

Understanding Mentoring for Quality Induction



INTRODUCTION

The New Jersey Mentoring for Quality Induction initiative is designed to ensure the success of novice teachers in New Jersey classrooms. This folder, *Understanding Mentoring for Quality Induction*, will provide the rationale and research base that undergirds the initiative, places mentoring within the context of a comprehensive program of induction, and offers program guidelines. This folder will also provide the regulations governing mentoring for quality induction (*N.J.A.C. 6A:9-8.4*) and the New Jersey Professional Standards for Teachers, which outline what all teachers are expected to know and be able to do, and other regulations to which local mentoring plans must be aligned.



Guiding Questions

- What is the purpose of a mentoring for quality induction program?
- What are the principles that underlie the nation's most effective mentoring for quality induction programs?
- What are the DOE guidelines for establishing a mentoring for quality induction program?
- What are the state regulations for mentoring (*N.J.A.C. 6A:9-8.4*)?
- How do the New Jersey Professional Standards for Teachers relate to mentoring for quality induction?



Glossary

Induction: transition into the teaching profession, which includes mentoring for the novice teacher as well as training and support for the mentors.

Mentoring: as part of the complex process of induction where mentors provide ongoing support and guidance to novice teachers as they transition into the teaching profession.



Key Resources

- New Jersey regulations governing the Mentoring for Quality Induction initiative (*N.J.A.C. 6A:9-8.4*)
- New Jersey regulations governing the evaluation of provisional teachers (*N.J.A.C. 6A:9-8.6*)
- The New Jersey Professional Standards for Teachers
- NCLB Key Elements of High Quality Professional Development
- Annotated Bibliography

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Understanding Mentoring for Quality Induction

The Case for Mentoring for Quality Induction

As novice teachers transition into the teaching profession, they are required to participate in a rigorous mentoring program lasting at least one year. The state requires mentoring for all novice teachers to provide sustained and intensive support that:

- Ensures novice teachers develop proficiencies outlined in the New Jersey Professional Standards for Teachers;
- Increases teacher effectiveness to enhance student learning; and
- Supports increased job satisfaction and teacher retention.

Districts must create systematic programs in which all members of the school's professional community are engaged in supporting novice teachers as they become effective professionals whose standards-based practice will support high levels of student achievement in all New Jersey classrooms.

Research on Mentoring and Induction

It is clear that mentoring is a key component in assuring novice teacher success. Research shows that mentoring for quality induction programs save district resources. About 25% of new teachers leave the profession within the first year and about 30% leave within the first five years. These percentages are even higher (about 50%) in urban areas. Because of this turnover rate, some states are using induction programs to help provisional teachers, from either traditional or alternative preparation programs, to make a successful transition into the classroom and teaching profession. Novice teachers who are involved in induction-with-mentoring programs are more likely to stay in the teaching profession and move beyond the initial survival issues to teacher competency as defined by professional teaching standards (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1996, 2000).

Critical Attributes of Effective Mentoring

Mentoring is a critical component of induction. The following critical attributes of effective induction programs have been validated by the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices. Effective mentoring programs:

- Promote universal participation for new teachers from both traditional and alternative preparation programs;
- Use experienced teachers as mentors;
- Include mentor preparation;
- Facilitate release time or reduced teaching loads for beginning teachers and mentors;
- Have earmarked funding;
- Are based on clear standards;
- Are structured and defined by input from beginning and veteran teachers;
- Assess beginning teachers' performance;
- Have a subject-specific focus;



Understanding Mentoring for Quality Induction

- Extend throughout the school year and beyond the first year of teaching; and
- Provide teachers with working conditions – including placement in subjects that they are qualified to teach, placement with students who are not the most challenging, opportunities to participate in targeted professional development, and opportunities to observe and be observed by veteran teachers – that enable them to focus on strengthening their teaching skills (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, Jan. 9, 2002, pp. 3-4).

