

**TEXAS BEGINNING EDUCATOR
SUPPORT SYSTEM**

TxBESS PROGRAM STANDARDS

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TEXAS BEGINNING EDUCATOR SUPPORT SYSTEM

PROGRAM STANDARDS

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Texas Beginning Educator Support System

Program Standards

The Texas Beginning Educator Support System (TxBESS) is an initiative of the Texas State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) with project leadership and oversight from Resources for Learning. TxBESS is designed to provide systemic support for beginning teachers in their first and second years on the job. In TxBESS, partnerships that include beginning teachers, local school districts, schools, educator preparation entities, local businesses, community members, and regional education service centers have shared responsibility for the success of beginning teachers.

Supporting beginning teachers early in their careers leads to reduced turnover and a more experienced, better-qualified public school teaching staff. TxBESS is part of a coherent, standards-based system that begins with the state student standards and continues through pre-service preparation, induction, and in-service professional development. Beginning teachers who have TxBESS support attain greater professional expertise more quickly than unsupported beginning teachers, leading to higher academic achievement among Texas students. To achieve this goal, TxBESS:

- Implements an array of effective models of beginning teacher support based on the *TxBESS Framework* and disseminates the models to the wider educational community;
- Provides beginning teachers with support teams consisting of mentors, the principal of the beginning teacher's school, and representation from educator preparation entities;
- Provides beginning teachers with mentors who use a coaching model of support;
- Improves the ability of beginning teachers to work successfully with diverse students and communities;
- Provides a rich program of job-embedded, extended professional development for all those who support beginning teachers;
- Enhances principals' abilities to establish a school climate that supports beginning teacher growth and retention;
- Identifies models of evaluating the impact of TxBESS and disseminates findings to the wider educational community; and
- Stabilizes the teaching force by reducing beginning teacher transfer rates within and across school districts.



Using the *TxBESS Program Standards*

The *TxBESS Program Standards* identify attributes of successful TxBESS implementation while allowing local TxBESS programs to develop methodologies and delivery systems appropriate for schools, districts, educator preparation entities, and beginning teachers in their regions or districts. Additionally, program staff can use the standards for self-assessment and ongoing program improvement.

The *TxBESS Program Standards* are useful not only in designing support systems for pre-service teachers, fully-certified teachers, and alternative certification interns, but also for teachers who are new to a district, school, grade level, or assignment. Those who may be employed on temporary credentials or waivers can also benefit from TxBESS.

Organization of the *TxBESS Program Standards*

Each program standard is presented in three parts: (a) a statement of the standard, (b) a brief rationale, and (c) quality indicators that program staff can use for program design and that project evaluators can use for ongoing program evaluation.

The standards are clustered into three broad categories:

- Design, Organization, and Context (Standards 1-6)
- Support and Formative Assessment of Beginning Teachers (Standards 7-11)
- Resources and Accountability (Standards 12-13)

Supplementary information is provided in Appendix A, Guidelines for Support Team Training and Relationships.



DESIGN, ORGANIZATION, AND CONTEXT

Standard 1: Partnerships

Collaboratives that consist of local school districts, educator preparation entities, regional education service centers (ESCs), and other stakeholders (e.g., business and community leaders) design, implement, and maintain beginning teacher support systems. These partnerships are central to the creation and delivery of a coherent and efficient plan for the professional development and support of beginning teachers. In addition to aligning these program standards, each partnership is customized to reflect the unique strengths and needs of the teachers, students, and communities it serves.

Rationale

Quality support systems enhance the effectiveness of beginning teachers and improve the retention of those teachers in the education profession. These support systems can be organized and managed most effectively through partnerships that include education service centers, educator preparation entities, K-12 school districts, and other stakeholders. Each partner contributes a unique perspective and necessary resources to create a powerful support system for the beginning teachers served.

Quality Indicators

- An advisory group, consisting of all stakeholders in the collaborative, guides each program.
- Partnerships demonstrate an ongoing commitment to beginning teacher support and are tailored to the specific needs of beginning teachers in the district or region.
- Responsibilities for program implementation and oversight by each participating entity are clearly defined and coordinated.
- Partners regularly engage in purposeful communication through a variety of formal and informal means, including technology when appropriate, to establish and maintain collaborative relationships with one another and with other partnerships.



DESIGN, ORGANIZATION, AND CONTEXT

Standard 2: Rationale and Goals

A sound, well-articulated rationale that is grounded in research and effective practice guides program goals.

