



**ARIZONA BEGINNING TEACHER**

# **Induction Program Standards**

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# INTRODUCTION

## Why Induction?

Teacher effectiveness has been shown to be the single most important school-based indicator of student success. Effective teachers can offset the impacts of socioeconomic and other factors on student outcomes.

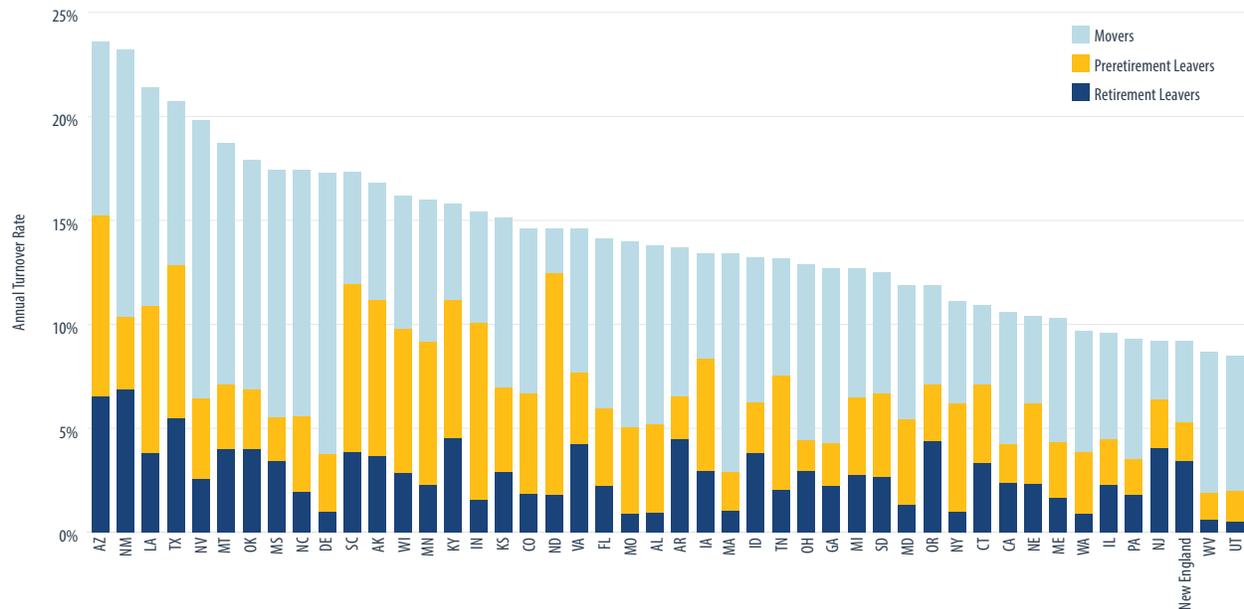
It takes time and support to become the kind of teacher who can have such positive effects on all students. Yet, across the country, the rate of teacher turnover—that is, all teacher movement out of schools or out of the profession—remains high. Half of all teachers leave the profession within their first three to five years, and it is often the highest-achieving and most-effective new teachers who leave first. Teacher candidates who enter through traditional pathways (e.g., programs based in institutions of higher education) have a wide range of field placement experiences in terms of time, placement, and exposure to high-quality teaching examples. Due to the unevenness of these experiences, graduates of teacher education programs often report feeling unprepared. Teachers entering the profession through alternative certification pathways (e.g., teachers operating on an alternative teaching certificate, Subject Matter Expert Certificate, etc.) also report concerns about their readiness to teach. These candidates usually have less or no coursework in teaching pedagogy and classroom experience prior to contracted employment. As a result, attrition rates are as much as 25% higher than candidates from traditional teacher education programs. The number of international teachers working in Arizona is on the rise as well, and these educators also have a unique set of challenges in transitioning to teaching in the United States. To compound the issue, most alternatively certified and international teachers go to work

in schools where there are a high number of students of color, in rural schools, and/or Title 1 schools. These students, who have been identified as needing strong instruction, therefore, are also the most likely to have an underqualified teacher who will not last beyond their third year of teaching.

