

Testimony of

Liz Misiewicz, Ridgefield Public School Teacher

Before the Education Committee

**SB 183**

**An Act Implementing the Recommendations of the Department of Education**

Good afternoon Senators Slossberg and Boucher, Representatives Fleischmann and Lavielle, and members of the Education Committee. My name is Liz Misiewicz, and I am a 7th grade English teacher in Ridgefield and Shelton resident. I come from a family of teachers. My purpose in writing this is to testify on Section 9 of SB 183: An Act Implementing the Recommendations of the Department of Education, share my enriching experience with TEAM, Connecticut's Teacher Education and Mentoring Program, and respectfully ask you to support the restoration of funding to this nationally-recognized teacher induction program.

Not only am I a TEAM participant, I am also a mentor and reflection paper reviewer. My experience as a mentee was so powerful that I am devoted to advancing the work of TEAM because of how it greatly the program and its data system greatly benefits new teachers and provides crucial support. I have led sessions at conferences organized by the CEA, and also at the Connecticut Teacher of the Year Council's Empowered to Lead Symposiums. As someone who sat on Governor Malloy's Educator Common Core Implementation Task Force, I have seen firsthand the importance of having a strong induction program available to support and guide new teachers through the implementation of the Common Core State Standards.

I remember the summer before I started my first year of teaching—the excitement and nervousness—a mix of emotions as I'm sure you all have felt at the start of a new career. But what settled my mind so I could spend my summer focused on planning curriculum to positively impact student learning instead of my nerves was TEAM—knowing I was going into this profession with support from a mentor. I felt a sense of safety and security knowing I could

seek advice on the modules in addition to other questions - so I could focus on teaching and not be overwhelmed by stress. I constantly hear from new teachers how important it is for them to have this relationship with a veteran teacher.

I especially liked the ability to choose goals personal and specific to my teaching practice. I then sought out books and more to find ways to achieve those goals. TEAM keeps us abreast of the latest news and research in education that we then immediately apply to our classroom. For one module, I introduced student-led book discussions connected to evening online discussions to grow critical thinking skills. TEAM provided me with the ability to create this learning environment and now other teachers are observing my class to see how to implement it.

This entire process is guided by a strategic data system known as [ctteam.org](http://ctteam.org) that tracked my goals and seamlessly sent communication to my administrators as I completed modules. New teachers visit this site multiple times a week to utilize its many resources. We rely on this system to track our mentor hours, keep records of our papers and our certification. It is more than a database system, it is a record and portfolio of our hard work and dedication to improve student learning and advance our certification. How will this be done if the site goes away? Teachers will be left extremely stressed, unsure of where their certification stands. The effects are resounding.

How do we expect our state to remain at the forefront of education with this cut in funding for teacher retention? New teachers deserve the support TEAM and its data system provides. I respectfully ask that this Committee recommend the restoration of funding for the TEAM program. Thank you.