



# House of Representatives

**File No. 750**

General Assembly

February Session, 2008

**(Reprint of File No. 497)**

Substitute House Bill No. 5871  
As Amended by House Amendment Schedule  
"A"

Approved by the Legislative Commissioner  
April 28, 2008

## **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2 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July*  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) sequential modules based on state  
86 standards as set forth in the Common Core of Teaching, as developed  
87 by the Department of Education, (3) requirements concerning (A)  
88 mentor eligibility and assignments and training of mentors, and (B) the  
89 frequency with which mentor teachers should meet with beginning  
90 teachers, (4) methods to encourage collaboration from the Department  
91 of Education, Regional Educational Service Centers and local and  
92 regional school districts to identify, recruit and retain mentors, (5)  
93 recommendations concerning the transition between the beginning  
94 educator support and training program and the mentor assistance  
95 program, including, but not limited to, an evaluation process and  
96 procedures concerning initial educators who completed one or more  
97 professional knowledge clinical assessments, but have not received a  
98 satisfactory evaluation by June 30, 2009, (6) recommendations  
99 concerning possible exemptions from the mentor assistance program  
100 for educators who taught previously in another state, taught  
101 previously in a nonpublic school or have teaching assignments for  
102 which such program may not be relevant and any other situation for  
103 which the task force determines that an exemption may be  
104 appropriate, and (7) recommendations concerning the development of  
105 a data collection and evaluation system for monitoring the mentor  
106 assistance program on local and state-wide levels. The task force  
107 should consider whether legislative changes should be made,  
108 including, but not limited to, amending section 10-220a of the general  
109 statutes to (i) require a reduced classroom teaching work load for  
110 mentors, as determined by the school district, (ii) expand the categories  
111 of persons who can become mentors, (iii) require that beginning  
112 teachers receive and complete the mentor assistance program during  
113 their first two years of certification, and (iv) require that school  
114 districts receive full funding to implement the mentor assistance  
115 program.

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

117 (1) The chairpersons and ranking members of the joint standing  
118 committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters

119 relating to education, or their designees;

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

122 (3) Two appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives,  
123 one of whom is a member of the Connecticut Association of Schools  
124 and one of whom is a member of the Connecticut Federation of School  
125 Administrators;

126 (4) Two appointed by the president pro tempore of the Senate, one  
127 of whom is a teacher at a regional vocational-technical school and one  
128 of whom is a member of the Connecticut Association of Public School  
129 Superintendents;

130 (5) Two appointed by the majority leader of the House of  
131 Representatives, one of whom is a faculty member of the Connecticut  
132 State University system who teaches in a teacher preparation program  
133 and one of whom is a member of the Connecticut Education  
134 Association;

135 (6) Two appointed by the majority leader of the Senate, one of  
136 whom is a teacher in a public school who participates or participated  
137 as a mentor teacher in the beginning educator support and training  
138 program and one of whom is a member of the Connecticut chapter of  
139 the American Federation of Teachers;

140 (7) Two appointed by the minority leader of the House of  
141 Representatives, one of whom is a member of the Connecticut  
142 Association of Boards of Education and one of whom is a  
143 representative of the Connecticut Conference of Independent Colleges;

144 (8) Two appointed by the minority leader of the Senate, one of  
145 whom is a member of the Connecticut Parent Teacher Association and  
146 one of whom is a teacher in a public school who holds an initial  
147 educator certificate; and

148 (9) The Commissioner of Education, or the commissioner's designee.

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

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

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

159 (f) Not later than January 1, 2009, the task force shall report, in  
160 accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes,  
161 its findings and recommendations to the joint standing committee of  
162 the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to  
163 education and to the Legislative Program Review and Investigations  
164 Committee. The task force shall terminate on the date that it submits  
165 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

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:**

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

Note: GF=General Fund

#### **Municipal Impact:**

<b>Municipalities</b>	<b>Effect</b>	<b>FY 09 \$</b>	<b>FY 10 \$</b>
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 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.

House "A" changes the components of the plan that the task force developed to study the replacement of the beginning educator support and training (BEST) program. Additionally, the amendment changes the membership of the task force. The amendment is not anticipated to result in a fiscal impact.

### ***The Out Years***

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to inflation.

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**OLR Bill Analysis****sHB 5871 (as amended by House "A")\******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 21-member task force to develop a new mentor assistance program to replace the BEST program starting in the 2009-2010 school year and recommend transition procedures between the old and new programs.

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.

\*House Amendment "A" (1) adds requirements that the task force recommend transition procedures from the old to the new program and appropriate exemptions for teachers in special situations; (2) adds four members to the task force and changes its appointing authorities from the Education Committee co-chairpersons to the legislative leaders; and (3) makes a minor language change.

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 21-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. sequential modules 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;
5. recommended transition procedures from the BEST Program to the new mentor program, including ways to evaluate beginning teachers who complete one or more of the BEST clinical assessments but have not received satisfactory evaluations as of June 30, 2009;
6. possible exemptions from the new program's requirements for teachers (a) with teaching experience in another state or a private school, (b) who teach in areas where the new program is not relevant, or (c) in other special situations for which the task force considers an exemption appropriate; and
7. 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 consists of the Education and Program Review and

Investigations committees' co-chairpersons and ranking members or their designees, the education commissioner or his designee, and 12 members representing various entities or with certain qualifications and appointed by legislative leaders as follows:

<i>Appointing Authority</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Member of/Qualifications</i>
House speaker	1	Connecticut Association of Schools
	1	Connecticut Federation of School Administrators
Senate president pro tempore	1	Regional vocational-technical school teacher
	1	Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents
House majority leader	1	Connecticut State University faculty member who teaches in a teacher preparation program
	1	Connecticut Education Association
Senate majority leader	1	Public school teacher who is or was a BEST mentor
	1	American Federation of Teachers, Connecticut chapter
House minority leader	1	Connecticut Association of Boards of Education
	1	Connecticut Conference of Independent Colleges
Senate minority leader	1	Connecticut Parent Teacher Association
	1	Public school teacher with an initial educator certificate (i.e., a beginning 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 earlier.

## **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)