



SMU | ANNETTE CALDWELL SIMMONS
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION & HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

RESEARCH IN MATHEMATICS EDUCATION

STEM Academy for Teachers and Leaders: Teacher Exit Summary

INTERNAL

RESEARCH IN
MATHEMATICS
EDUCATION

STEM Academy for Teachers and Leaders: Teacher Exit Summary

C. Taylor Cox • Elizabeth L. Adams • Leanne R. Ketterlin-Geller

Southern Methodist University

Spring 2020

Published by

Southern Methodist University
Department of Education Policy & Leadership
Simmons School of Education & Human Development
PO Box 750114
Dallas, TX 75275-0114
Contact information: rme@smu.edu

This research was supported by The Texas Instruments Foundation and the O'Donnell Foundation; GT00317. Opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect those of The Texas Instruments Foundation, the O'Donnell Foundation or individuals within

Copyright © 2020. Southern Methodist University. All rights reserved. This publication, or parts thereof, may not be used or reproduced in any manner without written permission.

SMU will not discriminate in any employment practice, education program or educational activity on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, disability or veteran status. This document is available in alternative formats upon request.

Abstract

The purpose of this report is to summarize the counts and characteristics of teachers who exited the STEM Academy before the program concluded in spring 2020. In all, 24 of 45 teachers (51.1%) total exited the Academy over the course of three years of implementation. The majority of teachers left the Academy for personal reasons, while many others moved into different roles. Exiting teachers were invited to complete a teacher exit survey, which provided their opinions on the time commitment and workload, as well as factors that contributed to their decision to leave. Seven exiting teachers completed the exit survey. The majority of feedback received was positive, as most teachers stated the 11 factors listed in the survey did not contribute to their decision (e.g., stress, quality of SMU coursework, lack of communication from SMU team). The factors that did contribute to some teachers' decisions to leave include multiple competing priorities, time requirements related to participation, and lack of support for the program from administration or district. While only seven of the 24 teachers who exited the Academy took the exit survey, the feedback they provided is important for future iterations of the Academy and those interested in implementing other programs like the STEM Academy.

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Method	1
Results	1
Conclusion	5
Appendix A – Teacher Exit Survey	6

STEM Academy for Teachers and Leaders: Teacher Exit Summary

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of teachers' reasons for leaving the STEM Academy since 2017. This report includes information about all teachers who exited the Academy, including counts as well as teachers' reasons for leaving the Academy, which were collected both informally and via the exit survey. More detailed information about reasons for exit is available for those teachers who completed the exit survey.

Method

All exiting teachers were invited to participate in the STEM Academy for Teachers and Leaders Exit Survey. Of the 24 teachers who exited, seven (30.4%) completed a teacher exit survey via the online interface Qualtrics. The survey included seven questions focused on factors contributing to teachers' exit from the STEM Academy. This includes two multiple choice questions, two matrices using Likert scales, and three open response questions. The survey is available in Appendix A.

Although all teachers did not complete the exit survey, all exiting teachers notified STEM Academy staff as to why they were exiting, whether it was in person or via email. Given the low response rate to the survey, we included information provided by STEM Academy staff in the overall summary in this report. This information provides a more complete summary of teachers' reasons for exit; albeit less detailed than the information provided in the exit survey.

Results

Table 1 shows the total number of teachers who exited the STEM Academy by season and by cohort. Teachers begin the STEM Academy program in either summer 2017 or 2018; cohort 1 teachers joining in summer 2017 and cohort 2 teachers joining in summer 2018. Seven of 15 teachers (46.7%) exited cohort 1 and 17 of 30 teachers (56.7%) exited cohort 2. The majority of exited teachers in cohort 1 exited in summer 2018, which was their second summer. Nine teachers from cohort 2 exited the academy near the end of school year (i.e., spring 2019), and six teachers exited in summer 2019, which was their second summer.

Table 1. Times points teachers left the STEM Academy by cohort
(n=24)

	Summer 2017	Fall 2017	Spring 2018	Summer 2018	Fall 2018	Spring 2019	Summer 2019	Fall 2019	Spring 2020	Total
Cohort 1	0	1	0	3	1	2	0	0	0	7
Cohort 2	NA	NA	NA	1	0	9	6	0	1	17
Total	0	1	0	4	1	11	6	0	1	24

Note: Cohort 2 did not join the STEM Academy until summer 2018.

