

14 - 0113



Southeast Asian Teacher Program – Collaborative Urban Educator Grant

Memorandum to:

The Honorable Chuck Wiger, Chair
Senate E-12 Division
205 Capitol
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Saint Paul, MN 55155-1606

The Honorable Paul Marquart, Chair
House Education Finance Committee
597 State Office Building
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Saint Paul, MN 55155

From: Dr. Sally A. Baas, Director of the Southeast Asian Teacher Program, Concordia University, St. Paul

Dear Chairs Wiger and Marquart:

It is my pleasure to report to the Legislature on the use of Collaborative Urban Educator grant monies pursuant to the reporting requirements of Laws 2011, 1st Special Session, Chapter 11, Article 2, Section 50, Subdivision 14, and Laws 2013, Chapter 116, Article 3, Section 37, Subdivision 12.

The Southeast Asian Teacher Licensure Program began in 1998 when a group of Hmong families came to the Legislature to request funding for a program to prepare teachers whose faces reflected their children's.

In response to these community conversations, Concordia University, St. Paul, created the Southeast Asian Teacher (SEAT) Program which is a baccalaureate degree/teacher licensure program for culturally and linguistically diverse paraprofessional and non-licensed teachers who are currently employed in Minnesota school districts. It provides academic and personal advising, tutoring, evening classes, technical assistance, books, laptop, and financial support for students whose faces reflect those of the diverse students in urban and urban-like schools. As a public-private partnership between the state and

the university, SEAT provides an investment in each student's future, expanding their potential, skills, talents and intellect while providing them with a circle of support from entrance to the program through their first years of teaching. All requirements of the university general education and education major must be met. Over time, the program has accepted students of color from many ethnic backgrounds, but it has remained true to the mission of preparing teachers of color for today's Minnesota students. Concordia University's SEAT Program seeks to admit qualified applicants who are working in a public school setting and want to become licensed teachers. The program strongly encourages persons of color to apply, but does not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, ethnicity, socio-economic status, or religion. Applicants are expected to demonstrate their commitment and capability to work as a teacher with urban and urban-like learners throughout the application process and training.

The SEAT program received \$200,000 in state grant funding for 2013 to support one-half of each student's tuition, their books, and laptop rental, in addition to funding the part of the director's salary, the salary of the program associate, materials for support for students studying for the MTLE tests, and other costs related to student coursework for the SEAT Seminar in addition to preparing faculty to work cross-culturally with students. During 2013, there were 21 students in the program from these ethnicities: Hmong, Nigerian, Somali, African American, and Paraguayan. All were students of color. This academic year 2013-2014, there are 18 students registered for SEAT and they are Hmong, Nigerian, Somali, African American, Paraguayan, Puerto Rican, and Egyptian.

At the end of the 2012-2013 academic year, we graduated eight (8) students with licensure in K-6, ESL, SPED, 5-12, and Social Studies. Their backgrounds were Hmong, African, and African American.

2013 goals included:

- Provide a culturally responsive education for the SEAT students' preparation to become classroom teachers.
- Provide an average of 10 credits a semester to the students currently enrolled in the program;
- Provide half of students' tuition, a voucher to purchase textbooks from the Concordia University, St. Paul Bookstore, and laptop for their use while they are registered for class.
- Provide the academic and "academic cultural" support for students to be successful in the program.

- Provide e-mentoring and face-to-face mentoring for SEAT graduates who are in their first and second years of teaching.
- Work with the school districts to recruit students, and to assist in the hiring and placement of SEAT graduates as classroom teachers.
- Recruit and enroll six new students.
- Enable students to be involved in service learning and leadership roles in the Concordia University, St. Paul community through the Hmong Culture and Language Program & Building Cultural Bridges, summer camp program.

The program is directed by Dr. Sally A. Baas, who has directed the program since 2003. The program associate is Ms. Nao Thao, M.A.

Dr. Baas earned her Doctor of Education degree from St. Mary's University in Minneapolis, at which time she was recognized with the St. Mary's University Outstanding Dissertation Award for her investigation entitled, "What Does it Mean to be Hmong in the Twin Cities of Minnesota?" Recently, her dissertation was published as a book by Lambert Academic Press, and it has been distributed to several countries throughout the world. Dr. Baas has more than 40 years of experience in teaching students of all ages, administration, and project management. She has been particularly successful in increasing the number of teachers of color entering and persisting in teaching in the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

The Program Associate is Nao Thao, M.A., who is a graduate of the SEAT Program with training in English as a Second Language, and has her Master's Degree in Differentiated Instruction, is the Co-director of the Hmong Culture and Language Program, and serves as the facilitator of the SEAT Seminar this year.

Both professionals have been a part of the program for more than 10 years and have successfully led and counseled the students who are in the program as part of the circle of their success, from the entry into the program, to well into their second and third years of successful teaching in local schools.

The SEAT Program is also supported by administrators at Concordia University, St. Paul, including: President Tom Ries, VP for Academic Affairs Lonny Maly, VP for Finance Michael Dorner, and VP and Dean of Diversity Dr. Cheryl Chatman.

The regular reports which we file with MDE contain more detailed information if your committees are interested.

I would be pleased to answer any questions which committee members or staff may have, or to host a site visit at Concordia University. Our students would love to meet with you also.

We do want to thank the committees for their support of the Collaborative Urban Educator grant program which allows Concordia to continue the work of the SEAT program and the broader state policy of developing more teachers of color in the state's K-12 public schools.

Please find attached a summary of how state grant funds were used in 2013.

Cc: Sen. Sean Nienow
Rep. Kelby Woodard
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