State Policy Review: Teacher Induction

Connecticut

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.
   
   State law requires the state Department of Education to “establish and administer a teacher education and mentoring program that includes guided teacher support and coaching and the completion of instructional modules … for beginning teachers.” It also requires each beginning teacher to “develop a two-year individualized mentoring plan.” [General Statutes of Connecticut (GSC) Chapter 166 § 10-145o]

   All new teachers (those who are teaching under an initial educator certificate, interim initial educator certificate, or a 90-day certificate in a subject area) are required to participate in the state’s Teacher Education And Mentoring (TEAM) Program, enacted into law in 2009 and implemented in the 2010–2011 school year. Teachers employed in public schools, charter schools and approved private special education facilities are required to participate. Teachers in most endorsement areas (bilingual education, elementary education, English language arts, health, mathematics, music, physical education, science, social studies, special education, teachers of English as a second language, visual arts and world languages) are required to participate in the full two-year TEAM program. Participation in the one-year TEAM program is required of new teachers in other endorsement areas.

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 or mentoring support.

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

   State law requires the state Department of Education “to develop guidelines for the creation and approval of district teacher education and mentoring plans.” The State Board of Education approved TEAM Program Guidelines in June 2010. The Guidelines reflect the roles and responsibilities of each of the TEAM program stakeholders – beginning teachers, school districts, the state department of education, and regional education service centers. They also describe the structures and policies that need to be in place to guide local program implementation. In addition, TEAM Mentoring Module Guidelines describe the five professional growth modules that provide a framework for support of new teachers and which must be completed by new teachers, with mentoring support. [GSC Chapter 166 § 10-145o]
4. Mentor Selection:
State policy should require a rigorous mentor selection process.

State law requires a mentor to hold “a provisional educator certificate or a professional educator certificate and have at least three years teaching experience in Connecticut, including at least one year of experience in the district in which they are presently employed. Retired certified teachers may also serve as mentors, provided they successfully complete a mentor training program.” State law tasks local school boards with the responsibility to “recruit and pair mentors from within and outside of the district to work with beginning teachers.”

[GS Chapter 166 § 10-145o]

TEAM Program Guidelines articulate specific mentor selection criteria. The Guidelines state that mentor teachers should demonstrate: (1) effective teaching practice; (2) ability to work cooperatively as a team member to aid the professional growth of a beginning teacher; (3) professional commitment to improving the induction of beginning teachers into the teaching profession; (4) ability to relate effectively to adult learners; (5) ability to be reflective and articulate about the craft of teaching; and (6) such other criteria as may be deemed necessary by the district committee.

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

State law requires the state Department of Education, in collaboration with stakeholders, to “train mentors to carry out responsibilities at the district level.” In practice, mentors must complete TEAM Program Support Teacher training, including the three-day Initial Support Teacher Training for new mentors offered by Regional Educational Support Centers. Previously trained mentors may attend a one-day mentor update training. [GS Chapter 166 § 10-145o]

MENTORS may be assigned to a beginning teacher without having completed TEAM training, but they must register for and participate in TEAM training within 30 days of assignment. TEAM Program Guidelines require both newly trained and previously trained mentors to participate in an update training every three years.

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 law says that “each mentor shall be assigned two beginning teachers, except that in certain circumstances, a mentor may be assigned three beginning teachers.” It requires local school boards to “ensure substitute teacher coverage for mentors and beginning teachers to participate in the activities and modules” required in the district’s three-year teacher education and mentoring plan and to ensure that its schools “coordinate the activities and schedules of mentors and beginning teachers to ensure faithful implementation of the district plan.”

[GS Chapter 166 § 10-145o]

Each school district is required to develop a TEAM Program Three-Year Support Plan for Teachers and Mentors. The plan must include a procedure for addressing any problems or issues that arise between a beginning teacher and their mentor and, if warranted, a plan for dissolving a mentor placement.

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.

Legislation passed in October 2009 established the Teacher Education And Mentoring (TEAM) Program. Implementation of the program began in the 2010–2011 school year. The TEAM Program is an induction program for beginning teachers that includes mentorship and professional development. It is designed around five professional growth modules in order to provide a framework for support of new teachers. These five modules are focused on the following domains of the state’s Common Core of Teaching: classroom environment, planning, instruction, assessment and professional responsibility. Beginning teachers in core certification areas are required to receive mentorship for two years and to successfully complete two modules in their first year and three modules in their second year to fulfill program requirements. The state recommends that beginning teachers complete the
five-module process in two years, however they are given three years to complete the TEAM requirements. Beginning teachers in other certification areas are required to receive mentorship for one year and successfully complete two modules of their choice. The state recommends completion in one year, but formally provides two years to meet the requirements. [GSC Chapter 166 § 10-145o]

