SREB

Southern Regional Education Board

Teacher Induction Framework

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Teacher Induction Framework

Invest in Educators Through Induction

Every student deserves a great teacher. We must have great educators who can fully prepare the next generation of leaders, entrepreneurs and workers to sustain state and local economies.

Schools face a significant challenge in finding both the quantity and the quality of teachers they need. Shortages are particularly high in the South. The Southern Regional Education Board is committed to helping states, districts and schools develop, support and retain a strong educator workforce. This is a complex effort with many facets. This publication addresses one essential and foundational element— high-quality induction for early-career teachers. In addition to this document, SREB has produced or sourced additional resources to help districts and schools put this framework into action.

What Is Teacher Induction?

SREB defines induction as a comprehensive support system designed to help new teachers transition smoothly into their roles, adapt to their new environment, and develop their skills to implement high-impact instructional practices and create a positive classroom culture. Ultimately, the objective should be increased teacher retention, higher teacher self-efficacy and improved student outcomes.

Two key goals of high-quality teacher induction programs are to increase retention and improve novice teachers' skills, ultimately improving student achievement (Ingersoll, 2012). Research has produced evidence that high-quality induction programs can increase teacher effectiveness and improve student learning when implemented well (Glazerman et al., 2010; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Young et al., 2017). Induction programs can return substantial financial benefits well beyond their investment by reducing the costs of recruiting, hiring and orienting new teachers to the district and school culture (Villar & Strong, 2007).

At least 31 states in the nation, including at least seven in the SREB region, require districts to provide some level of support for novice teachers and their mentors through an induction program, according to the Education Commission of the States.

Why Is Teacher Induction Important?

To recruit and retain enough quality educators, it is important to focus on ways to make teaching a more attractive profession. One essential element of any career is the structure of ongoing support for entry-level employees. Teaching is no different. A comprehensive system of support provides new talent with opportunities to learn from experienced colleagues, practice and master the craft, and set challenging yet achievable goals for improvement. In these ways, induction for novice teachers can foster professional growth, satisfaction and even retention.

Novice teachers who receive comprehensive induction support are twice as likely to remain in the profession (Espinoza et al., 2018). Teacher induction programs not only play a crucial role in retaining novice educators, but also in ensuring their effectiveness. Novice teachers often cite a lack of adequate support as a major factor in their decision to leave the profession (Ingersoll & May, 2011). By providing structured mentorship and professional learning, induction programs help novice teachers build confidence, develop their instructional skills and foster a sense of professionalism (Kessels, 2010). These programs not only benefit teachers but also have a direct impact on student achievement, as research consistently shows that teachers play a significant role in determining student success (Sancassani, 2023). However, the goal is not simply to retain teachers but to retain high-quality teachers — those who are well-prepared, engaged, and effective in fostering student learning.

Induction programs ensure that teachers receive the necessary training and support to grow into highly skilled professionals who remain committed to the field.

A key factor in both teacher retention and effectiveness is teacher job satisfaction, which refers to a teacher's overall emotional and cognitive experience within their occupation, working conditions and professional well-being (Hoque et al., 2023). Job satisfaction describes the mindset that directly influences teachers' enthusiasm, commitment to teaching and daily work efficiency. It is also strongly linked to student achievement, as satisfied teachers are more engaged in their instruction, leading to improved student performance (Hoque et al., 2023).

Furthermore, from an organizational commitment perspective, increasing job satisfaction enhances teachers' sense of identity and belonging within their school community, making the profession more attractive and sustainable. Research highlights a strong correlation between induction programs, professional learning and teacher job satisfaction, reinforcing the idea that well-supported teachers are not only more likely to stay in the profession but are also better equipped to foster student success (Aarts et al., 2020; Nguyen et al., 2020).

> Ultimately, teacher induction programs are not just about keeping teachers in the profession — they are about ensuring students are taught by high-quality educators who are motivated, well-trained and committed to excellence in the classroom.

Data to Support the Need for Induction

In 2023, there were an estimated 55,300 teacher vacancies nationwide, with 32,200 or 58% of those vacancies in the South, according to Annenberg Institute. SREB estimates the vacancy count in the South to actually be 39,700 in the same year. Nationwide there were 270,500 teaching positions filled by staff who were underqualified for their position (Nguyen et al, 2022).

