New Teacher Center’s 2016 Review of State Policies on New Educator Induction provides comprehensive summaries for all 50 states. For each state, NTC reviews the presence or absence of policies related to nine 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.

## 1. Educators Served

State policy should require that all beginning teachers, principals, and administrators receive induction support during their first two years in the profession.

The state requires mentoring and induction for all first-year teachers. Act 1091 of 2015 requires the Arkansas Teacher Excellence and Support System (TESS) “to include novice teacher mentoring and induction.” Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) program rules define a novice teacher as one with “less than one year of classroom teaching experience.” Alternatively licensed teachers (such as those who enter the profession through the Arkansas Professional Pathway to Educator Licensure) are mentored for one to two years, dependent upon program requirements.

Beginning Administrators on an Administrator License Completion Plan (ALCP) are mentored until the plan is completed up to three years. The state requires mentoring and induction for all first-year school administrators. ADE rules governing educator mentoring and induction programs define a beginning administrator as an individual with “less than one year of public school administrative experience.”

## 2. Mentor Quality

State policy should require a rigorous mentor selection process and foundational training and ongoing professional development for mentors. State policy should also establish criteria for how and when mentors are assigned to beginning educators and allow for a manageable caseload of beginning educators and the use of full-time teacher mentors.

ADE program rules define a “certified mentor” as an individual who holds a current Arkansas teaching or administrator’s license, unless otherwise not required by law.

ADE program rules require mentors to be certified by the ADE’s Office of Educator Effectiveness “as trained in the state-adopted mentoring model.” Mentors must attend all ADE-mandated training, orientation and information meetings.

All local mentoring programs must have an Induction Project Director, a designated person “responsible for the coordination of mentor assignments, oversight of mentor funding appropriations, adherence to state rules and guidelines related to mentoring, and all written and fiscal reporting and communication to the Department” Induction Project Directors shall, according to Rule 3.02.3, “Assign to each novice teacher, within three weeks of the novice teacher’s first contract day of the school year, a certified, trained mentor who has: [1] “a compatible background in licensure content area and level of licensure; and [2] at least three years of “successful teaching experience.” “A teacher employed by a public charter school with only one year of teaching experience may mentor in a public charter school if the public charter school obtains approval from the Department.” [Rule 3.02.3.3.1]

ADE program rules require mentoring programs to assign, within three weeks of a beginning administrator’s first contract day of the school year: (1) a certified administrator mentor or (2) an administrator with a minimum of one year of experience in the beginning administrator’s licensure area and who is in the process of being certified in the state-adopted mentoring model. “If a certified mentor is not available in the beginning administrator’s school district, a certified mentor may be obtained from outside the school district.” [Rule 3.02.4]

ADE rules restrict the mentoring relationship to a 1-to-1 pairing. However, a program may submit a request to the ADE “for approval for assigning more than one novice teacher or beginning administrator to a mentor.” [Rule 3.03]

## 3. Time

State policy should encourage programs to provide release time for teacher mentor and dedicated mentor-new teacher contact time.

ADE program rules require mentoring programs to provide release time for novice teacher mentors and administrator mentors to attend required training or informational meetings held by the ADE. [Rule 3.02.5] Further, programs must provide “released time during the contract day for a novice teacher and mentor to work together on the mentoring modules.” [Rule 3.02.6]

## 4. Program Quality

State policy should address the overall quality of induction programs by requiring regular observation of new teachers by mentors, the provision of instructional feedback based on those observations, and opportunities for new teachers to observe experienced teachers’ classrooms; encouraging a reduced teaching load for beginning teachers; and encouraging participation of beginning educators in a learning community or peer network.

### Teachers

ADE program rules require beginning teacher mentoring to consist of “support and focused feedback with regard to instructional skills, classroom management, and professional behaviors.” [Rule § 3.01.2] Beginning teachers must attend all ADE-mandated
training, orientation and information meetings. [Rule § 3.01.5]
The ADE describes the state’s Novice Teacher Mentoring Program as “a blended-learning environment.” The first semester is to consists of “the Survive and Thrive Resource Module,” a guideline of events to assist the new teacher in beginning the school year. In the second semester of mentoring, the NT and mentor work together through “the Survive and Thrive Module” with special emphasis to support the NT’s Professional Growth Plan (PGP) which address areas to strengthen instructional implementation. In addition, mentors who work with educators in specialty positions with use the added resources for Special Education, Library Media Specialists, and Counselors.

