

Beginning Educator Support Program

1. **Purpose:** Based on research that demonstrates that “the single greatest leverage point for assuring that all students achieve at high levels is the quality of the teacher in the classroom” (Berry, 2004), the purpose of the Beginning Educator Support Team (BEST) program is to:
 - Close learning gaps experienced by novice teachers when they enter a new system, so they can close their students’ learning gaps;
 - Attract, train, and retain skillful novice teachers in Washington’s public schools; and
 - Build systems of support within school districts to sustain induction work.
2. **Description of services provided:** A high quality induction and mentoring program moves new teachers beyond mere survival to increasingly positive impacts on student learning (Villar, 2005 and 2007). BEST supports and promotes strategies for improving districts’ efforts to attract, train, and retain highly-skilled novice teachers who can positively impact their students’ learning.

One hundred thirty-one districts were funded to serve 2114 Year 1 teachers and 1675 Year 2 teachers in-2016-2017. In addition, 26 districts participated in a ~~pilot~~ program to provide mentor support for 215 Year 1 ESAs. These districts and regional consortia were tasked with implementing the following research-based program components:

- Assignment of a carefully selected, well-trained mentor;
- Instructional orientation prior to the start of teaching;
- Professional development designed specifically for beginning teachers;
- Opportunities to be observed and receive non-evaluative feedback on instruction;
- Support with the teacher evaluation system and use of the district’s instructional framework;
- Special attention to the needs of novice teachers in under-performing schools; and
- Formation of a stakeholders’ team.

FY17 - \$9 million

Of the \$9 million allocated for FY 17, \$600,000 was set aside to support development of induction throughout the state with the following services:

- **OSPI Mentor Academies** provided high quality professional development for instructional mentors, coaches, and administrators focused on the specific knowledge and skills necessary to accelerate new teachers’ instructional effectiveness in their classrooms. Approximately 1,025 mentors, coaches, and administrators were trained from districts all across the state. To extend the impact of resources, BEST partnered with several districts in order to provide additional Mentor Academies.
- Ten **Regional Mentor Roundtables**, including one on-line, continued the development of mentors and instructional coaches who support the growth of new teachers.
- **Induction Coaching** for BEST grantees provided technical assistance and personalized support as districts developed and refined their comprehensive induction programs.

- **Regional Induction Coordinator Roundtables** open to all to build understanding of comprehensive induction, provided opportunities to collaborate, deepen induction practices, and identify goals for their work.
- **Spring Mentor-Coach Conference** as part of the Spring Symposium, “Equity in Action: Identity Safe Classrooms and Schools,” was attended by approximately 270 mentors, instructional coaches, and grantee teams focused on addressing issues of equity and access for students.
- **Grantee Convening** in March as part of the Spring Symposium included examining data, sharing strategies, engaging in problem-solving to overcome challenges, and beginning to write an induction plan for 2017-2018.
- A **tool to guide mentors** in self-assessment and reflection, *Washington State Standards for Mentoring*, was created and published. These standards are designed to help both new and veteran mentors in various job settings to assess their current level of understanding and abilities, and to create actionable steps to improve.
- The University of Washington’s Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy conducted a study comparing first-year teacher retention in Washington districts that were fully engaged in the BEST program with those that were not. Their data showed that the likelihood of a first-year teacher leaving the profession is four percentage-points lower (6%) in districts that are fully implementing BEST than in school districts who do not fully implement it or don’t have access to BEST funds (10%).

3. **Criteria for receiving services and/or grants:** The competitive BEST Grants were awarded to districts and consortia who demonstrated a need, particularly in under-performing schools; a commitment to comprehensive induction; and leadership to accomplish the work.

To qualify for consideration for competitive BEST grant funding, districts committed to providing the following:

- **A well-trained, carefully selected mentor** who will provide an average of 1-2 hours per week for Year 1 teachers for planning and reflection conferences, observations, and feedback;
- **An instructional orientation** with compensation for time prior to the start of school to acquaint new educators with district and school expectations and help them plan for their first days and weeks with students;
- **Professional learning for beginning educators** aligned to the WA State 8 Teacher Evaluation Criteria (or other professional standards when relevant) and the district’s adopted instructional framework and designed to meet their unique learning needs. Special attention should be given to fostering and managing a safe, positive learning environment (C5); centering instruction on high expectations for student achievement (C1); demonstrating effective teaching practices (C2); using multiple student data elements to modify instruction and improve student learning (C6); and fostering culturally relevant teaching practices;
- **Formative observations with feedback** for mentees provided by mentors at least quarterly;
- **Release time for new teachers to observe** accomplished teaching while accompanied by their mentor or other instructional leader;

