POLICY
SNAPSHOT

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Supporting New Teachers: What Do We Know About Effective State Induction Policies?

Finding effective ways to support all teachers—especially new and struggling teachers—has never been more critical. According to the U.S. Department of Education, approximately 419,000 new teachers will be hired in 2015 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2011). Estimates suggest that between 40 percent and 50 percent of these new teachers will leave the education workforce within five years (Ingersoll, 2012). Research suggests that induction programs can increase teacher retention rates—but this impact depends on the quality of supports provided (Ingersoll, 2012; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004).

A systematic approach to induction ensures that new teachers have the resources and supports they need to be effective in the classroom. Although this topic has gained much traction in the literature and in states and districts across the country, states continue to seek guidance on how to leverage their resources to create high-quality induction and mentoring programs. In this Policy Snapshot, we summarize existing research about induction and identify important state policy considerations for building a systematic, comprehensive approach to teacher induction. This brief also provides considerations for differentiating supports for special educators and teachers of English language learners (ELLs), which are often hard-to-staff positions. Although federal and local policies also have potential for positive impact, this policy snapshot focuses on the role of state education agencies. To help support states in making policy decisions, we also include practical examples of mentoring policies and programs. That said, we do not endorse any of the programs featured.

What Is the Difference Between Mentoring and Induction?

The terms *mentoring* and *induction* are often used interchangeably. However, mentoring is one-on-one support and feedback provided by an experienced veteran teacher to a new or struggling teacher. An induction program is a larger system of support that often includes mentoring but also includes additional supports, such as help with curriculum planning and professional development.

Quote to Note

"Teachers are not 'finished products' when they complete a teacher preparation program. Strong residency and mentored induction experiences during their initial years in the classroom provide beginning teachers with invaluable support as they lay the groundwork to become accomplished teachers. A well-planned, systematic induction program for new teachers is vital to maximize their chances of being successful in any school setting."

(National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2003, p. 20)

What Does the Research Say About Effective Induction Programs?

High-quality induction programs, when implemented well, can increase not only retention but also teacher effectiveness and can improve student learning; for example, receiving high-quality induction and mentoring has been associated with first-year teachers showing student performance gains equivalent to those of fourth-year teachers who did not have this support (Strong, 2006). In 2007, Villar and Strong calculated the return on investment of an induction program in California after five years to be $1.66 for every dollar spent. Both novice teachers and experienced teachers who are new to the district can benefit from induction programs.

Mentoring is a critical part of induction programs. Research suggests that states and districts should set criteria for mentor selection and assignment, including the following:

- Interpersonal skills

- Instructional effectiveness

- Leadership

- Work experience

- Content-area and grade-level expertise similar to the mentee's assignment (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2004; Goldrick, Osta, Barlin, & Burn, 2012; Hobson, Ashby, Malderez, & Tomlinson, 2009; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Johnson, 2009; Wechsler, Caspary, Humphrey, & Matsko, 2010)

Research Spotlight

From Good to Great: Exemplary Teachers Share Perspectives on Increasing Teacher Effectiveness Across the Career Continuum

A new report released by the National Network of State Teachers of the Year and the Center on Great Teachers and Leaders found that among the surveyed National and State Teachers of the Year, access to an assigned or informal mentor was ranked higher than any other support during the novice career stage in terms of its impact on their effectiveness. Only 37 percent of respondents overall had an assigned mentor, but among those who did, the most important mentor characteristics included modeling effective teaching practices and providing helpful support and advice—more than 60 percent of respondents ranked these two characteristics as among the three most important characteristics of a mentor.

Source: http://www.gtlcenter.org/sites/default/files/Good_to_Great_Report.pdf

Like teachers, mentors should receive ongoing professional development. Mentors should receive compensation for their additional responsibilities but also be held accountable for their coaching and support (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2004; Goldrick et al., 2012; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Johnson, 2009; Wechsler et al., 2010).