Local programs are required to support the “full participation” of the beginning educator in the program, “including without limitation focused observations and professional development activities, and online and face-to-face activities...that engage them in collaborative dialogue, problem solving, and professional development.” [Rule 3.02.7]

Mentoring and observational information cannot be used for employment or evaluation decisions “unless students are at risk, either physically or emotionally.” [Rule 3.05.2]

Administrators
The beginning administrator mentoring program must consist of “a certified mentor providing support and focused feedback with regard to skills, management, and professional behaviors.” [Rule § 3.01.3] Beginning administrators must attend all ADE-mandated training, orientation and information meetings. [Rule § 3.01.5]

5. Program Standards
The state should adopt formal program standards that govern the design and operation of local educator induction programs.

The state does not have formal induction program standards, but provides extensive requirements for both teacher and administrator induction in state educator mentoring rules. [Section 3.0 of Rules Governing Educator Mentoring Programs] Existing rules posted on the ADE website are aligned with the InTASC teaching standards and the ISLLC leadership standards.

6. Funding
The state should authorize and appropriate dedicated funding for local educator induction programs; and/or establish competitive innovation funding to support high-quality, standards-based programs.

ADE program rules provide for mentor stipends. [Rule 3.02.9.1] Based on the availability of funds, they also allow for a stipend for induction project directors (not to exceed $1,000) based on the number of novice teachers and beginning administrators in the school or district. [Rule 3.02.1.3]

7. Educator Certification/Licensure:
The state should require beginning educators to complete an induction program to move from an initial teaching license.

All Arkansas educators receive a standard license upon completion of their teacher preparation program. Mentoring provides support for the novice teacher in his or her first year of teaching. The ADE online web application system helps to manage the mentoring process. All novices, beginning administrators, and their respective mentors have a profile in the system and the school district project director assigns mentors to the novices. A grant is issued to the school district for the mentoring, if all the requirements are met. All novice teacher and beginning administrator mentoring documentation is recorded in the ADE online web application system.

There are no initial licenses issued for administrators. All beginning administrators are required to be mentored for a minimum of one year. An administrator not licensed but employed as an administrator, must complete an ADE-approved Administrator License Completion Plan (ALCP). The administrator has three years to complete the ALCP and must be mentored while completing the plan.

8. Program Accountability
The state should assess or monitor induction programs through strategies such as program evaluation, program surveys, peer review, and accreditation.

State program rules require the ADE to “monitor the quality of each public school or school district’s mentoring program,” such as through review of “mentoring and observation documentation” uploaded into the ADE Office of Educator Effectiveness’s data system. [Rule 3.05.1]

ADE program rules require every school district, school, or other public educational setting that employs a beginning educator to: (1) notify the ADE’s “Office of Educator Effectiveness, no later than September 1 of each year, of the appointment of an induction project director who will act as the liaison for the program.” Induction project directors must complete the annual Project Director Update sponsored by the OEE, in order to have access to the ADE’s online data system and to be qualified to pair a novice teacher or beginning administrator with a certified mentor. (2) Submit to the OEE via the online data system, no later than September 30 of each year: [A] a register of all novice teacher/mentor pairs and beginning administrator/mentor pairs employed by the school or district; and [B] an assurances statement that the school or district is in compliance with these rules regarding mentoring. [Rule 3.02]

Programs that do not comply with state program rules may be placed in “accredited-cited status” by the ADE. [Rule 3.06]
9. Teaching Conditions

States should adopt formal standards for teaching and learning conditions; conduct regular assessments of such conditions; and incorporate the improvement of such conditions in school improvement plans.

State policy addresses some aspects of teaching and learning conditions. Standard fifteen (XV) of the Arkansas Standards for Accreditation of Arkansas Public Schools and School Districts is written in Section 20.02 of the Rules Governing Standards for Accreditation: “Each room shall be furnished with equipment and instructional materials necessary to provide the environment and working conditions appropriate for subjects or activities assigned.”

The ADE conducts an on-campus Standards Review (OSR) of each school district no less than one (1) time every four years as mandated by Ark. Code Ann. §615202(e)(1). ADE Rules Governing Standards for Accreditation of Arkansas Public Schools and School Districts, Standard XVIII, Section 23.03, require the ADE to annually review all reports and investigate suspected deficiencies in meeting standards.

Each year an on-campus Standards Review of a selected number of school districts occurs to ensure compliance with Standards. The ADE may visit any school campus for an OSR at other times as determined necessary by the Commissioner of Education or the State Board of Education. A Statement of Assurance (pursuant to Ark. Code Ann. §615202(1)) must be filed with the Standards Assurance Unit each year.

Links


The Arkansas Department of Education has reviewed this state summary.

This information is accurate as of February 2016.