The makeup of the teaching force is also an area of concern. Research has shown the value of having a teaching force that mirrors the student population. Yet in a state whose student population is more than 50% students of color, Arizona teachers are nearly 80% white. Teachers of color are more likely to enter teaching through an alternative pathway (25% vs. 12% of white teachers) for a wide range of reasons, including cost and the mission-driven nature of such programs. Given the statistics about the retention rate of alternatively certified teachers, this suggests that the number of teachers of color leaving the profession is higher on average than the number of white teachers. Induction for teachers of color, therefore, is a particularly critical intervention to ensure the development of diversity in the Arizona teacher workforce and also to ensure that students have access to high-quality teachers of color.

About 90% of the annual demand for teachers nationwide is created when teachers leave the profession, with about two-thirds of those teachers leaving for reasons other than retirement. As of 2012, Arizona had the highest rate of teacher turnover of all 50 states, making a focus on reducing attrition particularly important (see figure on page 3). Further, enrollment in teacher education programs of all types across the country have declined by as much as one-third since 2010. This suggests

## Teacher Turnover Varies Widely by State



Note: States with fewer than 25 teachers surveyed were excluded (DC, HI, and WY). Three small New England states with similar data patterns were combined (NH, RI, VT). Due to small sample sizes by state, most differences in turnover rates are not statistically significant.

Source: Learning Policy Institute analysis of National Center for Education Statistics Schools and Staffing Survey, 2011-12 and Teacher Follow-up Survey, 2012-13.

that the number of candidates available to fill vacancies is also declining. Schools seeking math, science, special education, and bilingual/English language-development teachers, especially for very rural and urban schools, are finding hiring especially challenging.

Given the wide range of preparation experiences and readiness levels of beginning teachers<sup>1</sup>, Arizona schools need to consider strategies for supporting beginning teachers in developing the knowledge, skills, dispositions, and professional identities necessary to increase their staying power in the profession.

Not only does turnover contribute to shortages, this revolving door costs U.S. schools over \$7 billion annually or in excess of \$20,000 to replace each teacher who leaves a school district. Most importantly, high turnover rates reduce achievement for students whose

classrooms are directly affected, as well as for other students in the school. The high rate of teacher turnover drains schools of talent and robs students of access to the kind of high-quality instructional experiences they deserve. Students who have several inexperienced or ineffective teachers in a row have significantly lower achievement and slower gains in achievement than those students assigned to a sequence of highly effective teachers.

Keeping teachers long enough to maximize their effectiveness with Arizona students is critical. While teachers may grow toward proficiency on their own, the learning curve in their first years is steep. If novice educators are left to sink or swim without support during this critical period in their development, they may become overwhelmed and leave the field. If they do stay, they can develop attitudes, beliefs, and practices that may help them

<sup>1</sup> A beginning teacher is an educator with 0–3 years of teaching experience. Districts may choose to broaden this definition to include a wider range of teachers requiring mentoring support (i.e., teachers new to the state or district, international educators, those with new credentials, teachers returning to education after a long hiatus).

survive, but do not serve the educational needs of all students. In Arizona’s schools, for example, educators need to understand and be able to address the unique needs of diverse learners including English language learners, students with special needs, and students from a wide range of socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds in order to provide equitable access to grade-appropriate content. Cultivating these skills takes time and support.

Developing effective teachers—those who stay and have the knowledge and skills to help all students achieve to their maximum potential—takes intentional work. In study after study, researchers have found that beginning teachers who receive comprehensive induction support were retained at higher rates and had increased job satisfaction, efficacy, and success over those who received no structured support in their early years of teaching. Comprehensive induction for new teachers includes an intentional and structured package of support provided over at least two years that includes: regular and ongoing instructionally focused mentoring, observation, and feedback from an expert and trained mentor; time for collaborative planning with colleagues; a reduced teaching load; and a focus on high-leverage activities such as analyzing student work and discussing culturally responsive and effective instructional strategies. Further, beginning teachers who are provided with at least two years of quality induction support that includes the components listed above are more likely to have classes that achieve at rates similar to those of their veteran peers and are more likely to persist in using high-quality teaching practices long beyond the induction program than their non-mentored peers. Moreover, the positive effects of induction

and mentoring seem to hold true in both underserved communities, communities of color, and across all levels of schooling from elementary to high school. In a state as diverse as Arizona, it makes sense to focus on a strategy that can show positive effects across all school types, levels, and populations.

