



House of Representatives

General Assembly

File No. 497

February Session, 2008

Substitute House Bill No. 5871

House of Representatives, April 7, 2008

The Committee on Education reported through REP. FLEISCHMANN of the 18th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

AN ACT CONCERNING THE BEST PROGRAM.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Subsection (d) of section 10-220a of the general statutes is
2 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July*
3 *1, 2009*):

4 (d) The Department of Education may fund, within available
5 appropriations, in cooperation with one or more regional educational
6 service centers: (1) A cooperating teacher program to train Connecticut
7 public school teachers and certified teachers at private special
8 education facilities approved by the Commissioner of Education and at
9 other facilities designated by the commissioner, who participate in the
10 supervision, training and evaluation of student teachers; and (2)
11 institutes to provide continuing education for Connecticut public
12 school educators [, assessors] and cooperating teachers, [and teacher
13 mentors,] including institutes to provide continuing education for
14 Connecticut public school educators offered in cooperation with the

15 Connecticut Humanities Council. [; and (3) a beginning teacher
16 support and assessment program to train Connecticut public school
17 teachers and other qualified persons approved by the Commissioner of
18 Education and certified teachers at such private special education and
19 other designated facilities who serve as mentors or assessors for
20 beginning teachers and who supervise, train and assist or assess
21 beginning teachers in their initial years in teaching and to pay stipends
22 to assessors.] Funds available under this subsection shall be paid
23 directly to school districts for the provision of substitute teachers when
24 cooperating teachers [, teacher mentors, beginning teachers and
25 assessors] are released from regular classroom responsibilities and for
26 the provision of professional development activities for cooperating
27 and student teachers. [, teacher mentors, assessors and beginning
28 teachers.] The cooperating teacher [and beginning teacher support and
29 assessment programs] program shall operate in accordance with
30 regulations adopted by the State Board of Education in accordance
31 with chapter 54, except in cases of placement in other countries
32 pursuant to written cooperative agreements between Connecticut
33 institutions of higher education and institutions of higher education in
34 other countries. A Connecticut institution may enter such an
35 agreement only if the State Board of Education and Board of
36 Governors for Higher Education have jointly approved the institution's
37 teacher preparation program to enter into such agreements. Student
38 teachers shall be placed with trained cooperating teachers. [Beginning
39 teachers shall participate in a beginning teacher support and
40 assessment program as made available by the board. School districts
41 shall be responsible for providing support to beginning teachers which
42 shall include, but not be limited to, the placement of beginning
43 teachers with trained teacher mentors who may be full or part-time
44 teachers in the same or a different building than the beginning teacher
45 and provision of trained assessors to conduct assessments of beginning
46 teachers. Cooperating teachers, teacher mentors and assessors may
47 serve concurrently in more than one capacity and may be assigned
48 more than one student teacher or beginning teacher in each such
49 capacity. The assessment of each beginning teacher shall be based

50 upon, but not limited to, data obtained from observations conducted
51 by assessors using an assessment instrument. A beginning teacher
52 shall be assessed by educators with teaching experience in the same
53 general subject area as such beginning teacher.] Cooperating teachers
54 [and teacher mentors] who are Connecticut public school teachers [and
55 assessors who are employed by school districts] shall be selected by
56 local and regional boards of education. Cooperating teachers [and
57 teacher mentors and assessors] at such private special education and
58 other designated facilities shall be selected by the authority responsible
59 for the operation of such facilities. If a board of education is unable to
60 identify a sufficient number of individuals to serve in such positions,
61 the commissioner may select qualified persons who are not employed
62 by the board of education to serve in such positions. Such regulations
63 shall require primary consideration of teachers' classroom experience
64 and recognized success as educators. The provisions of sections 10-
65 153a to 10-153n, inclusive, shall not be applicable to the selection,
66 placement and compensation of persons participating in the
67 cooperating teacher [and beginning teacher support and assessment
68 programs] program pursuant to the provisions of this section and to
69 the hours and duties of such persons. The State Board of Education
70 shall protect and save harmless, in accordance with the provisions of
71 section 10-235, any cooperating teacher [, teacher mentor or assessor]
72 while serving in such capacity.

