



State Policy Review: New Educator Induction Vermont

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.

State law does not require all first- and second-year teachers to receive induction support. However, the Vermont State Board of Education's Manual of Rules and Practices (§ 2121.3), requires mentoring to be "a component of each supervisory union's needs-based professional learning system." Guidelines for Developing Successful Educator Mentoring Programs, adopted by the Vermont Standards Board for Professional Educators (VSBPE) in 2005, suggest that "[t]he mentoring relationship ... should last a minimum of two years."

Act 20 (2011) requires superintendents to work with the Vermont Principals' Association (VPA) to ensure that a new principal or technical center director receives mentoring support during at least the first two-years of employment. The policy requires districts to allocate sufficient funds to cover the cost of two years of mentoring support.

Vermont Guidelines on Teacher and Leader Effectiveness identify developing and supporting novice teachers through induction-with-mentoring as an essential element of a high-quality evaluation process.

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.

Guidelines for Developing Successful Educator Mentoring Programs suggest that local programs should have "clear criteria and procedures for selecting mentors" and "a process for on-going assessment of ... the mentor's skills." The VSBPE's Manual of Rules and Practices articulates School Quality Standards on Needs-Based Professional Development (§ 2114-7) that define a "mentor" as "an experienced educator who has demonstrated high quality instructional practice and who has been provided training in mentoring."

State Guidelines suggest that "[t]here must be initial and on-going, research-based training for mentors in essential skill areas. These include adult learning theory, evidence-based observational skills, action research, and coaching skills."

State Guidelines suggest local programs should have "clear criteria and procedures... for matching mentors and new educators. Important considerations include physical proximity and congruity of content and/or instructional level. In addition, there must be a process for on-going assessment of the relationship and the mentor's skills."

3. Time

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

State Guidelines for Developing Successful Educator Mentoring Programs recommend that the "mentoring relationship for a Level I educator should last a minimum of two years, with the most intense contact occurring during the first year." The guidelines also suggest that local programs provide "consistent, dedicated time for each mentor/ mentee pair to meet, at least weekly ... in the first year of the mentorship." They also recommend "monthly release time (a minimum of 3 hours/month)" for mentors and new teachers to engage in mentoring activities, including observations.

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 Guidelines for Developing Successful Educator Mentoring Programs suggest that the mentor and new teacher engage in joint planning of instruction and problem solving "difficult issues." They also recommend "monthly release time" for mentors and new teachers to "conduct structured observations of each other's practice" as well as "recognition and/or compensation for the mentor's training and work (e.g., stipends, re-licensure or academic credit, public acknowledgement)."

5. Program Standards

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

VSBPE's Guidelines for Developing Successful Educator Mentoring Programs define mentoring as "an essential component of the preparation and induction of new educators, and of the continuum of professional preparation, development, and leadership" as well as "a structured program that pairs a mentor with an educator who is either new to the profession or new to the school, in order to provide training, orientation, assistance and support." They identify five components of successful mentoring programs: (1) A structured process focused on a model of practice designed to improve student learning; (2) Defined criteria and procedures for mentor selection and placement of new educators; (3) Initial and on-going, research-based mentor training; (4) Complete separation of the mentoring and performance evaluation processes; and (5) Adequate time for the mentoring relationship to be successful.

Section 2 of Act 20 required the creating of a committee to conduct an interim study of teacher induction and mentoring. It was charged with studying and evaluating induction and mentoring practices and programs in Vermont and other states. The committee submitted its report in January 2012. It contained three recommendations:

1. Strengthen and combine VSBPE's 2005 teacher induction and mentoring guidelines and Vermont's School Quality Standards regarding teacher induction and mentoring.
2. Induction-with-mentoring programs should be implemented and monitored by the supervisory unions and supervisory districts, and program data incorporated into existing, annual reporting procedures.
3. The VDE, in collaboration with educational associations, should develop statewide recommendations for sustainable funding of induction-with-mentoring programs.

Additionally, the committee's recommendations were incorporated into the Vermont Guidelines on Teacher and Leader Effectiveness. These guidelines stress developing and supporting novice teachers through induction-with-mentoring as an essential element of a high-quality evaluation process.

VSBPE reviewed the state's existing mentoring guidelines and determined that they provided sufficient guidance to the field.

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.

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 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.

While State Guidelines suggest that induction and mentoring program goals should "identify the means of evaluating the effectiveness of the program," the state does not actively assess or monitor local program quality.

Vermont is in the process of honing a system for assessing individual supervisory unions' progress toward meeting the state's Education Quality Standards. In total, there are five categories being assessed, with the High Quality Staffing category being most applicable to induction. The reviews would have two distinct parts. The first part is the Annual Snapshot Review (ASR) which will collect consistent quantitative data from each supervisory union each year. The metrics to be used are still being determined. The second portion is the Integrated Field Review (IFR). The IFRs are likely to occur every three years and will involve a team from the Vermont Agency of Education as well as peers from other supervisory unions visiting schools to observe classrooms, review documents, and interview students, teachers, administrators, and parents. The state education agency is currently piloting the IFRs in several supervisory unions across the state.

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.

In 2013, in partnership with New Teacher Center, Vermont administered the Teaching, Empowering, Leading and Learning (TELL) Vermont Survey, a statewide online survey of school-based, licensed educators. The TELL Survey included 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.



Links

Vermont Act 20: <http://www.leg.state.vt.us/docs/2012/Acts/ACT020.pdf>

Vermont State Board of Education’s Manual of Rules and Practices (February 2014):
http://education.vermont.gov/documents/educ_sbe_rules_manual_of_rules_ALL.pdf

Vermont State Board of Education, Education Quality Standards: State Board Rule 2000
<http://education.vermont.gov/state-board/rules/2000>

Vermont Standards Board for Professional Educators (VSBPE), Guidelines for Developing Successful Educator Mentoring Programs:
http://education.vermont.gov/documents/educ_vsbpe_policy_manual_mentoring.pdf

Vermont Guidelines on Teacher and Leader Effectiveness:
http://education.vermont.gov/documents/EDU-Vermont_Task_Force_2012_06_18_Meeting_Minutes.pdf

Report to the House and Senate Committees on Education for Vermont Act 20: <http://legislature.vermont.gov/assets/Documents/Reports/276028.pdf>

The Vermont Agency of Education has reviewed this state summary.

This information is accurate as of February 2016.

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