

**A GUIDE TO
THE BEST PROGRAM
For BEGINNING TEACHERS
2008 - 2009**



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INTRODUCTION

The Beginning Educator Support and Training (BEST) Program is a comprehensive induction program of support and assessment for beginning teachers. Beginning teachers must successfully complete BEST Program requirements in order to be eligible for the Provisional Educator Certificate.

The purposes of *A Guide to the BEST Program for Beginning Teachers* are:

- to provide beginning teachers with critical information relating to BEST Program requirements;
- to describe the rights and responsibilities of beginning teachers participating in the BEST Program; and
- to delineate the types of support that are available to beginning teachers to meet these requirements.

The Goal of the BEST Program

The mission of the BEST Program is to ensure that every Connecticut student is taught by a highly qualified and competent teacher. Accordingly, the BEST Program is designed to:

- ensure that beginning teachers have opportunities to strengthen their knowledge of subject matter and instructional strategies, as well as to enhance their understanding of students as learners;
- prepare beginning teachers to successfully develop and demonstrate the foundational skills and competencies as well as discipline-specific teaching standards as defined by *Connecticut's Common Core of Teaching (see Appendix 7)*;
- assist beginning teachers in understanding the school and district's curricular goals and standards, as well as state standards for student achievement, as defined by *Connecticut's Common Core of Learning, Connecticut Framework: K-12 Curricular Goals and Standards* and both the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) and Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT);* and
- provide the foundation for a process of lifelong learning and professional growth.

Ultimately, the goal of BEST Program support is to ensure that all beginning teachers have opportunities to strengthen their knowledge of subject matter and instructional strategies, enhance their understanding of students as learners and begin a process of lifelong learning and professional growth.

*The following publications may be accessed on the CSDE website: <http://www.ct.gov/sde> :

Click on "Curriculum" for *The Connecticut Framework: K – 12 Curricular Goals and Standards and the Common Core of Learning (CCL)*.

Click on "Student Assessment" for the *Connecticut Mastery Test* and *Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT)*.

BEST in Transition

The promotion of high standards for teachers has been an integral component of Connecticut's education reform agenda since the mid-1980s. The Education Enhancement Act of 1986 was highly successful in raising standards for teacher education and licensing as well as increasing teacher salaries to among the highest in the nation. This "balanced equation" of higher teacher salaries matched by increased professional standards has been highly successful in attracting more academically qualified individuals into Connecticut's schools.

Central to Connecticut's teacher improvement initiatives has been the Beginning Educator Support and Training (BEST) Program, first introduced in 1988 as a one year program of support and assessment. At that time the assessment was based on classroom observations. With the intent to broaden the scope of the assessment to focus on student learning over time, the portfolio assessment was developed. Thus the program evolved beginning in the mid-90s to a two year program which required support in year one and completion of a content-specific portfolio in year two, with a third year available if necessary.

Legislation passed in May 2008 calls for the replacement of the current BEST Program with a new beginning teacher program, effective July 1, 2009. As a result, the program will be going through a transition period commencing with the 2008-09 school year. Therefore, this Guide is applicable to the 2008-09 year only. During this year, teachers will continue to submit portfolios but will not be required to submit videos as part of the portfolio process. At the same time, a legislatively established task force will be making recommendations for the replacement of the current BEST Program with a new induction program for beginning teachers and to establish standards for the successful completion of this new program, effective for the 2009-10 year.

Accordingly, the BEST Program will continue to evolve to prepare to meet the challenges of classrooms of the 21st century. Through a structured support system and enhanced professional development, the program will build the capability of beginning teachers to improve their instructional effectiveness leading to increased student learning. As always, the central focus of the BEST program will be to provide meaningful learning experiences which enable beginning teachers to continuously raise their expectations for their students' achievement and for their teaching.

CHAPTER 1: REQUIREMENTS OF THE BEST PROGRAM

This chapter will assist beginning teachers in understanding:

- BEST Program requirements, including the specific requirements for teachers based on their teaching assignments and certification endorsement areas;
- whom to contact for assistance;
- responsibilities and rights of beginning teachers; and
- special requirements for graduates of the Alternate Route to Certification (ARC) Program.

The sections in this chapter include:

Section A: Who must participate in the BEST Program?

Section B: BEST Program Requirements for 2008-09

Section C: Program Requirements for Holders of Durational Shortage Area Permits (DSAPs)

Section D: Annual Registration in BEST

Section E: Online Resources in BEST

Section F: BEST Program Contacts/Resources

Section G: The Rights and Responsibilities of Beginning Teachers in the BEST Program

Section H: Special Requirements for Graduates of the Alternate Route to Certification (ARC) Program

Section A: Who Must Participate in the BEST Program?

Beginning teachers who:

- are employed as teachers in a Connecticut public school¹ or an approved private special education facility;
- **hold one** of the following certificates:
 1. Initial Educator Certificate
 2. Interim Initial Educator Certificate
 3. Temporary 90-day Certificate
 4. *Durational Shortage Area Permit (DSAPs)²

*Please refer to page 5 for participation information for holders of **DSAPs**;

- are employed full time or part time; or
- are hired under a *long-term substitute status* (provided they are teaching under a **valid certificate** as noted above and in the corresponding endorsement area of that certificate).

NOTE: Holding a **valid certificate** is a condition for both employment as a teacher **and** participation in the BEST Program. Beginning teachers must hold a teaching certificate with an endorsement that is appropriate to their teaching assignment. A teacher's BEST Participation Category is determined by the teacher's certification and teaching assignment.

Section B: BEST Program Requirements for 2008-09 Only (see Figure 1, page 6)

There are **two categories of participation** in the BEST Program for beginning teachers during the **2008-09** school year. To verify participation categories based on certification, please refer to **Appendix 1**.

(1) For teachers working under Initial Educator Certificates for elementary education, English language arts, mathematics, music, physical education, science, social studies, special education, visual arts, world languages and bilingual education, the following Q & A reflects recent programmatic changes:

What are the program requirements for teachers with Year One program status?

Teachers with year one status will participate in BEST to receive support from a district assigned mentor or support team. Effective with the 2009-10 school year, the BEST Program will be replaced with another beginning teacher program. Teachers who are year one in BEST in 2008-09 will be expected to fulfill the requirements of the new program beginning with the 2009-10 school year. Note that, because of anticipated program changes, year one teachers are not eligible to submit a portfolio during the 2008-09 school year.

¹ Public schools include charter schools, magnet schools, regional educational service centers, private special education facilities and schools operated by the Department of Correction, Department of Mental Retardation and Department of Children and Families.

² Teachers serving under DSAPs are registered into BEST for the purpose of receiving support until they meet eligibility requirements for the initial educator or 90-day certificate.

What are the program requirements for teachers with Year Two program status?

Teachers with year two status are required to complete a BEST portfolio due May 15, 2009. Teachers are not required to submit videos as part of their portfolios.

What are the program requirements for teachers with Year Three program status?

Teachers who held year two status in 2007-08 and did not meet standards on a portfolio submitted during that school year or did not submit a portfolio in that year, will participate as a year three teacher during the 2008-09 year. These teachers will be required to submit a portfolio which is due February 2, 2009. Year three candidates will follow the guidelines of the 2008-09 portfolio handbook and will not submit a video with their portfolios.

