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.

A 2014 state law requires all beginning teachers, counselors, librarians and school nurses to participate in a one-year residency program, administered by the Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE), beginning in the 2015-2016 school year. [Oklahoma Statutes §70-6-195] Teach for America participants are specifically exempted from this residency program requirement. [Oklahoma Statutes §70-6-122.4]

The state does not require new school administrators to receive induction or residency 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 law requires the OSDE’s beginning teacher residency program to include “requirements and guidelines for selection and appointment of mentor teachers.” [Oklahoma Statutes §70-6-195]

   State law defines a mentor teacher as “any teacher holding a standard certificate who is employed in a school district to serve as a teacher and who has been appointed to provide guidance, support, coaching and assistance to a resident teacher employed by the school district.” A mentor teacher must be a classroom teacher and have a minimum of two years of classroom teaching experience as a certified teacher. Mentor teachers “from a list of qualified teacher volunteers who have submitted their names for that purpose.” State law further stipulates: “After compilation of the list, the principal shall provide opportunity for input from the bargaining agent, where one exists. Membership or non-membership in a professional teacher organization shall not be considered as a factor in selecting a mentor teacher.” [Oklahoma Statutes §70-6-182] State regulations further articulate the intent that mentors “possess the requisite knowledge and skills for assisting the beginning teacher.” [210 Oklahoma Administrative Code (OAC) 210: 20-17-3]

3. **Time**

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

   State regulations require the residency committee to meet with each first-year teacher a minimum of three times for evaluation review and recommendation, and each member of the committee to observe the beginning teacher a minimum of three times. They also establish a formal committee process as follows:

   a) Formal Committee Meeting I with the resident teacher to become acquainted with each other, elect a chairperson, establish a communication system, establish a schedule for committee member’s activities, and review the evaluation form.
   b) Observation I is an independent visitation.
   c) Observation II is an independent visitation.
   d) Formal Committee Meeting II with the resident teacher to review progress and formulate recommendations concerning the teaching performance of the resident teacher.
   e) Observation III is an independent visitation.
   f) Formal Committee Meeting III with the resident teacher to make a recommendation concerning certification. [OAC 210:20-15-3]

   State regulations charge school districts with the responsibility “to ensure that a mechanism be provided whereby the mentor teacher will provide guidance and assistance to the beginning teacher a minimum of 72 hours per year in classroom observation and consultation.” [OAC 210:20-17-3]
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 requires four elements of the new teacher residency program: (A) Guidelines and assignments for resident teacher positions in the school districts; (B) Requirements and guidelines for selection and appointment of mentor teachers; (C) Guidelines for the appointment and functions of a residency committee; and (D) An appropriate professional development, support, mentorship and coaching program for the resident teacher. [Oklahoma Statutes §70-6-195]

State law defines a residency committee as “a committee in a school district for the purpose of providing professional support, mentorship and coaching to the resident teacher. A residency committee may consist of one or more mentor teachers, the principal or an assistant principal of the employing school, one or more administrators designated by the school district board of education, a teacher educator in a college or school of education of an institution of higher education or an educator in a department or school outside the institution’s teacher education unit. If possible, qualified mentor teachers shall have expertise in the teaching field of the resident teacher and, if possible, the higher education members of the residency committee shall have expertise and experience in the teaching field of the resident teacher. However, in all cases, at least one member of the residency committee shall have expertise and experience in the teaching field of the resident teacher.” [Oklahoma Statutes §70-6-182]

State law requires any school district that employs a beginning teacher to appoint a residency committee. The committee must: (A) Meet with the resident teacher as may be required; (B) Work with the resident teacher to assist in all matters concerning classroom management and professional development for that teacher; and (C) Provide professional support, mentorship and coaching for the resident teacher. [Oklahoma Statutes §70-6-195]

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 program standards for teacher induction or residency 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.

State law establishes a maximum state-funded stipend of $500 per mentor teacher. [Oklahoma Statutes §70-6-106.1]

State law gives the Oklahoma State Board of Education (OSBE) authority “to develop and administer training for residency committees and training for professional development through professional development institutes.” Subject to the availability of funds, this may include the “training of residency committee members in teacher mentoring.” [Oklahoma Statutes §70-6-200]

7. Educator Certification/Licensure

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

State law mandates successful completion of a one-year residency program and a recommendation from the residency committee as part of the teacher certification process. [70 O.S. 6-195] The residency committee’s evaluation process includes:

(A) A standard observation instrument adopted by the OSBE and used by each residency committee to evaluate a resident teacher for certification purposes only;

(B) Each residency committee meets with the resident teacher a minimum of three times per year for evaluation review and recommendation;

(C) Each member of the committee observes the resident teacher a minimum of three times per year; and

(D) The committee process follows a six-part sequence that includes observations, committee meeting and ultimately a recommendation concerning certification. [OAC 210:20-15-3]
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 or monitor local teacher residency program quality.

The OSBE is responsible for making “an annual report to each teacher education institution in Oklahoma on the certification status of each of its graduates who was employed as a resident teacher”:

(A) Recommendation for certification;
(B) Recommendation for a second year in the Residency Program; or
(C) Recommendation for noncertification at the conclusion of the second residency year. [OAC 210:20-15-3]

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.

The state’s teacher-equity plan, approved by the U.S. Department of Education in 2015, includes various strategies to improve teaching and learning conditions.

Links

Oklahoma State Department of Education—Teacher Residency Program: http://sde.ok.gov/sde/teacher-residency-program

Oklahoma Statutes, Title 70—Schools: http://law.justia.com/codes/oklahoma/2014/title-70

Oklahoma Administrative Code: http://www.oar.state.ok.us/oar/codedoc02.nsf

State Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators: http://www2.ed.gov/programs/titleiparta/equitable/ok.html

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

This information is accurate as of February 2016.