Why Mentoring is Vital

Induction provides a hands-on opportunity for beginning teachers – under the guidance of experienced mentors – to link the theory of instruction learned in their teacher preparation programs with the practice of classroom teaching. There is little question that induction programs pay dividends in terms of teachers who are better prepared for their jobs, more confident in their professional skills, and more likely to remain in teaching. (*Education Issues Policy Brief*, Sept. 2001, p. 2)

Induction that lasts at least as long as a full school year affords the novice teacher an opportunity to experience all of the rites of school – opening the year, planning and teaching complete instructional units, adjusting teaching to meet students' learning needs, assigning grades, closing out the school year – in the semi-sheltered setting an experienced mentor can provide. (*Education Issues Policy Brief*, Sept. 2001, p. 3)

Becoming an excellent teacher is a continuous process which involves acquiring knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values generally required of all teachers in pre-service preparation programs, refined by practice during induction at a school-site, and further honed by professional development activities throughout a teacher's career. In this continuum, the transition year is crucial for new teachers as they assume the responsibility for the education of students. It is in the first year that they will adopt the habits regarding continual professional development and will determine whether they will continue to teach. (*New Jersey Education Association Review*, Sept. 2000, p.3).

Key Principles in Mentoring for Quality Induction

- **Novice teachers need and deserve ongoing professional learning opportunities.** Professional standards for teachers identify and describe the knowledge, dispositions, and performance of effective teaching practice. Novice teachers need to be part of a professional learning community in which all teachers engage in continuous conversations and reflect on the impact of teacher competency in applying the Professional Standards for Teachers to student learning.
- **Mentoring is a key component for a successful novice teacher induction program.** Hiring and retaining novice teachers is a costly endeavor. Mentors, working with novice teachers to promote their personal and professional growth, will enhance the



Understanding Mentoring for Quality Induction

likelihood of novice teachers staying in the teaching profession by inducting them into a supportive professional culture.

- **Without mentoring, novice teachers may focus on survival.** With mentoring, novice teachers can focus on increasing their competency to impact student learning. Mentors work with novice teachers to identify and then develop action plans to build on their strengths and address their weaknesses. The intent is to ground their work in both standards for good teaching, and the latest research on best practices to increase student achievement.
- **Mentors and novice teachers both gain from the experience.** The mentor and novice teacher work together to learn and implement the New Jersey Professional Standards for Teachers and the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards for all their students. Mentors and novice teachers work together to learn and apply knowledge and skills in content, pedagogy, and assessment to impact learning for all their students.
- **Mentoring programs built on knowledge that reflects the best available research on teaching practices have the greatest potential for success.** The effective preparation of mentors focuses on adult learning theory, theory of teacher development, interpersonal skills development, coaching techniques, and reflective dialogue. As mentors learn and apply these theories and skills in their work with novice teachers, there is greater potential for continuous improvement for all teachers and students.
- **If a district expects to hold its mentors accountable, a formal program with in-depth mentor preparation and support must be in place.** An in-depth mentor preparation program provides ongoing skill training for the mentors, including a clear understanding of the purpose of the mentoring program; clearly defined expectations of their roles and responsibilities; consistent implementation and monitoring of the program; and the use of established protocols.
- **Mentoring partnerships can take various forms including one-on-one mentor-novice teacher partnerships or a team of teachers, new and veteran, working together.** Mentoring is a reciprocal relationship between a mentor and a novice teacher working together in a grade level/department team that acts as a professional learning community. A novice teacher may have more than one mentor, depending on the expertise needed.



Understanding Mentoring for Quality Induction

Mentoring for Quality Induction Program Guidelines

All provisional teachers, upon hire, will be assigned a mentor who has been selected through an application process and has received a comprehensive training program. All provisional teachers will receive a rigorous mentoring program for a minimum of one year. The mentors must be certified teachers who have been carefully selected based on specific criteria. Whenever possible, it is important that mentors and novice teachers are matched according to grade level and subject area. The Department of Education recommends the following guidelines for building district Mentoring for Quality Induction programs.