- (2) For teachers certified in agriculture and vocational agriculture, business education, health, home economics, technology education, partially sighted, hearing impaired, blind, marketing education, occupational and trades-related subjects in Connecticut Technical High Schools or in a comprehensive high school and TESOL:**

What are the program requirements for teachers working under the certification areas listed above?

First year beginning teachers who are participating in the BEST Program under these certification areas will receive support from a mentor or support team for one year.

Section C: Program Requirements for Holders of Durational Shortage Area Permits (DSAPs)

Individuals who are teaching under a DSAP are registered into BEST for the purpose of receiving support until they complete all course work and testing requirements for the Initial Educator Certificate or Temporary 90-day Certificate. Teachers who are working under a DSAP for the 2008-09 school year will be assigned a mentor or mentor team but will not be “officially” registered into BEST. Note that individuals who are teaching under a DSAP must receive at least two years of support through mentorship. Once issued an Initial Educator Certificate, these teachers will be required to fulfill the requirements of the new beginning teacher program, effective for the 2009-10 school year.

Where do I go for help?

If you are uncertain about your status in the BEST Program, you should contact your BEST Program District Facilitator. The BEST Program District Facilitator is the teacher or administrator in the local district appointed by the superintendent to coordinate the implementation of the BEST Program in the local school district. A directory of BEST District Facilitators is available on www.ctbest.org.

FIGURE 1

BEST Participation Categories 2008-09 ONLY

BEST Program requirements for teachers of bilingual education, elementary education, English language arts, mathematics, music, physical education, science, social studies, special education, visual arts and world languages

| For Teachers Who Hold YEAR ONE STATUS IN 2008-09 | For Teachers Who Hold YEAR TWO STATUS IN 2008-09 | For Teachers Who Hold YEAR THREE STATUS IN 2008-09 |
|--|--|--|
| <p>School-based support: (required)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support by mentor or support team <p>State-based support: (recommended)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • regionally scheduled discipline-specific seminars in the spring • Internet-accessible online learning units | <p>School-based support: (optional at discretion of district)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support by mentor or support team <p>State-based support: (recommended)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • regionally scheduled discipline-specific seminars (two for each content area) in the fall • Internet-accessible online learning units <p>Assessment (required):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • submission of a teaching portfolio by May 15, 2009 | <p>School-based support: (optional at discretion of district)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support by mentor or support team <p>State-based support: (recommended)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • portfolio conferences for beginning teachers not meeting the portfolio standard in year two <p>Assessment: (required)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • submission of a teaching portfolio by Feb. 2, 2009* <p><i>*Third portfolio submission: Upon request of the superintendent of schools, year-three participants who have already submitted two portfolios and have not met standards may have one additional submission opportunity by June 15. This option is not available to individuals who have submitted fewer than two portfolios.</i></p> |

BEST Program requirements for teachers of agriculture and vocational agriculture, business education, health, home economics, technology education, partially sighted, hearing impaired, blind, marketing education, occupational and trades-related subjects in Connecticut Technical High Schools or in a comprehensive high school and TESOL.

| One Year |
|--|
| <p>School-based support (required):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support by mentor or support team |

Section D: Annual Registration in BEST

It is the responsibility of the school district to enter beginning teachers in the State Staff File each year within **10 days** of hire or assignment to a school district. Teachers who hold the appropriate certificates (as listed on page 5) are automatically registered into the BEST Program. Registration occurs on an annual basis until beginning teachers have met all BEST Program requirements.

Beginning teachers receive a **registration confirmation letter** from the Connecticut State Department of Education confirming that they have been registered or reregistered in the program. This letter contains the following critical information, based upon the data provided by the school district in the State Staff File:

Name

District

School

Date of registration in BEST

Primary certification endorsement area

Primary teaching assignment

Mentor or support team leader

Portfolio subject area, if applicable

This information must be accurate and updated as appropriate, as it affects the category of BEST Program participation to which beginning teachers are assigned, the address to which materials and information will be sent and communications to the school district about the status of beginning teachers in the BEST Program.

Where do I go for help?

If you do not receive a registration confirmation letter from CSDE, you should contact your BEST District Facilitator to ensure that you have been entered into the State Staff File. **Registration confirmation letters will be sent to you at your school address and should be received by the end of October if you were entered in September. If you were entered after September, you should receive confirmation within one month after your entry date. PLEASE READ YOUR LETTER CAREFULLY SO THAT YOU ARE AWARE OF YOUR STATUS IN THE PROGRAM AND YOUR REQUIREMENTS.**

If the information on the registration confirmation letter is incorrect, you must complete the “BEST Data Change Form” (enclosed with your registration confirmation letter) and submit it to your District Facilitator immediately. Should changes in teaching assignment, school assignment or employing district occur at a later date, **please remember to inform the BEST Program Office at (860) 713-6820.**

Section E: Online (web-based) Resources in BEST through “BEST CONNECTIONS”

The ***BEST Connections*** website address is www.ctbest.org. This website has been established for multiple purposes: (1) as a communications site; (2) as a registration site; and (3) as a link to BEST resource documents.

- **For BEST communications:** To help ensure that you receive prompt and timely communications from BEST portfolio project leaders and teachers-in-residence, go to www.ctbest.org and click on “***Receive BEST Messages***” to subscribe to content-specific BEST messages. Through this e-mail connection, we will be able to stay in touch with you regarding:
 - important dates and/or reminders;
 - professional development training opportunities relevant to your teaching area; and
 - resources and tips to help you complete your portfolio and improve your instruction.
- **To register for all BEST professional development courses:** Check the BEST Connections website for listings of BEST Regional Seminars and Orientation Sessions. (See page 15 for State Support Related to the BEST Teaching Portfolio for a description of types of offerings.)
- **BEST resource documents:** By clicking on “Resource Documents” you can access the following informational materials: *A Guide to the BEST Program for Beginning Teachers*, portfolio handbooks in 10 subject areas, portfolio-related forms, learning units in 10 subject areas, portfolio feedback rubrics, sample portfolio performance reports in 10 content areas and the *Common Core of Teaching*. (See page 16 for more information on online learning units.)

Section F: BEST Program Contacts/Resources

Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE)

Bureau of Educator Preparation, Certification, Support and Assessment

- **BEST Program Office:** Individuals may contact the BEST Program Office at (860) 713-6820 with questions regarding program participation status, requirements of the program or support issues, or to report changes in employment/school address.
- The BEST Program staff also includes a **project leader and/or one or more teachers-in-residence** representing each subject area included in the Portfolio Induction Program: elementary, English language arts, mathematics, music, physical education, science, social studies, special education, visual arts and world languages. These individuals are readily available to assist and advise beginning teachers in program participation

requirements. A list of project leaders and teachers-in-residence can be found in **Appendix 2**.

- Call the Certification Office for questions about certification and application processes at (860) 713-6969, or contact this office via e-mail at teacher.cert@ct.gov.

