

## Beginning Educator Support Program

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

One hundred sixty-two districts were funded to serve 2790 Year 1 teachers and 2084 Year 2 teachers in-2017-2018. These districts and regional consortia were tasked with implementing the following research-based program components:

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

### **FYI 18 - \$10.5 million**

Of the \$10.5 million allocated for FY 18, \$800,000 was set aside to support development of induction throughout the state with the following services:

- **OSPI Mentor Academies** provided high quality professional development for instructional mentors, and administrators focused on the specific knowledge and skills necessary to accelerate new teachers’ instructional effectiveness in their classrooms. Approximately 1,150 mentors, coaches, and administrators were trained from districts all across the state.
- Fifteen **Regional Mentor Roundtables**, including one on-line, met eight times each to continue the development of mentors and instructional coaches who support the growth of new teachers.
- **Induction Coaching** for BEST grantees provided technical assistance and personalized support as districts developed and refined their comprehensive induction programs.

- **Regional Induction Coordinator Roundtables**, open to all to build understanding of comprehensive induction, each provided three opportunities to collaborate, deepen induction practices, and identify goals for their work.
- **Spring Mentor-Coach Conference** as part of the Spring Symposium, “Equity in Action: Shaping Future Outcomes,” was attended by approximately 325 mentors, instructional coaches, and grantee teams focused on addressing issues of equity and access for students.
- **Grantee Convening** in March as part of the Spring Symposium included examining data, sharing strategies, engaging in problem-solving to overcome challenges, and beginning to write an induction plan for 2018-2019.
- **Standards for Beginning Educator Induction** were revised to specifically address principals’ engagement in induction, equity, and support for beginning teachers of special education.

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

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

- **A well-trained, carefully selected mentor** who will provide an average of 1-2 hours per week for Year 1 teachers for planning and reflection conferences, observations, and feedback;
- **An instructional orientation** with compensation for time prior to the start of school to acquaint new educators with district and school expectations and help them plan for their first days and weeks with students;
- **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;
- **Professional development for mentors**, including completion of the 3-day OSPI Mentor Academy 101 and continued professional learning to build mentor skills through local, regional, or online Mentor Roundtables;
- **Job description and compensation for mentors** of early career educators for required activities which fall outside the mentor’s regular job responsibilities;
- **Special attention to the needs of early-career educators in challenging schools** and/or working with students facing the most challenges;
- **Stakeholders’ Group** to meet at least 3 times/year with representation from multiple groups across the district;

- **BEST Grantee Convening** attendance; and
- **ESD Consortium Leads** committed to build the capacity of individual districts to create comprehensive induction programs.

#### Beneficiaries in 2017-18 School Year:

<b>Beginning Educator Support Team (BEST) Program</b>	<b>2017-2018</b>
Districts receiving funding through competitive grants:	162
# Year 1 Teachers (first year teachers only)	2790
# Year 2 Teachers	2084
# Districts eligible to access mentor professional development and induction support from BEST staff	295
Mentors, coaches, administrators trained at Mentor Academies, Tune-ups, and Spring Equity Symposium	1475

**# of OSPI staff associated with this funding (FTEs):** 2.65 FTE [1.5 program specialist, 1.0 admin assistant, 0.05 director, 0.1 contracts specialist]

**# of contractors/other staff associated with this funding:** 46 Contractors

<b>FY 18 Funding:</b>	<b>State Appropriation:</b>	\$10.5 million
	<b>Federal Appropriation:</b>	\$0.0
	<b>Other fund sources:</b>	\$0.0
	<b>TOTAL (FY18)</b>	<b>\$10.5 million</b>

4. **Are federal or other funds contingent on state funding?** No.
5. **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. While the number of participants has increased significantly, BEST does not provide for all districts and new teachers in the state, nor is support extended to three years. Ideally, with sufficient funding, all new teachers and principals would enjoy an effective induction program.

Fiscal Year	Amount Funded	Actual Expenditures
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):**

Fiscal Year	No. of 1 <sup>st</sup> Year Teachers Participating	Amt. per 1 <sup>st</sup> Year Teacher Participating	No. of 2 <sup>nd</sup> Year Teachers Participating	Amt. per 2 <sup>nd</sup> Year Teacher Participating	No. of 3 <sup>rd</sup> Year Teachers Participating	Amt. per 3 <sup>rd</sup> Year Teacher Participating
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

Fiscal Year	Amount	# of Beginners Participating in TAP	Amount per Beginner
FY 09	\$2.348 million	2,314	\$880
FY 08	\$2.348 million	2,674	\$790
FY 07	\$2.348 million	2,675	\$810
FY 06	\$2.348 million	2,536	\$800
FY 05	\$2.348 million	2,330	\$880
FY 04	\$2.348 million	1,973	\$1,000
FY 03	\$2.348 million	2,165	\$875
FY 02	\$4.695 million	2,830 <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.

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

Fiscal Year	Districts Funded within Consortia	Total Districts Funded
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

7. **Programmatic changes since inception:** New teacher induction in Washington school districts is an issue of equity of access for students. OSPI's recently-released "Washington State's Ensuring Equitable Access 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 State annually.

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

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

- Retention can be improved with grow-your-own programs.
- Teacher-leadership (e.g., mentoring) opportunities can help with retention of experienced teachers.
- Coordinated, connected regional support through Educational Service Districts can grow the work with individual consortium members as well as among the members to maximize resources and impact. Districts have asked to be added to some of the BEST ESD consortia.
- Connections among initiatives, such as the Teacher and Principal Evaluation Program (TPEP) and the Office of System and School Improvement (OSSI), increase the impact

of all of them and improves systemic thinking.

- New grantees show shifts in the depth of their understanding of instructional mentoring that improves teacher effectiveness and comprehensive induction during their first few years in BEST.
- Recruiting mentors, especially in a time of teacher shortages, presents a challenge.

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

- BEST is not able to provide for all districts and new teachers in the state. Grant funds are not able to adequately fund current BEST districts and cover two rather than the desired three years.
- Because funding doesn't fully cover all first and second-year teachers in the state, BEST has not be able to continue funding support for first-year ESAs (counselors, nurses, OTs, PTs, psychologists, etc.) Districts continue to request this support.
- Principal mentoring is not allowed or funded in the current proviso.
- Skillful leadership of BEST work at the ESD and district level is essential. When leadership changes, systems are challenged to maintain continuity and integrity in the work. To address this, BEST provides annual orientations and more focused induction coaching to accelerate the learning of new leaders.
- Districts consistently cite challenges in effectively engaging and supporting principals in the induction work. Revisions to *Standards for Beginning Educator Induction* provide some tools to help with this.
- Small districts with just a few new teachers face challenges in providing robust support. Collaborations with neighboring districts and within ESDs enhance resources and supports.

10. **Future opportunities:**

- Increased funding could extend support to more districts, enhance funding for second-year teachers, provide support for ESAs, and extend support for third-year teachers.
- BEST will form a work group to identify unique needs and opportunities for induction in small and remote districts.

11. **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.

12. **Other relevant information:**

13. **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;
- 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 194 school districts and eight ESDs participating in BEST for the 2018-19 school year. For a list, see the BEST [website](#).

14. **Program Contact Information:**

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