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.

**State Policy Review: New Educator Induction**

**Illinois**

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.

Illinois does not require all beginning teachers to receive induction support. A 2002 state law requires a mentor to be assigned to every first- and second-year teacher (105 Illinois Compiled Statutes (ILCS) 5/21A-20), but this state mandate is contingent upon universal state funding. [105 ILCS 5/21A-10] Given that such funding never has materialized, the mandate has never taken effect.

Illinois does not require all beginning principals to receive induction support. State law requires mentoring of new principals for one or two years, but makes it contingent upon state funding. Similar to teacher induction, this mandate has never taken effect. By law, the new principal mentoring program would match “an experienced principal … with each new principal in order to assist the new principal in the development of his or her professional growth and to provide guidance.” Mentors must have served as a principal in Illinois for at least three years, have “demonstrated success as an instructional leader,” and have completed required training. [105 ILCS 5/2-3.53a]

State law also requires a two-year mentoring program for new superintendents, contingent upon sufficient state funding. This mandate also is not in effect. The program would match “an experienced superintendent … with each new superintendent … to assist the new superintendent in the development of his or her professional growth and to provide guidance.” Mentors must have served as an Illinois school district superintendent for at least three years, have “demonstrated success as an instructional leader,” and have completed required training. [105 ILCS 5/2-3.53b]

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.

Illinois establishes mentor selection criteria in the application for state funding. These include:

A. A record of the mentor’s effective teaching practice and professional conduct, including at least three years of teaching experience and a performance evaluation rating of “proficient” or “excellent” from each of the mentor’s last two performance evaluations;

B. Demonstrated commitment of the mentor to his or her own professional growth and learning, including the ability to be reflective and articulate about his or her teaching practice;

C. Ability of the mentor to relate and communicate effectively with colleagues;

D. The mentor’s professional commitment to improving beginning teacher induction; and

E. Knowledge of effective professional development for beginning teachers and effective adult learning strategies. [23 IAC 65.150d]

Illinois Standards of Quality and Effectiveness for Beginning Teacher Induction Programs offer additional guidance on mentor selection. Standard 5 guides programs to use clear selection criteria “that represent a commitment to mentors”: (1) evidence of effective teaching practice, (2) strong intra-and interpersonal skills, including self-reflection of practice, and (3) responsiveness to needs of beginning teachers.

Further, the state’s Teacher Leader Endorsement defines a “teacher leader” as an individual with the skills and capacity, in part, “to provide guidance, coaching, mentoring, influence, direction and support to teachers to improve the effectiveness of teaching and learning.” School districts roles in which teacher leaders are eligible to serve include coach and mentor. In order to receive a teacher leader endorsement, a candidate holding a professional educator license must have obtained a master’s degree or higher from a regionally accredited institution, have passed the test of basic skills, and have completed an approved educator preparation program. [23 IAC 25.32]
State law requires the provision of mentor training and requires mentor teachers to demonstrate “best practices in teaching.” [105 ILCS 5/21A-20] Illinois provides requirements for mentor training in application for state funding. These foundational training elements must address:

A. Adult learning theory and/or instruction relative to the implementation of Learning Forward’s Standards for Professional Learning;
B. Foundations of mentoring;
C. Formative assessment;
D. Coaching and observation strategies; and
E. Analysis of student work and data. The grant application allocates 25 percent of the available points to mentor recruitment and support, and it includes a specific call for initial and on-going training of mentors in an established “community of mentoring practice.” [23 IAC 65.150]

Proposals for state funding also must provide a plan for “ongoing” mentor training, with “at least monthly opportunities for mentors to interact with other mentors via a mentor learning community to build mentors’ skills through problem-solving and reflection so that they can better assist beginning teachers in the development of their teaching skills and professional practices.” They also must provide “a detailed description of the process to be used for assessment of mentor practice and mentor accountability.” [23 IAC 65.150]

Illinois Standards of Quality and Effectiveness for Beginning Teacher Induction Programs offer more specific guidance on mentor development. Criteria outlined in the standards include: mentors participating in foundational mentor training; mentors regularly participating in an ongoing professional learning community that supports their reflective practice and their use of mentoring tools, protocols, and formative assessment, as well as relevant district tools and standards; and mentors engaging in self-assessment to reflect on their own development as teachers and mentors.

Induction program standard 5 guides programs to match beginning teachers and mentors according to relevant factors, including certification, experience, current assignments and/or proximity of location. The standards also guide programs to define a process to address changes or necessary adjustments in mentor/beginning teacher matches.

3. Time

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

For state-funded induction programs, Illinois requires that new teachers and mentors spend at least 40 hours in face-to-face contact during the first school year, including both classroom observations and other interactions. [23 IAC 65.130] Illinois teacher induction program standards require that: program leadership allocate sufficient, sanctioned, protected time essential for high quality induction and mentoring (standard 3); mentors have time to engage in mentor learning communities (standard 6); and beginning teachers have regularly scheduled time to participate in ongoing professional development that is focused on their professional growth to support student learning (standard 7).

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. It should encourage a reduced teaching load for beginning teachers; and encourage the participation of beginning educators in a learning community or peer network.