Rationale

A beginning teacher support system is built on a vision of beginning teacher growth and development that is supported by research. This vision reflects the needs of beginning teachers as they develop over time and includes appropriate support activities designed to meet the needs of beginning teachers as individuals and as a group.

Quality Indicators

- Program design is consistent with the program standards.
- The *TxBESS Framework* guides the delivery of services to beginning teachers.
- The program of support is built on generally understood patterns of beginning teacher development; however, the program is flexible enough to provide support for beginning teachers whose development differs from the norm.
- The program is designed to assist beginning teachers in becoming successful members of the teaching profession and ensuring that their students demonstrate mastery of the state standards.
- The plan for delivery of services to beginning teachers recognizes the need to provide continuity for teachers throughout pre-service preparation, the beginning years of teaching, and ongoing professional development.



DESIGN, ORGANIZATION, AND CONTEXT

Standard 3: Design and Implementation

Program design and implementation is based on the needs of districts, schools, teachers, and students. An infrastructure is established to help ensure that beginning teachers are retained and that they have immediate, significant impact on student learning.

Rationale

A formal beginning teacher support system requires commitment from all stakeholders: school board members, superintendents, central office administrators, school administrators, certified professional staff, non-certified professional staff, parents, teacher organizations, representatives from educator preparation entities, retired teachers, business/community members, and service clubs.

Quality Indicators

- Through the adoption of policies, school boards address the need for increased retention of and improved support for beginning teachers.
- An active advisory board of stakeholders is the key to the success of a coherent beginning teacher support program.
- The advisory board studies the needs of teachers and students and makes decisions for implementation and evaluation of a beginning teacher support program.
- In light of best practice, the district must consider the following elements:
 - Time,
 - Budget ,
 - Stipends and other forms of mentor compensation and recognition,
 - Matching mentors and beginning teachers,
 - Mentor selection,
 - Mentor training,
 - Professional development,
 - Implementation and evaluation, and
 - Program coordination.
- To build capacity within the district and to sustain an effective mentoring program, key staff members who assume coordination and oversight of the training responsibilities for the district know mentoring and coaching strategies.
- Each superintendent designates a district induction coordinator to oversee program implementation.
- Each principal designates a school induction coordinator who will support mentors and beginning teachers.
- Both beginning teachers and mentors utilize the *TxBESS Activity Profile (TAP)*, which gives teachers opportunities to self-assess their practices and supports them in their development as self-directed learners.
- Beginning teacher action plans drive professional development plans and offerings.



DESIGN, ORGANIZATION, AND CONTEXT

Standard 4: District Responsibilities When Employing Beginning Teachers

Districts have policies that direct personnel to provide appropriate placements and support for beginning teachers, so that beginning teachers have opportunities to succeed.

Rationale

System-wide support is necessary for beginning teachers to become proficient educators. Local school board policies delineate district commitments to the beginning teachers it hires. The appropriate assignment of beginning teachers is a critical factor and an important consideration in facilitating their successful entry into the profession. Beginning teachers who are placed in assignments for which they have been prepared are more likely to remain in the profession than those who are placed in assignments for which they have not been prepared.

Quality Indicators

- The school board has a policy on beginning teacher support that includes appropriate placement of beginning teachers and the provision of trained support teams.
- District and school personnel allocate resources for the support of beginning teachers.
- District and school personnel assign beginning teachers to positions in which they are likely to succeed. When possible, they avoid placing beginning teachers in difficult assignments, instead opting for placements that will provide beginning teachers with greater opportunities for success.
- District and school personnel support principals in their efforts to develop faculties that have shared responsibility for the success of its beginning teachers.
- Beginning teachers are assigned to only one school.
- Beginning teachers teach classes only within their areas of certification.
- If beginning teachers must be assigned to work in challenging settings, mentors and school and district administrators provide additional assistance and/or resources to these beginning teachers. This assistance may include more intensive mentoring, specialized training, arrangements for team teaching, and/or increased assistance from paraprofessionals.



DESIGN, ORGANIZATION, AND CONTEXT

Standard 5: Roles and Responsibilities of Principals

Supported by district administration and specialized training, principals have unique responsibilities to ensure that newly hired beginning teachers are supported and retained by the school.

Rationale

Critical to each beginning teacher's success are the knowledge, attitudes, and actions of the principal. Though the principal may delegate some beginning teacher support responsibilities, the principal is the one who can facilitate beginning teacher success by allocating resources, such as intensive support, release time for observations, specialized training, team-teaching arrangements, and/or paraprofessional assistance.