- **Professional development for mentors**, including completion of the 3-day OSPI Mentor Academy 101 and continued professional learning to build mentor skills through local, regional, or online Mentor Roundtables;
- **Job description and compensation for mentors** of early career educators for required activities which fall outside the mentor's regular job responsibilities;
- **Special attention to the needs of early-career educators in challenging schools** and/or working with students facing the most challenges;
- **Stakeholders' Group** to meet at least 3 times/year with representation from multiple groups across the district;
- **BEST Grantee Convening** attendance;
- **ESD Consortium Leads** will work to build the capacity of individual districts to create comprehensive induction programs.

4. Beneficiaries in 2016-2017 School Year:

Beginning Educator Support Team (BEST) Program	2016-17
Districts receiving funding through competitive grants:	131
# Year 1 Teachers (first year teachers only)	2114
# Year 2 Teachers	1675
# ESAs (OT, PT, Psychologist, Nurse, Counselor) in Pilot Program	215
# Districts eligible to access mentor professional development and induction support from BEST staff	295
Mentors, coaches, administrators trained at Mentor Academies, Tune-ups, and Spring Equity Symposium	1525

- 5. FY 17 Funding: State Appropriation:** \$9 million
of OSPI staff associated with this funding: 2.35 FTE [1.6 program specialist, .05 director, 0.6 admin assistant, 0.1 contracts specialist]
of contractors/other staff associated with this funding: 17 contractors
- 6. Are federal or other funds contingent on state funding?** No.
- 7. Funding history and educators served:** Funding for this purpose was first provided by the legislature in 1987 through the former Teacher Assistance Program (TAP). TAP funding was appropriated and then divided among all first year teachers across the state. The Beginning Educator Support Team (BEST) program was implemented by the legislature in FY 2009-11. BEST grants are awarded to districts on a competitive basis, with the intent of assuring that novice educators receive a comprehensive induction program. While the number of participants has increased significantly, BEST does not provide for all districts and new teachers in the state, nor is support extended to three years. Ideally, with sufficient funding, all new teachers and principals would enjoy an effective induction program.

Beginning Educator Support Team (BEST) Program (FY 2010 - Present):

Fiscal Year	No. of 1st Year Teachers Participating	Amt. per 1st Year Teacher Participating	No. of 2nd Year Teachers Participating	Amt. per 2nd Year Teacher Participating	No. of 3rd Year Teachers Participating	Amt. per 3rd Year Teacher Participating
FY 17	2114	\$3500/\$2500 /\$2000	1675	\$1000	n/a	n/a
FY 16	1655	\$2500	819	\$1000	n/a	n/a
FY 15	980	\$2500/1500	367	\$500	n/a	n/a
FY 14	232	\$2,500	0	\$2,000	0	\$500
FY 13	204	\$2,500	103	\$2,000	n/a	n/a
FY 12	133	\$2,500	132	\$2,000	n/a	n/a
FY 11	286	\$3,500	192	\$2,100	Not funded due to cutbacks	n/a
FY 10	197	\$5,000	316	\$3,000	384	\$500

Fiscal Year	Amount	# of Beginners Participating in TAP	Amount per Beginner
FY 09	\$2.348 million	2,314	\$880
FY 08	\$2.348 million	2,674	\$790
FY 07	\$2.348 million	2,675	\$810
FY 06	\$2.348 million	2,536	\$800
FY 05	\$2.348 million	2,330	\$880
FY 04	\$2.348 million	1,973	\$1,000
FY 03	\$2.348 million	2,165	\$875
FY 02	\$4.695 million	2,830 ¹	\$1,500
FY 01	\$3.150 million	2,545	\$1,270
FY 00 ²	\$3.150 million	2,307	\$1,365
FY 99 ²	\$1.305 million	1,842	\$708
FY 98 ²	\$1.305 million	1,667	\$782
FY 97 ²	\$1.305 million	1,527	\$854
FY 96 ²	\$1.305 million	1,146	\$1,138
FY 95 ¹	\$1.450 million	977	varied
FY 94 ¹	\$1.450 million	915	\$1,780
FY 93	\$1.040 million	498	\$1,780
FY 92	\$1.156 million	563	\$1,780
FY 91	\$1.775 million	unknown	\$1,780
FY 90	\$1.775 million	987	\$1,780
FY 89	\$1.450 million	688	\$1,700
FY 88	\$1.450 million	859	\$2,100
FY 87	\$1.417 million	689	\$1,700

¹ Includes \$200,000 for a pilot project providing services to experienced teachers having difficulties.

