



State Policy Review: New Educator Induction Connecticut

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 requires the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) to "establish and administer a teacher education and mentoring program that includes guided teacher support and coaching and the completion of instructional modules ... for beginning teachers." It also requires each beginning teacher to "develop a two-year individualized mentoring plan." [General Statutes of Connecticut (GSC) Chapter 166 § 10-145o]

All new teachers (those who are teaching under an initial educator certificate, interim initial educator certificate, or a 90-day certificate in a subject area) are required to participate in the state's Teacher Education And Mentoring (TEAM) Program, enacted into law in 2009 and first implemented in the 2010-2011 school year. Teachers employed in public schools, charter schools and approved private special education facilities are required to participate. Teachers in most endorsement areas (bilingual education, elementary education, English language arts, health, mathematics, music, physical education, science, social studies, special education, teachers of English as a second language, visual arts and world languages) are required to participate in the full two-year TEAM program. Participation in the one-year TEAM program is required of new teachers in other endorsement areas.

The state does not require new school administrators to receive induction or mentoring support. But the CSDE supports programs for new administrators through a collaborative effort known as LEAD Connecticut—a partnership of state and national organizations.

LEAD CT operates several programs including the Turnaround Principals Program (TPP) that provides intensive support to principals serving in low-achieving schools. Principals participate in an intensive eight-day summer institute and a monthly turnaround principal community of practice. Principals receive additional support through high-quality executive coaching and participation in a network of principals serving students and families in low-performing schools. The program focuses on core turnaround leadership competencies: Improving the academic program, fostering a positive academic culture, managing human capital, and driving a strategic improvement process. Over the last three years, the TPP has trained approximately 60 principals.

The LEAD CT Executive Coaching Program for Superintendents is a partnership between the Connecticut Center for School Change, the University of Connecticut's Neag School of Education and CT Association of Public School Superintendents. The executive

coaching approach provides monthly superintendent community of practice sessions and matches a new school superintendent with a trained executive coach. The initiative uses the superintendent competencies developed by LEAD CT.

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 a mentor to hold "a provisional educator certificate or a professional educator certificate and have at least three years teaching experience in Connecticut, including at least one year of experience in the district in which they are presently employed. Retired certified teachers may also serve as mentors, provided they successfully complete a mentor training program." State law tasks local school boards with the responsibility to "recruit and pair mentors from within and outside of the district to work with beginning teachers." [GSC Chapter 166 § 10-145o.f]

TEAM Program Guidelines articulate specific mentor selection criteria. The Guidelines state that mentor teachers should demonstrate: (1) effective teaching practice; (2) ability to work cooperatively as a team member to aid the professional growth of a beginning teacher; (3) professional commitment to improving the induction of beginning teachers into the teaching profession; (4) ability to relate effectively to adult learners; (5) ability to be reflective and articulate about the craft of teaching; and (6) such other criteria as may be deemed necessary by the district committee.

State law requires the CSDE, in collaboration with stakeholders, to "train mentors to carry out responsibilities at the district level." In practice, mentors must complete TEAM Program Support Teacher training, including the three-day Initial Support Teacher Training for new mentors offered by Regional Educational Support Centers. Previously trained mentors may attend a three-hour mentor update training. State law requires that mentors update their training every three years.

State law establishes that "each mentor shall be assigned two beginning teachers, except that in certain circumstances, a mentor may be assigned three beginning teachers." [GSC Chapter 166 § 10-145o]

3. Time

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

State law requires local school boards to “ensure substitute teacher coverage for mentors” and beginning teacher participation in the activities and modules required in the district’s three-year TEAM program plan. The state also requires schools to “coordinate the activities and schedules of mentors and beginning teachers to ensure faithful implementation of the district plan.” Furthermore, state law requires that “each mentor provide 50 contact hours to each beginning teacher during the program, with the expectation of approximately 10 contact hours per module.” [GSC Chapter 166 § 10-145o]

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 TEAM program rules do not establish requirements for classroom observation or the development of beginning teacher learning communities. TEAM-trained mentors work with beginning teachers to: (1) identify a need or opportunity for professional growth; (2) develop a professional growth action plan; (3) implement the action plan and apply new learning; and (4) reflect and document new learning and impact on students. Beginning teachers and their mentors must use the electronic tools available on the TEAM Program website to complete each professional growth module. [GSC Chapter 166 § 10-145o].

