

Remarks of Katelyn Tavalacci
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To the Education Committee

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My name is Katelyn Tavalacci, and I'm an elementary school teacher in Stamford. I'd like to share with you my thoughts, concerns, and questions about SB183, specifically Section 9, which pertains to the TEAM program. While I am trained as both a TEAM new teacher mentor and a TEAM paper reviewer, I did not go through the TEAM program as a new teacher, though I wish I had. Instead, I went through the BEST portfolio program, a tedious hurdle that didn't help me further my professional learning or growth, but rather served as an extra stressor during an already-difficult time in my career. I wish that I had the opportunity to grow through reflection, trial and error, and professional discourse as the TEAM program affords. Going through the TEAM modules and paper writing encourages new teachers to develop habits that are crucial to improving their practices and, in turn, helping our children to succeed. Teachers are supposed to reflect on their teaching. Teachers are supposed to make adjustments to their practice based on their students' needs. Teachers are supposed to judge whether their adjustments fail or succeed. These are the crucial habits and skills that we expect from good teachers, though these skills are not often taught through teacher prep programs. These skills need to be honed on the job, and the TEAM program is incredibly effective in helping new teachers form these habits while also receiving the support of mentor teachers who help to mold new talent each year.

I would like to urge the committee to please strongly consider funding the TEAM program for new teachers. If we need our students to receive the best education possible, we need to make sure that our teachers are able to provide them with the best possible schooling experiences. New teachers need the support and guidance the TEAM program and mentors provide in order to facilitate those experiences.

Thank you for your time.