Attachment 3g:
Program Staff Coordinators
Focus Group Protocol

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OMB No. 3145-New
Expiration Date:
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Noyce Program Evaluation Focus Group Protocol: Program Support Staff/Coordinators

OBJECTIVES:

These questions aim to elicit comprehensive insights from Program Support Staff/Coordinators regarding the Noyce Program's perceived impact, effectiveness, and evolution over time, as well as the factors influencing project success and day-to-day operation of a Noyce Program.

FACILITATOR SCRIPT:

INTRODUCTION

- Hello, my name is **[NAME OF FACILITATOR],** and I will be facilitating this confidential focus group today.
- I am an independent evaluation and research consultant. I work for WhitworthKee Consulting. We are partnering with the National Science Foundation to evaluate the Robert Noyce Teacher Scholarship Program and identify areas that are working well and opportunities for growth. NSF has contracted the WKC Evaluation Team as a third-party evaluator so that the Noyce community can express their true perceptions and experiences with Noyce without having personal information tied to responses.
- Joining us today is my colleague **[NAME OF CO-FACILITATOR/NOTETAKER]** who will function in the background to take notes and observe the session. They will remain in the background without video but may also ask follow-up questions.
- As you may know, the focus groups were organized by your role or position within the Noyce Program when possible. This is the *program support staff/coordinator focus group*.
- The purpose of this focus group is to discuss your perceptions of the impact of the Noyce Program, how well the Program has worked, and how the Program has changed over time. We will also discuss your perception of the factors related to the Program's success and perceptions of those invested in the STEM education community. There are no right or wrong answers, and please be straightforward with your responses. You may not have experience with or know the answer to every question. Because Noyce projects and roles can vary, please feel

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free to share with us if you don't know the answer to the question or it doesn't apply to you. This focus group will last no more than 60 minutes.

- You can skip any question that you do not want to answer, and you can leave the focus group at any time. Your participation in this focus group will not impact your or your institution's ability to receive funding from NSF either now or in the future.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Your answers in today's focus group will remain private. The WKC Evaluation Team will not connect your name or any personal details to your responses. The results will be summarized to reflect the overall group's perspectives. Before sharing the information with external parties (e.g., NSF, NSF's website, reports to Congress, Noyce events, other conferences, publication audiences, or other professional communities), the team will make sure that any identifying details are removed.

We would like to record this focus group session so that we can ensure that we have time to think deeply about your responses. To maintain data security, the recording will be stored in a password-protected cloud-based drive. It will not be shared with anyone except the researchers working on the Noyce Program evaluation. Please verbally acknowledge your consent to recording by saying, "I agree." **[FACILITATOR NOTE: MAKE SURE TO RECEIVE A VERBAL "I AGREE" FROM ALL FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS. MAKE NOTE OF PARTICIPANT CONSENT (YES/NO) IN THE TRACKER.]**

Do you have any questions before we get started?

[IF YES, PLEASE ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS AS BEST YOU CAN. IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO ANSWER A QUESTION, PLEASE REACH OUT TO THE PROJECT LEAD OR CO-LEAD]

[IF NO, BEGIN THE FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS]

FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

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[FACILITATOR NOTE: START RECORDING IF PARTICIPANT CONSENTED; IF THEY DID NOT, BOTH THE INTERVIEWER AND NOTETAKER WILL TAKE NOTES TO CAPTURE AS MUCH DATA AS POSSIBLE] I'm going to start the recording now.

Background

[INFORMATION ON NAME, CURRENT ROLE, AND NAME OF THE NOYCE PI WITH WHICH RESPONDENT IS AFFILIATED WILL BE CAPTURED FROM THE DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE – SHARE THE RESPONDENTS' DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE ANSWERS AND VERIFY THEY ARE CORRECT.

IF ANY INFORMATION IS INCORRECT, PLEASE NOTE THE RESPONDENT'S CORRECTED INFORMATION AND GIVE THE UPDATED INFORMATION TO THE PROJECT LEAD OR CO-LEAD]

FACILITATOR SCRIPT: In this section, we will discuss the Noyce application process. Please feel free to share your experience with applying for the Noyce Award, if you have been a part of the application process before.

1. How long have you personally actively been involved in applying for Noyce funding, across all institutions where you've worked? **[BACKGROUND]**

STEM Teacher Preparation Field

2. From your perspective, what specific parts of the STEM teacher preparation field do you think should be emphasized and funded? **[1A]**

FACILITATOR SCRIPT: As you may know, the Noyce Program provides funding to higher education institutions via (a) scholarships, (b) stipends, and (c) other means of programmatic support to recruit and prepare science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) majors and other professionals to become K-12 teachers and teacher leaders.

3. If the Noyce Program could fund anything (the sky is the limit), what would you suggest that NSF fund to recruit, prepare, and retain STEM teachers and teacher leaders in high-need school districts? **[1]**

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    a. **Probe:** Can you identify specific <u>areas</u> within STEM education that are currently underserved or overlooked that could benefit from additional funding? **[1A]**

    b. **Probe:** Are there specific <u>populations of individuals</u> in STEM education that are currently underserved or overlooked that you think could benefit from additional funding?

    c. **Probe:** How could the Noyce Program be expanded to further support the professional development of STEM teachers and teacher leaders? **[1A]**

FACILITATOR SCRIPT: We'd now like to transition to talking about your experience applying for Noyce funding.

