State Policy Review: Teacher Induction

Minnesota

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 new teachers receive induction support during their first two years in the profession.

The state does not require that all new teachers must receive induction or mentoring support, but does encourage school districts to develop mentoring programs for teachers new to the profession and district. The Minnesota Board of Teaching is responsible for providing resources and guidance for these programs. [Minnesota Statutes (M.S.) § 122A.70]

State law directs school districts to develop a probationary teacher peer review process with an exclusive representative of the teacher in the district. The process may include trained observers serving as mentors or coaches or having teachers participate in professional learning communities. [M.S. §§ 122A.40, 122A.41]

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

State policy does not require all 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.

Minnesota does not have formal induction program standards. The Teacher Support Partnership (TSP) — a collaboration between Education Minnesota, the Minnesota Department of Education, Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities, and the Minnesota Board of Teaching – published the Minnesota Educator Induction Guidelines in 2009. The Guidelines provide extensive resources to support the design and implementation of induction programs.

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

State policy does not address mentor selection. The Minnesota Educator Induction Guidelines developed by the Teacher Support Partnership contain guidance about mentor selection. The Guidelines address three selection criteria, (1) instructional skills, (2) mentoring skills and knowledge, and (3) personal and professional dispositions. Examples of instructional skills include five or more years of successful teaching experience, demonstration of “solid content knowledge,” and demonstration of “a broad repertoire of instructional practices.” For mentoring skills and knowledge, the Guidelines include
understanding beginning teacher development and adult learning theory, analyzing instruction based on professional teaching standards, and using a continuous improvement, professional growth model. Finally, examples of dispositions offered include open and honest communication, modeling reflective practices, and demonstrated commitment to individual professional growth and learning.

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

State policy does not require foundational training or ongoing professional development for mentors. However, the Minnesota Educator Induction Guidelines developed by the Teacher Support Partnership contain guidance about mentor training, including a specific focus on instructional coaching and communication and facilitation skills.

The Minnesota Department of Education provides an annual Report to Legislature on Staff Development about district and site-based staff development results and expenditures. The report includes each district’s account of induction program activities instituted during the previous school year. Districts self-report their mentor training activities in the following areas: coaching skills, observation strategies, professional teaching standards, and using formative assessments for professional growth.

In 2010 the Minnesota Board of Teaching made competitive grant funds available for the purpose of funding “mentor training sites.” These funds are intended for existing programs interested in enhancing and expanding mentor training outside of their school district, charter, or coalition. The Board of Teaching made available $8,000 in funding to support one or two mentor training sites.

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 does not address mentor assignment and caseload. However, the Minnesota Educator Induction Guidelines developed by the Teacher Support Partnership contain guidance about mentor assignment and providing time for mentoring. The Guidelines recommend new teacher-mentor matches “based on teaching assignment” and the provision of “protected time to engage in mentoring activities” both for the beginning educator and the mentor. They note “the most highly recommended model for mentoring calls for full-time release of teachers who fulfill mentoring roles in their school or district.”

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.

State policy does not address key induction program elements.

State law articulates minimum criteria for selection for applicants for the state-funded Mentor Training Program grant. These include a commitment to: (1) Allow staff participation; (2) Assess skills of both beginning and mentor teachers; (3) Provide appropriate in-service to needs identified in the assessment; (4) Provide leadership to the effort; (5) Cooperate with higher education institutions; (6) Provide facilities and other resources; (7) Share findings, materials, and techniques with other school districts; and (8) Retain teachers of color. [M.S. § 122A.70]

The Minnesota Department of Education provides an annual Report to Legislature on Staff Development regarding district and site staff development results and expenditures. Included within the report is each district’s account of induction program activities instituted during the previous school year. Districts self-report their program elements, such as expectations for collaboration time with a mentor, use of formative assessments to guide professional growth, new teacher observations of master teachers, new teacher orientation, new teacher seminars, observations conducted by a mentor, and if the school delivers a one-, two- or three-year program for new teachers.

The Minnesota Educator Induction Guidelines, developed by the Teacher Support Partnership, contain guidance about program delivery as well.

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

The state does not provide dedicated funding to support location educator induction programs.

In 2010 the Board of Teaching made competitive Mentor Training Program grant funding available for the purpose of funding “mentor training sites.” These funds are intended for existing programs interested in enhancing and expanding mentor training outside of their school district, charter, or coalition. In 2010, the Board of Teaching provided $8,000 of funding for one or two mentor training sites.
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 make participation in an induction program a requirement to advance to a professional teaching license.

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 state does not assess or monitor induction program quality. However, the Minnesota Educator Induction Guidelines developed by the Teacher Support Partnership contain guidance about data collection and sources of evidence as part of program evaluation.

The Minnesota Department of Education provides an annual Report to Legislature on Staff Development regarding district and site staff development results and expenditures. Included within the report is each district’s account of induction program activities instituted during the previous school year. Districts self-report on the types of evaluation measures used to determine program effectiveness. These measures include impact on student achievement, impact on teacher effectiveness, impact on teacher retention, knowledge and application of new teacher development, new teacher-mentor relationship, and new teacher job satisfaction.

Links:
Minnesota Department of Education – Teacher Induction:
http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/Accountability_Programs/School_Improvement/Professional_Development/Teach_Induction/index.html

Minnesota Education Induction Program Guidelines (from the Teacher Support Partnership):
http://teachsupportpartnershipmn.org/guidelines/

The Minnesota Department of Education has reviewed this state summary.

This information is accurate as of March 2011.