



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



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Circular Letter: C-4

TO: Superintendents of Schools
Executive Directors, Regional Educational Service Centers

FROM: Mark K. McQuillan
Commissioner of Education

DATE: August 18, 2009

SUBJECT: Update on the Proposal for a New Teacher Induction Program

With the 2009-2010 school year approaching, we are writing to provide an update on proposals for a successor program to BEST.

In early May 2009, Substitute House Bill 6686, *An Act Concerning the Teacher Educator and Mentoring Program*, went before the Appropriations Committee. Unfortunately, the Appropriations Committee did not act on it at that time. Therefore, funding for the new program will be unknown until the budget debates are resolved.

With confidence, nonetheless, that some funding will ultimately be approved for such a program, preliminary planning is underway to provide a context for support of new teachers. Currently, a group consisting of RESC staff, CSDE staff, union representatives, and higher education representatives, has been meeting to begin the design of the first of the five proposed mentor modules.

Based on the recommendations of the BEST Task Force, originally included in Substitute House Bill 6686, we envision the Teacher Educator And Mentoring (TEAM) Program (proposed name) to be designed for the purpose of creating a framework for individualized professional growth for beginning teachers.

To accomplish this goal, the program will have the following main components:

Module Design

- Five modules providing a framework for support of new teachers focused on the following domains of the Common Core of Teaching (CCT): classroom environment, planning, instruction, assessment for learning and professional responsibility. Modules are to be collaboratively developed by the groups mentioned above. Mentors and beginning teachers will work together to establish the focus of each module. The development of individualized growth plans for the beginning teacher will be based on a needs assessment completed by each beginning teacher. As part of each module, mentors and beginning teachers will focus on classroom practice. At the culmination of each module, a written reflection paper will be written by the beginning teacher and submitted to a district or regional TEAM review committee to determine if the beginning teacher has met the completion standard.

District Responsibilities

- The establishment of a district TEAM coordinating committee for the purpose of developing a plan for the support of beginning teachers based on state developed guidelines, and for the review

of beginning teacher reflection papers. Since many districts have requested the option of participating in regional committees to review reflections and determine successful completion, a regional option to review module submissions may be considered. Each district would still be required to develop support plans.

- Assignment of a trained mentor to each beginning teacher upon hire based on established guidelines.
- Coordinating committee participation in training regarding the development of support plans and review of written reflections.
- Distribution of funding to mentors as made available by the state, pending the passage of legislation.
- Notification to the state of the beginning teacher's successful completion of each module and eligibility for the Provisional Educator Certificate.

CSDE Responsibilities:

- Development and management of data systems that will allow accessibility for districts to document beginning teacher participation and program completion.
- Development of guidelines for the creation and approval of district support plans.
- Monitoring of district plans and implementation of the program.
- Distribution of funding to districts as made available, pending the passage of legislation.
- Issuance of the Provisional Educator Certificate to all teachers deemed successful on all required modules by each district.
- Oversight of an outside evaluation of the program every three to five years.

Collaboration of CSDE, RESCs, Teacher Unions and Higher Education will result in:

- Development of mentor modules.
- Development and delivery of training for mentors.
- Development and delivery of training for the district coordinating committee regarding the development of support plans and review of module submissions.
- Technical assistance to districts.

Participation Guidelines:

For the 2009- 2010 school year, all teachers who were previously registered in BEST but did not successfully complete the BEST Program by July 1, 2009, will be required to participate in and fulfill the requirements of the new program as approved by the legislature. These teachers will participate in the piloting of the first two developed modules. Upon successful completion of these activities, they will be considered to have fulfilled the standards of a beginning teacher program to qualify for the Provisional Educator Certificate.

All new teachers hired after July 1, 2009, who have no previous BEST participation record, will participate in the piloting of the first two modules during the 2009-2010 school year and the piloting of the three remaining modules during the 2010-2011 school year.

In summary, the goal of the new program is to promote high quality induction for beginning teachers by providing guidance and support for the development and successful implementation of individualized growth plans that address the learning needs of teachers and align with standards and district initiatives for improved student learning. We look forward to working with teachers, districts, professional organizations, higher education and RESCs to accomplish this mission.

MKM:bhs

Enclosure: (1)

District Roles and Responsibilities for Proposed TEAM Program 2009 - 2010

<u>District Role</u>	<u>Responsibilities</u>	<u>Tentative Timeline</u>
<u>Superintendent/District Administrator</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication to administrators and teachers about proposed TEAM Program • New Teacher Orientation for District • Selection and implementation of district/regional review committee (district/regional decision pending legislation) • Develop/Submit DRAFT District Support Plan for teachers in TEAM to SDE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing • Aug./Sept. 2009 • Early Winter 2010 • Spring 2010
<u>Principals/School Administrators</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Teacher Orientation to School • Match Beginning Teachers with BEST-trained Mentors (includes teachers who were previously registered in BEST, but did not successfully meet BEST standards by July 1, 2009, and teachers hired after July 1, 2009, who have no previous BEST participation record) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aug. /Sept. 2009 • Aug./Sept. 2009
<u>Mentors/Beginning Teachers</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish collaborative relationship • Focus conversations/support on logistics, organization of Beginning Teacher's classroom, awareness of student needs and expectations, becoming familiar with curriculum, resources and materials, etc. • Begin to explore strengths and areas for professional growth in the area of Classroom Environment (proposed TEAM Module # 1) • Participate in requirements for Module # 1 • Participate in requirements for Module # 2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aug./Sept. 2009 • Early Fall 2009 • Oct./Nov. 2009 • Available Early Winter 2010 (Module #1) • Available Late Winter 2010 (Module #2)
<p>Update mentor Training for previously BEST-trained Mentors will be offered in early Fall 2009 New Mentor Training will be offered in Fall 2009</p>		