State Policy Review: New Educator Induction

Florida

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.

State policy does not require all new teachers or administrators to receive induction support. The state requires teachers who complete a district-sponsored alternative certification program to have a mentor. [Florida Statutes §§ 1012.56 (8.a.3)] In Florida, induction and mentoring policies and procedures are typically developed and implemented by local school districts.

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 the use of full-time teacher mentors.

State policy does not address mentor selection, training, assignment, or caseload.

3. Time

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

State policy does not address issues of time such as release time for mentors or dedicated mentor-new teacher contact time.

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.

State policy does not address program quality.

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.

State law requires the Florida Department of Education (FLDOE) to “create guidelines and identify best practices for the mentors of first-time teachers and for new teacher-support programs that focus on the professional assistance needed by first-time teachers throughout the first year of teaching” as part of teacher recruitment and retention requirements [Florida Statutes § 1012.05 (2.l.)]. The state is currently in the process of developing these guidelines. The FLDOE must consult with the Florida Center for Reading Research and the office of ‘Just Read, Florida!’ in developing the guidelines. In addition, state law requires local school boards to “adopt policies relating to mentors and support for first-time teachers” based upon the FLDOE’s guidelines. [Florida Statutes § 1012.05 (3.a.)]

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.

The state does not provide dedicated funding for local induction programs.

State policy authorizes a mentoring bonus [for holding a valid National Board for Professional Teaching Standards certificate and serving as a mentor]. Based on availability of state funds, mentor teachers certified by the National Board are eligible for “an annual bonus equal to 10 percent of the prior fiscal year’s statewide average teachers’ salary, plus the employer’s share of social security and medical taxes” if they provide “the equivalent of 12 workdays of mentoring and related services” outside of regular student contact hours. Due to budgetary constraints, legislation was revised to limit the National Board certification bonus to the first 10 years of certification only, and to provide the option of prorating the mentoring bonus. [Florida Statutes § 1012.72] Since 2011, the Legislature has not provided funding for either bonus.
7. Educator Certification/Licensure

The state should require beginning educators to complete an induction program to move from an initial teaching license.

The state does not require new teachers to participate in an induction program in order to advance to a professional certificate. However, the state requires new teachers to demonstrate mastery of “professional education competence.” One way new teachers who hold a temporary certificate can demonstrate mastery is by successfully completing a school district’s “professional education competence demonstration program,” or induction program. [Florida Statutes § 1012.56(8)(b)]

8. Program Accountability

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

The state does not assess or monitor induction program quality.

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.

The state has not adopted standards for teaching and learning conditions nor has the state has fielded a survey of teaching and learning conditions. Florida’s Educator Accomplished Practices, however, require effective educators to “maintain a student-centered learning environment that is safe, organized, equitable, flexible, inclusive, and collaborative.” [Florida State Board of Education Rule 6A-5.065]