As noted above, instructional mentoring is at the heart of every high-quality beginning teacher induction program. Instructional mentors<sup>2</sup> go beyond providing a beginning teacher with a buddy who can periodically answer questions or provide social and emotional support. Instead, instructional mentors are highly trained teacher leaders who systematically provide one-to-one professional development for beginning teachers to strengthen their instructional competence and ways of professional work. Instructional mentors are expert educators who have a proven track record of success with a wide range of learners, are highly collegial, and display the positive attitudes and dispositions that schools would like to see replicated in their newest teachers. However, being a highly effective teacher does not automatically mean one will also be a highly effective mentor, as the skills and abilities they must possess are different from those of a classroom teacher. Instructional mentors need systematic and ongoing professional learning to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively guide beginning teachers toward excellence. Further, instructional mentors need time to do their jobs well. When they do not have release time to observe the classrooms of beginning teachers first hand, they must rely on the incomplete understanding of the beginning teacher to determine needs. To maximize the benefits of these teacher leaders, therefore,

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<sup>2</sup> Instructional mentors are experienced and highly trained professionals who provide one-to-one professional development for beginning teachers in order to improve teacher retention and learning, as well as student outcomes.

schools must create structures that enable instructional mentors and beginning teachers to engage together in frequent, ongoing, and job-embedded<sup>3</sup> ways.

## Developing Beginning Teacher Induction Standards for Arizona

An original set of standards guiding the development of beginning teacher induction programs in Arizona was created in 2004. Since then, changes in how teachers enter the profession, as well as our understanding of what goes into developing an effective beginning teacher induction program, have occurred at both the state and national level. In addition, the passage of the Arizona Teacher's Academy in 2019, which includes a year of induction support for Academy graduates, raised the need to articulate a clear definition of induction for the state. Those graduates may choose to work anywhere in the state so, therefore, all educational organizations that hire new teachers need to have a common level of programming available.

This revised set of standards is the result of a series of working meetings with a wide range of stakeholders from across Arizona including Department of Education staffers, district and school leaders,<sup>4</sup> human resource experts, association and school board members, policy makers, university faculty, educational nonprofit leaders, and mentor program directors from both traditional and charter schools, as well as urban and rural settings, and from all corners of the state. Each of these stakeholders, in turn, vetted iterative drafts of these standards with a range of stakeholders in their own communities including school leaders, mentors, teachers, and parents.

There are three levels of standards outlined in this document: **Organizational**, **Professional**, and **Instructional Mentoring**.

1. The **Organizational Standards** create a foundation for successful induction work by describing how the induction program should be organized, administered, implemented, and improved over time.
2. The **Professional Standards** outline the support and structures needed by both the instructional mentors and the beginning teachers. The four areas include organizing principles for instructional mentoring programs as well as outlining mentor job selection, responsibilities, development, and assessment.
3. The **Instructional Mentoring Standards** focus on the knowledge, capabilities, and dispositions that are critical for beginning teachers to develop in their first years of practice under the guidance of instructional mentors. The four standards include how onboarding and professional learning for beginning teachers should be structured; define the scope of instructional mentoring work; and define how diversity, equity, and inclusion should be a central guiding principle for induction programs.

Building highly effective induction programs that retain and grow teachers capable of helping all students succeed is an important endeavor. As these standards show, there are a number of elements that must work in collaboration with one another in order to maximize the potential of such programs. It may take time to develop and grow such programs and, therefore, these standards are written using ideal language meant to provide

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<sup>3</sup>Job-embedded professional learning occurs during the school day and is grounded in day-to-day teaching practice. Thus, this model requires that mentors have time to observe and work with beginning teachers during instructional periods.

<sup>4</sup>School leaders include building principals, assistant principals, and/or others who work in a leadership capacity at the site level.

a target for Local Education Agencies (LEAs). It is also important to highlight that each locality is unique and, therefore, opportunities for flexibility are explicitly written into the standards to allow each community to develop

a rich and appropriate beginning teacher induction program. Together, we can improve retention rates for new teachers and ensure all of Arizona's students have access to a great teacher every year.

**“Teachers are not ‘finished products’ when they complete a teacher preparation program. Strong residency and mentored induction experiences during their initial years in the classroom provide beginning teachers with invaluable support as they lay the groundwork to become accomplished teachers. A well-planned, systematic induction program for new teachers is vital to maximize their chances of being successful in any school setting.”**

National Commission on Teaching and America's Future



## **I. ORGANIZATIONAL STANDARDS**

The platform upon which high-quality differentiated induction programs are built. They include strong leadership, shared vision, allocation of resources based on need, engagement with school leaders and other stakeholders, and processes for continuous program improvement that results in improved teacher retention and outcomes for all students.