73 Sec. 2. (*Effective July 1, 2008*) Notwithstanding the provisions of
74 section 10-220a of the general statutes, as amended by this act, or any
75 regulation adopted by the State Board of Education pursuant to said
76 section, for the 2008-2009 school year, the Department of Education
77 shall not require any beginning teacher being assessed as part of the
78 beginning teacher support and assessment program to complete a
79 video component as part of such assessment program.

80 Sec. 3. (*Effective from passage*) (a) There is established a task force to
81 develop a plan to replace the beginning educator support and training
82 program with a mentor assistance program starting with the 2009-2010
83 school year. The plan shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

84 (1) Requirements for an initial educator's successful completion of the
85 mentor assistance program, (2) sequence support modules based on
86 state standards as set forth in the Common Core of Teaching, as
87 developed by the Department of Education, (3) requirements
88 concerning (A) mentor eligibility and assignments and training of
89 mentors, and (B) the frequency with which mentor teachers should
90 meet with beginning teachers, (4) methods to encourage collaboration
91 from the Department of Education, Regional Educational Service
92 Centers and local and regional school districts to identify, recruit and
93 retain mentors, and (5) recommendations concerning the development
94 of a data collection and evaluation system for monitoring the mentor
95 assistance program on local and state-wide levels. The task force
96 should consider whether legislative changes should be made,
97 including, but not limited to, amending section 10-220a of the general
98 statutes to (i) require a reduced classroom teaching work load for
99 mentors, as determined by the school district, (ii) expand the categories
100 of persons who can become mentors, (iii) require that beginning
101 teachers receive and complete the mentor assistance program during
102 their first two years of certification, and (iv) require that school
103 districts receive full funding to implement the mentor assistance
104 program.

105 (b) The task force shall consist of the following members:

106 (1) The chairpersons and ranking members of the joint standing
107 committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters
108 relating to education, or their designees;

109 (2) The chairpersons and ranking members of the Legislative
110 Program Review and Investigations Committee, or their designees;

111 (3) Four appointed by the House of Representatives chairperson of
112 the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having
113 cognizance of matters relating to education, one of whom shall be a
114 member of the Connecticut Education Association, one of whom shall
115 be a member of the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education,
116 one of whom shall be a member of the Connecticut Association of

117 Schools and one of whom shall be a member of the Connecticut
118 Federation of School Administrators;

119 (4) Four appointed by the Senate chairperson of the joint standing
120 committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters
121 relating to education, one of whom shall be a member of the
122 Connecticut chapter of the American Federation of Teachers, one of
123 whom shall be a member of Connecticut Association of Public School
124 Superintendents, one of whom shall be a member of the Connecticut
125 Parent Teacher Association and one of whom shall be a teacher at a
126 regional vocational-technical school; and

127 (5) The Commissioner of Education, or the commissioner's designee.

128 (c) All appointments to the task force shall be made no later than
129 thirty days after the effective date of this section. Any vacancy shall be
130 filled by the appointing authority.

131 (d) The chairperson of the task force shall be the Commissioner of
132 Education, or the commissioner's designee. The chairperson shall
133 schedule the first meeting of the task force, which shall be held no later
134 than sixty days after the effective date of this section.

135 (e) The administrative staff of the joint standing committee of the
136 General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education
137 shall serve as administrative staff of the task force.