Effective induction programs provide more than just mentoring. A comprehensive induction program should include the following:

- An orientation to the district and school culture through effective principal leadership and communication

- Instructional support that includes data-driven conversations between mentors and through peer-based professional learning communities

- A set of professional expectations that are aligned with school, district, or state standards

- Ongoing professional development based on individual teacher needs (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2004; Goldrick et al., 2012; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Johnson, 2009; Wechsler et al., 2010)

Strategies for Setting Effective Policy Related to Induction Programs

States play a crucial role in ensuring that teachers have access to high-quality induction programs. The following sections highlight state policy strategies that your state should consider.

1. **Set Program Requirements.** State policies can set minimum expectations for induction programs, such as who must participate and for how long, the standards guiding the programs, and who may serve as mentors.

   Participation. Policies outlining required participation in an induction program ensure that all novice teachers receive some support. As of 2012, 27 states required some form of induction or mentoring for all beginning teachers (Goldrick et al., 2012). One way to require participation is to tie successful completion of the induction program to recertification requirements. For example, Colorado and Massachusetts both require successful completion of an induction program in order to obtain a professional license.

   Clear Expectations for the Induction Team. Each member of the induction team (teacher, mentor, and administrator) must clearly understand the expectations of the induction program. Program staff should provide clear and effective communication about the roles and responsibilities of the mentors and principals (Humphrey, Koppich, Bland, & Bosetti, 2011; Humphrey, Wechsler, Bosetti, Park, & Tiffany-Morales, 2008; Kapadia & Coca, 2007; Wechsler et al., 2010).

   Length of Teacher Induction. Only six states required induction for more than two years (Goldrick et al., 2012). Setting the length of teacher induction at two or more years ensures that teachers not only are provided support to thrive in their first year of teaching but also can reinforce and refine their practice throughout their second year in the classroom. A recent Institute of Education Sciences study found no impact on student achievement when teachers were offered one year of comprehensive induction support, but there were significant, demonstrated impacts by the third year of teaching when teachers were offered two years of induction support (Glazerman et al., 2010).

> **Tip**
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> **LOOKING FOR** an overview of state induction and mentoring policies? Check out the New Teacher Center's 2012 Review of State Policies on Teacher Induction.
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> **LOOKING FOR** a state discussion guide? The National Association of State Boards of Education Discussion Guide provides a summary of research and best practice as well as policy frameworks and exercises to guide state-level discussions about induction policies.

Program Standards. Program standards establish a consistent expectation for mentoring and induction activities. The New Teacher Center identifies three sets of standards that should be included:

- Foundational standards that address the program vision and goals, program assessment, evaluation, and accountability and information on leader engagement
- Structural standards focused on mentor roles and responsibilities, professional development, and teacher assessment
- Instructional standards focused on "instructional practice, equity, and universal access" (New Teacher Center, n.d.)

Sample Regulatory Text Concerning Mentor/Mentee Matching

Kentucky

"Priority shall be given to resource teachers in the following order…

1. Teachers with the same certification in the same school;
2. Teachers with the same certification in the same district;
3. Teachers in the same school;
4. Teachers in the same district; and
5. Teachers in an adjacent school district."

Mentor Qualifications. Establish mentor eligibility requirements, such as being rated highly effective on performance evaluations, demonstrated understanding of adult learning, years of experience, minimum years of instructional experience, and leadership qualities (Curtis, 2013). A screening process using these eligibility requirements can help ensure that mentors have the qualifications, characteristics, and skills needed to support new and struggling teachers.

Criteria for Assignment. In addition to articulating mentor qualifications, states can provide guidance or requirements related to the assignment of mentors. For example, Kentucky regulations prescribe priorities for selecting and matching mentors to teachers on the basis of location and certification. In New Jersey, the mentor cannot directly supervise the new teacher or conduct teacher evaluations; this requirement reinforces that conversations between the mentor and mentee should be constructive and not perceived as punitive.

2. **Allocate Enough Time for Induction Work.** Set time requirements to emphasize that your state values induction and mentoring and that the allocation of staff time for induction activities is a priority at the state and district levels. Policies can include minimum amounts of contact time, the provision of regular release time for teachers and mentors, and provisions enabling beginning teachers to have a reduced workload. In addition, policies related to mentor assignment (within the same grade level or content team, at the same school, and so on) can help ensure that teachers and mentors have opportunities to meet.

