State Policy Review: Teacher Induction

Texas

The New Teacher Center’s 2011 Review of State Policies on Teacher Induction provides comprehensive summaries for all 50 states. For each state, the NTC reviews the presence or absence of policies related to 10 key criteria that are most critical to the provision of universal, high-quality induction and mentoring support for beginning educators. The state summaries capture all relevant policies, statutes, regulations, induction program standards, and other guidance on new teacher induction and mentoring.

1. Teachers Served:
State policy should require that all teachers receive induction support during their first two years in the profession.

The state does not require new teachers to receive induction support. State policy provides that “each school district may assign a mentor teacher to each classroom teacher who has less than two years of teaching experience in the subject or grade level to which the teacher is assigned.” [Texas Education Code § 21.458]. It requires all participants in educator preparation programs to be provided a “campus mentor” during their internship year. [Texas Administrative Code Rule § 228.35]

The state operates the Beginning Teacher Induction and Mentoring Program to which a school district may apply for funds to establish a mentoring program for first- and second-year teachers.

2. Administrators Served:
State policy should require that all school administrators receive induction support during their first two years in the profession.

The state does not require new school administrators to receive induction support.

3. Program Standards:
The state should have formal program standards that govern the design and operation of local teacher induction programs.

The state does not have formal induction program standards.

4. Mentor Selection:
State policy should require a rigorous mentor selection process.

State policy requires that a mentor teacher must “have at least three complete years of teaching experience with a superior record of assisting students, as a whole, in achieving improvement in student performance.” [Texas Education Code § 21.458]

5. Mentor Training:
State policy should require foundational training and ongoing professional development for mentors.

State policy requires that a mentor teacher must complete “a research-based, mentor and induction training program” approved by the state education commissioner and complete “a mentor training program provided by the district.” [Texas Education Code § 21.458]
6. Mentor Assignment and Caseload:
State policy should address how mentors are assigned to beginning teachers, allow for manageable mentor caseloads, and encourage programs to provide release time for mentors.

State policy requires that a mentor teacher must teach in the same school and, to the extent practicable, teach the same subject or grade level as the beginning teacher. [Texas Education Code § 21.458]. In addition, an induction program funded through the Beginning Teacher Induction and Mentoring Program must provide “scheduled release time in order for a mentor teacher to fulfill mentoring duties.”

7. Program Delivery:
State policy should identify key induction program elements, including a minimum amount of mentor-new teacher contact time, formative assessment of teaching practice, and classroom observation.

A local induction program funded through the state’s Beginning Teacher Induction and Mentoring Program (BTIM) “must be a research-based mentoring program that, through external evaluation, has demonstrated success in improving new teacher quality and teacher retention.”

BTIM programs must provide orientation and mentoring for beginning teachers and include the following elements: (1) A recruitment process for mentor teachers; (2) A structured mentoring component based upon research on teacher induction, beginning teacher development, and quality professional development; (3) Regular teacher observations and standards-based assessments; (4) Continuous support and ongoing professional development for beginning teachers that includes collecting and analyzing student performance data, classroom management, and pertinent topics related to pedagogy and student achievement; (5) Continuous support and ongoing professional development for mentor teachers that includes collecting and analyzing student performance data, classroom management, and pertinent topics related to pedagogy and student achievement; (6) Scheduled release time for mentor teachers; and (7) Training for administrators on implementing and supporting an induction and mentoring program. [Texas Administrative Code Rule § 153.1011]

The rule also prescribes specific mentor duties, including: (1) Participation in beginning teacher orientation; (2) Weekly meetings with the beginning teacher; (3) Documenting mentor/beginning teacher activities; (4) Attending regularly scheduled campus mentor support meetings and trainings; (5) Providing support to new teachers in collecting and analyzing student data, classroom management, curriculum planning, and other activities related to pedagogy and improved student achievement; (6) Conducting observations and assessments of the beginning teacher; and (7) Completing all requirements of the school district’s beginning teacher induction and mentoring program. [Texas Administrative Code Rule § 153.1011]

8. Funding:
The state should provide dedicated funding to support local educator induction programs.

The state supports an annual grant program — the Beginning Teacher Induction and Mentoring Program — to which a school district may apply for funds to establish a mentoring program for first- and second-year teachers. Funds may be used only for providing: (1) Mentor teacher stipends; (2) Scheduled time for mentor teachers to provide mentoring to assigned classroom teachers; and (3) Mentoring support through providers of mentor training.

Current state funding (2009 – 2011) is approximately $11.6 million. Eligible applicants are school districts and open-enrollment charter schools that submitted the mandatory notice of intent by the October 2, 2009 deadline.

9. Educator Accountability:
The state should require participation in and/or completion of an induction program to advance from an initial to a professional teaching license.

The state does not require new teachers to participate in an induction program in order to advance to a professional teaching license. However, state policy does require all participants in educator preparation programs to be provided a “campus mentor” during their internship year. [Texas Administrative Code Rule § 228.35]

10. Program Accountability:
The state should assess or monitor program quality through accreditation, program evaluation, surveys, site visits, self-reports, and other relevant tools and strategies.

The Beginning Teacher Induction and Mentoring Program allows the state education agency “to audit mentor program funds, and requires each district providing a program to submit progress reports to the commissioner.” A final evaluation report must include: (1) the total number of beginning teachers and mentor teachers who actually participated in the beginning teacher induction and mentoring program; and (2) the use of funds and activities conducted. [Texas Administrative Code Rule § 153.1011]
Links:
Texas Education Agency – Beginning Teacher Induction and Mentoring: http://www.tea.state.tx.us/btim.aspx

The Texas Education Agency reviewed an initial draft of this state summary.
This information is accurate as of March 2011.