

Remarks of
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To the Education Committee

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My name is Lisa Rampulla Bress and I'm a retired Teacher Leader from Windsor CT. I'd like to share my thoughts, concerns, and questions about SB183, specifically Section 9, which pertains to the TEAM program.

As a trained Team Mentor and Head Teacher in Windsor CT with 30 plus years of experience, I spent a great deal of time supporting and assisting teachers who were new to the profession. The significance of mentoring programs can't be underestimated since evidence shows many new teachers leave the profession within the first five years due to lack of support. It has been my experience that those who complete the nationally recognized TEAM Program feel better prepared and supported during those critical years. The program also enhanced my professional growth as a teacher/mentor and was an important step on the path to teacher leadership.

That's why I'm deeply concerned about the proposed changes in section 9 of SB183, specifically, the elimination of the reflection paper as the culminating activity in each module (lines 695, 704-710), the elimination of the use of the electronic database monitoring system currently housed at EASTCONN (lines 583, 589-592) and the elimination of superintendent's attestation (lines 711-718).

Having a statewide standard for completion of each level of team and an electronic database ***outside of the districts*** is absolutely necessary in order to ensure program consistency and accountability across Connecticut. When teachers move from one school district to another it is essential for administrators, colleagues and parents to know, that every teacher has met the same standards of excellence set forth in TEAM. Eliminating the requirement of a reflection paper at the end of each module removes a practice that is educationally sound and provides the consistent measure of eligibility needed to advance in the program.

Budget cuts to TEAM have already placed a financial burden on districts. Asking them to create or pay for a data system is costly and unfair. It could also lead to an inequitable situation if school districts lack the needed funds to adequately create and monitor the program, or produce credentials that are inconsistent across the state.

Lastly, the proposed elimination of superintendent's attestation for TEAM completion (lines 711-718) takes away an authority granted to district leaders over 10 years ago. Common sense dictates we should leave the authority to certify successful completion of TEAM with those who know the candidates best.

The bottom line is TEAM works! It has created consistently high standards for teacher development and growth, which results in better outcomes for students. I urge you to reject the proposed changes to the TEAM program noted above, and preserve the successful components that have guaranteed all CT teachers have the high quality peer support they deserve. Thank you.