Regional Educational Service Centers (RESCs)

- **EASTCONN** Regional Educational Service Center (RESC) serves as CSDE's central administrator of the BEST Program. Many BEST Program services and correspondences are handled by EASTCONN. EASTCONN can be reached at its toll-free help line at (888) 531-9910. An EASTCONN representative will be able to answer questions or direct individuals to an appropriate resource.
- **ACES, CES, CREC, Education Connection and LEARN:** These are the five additional RESCs. Each has representatives on staff who serve as BEST Program liaisons to mentors, portfolio scorers and district facilitators. The RESCs also provide the following services to beginning teachers: regional BEST orientations and portfolio seminars. In addition, RESCs host Portfolio Assessment Conferences (PACs). A list of the RESCs can be found in **Appendix 3** and a map of RESCs can be found in **Appendix 6**.

Section G: The Rights and Responsibilities of Beginning Teachers in the BEST Program

The successful induction of new teachers into the profession, as well as meeting requirements for ongoing teacher certification, requires a sharing of responsibilities among the local school district, state and the beginning teacher.

The Rights of Beginning Teachers

- **School-based support:** assignment of a mentor or support team within 10 days of commencing teaching; provision of instructional support specific to one's content area or discipline.
- **State-based support:** provision of professional development through discipline-specific seminars and Internet-accessible online learning units/seminars and ongoing communications through the BEST Connections website; conferences for individuals who do not successfully complete the portfolio assessment.
- **Regular contacts with a mentor or support team member:** at least biweekly meetings or other forms of contact with the mentor or a support team member (see page 12).
- **Availability of released time:** local district provision of released time on at least eight occasions (or equivalent of 8 half days) to allow beginning teachers to observe or be

observed by their mentors or support team members or for professional development-related activities.

- **Application for an exemption from the BEST assessment:** If a beginning teacher's teaching assignment is so unique that the requirements of the BEST portfolio assessment cannot be met, the beginning teacher, in conjunction with the BEST District Facilitator, may apply for an exemption. (See page 22 for a more detailed explanation of BEST Program assessment exemption policies and procedures for the portfolio program.)

Where do I go for help?

Your first point of contact for problems or issues with the BEST Program is the District Facilitator. You should contact that individual if you have not been assigned a mentor or support team within 10 days of commencing teaching, or if you are not receiving the assistance you need from your mentor or support team. Your principal is also responsible for ensuring that you are provided with appropriate instructional support by your mentor or support team and for facilitating opportunities for mentors and support team members to meet on a regular basis.

If after contacting both your District Facilitator and principal, you are still not receiving the support you need to successfully complete the BEST Program, you should contact EASTCONN at 888-531-9910. EASTCONN will refer you to alternative forms of regionally based support, depending upon your specific needs. In addition, BEST Program Teachers-in-residence can be of assistance by referring you to content-specific sources of support both in and outside your district.

The Responsibilities of Beginning Teachers

- **Beginning teachers must hold a valid Connecticut teaching certificate appropriate for their teaching assignment.** If you are employed as a teacher but do not hold a valid certificate for that assignment, this service will not count towards eligibility for the Provisional Educator Certificate, nor will you be eligible for registration in the BEST Program. Furthermore, you may be at risk of losing credited service towards retirement.
- Beginning teachers must know their **program status** and what they must do to **successfully complete** the BEST Program within the appropriate time frame, as well as the consequences of nonparticipation.
- Beginning teachers should know who their **District Facilitator** is. The BEST Program District Facilitator is responsible for coordinating the implementation of the BEST Program within each school district. A list of BEST District Facilitators will be made available on www.ctbest.org.

- **Beginning teachers must verify, on an annual basis, that the information shown in BEST registration confirmation letters is correct. If the information is not correct, Beginning Teachers must contact the BEST Program office at (860) 713-6820 to resolve any discrepancies.**
- Once registered in BEST, beginning teachers must **inform the BEST Program office at (860) 713-6820 of any changes** in teaching assignment, school assignment, name or employing school district.
- Beginning teachers should use the **resources available in their districts** such as their mentor or support team, principal, department chair or supervisor, colleagues trained as BEST assessors and other beginning teachers who have recently completed the BEST Program.
- Beginning teachers should use **resources provided by CSDE**, such as discipline-specific support online and regional seminars to strengthen their knowledge of instructional strategies and students as learners as well as to prepare for the BEST requirements.

Section H: Special Requirements for Graduates of the Alternate Route to Certification (ARC) Program

ARC beginning teachers must meet the following **additional** requirements in order to be eligible for the Provisional Educator Certificate:

- 1) **School-based support:** ARC beginning teachers are provided with a school-based mentor or support team for a **two-year period**.
- 2) **Thirty hours of professional development:** ARC beginning teachers must complete a minimum of 30 hours of professional development prior to application for the Provisional Educator Certificate. Beginning teachers must submit an attestation to the Bureau of Educator Standards and Certification from the superintendent of schools verifying completion of the 30 hours of professional development through attendance at a combination of CSDE-sponsored seminars/workshops **and** professional development sponsored or approved through the teacher's district.

Examples of BEST professional development are discipline-specific support seminars held at regional sites and BEST orientation sessions. At the conclusion of each school year, CEU certificates will be sent to ARC beginning teachers verifying their attendance at BEST professional development sessions.

CHAPTER 2: SUPPORT FOR BEGINNING TEACHERS

This chapter describes the support component of the BEST Program by outlining its goals and the kinds of school- and state-based support available to beginning teachers. The sections in this chapter include:

Section A: School-Based Support for Beginning Teachers

1. What is the role of the mentor or BEST support team?
2. Responsibilities of the individual mentor or support team
3. Examples of instructional support provided by the mentor or support team

Section B: State-Based Support for Beginning Teachers

1. State support related to general BEST requirements
2. State support related to the BEST teaching portfolio

BEST Program Support

BEST Program Support is designed to complement the local district's induction process and ensure that beginning teachers have minimum levels of school-based support provided by a trained mentor or support team assigned to them during their first year.

There are two types of support provided while in the BEST Program:

1. school-based support; and
2. state-based support.

Section A: School-Based Support for Beginning Teachers

School-based support is provided by either an individual mentor or a "support team."

Minimum Levels of School-Based Support Required Through the BEST Program

- A. Assignment of a **mentor** or **support team** within 10 days of commencing teaching.
- B. **Regular contacts** with the mentor or support team members:
 1. Local district provision of released time **on at least eight occasions** (equivalent to 8 half days) for beginning teachers to observe or be observed by their mentors or support team members or for professional development-related activities.
 2. The equivalent of 30 hours of "**significant contacts**" over the course of a school year between a beginning teacher and his or her mentor, support team members, content colleagues, the principal and/or district facilitator.

These "*significant contacts*" may include district wide BEST orientation meetings, after-school professional development activities provided by district facilitators, activities introducing

beginning teachers to the community and regularly scheduled staff meetings in which beginning teachers participate.

1. What is the Role of the Mentor or BEST Support Team?

A **mentor** is an accomplished teacher who has been selected by the local school district and has completed BEST Program Support Teacher training. This individual is assigned to support a beginning teacher during his or her first year of participation in the BEST Program. The individual mentor is trained to provide instructional support to the beginning teacher as well as to identify additional resources needed to ensure that the beginning teacher develops competency in his or her teaching.

A **BEST support team** is a group of educators led by a school staff member who has completed BEST Support Teacher training. A support team may support one or more beginning teachers at the district or building level. Other members of the team may include teachers in the same content area or grade level as the beginning teacher, a trained Connecticut Competency Instrument (CCI) assessor or BEST portfolio scorer, the principal, a department chair, a curriculum specialist and past “graduates” of the BEST Program.