Quality Indicators

- Principals are knowledgeable about beginning teacher development and the role of the support system in retaining beginning teachers.
- Principals understand, inform the faculty of, and actively advocate the support system's rationale and goals.
- Principals secure assignments for beginning teachers that increase the likelihood for success early in their careers by:
 - Reducing the number of difficult assignments,
 - Giving beginning teachers their own classrooms,
 - Assigning beginning teachers fewer students than veteran teachers,
 - Assigning beginning teachers fewer students with special needs,
 - Assigning beginning teachers single grade classrooms,
 - Assigning beginning teachers classes only within their area of certification,
 - Assigning beginning teachers a limited number of class preparations, and
 - Limiting extracurricular assignments.
- If beginning teachers must be assigned to work in difficult assignments, building principals provide them with additional assistance and resources.
- Principals facilitate the introduction of beginning teachers to the staff and assimilate beginning teachers into the learning community by providing orientation and ongoing information on school resources, procedures, policies, and the TxBESS program.
- Principals understand the role of other support team members (e.g., mentors, educator preparation faculty members) and respect the confidentiality between team members and the beginning teacher.
- Principals encourage the use of the *TxBESS Activity Profile* as a tool for individualized professional development plans and goal setting.



DESIGN, ORGANIZATION, AND CONTEXT

Standard 5: Roles and Responsibilities of Principals (cont'd)

- Principals participate in TxBESS training and explore the program's potential use as a structure for determining individual- and school-level professional development for all teachers.
- Principals differentiate between the Professional Development and Appraisal System (PDAS), an annual performance evaluation, and the *TxBESS Activity Profile* (TAP), a formative collection of data for self-assessment.
- Principals schedule time and provide access to resources for mentors and beginning teachers to work together on a regular basis.
- Principals encourage the participation of beginning teachers in learning activities appropriate for their level of development (e.g., observing experienced teachers, participating in study groups, and attending workshops and conferences).



DESIGN, ORGANIZATION, AND CONTEXT

Standard 6: Diversity

The support program provides beginning teachers with knowledge and skills that enable them to work effectively with diverse student populations and communities.

Rationale

A support program for beginning teachers is built on a shared respect for all. Support team members view differences as opportunities for learning and believe cross-cultural experiences are an integral part of the beginning teacher's learning. Additionally, the team assists the beginning teacher in establishing and conveying to students a relationship between the curriculum and the various cultures represented in the community. The team encourages attitudes that foster unity while respecting diversity.

Quality Indicators

- The program helps beginning teachers effectively teach diverse student populations.
- The support team informs beginning teachers of the variety of school and community resources that foster understanding of their students and the changing society in which they teach.
- The program provides professional development activities that specifically address:
 - Effective curriculum and instructional strategies for use with learners with diverse needs; and
 - The impact on student learning of attitudes toward, and understanding of, cultural and linguistic differences.
- The support team assists beginning teachers in understanding their students' cultures and in communicating with families/caregivers about the achievements of students.



SUPPORT AND FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT OF BEGINNING TEACHERS

Standard 7: Selection of Support Team Members

Each beginning teacher has a support team that consists of the principal, a mentor, and a representative from an educator preparation entity. Support teams are selected using well-defined criteria that are consistent with beginning teachers' assignments and responsibilities and team members' responsibilities in the support program.

Rationale

Well-qualified team members from educator preparation entities and the local school and/or district are critical partners for the successful implementation of the TxBESS program. The leadership skills of veteran educator members of support teams will likely be enhanced through their service as resources to beginning teachers. However, to effectively carry out these responsibilities and grow professionally, formal training of all support team members is essential.

Quality Indicators

- Criteria for selecting support team members are clearly specified, and each member of the partnership follows and supports the use of these criteria.
- The partnership follows a comprehensive plan for training support team members. Support team members have:
 - An understanding of expected beginning teacher development,
 - Knowledge of formative assessments such as the *TxBESS Activity Profile*,
 - Skill in coaching the beginning teacher and in fostering reflective practice in beginning teachers,
 - The necessary interpersonal skills to work collaboratively with a beginning teacher,
 - A commitment to their own professional growth and learning,
 - A high degree of competency in their own teaching practices, and
 - The ability to demonstrate excellent professional role modeling.
- Input from the beginning teacher is considered when matching the support team members with the beginning teacher. The beginning teacher and the experienced teacher team member(s) are matched in terms of relevant experience, current assignments, and/or proximity of work location. If the match is not beneficial to the beginning teacher, alternative arrangements are made.
- Team members are familiar with the instructional content and the student population being taught by the beginning teacher(s) with whom they are working.



