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 does not require all new teachers to receive induction or mentoring support, but does encourage school districts to develop mentoring programs for teachers new to the profession and to the school district. The Minnesota Board of Teaching is responsible for providing resources and guidance for these programs. [Minnesota Statutes (M.S.) § 122A.70]

State law also directs school districts to develop a probationary teacher peer review process with an exclusive representative of the teacher in the district. The process may include trained observers serving as mentors or coaches or having teachers participate in professional learning communities. [M.S. §§ 122A.40 Subd. 6, 122A.41 Subd. 3]

The Minnesota Department of Education’s (MDE) most recent Staff Development Report found that of the 312 public school districts that submitted a report, 271—or 87 percent—had some type of teacher induction program, but only one-third had programs that served second-year teachers. [MDE]

State policy does not require all new school administrators to receive induction support.

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 does not address mentor selection. Minnesota Educator Induction Guidelines contain guidance about mentor selection. The Guidelines address three selection criteria: (1) instructional skills, (2) mentoring skills and knowledge, and (3) personal and professional dispositions. Examples of instructional skills include five or more years of successful teaching experience, demonstration of “solid content knowledge,” and demonstration of “a broad repertoire of instructional practices.” For mentoring skills and knowledge, the Guidelines include understanding beginning teacher development and adult learning theory, analyzing instruction based on professional teaching standards, and using a continuous improvement, professional growth model. Finally, examples of dispositions offered include open and honest communication, modeling reflective practices, and demonstrated commitment to individual professional growth and learning.

State policy does not require foundational training or ongoing professional development for mentors. However, Minnesota Educator Induction Guidelines contain guidance about mentor training, including a specific focus on instructional coaching and communication and facilitation skills. The MDE’s statutorily required annual report to the Legislature on staff development includes each district’s account of induction program activities instituted during the previous school year. Districts self-report their mentor training activities in the following areas: coaching skills, observation strategies, professional teaching standards, and using formative assessments for professional growth.

State policy does not address mentor assignment and caseload. However, Minnesota Educator Induction Guidelines recommend new teacher-mentor matches “based on teaching assignment.” They note “the most highly recommended model for mentoring calls for full-time release of teachers who fulfill mentoring roles in their school or district.”

3. Time

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

State policy does not address time for mentoring activities. However, Minnesota Educator Induction Guidelines recommend both new teacher and their mentors be provided “protected time to engage in mentoring activities.” The Guidelines suggest that mentors be given release time from educational responsibilities to perform the role of the mentor (e.g., observations, debriefing, student work analysis, coaching sessions). Similarly, new teachers should have time allotted in their schedules for mentoring and professional development activities. To ensure this time is provided, school-scheduling considerations should be part of the mentor program design.

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 does not address key induction program elements.
State law articulates minimum criteria for the selection of applicants for the currently unfunded Minnesota Training Program Grant. These include a commitment to: (1) Allow staff participation; (2) Assess skills of both beginning and mentor teachers; (3) Provide appropriate in-service to needs identified in the assessment; (4) Provide leadership to the effort; (5) Cooperate with higher education institutions; (6) Provide facilities and other resources; (7) Share findings, materials, and techniques with other school districts; and (8) Retain teachers of color.

[M.S. § 122A.70]

The MDE’s annual report to the Legislature on staff development includes each school district’s account of induction program activities instituted during the previous school year. Districts self-report their program elements, such as expectations for collaboration time with a mentor, use of formative assessments to guide professional growth, new teacher observations of master teachers, new teacher orientation, new teacher seminars, observations conducted by a mentor, and if the school delivers a one-, two- or three-year program for new teachers.

Minnesota Educator Induction Guidelines contain some guidance about program delivery as well.

5. Program Standards

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

Minnesota does not have formal induction program standards. The Teacher Support Partnership (TSP)—a collaboration involving the MDE, Education Minnesota, Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, the University of Minnesota- Twin Cities, and the Minnesota Board of Teaching—published Minnesota Educator Induction Guidelines in 2009. The Guidelines support the design and implementation of induction 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.

Minnesota does not provide dedicated funding specifically for teacher induction or mentoring. But the state requires school districts to reserve an amount equal to at least two percent of their basic state education revenues for the purposes of teacher development and evaluation, principal development and evaluation, professional development, and violence prevention training. Further, because state law allows for induction and mentoring support as part of the required “annual evaluation process” for teachers, school districts may use their 2-percent set-aside to fund induction and mentoring activities. In addition, state law provides that, “to the extent extra funds remain, staff development revenue may be used for … teachers’ mentoring.”

[M.S. §§ 122A.40, 122A.61]

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 make participation in an induction program a requirement to advance to a professional teaching license.

8. Program Accountability

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

The state does not assess induction program quality. However, Minnesota Educator Induction Guidelines contain guidance about data collection and sources of evidence as part of program evaluation. In addition, the MDE’s annual report to the Legislature on staff development includes each school district’s account of induction program activities instituted during the previous school year. Districts self-report on the types of evaluation measures used to determine program effectiveness. These measures include: impact on student achievement, teacher effectiveness, and teacher retention; knowledge and application of new teacher development; new teacher-mentor relationship; and new teacher job satisfaction.

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

Minnesota Education Induction Program Guidelines:
http://education.state.mn.us/mdeprod/idcplg?IdcService=GET_FILE&dDocName=005750&RevisionSelectionMethod=latestReleased&Rendition=primary

Minnesota Statutes § 122A.40: https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=122A.40

Minnesota Statutes § 122A.41: https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=122A.41

Minnesota Statutes § 122A.70: https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=122A.70


The Minnesota Department of Education has reviewed this state summary.

This information is accurate as of January 2016.