The teacher turnover rate has increased yearly since 2020, reaching 18.2% in the South in 2022-23, with a 45% turnover rate for teachers in their first five years of teaching among the states reporting. Several SREB states had high average turnover rates in 2022-23: the highest include 25.6% in Arkansas, 24.9% in Kentucky and 24% in Oklahoma. These figures compare poorly with teacher attrition globally, which comes in at just over 9% in 2022, according to the book *Global Report on Teachers*.

A growing number of newly hired teachers need additional support to be effective in the classroom. In the South as of 2023, 18.2% of teachers are inexperienced, 10% are uncertified and 9.2% are out-of-field. There is a disproportionate impact on low-income students. Students in high-poverty schools are 48% more likely to have an out-of-field teacher, 35% more likely to have an inexperienced teacher, and 60% more likely to have an uncertified teacher than students in low-poverty schools.

Total Teacher Preparation Program Completors
SREB region

↓ **25%** drop from 2012-13 and 2022-23

2012-13
70,297

2016-17
62,710

2017-18
58,199

2018-19
54,950

2020-21
57,682

2022-23
52,963

2019-20
54,143

2021-22
54,199
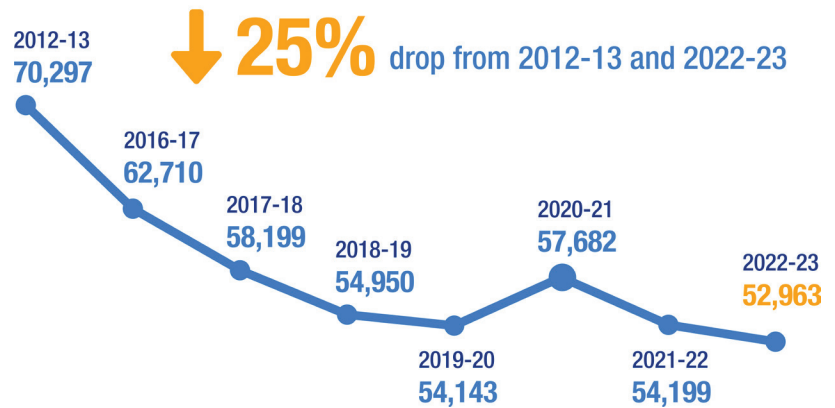
University preparation programs for teachers are also enrolling and graduating fewer teachers each year. Between 2009 and 2014 national statistics showed a 35% decrease in enrollment in teacher preparation programs and a 23% decrease in completion of those programs (Sutcher et al., 2019).

Continuing that downward trend and looking more specifically at the South, between 2013 and 2023 SREB states saw a 25% drop in graduates of teacher preparation programs. These trends lead to long-term shortages of fully prepared teachers for the South if they continue.

Supporting Policy & Practice

For decades, SREB has analyzed data and research and convened leaders to support action to improve teacher preparation, recruitment, licensure, effectiveness, support and retention. SREB has created one-of-a-kind data dashboards and embarked on new research for the field with Vanderbilt University to help with evidence-based decision making. SREB's Teacher Preparation Commission recommended in 2019 that all teacher candidates be required to meet the same high criteria for licensure, whether their preparation is traditional or alternative. The Commission also recommended prioritizing investment in paid yearlong residencies for teacher candidates, rather than traditional one-semester clinical experiences.

At SREB, we've learned that school improvement works when change efforts are grounded in a shared vision and mission, teachers and leaders own their efforts, and ongoing support builds capacity within the school and the district to sustain positive change. Our research-based, time-tested school improvement process puts K-12 leaders, teachers and counselors in the driver's seat and gives them the wraparound support, ongoing professional learning and coaching, challenging curricula like our "out of the box" *Advanced Career* pathways, and transformative instructional strategies they need to shift their practices from good to great. In turn, lessons from this work in practice is used to help strengthen our work in policy.

SREB Teacher Induction Framework
Core Components and Elements of Success

Effective induction is a key element of support so that teachers grow and remain in the profession. SREB has developed this teacher induction framework to help states and districts build comprehensive systems to support novice teachers and their mentors.