A **master or lead mentor** is an individual assigned to a school building to act as a liaison to the district facilitator, mentors and beginning teachers for the purpose of brokering support and resources as needed.

2. Responsibilities of the Individual Mentor or Support Team

Regardless of whether support is provided by a mentor or support team, that mentor or support team is responsible for assisting the beginning teacher in:

- exploring a variety of teaching strategies that address diversity in students and their learning styles;
- identifying the effective teaching strategies that conform to the foundational skills and competencies as well as discipline-specific standards of the CCT;
- reflecting on the effectiveness of teaching and how well students are learning; and
- documenting the types and frequency of support provided to the beginning teacher.

3. Examples of Instructional Support Provided by the Mentor or Support Team

a. Gaining practice in how to document one’s teaching and reflect on practice

Many districts are adopting their own versions of portfolios for purposes of documenting teaching as part of the local district evaluation process. **Mentor and support teams** can help beginning teachers develop skills in **collecting evidence** of their teaching and of student learning. Examples of documentation that can be collected include the following:

- lesson plans or plans for a unit of instruction;
- lesson logs, including reflections on what went well with the lesson and what could be done differently to elicit more positive results;
- videotapes of lessons or lesson segments; and

- examples of student work and analyses of student progress toward learning goals.
- b. Assistance in demonstrating essential teaching competencies as defined by *Connecticut's Common Core of Teaching***

Connecticut's Common Core of Teaching (CCT) consists of both foundational skills and competencies and discipline-specific teaching standards. Mentors and support team members should assist beginning teachers in mastering the teaching competencies as specified by the CCT. These competencies place an emphasis on teacher content knowledge and the teaching of a specific discipline and the impact of teaching on student learning. This requires beginning teachers and their mentors/support team members to focus on teaching over time (such as a unit of instruction) and to examine multiple sources of data about teaching, including lesson plans, student work, use of assessments and teacher reflection about teaching and learning.

c. Assistance in planning lessons and units of instruction

Mentors/support team members are trained to guide beginning teachers in developing instructional objectives that are clearly stated and appropriate. Writing clear objectives that are observable within the context of the lesson is critical.

Mentors/support team members also can help focus planning of a unit of instruction around the following critical questions:

- How does the beginning teacher use his or her understanding of students to establish learning goals and objectives?
- Are planned tasks related to instructional goals and objectives?
- What materials will be needed for the lesson or unit?
- How does the teacher make accommodations to meet students' needs and interests?
- What assessment strategies does the teacher plan to use and are they appropriate to the goals and objectives?
- What did the teacher learn about the students' knowledge and skills from the work they produced?
- What did the teacher learn about his or her teaching and what accommodations would he or she make the next time this unit is taught?

d. Providing feedback on instruction

Mentors/support team members may either observe a beginning teacher or view videos of his or her teaching to provide feedback about the following critical questions:

- How well were the lesson elements linked so that students could see a connection between lesson elements, as well as past and future learning?
- How well were lessons developed to move students toward achieving objectives?
- What were the teacher's and the students' roles in classroom discourse?
- How effectively did the teacher monitor understanding and make adjustments as appropriate?

e. Learning how to evaluate student work

Mentors/support team members can help beginning teachers select appropriate samples of student work that illustrate learning over time and direct attention to the following critical questions:

- How does the teacher evaluate student work and communicate criteria for success and/or results to students?
- How effective were the assessment strategies the teacher used to gather information about students and their learning?
- How did the teacher use student assessment results to modify instruction?

Where do I go for help?

If you have not been assigned to a mentor or support team and/or have not been meeting regularly with your mentor or support team members, or are concerned that you are not receiving appropriate support as described in this chapter, contact your BEST District Facilitator or principal.

If after contacting both your District Facilitator and principal, you are still not receiving the support you need to successfully complete the BEST Program, you should contact EASTCONN at 888-531-9910. EASTCONN will refer you to alternative forms of regionally based support, depending upon your specific needs. In addition, BEST Program teachers-in-residence can be of assistance in referring you to content-specific sources of support both in and outside your district.

Section B. State-Based Support for Beginning Teachers

The state provides support to beginning teachers primarily through the provision of regional and online (web-based) seminars. Beginning teachers are strongly encouraged to attend CSDE-provided professional development offerings and to view the Internet-accessible online learning units/seminars, as they provide valuable information to help beginning teachers successfully complete the BEST Program. Regionally scheduled sessions also help ARC teachers meet the requirement of completing 30 hours of professional development. State support is also provided through the BEST Connections website and via program staff (see page 8).

State Support Related to the BEST Teaching Portfolio

- a. **Discipline-specific beginning teacher learning units and seminars:** A series of seminars is offered throughout the first and second years of a beginning teacher's participation in the BEST Program through a combination of *online* (web-based) learning units and *regionally scheduled* seminars.

- **ONLINE LEARNING UNITS:** All online learning units are designed specifically to support beginning teachers by encouraging collaboration between beginning teachers and their mentors, content colleagues and/or administrators, on topics related to effective planning, instruction and assessment. Each session highlights key elements of the BEST Program requirements and can be accessed by beginning teachers whenever they wish. To access these, go to the BEST website at www.ctbest.org click on “*Online Learning Units.*” Then click on the subject area corresponding your teaching assignment and subject area.

Each online, web-based learning unit includes five sections, as follows:

1. **Lessons** provide a review of one or more components of effective teaching in the beginning teacher’s discipline or content area.
 2. **Exercises** are activities designed to assist beginning teachers in focusing on important elements of effective teaching in their discipline. Most exercises are designed to facilitate focused interactions and collaborative work between beginning teachers and their mentors or other colleagues.
 3. **The Mentor Corner** includes key issues or questions that can focus discussions between a beginning teacher and his or her mentor or content colleague on effective teaching.
 4. **The Portfolio Corner** identifies the direct link between the content of each learning unit with the portfolio requirement.
 5. **Resources** include discipline-specific standards, actual portfolio samples, related recommended websites and more. In some cases, beginning teachers will need to refer to resources in order to complete the learning unit exercises.
- **REGIONAL SEMINARS:** Beginning teachers should plan on attending one regional seminar (scheduled at regional sites around the state) in the spring of their first year in BEST and two in the fall of their second year in BEST. These seminars complement the online learning units and provide an opportunity for beginning teachers to deepen their understanding of Connecticut’s teaching standards and portfolio requirements through participation in structured collaborations with peers and seminar leaders. **For scheduled dates and site information and to register, go to www.ctbest.org and click on “*Beginning Teacher Seminars.*”**

- b. **Portfolio Assessment Conferences:** Beginning teachers who do not meet the acceptable performance standard on the portfolio during their second year of teaching are eligible for in-person conferences with a trained portfolio scorer.

Where can I go for help?

Information and registration instructions on all BEST professional development sessions will be made available to you through one or all of the following sources:

1. direct mail to you at your school address;
2. the “BEST Connections” website: www.ctbest.org;
3. the CSDE website: www.ct.gov/sde – click on “BEST;”
4. your BEST District Facilitator; and
5. EASTCONN at (888) 531-9910.

