



Philadelphia Education Fund
Champions for Quality Public Education

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To apply for this Fellowship, please go on the Stoneleigh site and complete the Individual Application. Direct the application and any further questions about the project to Liza Herzog, Senior Research Associate at lherzog@philaedfund.org or at 215-665-1400 ext. 3323.

Junior Fellowship Program Abstract

The mission of the Philadelphia Education Fund (Ed Fund) is to improve the quality of public education for underserved youth throughout the greater Philadelphia region. In collaboration with schools, school districts, and other partners, the Ed Fund enhances teaching and learning; conducts research studies that fuel its work and that of others; directly assists students to access and succeed in postsecondary education; convenes public education stakeholders in support of school reform policy and practice; and informs and engages citizens as public school advocates in the greater Philadelphia region.

In 2005, the Ed Fund conducted research with Johns Hopkins University that asked a simple question: *how early in the middle grades can we identify students who are at risk for dropping out?* We were astounded to learn that sixth graders in Philadelphia (and in six other cities where we have replicated our work) who do not attend regularly, receive poor behavior marks, or fail math or English have **no more than a 10% chance of graduating on time and a 20% chance of graduating within five years.** In a given year, between 1,000 and 2,000 sixth graders in Philadelphia have each of these risk factors.

We have put our research into action by creating a research-based, comprehensive dropout prevention/intervention model aimed at interrupting the pattern of failure among students who demonstrate these at-risk behaviors (attendance, behavior, course failure in math/English) in the middle grades.

An Ed Fund on-site facilitator works with school teams by grade group around the risk factors, closely monitoring progress, interpreting data, and enabling principals and teachers to identify and support students with the risk factors. Our Early Warning Indicator system is automated through the District's SchoolNet, so that principals and teachers have access to data to inform their daily craft. This "real-time resource" allows for close monitoring of success and development of whole-school, targeted and intensive student interventions. Our preliminary results are promising: 45% of students who entered the sixth grade off-track in attendance were now on track, 52% of students who entered off-track in behavior were now on-track, and more than 80% who entered with Fs in math or English had picked up their grades.

The Stoneleigh Junior Fellow would work within the Philadelphia Education Fund's Research Department, reporting to Senior Research Associate Dr. Liza Herzog, to help us better understand the impact of our whole-school, targeted, and intensive supports by linking survey data we collect around the type, duration, and response to intervention to the District's student outcomes for attendance, behavior and course performance. Only then can we determine which supports work best with which risk-specific student populations. The work of the Fellow will help to inform the program design for expansion schools in Philadelphia as well as expansion sites Los Angeles, Seattle, Detroit, San Antonio, Chicago, and New Orleans which has taken on the name *Diplomas Now*.

The Ed Fund seeks a candidate with a Master's degree or who is working toward a doctorate in Education, Sociology, Economics, or Statistics. Candidates should be interested in research, policy and advocacy in education and should be committed to improving the quality of education for youth in Philadelphia. The award will be commensurate with education and experience and will include benefits.