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.

Teachers
State law requires induction programs to provide a minimum of “a two-year sequence” of support to all beginning teachers, guidance counselors, teacher librarians, and interns (hired under alternative licensure). The state provides for an optional third year, at the expense of the district or area education agency (AEA), if necessary for a teacher to meet the requirements of a career-level teaching license. The stated purposes of induction programs, under Iowa state law, are to: (1) promote excellence in teaching, (2) enhance student achievement, (3) build a supportive environment within school districts and area education agencies, (4) increase the retention of promising beginning teachers, and (5) promote the personal and professional well-being of teachers. Each year, approximately 3,000 beginning educators participate in the state-funded Iowa Mentoring and Induction Program. [Iowa Code Annotated (ICA) § 284.5, Iowa Administrative Code (IAC) § 281-83.3(2), Iowa Department of Education website]

Iowa’s Teacher Leadership and Compensation (TLC) System – established by legislation in 2013 – rewards effective teachers with leadership opportunities and higher pay, attracts promising new teachers with competitive starting salaries and more support, and fosters greater collaboration for all teachers to learn from each other. Applicant districts must choose one of three teacher-leadership models: (Model 1—Teacher Career Paths Model): Creates model, mentor, and lead teacher roles; (Model 2—Instructional Coach Model): Includes model teacher, instructional coach, and curriculum and professional development leader roles; and (Model 3—Comparable Plan Model): Includes increased support for new teachers, multiple teacher leadership roles and an aligned professional development system. The Iowa General Assembly approved $50 million for the first year of implementation in 2014-15. In each subsequent year through 2016-17, another $50 million will be added to the system for a total of $150 million per year, enabling all school districts to participate in the program if they choose. [IAC §§ 284-15, 284-16 and 284-17]

School Administrators
State law requires school districts to provide a qualified mentor to all beginning school administrators (and superintendents) for a minimum of one year. Similar to teacher induction, an additional year is allowable, “if, after conducting a comprehensive evaluation, the school district or area education agency determines that the administrator is likely to successfully demonstrate competence in the Iowa standards for school administrators by the end of the second year.” The stated purposes of induction programs for school administrators, under Iowa state law, are to: (1) promote excellence in school leadership, (2) improve classroom instruction, (3) enhance student achievement, (4) build a supportive environment within school districts, (5) increase the retention of promising school leaders, and (6) promote the personal and professional well-being of administrators. The mentoring and induction for beginning administrators is sponsored by School Administrators of Iowa. This one-year program supports the Iowa Standards for School Leaders, as well as beginning administrators’ professional and personal needs. [ICA § 284A.5, IAC § 281-83.9, Iowa Department of Education website]

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.

State policy requires induction programs to establish a mentor selection process. State law defines a mentor as a teacher or a retired teacher who holds a valid teaching license, has a record of three years of successful teaching practice, and has a demonstrated “professional commitment to both the improvement of teaching and learning and the development of beginning teachers.” [ICA § 284.2 and IAC § 281-77.8(2)]

State policy requires a “mentor training process” as a component of teacher induction programs. Specific goals must include: (1) Be consistent with effective staff development practices and adult professional needs to include skills needed for teaching, demonstration, and coaching; (2) Address mentor needs, indicating a clear understanding of the role of the mentor; (3) Result in the mentor’s understanding of the personal and professional needs of new teachers; (4) Provide the mentor with an understanding of the district expectations for beginning teacher competencies based on the Iowa teaching standards; and (5) Facilitate the mentor’s ability to provide guidance and support to new teachers. [IAC § 281-83.3(3)]

State policy requires programs to identify “roles and responsibilities of the mentor” and establish a process for dissolving mentor and beginning teacher partnerships. [IAC § 281-83.3(3)]

School districts who opt to pursue Model 1 [Teacher Career Paths] in the TLC System must ensure that mentor teachers have
been evaluated by the school district as demonstrating the competencies and superior teaching skills of a mentor teacher, and recommended for a one-year assignment as a mentor teacher by a site-based review council. In addition, a mentor teacher must hold a valid teaching license, participate in teacher professional development, demonstrate continuous improvement in teaching, and possess the skills and qualifications to assume leadership roles. A mentor teacher may not have a teaching load of greater than 75 percent student instruction. A mentor teacher receives an annual salary supplement of at least $5,000. [IAC § 284-15]

Most school districts have designed their TLC Plan around the Comparable Plan Model (Model 3). It may include mentor teachers. Under Model 3, mentor teachers are those teacher leaders who teach full-time or part-time and also support the professional development of initial and career teachers. [IAC § 284-17]

3. Time

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

State policy requires release time for mentors and beginning teachers to plan. [IAC § 281-83.3(3)]

School districts who opt to pursue Model 1 (Teacher Career Paths) in the TLC System must not assign mentor teacher a teaching load of more than 75 percent student instruction. [IAC § 284-15]

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.

State policy establishes required components for induction programs. It does not prescribe minimum time allocations, but directs programs to create a supportive organizational structure that provides release time, the demonstration of classroom practices, observations of teaching and feedback. [IAC § 281-83.3(3)]

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 induction program standards as an adopted policy or rule. However, Iowa induction program design and operation guidance is embedded in the Iowa Administrative Code [§ 281-83] that outlines components that “shall” be part of programs.

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.

Each school district or AEA receives state funding in the amount of $1,300 per participating beginning teacher, with $1,000 ($500 per semester) reserved for mentor stipends. The state appropriated $4,021,875 for districts and AEAs for the purpose of educator mentoring and induction programs during the 2015-2016 school year. [ICA § 284.13 and IAC § 281-83.3(4)]

Iowa’s TLC System, in part, provides beginning teachers with more professional support from compensated mentor teachers. The Iowa General Assembly approved $50 million for the first year of implementation in 2014-15. In each subsequent year through 2016-17, another $50 million will be added to the system for a total of $150 million per year, enabling all school districts to participate in the program if they choose. [IAC § 284-15]

7. Educator Certification/Licensure

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

The state requires the successful completion of a two-year induction program in order to advance to the career-level teaching certificate. This includes a comprehensive evaluation at the end of the induction period to determine whether a teacher meets the expectations to move to the career level. After the two-year induction program, the beginning educator receives a standard license in most cases. If an educator does not meet the requirements after the two years, a district can grant and fund a third year in the induction program. If the educator does not successfully complete the program after the third year, (s)he cannot receive a license. [ICA §§ 272.28 and 284.5 and IAC § 281-83.3(2)]

8. Program Accountability

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

Each school district or AEA must develop a two-year beginning teacher mentoring and induction plan based on the Iowa teaching standards. The plan must be included in the school district’s comprehensive school improvement plan submitted to the state. State law outlines three elements of the program evaluation process that must be part of local induction plans: (1) An evaluation of the district and area education agency program goals; (2) An evaluation process that provides for the minor and major program revisions; and (3) A process for how information about the program will be provided to interested stakeholders. [IAC § 281-83.3(3)]
Every public school district and AEA in Iowa has a Mentoring and Induction Plan that has been approved by the Iowa Department of Education.

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.

State policy does not address teaching and learning conditions.

Links

Iowa Department of Education — Mentoring and Induction for Beginning Educators: https://www.educateiowa.gov/pk-12/educator-quality/mentoring-induction-beginning-educators

Iowa Department of Education – Mentoring and Induction for Beginning Administrators: https://www.educateiowa.gov/pk-12/administrator-quality/mentoring-induction-beginning-administrators


Iowa Laws and Rules: https://www.legis.iowa.gov/law

The Iowa Department of Education has reviewed this state summary.

This information is accurate as of February 2016.