SUPPORT AND FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT OF BEGINNING TEACHERS

Standard 8: Training of Support Team Members

Support team members are well prepared to assume their responsibilities and are consistently supported in their efforts to assist beginning teachers. Professional development focuses on the knowledge and skills necessary to identify and respond to beginning teacher needs. Support teams meet regularly to plan and implement support activities.

Rationale

Not all excellent teachers are prepared to help novices develop professionally. Mentors and other support providers need to be aware of the diversity of beginning teacher needs and be able to structure and provide opportunities that foster professional growth and development. Support team members must be prepared for their roles and be provided opportunities to assess and reflect on their efforts.

Quality Indicators

- Professional development experiences are provided to assist support team members with their assigned roles. Support team training provides opportunities for meaningful, job-embedded professional development as support team members practice learning new skills, including but not limited to mentoring and administering the *TxBESS Activity Profile* and other formative assessments. See Appendix A, Guidelines for Support Team Training and Relationships.
- At least one support team member participates in training for the *TxBESS Activity Profile*.
- Support team members are provided time to meet with each other to develop and refine needed skills, problem solve, and assess and reflect on their work.
- Program staff and support team members participate in national, state, and local activities and discussions related to the development and enhancement of beginning teacher support systems.
- Each TxBESS project will have, or have access to, at least one trainer. TxBESS state trainers provide training for local mentor trainers. Local mentor trainers keep up with enhancements to TxBESS training. Local mentor trainers agree to maintain the integrity of the TxBESS training.
- Each mentor completes the TxBESS mentor training as delivered by a TxBESS mentor trainer. Mentors keep up with enhancements to the TxBESS program.



SUPPORT AND FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT OF BEGINNING TEACHERS

Standard 9: Formative Assessment and Continuous Growth of the Beginning Teacher

The beginning teacher, in partnership with the mentor and/or other support team members, completes the TxBESS Activity Profile (TAP), which is based on the TxBESS Framework. Though the TAP is required to be used only once during the first year of teaching, its periodic use is encouraged to document growth in the beginning teacher's classroom practices. The information obtained from the TAP and other formative assessments is used to shape the scope, focus, and content of beginning teachers' ongoing professional development.

Rationale

An early assessment of a beginning teacher's strengths and needs helps target support services where they are most needed. Information from the TAP can guide the teacher in establishing and pursuing professional development goals during the first two years of teaching. Beginning teachers may move forward in their professional practice in a variety of ways, developing different aspects of teaching at different rates. Engaging in ongoing formative assessments supports habits of self-reflection and career-long professional growth.

Quality Indicators

- The TAP is administered according to stated procedures.
- At least one support team member is trained to use the TAP and is prepared to discuss the assessment information with the beginning teacher and other support team members, as appropriate.
- The support team conducts informal assessments, using such means as conversations, logs, or interactive journals, to provide data to the beginning teacher to monitor his/her own growth and progress.
- Formal assessments used to supplement the TAP are aligned with the *TxBESS Framework* and exemplify sound assessment practices.
- Information gathered from the TAP and other formative assessments contributes to the design of subsequent professional development.



SUPPORT AND FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT OF BEGINNING TEACHERS

Standard 10: Individualized Support for Increased Teaching Proficiency

Each member of the support team—the principal, a mentor, and an educator preparation faculty member—is well prepared to support the beginning teacher in the areas identified on the TAP Action Plan. Support for the beginning teacher may include activities such as one-to-one coaching, small group meetings with other beginning teachers led by trained facilitators, conferences, training sessions, and university-based courses.

Rationale

Coaching from mentors, teacher educators, and principals is a powerful tool for facilitating the growth of the beginning teacher. In one-to-one coaching relationships, the beginning teacher learns the skills necessary to become an effective, reflective practitioner. In some instances, partnerships may determine that the effectiveness of beginning teachers could be enhanced more efficiently through large- or small-group learning activities, such as reading groups, short-term classes delivered through distance learning technology, and guided group action research projects.