SREB's teacher induction framework identifies four evidence-based components of effective comprehensive induction programs, with elements of success for each:

- A tiered support system for novice and mentor teachers
- Leadership for new teacher success and retention
- High-quality mentoring
- Professional learning for positive teacher and student outcomes

Tiered Support System for Educators
Comprehensive approach that fosters professional growth for novice teachers, mentors and school leaders.

LEADERSHIP

Leadership for Teacher Success & Retention

School and district instructional leadership that nurtures, grows and empowers teachers.

MENTORING

High-Quality Mentoring

Targeted yet flexible mentoring that attends to the unique needs of novice teachers.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Professional Learning for Positive Teacher & Student Outcomes

Sustained, strategic development and coaching of novice and mentor teachers.

Continuum of Support

No Support

Educators receive no formal guidance or help from leaders, designated mentors, coaches or other professional support.

Compliance-Driven

As part of a required support program, educators complete growth plans and consult with mentors.

Problem-Driven

Mentoring structures and learning activities are linked to specific challenges encountered by educators.

People-Driven

Leaders, mentors, coaches, professional learning communities and other growth strategies collectively support educators' entry and progress

Induction should help novice teachers successfully adapt to the culture and context of the school where they begin their teaching career and help teachers have a positive impact on student learning. It should respond to novice teachers' pedagogical needs, bolster their confidence in their ability to teach the content, and help them grow their instructional expertise and professional identity.

For mentor teachers, support should expand their leadership skills, particularly in the areas of leading professional learning, providing effective instructional strategies, and conducting observations with meaningful and actionable feedback.

Many school districts provide limited support for their novice teachers and mentors.

Effective induction programs provide individualized experiences for each teacher, with support specific to the person, grade level and content area assigned for that school year, as well as challenges encountered. Effective induction provides strong support not only to novice teachers, but also to the mentor teachers and school leaders who serve as professional role models for early career teachers.

All educators need support in their roles, especially those who have entered a new role, such as early career teachers, new teacher leaders and novice administrators. Quality support should be varied and layered, with different support coming from different sources, and targeted support varying in intensity based on individual need.

To ensure a robust and effective induction experience for novice teachers, districts should establish a comprehensive, tiered system of support that fosters the professional growth of novice educators, their mentors, and even the skills and capacity of school administrators as instructional leaders (New Teacher Center, 2021). Effective induction programs require cohesive support that includes leadership, mentoring, professional learning and coaching strategies in each tier. This involves both policy and practice.

A comprehensive induction system features the other three components detailed in the SREB Framework: a strong leadership focus, well-structured mentoring and targeted professional learning.

Support System Policies

District and school leaders need to develop policies that set the stage for the success of a high-quality induction program. These policies should be aligned with the latest research and adhere to state-specific guidelines and expectations (New Teacher Center, 2021). Policies should address the following:

- the duration of the induction periods
- workload of novice teachers, criteria for mentor selection
- training for mentors planning and collaboration time for mentors
- compensation for additional workload for mentor teachers
- accountability for the program's implementation

> For more on evidence-based teacher support policies at both the state and local level, see these SREB's reports:
>
> - Teacher Induction Policies
> - Blueprint to Solve Teacher Shortages for State Leaders
> - Blueprint to Solve Teacher Shortages for School and District Leaders

Elements for Success

District and school leaders should:

1. **Program Structure:** Establish clear, concise and accessible policies, expectations and processes for teacher induction and mentoring. Responsibilities and services provided by district and school staff, as well as partner organizations, are clearly articulated, well-aligned and complementary.

2. **Program Duration:** Require induction for no less than two years. Three years is optimal.

3. **Workload Protections:** Limit additional duties for novice teachers and provide ample planning time to onboard and collaborate.

4. **Mentor Selection:** Establish specific, rigorous criteria based on research, including characteristics of an effective mentor and instructional effectiveness. Require monitoring to ensure these criteria are upheld.

5. **Mentor Compensation:** Provide additional pay to recognize added mentor responsibilities.

6. **Mentor Time:** Include release from classroom and other duties to meet with mentees, conduct observations, complete paperwork and fulfill other requirements during work hours.

7. **Data Monitoring:** Require annual collection and analysis to determine whether novice and mentor teachers receive adequate support and whether program expectations are met.

8. **Policy Review:** Regular reviews — at least every three years — ensure alignment with current research and state-level expectations.