State law requires each mentor to “provide [50] contact hours to each beginning teacher during the program, with the expectation of approximately [10] contact hours per module.” TEAM-trained mentors work with beginning teachers to: (1) identify a need or opportunity for professional growth; (2) develop a professional growth action plan; (3) implement the action plan and apply new learning; and (4) reflect and document new learning and impact on students. Beginning teachers and their mentors must use the electronic tools available on the TEAM Program website to complete each professional growth module. [GSC Chapter 166 § 10-145o]

State law prescribes requirements for beginning teachers. “For each instructional module, beginning teachers shall (A) apply the knowledge gained through such activities in a lesson, project or demonstration of how the activity impacted student learning, and (B) submit a reflection paper or project, to be signed by the mentor, that summarizes, describes or analyzes what has been learned by the beginning teacher and their students throughout the module and how the learning contributed to the development of such beginning teacher. Such reflection paper or project shall be forwarded to the district’s coordinating committee for approval.” [GSC Chapter 166 § 10-145o]

School districts are required to employ a District Facilitator to coordinate the implementation of the TEAM Program. TEAM Program Guidelines state that this person must be a certified teacher or administrator. Districts also must establish a TEAM Coordinating Committee to plan, implement and monitor the district’s program. The Committee must include a minimum of four certified professional employees and must include the District Facilitator, a trained mentor teacher, an administrator, and a representative of “the exclusive bargaining representative for certified employees.” It must develop and implement a Three-Year District Support Plan to address the recruitment and training of mentors, a plan for the review of beginning teachers’ module reflection papers, and budget and resources that will enable teachers to successfully complete the required professional growth plans.

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

State law requires mentors to receive “a minimum of a [$500] annual stipend for each beginning teacher assigned.” Specifically, the state pays a mentor stipend of $500 for each beginning teacher served (and a $250 stipend for each beginning teacher mentored for only part of the school year). [GSC Chapter 166 § 10-145o]

The 2010–2011 school year marks the first year of implementation of the TEAM program. State funding of $4.1 million supports mentor stipends, mentor and administrator training, and training for reviewers of TEAM reflection papers. The state does not provide general funding for local TEAM programs.

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.

Beginning teachers must successfully complete the TEAM Program to be eligible for a provisional educator certificate. Teachers who do not successfully complete program requirements in the prescribed amount of time are not eligible for the provisional educator certificate or for reissuance of their initial educator certificate.

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.

State law requires the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) to “oversee an outside evaluation of the [TEAM] program every three to five years” and to “monitor district implementation of the [TEAM] program to ensure fidelity to the program’s plan and goals, including random district audits and observations by state personnel.” [GSC Chapter 166 § 10-145o]

State law requires local school boards and school districts to develop and implement a Three-Year District Support Plan. The plan must include: (1) background information about the district that includes a community profile, district profile, student profile, faculty profile, mentor profile and beginning teacher profile; (2) a statement of three-year objectives related to the state’s goal statement for the teacher education and mentoring program; (3) a general timeline for district coordinating teams to meet with central
office personnel, principals, mentors or district facilitators; (4) a description of the process used to select mentors and assign them to beginning teachers, based on subject areas, levels and need; (5) a description of the process used to train and update mentors in best practices and essential knowledge; (6) a timeline of district-wide mentoring days for observations, individual discussion, small group meetings, professional development days, regional educational service center training sessions and beginning teachers’ completion of tasks associated with each module; (7) a description of the process used to collect, review and coordinate teachers’ mentoring plans; (8) a description of the process to resolve internal disputes over the district’s recommendations to the state concerning which individuals have satisfactorily completed the instructional modules; and (9) a description of the resources and budget needed to carry out the activities described in the plan.

[**GSC Chapter 166 § 10-145o**]

State law also requires school boards to submit an annual report on mentor-teacher activities to the district coordinating committee for review and approval.

[**GSC Chapter 166 § 10-145o**]

TEAM Program Guidelines give the CSDE the responsibility “to monitor district fidelity to the program.” This can include random district audits and observations and the monitoring of district three-year support plans, mentor logs, beginning teachers’ workspace entries, mentor teachers’ workspace entries, beginning teacher timelines for participation, mentor stipend payments, and district annual reports.

---

**Links:**

Connecticut’s Teacher Education And Mentoring (TEAM) Program: [http://www.ctteam.org](http://www.ctteam.org)


*The Connecticut State Department of Education has reviewed this state summary.*

*This information is accurate as of March 2011.*