State law prescribes requirements for beginning teachers. “For each instructional module, beginning teachers shall (A) apply the knowledge gained through such activities in a lesson, project or demonstration of how the activity impacted student learning, and (B) submit a reflection paper or project, to be signed by the mentor, that summarizes, describes or analyzes what has been learned by the beginning teacher and their students throughout the module and how the learning contributed to the development of such beginning teacher. Such reflection paper or project shall be forwarded to the district’s coordinating committee for approval.” [GSC Chapter 166 § 10-145o] Beginning teachers must complete up to five professional growth modules focused on the Common Core of Teaching domains: classroom environment, planning, instruction, assessment and professional responsibility. [TEAM Manual for 2015-2016]

School districts are required to employ a District Facilitator, who must be a certified teacher or administrator, to coordinate the implementation of the TEAM Program. Districts also must establish a TEAM Coordinating Committee to plan, implement and

monitors the district’s program. The Committee must develop and implement a Three-Year District Support Plan to address the recruitment and training of mentors, a plan for the review of beginning teachers’ module reflection papers, and budget and resources that will enable teachers to successfully complete the required professional growth plans.

5. Program Standards

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

State law requires the CSDE “to develop guidelines for the creation and approval of district teacher education and mentoring plans.” The State Board of Education first approved TEAM Program Guidelines in June 2010. They reflect the roles and responsibilities of each of the TEAM program stakeholders — beginning teachers, school districts, the state department of education, and regional education service centers. They also describe the structures and policies that need to be in place to guide local program implementation. In addition, 2015-2016 TEAM Module Guidelines provide an overview of the professional growth process in the modules in which beginning teachers: acquire new knowledge; use that knowledge to improve their teaching practice; and demonstrate the positive impact of the new practices on student learning.

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 requires mentors to receive “a minimum of a [\$500] annual stipend for each beginning teacher assigned.” The mentor of any beginning teacher required to complete five modules over a two-year timeframe is entitled to a \$1000 stipend. The total budget for the TEAM Program is approximately \$3 million. [Sec. 10.145o (f) and TEAM Manual for 2015-2016]

7. Educator Certification/Licensure

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

The TEAM Program is designed around five professional growth modules in order to provide a framework for support of new teachers. Beginning teachers in core certification areas are required to receive mentorship for two years and to successfully complete two modules in their first year and three modules in their second year to fulfill program requirements. The state recommends that beginning teachers complete the five-module process in two years, however they are given three years to complete the TEAM requirements. Beginning teachers in other certification areas are required to receive mentorship for one year and successfully complete two modules of their choice. The state recommends completion in one year, but formally provides two



years to meet the requirements. [GSC Chapter 166 § 10-145o] Beginning teachers must successfully complete the TEAM Program to be eligible for a provisional educator certificate. Teachers who do not successfully complete program requirements in the prescribed amount of time are not eligible for the provisional educator certificate or for reissuance of their initial educator certificate. [GSC Chapter 166 § 10-145o]

8. Program Accountability

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

State law requires the CSDE to “oversee an outside evaluation of the [TEAM] program every three to five years” and to “monitor district implementation of the [TEAM] program to ensure fidelity to the program’s plan and goals, including random district audits and observations by state personnel.” [GSC Chapter 166 § 10-145o] State law requires local school boards and school districts to develop and implement a Three-Year District Support Plan. The plan must include: (1) background information about the district that includes a community profile, district profile, student profile, faculty profile, mentor profile and beginning teacher profile; (2) a statement of three-year objectives related to the state’s goal statement for the teacher education and mentoring program; (3) a general timeline for district coordinating teams to meet with central office personnel, principals, mentors or district facilitators; (4) a description of the process used to select mentors and assign them to beginning teachers, based on subject areas, levels and need; (5) a description of the process used to train and update mentors in best practices and essential knowledge; (6) a timeline of district-wide mentoring days for observations, individual discussion, small group meetings, professional development days, regional educational service center training sessions and beginning teachers’ completion of tasks associated with each module; (7) a description of the process used to collect, review and coordinate teachers’ mentoring plans; (8) a description of the process to resolve internal disputes over the district’s recommendations to the state concerning which individuals have satisfactorily completed the instructional modules; and (9) a description of the resources and budget needed to carry out the activities described in the plan. [GSC Chapter 166 § 10-145o]

State law also requires school boards to submit an annual report on mentor-teacher activities to the district coordinating committee for review and approval. [GSC Chapter 166 § 10-145o]

The TEAM Program Guidelines state that the CSDE may access the annual report, submitted by districts, as part of the auditing process. Additionally, every three years the CSDE conducts an external program review. The last external review was conducted in 2015. The CSDE also collects anecdotal feedback through a monthly messaging mechanism whereby teachers and mentors can provide feedback to specific questions.

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.

Links

Connecticut’s Teacher Education And Mentoring (TEAM) Program: <http://www.ctteam.org>

Connecticut State Board of Education—TEAM Program Guidelines: www.ctteam.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/TEAM_GUIDE-LINES_11-12.pdf

LEAD Connecticut: <http://www.leadconnecticut.org>

Team Program Manual 2015-2016: http://www.ctteam.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/TEAM_Program_Manual_2015-2016.pdf

The Connecticut State Department of Education has reviewed this state summary.

This information is accurate as of January 2016.

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PR-CT-US-1602-EN