Support System Implementation

Processes are essential to ensure that policies are followed in practice to support both novice teachers and their mentors.

A cohort approach fosters a strong peer-support network, reinforced by guidance from mentors, administrators, and experienced educators at multiple levels within the school and district. A key benefit is the deep sense of community it cultivates, offering both emotional and professional support, both of which are especially crucial during the early years of teaching. Research indicates that teachers in cohort models report higher satisfaction levels, as they feel more connected with peers, have access to collaborative learning opportunities and benefit from shared experiences (Gilles et al., 2010).

Teacher induction should include a formal orientation prior to the school year to prepare novice teachers for the challenges of the classroom. Additionally, the system should establish a structured process for mentors to observe new teachers and provide meaningful, growth-oriented feedback aimed at refining both instructional skills and overall professional practice. New teachers who spent substantial time on instructional strategies and lesson planning with their mentors were more likely to stay in their district, showing that mentoring focused on meaningful topics can improve retention (Maready et al., 2021; SREB, 2018).

Not all services must be delivered by school or district staff. Supports can be supplemented by partners such as local university educator preparation program faculty, associations or regional service agencies. It is important to plan what services will be provided by others, at what cost and for how long, and to create a sustainability plan in case partner offerings change.

Elements for Success

District and school leaders should:

1. **Progress Monitoring:** Track implementation during and at the end of the year, including novice teacher growth, student learning impact and retention, mentor teacher selection, impact and retention, and partner organization services. Use reviews for accountability, fidelity and continuous improvement.

2. **Individualized Support:** Provide tiered support for novice teachers from district and school leadership, mentors, targeted professional learning, instructional coaching and professional learning communities.

3. **Program Orientation:** Begin with a required session before the school year starts, introducing novice teachers to the district and school community, protocols, support structures and instructional initiatives. Host a make-up session for those hired after the year begins.

4. **Cohort Model:** Build community and networking opportunities, allowing groups of novice teachers and mentors to collaborate separately.

5. **Consistent Support:** Offer regular check-ins for novices from mentors and school leaders, such as weekly meetings or monthly small groups.

6. **Meaningful Feedback:** Provide formal and informal classroom observations with constructive feedback and follow-up support from mentors, administrators and district staff.

7. **Resource Access:** Organize and share materials so they are easily available. Examples include a one-stop-shop, Google Classroom or Canvas.

8. **Mentor Support:** District and school leaders deliver tiered support to mentors, including targeted professional learning, coaching and learning communities.

9. **Leader Development:** Provide professional learning and coaching to help administrators support the individual needs of novice teachers and mentors.

10. **Educator Well-Being:** Ensure leaders are mindful of educator wellness by providing mentor and leader training on best practices.

The role of leaders in teacher induction is to create a supportive and professional environment that encourages and recognizes the growth of novice teachers and their mentors. District leaders from human resources, the professional learning office, and the curriculum and instruction team should develop, implement and monitor policies that:

- enable teacher and leader collaboration;
- value professional learning, such as workshops, coaching, mentoring and meaningful feedback; and
- provide layers of support to novice teachers and mentor teachers

District and school leaders then put these policies into practice.

Systems-Focused Instructional Leadership

Strong instructional leadership is critical to a proactive induction environment where every teacher has high-impact support to grow professionally and improve student outcomes. Establishing and maintaining quality induction programs is unlikely without committed leadership at both the district and school level.

Strong instructional leaders serve as visionaries, inspiring staff to make student-centered decisions. They foster an environment where both students and staff thrive. They create a culture of learning in which teachers are actively guided in improving their instructional practices through regular observations, feedback and professional learning. By modeling a collaborative approach, leaders create opportunities for teachers to reflect, share strategies and grow in their craft.

At the same time, instructional leaders cultivate a school culture rooted in trust, respect and high expectations, creating an environment where both educators and students thrive. By setting clear values, engaging families and ensuring learning opportunities for all students, strong leaders cultivate a sense of community and belonging that support academic success and personal growth.

Effective instructional leaders focus on driving continuous improvement. This is done by setting growth expectations and leading by example, as well as providing a strong emphasis on and implementation of observations and feedback processes for individual growth. These supervisory observations, both formal and informal, should be for identifying individual growth strategies that leaders, coaches and mentors can provide. They can also be used as part of the educator evaluation process. All educators need involved supervisors who provide this instructional leadership, no matter their preparation or experience level, licensure status or career trajectory.

