

TEAM Q&A for Beginning Teachers and Mentors

Q: What happened to TEAM funding?

A: The funding for the TEAM program was unexpectedly eliminated from the state budget, which passed on October 26, 2017.

Q: Will TEAM mentors still be paid stipends?

A: State law requires that districts pay mentors a \$500 stipend per mentee. These stipends had historically been reimbursed by the state of Connecticut out of the TEAM budget. Because there is no budget remaining for TEAM, districts must pay the \$500 stipend for each mentee even though they will not be reimbursed by the state.

Q: My district pays an additional stipend to mentors on top of the \$500, but will this additional stipend be eliminated?

A: It depends on whether the additional stipend is part of your contract. If it is in your contract, districts must pay the \$500 required by state law, plus the additional amount listed in the teachers' contract. If it is not in your contract, it may be subject to policy. Please contact your local association president for more information.

Q: As a beginning teacher, am I still required to complete the TEAM modules?

A: Yes, statute requires all new teachers complete the number of TEAM modules appropriate to their certification endorsement within a maximum time frame of three years in order to gain provisional certification. The recommended time frame for completion of TEAM is two years, but it can carry over into a third year without penalty.

Q: Are reflection papers still required?

A: The state will no longer require the completion of reflection papers, but your district might. Statute requires evidence that modules were completed, which in some districts may still be a reflection paper, but in other districts it may be some kind of project. Therefore, the type of evidence required to show that each module was completed might differ from one district to another. At this time, papers can still be submitted on the TEAM database and are still being reviewed.

Q: I'm midway through TEAM, what happens to my completed reflection papers and other information stored on the TEAM database?

A: CEA strongly recommends that teachers create back-ups of materials on the TEAM site that may be important in the event the TEAM database is unable to keep the system functioning. The TEAM database is operated by EASTCONN and in the past, but because the budget for TEAM was eliminated, there is no money to keep the database operational. EASTCONN is attempting to find its own funding to maintain the TEAM site, so its fate remains unknown. There is possibility that EASTCONN may decide to charge districts who wish to continue using it a small fee for each beginning teacher, but this is undetermined at this time.

Q: What happens if I do not complete all required TEAM modules within the allotted time?

A: Beginning teachers have up to three years to complete all necessary modules, and this timeline was not changed in the budget bill. If you do not complete all of the required modules within three years, you will not be permitted to renew your teaching certificate when it expires. As a result, you would have to file and pay for an extension to your initial certificate, as well as request an extension to TEAM from the CSDE. Please be aware that extensions are generally granted only for extenuating circumstances and are not automatically approved.

Q: If a teacher wants to become a TEAM mentor or a cooperating teacher, will the TEAM training still be required?

A: Yes, training for mentors and cooperating teachers will still be required, but it will not be free. Districts will be expected to pay for the necessary training. Mentor update training will now be conducted entirely online. In addition, according to the CSDE, there will no longer be training for reflection paper reviewers.

Q: What will happen to the TEAM Program?

A: As a result of the budget bill, TEAM is now an unfunded mandate and as such, its future could be in jeopardy in the coming legislative session. TEAM is one of the most highly regarded new teacher induction and support programs in the country, and we all would like to see it remain so. CEA is working hard advocating for a restoration of funding to TEAM and has been raising the concerns of teachers with the legislators and the CSDE. Your advocacy is critical to the fight to restore the program. If TEAM has benefited you and the students in your district, please share your story with your state legislators and/or members of the State Board of Education.

Q: Who do I contact with questions and concerns?

A: Notify the TEAM Program Manager at the Connecticut State Department of Education, Claudine Primack, at claudine.primack@ct.gov of any problems or concerns and cc Dr. Kate Field at CEA at katef@cea.org. You may also consider writing to your state senator or representative. Their contact information can be found at <http://www.cea.org/politics/legislator-lookup/>.

If you are interested in receiving updates on the TEAM situation, please send an email to MyProfession@cea.org noting your district and with "TEAM Updates" in the subject line.