

## Beginning Educator Support Program

1. **Purpose:** The purpose of the Beginning Educator Support Team (BEST) program is to:
  - Support beginning teachers so they can provide effective instruction that closes opportunity gaps for students;
  - Attract, train, and retain skillful novice teachers in Washington's public schools; and
  - Build systems of support within school districts to hold a collective sense of responsibility for the success of beginning teachers and the students in their classrooms.
2. **Description of services provided:** BEST supports and promotes strategies for improving districts' efforts to attract, train, and retain highly skilled novice teachers who positively impact their students' learning.

In 2018-2019, BEST funded 182 districts serving 3001 Year 1 teachers and 2,530 Year 2 teachers. 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 for beginning teachers 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.

In addition, BEST asked districts to attend to these areas that impact student learning when neglected:

- Enhanced, coordinated support for teachers of special education that addresses their complex role as teacher, case manager for students, and lead for other adults in their buildings.
- Intensive support for teachers with limited certificates who have not yet completed a teacher preparation program.
- Mitigation of the impact of extra-challenging placements on first-year teachers and their students.

### **FYI 19 - \$10.5 million**

Of the \$10.5 million allocated for FY 19, \$725,000 was set aside to support induction work around the state. Services from the previous year were expanded to reach more regions and to enhance the following:

- **OSPI Mentor Academies** provided high quality professional development for instructional mentors and administrators focused on the specific knowledge and skills necessary to accelerate new teachers' instructional effectiveness in their classrooms. BEST provided seven 1-day academies specifically for mentors supporting teachers of

special education, and five 2-day academies focused on mentoring for racial equity. More than 2,000 mentors, coaches, and administrators attended 49 academies during the year.

- **Regional Mentor Roundtables**, including one on-line, continued the growth of mentors and instructional coaches through opportunities to learn, practice their skills, explore problems of practice, and network with other mentors. Regional roundtables were offered at 18 locations around the state, meeting approximately eight times each.
- **Support for In-District Mentor Roundtables** through monthly Zoom meetings provided facilitators content and strategies to support their planning;
- **Induction Coaching** for each BEST grantee provided technical assistance and personalized support for districts to continue refining their comprehensive induction programs.
- **Regional Induction Leader Roundtables**, open to all districts, to build understanding of comprehensive induction, provide opportunities for collaboration, share induction practices, and network were offered at seven locations around the state.
- **Annual BEST Grantee Convening** in March as part of the annual BEST Spring Symposium engaged approximately 320 participants in examining data, sharing strategies, problem-solving to overcome challenges, and drafting induction plans for 2019-2020.
- **Annual Mentor-Coach Racial Equity Conference** in March as part of the annual BEST Spring Symposium, “Equity in Action: Transforming the Narrative,” was attended by approximately 340 mentors, instructional coaches, and other educational leaders focused on addressing issues of racial equity and access for students.
- **BEST Workgroups** convened to address induction challenges in rural/remote school districts and to create guidelines for districts as they support beginning English Language Development/Bilingual Education teachers.

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; on-going commitment to developing comprehensive induction; and leadership to accomplish the work.
4. To qualify for continuing with 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 them with district and school expectations and culture; orient them to preferred instructional practices and curriculum; and help them plan for their first day, weeks, and month with students;
  - **A classroom set-up visit** prior to the start of school or the start of the new educator’s assignment in which a mentor meets with the new educator to assist with classroom set-up and plans for the first days with students;
  - **On-going professional learning for beginning educators** designed to meet their unique needs throughout the first year. Professional learning is aligned to the Washington State 8 Teacher Evaluation Criteria (or other professional standards when relevant) and the

districts adopted instructional framework. Special attention should be given to Criteria 1, 2, 5, and 6;

- **Formative observations with feedback** for mentees provided at least monthly by released mentors and a minimum of four times per year by colleague mentors;
- **Release time for new teachers to observe** accomplished teaching while accompanied by their mentor or other instructional leader;
- **Job description and compensation for mentors** of early career educators for required activities that fall outside the mentor’s regular job responsibilities such as attending mentor roundtables, after-school meetings, and summer trainings;
- Initial professional learning for mentors, including completion of the 3-day OSPI Mentor Academy 101 (preferably before the initial year of mentoring and no later than December of that year);
- **Ongoing professional learning for mentors** to build capacity in components of the [OSPI Standards for Mentoring](#). Mentors should participate regularly in roundtables which may be hosted by OSPI, regional ESDs, regional consortia, and/or school districts. OSPI will provide Mentor Roundtable facilitator training and will coordinate a statewide communications network to support the work of roundtables and their membership;
- **Special attention to the needs of early-career educators in challenging schools** and/or working with students facing the most challenges;
- **Stakeholders’ Team** to meet at least 3 times per year in order to examine the current state of comprehensive new educator induction, gather and review data, problem-solve, and set goals. In order to build a sense of collective responsibility, members should represent multiple groups across the district;
- **BEST Grantee Convening** attendance; and
- **ESD Consortium Leads** committed to build the capacity of individual districts to create comprehensive induction programs.

