

# September 30, 2010 - TERC Receives Grant Funding from The Noyce Foundation to Pursue Two Exploratory Studies on Participation in the Massachusetts Science Fair

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**CAMBRIDGE, MA**—TERC received funding from The Noyce Foundation to explore how participation in the [Massachusetts State Science and Engineering Fair](#) and other out-of-classroom opportunities informs STEM interest and career choices. “Up until this point, little research has been done on how and if participation in science fairs has effects on attitudes and orientation toward scientific careers,” says Polly Hubbard, Principal Investigator for these two studies. “The findings could influence how educators, policy makers, and STEM professionals think about participation in this (currently voluntary) program.”

Contribution of Science Fair to Middle School Student Interest in Science Careers employs a quasi-experimental design where students who participate in Science Fair activities are compared with non-participants. It will examine middle school students’ interest in science topics; interest in science careers; reported feelings of self-efficacy; and plans to pursue additional courses pre-and-post Science Fair. Perceived Impact of Science Fair Participation on Scientists’ and Engineers’ Interest in Science examines the effect of Massachusetts Science Fair experiences on a proposed sample of scientists and engineers who hold degrees in the natural sciences. The respondents will be culled from across the scientific research sector in Massachusetts and interviewed about their experiences in Science Fair and/or independent scientific research in secondary school and the degree to which these experiences informed their choice of careers. Resulting reports will be used to identify issues to explore in future work and will be submitted to policy makers highlighting the perceived impact of Science Fair participation on working science professionals.

The Noyce Foundation is an organization dedicated to helping students become curious, thoughtful, and engaged learners through improving the teaching of math, science, and literacy in public schools; developing leadership to support student achievement; advancing education policy and research; and expanding opportunities for students to experience science hands-on in out-of-school settings. More information can be found at: [www.noycefdn.org](http://www.noycefdn.org).