State Policy Review: Teacher Induction

Missouri

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.

Missouri law requires every district to operate a “teacher-driven mentor program.” [Missouri Revised Statutes (MRS) § 161.375]. New teachers are required to “participate in a mentoring program approved and provided by the district for a minimum of two years.” [MRS § 168.021]

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

Missouri requires new school administrators to participate in a district-provided induction program during their first two years. [5 Code of State Regulations (CSR) 80-800.360]

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

State law required the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to develop Mentoring Program Standards for teacher and principal mentoring no later than June 30, 2008. [MRS § 161.375 and 5 CSR 80-850] The standards address mentor selection, training and assignment, provide guidance about key mentoring program elements, and articulate a requirement for a systemic and ongoing program review and evaluation. [See criteria #4 – #7, #10]

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

Missouri’s Mentoring Program Standards provide criteria for mentor selection, including a requirement that mentors have a minimum of three years of teaching experience. The following are additional standards-based mentor selection criteria:

- Have traits such as enthusiasm and a professional commitment;
- Are committed to self-growth and mentoring;
- Hold a similar position (grade, subject area, same school, same district);
- Understand broad educational issues as well as specific teaching issues;
- Have a strong understanding of pedagogy, instructional expertise, and relevant administrative issues; and
- Are available to mentor (release time, fewer additional assignments).

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

Missouri’s Mentoring Program Standards provide guidance on “comprehensive mentor training.” The Standards call for training that: (1) Recognizes mentoring is not evaluation; (2) Includes cognitive coaching skills along
with collaborative training; (3) Includes observation and feedback training/skills; (4) Provides an awareness of phases of first-year educators; (5) Provides training on mentoring standards, performance-based evaluation requirements, certification requirements, and local expectations; (6) Includes a catalogue of resources available for beginning educators; (7) Recognizes the need for knowledge and strategies on classroom management; (8) Encourages small districts to form mentoring consortia; (9) Focuses on exemplary teaching and assessment practices; (10) Builds working strategies that encourage problem solving and independent thinking; (11) Provides understanding of student assessments and how educators can utilize them to guide instruction; and (12) Includes self-assessment that identifies whether mentoring is meeting both the mentor’s and protégé’s expectations. The standards do not specifically address ongoing mentor professional development.

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.

Missouri’s Mentoring Program Standards articulate that mentors and beginning teachers require sufficient time to observe teaching which can be accomplished via release time and schedule coordination. The standards also state that mentors should be “assigned collaboratively by the administrator and local professional development committee” and be “supported in time/effort by administration and school board.” Further, the standards allow programs to use “a mechanism to end pairing if either mentor or protégé is not satisfied.”

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.

Missouri’s Mentoring Program Standards provide guidance about key program elements. The standards require entry into a new teacher’s community, district, school, and classroom context that is systematic, on-going, and individualized. They also require classroom observations with pre- and post-conferences and the provision of time for mentor and beginning teacher activities and meetings.

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

The state does not provide dedicated funding to support local mentoring 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.

State law requires the State Board of Education to ensure that new teachers “participate in a mentoring program approved and provided by the district for a minimum of two years” as one of the requirements to receive a “career continuous professional certificate.” [MRS § 168.021]

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.

Missouri Mentoring Program Standards require a systemic and ongoing program review and evaluation by all stakeholders that identifies mentoring outcomes and their measurement, gathers feedback from stakeholders, and includes anonymous exit interviews.

Links:

The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has reviewed this state summary.

This information is accurate as of March 2011.