#### Beneficiaries in 2018-19 School Year:

<b>Beginning Educator Support Team (BEST) Program</b>	<b>2018-2019</b>
Districts receiving funding through competitive grants:	182
# Year 1 Teachers (first year teachers only)	3,001
# Year 2 Teachers	2,530
# Districts eligible to access mentor professional development and induction support from BEST	295
Mentors, coaches, administrators trained at Mentor Academies and Spring Equity Symposium	2,325

**# of OSPI staff associated with this funding (FTEs):** 2.65 FTE

**# of contractors/other staff associated with this funding:** 48 Contractors

<b>FY 19 Funding:</b>	<b>State Appropriation:</b>	\$10.5 million
	<b>Federal Appropriation:</b>	\$0.0
	<b>Other fund sources:</b>	\$0.0
	<b>TOTAL (FY19)</b>	\$10.5 million

5. **Are federal or other funds contingent on state funding?** No.
6. **State funding history:** 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 and consortia on a competitive basis, with the intent of assuring that novice educators receive a comprehensive induction program in order to ensure equitable access for students to effective teaching. While the number of participating districts has increased significantly, BEST is not yet able to provide for all districts and new teachers in the state. Nor is BEST able to fund enhanced support for teachers in more challenging contexts such as teaching with a limited certificate or in special education, or to provide induction support for principals or Educational staff associates (ESA—counselors, nurses, OT, PT, etc.). Ideally, with enough funding, all new educators including ESAs and principals would enjoy an effective induction program.

<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>Amount Funded</b>	<b>Actual Expenditures</b>
FY19	\$10,500,000	\$10,288,704
FY18	\$10,500,000	\$10,383,282
FY17	\$9,000,000	\$8,883,245
FY16	\$5,500,000	\$5,327,162
FY15	\$3,000,000	\$2,915,211
FY14	\$1,000,000	\$957,888
FY13	\$1,000,000	\$986,846
FY12	\$1,000,000	\$961,240
FY11	\$1,800,000	\$987,700
FY10	\$2,348,000	\$2,266,227

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

<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>No. of 1<sup>st</sup> Year Teachers Participating</b>	<b>Amount. per 1<sup>st</sup> Year Teacher Participating</b>	<b>No. of 2<sup>nd</sup> Year Teachers Participating</b>	<b>Amount. per 2<sup>nd</sup> Year Teacher Participating</b>	<b>No. of 3<sup>rd</sup> Year Teachers Participating</b>	<b>Amount. per 3<sup>rd</sup> Year Teacher Participating</b>
FY19	3001	\$3500/\$2000*	2530	\$750	n/a	n/a

**\*NOTE:** In FY19, 21% of grantee districts (39) were partially funded because the number of qualifying teachers exceeded available grant funds.

FY18	2790	\$3500/\$2000	2084	\$1000	n/a	n/a
FY17	2114	\$3500/\$2500/\$2000	1675	\$1000	n/a	n/a
FY16	1655	\$2500	819	\$1000	n/a	n/a
FY15	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

<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b># of Beginners in TAP</b>	<b>Amount per Beginner</b>
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 <sup>1</sup>	\$1,500
FY 01	\$3.150 million	2,545	\$1,270
FY 00 <sup>2</sup>	\$3.150 million	2,307	\$1,365
FY 99 <sup>2</sup>	\$1.305 million	1,842	\$708
FY 98 <sup>2</sup>	\$1.305 million	1,667	\$782
FY 97 <sup>2</sup>	\$1.305 million	1,527	\$854
FY 96 <sup>2</sup>	\$1.305 million	1,146	\$1,138
FY 95 <sup>1</sup>	\$1.450 million	977	varied
FY 94 <sup>1</sup>	\$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

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

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

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<sup>3</sup> FY10 and 11 are the first years of BEST program funding; FY 87 through FY 09 reflect TAP funding.

7. **Number of beneficiaries (e.g., schools, students, districts) history:**

Fiscal Year	Districts Funded within Consortia	Total Districts Funded
FY19	115	182
FY18	94	162
FY17	73	131
FY16	33	69
FY15	26	39
FY14	0	7
FY13	17	19
FY12	26	28
FY11	11	14
FY10	27	30

8. **Programmatic changes since inception:** New teacher induction in Washington school districts is an issue of equity of access for students. OSPI's "Washington State's Ensuring Equitable Access of Excellent Educator Initiative State Plan" provides significant data showing that many of our underserved students are inequitably taught by less-experienced teachers. Funding comprehensive induction is part of the way to close the opportunity 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 districts cobbled together 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 directed 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 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 62 districts and 1,315 first and second-year teachers possible.

The 2018 budget funded BEST at \$10.5 million, again allowing the program to expand. An additional 31 districts and 1,085 first and second-year teachers were added to the program. With each year participating in the program, districts further develop their systemic support for their novice teachers.