4. How many of you have gone through the Noyce application process? If you have been involved with the Noyce application process, what support from NSF, your institution, or other sources, did you consider when applying for Noyce funding? **[IF NEEDED: FOR EXAMPLE, TO WHAT EXTENT ARE TRAINING, INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT, MATERIALS AND RESOURCES, EASE OF APPLICATION, ETC., FACTORS WHEN APPLYING FOR NOYCE FUNDING?] [1B]**

    a. **Probe:** With which entities do you collaborate as part of your Noyce project? **[IF NEEDED: NON-PROFIT PARTNERS THAT PROVIDED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, INTERNSHIPS, RESEARCH EXPERIENCES; OTHER INSTITUTIONS; OTHER DEPARTMENTS; LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS; ETC.]** What role do they have? How did you develop these relationships? **[1B, 2A]**

    b. **Probe:** What entities are missing from your existing partnerships that would help support your Noyce project? **[1B, 2A]**

5. If you have been involved with the Noyce application process, what are the barriers to applying for Noyce funding? **[IF NEEDED: FOR EXAMPLE, TO WHAT EXTENT ARE COST-SHARING REQUIREMENTS, DEGREE OF ALIGNMENT OF THE TRAINING MODELS BEING USED BY INSTITUTIONS WITH THE NOYCE REQUIREMENTS, OVERALL FUNDING LIMITATIONS, FUNDING LIMITATIONS FOR STUDENTS, WAYS IN WHICH INFORMATION IS COMMUNICATED, ETC., BARRIERS TO APPLYING?] [1C]**

    a. **Probe:** What are some specific challenges or complexities that you encountered during the application phase? For example,

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what challenges or complexities existed within society, the larger field, at the institution level, and/or at the college, department, and faculty level? **[1B, 1C, 3, 3B, 3C, 3D]**

b. **Probe:** What types of support or resources do you think would be most beneficial to facilitate applying for a Noyce Award (e.g., technical assistance, funding)? **[1B, 3, 3C, 3D]**

c. **Probe:** How does the burden of applying for the Noyce Award compare to other similar funding opportunities in STEM education (if you have previously been involved in applying for other similar opportunities)? **[IF NEEDED: FOR EXAMPLE, WAS IT EASIER, MORE DIFFICULT, ABOUT THE SAME?] [1B, 1C, 3, 3B, 3C, 3D]**

6. What support from NSF, your institution, or other sources, did you consider when applying for Noyce funding? **[1D]**

Perceptions of the Noyce Program

FACILITATOR SCRIPT: In this next set of questions, we would like to explore your perceptions about the Noyce Program overall and its impact as well as any gaps in its reach.

7. What is your overall perception of the Noyce Program? **[2A]**

a. **Probe:** What is your perception of current Noyce scholars and fellows? **[2B]**

b. **Probe:** What is your perception of former Noyce scholars and fellows? **[2C]**

Facilitator Script: As you know, one of the main intentions of the Noyce Program is to address the critical need for recruiting, preparing, and retaining highly effective elementary and secondary mathematics and science teachers and teacher leaders who persist as classroom teachers in high-need school districts.

To fulfill their teaching requirement for Noyce funding, scholars/fellows must be placed in a school in a high-need K-12 school district.

8. From what you have seen, are scholars and fellows being placed in what you'd consider to be a high-need school or school district? Why or why not?

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9. What is your perception of the impact of the Noyce Program (i.e., after implementation)? For example, how does the Noyce Program address STEM teacher shortages and/or retaining STEM teachers in high-need schools? **[2D]**
    a. **Probe:** What factors contribute to your perception of the impact of the Program? **[2D]**
    b. **Probe:** What are the gaps in the Noyce Program's reach and impact to addressing the critical need for recruiting, preparing, and retaining highly effective STEM teachers and teacher leaders in high-need school districts.)? **[2D]**

Changes to the Solicitation

FACILITATOR SCRIPT: This next section will mainly be focused on those of you who have previously been involved in the Noyce application process to hear what your experience has been like.

10. If you have been involved with the Noyce application process, during the time you've been familiar with the Noyce Program solicitation, how have substantial changes to the solicitation impacted how you perceive the Program? **[3]**
11. If you have been involved with the Noyce application process, in what ways has the application process changed? **[3A]**
    a. **Probe:** To what extent has the amount of effort it takes to complete a Noyce Award application changed over time? **[3A]**
    b. **Probe:** In what ways did these changes impact whether your group/your PI applied for Noyce funding or not? **[3B]**

Merit Review Process and Program Outcomes

FACILITATOR SCRIPT: For the next few questions, we will discuss your views on the merit review and funding process for the Award.

12. How many of you have gone through the Noyce application merit review process? If you have gone through the Noyce application merit review process, what are your impressions/perspectives on that process? **[4, 4B]**

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13. What were your perceptions of the feedback you received on your Noyce solicitation application? **[4B]**

Wrap Up

14. As we wrap up our time together, would you like to share any lessons learned during your involvement with the Noyce Program or any growth opportunities that could help improve the Program? **[5]**

FACILITATOR SCRIPT: Thank you for your time and for sharing your experiences and perceptions. This will be extremely helpful for NSF as they identify areas in Noyce that are working well and opportunities for growth. As I mentioned at the beginning of our focus group, all information that you provided will remain confidential, and any identifying details will be removed before any information is shared with external parties. Finally, all of the recordings will only be made accessible to the WKC Evaluation Team.