Elements for Success

Leaders should:

1. **Vision Sharing:** Communicate the school's mission to all stakeholders in multiple ways to foster a sense of belonging among students and staff.

2. **Staff Presence:** Support personnel by being consistently and actively visible during the school day with guidance, prompt support, observations and actionable feedback.

3. **Data Analysis:** Collaborate with staff to use data for informed decision making. Align policies, instructional strategies and resource allocation with student and staff needs and the strategic plan.

4. **Reflective Practice:** Engage in collaborative reflection with faculty and staff.

5. **Assessment Consistency:** Ensure grading practices are consistent, fair and aligned with district and school instructional goals.

6. **Student Engagement:** Demonstrate a clear understanding of classroom engagement and assist teachers in using strategies that motivate and challenge students.

7. **Classroom Culture:** Actively support positive environments, providing resources, learning opportunities and guidance to help teachers create settings where students feel safe, respected and motivated to learn.

8. **Teacher Recognition:** Celebrate accomplishments to foster a culture of appreciation and highlight the impact of effective teaching on student success.

Induction-Focused Instructional Leadership

District and school leaders should use their strong instructional leadership skills to support novice teachers during their induction period. In particular, they provide mentorship structures, tailored professional learning, collaborative opportunities, constructive feedback, emotional support and access to essential resources. These actions are key to helping novice teachers transition smoothly into the profession and grow into effective educators.

District and school leaders play a critical role in supporting novice teachers by establishing mentorship programs that pair them with effective educators, offering guidance on instructional strategies, classroom management and school culture — key factors in teacher success and retention (Sims & Fletcher-Wood, 2018). They also provide targeted professional learning for both new teachers and mentors, focusing on high-impact teaching techniques, assessment practices, and classroom procedures to build confidence and competence (Kraft et al., 2018).

Leaders ensure mentors receive training in coaching, delivering unbiased and actionable feedback, and supporting novice teachers' professional and emotional well-being. Principals foster collaborative school environments, encouraging participation in professional learning communities and family engagement, which enhances teacher efficacy and reduces isolation (Ronfeldt et al., 2018).

Regular classroom observations by administrators and mentors offer constructive, non-evaluative feedback that promotes professional growth over time (Papay & Johnson, 2018). Leaders also provide emotional support and create safe spaces for discussing challenges to help prevent burnout (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2018), while ensuring new teachers have access to necessary classroom resources and technology to boost preparedness (Voss et al., 2019).

Elements for Success

Leaders should:

1. **Mentoring Program:** Implement a structured system that assigns strategically selected teachers as mentors, requires regular collaborative meetings, and gathers feedback from both teacher and mentor to ensure a constructive experience.

2. **Mentor Development:** Provide skill-building, professional learning and ongoing support and feedback to cultivate a strong set of mentor teachers.

3. **Teacher Feedback:** Offer novice educators actionable input tied to observable practices, including recommendations for growth, with follow-up to monitor progress and provide support.

4. **Professional Learning:** Organize required learning that addresses common novice teacher challenges, supports acclimation to the school and provides opportunities to build the leadership skills of mentor teachers.

5. **Collaboration Time:** Schedule opportunities throughout the year for novice teachers to connect with peers at their school and across the district, fostering their sense of support and belonging.

6. **Supportive Environment:** Create a culture where novice teachers feel comfortable approaching principals and other leaders (such as assistant principals or mentors) about successes and challenges.

7. **Resource Access:** Ensure novice teachers can easily find and effectively use the materials and tools they need.

To effectively support today's new teacher workforce, a comprehensive teacher induction program must be responsive, personalized and focused on instruction. New teachers, whether they are prepared and certified traditionally, provisionally or alternatively, face significant challenges that require targeted support (New Teacher Center, 2024).

Selecting effective mentors is critical for the success of novice teachers. Effective mentoring is rooted in mentors' proven ability to deliver rigorous, standards-based instruction that meets their own students' academic and emotional needs. Mentors should also possess strong interpersonal skills, experience working with adult learners and an ability to build supportive relationships with mentees. Selection of mentors should prioritize their capability to elevate both teacher practice and student learning outcomes (SREB, 2018).