For state-funded programs, Illinois requires the following elements:

A. The assignment of a mentor teacher to each beginning teacher for a period of at least 2 school years, providing sufficient time for the beginning teacher and mentor to engage in mentoring activities;
B. Alignment with the Illinois Professional Teaching Standards, content area standards and local school improvement and professional development plans;
C. Professional development specifically designed to ensure the growth of the beginning teacher’s knowledge and skills and accelerate the beginning teacher’s practice;
D. Formative assessment designed to ensure feedback and reflection, which must not be used in any evaluation of the beginning teacher; and
E. The role of mentor teachers, the criteria and process for their selection, and how they will be trained.

Each funded induction program may serve no fewer than 10 beginning teachers. New teachers and mentors must spend at least 40 hours in face-to-face contact during the school year. This contact time can include both classroom observation of the new teacher by the mentor and other interactions between these individuals. [23 IAC 65.130] State law requires a mentor teacher participating in the evaluation of a new teacher or the school’s evaluation procedure.

Illinois Standards of Quality and Effectiveness for Beginning Teacher Induction Programs suggest that quality program design includes time to support mentoring activities such as “analysis of student work, data collection, observations and reflective conversations.”
5. Program Standards

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

Illinois has both Illinois Standards of Quality and Effectiveness for Beginning Teacher Induction Programs approved by the State Teacher Certification Board and an Induction Program Continuum provided as guidance by the State Board of Education. All state-funded induction programs must be responsive to the requirements as set forth in the Standards, per state regulation. [23 IAC 65.130]

The state’s induction program standards are comprised of nine elements that address the following: (1) Induction Program Leadership, Administration, and Support; (2) Program Goals and Design; (3) Resources; (4) Site Administrator Roles and Responsibilities; (5) Mentor Selection and Assignment; (6) Mentor Professional Development; (7) Development of Beginning Teacher Practice; (8) Formative Assessment; and (9) Program Evaluation.

The Continuum provides descriptors for four performance levels (Establishing, Applying, Integrating, and Systematizing) of program implementation. There are performance levels for each criterion of the Program 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.

State law establishes that, when funds are available, ISBE shall pay public schools $1,200 per beginning teacher annually for two years for: (1) mentor teacher compensation; (2) mentor teacher training or new teacher training, or both; and (3) release time. The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) reserves the ability to retain up to $1 million of the appropriation to train mentors, administrators, and other personnel, to provide best practices information, and to conduct an evaluation of the programs’ impact and effectiveness. [105 ILCS 5/21A-25] In practice, since this law’s enactment in 2002, state funding has never been this robust.

When state funding is insufficient to fund every school district within Illinois, ISBE partially funds induction programs via a competitive grant process. This has been typical practice in recent years. State-funded programs must assign a mentor teacher to each beginning teacher for a period of at least 2 school years and provides at least 40 hours of mentoring annually. [23 IAC 65.20 and 65.130]

For the 2015-2016 school year, ISBE has made approximately $1 million available for the New Teacher Induction and Mentoring Program Grant. The typical grant to be awarded will be $1,200 per each new teacher served in a program that is approved for funding.

7. Educator Certification/Licensure

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

State policy does not require participation in and/or completion of an induction program to advance from an initial to professional teaching license.

Effective July 1, 2014, the state’s new teacher licensure system requires all teachers to participate in 120 hours of professional development annually. Beginning teachers will no longer be issued an initial license. All novice and veteran teachers will hold the same Professional Educator License. Participation in an induction or mentoring program may count toward the 120-hour requirement. [105 ILCS 5/21B-25, 21B-40, and 21B-45]

8. Program Accountability

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

State law requires ISBE and the State Teacher Certification Board to contract with an independent party to conduct an evaluation of new teacher induction programs by January 1, 2009 and then every third year thereafter. [105 ILCS 5/21A-30]

For state-funded programs, ISBE’s criteria for a grant application allocates 15 percent of the available points to program evaluation. It requires programs to:

A. Identify information to be collected and reported on the performance and retention of beginning teachers;
B. Design an evaluation to assess the effectiveness of particular initiatives or components of the program and produce data that can be used to improve the program; and
C. Identify a method for tracking the continued service of the teachers served after the project ends so that longitudinal data can be compiled. [23 IAC 65.150]

State-funded induction programs also are required to participate in “external reviews and statewide data collection” and to submit required data and information to ISBE annually. [23 IAC 65.170]

Illinois teacher induction program standards offer additional guidance on program evaluation. Program evaluation is to be based on the program standards, incorporate information from internal and external sources, be collected on an on-going basis and be conducted annually. Programs are expected to share results with stakeholders and participate in external reviews including ISBE program approval and review processes and other statewide data collection.
9. Teaching Conditions

The state 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 University of Chicago’s Consortium on Chicago School Research developed the 5Essentials System and Survey to identify school characteristics more likely to improve student learning. The Survey combines measures a school’s performance on the five essential supports of school improvement: Effective Leaders; Collaborative Teachers; Involved Families; Supportive Environment; and Ambitious Instruction. The Survey was first administered statewide in 2014, and has been fielded on an annual basis since.

Links


Illinois 5Essentials Survey - [https://illinois.5-essentials.org](https://illinois.5-essentials.org)

Illinois New Teacher Collaborative: [http://intc.education.illinois.edu](http://intc.education.illinois.edu)


The Illinois State Board of Education has reviewed this state summary.

This information is accurate as of February 2016.