Guideline 1: Adopt Program Rationale, Goals, and Design

A sound, well-articulated rationale, grounded in research and effective practices, guides the development of program goals and plans for the design and delivery of support and assessment services to novice teachers. The stages of teacher development are clearly understood and taken into consideration when designing and implementing mentoring programs.

Rationale

An induction program should be built on a vision of novice teacher growth and development that is supported by research and practice. This vision should recognize the *strengths and needs* of novice teachers as they develop over time and should include appropriate support activities and assessment practices designed to meet novice teachers' needs in effective ways.

Criteria for Guideline 1

- The overall design of the program is consistent with the New Jersey Professional Standards for Teachers, and includes a rationale based on sound theory and practice.
- The delivery of services is planned and implemented in ways that are consistent with best practices.
- The program is designed to address the strengths and needs of novice teachers and recognizes individual developmental differences in teachers, support providers, and assessors.
- The program includes a process for the development and implementation of a Professional Improvement Plan (PIP) based on formative assessment information for the support and professional development of each novice teacher. The novice teacher needs a PIP by the end of his/her first year.
- The program is designed to assist novice teachers in teaching the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards to all students.
- The program is designed to help novice teachers effectively teach the diverse students in New Jersey schools.
- The program is designed to support the induction of novice teachers as responsible



Understanding Mentoring for Quality Induction

members of the teaching profession, as well as employees of a school and district.

- The plan for delivery of services recognizes that first-year teachers may have different developmental needs. Factors that should be considered include type of preparation program, preparation or employment in another state, and/or mid-career entry into the profession.
- The plan for delivery of services recognizes the need to provide continuity for teachers between their pre-service preparation and induction, and between their induction and ongoing professional development.

Guideline 2: Clarify Roles and Responsibilities of School Leaders

School leaders must understand and be prepared to assume their responsibilities for supporting novice teachers in the induction program. Preparation addresses the knowledge about novice teacher needs and the role and responsibilities of the principal in supporting each component of the program.

Rationale

The knowledge, attitudes, and the actions of school leaders are critical in setting the stage for novice teacher success. School leaders are instrumental in providing the structure for intensive support and assessment activities, and creating a positive climate for these activities.

Criteria for Guideline 2

- School leaders are knowledgeable about the program's rationale and goals. They meet regularly to engage in activities designed to assist them in creating a climate within their schools to support novice teachers and their mentors.
- School leaders provide an orientation that informs novice teachers about resources, personnel, procedures, and policies.
- School leaders facilitate the introduction of novice teachers to the staff and the inclusion of novice teachers into the learning community.
- School leaders understand the role of the mentor and respect the confidentiality between the mentor and the novice teacher.
- School leaders support building-level activities related to novice teacher support and assessment and provide structure for mentors and novice teachers to work together on a regular basis.
- School leaders facilitate participation in professional development activities by novice teachers.
- School leaders inform their staff about the New Jersey Professional Standards for Teachers, and explore their potential use as a structure for determining individual and building-level professional development.
- School leaders participate in the program's evaluation and development.



Understanding Mentoring for Quality Induction

Guideline 3: Implement the Selection Process for Mentors

School leaders select mentors of novice teachers using well-defined, justifiable criteria that are consistent with their assigned responsibilities in the induction program. The selection process is planned and implemented carefully, with a primary focus on the *development* of novice teachers.

Rationale

By selecting well-qualified mentors, program administrators can ensure that novice teachers receive quality support. Selection as a mentor not only confers status on those chosen, but also develops their leadership skills.

Criteria for Guideline 3

Qualities of effective mentors include:

- Understanding of the mentor roles and responsibilities.
- Willingness to participate in a comprehensive mentor training; Awareness of novice teacher development; Willingness to share instructional ideas and materials with novice teachers; Effective interpersonal skills and willingness to work collaboratively with a novice teacher; Commitment to their own professional growth and development; Serves as a professional role model.