Table 2 shows a summary of all exiting teachers’ reasons for leaving the STEM Academy based on informal communication and the exit survey. All 24 teachers who exited the Academy informed the STEM Academy team of their reasons for leaving either informally or via the exit survey. Eleven teachers (45.8%) exited the Academy for personal reasons (i.e., family responsibilities, summer conflict, etc.). Seven teachers (29.1%) exited because they are no longer teaching in Dallas ISD. Three teachers (12.5%) exited teaching completely, two teachers (8.3%) moved into leadership roles in their school, and one teacher (4.2%) retired.

Table 2. Teachers’ reasons for leaving the academy
(*n*=24)

Reason	Teacher Count
Personal reasons	11 (45.8%)
Left Dallas ISD	7 (29.1%)
Exited teaching	3 (12.5%)
Moved into leadership role	2 (8.3%)
Retired	1 (4.2%)
Total	24 (100%)

Note: Some of the teachers listed in this table did not complete the exit survey. These teachers informed us of their reason for leaving through either email or in person communication.

Seven teachers who exited the STEM Academy completed the exit survey. Table 3 reflects teachers’ views of the STEM Academy time commitment and workload throughout the year based on the exit survey only. The majority of teachers who completed the exit survey stated that the workload and time commitment to the factors below were either “about right” or “varied, but all right.” Two teachers (28.6%) stated that the time commitment to the summer academy was “too great.”

Table 3: Teachers’ views of STEM Academy time commitment and workload
(*n*=7)

	Too light	About right	Varied, but all right	Too great
The summer academy workload was	0 (0.0%)	1 (14.3%)	6 (85.7%)	0 (0.0%)
The summer academy time commitment was	0 (0.0%)	3 (42.9%)	2 (28.6%)	2 (28.6%)
The coaching workload was	0 (0.0%)	4 (57.1%)	3 (42.9%)	0 (0.0%)
The coaching time commitment was	0 (0.0%)	4 (57.1%)	3 (42.9%)	0 (0.0%)

Table 4 reflects the factors that contributed to teachers' decisions to leave the academy. Two teachers (28.6%) stated that multiple competing priorities highly contributed to their reason for leaving the Academy. Two teachers (28.6%) stated that stress somewhat contributed, and two teachers (28.6%) stated that lack of alignment between SMU and school district curricula somewhat contributed. Additionally, all 7 teachers (100%) stated that lack of communication from SMU team and the quality of SMU coursework *did not* contribute to their decision to leave.

Table 4: Teachers' reasons for leaving the STEM Academy
(*n*=7)

Reason	Did not contribute	Somewhat contributed	Highly contributed
Multiple competing priorities	5 (71.4%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (28.6%)
Time requirements related to participation	5 (71.4%)	1 (14.3%)	1 (14.3%)
Lack of support for the program from administration or district	5 (71.4%)	1 (14.3%)	1 (14.3%)
Program was not what I expected	6 (85.7%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (14.3%)
Not interested in earning SMU course credit	6 (85.7%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (14.3%)
Lack of alignment between SMU and school district curricula	6 (85.7%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (14.3%)
Lack of alignment between SMU and school or district priorities	5 (71.4%)	2 (28.6%)	0 (0.0%)
Stress	5 (71.4%)	2 (28.6%)	0 (0.0%)
Quality of coaching provided by SMU	6 (85.7%)	1 (14.3%)	0 (0.0%)
Quality of SMU coursework	7 (100%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Lack of communication from SMU team	7 (100%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)

Six of seven teachers answered the question, "Would you recommend the STEM Academy for Teachers and Leaders Program to other teachers or leaders?" All six teachers who responded to this item (100%) responded either probably yes or definitely yes. One teacher did not respond to this item.

Table 5: Recommend the STEM Academy to others
(*n*=6)

	Definitely yes	Probably yes
Would you recommend the STEM Academy for Teachers and Leaders Program to other teachers or leaders?	4 (66.7%)	2 (33.3%)

Conclusion

Although a small number of exiting teachers completed the exit survey, project staff retained detailed records related to teacher exit, which supported this report. A total of 24 teachers in both cohorts exited the Academy in the past three years. Additionally, the majority of teachers (45.8%) left the Academy for personal reasons. For the teachers who completed the exit survey, the majority of teachers believed the workload and time commitment were either “about right” or “varied, but all right.” Teachers also stated that multiple competing priorities, time requirements related to participations, and lack of support for the program from administration or district contributed to their reasons for leaving. Additionally, 100% of teachers stated that they would recommend the STEM Academy to other teachers or leaders.