CHAPTER 3: THE BEST PROGRAM PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT FOR THE 2008-09 SCHOOL YEAR ONLY

Year two and three beginning teachers who are teaching under Initial Educator Certificates or Interim Initial Educator Certificates and are certified in the areas of bilingual education, elementary education, English language arts, mathematics, middle grades, physical education, science, social studies, special education, visual arts and world languages must successfully complete the portfolio assessment as a participation requirement in the BEST Program. Note that teachers are not required to submit videos as part of portfolios submitted in 2008-09.

This chapter describes the BEST Program portfolio assessment process. Successful completion of this process is required for beginning teachers who are participating in the **Portfolio Induction Program**.

The sections in this chapter include:

- Section A: Special Notice Regarding Participation of Elementary/Middle Grades Certified Teachers**
- Section B: The BEST Program Portfolio Assessment**
- Section C: Change in Teaching Assignment from Year One to Year Two**
- Section D: Documentation of Special Circumstances**
- Section E: Exemption Policy for the BEST Portfolio Assessment**
- Section F: Science Safety Self-Assessment (Science Teachers Only)**

Section A: Special Notice Regarding Participation of Elementary and Middle Grades Certified Teachers in 2008-09

1. *Elementary certified teachers:*

- Beginning teachers who ***teach multiple subjects in self-contained classrooms*** should participate in the elementary component of BEST.
- ***Elementary certified teachers*** whose teaching assignment is English language arts only (including integrated language arts or developmental reading) or mathematics only (including remedial mathematics) may petition through the portfolio exemption process to complete ***only the literacy*** or ***only the numeracy*** portion of the elementary portfolio. ***NOTE: a petition for exemption from either the literacy or numeracy portion of the portfolio will not be considered until year two of participation.*** (See page 22 for more information on the exemption process.)
- ***Elementary certified teachers*** who teach social studies only, science only or world languages only, (or a combination of these subjects) are required to complete a social studies, science or world languages portfolio as appropriate to the assignment.

2. *Middle school certified teachers:*

- Middle school certified teachers who teach primarily one subject area (such as English/language arts, history/social studies, mathematics or science) should participate in the component of BEST that corresponds to their primary teaching assignment by submitting a portfolio in that content area. If a middle grades teacher is assigned to teach more than one subject area, he or she should select the BEST participation area that corresponds to his or her primary teaching assignment (representing his or her greater course load).

Section B: The BEST Program Portfolio Assessment

The BEST Program teacher portfolio assessments have been designed to assess the foundational skills and competencies, as well as discipline-specific teaching standards identified in *Connecticut's Common Core of Teaching* (see **Appendix 7**).

All portfolios, regardless of the content area, require the following documentation:

- daily lesson plans for a five to eight hour unit of instruction with one class;
- examples of student work; and
- reflective commentaries on teaching and learning that took place during the unit.

Portfolio handbooks in each disciplinary area provide information about the specific requirements of the portfolio. Portfolio handbooks will be made available on a CD-ROM and distributed by mail to school addresses of all first- and second-year teachers. In addition,

portfolio handbooks are available through the *BEST Connections* website at www.ctbest.org; click on “*Portfolio Handbooks.*”

Feedback on your portfolio: All beginning teachers receive an **individualized performance profile based on portfolio feedback rubrics**, which describes their performance in the categories of designing and implementing instruction, assessment of learning and analysis of teaching. Portfolio feedback rubrics are available online at www.ctbest.org, click on “Resource Documents” and scroll down to “Portfolio Feedback Rubrics.” All beginning teachers who do not successfully complete the portfolio assessment are encouraged to schedule a **BEST Portfolio Assessment Conference (PAC)**. During such conferences, a trained portfolio scorer/trainer meets individually with a beginning teacher to help him or her interpret the score report and discuss strategies for improvement.

Where can I go for help?

- **BEST Connections, which provides BEST information, communications and registration at the website www.ctbest.org**, has been set up to ensure that all BEST Program participants receive ongoing communications from BEST Program staff members, portfolio project leaders and teachers-in-residence. To receive ongoing communications through your e-mail, go to www.ctbest.org and click on “**Receive BEST Messages.**”
- **General information** about the BEST Program and the portfolio assessment can be found on the *BEST Connections* website at www.ctbest.org; click on “Resource Documents.” These resources include *A Guide to the BEST Program for Beginning Teachers, Portfolio Handbooks in ten subject areas, all portfolio-related forms, Portfolio Feedback Rubrics, learning units in ten subject areas and the Common Core of Teaching* are available.
- **BEST Connections** is also a registration site for all BEST Professional Development seminars for beginning teachers. To view all professional development offerings for beginning teachers, go to www.ctbest.org and click on “**Registration for PD.**”
- **BEST Portfolio exemplars** are made available at each RESC for viewing by beginning teachers and their mentors. These examples represent a selection of beginning teacher portfolios in each content area. To view these exemplars, call your nearest RESC to schedule an appointment (see **Appendix 3** for a list of the RESCs). Some districts have purchased copies of portfolio exemplars (check with your district facilitator). In addition, the online discipline-specific seminars contain a sample portfolio for each of the respective disciplines (see the website address above).
- **Support of Colleagues:** In addition to your mentor, seek out others who have completed BEST portfolios and those who are trained portfolio scorers.

Section C: Code of Professional Responsibility

All teachers licensed in the State of Connecticut are held to the Code of Professional Responsibility for Teachers (Sec. 10-145d-400a of the State Certification Regulations). All teaching documented in the portfolio must reflect professional and ethical conduct. **The Teaching Portfolio Authenticity Sign-Off Form (included in all portfolio handbooks) must be included with all portfolios submitted for evaluation and must be signed by both the beginning teacher and principal.** Any detection of a breach of ethical conduct, such as plagiarism (e.g., the taking of whole parts of portfolio exemplars or someone else’s portfolio), lack of authenticity of the student work or forgery (i.e., principal’s signature), will be reported to the district’s employing superintendent and **may result in revocation of a licensure.**

Section D: Important Notice About Third-Year Participation

Beginning teachers who submit a portfolio in year two but do not meet the portfolio standard, or beginning teachers who fail to submit a portfolio in year two, have an opportunity to submit a portfolio during their third year of participation in the BEST Program. These portfolios are due on **February 1**, with the final score report submitted to the beginning teacher and district by **April 1**.

Eligibility for a Third Portfolio Submission: Upon request of the superintendent of schools, third-year BEST program participants who have already submitted two portfolios (one in year two and one in February of year three) and who have not yet met the acceptable performance standard *may* have one additional submission opportunity (by June 15). *This option is not available to individuals who have submitted fewer than two portfolios.*

A beginning teacher who does not submit a portfolio or does not meet the acceptable performance standard **by the end of the third year of participation in the BEST Program may not be eligible** for reissuance of the Initial Educator Certificate.

Section E: Change in Teaching Assignment from Year One to Year Two

A beginning teacher who has a significant change in teaching assignment (***one which impacts the BEST portfolio participation area***) may petition to extend the time frame for completing BEST by ***“rolling back”*** his or her ***participation year.***

- Examples of changes that *qualify* for this extension are from science in year one to mathematics in year two, or from English/language arts in year one to social studies in year two.
- Examples of changes that *do not qualify* for this extension because they do not impact the BEST portfolio participation area are from chemistry in year one to biology in year two, or from history in year one to geography in year two, or from Grade 1 to Grade 5 in elementary.