# Standard 1 Program Structure

The beginning teacher induction program spanning a minimum of two years, may be sponsored by a single P-12 LEA, school district, charter, tribal nation, teacher education provider, education service agency, or group of organizations functioning as a consortium. Provisions to support participation can be made by utilizing technology and distance learning to include small, remote, tribal, and/or rural districts. The program sponsor will demonstrate a commitment to the program through the clear, appropriate, and equitable allocation of authority, initiative, and sufficient resources to support its implementation. In a consortium, personnel and material resources will be assigned to each sponsoring organization in proportion to its level of effort and degree of responsibility.

An oversight or leadership committee, which includes representatives from the various program sponsors, leaders, and influencers (e.g., directors of relevant programs such as curriculum, special education services, English language development or other similar roles), will be responsible for the overall direction of the program and will meet regularly to discuss program design, development, implementation, equity in support systems and assignments, and formative evaluation. The oversight committee's responsibilities are to ensure these standards are fully enacted with appropriate resources to meet the local program context.

**“Mentors spur growth by introducing new ways of thinking and pushing new teachers outside of their comfort zone. They present new teaching methods and provide tips on how to handle various situations inside and outside the classroom. By doing so, mentors help new teachers develop and grow as educators.”**

Dianne McKinnley

## Standard 2

# 2 Program Vision, Model, and Institutional Commitment

Leadership, together with a representative coalition of stakeholders (e.g., teacher education providers; school and organizational leaders including directors of English language development and special education; association representatives; instructional mentors; early career teachers; and a cross-section of P-12 teachers including general education, special education, gifted, English language development, arts education), will develop an induction program rationale. That rationale will articulate a clear understanding of the value of induction and describe how the model is part of a comprehensive plan for teacher development. Stakeholders will develop a common mission, vision, and goals for the induction program that addresses the program rationale and focuses on the learning of all students by retaining and extending the learning of beginning teachers as part of a comprehensive system of teacher development. Program goals should also include, but are not limited to:

- Providing a seamless transition into teaching from a range of teacher preparation experiences (e.g., 'traditional', alternative certification, international)

- Developing an understanding of and connection with local context and community
- Supporting teacher collaboration, communication, and collegiality to prevent teacher isolation
- Cultivating a sense of professionalism, self-efficacy, self-reflection, and the capacity for continued learning
- Enhancing teachers' use of evidence-based instructional models, particularly for English language learners, students with special needs, and gifted students
- Building positive classroom climate, community, and relationships with and among students

The program model is developed using effective, high-leverage and evidence-based best practices in alignment with both preservice and inservice professional standards. As part of the induction program structure, guidelines that ensure beginning teachers are accountable for participating in the program are developed. Adequate time and resources are allocated to support quality of programming and long-term sustainability.

# Standard 3

## 3 Program Leadership and Communication

Program design provides for a qualified program leader. Qualifications for this position should encompass qualities and experiences that will lead to the successful implementation of the induction program including, but not limited to:

- A demonstrated and articulated belief in the capabilities of all educators and students
- Successful experience mentoring and/or coaching educators
- Depth of knowledge and understanding necessary to be able to implement an induction program including knowledge of induction, adult learning theory, and relevant standards (i.e., teacher professional standards, English language proficiency standards, and

best practices and regulations governing work with students from special populations)

- Leadership experience, including program management, building and leading professional learning, and program evaluation

Program leaders are provided with adequate time, resources, and organizational decision-making powers to enact a high-quality and sustainable program. Program leaders coordinate and align with other local, site-based professional learning or reform initiatives to develop a program integrated into broader school systems. They also establish processes to communicate regularly with stakeholders in order to promote understanding and ownership based on shared data and evaluation results.

**“Coaching is a form of professional development that brings out the best in people, uncovers strengths and skills, builds effective teams, cultivates compassion, and builds emotionally resilient educators. Coaching at its essence is the way that human beings, and individuals, have always learned best.”**

Elena Aguilar

# Standard 4

## 4 School Leader Engagement

School leaders are provided an initial onboarding that includes a clear outline of the induction program model and with expectations of their role in the program, as well as an annual review and update in order to support and reinforce an aligned and cohesive vision and purpose of induction throughout the school and school system. School leaders work closely with the program leader and instructional mentors to:

- Conduct an initial orientation for beginning teachers about school and/or district resources, personnel, procedures, and policies.
- Implement policies and initiatives that promote a positive climate for beginning teachers and instructional mentors (e.g., reduced instructional assignments, class assignments that take into consideration the developmental level of a beginning teacher, limited preps and extracurricular activities, limited numbers of transitions between classrooms and/or schools, additional resources for beginning teachers).
- Align and integrate induction with other school priorities and professional initiatives to ensure beginning teacher support is streamlined and non-duplicative (e.g., adjust evaluation process to reflect induction program goals, excuse beginning teachers from additional coaching while being

mentored in the induction program, adjust special education mentor evaluation to reflect their unique context and skill set).

