



**Data-Informed  
K-12 Human  
Capital Strategies**

**CONTENT GUIDE:**

# Educator Induction

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*Local education agency (LEA) and school leaders can use this guide to learn more about:*

- The purposes and desired outcomes of induction for new educators;
- Effective practices they can use in planning and implementing educator induction;
- Strategies to address challenges, constraints or other considerations when implementing effective induction;
- Examples from other LEAs that have implemented induction strategies; and
- Resources to support this work in your LEA.

# Context

Beginning teachers need strong support systems. In addition to adjusting to the demands of the teaching profession, beginning teachers may teach heavy class loads, manage the most challenging classrooms, and take on nonteaching responsibilities beyond their regular teaching assignments.<sup>1</sup> This teacher induction guide was written to support LEAs and schools as they plan for the induction experience of first-year teachers, long-term substitutes who are hired for a position for 45 days or more, and educational specialists—a requirement of the [Pennsylvania Educator Induction Plan Guidelines](#).

Induction programs are part of a larger system of support to improve new teachers' practice and ultimately retain effective teachers, all of which in turn boosts students learning. **Mentoring is a part of induction**; other supports, like orientation, help with curriculum planning, and professional learning can also be a part of induction.

Mentoring refers to one-on-one support and feedback provided by an experienced teacher to a new teacher or experienced teacher in need of support. Mentoring is a critical feature of a comprehensive induction program but should not be the only feature. To support teachers' professional growth, school and LEA leaders need to consider all the factors in attracting, preparing, developing, supporting and retaining teachers. The following list outlines elements of high quality, comprehensive induction programs:

- **Intensive and specific feedback** to improve teaching practice
- **Professional teaching standards** and data-driven conversations
- **Ongoing professional learning** targeted to the needs of beginning teachers
- **Clear roles and responsibilities** for administrators (also outlined in the [Pennsylvania Educator Induction Plan Guidelines](#))
- **Rigorous mentor selection**
- **Ongoing professional learning and support for mentors** (note the details outlined in the [Pennsylvania Educator Induction Plan Guidelines](#))
- **Designated time** for mentor-teacher interaction
- **Multiyear mentoring** (one year is required by the [Pennsylvania Educator Induction Plan Guidelines](#))
- **Collaboration with all stakeholders** to evaluate the program's effectiveness and plan for continuous improvement (for more information, see [this brief on evaluating induction programs](#))

**RESOURCE:** For more information on how induction and mentoring play a critical role in talent development, see the [Talent Development Framework for 21st Century Educators](#) on page 3, from the Center on Great Teachers and Leaders (GTL Center).

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<sup>1</sup> Hayes, L., Lachlan-Haché, L., & Williams, H. (2019). 10 mentoring and induction challenges in rural schools and how to address them. Washington, DC: American Institutes for Research, Center on Great Teachers and Leaders. Retrieved from [https://gtlcenter.org/sites/default/files/MentoringInduction\\_Rural.pdf](https://gtlcenter.org/sites/default/files/MentoringInduction_Rural.pdf)

# Why Focus on Continuously Improving Induction Programs?

Effective induction programs can improve students' equitable access to effective educators—especially when they target shortage subject areas and high need schools—and can also lead to improved teacher retention.<sup>2</sup> New teachers are less likely to leave the profession if they have a mentor in their content area and if they participate in formal planning and collaboration with other teachers.<sup>3</sup> Mentoring aligned with job roles and responsibilities is especially important for teachers in critical shortage areas, such as special education.<sup>4</sup> Mentoring and induction activities also have a positive impact on teacher commitment, classroom instructional practices, and student achievement.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, mentoring and induction can improve school climate and working conditions, and mentoring roles provide leadership opportunities for effective teachers.

**RESOURCE:** The GTL Center's **Mentoring and Induction Toolkit** is a comprehensive and ready-to-use resource that LEAs and schools can use to build strong induction and mentoring programs. The purpose of the toolkit is to provide tools, resources and support to facilitate meaningful conversations within LEAs about the design and implementation of effective, high quality induction and mentoring programs. The toolkit materials summarize research and best practices, highlight relevant examples, and provide streamlined processes for action planning.

**RESOURCE:** The following resources from The New Teacher Center can be valuable starting points for LEAs focused on improving their induction programs:

- **High-Quality Mentoring and Induction Practices** – Useful for a brief look at general elements and structures of induction programs as well as shifting from basic mentoring to more comprehensive mentoring and induction supports.
- **Teacher Induction Standards** – Useful for guiding LEAs in building a comprehensive induction program and for considering the instructional-focused formative assessment required for beginning teacher growth.
- **Mentor Practice Standards** – Useful for guiding mentor selection and recruitment efforts; developing training and professional growth opportunities for mentors; and assessing mentor quality and growth.

