

GOODMAN RESEARCH GROUP, INC.
Program Evaluation • Consultation • Market Research

*Robert Noyce Teacher
Scholarship Program
at HGSE*
**End-of-Project
Evaluation
Executive Summary**

PREPARED BY

Colleen F. Manning, M.A.
Nicole Brooks, M.Ed.
Irene F. Goodman, Ed.D.

SUBMITTED TO

Katherine K. Merseth, Ed.D.
Director, Teacher Education Program
Harvard Graduate School of Education

December 2012

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Goodman Research Group, Inc. wishes to thank all the HGSE Noyce Scholars who responded to our survey and participated in our telephone interviews.

Special thanks also to Kay Merseeth, Director of the Teacher Education Program, Vicki Jacobs, Director of Field Placements, Teacher Education Program, and Susan Kandel, Program Coordinator, Teacher Education Program, for their participation in and support of our evaluation activities.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Harvard Graduate School of Education's (HGSE) Teacher Education Program (TEP), in partnership with faculty from Harvard's Department of Mathematics and Division of Engineering and Applied Sciences, and initially in cooperation with Boston Public Schools (BPS), received six cycles of funding from the National Science Foundation (NSF) Robert Noyce Teacher Scholarship Program. Beginning with the 2006-2007 cohort and continuing through the 2011-2012 cohort, HGSE's Noyce Scholarship Program gave stipends to a total of 37 students. In return for the scholarship funds, the Scholars committed to complete two years of teaching in a high-need school district.

In March 2012, HGSE contracted Goodman Research Group, Inc. (GRG), a Cambridge-based research firm specializing in the evaluation of educational programs, to conduct an end-of-project evaluation of the Scholarship Program. The centerpiece of the evaluation was an online survey of all Scholars, conducted in May 2012, yielding a response from 35 of the 37 Scholars (95%). Telephone interviews with a subset of five Scholars and with three program administrators, as well as a review of year-end survey data from TEP participants and a review of the relevant literature, supplemented the survey.

It is noteworthy that the country's economic crisis occurred during the middle of HGSE's funding, affecting districts, schools, and classrooms everywhere. This compromised HGSE's goals of collaborating with BPS and securing student teaching positions. In the spring of 2009, the Boston Public Schools' Human Resources Department notified TEP that, because of budgetary constraints, the BPS would no longer be able to guarantee full-time teaching positions for TEP Noyce Scholars.

Another important bit of context is that the goals of the Noyce Scholarship Program are so closely aligned with those of HGSE's TEP that it would seem that some of the supports that institutions are expected to provide scholarship recipients were well integrated into TEP and available to all students. This made it challenging to disentangle the effects of the Noyce Scholarship Program from the effects of TEP as a whole. The key difference between the two was the stipend.

KEY FINDINGS

The Noyce Scholarship was moderately influential in some Scholars' decision to apply to HGSE TEP. For most Scholars, however, the length of the program and the field experience component, as well as the location and reputation of Harvard, were more important considerations.

Three-quarters of HGSE Noyce Scholars have fulfilled or are on track to fulfill their scholarship commitment and all but one Scholar who had fulfilled the commitment had remained teaching in high-need schools *beyond two years*. Scholars' previous experience in a high-need school predisposed them to this commitment. The scholarship amount also was an adequate incentive for Scholars and connection to the Scholar community may have contributed to their commitment.

Several Scholars did not fulfill their commitment, either because they had difficulty finding a job in a high-need school or due to personal reasons. Poor administrative support, low salaries, and lack of resources in high-needs schools also discouraged Scholars from teaching in a high-need school. While HGSE TEP generally prepared students for these obstacles, the program may have been even more influential in retention of teachers in these settings, had there been improvements to its mentorship and field experience components, professional development seminars, and assistance with the job placement process.

CONSIDERATIONS

Were Harvard to offer a similar scholarship program designed to promote teaching in urban high-need schools, GRG recommends that the administrators consider the following:

- Develop and evaluate outreach materials that carry a stronger, clearer message about how the scholarship program is distinguished from the overall teacher education program.
- Use insights from this research to focus outreach to different audience segments, such as applicants with previous experience in high-need settings who were more likely to remain committed to teaching in these settings.
- Hold regular meetings of scholars focused on team building and group support, with the expressed intent for that community to continue beyond graduation from TEP. Empower select scholars to lead community development among their smaller group.
- Reexamine the process of matching mentors and mentee and revisit assistance provided for job placement.

Goodman Research Group, Inc.

929 Massachusetts Avenue, Suite 2A
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

Tel: (617) 491-7033
Fax: (617) 864-2399

info@grginc.com
www.grginc.com

© 2012 Goodman Research Group, Inc.