² Includes \$180,000 for a pilot project providing services to experienced teachers having difficulties.

⁽¹⁾ Includes \$200,000 for a pilot project providing services to experienced teachers having difficulties.

^[2] Includes \$180,000 for a pilot project providing services to experienced teachers having difficulties.

³ FY 10 and 11 are the first years of BEST program funding; FY 87 through FY 09 reflect TAP funding.

- 8. Programmatic changes since inception:** New teacher induction in Washington school districts is an issue of equity of access for students. OSPI's recently-released "Washington State's Ensuring Equitable Access to Excellent Educator Initiative State Plan" provides significant data showing that many of our under-privileged and underserved students are inequitably taught by less-experienced teachers. Funding comprehensive induction is part of the way to close the equity gap for our students.

With a steady increase in the number of new teachers since 1987, and a TAP appropriation that remained constant, the amount allocated per new teacher declined. The allocation for 2008-09 was \$880 per new teacher, insufficient for districts to carry out the directives of the TAP legislation, let alone offer quality induction programs that include research-identified components for effectiveness. Magnified by the 20-year impact of the increased cost of living, the result was that some districts, unable to afford to meet the RCW criteria, did not even apply for funding. Many more districts were forced to supplement the state allocation from other unstable federal, state, and local funding sources (e.g. Title I, Title II, I-728, local levy funds, etc.) in order to provide effective programs. Still other well-intentioned districts were forced to cobble programs together which fell short of the level of support that research indicates can make a difference in improving both teacher retention and student achievement (Strong, 2005; Villars and Strong, 2005 and 2007).

Recognizing these issues, the legislature provided funding for beginning educator support to develop and implement BEST in FY 2010. With the same level of previous TAP funding, OSPI's Beginning Educator Support Team (BEST) program was funded to provide comprehensive induction and mentoring programs in "five to fifteen districts and/or regional consortia" (ESSB 6444) through a competitive grant process. Support for first-, second-, and third-year teachers and assistance to candidates for Professional Certification was initially funded in grantee districts. During the 2010 legislative session, BEST funding was reduced from \$2.348 million to \$2 million which necessitated the elimination of district support for third-year teachers and assistance to ProTeach candidates. In October, 2010, across-the-board state cuts further reduced BEST funding to \$1.88 million which impacted the ability of grantee districts to fully address all required program components. With the piloting and implementation of the statewide Teacher/Principal Evaluation system in 2012, BEST funding continued to focus on first- and second-year teachers and began focusing on provisional status teachers with a new teaching assignment. FY 2013 and 2014 funding continued at the reduced level of \$1 million.

In 2013-14, BEST provided two-year pilot grants to seven districts across Washington. Those districts served 220 first year teachers and enhanced the expertise of their mentors. The Legislature added \$2 million in additional funds for the 2014-15 school year, making possible support for 32 more districts and a total of 1347 early-career teachers. This represented less than 60% of the approximately 2300 first-year teachers hired in Washington State annually.

The Legislature funded BEST at \$5.5 million for 2015-2016, which allowed expansion to additional districts as well as expanded funding of Year 2 teachers and a pilot project to provide mentor support for Year 1 ESAs in selected districts. In 2016-2017, Legislature added an additional \$3.5

million, making the support of an additional 59 districts and 3,789 first and second-year teachers possible.

Despite the expansion to \$10.5 million for FY 18, which is further increasing the number of districts and teachers receiving services, additional funding is still needed in order to provide equitable access for students to highly-skilled teachers through comprehensive induction in all districts and to provide support through the first three years of a teacher's career.

