State Policy Review: New Educator Induction  
New Jersey

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 regulations require all school districts to develop a mentoring program to provide all non-tenured, first-year teachers “with an induction to the teaching profession and to the school district community through differentiated supports based on the teachers’ individual needs and to help them become effective professionals.” [New Jersey Administrative Code (NJAC) 6A:9C-5.1]

State policy requires all beginning teachers serving under a provisional certificate with less than one year of experience, including long-term substitute teachers serving for longer than 60 days, to participate in the Provisional Teacher Process. All first-year provisional teachers receive a full academic year of mentoring, with more intensive mentoring provided for teachers enrolled in a Certificate of Eligibility Educator Preparation Program (formerly known as the “alternate route” program). District mentoring programs must align to the NJ Professional Standards for Teachers. [NJAC 6A:9B-8.4] In addition, there are separate induction/mentoring requirements for Student Assistance Coordinators and School Library Media Specialists. [NJAC 6A:9B-8.4]

State policy requires all new principals to participate in a two-year residency program for principal certification. [NJAC 6A:9B-12.5(d)-(ii)] Any state-approved comprehensive mentoring and induction program for new principals must take place in a school or school district setting, provide professional experiences aligned with the NJ Professional Standards for School Leaders (NJAC 6A:9-3.4), provide trained and experienced mentors, and provide an individualized plan of support based on the candidate’s preparation and prior experience and the unique leadership demands of the employing school or school district.

The state also has separate residency/mentoring program requirements for school administrators and school business administrators. State policy requires new school administrators to complete a one-year, state-approved residency program. Any state-approved administrator residency program must take place in a school or school district, provide professional experiences aligned with the NJ Professional Standards for School Leaders (NJAC 6A:9-3.4), provide trained and experienced mentors, and provide an individualized plan of support based on the candidate’s preparation and prior experience and the unique leadership demands of the employing district. New school business administrators must complete a one-year state-approved residency program, supervised by a trained mentor who works with the district superintendent “to design a program of training and professional experiences for the candidate.” Administrator residency programs must align to the NJ Professional Standards for School Leaders.

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 regulations require the chief school administrator (superintendent) to “oversee the mentor selection process” for beginning teacher mentors and ensure the individual mentor meets the following minimum requirements:

a) Holds an instructional certificate and, when possible, is certified in the subject area in which the novice provisional teacher is working;

b) Has at least three years of experience and has taught full-time for at least two years within the last five years;

c) Does not serve as the mentee’s direct supervisor nor conduct evaluations of teachers;

d) Demonstrates a record of success in the classroom, including a rating of “effective or highly effective on the most recent summative evaluation”;

e) Understands the social and workplace norms of the school district and the community it serves;

f) Understands the resources and opportunities available in the school district and is able to act as a referral source to the novice provisional teacher; and

g) Completes “a comprehensive mentor training program with a curriculum that includes, at a minimum, training on the school district’s teaching evaluation rubric and practice instrument, Professional Standards for Teachers, Core Curriculum Content Standards, classroom observation skills, facilitating adult learning, and leading reflective conversations about teaching practice.” [NJAC 6A:9C-5.2]

The state Mentoring for Quality Induction Toolkit* identifies other criteria to be considered in the selection process, including: strong interpersonal skills; credibility with peers and administrators; leadership capacity; demonstrated curiosity and eagerness to learn; and respect for multiple perspectives.
The state’s Mentoring for Quality Induction Toolkit* suggests a number of providers that can support effective mentor training and professional development. Districts may design their own mentor trainings based on the state and toolkit criteria.

State policy requires each beginning teacher to be “assigned an individual mentor at the beginning of the contracted teaching assignment.” [NJAC 6A:9C-5.1(d)] In addition, the state’s Mentoring for Quality Induction Toolkit* lays out specific examples for how mentors might be assigned and suggests that release time for mentors is an effective practice.

Mentors of beginning school principals must have served for three years as an “effective principal” and “been engaged in some capacity in New Jersey public schools for at least 3 of the past 5 years.” They must also complete a State-approved mentor-training program. [NJAC 6A:9B-12.5(d)-(i)]

Mentors of new district-level administrators serving under a provisional school administrator certificate must have a minimum of three years’ experience as an effective school administrator and been engaged in New Jersey public schools for at least three of the past five years. The mentor must also complete a State-approved mentor-training program. [NJAC 6A:9B-12.4(l)]

Mentors of new school business administrators must at minimum be an experienced school business administrator and have completed a State-approved mentor orientation. [NJAC 6A:9B-12.7(c)]

3. Time

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

Beginning teachers holding a Certificate of Eligibility with Advanced Standing (i.e., those teachers who completed supervised clinical practice as part of their preparation program), must meet with their mentor at least once per week for the first four weeks of the teaching assignment. Beginning teachers who hold a Certificate of Eligibility (CE) must meet with their mentor at least once per week for the first eight weeks of the teaching assignment.

