

To the Connecticut General Assembly Education Committee:

I am writing to share my story and to request that you reinstate TEAM funding. If funding is not available, I urge you to reinstate the requirement that all beginning teachers reflect on and document their TEAM module process in a reflection paper. In addition to the learning that results from this process, it would also ensure that all beginning teachers have the same standard for success and the issuance of a provisional certificate.

I completed TEAM in 2010, and the program was not only valuable for me as a learner, but also for my students' learning. While the comprehensive module process and supportive mentorship were both foundational to my experience, it really would not have had the same impact without the reflection paper. As a literacy consultant, I often find myself saying to teachers across the disciplines that writing is thinking. This reflective writing not only provides a summative expression of teacher learning, but also serves as a catalyst for their learning. By reflecting on the process, identifying key evidence, and articulating transferrable takeaways about effective instruction, TEAM participants further refine their thinking about the connection between their practice and student outcomes. I can attest from my own experience that the TEAM program fostered such a connection for me. As a result, I became a more deliberate educator, developing a student-centered, outcomes-based mindset that I now model as an instructional leader.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Tiffany Smith