



**Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction**  
**Chris Reykdal, State Superintendent**

*All students prepared  
for post-secondary pathways,  
careers, & civic engagement.*

To: Deans and Directors  
Washington Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (WACTE)

From: Beginning Educator Support Team (BEST) Program Staff  
Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction

CC: Field Directors, WACTE

Date: October 17, 2019

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OSPI seeks to partner with WACTE by exploring collaborative efforts to respond to 2ESHB 1139, the omnibus bill on educator recruitment and retention, which in part addresses student teaching placements, including language for those who mentor student teachers in Sec. 202(1)(b)(ii):

*(ii) ...Student teacher mentors should also have received or be concurrently receiving professional development in mentoring skills.*

Quality mentoring matters because it deepens the skills, understanding and confidence of newer members of the teaching profession; when used systematically, it creates a school climate conducive to teacher growth and retention and to improved student learning. OSPI's Beginning Educator Support Team (BEST) Program provides free professional learning for quality mentoring through the OSPI Mentor Academy as one part of its comprehensive induction program.

The OSPI BEST Program was allocated a small sum of money for its role in implementing 1139. These funds are designated to provide professional development in mentoring skills for those who mentor student teachers. Several pre-service faculty members have attended the OSPI Mentor Academy in the past, and as an action item in response to the collaborative conversation at the Ellensburg conference in May, it seems that there is interest in doing more. A partnership with higher education would open opportunities for cooperating teachers to receive this focused professional learning in mentoring in addition to what is offered by preservice programs.

Considering the discussions in Ellensburg and other conversations with preservice program leaders and district leaders prior and since, OSPI proposes the following next steps for discussion toward a partnership with WACTE focused on deepening our collective capacity to effectively support student teachers:

1. OSPI staff attend the Field Supervisor group meeting to collaboratively discuss what supports are currently in place and what supports are needed in order to meet the new requirements from 1139 regarding training student teacher mentors. (October 2019)
2. Based on identified needs and suggested timelines, OSPI and WACTE organize and pilot Mentor Academy Training for student teaching mentors, field supervisors and faculty from interested preservice programs. (November 2019-February 2020)
3. OSPI/WACTE support and track implementation, assess issues and evaluate worthiness of continuing and/or expanding the training and other collaborative efforts that emerge. (ongoing)