- Provide resources that promote beginning teacher success including clarifying roles, structures, and resources (e.g., dedicated regular time during the school day for mentors and beginning teachers to meet, flexible schedule in order to attend professional learning).

Program design also provides clear expectations for communication between instructional mentors and school leaders to contribute to a seamless alignment between the beginning teacher induction program, professional standards, and school/district goals.

Maintaining confidentiality within the mentoring relationship is critical for success. Therefore, school leaders must respect the confidential nature of work between the instructional mentor and beginning teacher and not ask mentors to provide evaluative data on beginning teacher performance. Instead, school leaders observe beginning teachers, give feedback, and communicate with both the instructional mentors and beginning teachers about areas of strength and focus.

# 5 Standard 5 Ongoing Program Assessment and Improvement

Led by the program leader, stakeholders develop and implement a comprehensive system of longitudinal data collection and program evaluation aligned with the program's rationale, mission, vision, goals, design, and standards and in collaboration with broader district-level data collection and improvement strategies. Information from multiple internal and external evidence-based quantitative and qualitative data sources (e.g., program

enactment and quality metrics, mentor assessment data, teacher satisfaction data, retention and evaluation data, and student outcome metrics) and personnel (e.g., beginning teachers, mentors, school leaders, collaborating partners, program staff, and program leadership) will be included to assess effectiveness. Program leaders analyze, utilize, and systematically share data for continuous program improvement.

**“Being a new teacher is hard. Mentoring new teachers is hard. And improving the implementation of mentorship programs is hard. But the best way to work toward success for teachers, mentors and systems is using supports that are people-driven: growing the people doing the mentoring, tackling the personal aspects of being a new teacher, and thinking strategically about people’s actions and needs. When you invest in supporting people in these ways, both individuals and systems get better — resulting in impactful mentoring, happier teachers, effective instruction, and, most important, students who learn more in their classrooms each day.”**

SREB Educator Effectiveness



## II. PROGRAM STANDARDS

Focus on services and support needed for both instructional mentors and beginning teachers. They include mentor selection, development, and assessment as well as professional learning processes with mentors.

## Standard 6

# 6 Program Design

The beginning teacher induction program identifies and assigns instructional mentors who are fully or partially released from classroom responsibilities to work with beginning teachers. Instructional mentors fully released from classroom responsibilities will mentor beginning teachers with an ideal maximum ratio of 1:15. Instructional mentors released partially from classroom responsibilities will mentor beginning teachers with an ideal maximum ratio of three beginning teachers for every release period provided. The program will ensure instructional mentors are:

- Sufficiently trained and prepared to work effectively with beginning teachers

- Adequately resourced and supported to work with beginning teachers
- Provided with ongoing, regular and sufficient time to meet with beginning teachers during the school day

It is recommended that instructional mentors serve for multiple consecutive years so they can build the skills necessary to become highly effective instructional leaders and have the greatest impact on beginning teacher professional learning, thus maximizing their scope of influence with respect to increased teacher retention and academic achievement for all students.

**“When mentors are well-selected, well-trained and given the time to work intensively with new teachers, they not only help average teachers become good, but good teachers become great.”**

Dara Barlin

## Standard 7

# Instructional Mentor Selection, Assignment, and Responsibilities

The induction program outlines clear roles and responsibilities for instructional mentors and presents a formal and rigorous process for instructional mentor recruitment and selection, which are clearly communicated to all participants. A well-articulated selection process includes, but is not limited to, an application, recommendations, observations, and interviews. In addition, the program establishes explicit selection criteria that include, but are not limited to:

- At least five years of successful teaching experience in the P-12 classroom, ideally in the LEA in which they will mentor, or similar context
- Utilization of academic standards and evidence-based best practices to effectively teach diverse/heterogeneous populations
- Excellent professional role model—positive, collaborative, growth mindset, reflective, solution-oriented

- Effective interpersonal communication skills with students, colleagues, and parents/guardians
- Commitment to ongoing personal professional growth and learning to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to be an effective coach of adult learners
- National Board Certification preferred

Program leaders assign instructional mentors to beginning teachers in a timely manner taking these factors into account, among others: credentials; content; grade-level and developmental knowledge and experience; local context; expertise in working with English language learners or other special populations; and geographic proximity. Clearly delineated procedures are in place for reconsidering assignments in a timely manner when either the instructional mentor or beginning teacher is dissatisfied with the pairing.