Sample Regulatory Text Related to Release Time

Connecticut

Local and regional school boards of education must "ensure substitute teacher coverage for mentors and beginning teachers to participate in the activities and modules required in the three-year teacher education and mentoring plan."

Minimum Amounts of Contact Time. Setting a minimum amount of contact time establishes clear expectations for how much and how frequently mentors and teachers must work together. For example, Kentucky requires each mentor to spend a minimum of 70 hours total with a beginning teacher, and Arkansas requires two hours of weekly contact time between mentors and new teachers (Goldrick et al., 2012). Regulations in New Jersey require that mentors provide support during the course of the year but also specifically require that the mentor teacher and novice provisional teacher meet at least once per week during the first four weeks of school, and for the first eight weeks of school if the teacher has not had prior clinical experience; this

requirement recognizes the need to differentiate supports based on preparation and also acknowledges the critical need for support at the beginning of the year (New Jersey State Board of Education, 2014).

Regular Release Time. Regular release time for both mentors and teachers can assist with the relationship development needed for a strong connection between mentor and mentee. This release time should be sanctioned as specifically for induction work (Humphrey et al., 2008; Humphrey et al., 2011; Kapadia & Coca, 2007; Wechsler et al., 2010). State policy options include the following:

- Requiring districts or local boards of education to provide release time or offering funds to pay for the release time that districts provide to mentors and mentees

- Hiring full- or part-time mentors or providing funding that districts can use to employ full- or part-time mentors

Manageable Load. Providing schools the flexibility to assign new teachers a reduced teaching schedule while they acclimate to the new job will reduce the likelihood of teachers feeling overwhelmed and increase the efficacy of the induction program's implementation (Humphrey et al., 2008; Humphrey et al., 2011; Kapadia & Coca, 2007; Wechsler et al., 2010). A positive experience early in a teacher's career, ultimately, could lead to better teacher retention rates and increased teaching effectiveness.

Similarly, state policies can also ensure that mentors have manageable caseloads. For example, states such as Delaware, Kansas, Kentucky, and Mississippi limit the number of teachers a mentor may support in a year (Goldrick et al., 2012).

Program Spotlight

Maryland Teacher Induction Program

In April 2010, the Maryland State Board of Education approved regulations to create an induction program that provides new teachers with the following:

- An orientation program
- Support from a mentor
- Observation and coteaching opportunities
- Professional development
- Formative review of new teacher performance
- Reduced workload for new teachers and mentors (to the extent practical)
- Evaluation of the induction program

All teachers must participate in the program until they achieve tenure, and veteran teachers new to a school district participate for one year. Each school system has an induction coordinator. The state also provides full-release mentors to teachers.

3. **Allocate and Secure Resources to Support and Sustain Implementation.** Providing sustainable funding and resources is critical to the continued success of induction programs. States should provide dedicated funding to support induction. In 2010–11, 17 states provided funding for teacher induction, but only 11 provided funding to all school districts (Goldrick et al., 2012). Research on best practices indicates that states should consider providing induction and mentoring funds to all districts as opposed to funding through competitive grant programs (Humphrey et al., 2008; Humphrey et al., 2011; Kapadia & Coca, 2007; Wechsler et al., 2010). The costs per teacher vary, partly dependent on whether the state partially or fully funds the program. State-supported mentor stipends range from $500 to $1,200 per year, but some states provide additional funding to support induction activities. For example, Iowa provides $1,300 per new teacher ($1,000 for a mentor stipend plus an additional $300 for program costs), whereas Oregon's grant program allocates up to $5,000 for each novice teacher (Goldrick et al., 2012).

4. **Provide Ongoing Professional Development for Teachers and Mentors.** Professional development for new teachers should expand content knowledge, focus on instructional practice, encourage collaboration, and provide opportunities to ask questions and seek answers (Sun, 2012). In addition, professional development should provide mentors with important information about the program as well as help mentors develop coaching skills and pedagogical expertise. For example, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction in Washington provides a four-day mentor academy that covers a variety of topics ranging from new teacher development and meeting the needs of adult learners to classroom management and assessments. This summer academy is followed by a two-day academy that further develops mentors' skills and gives mentors an opportunity to discuss their work. Other supports include mentor tune-ups, during which mentors practice their coaching, collaborating, and consulting skills, mentor roundtables, and an annual symposium (Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, n.d.).

