

Dear Education Committee members:

I am greatly distressed to learn of SB183 which will have such a negative impact on our teaching profession in Connecticut. I have worked in Connecticut for 25 years in the public schools. I have mentored teachers since the launching of TEAM and worked with teachers prior in our earlier evaluation system known as BEST.

TEAM was a much improved evaluation over the former program. The BEST program had little impact on the growth and development of the new teachers beyond planning a teaching unit. That was the largest part of what was submitted- a planned unit of study. The material was mailed away for evaluation. It did not address classroom management. It did not encourage teachers to seek new learning and support. It required a videotaped twenty minute snippet of the teacher teaching. The videoed lesson took place mostly in a contrived setting. (I know this since I was a camera operator for many classrooms). It did little to share with the state the quality or lack of quality of the new teacher. Disruptive or challenging students were usually placed in another room while videoing took place. Students in the taping were often rehearsed and coached ahead with appropriate responses and behaviors. Thank goodness for the well researched and well developed TEAM program that replaced BEST.

What did we gain with the new program? Our TEAM program allows relationships to form among colleagues which is crucial in a well run school. Mentors not only coach the teacher as they prepare their module paper but help them day to day to improve and grow. The mentoring doesn't usually stop after the two years. The relationship that was forged continues. Universities and student teaching experiences are not enough to produce a teacher who is fully ready for teaching. Schools with supportive colleagues also see greater growth in student achievement. Isn't this true in most any industry? Productivity rises with a good working environment. Aren't our school children the most important investment for Connecticut's future? A decline in the quality of our schools will give people more reasons to leave our state.

SB183 will put more financial strains on districts. SB183 will remove the support of the TEAM web site from East Conn that is crucial for managing and supporting the new teachers across CT. The training that mentors receive to assist mentees has been outstanding and many will admit that they also grow and develop from the TEAM modules as well. The program allows for much reflection on teacher practice. Therefore, TEAM impacts not just the new teachers and students but veteran teachers as well.

Connecticut has always attracted talented new teachers. If we can not support them with our TEAM program, we will lose many of these candidates to other states. At a time when there is a decline in enrollment of education majors at the colleges, do we want to decrease our pool of quality new teachers? Can we risk this?

Finally, with news across this country of school shootings and debates on arming teachers, do we also need to add SB183 to the plates of those who serve our young

people in Connecticut? Our students do not deserve stressed and troubled teachers in Connecticut. Please rethink this bill.

Sincerely,

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