The criteria for selection and assignment of mentors include:

- Procedures for making selection decisions that are clearly specified and consistently followed and supported by all stakeholders, including the local bargaining unit.
- Selection criteria that are consistent with the mentors' specified roles and responsibilities.
- Novice teachers and their mentors who are matched in terms of relevant experience, current assignments, and/or proximity of location.
- A change of assignment if the match is not productive in which both parties are "held harmless."

Guideline 4: Design Professional Development for Mentors

Mentors must be well prepared and consistently supported in their efforts to assist novice teachers. Effective training is sustained, job-embedded, and aligned to the New Jersey Professional Standards for Teachers. Professional development provides a clear vision of the knowledge, dispositions, and performances that mentors need to support the development of novice teachers.

Rationale

Excellent teachers are not necessarily prepared to help others develop professionally. Awareness of the diversity of novice teacher needs and the ability to structure and provide opportunities that nurture professional growth and development demands different abilities and skills from those required to teach students in classroom settings. Mentors must be



Understanding Mentoring for Quality Induction

prepared for the confidential roles they are assuming and be provided opportunities to assess and reflect on their efforts and development, if they are to successfully fulfill their responsibilities.

Criteria for Guideline 4

- The roles and responsibilities of the mentors are clearly defined.
- Professional development experiences are provided to assist mentors with their assigned roles.
- Mentors are provided with time to meet with each other to develop and refine needed skills, problem-solve, assess, and reflect on their work.
- Mentors are prepared to assist in developing Professional Improvement Plans (PIP) with novice teachers at the end of their provisional year and to provide them with individual support.
- The specific components for mentor training will be determined locally and may be conducted in various formats. Minimum components of the training program should include the following:
 - Clarifying mentor's roles and responsibilities;
 - Learning to observe, coach, and give constructive feedback to peers, including strategies for self-reflection;
 - Utilizing best instructional practices, classroom management, and organization;
 - Dealing with difficult or resistant people and conflict resolution;
 - Practicing time management;
 - Developing knowledge of school/district policies and procedures, including student assessment, curriculum, guides, and supplemental resources; and
 - Enhancing knowledge of the New Jersey Professional Standards for Teachers.

Guideline 5: Facilitate Provision of Individualized Assistance and Support by Mentors

Novice teachers and their mentors are given time and opportunities to work together on a regular, ongoing basis. Support activities are guided by mentors, appropriate to novice teachers' individual strengths and needs, reflected in the Professional Improvement Plan (PIP), and provided in a manner that facilitates novice teacher growth and development. Reflection is used periodically to check the novice teacher's progress toward goals outlined in the PIP and to make adjustments in support activities, as appropriate.

Rationale

Mentoring from more experienced colleagues is a powerful means of providing support and assistance to novice teachers. Providing opportunities for novice teachers to access the knowledge, skills, and abilities of their mentors in ways that foster novice teacher growth involves careful planning so that the time spent working together is useful and productive. The program design and PIPs should describe the ways in which experienced teachers and novice teachers work together to promote growth along the dimensions defined in the New Jersey Professional Standards for Teachers.



Understanding Mentoring for Quality Induction

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Criteria for Guideline 5

- Mentors are given the designated responsibility to work with a novice teacher.
- Mentors and novice teachers are given time in the form of released time and/or joint planning periods to work together.
- Mentor provides confidential support and assistance to each novice teacher on a regular basis. Informal contact (weekly) and more structured formal contact (monthly) provide the minimum support deemed adequate. A plan is developed for frequent collaboration that includes communication via regularly scheduled meetings, phone calls, interactive journals, notes, e-mail, or other strategies. An accountability system is in place to ensure that mentors are assisting novice teachers on a regular basis.
- The areas of performance in which a novice teacher is assisted are determined by that beginning teacher's identified strengths, needs, and concerns, and are appropriate to the beginning teacher's developmental stage.
- Mentors work with their novice teachers on a variety of teaching tasks, such as preparing curricular and instructional plans, selecting and using instructional materials, and reviewing student work.
- Mentors and novice teachers have opportunities to work together in a variety of ways, such as observing one another teach, reflecting on the novice teacher's PIP, and jointly participating in professional development activities.
- Mentors use strategies that foster novice teacher growth, reflectivity, and autonomy.