If approved for the extension, a teacher who is in the second year of registration in BEST will be considered “year one” in 2008-09 and will need to meet corresponding program requirements in effect the following year (2009-10). A request form for this change can be found in **Appendix 4: Documentation of Change in Teaching Assignment and Request for an Adjustment in BEST Program Status**.

Section F: Extension of Time to Complete BEST Based on Documentation of Special Circumstances

Special and extenuating circumstances, such as a break in employment or a leave of absence due to illness or maternity leave, may impact a beginning teacher’s opportunity to complete BEST requirements. Consequently, a teacher may petition to extend the time frame for completing BEST by “rolling back” his or her participation year. Please refer to **Appendix 5** for *Documentation of Special Circumstances and Request for an Adjustment in BEST Program Status*. Requests will be reviewed by the BEST Review Committee upon receipt. Note that BEST Program participation requirements for the 2009-10 school year have not yet been determined.

Section G: Exemption Policy for the BEST Portfolio Assessment

Beginning teachers registered as second-or-third-year participants in the BEST Program in the 2008-09 school year may be eligible to submit an exemption application. Beginning teachers whose teaching assignments are sufficiently unique that they cannot complete a portfolio according to the portfolio handbook guidelines may be eligible for an exemption from the portfolio assessment. Exemption requests are made through the BEST Program District Facilitator, who completes an application in conjunction with the beginning teacher and mentor/support team in order to provide documentation regarding the beginning teacher’s teaching assignment. A beginning teacher must be registered as a second-or third-year participant in the BEST Program in the 2008-2009 school year to be eligible to submit an exemption application. First year teachers are not eligible for exemptions.

Exemption requests are reviewed by the BEST Review Committee and notification is provided to the district facilitator and the beginning teacher if the exemption is approved or denied.

Some of the teaching assignments that **may** be eligible for a full exemption include pre-kindergarten; computer technology, and teachers of students with severe/profound disabilities. **NOTE:** Elementary certified teachers who teach English language arts *only* or mathematics *only*, must apply for the partial elementary exemption in order to receive official approval to do only the literacy or only the numeracy section of the elementary portfolio (see page 19).

Applications for a full or partial exemption are available from BEST District Facilitators.

Section H: Science Safety Self-Assessment (Science Teachers Only)

The BEST Program makes available a CD-ROM version of a science safety assessment activity to evaluate beginning teachers' knowledge of laboratory safety management. This assessment activity is designed to be administered by school district science coordinators or science department chairs. Districts are encouraged to require that beginning science teachers complete the science safety activity prior to the end of their participation in BEST. Details about the science safety activity will be provided by their science chairpersons or coordinators.

Section I: Standards for Successful Completion of the BEST Portfolio Assessment

Due to the elimination of the requirement to submit a video as part of the BEST portfolio, the Connecticut State Department of Education is conducting a study in the fall of 2008 to determine appropriate performance standards for beginning teachers submitting portfolios during the 2008-2009 school year. Once approved by the State Board, these standards will be communicated to program participants.

FIGURE 2

CONNECTICUT'S COMMON CORE OF TEACHING (CCT)

I. FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES

- I. Teachers have knowledge of:**
- A. Students**
 1. *Teachers understand how students learn and develop.*
 2. *Teachers understand how students differ in their approaches to learning.*
 - B. Content⁶**
 1. *Teachers are proficient in reading, writing and mathematics.*
 2. *Teachers understand the central concepts and skills, tools of inquiry and structures of the discipline(s) they teach.*
 - C. Pedagogy**
 1. *Teachers know how to design and deliver instruction.*
 2. *Teachers recognize the need to vary their instructional methods.*
- II. Teachers apply this knowledge by:**
- A. Planning**
 1. *Teachers plan instruction based upon knowledge of subject matter, students, the curriculum and the community.*
 2. *Teachers select and/or create learning tasks that make subject matter meaningful to students.*
 - B. Instructing**
 1. *Teachers establish and maintain appropriate standards of behavior and create a positive learning environment.*
 2. *Teachers create instructional opportunities that support students' academic, social and personal development.*
 3. *Teachers use effective verbal, nonverbal and media communications techniques which foster individual and collaborative inquiry.*
 4. *Teachers employ a variety of instructional strategies that enable students to think critically, solve problems and demonstrate skills.*
 - C. Assessing and Adjusting**
 1. *Teachers use various assessment techniques to evaluate student learning.*
 - D. Reflecting**
 1. *Teachers continually engage in self-evaluation of the effects of their choices and actions on students and the school community.*

II. (CCT) DISCIPLINE-BASED PROFESSIONAL TEACHING STANDARDS

(Refer to *Connecticut's Common Core of Teaching* for standards for teachers of elementary education, English language arts, mathematics, music, physical education, science, social studies, special education, visual arts and world languages).

⁶ Note that prior to issuance of the initial teaching license, prospective teachers must demonstrate essential skills in reading, writing and mathematics through the PRAXIS 1 CBT examination and content knowledge through the PRAXIS II content-area examinations (or ACTFL).

APPENDIX 1

BEST PARTICIPATION CATEGORIES BY CERTIFICATION CODES

| <p align="center">Category 1: For 2008-09 Only For teachers certified and teaching under the endorsements below (Support and Portfolio Assessment Required)</p> | <p align="center">Category 2: For 2008-09 Only For teachers certified and teaching under the endorsements below (Requirement for Support for One Year)</p> | <p align="center">BEST Program NOT available Certification Endorsement Areas NOT participating in the BEST Program</p> |
|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ English (#015) ➤ Mathematics (#029) ➤ Biology (#030) ➤ Chemistry (#031) ➤ Physics (#032) ➤ Earth Science (#033) ➤ General Science (#034) ➤ Special Education (#065, 165, 265) ➤ Elementary (#001, 002, 003, 004, 005, 006, 008, 013, 112, 113) ➤ Middle School 4-8 (#006, 215, 226, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235) ➤ History/Social Studies (#025, 026) ➤ Art (#042) ➤ Music (#049) ➤ Physical Education (#044) ➤ Bilingual Education (#009, 902, 915, 926, 929, 930, 931, 932, 933, 934, 966, 967, 968, 969, 970, 971, 972, 973, 974) ➤ World Languages (#018, 019, 020, 021, 022, 023, 024, 101) <p>Note: Anyone teaching under a DSAP in one of the Portfolio Induction subject areas will be registered into BEST for the purpose of receiving support until all requirements for the initial educator or the 90-day certificate have been met. Subsequently, if teaching under an initial certificate or 90-day certificate, the teacher will participate in the new teacher induction program as required as of July 1, 2009.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Business Education (#010) ➤ Vocational Agriculture (#041) ➤ Agriculture (#040) ➤ Health (#043) ➤ Home Economics (#045) ➤ Technology Education (#047) ➤ Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages [TESOL] (#111) ➤ Partially Sighted (#055) ➤ Hearing Impaired (#057) ➤ Blind (#059) ➤ Teacher-Coord. Marketing Educator (#089) ➤ Occupational Subj. in Technical High Schools (#090) ➤ Trade Related Subj. in Technical High Schools 091) ➤ Trade and Industrial Occupations in Comprehensive H.S. (#098) ➤ Health Occupations – Comp. High School (#103) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Driver Education (#035) ➤ Speech and Language Pathologist (#061) ➤ School Library Media Specialist (#062) ➤ School Counselor (#068) ➤ School Psychologist (#070) ➤ School Social Worker (#071) ➤ School Nurse-Teacher (#072) ➤ School Dental Hygienist-Teacher (#073) ➤ Vocational Technical Administrator (#082) ➤ School Business Administrator (#085) ➤ English to Non-English Speaking Adults (#088) ➤ Intermediate Administrator/Supervisor (#092) ➤ Superintendent of Schools (#093) ➤ Reading and Lang. Arts Consultant (#097) ➤ Remedial Reading / Remedial Language Arts (#102) ➤ Teacher Coordinator Co-op Work Edu/Diversified Occup. (#104) ➤ Department Chairperson (#105) ➤ H.S. Credit Diploma Prog. (#106) ➤ Ext. Diploma Prog. Non-credit Mandated Prog. (#107) ➤ Practical Nurse Education Instruction (#108) ➤ Health Occupations Technical High Schools (#109) |

