

# *Athletics and Athletics Center*

New Haven Public Schools  
Gateway Center  
54 Meadow Street  
New Haven, CT 06519

Joseph P. Canzanella, CAA  
Supervisor

Jake Jarvis  
Assistant to the Supervisor  
Middle School Athletics

Michael D. Vollero  
Physical Education Teacher,  
Mentor, & Instructional  
Coach

William Wynn  
Business Operations

(203) 946-8497 Office  
(203) 946-6535 Fax

[pe@new-haven.k12.ct.us](mailto:pe@new-haven.k12.ct.us)

## *New Haven Public Schools Physical Education Department*

**To:** Education Committee

**From:** Michael D. Vollero, Physical Education Teacher/Mentor/Instructional Coach

**Date:** March 23, 2009

**RE:** Proposed changes to Mentoring Beginning Teachers, HB 6686

As a Physical Education Teacher, Lead Mentor, Instructional Coach and a portfolio scorer for the State of Connecticut, I endorse the majority of **House Bill 6686**, An Act Concerning the Teacher Education and Mentoring Program. However, I have concerns about assigning one mentor to two beginning teachers and possibly three to successfully complete five learning modules for teacher certification. The bill requires the mentor and beginning teacher to meet for ten hours for each of the five learning modules, twenty hours for the first year and 30 hours the second year, per beginning teacher. Currently the Beginning Educator Support and Training (BEST) program requires an equivalent of thirty hours of significant contacts during the course of the school year. In my experience as a physical education mentor for sixteen years, I found it difficult at best to meet the current thirty hourly requirements for one beginning teacher, and cannot imagine mentoring two beginning teachers, much less three.

Rarely are beginning physical education teachers assigned with their mentor in the same school. We have many small K-8 schools, so, typically, our mentors and beginning teachers work in separate schools, leaving few opportunities to collaborate. Additionally, many of our mentors and beginning teachers coach interscholastic athletic teams' after school, increasing the difficulty that mentors and beginning teachers face in meeting with each other. To ensure the success of Bill 6686, please limit the assignment to only one beginning teacher per mentor. If it is possible to do two, then provide for it – but do not require two or even three.

Secondly, in the next two years the majority of mentors in New Haven will become eligible for retirement. Recruiting new mentors will require equitable compensation for their time and effort. It will be demanding in enlisting new mentors to work forty hours with two beginning teachers for \$500 a year and then the second year the same mentor will work sixty hours with two beginning teachers for the same salary. Only a small number of teachers will accept the role of a mentor with the proposed compensation salary, and it will be challenging as it is to identify and train so many mentors. It is imperative to make certain that beginning teachers are assigned the best mentors possible. I suggest an hourly rate that is equitable with current hourly scale rates for teachers working after school programs.

Teacher quality is critical to the success of students. The New Haven School District is committed to teacher excellence. I applaud the Education Committee and the State Department of Education in continuing teacher development.