State Policy Review: New Educator Induction

Texas

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 new teachers to receive induction support. State policy provides that "each school district may assign a mentor teacher to each classroom teacher who has less than two years of teaching experience in the subject or grade level to which the teacher is assigned." [Texas Education Code 21.458]

Texas operates the Educator Excellence Innovation Program (EEIP), a competitive grant program that requires a robust induction and mentorship program, among other elements aimed at increasing support for instructional growth and effectiveness. The state previously operated the Beginning Teacher Induction and Mentoring (BTIM) Program to which a school district could apply for funds to establish a mentoring program for first- and second-year teachers. Although the program remains in statute, it is no longer funded or supported.

The state requires "a principal or assistant principal employed for the first-time as a campus administrator (including the first time in the state)" to "participate in an induction period of at least one year." The induction period should be "a structured, systemic process for assisting the new principal or assistant principal in further developing skills in guiding the everyday operation of a school, adjusting to the particular culture of a school district, and developing a personal awareness of self in the campus administrator role. Mentoring support must be an integral component of the induction period." [Texas Administrative Code 241.25]

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.

Texas Education Code 21.458 requires a mentor teacher to "have at least three complete years of teaching experience with a superior record of assisting students, as a whole, in achieving improvement in student performance." Mentor teachers must complete "a research-based, mentor and induction training program" approved by the state education commissioner and "a mentor training program provided by the district." A mentor teacher must teach in the same school and, to the extent practicable, teach the same subject or grade level as the beginning teacher.

3. Time

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

State policy does not currently address mentoring time.

Induction programs funded through the BTIM Program were required to provide "scheduled release time in order for a mentor teacher to fulfill mentoring duties." Funds from this grant were used for only three purposes, one of which was to provide "release time for mentor teachers and beginning teachers to meet regularly for conferencing, observations, networking sessions, shared professional development, and other mentoring activities." [Texas Education Code § 153.1011] However, as stated above, this program is no longer implemented.

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 currently address induction program quality.

Local induction programs funded through the state’s former BTIM program were required to be "research-based mentoring programs that, through external evaluation, demonstrated success in improving new teacher quality and teacher retention." [Texas Education Code 153.101] Although the program remains in statute, it is no longer funded or implemented.

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.

The EEIP is a competitive grant program open to public school districts and open enrollment charter schools to improve educator effectiveness through the funding of innovative practices that target the entire timeline of a teacher’s career. These programs may include new models of recruitment, preparation, hiring, induction, evaluation, professional development, compensation, career pathways and retention. Applicant plans must address Induction and Mentoring, Evaluation, Professional Development and Collaboration, and Strategic Compensation and Retention. Grants can range from a minimum of $50,000 to a maximum $1 million per year and vary depending on the funding needs. The total amount of funds dedicated to this project is $28 million for the April 1, 2014, to August 31, 2016, project period. The project is funded 100 percent from state funds.

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 new teachers to participate in an induction program in order 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 currently assess or monitor induction program quality.

The BTIM Program, which is no longer funded or supported, had allowed the Texas Education Agency “to audit mentor program funds,” and required each participating school district to submit progress reports to the commissioner. [Texas Administrative Code 153.1011]

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.

The state does not have formal standards for teaching and learning conditions. However, state law requires the education commissioner to “develop an online survey to be administered statewide at least biennially to superintendents, principals, supervisors, classroom teachers, counselors, and other appropriate full-time professional employees. The survey results must be made available to districts and schools and each district and school must use survey results to review and revise their improvement plans to enhance the learning environment. [H.B.2012.7.064.e]

In 2014, Texas selected New Teacher Center to administer the Teaching, Empowering, Leading, and Learning (TELL) Texas Survey, a statewide online survey of school based licensed-educators, to fulfill this legislative requirement. The survey includes questions regarding: community engagement and support, teacher leadership, school leadership, managing student conduct, use of time, professional development, facilities and resources, instructional practices and support, and new teacher support. More than 80,000 educators completed the voluntary survey. More information may be found at www.telltexas.org.

Links


Texas Administrative Code Rule §228.35: http://www.sos.texas.gov/tac/

Teaching, Empowering, Leading, and Learning (TELL) Texas: http://www.telltexas.org

The Texas Education Agency reviewed this state summary.

This information is accurate as of February 2016.