Quality Indicators

- As a group, support team members establish each member's role and responsibilities related to the development of the beginning teacher.
- Support team members participate in ongoing training that helps ensure that they are knowledgeable about beginning teachers' development and needs, appropriate roles of support team members, and coaching skills.
- Beginning teachers' and mentors' classrooms are in close proximity to one another. When possible, beginning teachers and mentors have the same or similar teaching assignments and share a planning period and/or lunch period.
- Beginning teachers and experienced teacher team members are given dedicated time to work together and are provided this time through strategies such as reciprocal observations, release time, reduced teaching loads, and/or joint planning periods.
- Principals encourage the participation of beginning teachers in professional development activities appropriate for their level of experience (e.g., observing experienced teachers, participating in study groups, attending workshops and conferences).
- When group activities are used to develop beginning teacher proficiency, activities reflect the beginning teachers' needs and developmental levels. These activities are pertinent to the teachers' assignments and provide opportunities for immediate application of new learning. Individualized follow-up is provided.
- All support activities foster beginning teacher growth, reflection, and autonomy.



SUPPORT AND FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT OF BEGINNING TEACHERS

Standard 11: Ongoing Professional Development of Beginning Teachers

Professional development is designed to foster each beginning teacher's understanding of the state student standards, the TxBESS Framework, the teacher's students, and local instructional initiatives.

Rationale

The professional development of beginning teachers is guided by a common set of expectations yet is responsive to the needs of the individual teacher and the local school district. Formal learning experiences, such as workshops or seminars, are designed, presented, and reinforced with follow-up activities so that teachers will find the learning experiences to be helpful and relevant to their needs. Participating in a variety of meaningful professional development experiences promotes the growth of beginning teachers and their retention in the profession.

Quality Indicators

- Beginning teachers are given release time for observations of and meetings with the mentor and other experienced teachers. Additionally, beginning teachers are given release time for targeted professional development related to the TAP Action Plan.
- Beginning teachers participate in scheduling their professional development activities. Consideration is given to each beginning teacher's schedule in planning the time, place, and frequency of professional development activities.
- Support focuses on the state standards and on the *TxBESS Framework*, i.e., planning and preparation, classroom management, communication and instruction, and professionalism.
- Support team members and beginning teachers participate together in professional development activities, as appropriate.
- New learning developed in professional development activities is supported over time through a variety of strategies that are effective in working with beginning teachers and includes, but is not limited to, coaching, one-on-one support by a team member, classroom observations, teaching demonstrations, and interactive journals.
- Well-qualified professional development facilitators understand research-based educational theory and effective practice, model teaching practices that foster success in multicultural/multilingual environments, understand the developmental nature of teaching, and promote reflective practice.
- Professional development activities provide opportunities for beginning teachers to reflect on their own practice and apply new learning in their own classrooms.



RESOURCES AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Standard 12: Allocation and Use of Resources

The partnerships allocate sufficient personnel time and fiscal resources to deliver planned services and maximize beginning teacher success. Adequate resources are provided for beginning teachers and their support teams.

Rationale

Appropriate and adequate human and fiscal resources largely determine the quality and effectiveness of a beginning teacher support program. Support and assessment services should be based on realistic plans that draw on available federal, state, regional, district, and school resources.

Quality Indicators

- The program allocates sufficient funds to support beginning teachers and their support teams, including compensation to mentors and educator preparation faculty who serve on support teams.
- Mentors are given a stipend and release time for training, observing, and meeting with beginning teachers.
- Release time is provided to beginning teachers and mentors for reciprocal observations, coaching conversations, and planning.
- Fiscal and personnel resources are allocated to ensure that all aspects of the program (e.g., formative assessment, mentor training, beginning teacher professional development) are well supported.
- Adequate personnel resources are allocated for administering the program and for providing support to beginning teachers and mentors.
- Existing professional development resources, especially those designed to support beginning teachers, are coordinated to support and enhance the program.
- The use of program resources is monitored on a regular basis, and adjustments are made as needs arise.



RESOURCES AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Standard 13: Program Evaluation and Accountability

Beginning teacher support programs implement and maintain a comprehensive, ongoing system of program evaluation that involves partners and other stakeholders and fosters program improvements. The partnerships are held accountable for the quality and effectiveness of support provided to each beginning teacher.

Rationale

To demonstrate high quality, a program implements a regular and comprehensive evaluation and makes refinements based on the evaluation results. The evaluation is based on the *TxBESS Program Standards* and *TxBESS Framework*. The evaluation supports continued development of the program and recognizes that both the *TxBESS Activity Profile* and other formative assessments provide valuable information for TxBESS program improvement.

