



State Policy Review: New Educator Induction Kansas

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.

State policy requires all local education agencies (LEAs) to have an approved program providing systemic mentoring support to all first-year teachers/school specialists and all first-year educational leaders. Successful completion of at least a year of mentoring functions as the performance assessment required to advance from an initial to a professional teaching or school leader license. As a result, LEAs are required to have a formal mentor and induction program and plan approved by Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) and implemented locally. [Kansas Administrative Regulations (KAR) 91-1-203(b)(1)(A), (b)(2)(A), (b)(3)(A), and (b)(5)]

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.

Kansas state law defines a "mentor teacher" as "a certificated teacher who has completed at least three consecutive school years of employment in the school district" and has been selected by the local school board "on the basis of having demonstrated exemplary teaching ability." The criteria that constitute exemplary teaching include recent evaluations and recognition through national and state programs like the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards and the Kansas Exemplary Educators Network. [Kansas Statutes Annotated (KSA) 72-1412 and KAR 91-41-1(e)*] Mentors for school specialists must have the same specialist endorsement as their mentees. School specialist mentors can come from outside the school district, if necessary. [Kansas Model Mentor and Induction Guidelines]

State law requires mentor teachers to participate in and successfully complete a training program as well. [KSA 72-1412 and KAR 91-41-1(e)*] State program guidelines require initial mentor training to occur by October 1, and be followed by "ongoing professional learning for the mentor." The training and subsequent professional development must address the mentor's role in:

- Developing strategies for building relationships with new teachers;
- Developing skills for observation of the new teacher's practice;
- Assessing the needs of new teachers;
- Identifying strategies to address those needs;
- Coaching language and practice;
- Developing strategies for guiding new teachers to use reflection in their practice;
- Developing skills for guiding new teachers in using various types of formative assessment to focus instruction and differentiate for student needs;
- Guiding new teachers in collecting and analyzing student data to show evidence of learning;
- Guiding new teachers in their use of content standards when planning lessons/units; and
- Skills in using the professional education standards as a measure of assessing teacher practice. [Kansas Model Mentor and Induction Guidelines]

State law restricts a mentor teacher from providing assistance and guidance to more than two beginning teachers. As such, this provision precludes full-time teacher mentors. [KSA 72-1412]

3. Time

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

Kansas Model Mentor and Induction Guidelines require teacher mentor programs to provide weekly communication between mentors and beginning teachers as well as virtual or in-person observations at least three times per year.

Programs for beginning school and district leaders are required to provide 40 hours annually of mentor contact time, including at least three face-to-face meetings, as well as "a documented plan for providing additional training and support as appropriate (beyond the first year)." [Kansas Model Mentor and Induction Guidelines]

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 law stipulates that mentor teacher programs are "for the purpose of providing probationary teachers with professional support and ... continuous assistance." It defines the primary function of a mentor teacher as providing probationary teachers "with professional support and assistance." [KSA 72-1412]

The KSDE requires school districts to apply for approval of their mentor teacher programs. The criteria for evaluating applications and for state approval of local mentor teacher programs include: (1) a statement of purpose; and (2) a description of activities including, (a) contact time, (b) expectations for district administrators, (c) the alignment between the mentor teacher program and other district professional development, (d) mentor assignment and re-assignment, and (e) on-going professional development for each mentor teacher. [KAR 91-41-3*]

Kansas Model Mentor and Induction Guidelines require programs to provide "practical application of practices that outline a new teacher's/specialist's professional learning needs related to: the learner and learning; content knowledge; instructional practice; and professional responsibility" as articulated in the InTASC Model Core Teaching Standards.

The Guidelines also require programs to provide "one year of structured, intensive support for new teachers/specialists, with a documented plan for providing a second year of support if needed." Support during year one must include: (1) Weekly communication; (2) Observation, virtual or in-person, at least three times per year; and (3) A system for the mentor to provide reflective verbal dialogue and feedback.

5. Program Standards

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

Each LEA's mentor program and plan must address the Kansas Model Mentor and Induction Guidelines. There are four guidelines each for beginning teachers and school specialists and for beginning school and district leaders. They guidelines address professional learning practices, mentor selection and training, structured and intensive induction support, and a defined program accountability process.

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 authorizes—but does not currently fund—a \$1000 stipend for mentors of first-year teachers. [KSA 72-1414(6b)]

When state funding is provided, the district funding formula is the number of mentors multiplied by the amount of the mentor stipend (e.g., \$1000). Mentoring funds are reimbursed to districts in June after the entire year of mentoring has been provided. Funding for mentor training is the responsibility of the local school district.

7. Educator Certification/Licensure

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

State policy requires LEAs to have an approved program providing systemic mentoring support to all new teachers/school specialists and all new educational leaders hired under an initial license in order for the KSBE to allow their movement from an initial license to a professional license. [KAR 91-1-203(b)(5)]

Further, each applicant for a restricted teaching, school specialist or district leadership license must submit to the Kansas State Board of Education documentation that their LEA will: (1) Assign them a mentor; (2) Provide, within the first six weeks of employment, a new teacher orientation or induction program; and (3) Provide release time in order to work with the mentor teacher and to complete coursework needed for full licensure. Each LEA that employs a restricted license holder must submit to the commissioner of education an annual progress report during the effective period of the restricted license. This progress report must include verification that the LEA will continue to assign an experienced mentor teacher to the applicant and provide accommodations to the applicant to work with the mentor teacher and to complete the applicant's plan for full licensure. [KAR 91-1-203]

8. Program Accountability

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

Every LEA that receives a state mentor teacher program grant must submit an annual evaluation report to the KSBE on or before June 30. [KAR 91-42-1]



Kansas Model Mentor and Induction Guidelines require programs to provide “a defined accountability process to measure program effectiveness in providing effective support and growth at all levels.” Each district must be able to determine whether its program is effective, based on how the district defines ‘effective’ in its program plan. Multiple measurable goals and objectives, as well as a process for collecting specific data for each, should be a part of the program plan. If the program is determined to be semi-effective or not effective, the data results for each individual measure should help determine whether specific areas of the program need additional analysis or professional learning.

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.

***Note:** While regulations K.A.R. 91-41-1 through 91-41-4 remain active and do address requirements for mentors and district programs, they are only applied when the Legislature allocates funding to reimburse districts for stipends paid to mentors. As they do not necessarily align with more recent research and our current direction for mentoring and induction, they will likely be amended in the future. [KSDE District Mentor and Induction Program Guidance]

Links

Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE)—Teacher/Leader Mentoring: <http://www.ksde.org/Agency/DivisionofLearningServices/TeacherLicensureandAccreditation/Mentoring.aspx>

KSDE—District Mentor and Induction Program Guidance: <http://www.ksde.org/Portals/0/TLA/Mentoring/MENTOR%20AND%20INDUCTION%20GUIDANCE.pdf>

KSDE—Kansas Model Mentor and Induction Program Guidelines for New Educational Leaders: <http://www.ksde.org/Portals/0/TLA/Mentoring/KSDE%20EXPLANATION%20-%20LEADERSHIP%20MENTORING%20GUIDELINES%20%20final.pdf>

Kansas Administrative Regulations (KAR) 91-1-203: http://www.kssos.org/pubs/KAR%5C2009%5C4%20091_91-Department%20of%20Education,%202009%20KAR%20Vol%204.pdf

Kansas Statutes Annotated (KSA) 72: <http://www.ksrevisor.org/ksa.html>

The Kansas State Department of Education did not respond to our request to review this state summary.

This information is accurate as of February 2016.

© 2016 New Teacher Center. All rights reserved.
PR-KS-US-1602-EN