The New Teacher Center’s 2011 Review of State Policies on Teacher Induction provides comprehensive summaries for all 50 states. For each state, the NTC reviews the presence or absence of policies related to 10 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 on new teacher induction and mentoring.

1. Teachers Served:
State policy should require that all teachers receive induction support during their first two years in the profession.

State law requires school districts to provide every new teacher with “a formalized induction program” during their first year of employment. [South Carolina Code of Laws (SCCL) Section 59-26-40] In addition, state program guidelines require that “teachers employed under an annual contract who are receiving diagnostic assistance” receive similar support.

2. Administrators Served:
State policy should require that all school administrators receive induction support during their first two years in the profession.

The state requires all first-year school principals to receive induction support. State law requires every new “building level principal, director of a specialized education unit, or occupational education center director” to participate in the Principal Induction Program. [SCCL Section 59-24-80]

The Program seeks three outcomes for participants: (1) Professional Development — The program includes an orientation and follow-up sessions to provide training in instructional leadership, assessment and management skills essential to success in the principalship. If a participant meets all course requirements, he or she may earn six hours of recertification credit or one hundred-twenty (120) hours of renewal credit; (2) Support — Each participant is paired with an experienced principal who serves as a leadership coach throughout the induction year; and (3) Collegiality — Through the orientation, participants form a network for sharing resources and ideas. Principal Induction Program follow-up sessions during the induction year provide a forum for exchanging ideas and sharing effective leadership practices and strategies that impact their success as new leaders.

3. Program Standards:
The state should have formal program standards that govern the design and operation of local teacher induction programs.

The South Carolina Induction and Mentoring Program: Implementation Guidelines serve as the state’s program standards. They articulate four key program elements: (1) Local program leadership, (2) District program for beginning teachers, (3) District program for mentors, and (4) District plan for program evaluation. State law requires the state department of education to develop guidelines and regulations for teacher induction programs. [SCCL Sections 59-5-85 and 59-26-30]

4. Mentor Selection:
State policy should require a rigorous mentor selection process.

State law requires the state department of education to adopt criteria for the selection of mentor teachers. [SCCL Section 59-5-85]
The South Carolina Induction and Mentoring Program: Implementation Guidelines (Element 3.A.1) requires that teacher mentors must: (1) hold a valid state teaching certificate; (2) have a minimum of one year’s successful teaching experience in South Carolina at the continuing-contract level; (3) have expressed interest in becoming a mentor; (4) have the recommendation of a school administrator; (5) have the recommendation of another teacher in the district; (6) have demonstrated proficiency in the use of computer technology; (7) be a current practitioner or have been employed in a South Carolina public school system within the past five years; and (8) have successfully completed all required mentor training and activities.

Element 3.A.2 requires each district to ensure that every mentor teacher is evaluated on the basis of the degree to which he or she: (1) has knowledge of beginning-teacher professional development and effective adult learning strategies; (2) is conversant about the state’s performance assessment system (ADEPT); (3) has knowledge of researched-based instructional strategies and effective student assessment based on the state’s academic standards; (4) understands and appreciates the importance of an educator’s having a thorough command of the subject matter and skills that he or she is teaching; (5) understands and appreciates the importance of literacy in the teacher as well as the student and therefore underscores the necessity that language, as both reading and writing, be emphasized in every classroom; (6) has a record of exemplary teaching and professional conduct that allows him or her to serve as a role model; (7) has effective interpersonal and communication skills; (8) has a demonstrated commitment to his or her own professional growth and learning; (9) has the willingness and the ability to participate in professional preparation to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to be an effective mentor; (10) has the willingness and the ability to engage in non-evaluative assessment processes, including the ability to hold planning and reflective conversations with beginning teachers about their classroom practice; (11) has the willingness and the ability to work collaboratively and share instructional ideas and materials with beginning teachers; and (12) has the willingness and the ability to deepen his or her understanding of cultural, racial, ethnic, linguistic, and cognitive diversity.

5. Mentor Training:
State policy should require foundational training and ongoing professional development for mentors.

State law requires the state department of education to adopt criteria for the training of teachers who serve as mentors for new teachers as a part of the induction program. [SCCL Section 59-5-85] State mentor training is offered in collaboration with the Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention and Advancement (CERRA). State program guidelines (Element 1.A.18) require each district program coordinator to submit to the state department of education a list of all educators who successfully complete the state’s initial mentor training. Those guidelines (Element 3.B) stipulate that the mentor professional development program consists of three components: (1) initial mentor training for all mentors; (2) advanced mentor training for mentors whom the district selects; and (3) continuous professional development for all mentors.

6. Mentor Assignment and Caseload:
State policy should address how mentors are assigned to beginning teachers, allow for manageable mentor caseloads, and encourage programs to provide release time for mentors.