Quality Indicators

- TxBESS programs evaluate themselves in light of the mission, goals, and the *TxBESS Program Standards* and *TxBESS Framework* and use the quality indicators associated with each standard to assess progress.
- Program evaluations include information from internal and external sources.
- Feedback about program quality and effectiveness is sought in systemic ways from beginning teachers, their support teams, and others involved in the program.
- The delivery and content of both individualized support and formal professional development activities are evaluated for their relevance and effectiveness.
- Adjustments and improvements in all components of the program are based on the results of ongoing program evaluation, the implications of new and shared knowledge about teaching and learning, and the identified strengths and needs of beginning teachers.
- The support team uses external measures to examine program quality and effectiveness.



APPENDIX A

GUIDELINES FOR SUPPORT TEAM TRAINING AND RELATIONSHIPS

Partnerships that support beginning teachers are a critical part of TxBESS. A goal of TxBESS is to ensure that each beginning teacher learns to teach with the guidance of a support team. This support team consists of experienced educators from educator preparation programs, an experienced teacher who serves as mentor, and a principal from the beginning teacher's school. Each team member has specific responsibilities and a special role to play in the development of the beginning teacher.

For effective professional development for support team members, training is ongoing and thorough for the following reasons:

- Coaching requires skills that differ from teaching skills.
- Training helps new support team members take on their new roles confidently.
- Support team members need opportunities to communicate with others in similar roles.
- Support team members need opportunities to develop and refine their skills through practice.

This appendix elaborates on some of the *TxBESS Program Standards* and provides guidelines for establishing effective support team working relationships.

1. **The principal of the beginning teacher's school has unique responsibilities as part of the beginning educator's support team.** According to Standard 5, principals:
 - (a) Secure teaching assignments for beginning teachers that optimize opportunities for success. Some assignment considerations include:
 - Teaching assignments in the area(s) of preparation/certification
 - A minimum number of class preparations
 - Assigning beginning teachers their own classrooms
 - A smaller than average number of students
 - A smaller than average number of students with special needs (including, but not limited to, students with identified disabilities, gifted and talented students, and students who are English language learners)
 - Limited extracurricular responsibilities that are directly related to the beginning teacher's assignment
 - (b) Encourage beginning teachers' participation in a variety of professional development activities, including orientation to district/school policies, assimilation of beginning teachers into the school community, and encouragement of beginning teacher relationships with support teams. Principals, supported by district administrators, have some particular responsibilities in this area:



- Providing release time and other resources for the beginning teacher to meet with support team members, observe more experienced teachers, and participate in other professional development activities appropriate to the individual's needs and developmental levels
- Providing release time and other resources for school-based mentors to meet with the beginning teacher and participate in ongoing support team training
- Respecting the confidentiality of beginning teachers and support team members
- Assigning different school-based mentors when previously established relationships are unproductive

2. **Criteria for selecting mentors are applied consistently.** Criteria listed in Standard 7 include:

- (a) Understanding of beginning teacher development
- (b) Knowledge of formative assessments such as the *TxBESS Activity Profile*
- (c) Willingness to provide feedback and share instructional practices with beginning teachers
- (d) Effective interpersonal skills and willingness to work collaboratively with a beginning teacher
- (e) Demonstrated commitment to their own professional growth and learning
- (f) Demonstrated use of best practices in their own teaching
- (g) Effectiveness as a professional role model

TxBESS program staff may add more specific criteria, such as:

- Demonstrated reflection on educational practice
- Demonstrated expertise in teaching the state standards
- A required amount of teaching experience
- Current or recent experience in the same, or a similar, assignment as the beginning teacher
- Geographic proximity to the beginning teacher
- Interest in assimilating beginning teachers into the profession

3. **Once mentors are selected, they will participate in ongoing support team training, including initial training in how to coach beginning teachers and how to provide ongoing support.** Standard 8 requires TxBESS support team members to demonstrate knowledge and skill in the following areas:

- (a) Establishing a trusting relationship with the beginning teacher and other support team members
 - Understanding the roles of support providers, including maintaining the confidentiality of the beginning teacher
 - Building rapport with the beginning teacher