All contact time between mentor teachers and beginning teachers must be recorded on a log, developed as part of the district mentoring plan, submitted to the school district, and maintained locally. [NJAC 6A:9C-5.1(d)]

Beginning principal mentors must meet with the candidate “at least once per month” during the one-year residency period and be available on a regular basis to provide assistance or advice upon the candidate’s request. [NJAC 6A:9B-12.5(d)-(i)]

Beginning school administrator mentors must meet with the candidate “at least once per month” during the one-year residency period and be available on a regular basis to provide assistance or advice upon the candidate’s request. [NJAC 6A:12.4(l)]

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 regulations require school districts to provide every beginning teacher with the following supports:

a) Comprehensive induction to school district policies and procedures, including, but not limited to, introduction to school district curricula, student assessment policies, and training on the school district’s evaluation rubric, including setting and assessing student learning through student growth objectives;

b) Individualized supports and activities, aligned with state teaching standards, professional learning standards (The Standards for Professional Learning [NJAC 6A:9C-3.3] include participation in a professional learning community), and the school district’s teaching practice instrument; and

c) One-to-one mentoring, including: observation and feedback, opportunities to observe effective practice, confidential guidance and support in accordance with state teaching standards, and guidance in a self-assessment on the teaching practice instrument. [NJAC 6A:9C-5.1(c)]

The mentoring program for beginning principals must provide professional experiences that include opportunities to network with other candidates and experienced principals. Beginning principal mentors must provide “confidential guidance and support” and guide the candidate through a self-assessment based on the district’s state-approved principal practice evaluation instrument. The mentor also assists the candidate in developing an individualized mentoring plan, consults with the candidate’s direct supervisor in developing the individualized plan, supervises and verifies the candidate’s completion of all requirements. The mentor may not serve as the direct supervisor or conduct the candidate’s formal district performance evaluation. [NJAC 6A:9B-12.5(d)-(i)]

The mentoring program for beginning school administrators must provide professional experiences that include opportunities to network with other candidates and experienced school administrators. Beginning school administrator mentors must provide confidential guidance and support and guide the candidate through a self-assessment based on the NJ Professional Standards for School Leaders. The mentor also assists the candidate in developing an individualized mentoring plan and supervises and verifies the candidate’s completion of all required experiences and training. [NJAC 6A:9B-12.4(e)]
5. **Program Standards**

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

New Jersey has not adopted formal induction program standards; however, it has included many specific induction and mentoring program requirements within state regulations. In addition, the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) has created the Mentoring for Quality Induction Toolkit*, which provides standards, inquiry-based questions, and templates for thinking about/developing action-plans around program implementation and improvement. These tools incorporate a focus on mentor selection, professional development, the content of interactions, mentor support and accountability, collaboration with key stakeholders, program evaluation, and operational elements of program design and implementation.

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 currently provide dedicated funding for new educator induction programs. Subject to the availability of state funding, the NJDOE must appropriate them based on the number of beginning teachers employed each year by a school district. State regulations require districts to ensure that state funds “supplement, and not supplant,” other funding “already devoted to planning and implementing a novice teacher mentor program.” State funds must be used for one or more of the following:

- a) Stipends for mentor teachers;
- b) The costs associated with release time;
- c) Substitutes for mentor and novice teachers; and
- d) Professional development and training activities related to the program.

“If no State funds are available to pay the costs of mentoring fees, candidates who are required to complete a provisional period of teaching to obtain standard certification shall be responsible for payment of mentoring fees during the first provisional year. The employing school district may pay the cost of mentoring fees.” [NJAC 6A:9C-5.1(f)]

7. **Educator Certification/Licensure**

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

State law requires all beginning teachers to be registered in a district mentoring program to be eligible for a provisional teaching certificate. Beginning teachers holding a provisional certificate must successfully complete a one-year, mentoring program in order to be eligible for a standard certificate. Mentoring requirements are proportionally longer for teachers working part-time. [NJAC 6A:9B-8.4 and 8.5]

All beginning principals must successfully complete a two-year-long residency program to advance to a Standard Certificate. The recommendation must be submitted to the NJDOE based upon at least three reviews by the mentor of the candidate’s performance during each year of residency program, including a summative review aligned to the Professional Standards for School Leaders. The recommendation must include input from the candidate’s direct supervisor. [NJAC 6A:9B-12.5(d)-(i)]

All beginning school administrators must successfully complete a one-year residency program to advance to a Standard Certificate. The mentor formally evaluates each candidate on at least three occasions for purposes of certification. Each mentor must form an advisory panel of practicing educators to review the candidate’s progress during the residency as part of the certificate recommendation process. The mentor may also seek informal input from the employing district board of education. All performance evaluations must be aligned to the NJ Professional Standards for School Leaders. [NJAC 6A:12.4-[c]-[i]]

8. **Program Accountability**

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

State regulations require school principals to develop a beginning educator mentoring plan as part of the school district’s professional development plan. The plan must include “logistics for its implementation” and describe the district’s responsibilities. It must be submitted to the local school board to review its fiscal impact. It must be shared with each school improvement panel, which oversees its school-level implementation and communicate the plan to all beginning teachers and their mentors. The chief school administrator (superintendent) must review it annually and “revise it, as necessary, based on feedback from mentor logs, each school improvement panel, and data on teacher and student performance.” [NJAC 6A:9C-5.3] The Mentoring for Quality Induction Toolkit* lays out specifics for generating robust program evaluations.

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: On April 2, 2014 the State Board of Education adopted new mentoring regulations (effective as of May 5, 2014). The NJDOE is in the process of updating the Mentoring Toolkit to fully align with the new regulations.
Links

New Jersey Department of Education — Provisional Teacher Program: http://www.state.nj.us/education/educators/license/provprogram.htm

New Jersey Department of Education — Educator Mentoring and Induction Support: http://www.state.nj.us/education/profdev/mentor/index.shtml


New Jersey Mentoring for Quality Induction (Toolkit): http://www.state.nj.us/education/profdev/mentor/toolkit

Approved Residency Program Providers as of 2015:
- New Jersey Leaders to Leaders Website: http://www.njl2l.org
- New Jersey Association for School Administrators Website: http://www.njasa.net
- New Jersey Association for School Business Administrators Website: http://www.njasbo.com

The New Jersey Department of Education has reviewed this state summary.

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