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

North Dakota

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 support. Teachers who seek a Teaching Alternative Flexibility Endorsement must receive “intensive supervision or structured mentoring” during their first year “to become highly qualified in the additional subjects.”

Originally funded through a state appropriation in 2009, a 2011 state law codified the North Dakota Teacher Support System through which teacher induction for first-year teachers is provided in school districts that choose to participate. The System employs several different models of mentoring including: one-on-one, retired teachers, part-time teachers, and instructional coaches. [North Dakota Century Code, Chapter 15.1-18.2 and Education Standards and Practices Board (ESPB) Administrative Rules § 67.1-02-03-11]

The state does not require 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.

The Teacher Support System recognizes mentor selection as the most important factor in a successful mentoring partnership. It suggests that a “good mentor” is: committed to the role of mentoring; accepting of the beginning teacher; skilled at providing instructional support; effective in different interpersonal contexts; a model of a continuous learner; communicates hope and optimism. Suggested criteria for mentor selection include: strong interpersonal skills; credibility with peers and administrators; a demonstrated curiosity and eagerness to learn; respect for multiple perspectives; and outstanding instructional practice. In most cases, the school principal of the beginning teacher selects the mentor.

Mentors are required to complete the Teacher Support System training requirements. This includes an initial two-day, in-person training. The Teacher Support System Coordinator then conducts a half-day seminar for mentors in the fall. These seminars are held regionally in the state and mentors are required to participate. Mentors are also required to participate in online forums and/or courses throughout the year.

The Teacher Support System recommends that mentor and mentee have nearby working locations and have similarity in job descriptions. It outlines a variety of potential arrangements for mentor/mentee assignment including: a mentor who is a full-time teacher in the same building or within the district; a mentor who is from a neighboring district; a retired teacher who can mentor more than one new teacher; or instructional coaches who also serve as mentors. The Teacher Support System also offers online mentoring for math, science, special education, and special areas such as music, media and library.

3. Time

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

School districts that participate in the Teacher Support System (TSS) must provide a total of two days of release time each semester for the mentor and the first-year teacher to observe each other and/or other teachers. The district agrees to pay for the substitutes for this required activity, and receives reimbursement of up to $500 per year from the TSS for each mentor/mentee pair. Mentors receive a stipend to meet the requirements of the program.

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.

The Teacher Support System requires mentors to observe mentees teaching six times per year. First-year teachers must record themselves teaching twice annually and discuss this with their mentors. First-year teachers must spend a minimum of 12 hours per year observing other teachers (possibly including the mentor).

The Teacher Support System also requires: administrator training; one-on-one first-year teacher/mentor conferences that follow a protocol to guide the teachers through “a cycle of reflection, focus, possibilities, and planning” (protected by a strict “firewall”); mentor seminars; and triad meetings between first-year teachers, mentor and principal.
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 formal induction 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 allows the ESPB to use “any moneys it receives for the teacher support program to provide staff compensation, training, evaluation, and stipends for mentors and experienced teachers who assist first-year teachers participating in the program, and to pay for any other administrative expenses resulting from the program.” The state appropriated $2.7 million for the 2015-17 biennium for the North Dakota Teacher Support System.

The Teacher Support System reimburses districts up to $500 per year for each mentor/mentee pair for the cost of substitutes. Mentors receive an $800 stipend per semester for meeting all the requirements of the program.

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 require participation in an induction program 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 Teacher Support System requires that, at the end of each semester, each district verify that the mentor and mentee have completed all requirements in order for the new teacher to receive the university credit and the mentor to receive the stipend. The North Dakota Education Standards and Practices Board (ESPB) also employs multiple forms of feedback gathering, including hiring New Teacher Center to conduct an Induction Survey bi-annually. The ESPB reports regularly to its board and to state legislative committees.

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


North Dakota Teacher Support System: https://www.nd.gov/esp/tachersupport/

The North Dakota Education Standards and Practices Board reviewed this state summary.

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