

Testimony of  
Katherine Field  
**Connecticut Education Association**  
Before the Education Committee

RE:

**SB 183 AA Implementing the Recommendations of the Department of Education,  
Sec. 9 (TEAM)**

*February 26, 2018*

Good afternoon Senator Slossberg, Senator Boucher, Representative Fleischmann, Representative Lavielle, and members of the Education Committee; my name is Kate Field and I am the Teacher Development Specialist at the Connecticut Education Association (CEA). CEA represents active and retired teachers across the state, including thousands of beginning teachers who have benefitted from TEAM. I am testifying here today on Sec. 9 of SB 183, which would make significant changes to TEAM, Connecticut's beginning teacher induction and support program.

**CEA opposes Section 9.**

As a former teacher, TEAM mentor, school administrator, TEAM district facilitator, and TEAM reflection paper reviewer, I have rather a unique perspective on TEAM. In my current role at CEA, I attend TEAM field staff meetings, engage in calibration activities to ensure accuracy of scoring, and act as a liaison between teachers, administrators, field staff and SDE personnel when problems related to TEAM arise. I have been actively involved in TEAM in different capacities since its inception, and, together with our members across the state, consider it an essential investment in the development and retention of teaching talent in Connecticut.

TEAM is an extraordinarily successful program that has won national recognition and benefited thousands of teachers and students across our state. The last time the program went through an external evaluation in 2013, it received glowing reviews from beginning teachers, mentors, and administrators alike. Over 75% of novice teachers attribute their decision to remain in the teacher profession directly to the support they received through TEAM. Over 90% of administrators stated TEAM contributed to improved student outcomes. What other program would receive such high praise from all stakeholder groups? TEAM promotes data-based decision making, reflection, collaboration, and genuine growth. CEA is deeply concerned that this bill unnecessarily jeopardizes one of the state's most successful programs instead of funding it adequately.

SB183 would transform TEAM into a locally administered and funded program. There are many problems with this change, the most distressing of which is the disproportionate impact it will have on large urban districts with the highest percentages of beginning teachers.

These districts will face a substantial increase in expenses, and will likely be forced to cut back on the amount of support provided to novice teachers. Every student in every district, regardless of socioeconomic status, deserves a great teacher—and great teaching is not easy, it is craft that must be honed and nurtured, particularly in the first two critical years. Without the supports from a fully funded TEAM program, many teachers, particularly those in the most challenging environments, will likely leave their district or the profession entirely. This proposal will only exacerbate existing inequities in our state, and our children will ultimately pay the price for our lack of foresight.

Please do not dismantle a successful program before attempting to save it. TEAM is not an expensive program, but the benefits to students, teachers, and administrators are substantial.