# Standard 8

## 8 Instructional Mentor Professional Development

Under the direction of the program leader, the beginning teacher program provides evidence-based initial preparation and ongoing professional development for instructional mentors to equip them for successful work with beginning teachers that is aligned to program goals and LEA priorities. Instructional mentors are given regular time to meet with each other, facilitated by program leaders, to develop and refine needed instructional mentoring skills, and to problem-solve, assess, and reflect on teaching. Topics for instructional mentor professional learning may include, but are not limited to:

- Understanding program vision, mission, goals, and instructional mentor roles and responsibilities
- Implementing best practices in adult learning theory and strategies for effectively coaching adults
- Employing effective coaching strategies and language
- Fostering trusting, non-evaluative, confidential relationships with beginning teachers
- Building and maintaining positive working relationships with school leaders
- Understanding how beginning teachers develop and how to tailor support to match
- Developing and implementing beginning teacher professional learning plans
- Using instructional mentoring instruments, tools, protocols, and processes
- Facilitating reflective conversations about teaching and learning
- Collecting and effectively analyzing multiple sources of data, including, but not limited to: classroom observation (including video), lesson plans, beginning teacher reflections, student artifacts (e.g., work, assessments, projects), and achievement and behavioral data
- Providing actionable feedback that supports beginning teacher growth and development as well as student learning and development
- Assisting beginning teachers in understanding, analyzing, and addressing bias, inequity, and other issues related to diversity, equity, and inclusion within their sphere of influence
- Systematically building equitable and inclusive learning environments for all students, and delivering culturally responsive pedagogy
- Developing understanding of and strategies for effectively working with diverse student populations
- Assisting beginning teachers in developing positive and safe classroom communities
- Assisting beginning teachers in developing positive and productive connections with families and communities
- Facilitating the social-emotional learning (SEL) of instructional mentors and beginning teachers, and implementing SEL best practices in beginning teachers' classrooms
- Having courageous conversations about difficult situations that move work with beginning teachers and others forward without violating trust
- Continuing professional learning on best inclusive practices in education and standards-based instruction
- Establishing and working toward clear, meaningful professional goals through a process of reflection and collaboration

## Standard 9

# Mentor Assessment

The program leader facilitates a systematic and consistent process to assess the quality of services provided by instructional mentors in alignment with program goals. Multiple sources of qualitative and quantitative evidence may include, but are not limited to: information from the instructional mentor’s professional goals; feedback from beginning teachers and school leaders; observations of interactions during mentor professional development and in-field observations; and input from other

stakeholders. The program leader provides regular, formative data-informed feedback to mentors both as a group and individually. Feedback will be grounded in instructional mentoring standards and program goals. The system includes a process to ensure only successful instructional mentors are retained in order to ensure continued program quality. Mentor assessment data will be used as part of broader program assessment and improvement efforts outlined in Standard 5 on page 12.

“The good mentor is a model of a continuous learner.”

James B. Rowley



### **III. INSTRUCTIONAL MENTORING STANDARDS**

Articulate the knowledge, capabilities, and dispositions that instructional mentors support beginning teachers in developing to ensure all students learn and grow under their watch.

# 10 Beginning Teacher Onboarding and Professional Learning

One-to-one job-embedded confidential mentoring by a highly trained instructional mentor is the primary process by which beginning teachers are professionally supported and developed during their early years in education. A comprehensive mentoring system also includes an onboarding process for beginning teachers developed and implemented by the program leader, instructional mentors, school/LEA leaders and other relevant stakeholders. Additionally, the

induction program may provide additional job-embedded professional learning opportunities specifically for beginning teachers in alignment with school, LEA, and state professional priorities (e.g., working with English language learners and students with special needs). Precautions should be taken to ensure professional learning experiences for beginning teachers are streamlined and non-duplicative in order to ensure beginning teachers are not overwhelmed.