Guideline 6: Development and Use of Professional Improvement Plan

Professional learning activities are designed to foster each novice teacher's attainment of the expectations described in the New Jersey Professional Standards for Teachers, are reflective of state and local curricular and instructional priorities, and are responsive to individual teacher needs and concerns.

Rationale

Teacher development should be guided by a common set of expectations, yet responsive to the individual and to local priorities. Providing a variety of ongoing, job-embedded professional development experiences is effective in promoting the growth of novice teachers.

Criteria for Guideline 6

- The New Jersey Professional Standards for Teachers form the basis of expectations for novice teacher performance and for developing professional growth experiences.
- Consideration is given to each novice teacher's workload in planning the time, place, and frequency of professional development activities.
- Consideration is given to the implementation of statewide curriculum and instructional priorities in the training and professional development activities of novice teachers and mentors.



Understanding Mentoring for Quality Induction

- When possible and appropriate, mentors and novice teachers participate together in professional learning activities.
- New skills and knowledge developed in professional learning activities are supported over time through a variety of strategies that have been found to be effective in working with novice teachers, including but not limited to collegial coaching, one-on-one support, classroom observations, teaching demonstrations, and interactive journals.
- Persons selected to facilitate professional learning activities are well-qualified, understand current educational theory and practice, model teaching practices that foster success in multicultural/multilingual environments, understand the developmental nature of teaching, and promote reflective practice.
- Professional learning activities provide opportunities for novice teachers to reflect on their own practice and apply what they have learned to their own classrooms.

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Guideline 7: Allocate Use of Resources

Districts allocate sufficient personnel time and fiscal resources to enable the mentoring for quality induction programs to deliver planned services that maximize novice teacher success.

Rationale

The quality and effectiveness of a program are largely determined by the appropriate use of human and fiscal resources. Resources need to be sufficient and appropriate for the type of services offered. Support services should be based on realistic and reasonable plans that draw on available federal, state, and local resources.

Criteria for Guideline 7

- The districts allocate sufficient resources to foster the program's success and effectiveness.
- Fiscal and personnel resources are allocated in ways that ensure appropriate balance in providing the services to novice teachers.
- Existing professional development resources, especially those designed to support novice teachers, are coordinated with the induction program.
- The use of program resources is monitored on a regular basis, and adjustments are made as the need arises.



Understanding Mentoring for Quality Induction

Guideline 8: Monitor, Evaluate, and Refine the Program

Districts operate a comprehensive, ongoing system of program evaluation and development that involves program participants and other stakeholders and leads to substantive developmental efforts and program improvements.

Rationale

To achieve high quality and effectiveness, a program must be evaluated regularly and comprehensively and refinements must be made based on the evaluation results. The evaluation should be based on the program guidelines, as well as specific program goals and stated plans for meeting local goals. The evaluation should support continued development of the program and should recognize that both formal and informal evaluation serve useful purposes.

Criteria for Guideline 8

- Feedback about program quality and effectiveness is sought in systematic ways from novice teachers, their mentors, school leaders, and others involved in the program.
- The delivery and content of both individualized assistance and support and formal professional learning activities are evaluated for their relevance and effectiveness.
- Adjustments and improvements in all components of the program are based on the results of program evaluation, the implications of new knowledge about teaching and learning, and the identified strengths and needs of novice teachers.
- Program sponsors prepare themselves to participate constructively in external measures that are designed to examine program quality and effectiveness. They, in turn, prepare program participants to be involved in statewide evaluation efforts.