APPENDIX 2
BEST PROGRAM STAFF DIRECTORY
PROJECT LEADERS, TEACHERS-IN-RESIDENCE and STAFF MEMBERS

Elementary Education

| | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| Project Leader | Kim Wachtelhausen | (860) 713-6841 |
| Consultant: | Ellen Snow | (860) 713-6842 |
| Consultant: | Therese Horn | (860) 713-6842 |
| Consultant: | BG (Betty Gray) Brown | (860) 713-6842 |
| Teacher-in-Residence: | Nancy Powers | (860) 713-6817 |

English

| | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Project Leader: | Christine Sullivan | (860) 713-6828 |
| Teacher-in-Residence: | Claudine Primack | (860) 713-6823 |

Mathematics

| | | |
|-----------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Teacher-in-Residence: | Jack Rose | (860) 713-6826 |
| Teacher-in-Residence: | Kenneth Sherrick | (860) 713-6826 |

Music

| | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Project Leader/Teacher-in-Residence: | Sharon Cardillo | (860) 713-6839 |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|

Physical Education

| | | |
|-----------------------|--------------|----------------|
| Project Leader: | Jean Mee | (860) 807-2082 |
| Teacher-in-Residence: | Bonnie Doran | (860) 713-6929 |

Science

| | | |
|-----------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Project Leader: | Michal Lomask | (860) 713-6815 |
| Teacher-in-Residence: | Cindy Wilbur | (860) 713-6846 |

Social Studies

| | | |
|-----------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Project Leader: | Gail Tomala | (860) 713-6816 |
| Teacher-in-Residence: | Lou Pelligrino | (860) 713-6844 |

Special Education

| | | |
|-----------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Project Leader: | Sharon Fuller | (860) 713-6843 |
| Teacher-in-Residence: | Shelley Hall | (860) 713-6843 |

Visual Arts

| | | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Project Leader/Teacher-in-Residence: | Bethany Bonner | (860) 713-6848 |
|--------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|

World Languages

| | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Project Leader/Teacher-in-Residence: | Dorothy Raveille | (860) 713-6838 |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|----------------|

BEST Program Office

General Questions (860) 713-6820

BEST Program Manager

Beverly Hartstone (860) 713-6811

BEST Program Coordinator

Jane Gionfrido (860) 713-6812

APPENDIX 3

Field Staff Representative at the Regional Educational Service Centers (RESCs)

| RESC | Phone | Fax |
|--|--|----------------|
| ACES Jackie Chorney 205 Skiff Street Hamden, CT 06517 | (203) 407-4437 | (203) 407-4590 |
| CES Lyn Nevins 25 Oakview Drive Trumbull, CT 06611 | (203) 365-8858 | (203) 365-8846 |
| CREC Marta Diez 111 Charter Oak Avenue Hartford, CT 06106 | (860) 509-3612 | (860) 509-3699 |
| EASTCONN Grace Levin Windham Mills Bldg. 1 322 Main Street Willimantic, CT 06226 | (888) 531-9910 or (860) 455-0707 or | (860) 456-7845 |
| Education Connection Laura Patterson 355 Goshen Road P.O. Box 909 Litchfield, CT 06759 | (203) 791-1904 | (203) 778-8076 |
| Education Connection Laura Patterson 345 Main Street Danbury, CT 06810 | (203) 791-1904 | (203) 778-8076 |
| LEARN Ellen Dalton Eastport North 10 Vista Drive Old Lyme, CT 06371 <i>(mailing address: 44 Hatchetts Hill Road)</i> | (860) 434-4890 | (860) 434-4899 |

APPENDIX 4

DOCUMENTATION OF CHANGE IN TEACHING ASSIGNMENT and REQUEST FOR AN ADJUSTMENT IN BEST PROGRAM STATUS

A beginning teacher who has a significant change in teaching assignment (*one which impacts the BEST portfolio participation area*) may petition to extend the time frame for completing BEST by “rolling back” his or her “participation year.”

This form is to be completed **ONLY** if you have had a teaching assignment change from year one to year two, or year two to year three, of your BEST Program participation **which impacts your BEST portfolio participation content area.**

Examples of changes that qualify:

- from science in year one (2007-08) to mathematics in year two (2008-09); or
- from English/language arts in year one to social studies in year two.

Examples of changes that do not qualify for this extension:

- from chemistry in year one to biology in year two;
- from history in year one to geography in year two; or
- from Grade 1 elementary in year one to Grade 5 elementary in year two.

These examples do not result in a change in portfolio participation subject area.

*If you wish to request an adjustment in your participation year in order to extend the time frame for your completion of the BEST Program, please complete and submit the form **attached**. If approved, a **new registration confirmation letter** will be sent to you to confirm the change in your BEST participation year.*

NOTE: *This adjustment allows a **rollback of only one year**, i.e., from year two **back** to year one, or from year three **back** to year two.*

(Continued)

APPENDIX 4 (continued)

**DOCUMENTATION OF CHANGE IN TEACHING ASSIGNMENT and
REQUEST FOR AN ADJUSTMENT IN BEST PROGRAM STATUS**

Please complete only if you have had a **change in teaching assignment** from year one to year two, or from year two to year three, of your BEST participation which impacts your BEST portfolio participation subject area. **By submitting this form**, you are requesting to extend your time frame for the completion of BEST by “rolling back” your BEST participation status (as described on the cover sheet of this application form).

NOTE: This adjustment allows a **rollback of only one year**, i.e., from year two **back** to year one, or from year three **back** to year two.

Name: _____

Social Security #: _____

District: _____ School: _____

Address: _____

BEST Participation Record

Year-One Teaching Assignment: _____ Year: _____
(content area)

Year-Two Teaching Assignment: _____ Year: _____
(content area)

Year-Three Teaching Assignment: _____ Year: _____
(content area)

I verify that this information accurately reflects this teacher’s BEST participation record and teaching assignment change.