**“The biggest effects on student learning occur when teachers become learners and of their own teaching and when students become their own teachers.”**

John Hattie

# 11 Instructionally Focused Mentoring

The instructional mentor will regularly engage in intentional coaching conversations with the beginning teacher focused on developing the beginning teacher's instructional knowledge, skills, and tools in the following areas:

- Creating productive learning environments for all students
- Understanding grade level and content standards
- Assessing student strengths and needs in an ongoing manner
- Selecting, assessing, and adapting appropriate instructional materials, resources, and technologies
- Planning coherent, standards-aligned, rigorous, and differentiated lessons
- Knowledge about the school/LEA and community
- Understanding and fulfilling professional responsibilities

**“Educative mentoring rests on an explicit vision of good teaching and an understanding of teacher learning. Mentors who share this orientation attend to beginning teachers’ present concerns, questions, and purposes without losing sight of long-term goals for teacher development. They interact with novices in ways that foster an inquiring stance. They cultivate skills and habits that enable novices to learn in and from their practice. They use their knowledge and expertise to assess the direction novices are heading and to create opportunities and conditions that support meaningful teacher learning in the service of student learning.”**

Sharon Feiman-Nemser

# 12 Mentoring for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

The induction program will include embedded activities to learn about and advocate for equitable and inclusive learning environments that embrace and build on educators' and students' ethnicity, culture, race, linguistic, ability, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status. Instructional mentors encourage beginning teachers to maintain an open mind and a balanced perspective that conveys the fundamental belief that all students

can learn and meet high expectations. Through mentoring and other professional learning experiences, beginning teachers will practice bias awareness in self and context, addressing the unique learning needs of diverse learners (including students with learning differences and English language learners) with culturally responsive pedagogy and, ultimately, providing equitable access to rigorous grade-level content.

**“To make progress in educational equity, we need leaders, teachers, and other stakeholders to understand the different aspects of equity and how, when put together, they create more equitable outcomes for children.”**

Zaretta Hammond

# 13 Structures for Beginning Teacher Professional Learning

The induction program includes a process for developing and implementing a professional learning plan for each participant based on a range of developmentally appropriate evidence for beginning teachers to guide this professional learning structure. Grounded in professional learning standards, the professional learning plan is differentiated for each beginning teacher to ensure alignment with program goals, the content/grade level taught by the beginning teacher, local context, student strengths and needs, and the unique background and experiences of the beginning teacher. With input from school leaders, mentors support beginning teachers to develop, implement, gather evidence, revise, and reflect on their professional learning plan to maximize the learning opportunities for the beginning teacher and their students. All professional learning plans include the use of evidence-based high-quality instruction linked to student learning.

Instructional mentors and beginning teachers work within a common and clearly defined system structure, such as a plan-teach-reflect cycle, drawing from multiple data sources to refine and improve planning and instruction. Throughout these iterative cycles, instructional mentors may, among other support mechanisms:

- Regularly observe and give feedback
- Guide reflective conferences and support problem-solving
- Analyze student work
- Co-plan and co-teach
- Model an instructional practice

- Organize meetings with or observations of other teachers
- Guide resource location and selection

Instructional mentors use tools provided by the induction program to structure and guide conversations and collect data for analysis with the beginning teacher at each stage of this cycle.

Instructional mentors also support beginning teachers in developing professional relationships with others in order to build a professional support community for the beginning teacher that will extend beyond the beginning teacher induction program. This includes, but is not limited to, developing collaborative relationships with:

- Other beginning teachers
- Grade level and content area colleagues and teams
- Teacher and site leaders
- Parents and the community
- Other in-person or virtual professional networks that build a broader system of support for the beginning teacher

The beginning teacher will provide evidence of growth in relation to their personal professional growth plan along with reflections and next steps. The plan may be shared with others, including the school leader, at the discretion of the beginning teacher. However, it is exempt from any association with site-based evaluation processes, employment decisions, or credentialing requirements and should not be confused with formative evaluation for personnel purposes.

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Thank you to the committee members for shaping this document by sharing your expertise and soliciting feedback from a wide range of stakeholders within your own communities.

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Special thanks to Emily Davis with the Teacher Development Network, who facilitated the work of this committee and drafted this document.



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**“A democratic education means that we educate people in a way that ensures they can think independently, that they can use information, knowledge, and technology, among other things, to draw their own conclusions.”**

Linda Darling-Hammond