

March 13, 2018

To the Education Committee,

My name is Sharon Bartlett, and I'm the TEAM District Facilitator in Windham. I'd like to share with you my thoughts, concerns, and questions about SB183, specifically Section 9.

As a mentor for many years in both the BEST and TEAM programs that Connecticut provides for our beginning teachers as well as the district TEAM Facilitator in Windham for the past several years, I have first hand knowledge of the workings and benefits of TEAM. The overall program has been extremely successful in Windham because of the design of the program which stresses the reflective process every teacher should be using to provide quality instruction for our students. **We have approximately 45-65 beginning teachers in TEAM each year and over the past 4 years we have a retention rate of 75% of all of our beginning teachers who have completed TEAM.** In my mind, this is an extraordinary statistic for a Priority School district and one that speaks to the success of the TEAM mentoring and reflective process.

I have extreme concerns about the changes that SB183 Section 9 would make to the TEAM program. As you all know, the districts have been required to pick up the tab for the mentor stipends this year and in subsequent years. This would remain unchanged given the proposed legislation and accounts for over \$24,000 for Windham this year. It is my understanding that it is approximately 2/3 of the TEAM budget that was cut. We will need to provide for mentor stipends but there will be no way of monitoring the time they spend with their beginning teacher.

The smaller portion of monies needed to maintain TEAM involves the cost of maintaining the electronic data base and training for mentors/reviewers. **These components are essential to the integrity of the TEAM program as it was developed.** The reflection process, including the reflection paper, is the cornerstone of the program. Beginning teachers learn a tremendous amount as they identify a specific area of need for them personally using the CCT, learn about teaching techniques that will improve their instruction, implement these techniques, and reflect on the impact on their teaching and their students' learning. **ALL mentors who sit on our District TEAM Coordinating Committee feel that this process and the reflection paper are the core of their discussion/assistance with their beginning teacher.**

If there is no reflection paper, there will be no standard for successful completion of TEAM, rendering the system worthless in my opinion. Districts can reduce this process to a mere "discussion" of what was done with little specificity and quality!!! There will be no consistency or framework for the TEAM process to stand on.

In addition, the elimination of the electronic data base will cause incredible wasted time and consistency within and across districts in terms of where a beginning teacher is in the process and how much time/effort a mentor has put in in order to earn his/her stipend. As District Facilitator, I will have no idea who needs TEAM for certification and how to monitor their progress. Our numbers of beginning teachers are staggering....this would be an impossible task. Our Technology Director stated that the data system is something that he would need years to replicate! We do not have that luxury!! The State Department would also have no way of tracking each beginning teacher. Who will take responsibility for the decision for allowing a beginning teacher to receive a Provisional Certificate if our superintendents do not have to verify completion of TEAM?

I believe that, if Connecticut sets a standard for proficiency for our beginning teachers as they move through the certification process, we need to have a consistent system to evaluate their performance as well as chart their progress. The chaos that this bill will provide is not the way to assure that our students have the best instruction that they need to improve their academic and behavioral competency!

**Please DO NOT pass SB183 Section 9.** Instead, require reflection papers and provide the funds for the electronic data system and ideally the mentor/reviewer training and mentor stipends.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sharon Bartlett  
TEAM District Facilitator  
Windham Schools