

TEAM Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: September 9, 2026

Time: 8:00 - 9:30am

Location: Virtual

Attendees: Ashley Wright, Lauren Tafrete, Lisa Gianni, Victoria Malvey, Jessica Ocasio, Gady Weiner, Fran DiFiore, Sidrah Baloch, Kate Field, Danielle Lapan, Charmaine Tourse, DJ Vandrilla, Mary Yordon, Jenna Mancini, Jennifer Benevento, Brian Betesh, Joslyn DeLancey, Sharon Fuller, Marlo Ruggiero, Michelle Belcher-Felton

Welcome:

Ashley Wright opened the meeting at 8:01 a.m. and reviewed the goals and intended outcomes for TEAM 2.0. She provided an overview of the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) Strategic Focus Areas and explained how the TEAM 2.0 redesign aligns with those priorities.

Summer Updates:

- The committee welcomed the 2026 Connecticut Teacher of the Year, Brian Betesh, as a new member.
- Ad Hoc groups paused over the summer due to scheduling conflicts and will resume meetings in the coming weeks.
- Connecticut Education Association (CEA) developed a mentor checklist.
- Mentor engagement log samples were developed by CEA and the CSDE Talent Office.
- CSDE staff are drafting a proposal outlining mentor training for TEAM 2.0.
- CSDE submitted a legislative request for funding to support TEAM mentors; updates will be provided as more information becomes available.

TEAM 2.0: Vision and Redesign Priorities:

- The primary goal of TEAM 2.0 is to improve early career teacher retention by strengthening meaningful connections between Beginning Teachers (BTs) and mentors and reducing the overall burden of the induction program.
- The redesigned model shifts away from reflection papers and projects and toward applied practice supported through structured, authentic mentorship.

- BTs will have increased flexibility in completing modules. Mentor-BT conversations will be logged to track required hours, and modules no longer need to be completed in a set order.
- Two pathways will be available during the 2026–2027 transition year:
 - Pathway A: Current TEAM model with reflection papers and/or projects.
 - Pathway B: Pilot of TEAM 2.0 without reflection papers or projects, using mentor-BT engagement logs.
- BTs can select their pathway through their dashboard and should consult their District Facilitator before choosing.
- Selecting high-quality mentors is a priority for TEAM 2.0.
- Districts will be reminded that TEAM is a support program, not an evaluation tool, and should remain separate from the district evaluation and support system.
- The role of the TEAM Coordinating Committees (TCC) will be clarified, and districts will be encouraged to fully utilize their TCCs and collaborate with members of the PDEC.
- Boston University WEPC will conduct surveys in the fall and spring during the transition year and throughout full implementation beginning in fall 2027 to evaluate the impact of TEAM changes.

Discussion:

Mechanics:

- In TEAM 2.0, mentors should encourage BTs to collaborate across their school and seek guidance from staff with specialized expertise such as special education teachers, reading specialists, speech language pathologists, and school psychologists.
- A sample log was presented demonstrating entries aligned with the Plan, Apply, Reflect, and Feedback/Next Steps cycle, with mentors entering notes for each phase.
- CEA developed guiding questions for each module to support mentor-BT conversations.
- The committee discussed ways to ensure BT participation in log entries. Suggestions included providing a dedicated space for BT reflections and sending BTs a notification after a mentor submits an entry so that BTs have time to process the conversation before responding.

Mentors:

- Previously Confirmed Decisions:

- A statewide mentor application that will be reviewed by a committee representing multiple organizations.
- A system will be established to maintain mentor eligibility over time.
- Mentor-BT matching will remain the responsibility of districts, with guidance on key considerations.
- Current requirements for mentors:
 - Minimum of three years of teaching experience.
 - Self-selection by registering for the Initial Support Teacher (IST) training.
 - Hold at least an initial teacher certification.
- Application Requirements Under Consideration
 - Applicants should not be on a tiered support plan under their district's evaluation and support system.
 - Increasing the minimum years of teaching experience beyond three.
 - Establishing clear criteria to define an effective mentor.
 - Applying selection guidelines that also extend to cooperating teachers.
 - Including a recommendation as part of the application.
 - Considering alternative experience pathways for teachers who transitioned careers (i.e., science or math) or changed districts.
- Maintaining Mentor Eligibility
 - Current requirements include the completion of IST, and three online, asynchronous Professional Learning Units (PLU) over the course of three years.
 - IST training will remain a foundational requirement.
 - The committee discussed weighing active mentoring differently than inactive periods, as mentors not currently working with a BT may need additional support or PLUs.
 - Optional resources or communities of practice may provide valuable support, especially when offered in person at the district level.
 - Possibilities were discussed for aligning mentor professional growth goals with district evaluation processes to count toward mentor development.

Future meetings:

Will be held virtually, 8:00 am – 9:30 am on the following dates:

- October 13, 2026
- November 18, 2026
- December 9, 2026
- January 13, 2027
- February 10, 2027
- March 10, 2027

- April 14, 2027
- May 12, 2027
- June 9, 2027