Robust mentoring should be tailored to meet novice teachers where they are. It should provide individualized and just-in-time support and include:

- designated weekly meeting time for mentoring sessions;
- collaborative planning assistance to help novice teachers prepare effective lessons;
- opportunities for both virtual and face-to-face observations with meaningful and actionable feedback;
- professional learning focused on deepening novice teachers' content knowledge, instructional practices and classroom management procedures;
- timely support tailored to immediate needs;
- guidance on time management to help novice teachers prioritize tasks, attend to their well-being and prevent burnout; and
- small group or professional learning community meetings for peer support and collaboration among novice teachers.

By fostering an environment of comprehensive support and collaboration, districts and schools can better equip new teachers to thrive in their roles.

Balancing dual roles of a classroom teacher and mentor teacher

Evidence is mounting that the most effective mentors are mentor teachers who are connected to the same students as the novice teacher. But how can classroom teachers effectively do their jobs and mentor additional colleagues?

In the traditional one-on-one mentoring model, one mentor teacher supports one novice teacher. For mentors to provide meaningful support, they need designated time to fulfill their mentor duties – meet with their mentee, assist in analyzing student data and lesson planning, and provide actionable feedback after a classroom observation.

Impactful models are emerging to help schools shift from a one classroom, one teacher model to innovative team teaching approaches that incorporate varied roles for teachers depending on their abilities, skills and needs. Team teaching models allows mentor teachers to continue teaching students, while collaboratively coaching one to four other teachers, through a resetting of schedules, student load, support staff and planning time.

Strategically staffing schools can lay a foundation and establish the structures needed for promoting more comprehensive systems of support and modernizing the teaching profession. Staffing schools with well-trained mentor teachers who lead other teachers is a model that can provide educators with opportunities to feel fulfilled by their responsibilities and the support they receive. This approach also creates opportunities for learning, professional growth and salary increases for increased duties and impact.

No matter the mentoring structure used, it is imperative that school and district leaders provide mentors with the release time they need to effectively provide these supports, which could be done by using assistants, resident teachers or substitute teachers, or by decreasing a mentor's course load. It is also just as important to provide mentor teachers with training, coaching, feedback and compensation so they're appropriately prepared and supported in this key role.

To learn more on mentoring and innovative staffing models, see these resources:

- SREB brief: Mentoring New Teachers
- New Teacher Center: High Quality Mentoring & Instructional Coaching Practices
- Opportunity Culture model from Public Impact
- Next Education Workforce model from Arizona State University
- Residencies and Strategic Staffing model from US PREP
- Strategic Staffing Framework from Education First

Targeted Mentoring

Targeted, planned mentoring for novice teachers emphasizes the development of teaching practices and pedagogical skills over time. It involves deliberate attention to aspects of the novice teacher's practice aligned with individual growth goals, strengths and challenges. The idea is to provide structured support that addresses the most relevant needs of the novice teacher.

The key components of targeted mentoring include goal setting, reflective practice, collaborative observations and constructive feedback that is unbiased and non-evaluative. Collaborative observations, where the mentor observes the novice teacher in action, is followed by probing questions and feedback. This encourages dialogue about effective teaching practices.

Building strong, supportive relationships with novice teachers is foundational for effective, structured mentoring. This creates a nurturing environment that fosters confidence and trust.

Elements for Success

Mentors should:

1. **Trust Building:** Work to establish a strong, supportive relationship with the mentee.
2. **Meetings:** Set regular, informal times (beyond hallway chats) to reflect on progress and determine next steps.
3. **Targeted Support:** Provide the appropriate level of help to meet the immediate needs of the novice teacher.
4. **Goal Setting:** Assist the novice teacher in identifying professional growth objectives.
5. **Non-Evaluative Coaching:** Offer coaching that build trust, creating a supportive, non-threatening environment.
6. **Resource Sharing:** Promote evidence-based instructional practices. Supply materials for effective lesson planning.
7. **Classroom Guidance:** Help create a safe, organized and motivating environment for all students.
8. **Instructional Modeling:** Exhibit high-quality teaching and effective lesson delivery.
9. **Reflective Feedback:** Ask probing questions and give quality input after each observation to support collaborative reflection.