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<sup>2</sup> Cogshall, J., Mizrav, E., & Lachlan-Hache, L. (2019). Evidence-based practices to support equity: A snapshot on mentoring and induction. Washington, DC: Center on Great Teachers and Leaders; Ingersoll, R. M., & Smith, T. M. (2004). Do teacher induction and mentoring matter? *NASSP Bulletin*, 88(638), 28–40; Ingersoll, R. M., & Strong, M. (2011). The impact of induction and mentoring programs for beginning teachers: A critical review of the research. *Review of Educational Research*, 81(2), 201–233.

<sup>3</sup> Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011.

<sup>4</sup> Billingsley, B. S., Griffin, C. C., Smith, S. J., Kamman, M., & Israel, M. (2009). A review of teacher induction in special education: Research, practice, and technology solutions (NCIPP Document No. RS-1). Gainesville, FL: National Center to Inform Policy and Practice in Special Education Professional Development. Retrieved from [http://ncipp.education.ufl.edu/files\\_6/NCIPP\\_Induc\\_010310.pdf](http://ncipp.education.ufl.edu/files_6/NCIPP_Induc_010310.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Strong, M. (2006). Does new teacher support affect student achievement? (Research Brief). Santa Cruz, CA: New Teacher Center. Retrieved from <https://www.issueelab.org/resources/2881/2881.pdf>

# Effective LEA Policies and Practices

## ***First, involve the right people.***

As noted in the [Pennsylvania Educator Induction Plan Guidelines](#), the induction plan should be prepared by an induction educator committee of teachers and/or educational specialists selected by colleagues. When planning, developing or improving a teacher induction program, include a variety of voices in the conversation, including those of principals, mentors, induction or professional learning coordinators, union or association leaders, human capital officers, and other LEA leaders. Early career teachers also participate in some conversations to provide insight into their experience.

### **REFLECTION QUESTIONS:**

- *What stakeholder groups are involved in or impacted by the LEA induction program?*
- *How could representatives from those groups be brought together to develop or refine the current induction program?*

## ***Second, create a theory of change.***

A theory of change is a roadmap that shows how you expect change to occur as a result of your work and provides a general picture of the project plan. It explains how activities are expected to produce a series of results that help meet a longer-term goal. A well-conceived theory of change explains how the project is expected to work and keeps implementation and evaluation transparent so that everyone involved knows what is happening and why.

For example, “If I develop a quality mentoring and induction program that provides mentor teachers who understand effective teaching strategies to new hires, then new hires will feel adequately supported and will be less likely to leave the LEA.”

**RESOURCE:** The Center on Great Teachers and Leaders Mentoring and Induction Toolkit 2.0: **Module 7. Collecting Evidence of Induction Program Success** includes a [handout with example theories of change](#) for an induction program and a [workbook](#) that guides a team through developing a theory of change.

### **Third, recruit and select mentors.**

The recruitment and selection of mentors are among the most important variables in the success or failure of a mentor program. The process requires careful consideration of the program purpose (specifically the challenges that the induction program is meant to address, e.g. new teacher attrition, better classroom management); job descriptions for mentors; qualities of an effective mentor; and mentor selection criteria.

**RESOURCE:** The Center on Great Teachers and Leaders Mentoring and Induction Toolkit 2.0: [Module 2. Mentor Recruitment, Selection and Assignment](#) includes a [workbook](#) for school and district teams to make decisions about mentor recruitment, selection and assignment. Each section of the tool (recruitment, selection and assignment) includes reflection questions for a school or district team, questions to help develop or refine the process, and a form to record key steps.

#### **REFLECTION QUESTIONS:**

- *How is mentor recruitment and selection currently conducted?*
- *What improvements are needed in those processes?*
- *How do you know?*
- *If you were refining current processes, which stakeholders should be involved in decision-making?*

### **Next, train mentors.**

Mentors need training and support, given the differences between teaching students and mentoring adults. Training can come in a variety of forms: professional learning series, professional learning communities, coaching, and ongoing formative assessment. The use of mentor standards is also a valuable addition to any mentor support. They provide guidance for what effective mentors must know and be able to do and they describe the knowledge, skills, abilities, and dispositions that mentors must have in order to advance beginning teachers' practice and impact on student learning. Mentor standards are often used to guide mentors' growth, self-assessment and accountability. In some settings, mentors use the standards as a self-assessment and then develop a set of goals focused on their strengths and areas of growth. Mentors can also share these goals with the induction program lead and review the goals throughout the year to assess their growth. For more information see [this brief on training and supporting mentors](#), and the [New Teacher Center's Mentor Practice Standards](#).