- Being an advocate for the beginning teacher
 - Implementing effective communication with other support team members, including handling tensions that may arise in support team relationships
 - Disengaging from the mentoring relationship when necessary
 - Benefiting as a support team member
- (b) Understanding and using research on teacher development
- Understanding that learning to teach is a career-long process with predictable developmental stages
 - Recalling the day-to-day experiences of beginning teaching
 - Helping the beginning teacher develop and attain professional development goals
 - Helping the beginning teacher become self-sufficient
- (c) Using coaching, problem solving, and conferencing skills effectively
- Helping the beginning teacher use effective practices so students will demonstrate learning, as defined in the student standards and in local district and school policies
 - Helping the beginning teacher learn to self-assess and problem solve
 - Establishing goals for collaborative support team relationships
- (d) Helping the beginning teacher develop an action plan for professional development based on the *TxBESS Activity Profile*
- (e) Using strategies to facilitate adult learning
- Planning for productive use of time
 - Using release time effectively by engaging in structured, meaningful activities
 - Conducting reciprocal observations, using reflective and constructive feedback
 - Using journals to promote reflection
 - Using action research methodologies for problem solving
- (f) Using technology to facilitate effective communication among support team members
- Email
 - Listservs
 - Web resources
 - Video conferences
- (g) Using strategies to create a positive school climate that supports beginning teachers
- Communicating program goals and procedures to school and district administrators
 - Communicating program benefits to other teachers, community members, and students
 - Creating time in the school schedule for support activities



4. **Support team members consciously build trusting relationships with the beginning teacher.** According to Standards 8-10, support team members use the following strategies, as appropriate:
- (a) Consulting with the beginning teacher on meeting places and times, including the option of holding the initial support team meeting away from school to minimize distractions
 - (b) Establishing goals for the relationships between support team members and beginning teachers by framing them in a larger context (e.g., to help beginning teachers ensure that their students demonstrate mastery of the state standards and to learn best practices for teaching in content areas to make their classroom inclusive learning communities)
 - (c) Establishing ground rules for the relationship, for example:
 - Frequency of meetings
 - Length of meetings
 - Preferred methods of communication between meetings
 - Methods of emergency contact
 - (d) Avoiding nonscheduled, open-ended offers to help that usually lack purpose and focus
 - (e) Setting a purpose for each meeting. In the beginning, support team members assume this responsibility, but as the school year and the relationship progress, the beginning teacher may take on more of this responsibility. Examples of meeting topics (many of which are from the *TxBESS Framework*) include:
 - Tools of the trade—required and supplementary materials, such as the student standards and guides for state or district assessments; district curriculum guides; textbooks; technology; and other regional, district, and school resources
 - Time management for beginning teachers—efficient record keeping, use of technology for planning
 - Building a repertoire of teaching strategies (e.g., cooperative learning, project methodology, expanding the walls of the classroom, lecture) and judging the appropriateness of a strategy for the content, skill, and students being taught
 - Developing a repertoire of assessment strategies (e.g., performance assessment, portfolios, teacher-made tests, state and national standardized tests), knowing basic assessment principles, and determining the appropriate assessment tool for the purpose
 - Integrating instruction and assessment and evaluating student work as a basis for planning instruction
 - Understanding strengths and needs of all students (e.g., those with identified special needs, those who are English language learners, gifted and talented students, those with varied cultural and ethnic backgrounds)



- Engaging students in meaningful learning—establishing a culture that values learning
 - Communicating with students’ families/caregivers—initial and ongoing communications, conferences
 - Developing and implementing an individualized learning plan based on the results of formative assessments, such as the *TxBESS Activity Profile*
- (f) Recognizing the individual needs of beginning teachers. Maturity, previous experiences, and the current teaching assignment will affect the beginning teacher’s needs for support. The TxBESS Performance Standards provide a framework for analysis and discussion of the beginning teacher’s skills and for creating a professional development plan.
- (g) Recognizing the differences between a buddy and a mentor
- (h) Internalizing boundaries and establishing realistic expectations for mentors
- (i) When observing the beginning teacher, the support provider schedules pre- and post-observation conferences within 24 hours of the observation, whenever possible. One goal of the pre-observation conference should be for the beginning teacher to identify purposes for the observation.
5. **Support team members use strategies that will help beginning teachers become the reflective practitioners described in the TxBESS Performance Standards.** According to Standards 9-11, such strategies include:
- (a) Journals or dialogue journals
 - (b) Coaching
 - (c) Questioning
 - (d) Problem solving
 - (e) Self-assessment
 - (f) Study groups
 - (g) Modeling