138 (f) Not later than January 1, 2009, the task force shall report, in
139 accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes,
140 its findings and recommendations to the joint standing committee of
141 the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to
142 education and to the Legislative Program Review and Investigations
143 Committee. The task force shall terminate on the date that it submits
144 such report or January 1, 2009, whichever is earlier.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:

Section 1	<i>July 1, 2009</i>	10-220a(d)
Sec. 2	<i>July 1, 2008</i>	New section
Sec. 3	<i>from passage</i>	New section

ED *Joint Favorable Subst.*

The following fiscal impact statement and bill analysis are prepared for the benefit of members of the General Assembly, solely for the purpose of information, summarization, and explanation, and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose:

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact:

Agency Affected	Fund-Effect	FY 09 \$	FY 10 \$
Education, Dept.	GF - Cost/Savings	See Below	See Below
Legislative Mgmt.	GF - Cost	Minimal	None

Note: GF=General Fund

Municipal Impact:

Municipalities	Effect	FY 09 \$	FY 10 \$
Local and Regional School Districts	Savings	None	Minimal

Explanation

The bill eliminates the Beginning Educator Support and Training (BEST) program as of July 1, 2009.

Currently, the implementation of the BEST program is shared by organizations and staff at the state, regional, and local levels. Approximately 9 full-time staff from the State Department of Education (SDE) oversee and administer the program’s assessment component. Additionally, each of the six Regional Educational Service Centers (RESCs), funded through a three-year, \$10 million contract with SDE, has a part-time staff person to train and assist educators in supporting beginning teachers. One RESC serves as the central administrator for the support component of the BEST program. It is estimated that annual expenditures for the BEST program are approximately \$4.0 million. Eliminating the BEST program will result in a significant savings to SDE. Additionally, the elimination of the program could result in a savings to local and regional school districts associated with the responsibility for providing support to beginning teachers. Any savings, however, would be predicated on the cost of a successor program put in place in FY 10.

The bill also eliminates the requirement (for the 2008-2009 school year) that new teachers submit a video component as part of their BEST assessment portfolio. It is anticipated that the SDE could require minimal additional resources to examine the reliability and validity of the portfolio assessment without the video component.

Additionally, the bill establishes a task force to develop a plan for a new support program for beginning teachers to replace the BEST program, beginning in the 2009-2010 school year. The task force must report its findings and recommendations to the Education Committee and to the Legislative Program Review and Investigations Committee by January 1, 2009.

The bill appoints the chairpersons and ranking members of the Education Committee to the task force and requires the committee's staff to provide administrative assistance. The Office of Legislative Management would incur minimal costs associated with mileage reimbursement of 50.5 cents per mile for legislators participating on the task force.

The Out Years

The savings associated with the elimination of the BEST program would occur in FY 10. The additional resources required for SDE to conduct the portfolio assessment without the video component would be one-time in nature, as would the cost associated with the taskforce.

OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 5871

AN ACT CONCERNING THE BEST PROGRAM.

SUMMARY:

This bill:

1. eliminates the Beginning Educator Support and Training (BEST) program as of July 1, 2009;
2. eliminates the video component from the BEST assessment for new teachers for the 2008-09 school year; and
3. establishes a 17-member task force to develop a new mentor assistance program to replace the BEST program starting in the 2009-2010 school year.

The BEST Program is a two-year induction program of support and assessment for new teachers. Satisfactory completion of the program is required for beginning classroom teachers employed in public schools and approved private special education facilities.

EFFECTIVE DATE: The BEST Program repeal takes effect July 1, 2009, the elimination of the video component of the BEST assessment takes effect July 1, 2008, and the task force takes effect upon passage.

BEST PROGRAM ELIMINATION

As of July 1, 2009, the bill eliminates the requirement that beginning teachers participate in the BEST Program. As of the same date, it also eliminates the State Department of Education's (SDE's) authority to fund the program and local school districts' responsibility for providing support to beginning teachers in accordance with the law and SDE regulations (see BACKGROUND).

BEST ASSESSMENT VIDEO COMPONENT

The BEST Program requires new teachers to submit a teaching portfolio to SDE, generally near the end of their second year of BEST participation. The portfolio is used to assess the new teacher's knowledge and application of the state's teaching standards. In addition to other contents (lesson plan, student work and the teacher's assessment of that work, and the new teacher's commentaries reflecting on his or her teaching and students' work), portfolios must include a videotape of the teacher's classroom instruction. The video is usually a 15- to 20-minute segment of the teacher's classroom instruction.