Although funding did not increase in FY19, the scope of BEST's work did. An additional 20 districts, 200 Year 1 teachers, and 500 Year 2 teachers received support through BEST funds. The number of contractors, academies, and other supports were also increased to meet demand. With the increase in number of teachers, BEST was unable to fully fund 21% of districts according to the per teacher rates set by BEST. Districts attempted to fill the short-fall with TPEP or other funds.

9. **Evaluations of program/major findings:**

From a 2017 study by the University of Washington's Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy, we know that only 6% of first-year teachers in districts implementing the BEST program with fidelity are expected to exit the state and/or teaching profession, compared with 10% in all other districts in the state.

Additional findings by BEST about induction in the state include these:

- BEST support is valued by districts. Non-grantee districts continue to ask to join BEST, and current grantees continue to use BEST resources to refine and extend their work.
- Districts value the on-going support provided by BEST through mentor professional learning, induction coaching, and on-going guidance. (Example: A principal said she sends any teachers she can to Mentor Academy because they talk differently and more effectively about teaching when they return.)
- Districts with large numbers of Year 1 teachers holding limited certificates have increased retention of those teachers by providing intensive, targeted support. (Example: In 2018-2019, Pasco SD retained 93% of their 42 Year 1 teachers who held limited certificates.)
- Educational Service District consortium leaders are making connections among initiatives, such as the Teacher and Principal Evaluation Program (TPEP) and the Office of System and School Improvement (OSSI), increasing the impact and improving systemic thinking at the district level. (Example: In one ESD, the teachers' association president who had been trained that year as a mentor spoke strongly to his colleagues in support of the importance of using TPEP's student growth measures.)
- There is a demand for support of teachers in special education. Many participants in the seven academies focused on mentoring teachers of special education teachers requested additional training.
- Some districts are growing efforts to better support their teachers of color, and participation at the annual BEST Mentor-Coach Equity in Action Conference and mentor academy focused on mentoring for racial equity is strong. There is still much work to do to ensure equitable access for students and equitable classroom and school environments for students and teachers of color.

10. **Major challenges faced by the program:**

Although BEST covers a significant portion of the state, 25% of new teachers, 68% of new principals, and 100% of new educational staff associates (ESAs— school counselors, psychologists, social workers, etc.) do not receive mentoring and induction through BEST. In addition, BEST is not able to provide extra funding for novice teachers of special education and those teaching with limited preparation. These areas need more robust support to ensure teacher—and thus student—success.

- BEST is not able to provide funds for all new teachers in the state. Because of large numbers of Year 1 and Year 2 teachers in FY19, BEST reduced funding for all Year 2 teachers and 39 districts received only partial awards for their Year 1 teachers
- The state expanded positions for school counselors, but BEST was not provided funds to extend induction support to first-year counselors or other Educational staff associates (ESAs—nurses, OTs, PTs, psychologists, etc.), roles that are essential to supporting vulnerable students and closing opportunity gaps. Districts continue to request this support.
- The number of teachers with limited certificates continues to grow. Approximately 25% of Year 1 teachers in BEST districts held limited certificates. These teachers



often need more intensive support than their fully certificated colleagues, and some need continued intensive support into their second year of teaching.

- Teachers of special education represent approximately 15% of Year 1 teachers in BEST districts. They need increased, coordinated support from multiple departments in ways that traditional classroom teachers may not.
- There is not yet robust mentoring for beginning principals due to limited funding. These new administrators have pivotal roles with school and student success.
- Small districts with just a few new teachers struggle to provide robust support for singleton teachers.
- Recruiting release mentors when positions can't be guaranteed beyond a single year is difficult. Year-to-year funding creates uncertainty and teachers are often hesitant to risk giving up a guaranteed position for a job that may go away after a year.

11. **Future opportunities:**

- Extend support to teachers who often have students facing greater challenges by enhancing funding for teachers of special education, enhancing funding for teachers with limited certificates, and providing support for educational staff associates (ESAs—school counselors, nurses, OT, PT, etc.)
- Continue to build mentors' capacity to identify and address patterns of racial inequity in classrooms and to help novice teachers foster equitable classroom environments.
- Develop 1-day trainings to help districts create systems to support their teachers of special education, to extend the current training of mentors of teachers in special education, and to provide specific training for mentors of English Language Development/Bilingual Education teachers.
- Promote use of newly developed practices for measures of student growth as part of TPEP.
- Continue to expand BEST support to all 295 districts in the state, from the 182 districts being served in 2019-2020.

12. **Statutory and/or Budget language:**

**Budget Proviso:** SSB 5883 Section 513(12) - \$10,500,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2018 and \$10,500,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2019 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.

13. **Other relevant information:**

14. **List of schools/districts receiving assistance:**

**Available to all 295 school districts in Washington:**

- Mentor Academies and other mentor professional development available for mentors, instructional coaches, teacher leaders, and administrators;
- Annual Mentor-Coach Equity in Action conference;
- 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 65 school districts, two district consortia, and eight ESDs participating in BEST for the 2019-2020 school year, for a total of 189 districts. For a list of participating districts, see [Continuing BEST Grant Recipients](#).

15. **Program Contact Information:**

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