Program Spotlight

Connecticut Teacher Education and Mentoring Program

The Connecticut Teacher Education and Mentoring Program is a two-year induction program for beginning teachers that includes both mentoring and professional development.

Mentors. Each beginning teacher receives a mentor who has demonstrated effective teaching practice, ability to work cooperatively as a team member, professional commitment to improving teacher induction, ability to relate to adult learners, and ability to be reflective about the art of teaching.

Professional Growth. With the teachers, mentors develop individualized growth plans that are aligned with the Connecticut Common Core of Teaching. On the basis of these growth plans, mentors work with teachers to identify professional development opportunities, or modules, based on the Connecticut Common Core of Teaching. Through this process, teachers establish performance goals, develop an action plan, and reflect on their progress. For each module, the teachers write a reflection paper detailing what they learned, and they identify any changes in teacher practice and student outcomes resulting from their professional development.

Required Participation. Teachers must complete the Teacher Education and Mentoring Program to advance from an Initial Educator Certificate to a Provisional Educator Certificate.

Funding. In 2010–11, Connecticut allocated $4.2 million of state funds for mentor stipends, mentor and administrator training, and training for reviewers of Teacher Education and Mentoring reflection papers.

Sources: http://www.ctteam.org/
http://www.newteachercenter.org/sites/default/files/ntc/main/resources/brf-ntc-policy-state-teacher-induction.pdf

5. Consider the Variation in Needs by Experience and Context.

Balance Requirements With Flexibility. Setting state policy is essential, but the policy should emphasize important components of induction programs and refrain from being too prescriptive. District resources, individual teacher needs, and teacher preparation all vary within and across districts; state policy should be flexible enough to allow districts to differentiate support as needed. Given this need for balance, clearly articulating policies and guidelines so that districts know what is required and where flexibility exists is critical to the quality of implementation across districts (Hirsch et al., 2009).

Consider Needs of Special Educators and ELL Teachers. All mentoring and induction policies should allow and encourage differentiation of supports for unique needs. Special educators and teachers of ELLs may be in particular need of specific supports. A 2009 review of the literature highlighted common needs and concerns of novice special educators (Billingsley, Griffin, Smith, Kamman, & Israel, 2009). These needs are not unique to special educators but, given the unique contexts in which special educators work, different supports may be needed to address the following:

- Collaborating with general educators in inclusion situations
- Working with administrators, paraprofessionals, and parents
- Pedagogical concerns, including concerns about materials, curriculum, and student behavior
- Managing workload, including time and scheduling, caseloads, and paperwork

Similarly, teachers working with ELLs may need support to address the following challenges:

- Differentiating instruction on the basis of English language and academic levels (Gándara, Maxwell-Jolly, & Driscoll, 2005)
- Communicating with parents and connecting with students (Gándara et al., 2005)
- Implementing collaborative models for English as a second language (ESL) (Baecher, 2012)
- Meeting literacy needs of students and managing academic demands (Baecher, 2012)
- Managing placement, testing, and compliance of the school's ESL program with federal, state, and local policies (Baecher, 2012)
- Addressing the needs of ELL students with disabilities (Baecher, 2012; Christensen, Liu, & Thurlow, 2010).

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I WANT TO KNOW MORE!

For more information or resources on teacher induction programs, please contact gtlcenter@air.org.

Resources on Induction for Special Educators

Induction insights: Ensuring strong induction policies and support
http://ncipp.education.ufl.edu/files_9/policymakers/PII-6%20Ensuring%20Strong%20Induction%20Policies%20 and%20Support.pdf

A review of teacher induction in special education: Research, practice, and technology solutions
http://ncipp.education.ufl.edu/files_6/NCIPP_Induc_010310.pdf

State policies to improve the mentoring of beginning special education teachers
http://ncipp.education.ufl.edu//files_5/NCIPP%20POLICY%20final.pdf

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