State law establishes an incentive program for teachers who are trained to serve as teacher mentors. Incentives may include additional pay, release time, and additional assistance in the classroom. [SCCL Section 59-26-100] The South Carolina Induction and Mentoring Program: Implementation Guidelines (Element 3.A.4) require that districts must use at least two of the following three factors when matching a mentor with the beginning teacher: (1) Matching areas of certification (matching is required for special-area educators); (2) Matching or close grade levels in teaching, and/or (3) Physical proximity to one another on the school campus. Element 3.A.5 also ensures that districts assign mentors to beginning teachers “in a timely manner, before the teachers start teaching—or, in the case of late hires, not more than two weeks after their start date.” Element 3.A.6 of state program guidelines restricts a classroom teacher with a full teaching load who is serving as a mentor from being assigned more than two teachers at one time.
7. Program Delivery:
State policy should identify key induction program elements, including a minimum amount of mentor-new teacher contact time, formative assessment of teaching practice, and classroom observation.

State law requires that induction programs “must provide teachers with comprehensive guidance and assistance throughout the school year, as well as provide teachers with formal written feedback on their strengths and weaknesses relative to state standards for teaching effectiveness.” [SCCL Section 59-26-30] In practice, South Carolina’s induction and mentoring initiative exists as a collaborative effort among the state’s school districts, the teacher education programs in the state’s colleges and universities, the South Carolina Department of Education’s Division of Educator Quality and Leadership, and the Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement (CERRA).

State induction program requirements (South Carolina Induction and Mentoring Program: Implementation Guidelines) establish that each district induction program must include: (1) the assignment of a trained mentor for each new teacher, matched as closely as possible to the content area and grade level of the beginning teacher; (2) an orientation to the district’s induction and mentoring program requirements and criteria for successful completion of that program; (3) a mentor-guided formative assessment process that includes opportunities for each new teacher and mentor to collaborate on a regular basis to observe in the classroom and to reflect upon teaching, areas of identified need, school procedures and concerns, and/or planning for professional development activities; (4) the creation, by the mentor and advisee, of a written professional growth and development plan for each new teacher based upon his or her identified professional strengths and areas of need related to the state’s teacher performance standards; (5) professional development activities that support new teachers in attaining the knowledge and skills needed to achieve the goals established in their growth and development plans; and (6) opportunities for all new teachers within a school, district, and/or multidistrict consortium to interact as a group to share information and ideas about teaching on a regular and consistent basis.

8. Funding:
The state should provide dedicated funding to support local educator induction programs.

South Carolina provides annual flow-through funding to school districts to support the ADEPT (Assisting, Developing, and Evaluating Professional Teaching) performance assessment system requirements that include new teacher induction. Annual ADEPT flow-through funding is provided to all school districts on a per-new-teacher basis.

In the 2009–10 school year, ADEPT funding amounted to $750.37 per new teacher. The 2010–2011 legislative budget included the same level of flow-through ADEPT funding as the prior year. The per-new-teacher amount is based on the total number of new teachers employed statewide at the time of the annual count (February 15).

9. Educator Accountability:
The state should require participation in and/or completion of an induction program to advance from an initial to a professional teaching license.

State law requires that South Carolina teachers must complete a one-year induction program to be eligible for employment “at the annual contract level.” [SCCL Section 59-26-40]

10. Program Accountability:
The state should assess or monitor program quality through accreditation, program evaluation, surveys, site visits, self-reports, and other relevant tools and strategies.

The state department of education—in collaboration with Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement (CERRA)—manages an annual teacher assistance and support survey. All school districts administer it on an annual basis to all mentors, all teachers served by mentors, and all school administrators who work directly with mentors. Districts must analyze and review the results of this survey and must use the results as the basis for changes in order to continuously improve their induction and mentoring programs.

Each district must submit a detailed written plan for their induction and mentoring program to the state department
of education to be approved by the state board of education. The plan must address each area of the state's program standards as detailed in South Carolina Induction and Mentoring Program: Implementation Guidelines. Failure of a district to submit a plan may cause that district's allocation of educator quality funding to be withheld. Currently, every district in the state has an approved program.

Element 1.A.4 of the state program guidelines requires district administrators to “monitor and evaluate on an annual basis the quality of their induction and mentoring trainings, the quality of their professional development offerings, and the implementation of their induction and mentoring program.” The district must use multiple methods of evidence gathering and provide necessary technology to collect, compile, and analyze evaluation data. In addition, Element 1.A.7 calls upon required district program leadership teams to “establish and maintain for the annual evaluation of its induction and mentoring plan a system for the regular collection of feedback from all participants in the program regarding all central factors of the program’s implementation.”

Element 4 of state program standards addresses the responsibility of school districts for induction program evaluation. “Each district's induction and mentoring plan must have a comprehensive system of formative program evaluation that addresses all program requirements, involves all program participants as well as other stakeholders, and leads to substantive improvements.”

Links:


South Carolina Department of Education — ADEPT: http://www.scteachers.org/adept/index.cfm

South Carolina Department of Education: Assisting Beginning Educators through Induction and Mentoring: http://www.scteachers.org/Adept/assistingeducator.cfm

CERRA—Mentoring: http://www.cerra.org/mentoring/index.html

The South Carolina Department of Education has reviewed this state summary. This information is accurate as of March 2011.