Appropriation by Fiscal Year

Fiscal Year	Amount
FY17	\$9 million
FY16	\$5.5 million
FY 15	\$3 million
FY 14	\$1 million
FY 13	\$1 million
FY 12	\$1 million
FY 11 ³	\$2 million, reduced to \$1.88 million
FY 10 ³	\$2.348 million

9. Evaluations of program/major findings:

- Retention can be improved with grow-your-own programs.
- Teacher-leadership (e.g., mentoring) opportunities can help with retention of experienced teachers.
- Coordinated, connected regional support through Educational Service Districts can grow the work with individual consortium members as well as among the members to maximize resources and impact. Districts have asked to be added to some of the BEST ESD consortia.
- Connections among initiatives—Teacher and Principal Evaluation Program (TPEP), Transforming Professional Learning (TPL), Office of School and Student Success (OSSS)—increases the impact of all of them and improves systemic thinking.
- New grantees show shifts in the depth of their understanding of instructional mentoring that improves teacher effectiveness and comprehensive induction during their first few years in BEST.
- Recruiting mentors, especially in a time of teacher shortages, presents a challenge.

Districts have established research-based supports for novice teachers:

- Fostering a collective sense of responsibility for systemic support for novice teachers;
- Identifying openings and hiring early for hard-to-fill position to avoid leaving key positions unfilled at the start of school;
- Paid instructional orientation for new teachers;
- Providing carefully selected, trained mentors who serve for multiple years in order to increase their mentoring effectiveness;
- Providing monthly new-teacher cadres focused on classroom management, the district's instructional framework and evaluation process, instructional design, and assessment;

- Differentiated support and intensified support for teachers in high-need schools or in challenging assignments;
- Professional learning for second-year teachers through teacher cadres, self-selected topical sessions, and mentoring;
- Specific new teacher training focused on issues of equity and access for students;
- Studying the impact of their work in order to engage in continuous improvement.

Professional Learning through the Mentor Academy increases overall instructional capacity and teacher leadership in buildings and districts by

- Developing mentors' capacity to support reflective practice about instruction;
- Emphasizing equity in classroom management;
- Connecting observations and feedback from mentors to districts' instructional framework;
- Developing mentors' skill in articulating effective instructional practices to new teachers.

BEST has increased regional and statewide capacity to provide effective comprehensive induction for new teachers by addressing needs of systems leaders (superintendents, principals, and program facilitators), mentors and coaches, novice teachers, and ultimately their students by

- Developing highly-skilled Mentor Faculty who use their skills beyond BEST work to provide effective professional learning and to promote comprehensive induction;
- Growing local and regional Mentor Roundtable Facilitators who provide on-going mentor training and also help to promote understanding of a collective responsibility for supporting new teachers;
- Providing Induction Coaches well-versed in the state's *Standards for Beginning Teacher Induction* and systems coaching to help districts adopt policies, programs, and practices that provide effective instructional support to new teachers;
- Providing Induction Coordinator Roundtables to foster deeper learning about effective practices and 1-on-1 support from the BEST program staff.

BEST support has breadth and depth: Mentor academies, mentor tune-ups, regional mentor roundtables, monthly Tips for Mentors, mentor/coach equity conference, induction coaches so that mentors and beginning teachers, as well as their district leadership, have almost monthly access to high-quality, focused professional development and support.

10. Statutory and Budget Language:

Budget Proviso: 2ESHB 2376, Section 511 (12): \$5,500,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for 17 fiscal year 2016 and \$9,000,000 of the general fund— state appropriation for fiscal year 2017 are provided solely for a beginning educator support program. The program shall prioritize first year teachers in the mentoring program. School districts and/or regional consortia may apply for grant funding. The program provided by a district and/or regional consortia shall include: A paid orientation; assignment of a qualified mentor; development of a professional growth plan for each beginning teacher aligned with professional certification; release time for mentors and new teachers to work together; and teacher observation time with accomplished peers. Funding may be used to provide statewide professional development opportunities for mentors and beginning educators.

11. List of districts receiving assistance:

FY 2017:

Available to all 295 school districts in Washington

- Mentor Academies and other mentor professional development available for mentors, instructional coaches, teacher leaders and administrators;
- Induction Coordinator Roundtables provided regionally;
- Assistance from the BEST Program staff in designing and improving their district's induction work.

Districts/ESDs participating:

Currently, there are 145 school districts and seven ESDs participating in BEST for the 2017-18 school year; however, those numbers will increase as districts and consortia's are currently applying to receive funding. This application process closes August 31 and districts will be awarded by September 27, 2017.

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