Signature of BEST District Facilitator

Date

Signature of Beginning Teacher

Date

Please return this form to:
Jane Gionfrido, BEST Program Office
Connecticut State Department of Education
P.O. Box 2219, Hartford, CT 06145
Or fax to (860) 713-7028

APPENDIX 5

DOCUMENTATION OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES AND REQUEST FOR AN ADJUSTMENT IN BEST PROGRAM STATUS

BEST is designed as a two-year induction program with a third year available if a teacher *does not meet standards* on a portfolio submitted in year two, **OR** if the teacher *cannot submit in year two due to extenuating circumstances*. Examples of such extenuating circumstances are a break in employment or leave of absence due to illness, maternity leave or other significant circumstances.

Because special circumstances may impact a beginning teacher's opportunity to complete these requirements within the two-year time frame, BEST policy is to review each request and, pending approval of the BEST Review Committee, allow a teacher to elect to **roll back** his or her BEST participation status, thereby providing an additional year.

For example, if a beginning teacher is out for an extended period of time during her second year of participation due to maternity leave, the teacher may request to postpone the submission of the portfolio to the following year and maintain year-two status.

In order to request an adjustment to your BEST participation status, please complete and submit the attached form and include medical or district documentation as appropriate. If an adjustment of your BEST Program status is approved, a new registration letter will be sent to you to confirm this change in your BEST participation year.

(Continued)

APPENDIX 5 (continued)

DOCUMENTATION OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES AND REQUEST FOR AN ADJUSTMENT OF BEST PROGRAM STATUS

Name: _____

Social Security #: _____

District: _____ School: _____

Complete for the following registration years as applicable:

BEST Registration Year for **2007-08** as noted on your BEST registration confirmation letter (please check one):

____ Year 1 ____ Year 2 ____ Year 3

BEST Registration Year for **2008-09** as noted on your BEST registration confirmation letter (please check one):

____ Year 1 ____ Year 2 ____ Year 3

Please check reason for Request of Adjustment in BEST Program Status:

(please attach documentation of circumstances if appropriate):

- Illness
- Maternity leave/child care
- Break in teaching service
- Other; please explain below

IF A LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM TEACHING HAS OCCURRED, PLEASE PROVIDE THE BEGINNING AND ENDING DATES OF YOUR LEAVE (GIVE ESTIMATE OF TIME IF NECESSARY). YOUR REQUEST WILL NOT BE PROCESSED WITHOUT THIS INFORMATION

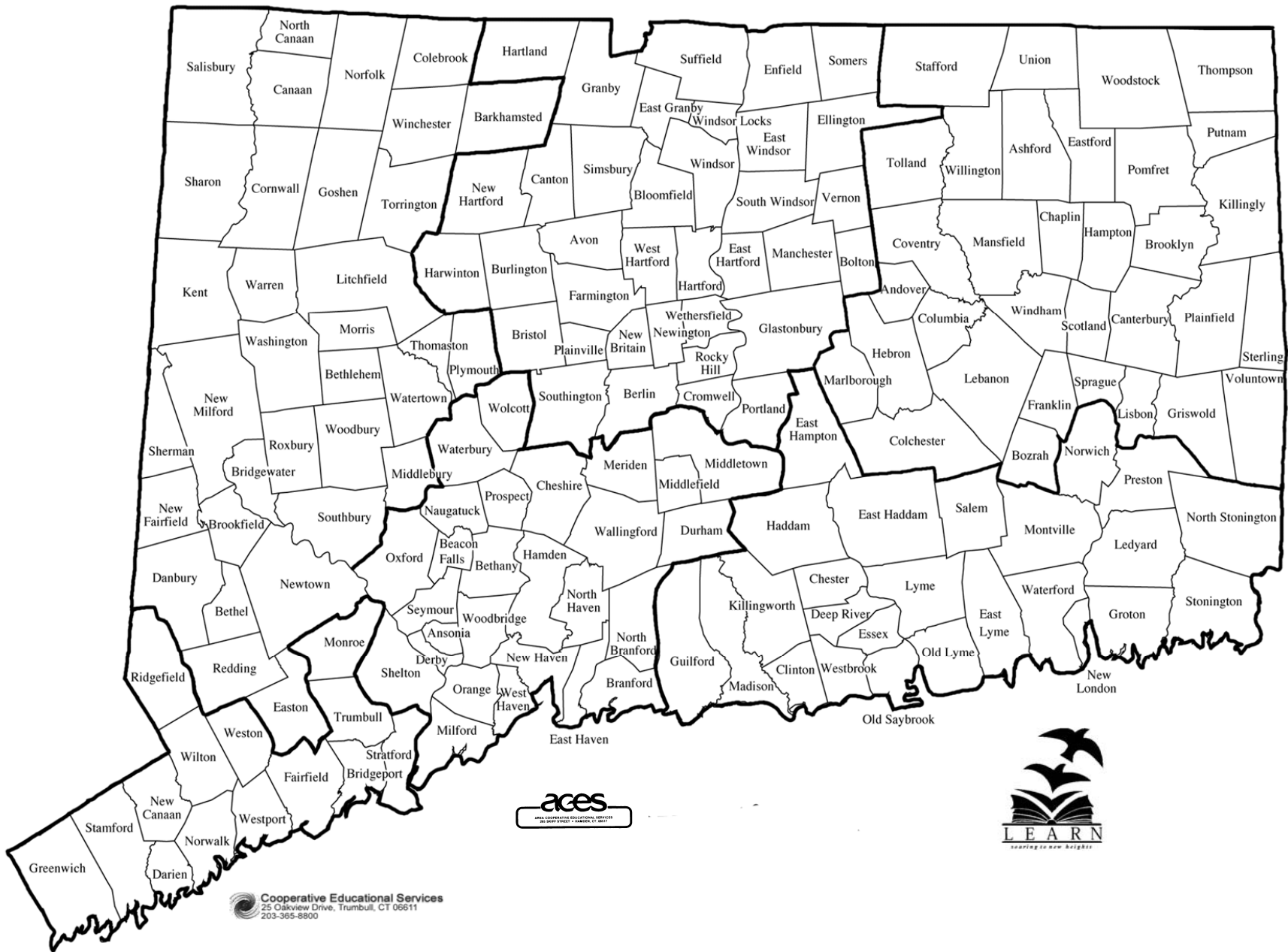
Signature of Beginning Teacher Date

Signature of BEST District Facilitator Date

Signature of Superintendent Date

This request will be reviewed by the BEST Review Committee. If approved, your program participation year will be adjusted (to roll back your BEST participation status) to provide for an extension of the time frame for the completion of BEST. A written response to this application will confirm or deny your request.

Please return this form to: **Jane Gionfrido / BEST Review Committee
Connecticut State Department of Education
P.O. Box 2219, Hartford, CT 06145
or fax to 860-713-7028**



APPENDIX 7

**Connecticut's
Common Core of Teaching**

State of Connecticut

M. Jodi Rell, Governor

State Board of Education

Allan B. Taylor, Chairperson
Janet M. Finneran, Vice Chairperson
Beverly R. Bobroske
Alice L. Carolan
Donald J. Coolican
Lynne S. Farrell
Theresa Hopkins-Staten
Christine Larson (Student)
Patricia B. Luke
Brandt Smallwood (Student)
John H. Voss

Valerie F. Lewis (ex officio)
Commissioner of Higher Education

Mark K. McQuillan
Commissioner of Education

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