## REFLECTION QUESTION:

- *What supports are needed to ensure that your induction program is comprehensive and aligned with high-quality mentoring and induction practices (see the New Teacher Center’s [Induction Program Standards here](#)).*

### **Step 5: Develop supports for new teachers.**

Just as mentor standards can be useful for the professional growth of mentors, induction program standards can guide the professional growth of new teachers. The New Teacher Center’s [Induction Program Standards](#) outline the value of onboarding, training and learning communities specifically for beginning teachers.

Use early assessments of new teachers’ strengths and challenges to determine what trainings and other supports to offer. Beyond mentors talking with teachers about general concerns, they should focus on teacher growth and development, with an emphasis on student learning. This includes reflection, goal setting, the analysis of student learning data, and regular cycles of observation and feedback. Receiving feedback on practice from a mentor prepares beginning teachers to benefit from feedback in formal observations.

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

- *What induction support is currently provided to new teachers?*
- *How will your team target supports and collect specific data on the needs of new teachers supporting high need populations of students (e.g., students with disabilities, English learners, students performing below grade level)?*

### **Step 6: Engage principals in leveraging the induction program.**

Induction programs can be more effective if principals receive training to make the most of the program. Principals can support mentors and the entire induction program by setting expectations of mentors and beginning teachers to participate in the program using standards as a guide to effective practice. Principals should also communicate with mentors to learn how the program is going and to ensure mentor training is aligned to beginning teachers' needs.

**RESOURCE:** The GTL Center Mentoring and Induction Toolkit 2.0: [Module 5. The Role of the Principal in Mentoring and Induction](#) includes actionable tools such as a [workbook](#) on the topic with reflection questions and places to record decisions on the principal role.

### **Step 7: Continuously improve and sustain induction programs.**

Induction and mentoring programs are successful only when monitored properly by collecting data from new teachers, mentors and principals. Although more details on evaluating induction programs are available [in this brief](#), consider the following types of data:

- **Program quality data:** whether the mentoring and induction program is meeting the goals expressed in the state or LEA's theory of change
- **Mentor quality data:** the quality of mentors, including their impact on improving new teacher practice and the perceptions of effectiveness among mentees
- **Data on the effectiveness of professional learning for new teachers:** the impact of the professional learning opportunities provided to new teachers on changing instructional practices and overall outcomes for [students](#)

#### **REFLECTION QUESTIONS:**

- *How could a process of program reflection and refinement be incorporated into the induction program regularly?*
- *How could other successful continuous improvement efforts in the LEA serve as a model or guide for continuously improving the teacher induction program?*
- *How will your program evaluation plan track progress toward mentoring and induction outcomes for new teachers in high need, low performing schools?*



# Key Considerations for Planning and Implementation

**Funding and Sustainability.** The flexibility offered with the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) is an opportunity to create the kind of comprehensive induction programs that address the needs of new teachers—across the board and particularly in the lowest performing schools. ESSA allows LEAs to rethink funding for both school improvement and professional learning activities. By braiding funding from Titles I and II, LEAs can re-envision professional learning for both new teachers and their mentors, reversing high teacher turnover trends and increasing the lure of teaching in challenging schools—all while increasing teacher effectiveness for the students with the greatest need. While data illustrates the value of investing in comprehensive mentoring and induction,<sup>6</sup> much of the Title IIA funds and other educator effectiveness funds typically are spent on less evidence-based professional learning. Thus, reconsidering funding approaches may be in an LEA’s best interest. For more information, see [Thought Leadership Forum Brief: Braiding Federal Funds Under ESSA](#).

## *LEA reflection:*

*How will your team ensure sustainable funding for the induction program across time?  
Does the LEA currently allocate educator professional learning funds for uses that are not required and are not proving to be effective?*

**Rural Schools.** The GTL Center’s [10 Mentoring and Induction Challenges in Rural Schools and How to Address Them](#) outlines common challenges that rural schools encounter when implementing mentoring and induction programs; provides strategies to address the challenges; and describes examples from the field. Although beginning teachers face similar challenges in every type of school, these challenges often are amplified in rural schools<sup>7</sup> which frequently have a higher proportion of beginning teachers than their urban or suburban neighbors.<sup>8</sup> For example, many beginning teachers are assigned to teach multiple courses and grade levels, which requires additional planning and preparation time. However, this situation may be even more challenging for a beginning teacher in a rural school with few staff because no other teachers are teaching that course or subject. The challenges for beginning teachers in rural schools are further amplified because these

<sup>6</sup> Villar, A. (2004). Measuring the benefits and costs of mentor-based induction: A value-added assessment of new teacher effectiveness linked to student achievement. Santa Cruz, CA: New Teacher Center.