The bill bars SDE from requiring new teachers to submit videos as part of their BEST assessment. The prohibition applies for the 2008-09 school year.

NEW TEACHER MENTOR ASSISTANCE PROGRAM TASK FORCE***Task Force Duties***

The bill establishes a 17-member task force to develop a plan for a new support program for beginning teachers to replace the BEST Program starting in the 2009-2010 school year. The plan must include:

1. requirements for a new teacher to successfully complete the new program;
2. "sequence support modules" (the bill does not define this term) based on the state's teaching standards;
3. requirements for (a) mentor eligibility, assignment, and training and (b) the frequency of meetings between mentors and new teachers;
4. ways to encourage collaboration among SDE, regional educational service centers, and local school districts to identify, recruit, and train mentors; and
5. recommendations for developing a data collection and

evaluation system to monitor the new program on a statewide and local level.

The bill also requires the task force to consider possible legislative changes to expand the categories of people who can become mentors and require:

1. a reduced classroom teaching load for mentors, as determined by local school districts;
2. new teachers to receive and complete the new program in their first two years of certification; and
3. full funding for school districts to implement the program.

Appointment and Members

The task force must include the chairpersons and ranking members of the Education and Program Review and Investigations committees or their designees; the education commissioner or his designee; and eight members appointed by the Education Committee co-chairpersons as follows:

<i>Appointing Authority</i>	<i>Member of</i>
Education Committee House chairperson	Connecticut Education Association
	Connecticut Association of Boards of Education
	Connecticut Association of Schools
	Connecticut Federation of School Administrators
Education Committee Senate chairperson	Connecticut chapter of the American Federation of Teachers
	Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents

	Connecticut Parent Teacher Association
	Vocational-Technical school teacher

Operations and Reporting Deadline

Task force appointments must be made within 30 days after the bill's passage. Vacancies must be filled by appointing authorities. The education commissioner or his designee serves as the task force chairperson and must call the first meeting within 60 days after passage. The Education Committee staff provides administrative support to the task force.

The task force must report by January 1, 2009 to the Education and Program Review committees. It terminates on that date or when it submits its report, whichever is later.

BACKGROUND

BEST Program

The BEST Program provides support for teachers during their first two years of teaching through (1) mentoring by more experienced teachers and (2) assessment of their teaching ability. The assessment includes classroom assessments and review of a portfolio the teacher submits at the end of his or her second year of teaching. A new teacher must complete the program satisfactorily in order to retain his or her teaching certificate.

Current law requires SDE, within available appropriations, to (1) administer the program; (2) provide training to mentor teachers and those who supervise, train, and assess new teachers; (3) pay stipends to teacher assessors; and (4) provide funds to local school districts for (a) substitute teachers to allow release of mentor teachers and assessors from regular classroom responsibilities and (b) professional development for mentors, assessors, and beginning teachers. SDE must operate the program according to regulations it adopts.

The law also requires school boards to provide support to their new

teachers, including assigning experienced mentor teachers to help them. Mentors can be full- or part-time teachers working in the same or a different school building. School districts must also provide trained assessors to evaluate new teachers' skills. Assessments must be based on, but not limited to, data from the observations of assessors using an assessment instrument. By law, assessors must have teaching experience in the same general subject area as the new teacher being assessed.

School districts must select the mentor teachers and any assessors they employ according to standards in SDE's regulations. Selection must be primarily based on mentor teachers' and assessors' classroom experience and recognized success as educators. Teacher assessors and mentors can serve in more than one such capacity and may be assigned more than one new teacher to assess or mentor. Mentor teachers' and assessors' selection, placement, compensation, hours, and duties are not subject to collective bargaining.

Finally, the law requires the State Board of Education to indemnify those serving as teacher mentors and assessors from damage claims arising from their activity in that capacity.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Education Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 30 Nay 0 (03/17/2008)