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.

### Policy Report

**State Policy Review:**

**New Educator Induction**

**Rhode Island**

#### 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 law requires school district strategic plans to “include a process for induction of new teachers,” but does not stipulate the number of years mentor support must be offered. In practice, mentoring programs in Rhode Island vary in length, some serving only first-year teachers and others serving new teachers through their third year in the profession. [Rhode Island General Laws (RIGL) §16-7.1-2(b.5)]

The state’s Basic Education Program Regulations require school districts to “provide differentiated support to all staff... [including] induction programs to support the developing proficiencies for new staff and staff serving in new assignments.” The regulations state that induction programs that systematically sustain enhancement of the teaching profession “combine mentoring, professional development and support, and evaluation for at least two years of a beginning educator’s professional career.”

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.

Rhode Island Beginning Teacher Induction/Mentor Program Standards require that mentors be “recruited, interviewed, selected, and assigned using a comprehensive process that is clearly articulated, and uses specific criteria that is communicated to all stakeholders.” Mentor selection should be based on content and pedagogical knowledge, classroom performance, ability to work with adults, strong intra- and inter-personal skills, evidence of self-reflective practice, ability to analyze student work and address diverse learner needs.

The Program Standards suggest that mentors receive training prior to being assigned to a beginning teacher and throughout the duration of their mentoring work. Criteria for quality program development include ongoing formal mentor training, mentor participation in professional learning communities, and mentors’ use of self-assessment and reflective practices. The Rhode Island Department of Education [RIDE] provides coach/mentor training aligned with the New Teacher Center’s teacher induction model.

The Program Standards suggest that mentors and beginning teachers be matched according to relevant factors, including certification, experience, current assignments and/or proximity of location.

#### 3. Time

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

RI Beginning Teacher Induction/Mentor Program Standards suggest that the quality and effectiveness of an induction program relies on appropriate and thoughtful use of resources including sanctioned, protected time. Further, the Standards suggest that, in order to achieve instructional excellence, coaches/mentors must balance their time between classroom observations and conferencing with beginning teachers.

#### 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; encouraging a reduced teaching load for beginning teachers; and encouraging participation of beginning educators in a learning community or peer network.

RI Beginning Teacher Induction/Mentor Program Standards outline an extensive list of criteria for quality induction program development, including: program leadership; program goals and design; allocation of resources; administrator role and responsibilities; mentor selection, assignment, and training; and educator assessment.

#### 5. Program Standards

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

In 2014, Rhode Island approved the RI Beginning Teacher Induction/Mentor Program Standards, influenced by New Teacher Center’s Induction Program Standards. The state’s program standards are intended to provide guidance to local education agencies regarding induction/mentor programs. They align with and serve as a continuum to the state’s Standards for Education
State Policy Review: New Educator Induction / Rhode Island

Preparation, Professional Teaching Standards, and the Teacher Evaluation and Support System. The Program Standards address:
• Program Leadership (Administration, support and evaluation);
• Program Goals and Design;
• Resources;
• Site Administrator Roles and Responsibilities;
• Coach/Mentor Selection and Assignment;
• Coach/Mentor Training and Professional Development; and
• Educator Formative Assessment.

The Program Standards provide guidance and are applicable to all induction program models utilized by local education agencies.

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 provide dedicated funding for local educator induction programs.

From 2011-2014, all teacher induction work was funded through the state’s Race to the Top grant. RIDE no longer offers a statewide, state-funded induction model due to lack of funding but continues to support implementation by school districts choosing to work within a regional partnership model. [2015 RI State Teacher-Equity Plan]

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 or completion of an induction program to advance to a professional teaching license.

8. Program Accountability

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

The state does not currently assess or monitor local induction program quality. From 2011-2014, under the requirements of the state’s Race to the Top grant, RIDE monitored the implementation of induction programs through ongoing onsite visits.

9. Teaching Conditions

States 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. Rhode Island has identified exploring “the feasibility of administering a survey of teaching and learning conditions” in its 2015 state teacher-equity plan approved by the U.S. Department of Education in 2015.

Links

Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE)—Induction: http://www.ride.ri.gov/TeachersAdministrators/Induction.aspx


Rhode Island Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education—Basic Education Program Regulations: http://www.ride.ri.gov/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/Inside-RIDE/Legal/BEP.pdf

Rhode Island General Laws §16-7.1-2(b.5): http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/Statutes/TITLE16/16-7.1/16-7.1-2.HTM

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

The Rhode Island Department of Education did not respond to our requests to review this state summary.

This information is accurate as of February 2016.