<sup>7</sup> Showalter, D., Johnson, J., Klein, R., & Hartman, S. L. (2017). Why rural matters 2015–2016: Understanding the changing landscape. Arlington, VA: Rural School and Community Trust.

<sup>8</sup> Gagnon, D. J., & Mattingly, M. J. (2015). Rates of beginning teachers: Examining one indicator of school quality in an equity context. *Journal of Educational Research*, 108(3), 226–235.

teachers are more likely to juggle a greater number of responsibilities to meet the needs of their small school communities. Geographic isolation, possible lower teacher compensation, and dispersed leadership structures contribute further to the difficulties that rural schools face in attracting and retaining effective teachers, particularly the most talented beginning teachers. The good news is that a viable solution exists. Rural schools can design and implement mentoring and induction with the local context in mind.

**Example in action:**

For example, a rural LEA in eastern Oklahoma hired retired, highly effective teachers to serve as mentors to beginning teachers on a part-time basis. The district asked principals to identify recently retired teachers with a strong record of success in the classroom.

**Example in action:**

A rural LEA in Washington state developed a teacher leadership program to encourage teachers to become leaders in their schools while remaining in the classroom. Teachers identified leadership roles matched to their schools' needs and their personal strengths. Then teachers submitted proposals to the district with a rationale for how their leadership role would help increase capacity in their rural schools. Teachers whose proposals were selected received additional planning time to carry out their new leadership roles. Some of the leadership roles created included technology support specialist, resource specialist (provides access to a variety of classroom materials for lessons), content specialist, mentor, data coach and facilitator, and professional learning community facilitator.

**Regional Partnerships.** Regional partnerships can be used to reduce the burden on smaller LEAs of designing and administering teacher induction programs.

**Example in action:**

In Texas, a regional service center developed a series of one-page practice guides for teachers, containing suggestions on how to thrive in a rural school while teaching multiple subjects or grade levels. A service center specialist traveled to district schools once per month to provide mentoring support to beginning teachers. For example, the specialist helped a first-year science teacher instructing six different grade levels to arrange the course curriculum so that multiple grade levels were studying similar content and using similar lab materials at the same time. In addition, the service center provided ongoing mentoring support to the beginning teacher to address other challenges associated with teaching science.

**Innovative Tech Solutions.** Innovative technology solutions can also be used to support new teachers.

*Example in action:*

The New Teacher Center’s **Electronic Mentoring for Student Success program** matches beginning teachers in the critical shortage areas of mathematics, science and special education with mentors who have the same teaching experience. Beginning teachers have access to content facilitators and specialists, including practicing scientists, mathematics educators, and special education faculty. Beginning teachers engage in interactive online learning communities with support from the content facilitators and specialists who answer just-in-time questions, curate online resources, and moderate discussion forums.

**Urban Schools.** Urban schools may face unique challenges providing induction support that meets the needs of its teachers.

*Example in action:*

District leadership teams in Kokomo, Indiana are working to improve teacher retention through a new comprehensive mentoring and induction program. As part of the GTL’s Mentoring and Induction Affinity Group, the district participated in a series of six in-person and virtual workshops that supported the development of resources and processes to develop and implement a comprehensive teacher induction program. Outside the workshops, the team met regularly and used knowledge-building activities and resources from the **GTL Center’s Mentoring and Induction Toolkit 2.0** to facilitate a data dive, a root-cause analysis, an induction program inventory, and other activities. These activities led to the following:

- **The discussion and development** of program goals
- **Concrete mentor selection criteria**
- **Targeted professional learning materials** for new teachers and mentors
- **Mentor and new teacher assessment plans** based on teacher and mentor standards
- **A monitoring plan** that included unique surveys of mentors, teachers and administrators to assess the quality and fidelity of the program

The Kokomo, Indiana team piloted the new mentoring program during the 2017–18 school year at four high need schools in the district. At the end of the pilot year, all four schools retained all their new staff. As a result, the new mentoring program expanded to all 13 instructional sites in the district in the 2018–19 school year.

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

- *Which of these sections is most useful to your LEA – rural, urban, regional support or tech solutions?*
- *What, if any, examples in action would be helpful for your LEA to further look into?*

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**Educator Induction**

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