In the future, the STEM Academy can be improved by encouraging buy-in from school leadership. Some teachers felt the STEM Academy did not align with school district priorities as well as school district curricula, which suggests that leaders play an important role in teachers’ views of the Academy. The STEM Academy could benefit from welcoming leaders to provide feedback on ways the Academy could better align with district priorities, as well as showing them ways that the STEM Academy is beneficial to their school and could help foster a stronger relationship between teachers, leaders, and university staff.

Appendix A – STEM Academy for Teachers and Leaders Program Exit Survey Informed Consent

You are being asked to take this survey because you previously participated in the STEM Academy for Teachers and Leaders Program. Your personal participation in this survey is voluntary. As a participant in this survey, you will take one survey. The survey is the only expectation for participation. The objective of the survey is to understand the factors that contributed to your exit from the STEM Academy. Only teachers who exit the STEM Academy early will be asked to participate in this study. The questions on the survey focus on the factors that contributed to your exit. These questions should not pose any risk to participants. There is no cost to you for taking part in this research study. You will not be paid for taking part in the research study.

You have a full right to privacy. This means that only the researchers who are part of this study will see the information about you from this survey. If the results of this study are shared with other people, your name will not be used so no one will know who you are. All information about you from this study will be kept in the locked office of Dr. Ketterlin-Geller. Information that is kept on computers will be kept safe from access by people who should not see it, through password-protection. If you have questions about this study or the procedures, please email STEMacademy@smu.edu

Taking part in this survey is voluntary. You do not have to take part in this survey and it is okay to refuse to sign this form. If you agree to take part and then change your mind, you can withdraw for any reason.

If you have concerns or questions about the study or have a research-related injury, contact any of the following:

Leanne Ketterlin Geller, Ph.D.
Texas Instruments Chair in Education
Professor, Education Policy & Leadership
Director, Research in Mathematics Education
Simmons School of Education and Human Development
Phone: 214/768-4947
Email: lkgeller@smu.edu/lkgeller@smu.edu

If you have questions about your rights as a participant or feel you have been placed at risk, you may contact:

Austin Baldwin, Ph.D., IRB
Chairresearchcompliance@smu.edu
214-758-2033

You are making a decision about being in this research study. When you sign this form, you are giving your permission to be in the study. By signing this form, you have not given up any of

your legal rights or released anyone from liability for negligence, and you are at least 18 years of age. Please read the statement and click the box below to move forward.

I have read (or have had read to me) this consent form. I have been given a chance to ask questions about the research study and the procedures involved. I believe that I have enough information to make my decision. I have also been told my other options. I agree to give my consent to take part as a subject in this research project.

Signature of Subject:

INTERVAL

STEM Academy for Teachers and Leaders Program Exit Survey

Thank you so much for your time and willingness to complete this survey. The factors that contributed to your exit from the STEM Academy for Teachers and Leaders are important to us. Please be completely honest as you complete this survey. As described in the informed consent, your responses will be confidential and will help us better support STEM Academy teachers and leaders in the future.

What was the primary reason you exited the STEM Academy for Teachers and Leaders Program?

- Change in role at my school (e.g., became an administrator, moved to a different content area or grade level)
 - Moved to a different school or district
 - Exited teaching
 - Retirement
 - Dissatisfied with the program
 - Personal reasons
 - Enrolled in another graduate program
 - Job-related time constraints
 - Other (please specify) _____
-

How much did the following factors contribute to your exit from the STEM Academy for Teachers and Leaders Program?

	Did not contribute	Somewhat contributed	Highly contributed
Stress	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Multiple competing priorities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of communication from SMU team	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of alignment between SMU and school or district priorities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of alignment between SMU and school or district curricula	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quality of coaching provided by SMU	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quality of SMU coursework	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Time requirements related to participation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Program was not what I expected	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Not interested in earning SMU course credit	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of support for the program from administration or district	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Page Break

What, if anything, would have encouraged you to continue participating in the STEM Academy for Teachers and Leaders?

What action, if any, could <u>SMU</u> have done to help you continue your commitment to the program?

What action, if any, could <u>your Dallas ISD campus administration</u> have done to help you continue your commitment to the program?

Within the STEM Academy for Teachers and Leaders:

	Too light	About right	Varied, but all right	Too great
The summer academy workload was:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The summer academy time commitment was:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The coaching workload was:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The coaching time commitment was:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Would you recommend the STEM Academy for Teachers and Leaders Program to other teachers or leaders?

- Definitely yes
- Probably yes
- Probably no
- Definitely no