Just-in-Time Mentoring

Just-in-time mentoring is immediate feedback and resources in the moment. This approach acknowledges that novice teachers often face challenges that require timely intervention and prompt support, while also allowing for deeper reflection and guidance in scheduled sessions. Mentors can provide heavy or light coaching to meet immediate needs. And teachers can take feedback and suggested strategies directly to their classroom, building their confidence.

The benefits of just-in-time mentoring for novice teachers are multifaceted. First, just-in-time mentoring promotes a culture of collaboration and continuous improvement. Early career teachers develop professional relationships that can last throughout their careers. Secondly, just-in-time coaching encourages reflective practice. It allows novice teachers to analyze their teaching methods through digital platforms or in-person meetings and use real-time feedback to improve their instruction and student learning. Additionally, just-in-time support creates a supportive system where teachers are empowered to thrive in a community, reducing the feelings of isolation that new teachers often experience.

Supporting new teachers needs to be more than just sharing information, providing instructional coaching and designing professional learning. It should be delivered with empathy, perspective and advice. Mentors need to be thought partners and skill developers for novice teachers, as well as a shoulder to lean on (SREB, 2018).

Elements for Success

Mentors should:

1. **Accessibility:** Maintain an open-door policy to respond to the novice teacher's immediate needs as they arise.
2. **Relationship Building:** Sustain a continuous, trusting connection with novice teachers using strong listening skills and empathy.
3. **Well-Being:** Stay attentive to the novice teacher's wellness and apply best practices to reduce stress and promote overall health.
4. **Work-life Balance:** Help novices maintain a healthy equilibrium to work and personal life.
5. **Self-Reflection:** Encourage reflective practices through strategies such as journaling.
6. **Empowerment:** Provide tools to build confidence and develop self-efficacy in novice teachers.

All teachers, at every level of experience, need professional learning support. High-quality professional learning cultivates skilled educational professionals who meet the needs of their students and improve student outcomes. Effective induction programs also enhance the teacher-leadership skills of mentor teachers.

Novice Teacher Development

Ongoing professional learning, through training and instructional coaching, is a critical element of induction and the foundation for the growth of teachers as professionals. Effective teaching is built through professional learning that aligns with educational goals and standards, promotes collaboration and emphasizes practical classroom applications. This targeted development equips novice teachers with the tools to implement meaningful changes in their practice, ultimately fostering effective teaching and learning (Prenger et al., 2020).

As novice teachers embark on their careers, they transition from foundational knowledge — gained through formal education — to the practical application of those concepts in the classroom. Induction should provide novice teachers with the necessary tools, strategies and support to navigate this transition effectively (Saunders, et al., 2024). Additionally, professional learning opportunities should support novice teachers in understanding their schools' local context and the needs of the student body.

A comprehensive and effective induction program, designed to deliver consistent results and withstand challenges, incorporates professional learning focused on improving teaching methods, fostering a positive classroom culture and addressing the many individual needs of students (SREB, 2018). Ongoing professional learning offers novice teachers a structured pathway to acquire the skills and qualifications for professional certification.

It is essential for school leadership to dedicate protected time for professional growth in collaborative professional learning, instructional unit planning and lesson development (SREB, 2018).

"High-quality professional learning develops novice teachers' instructional skills so they can meet the unique needs of every student."

Elements for Success

District, school leaders and mentors should:

1. **Adult Learning:** Provide ongoing, timely professional development that addresses the unique needs of new teachers. Topics include the teacher certification process, standards-based instruction and classroom routines.

2. **Program Orientation:** Offer professional learning to novices on district programs and resources that support and enhance professional growth.

3. **Evaluation Preparation:** Deliver training to help novice teachers navigate the district evaluation process, including setting goals, meeting timelines, collecting artifacts, participating in observations and completing the final evaluation.

4. **Classroom Culture:** Support novice teacher skill-building in creating positive classroom environments through active, focused and respectful student engagement and accessible learning opportunities for every student.

5. **Instructional Differentiation:** Provide development on strategies for responsive teaching that meets the varied needs of students, including multilingual learners and those with disabilities.

6. **Instructional Planning:** Dedicate time for collaborative learning on standards-aligned units and student-centered lessons using high-impact strategies and content-specific pedagogy. Novice teachers learn alongside veterans to help all students meet or exceed expectations.

7. **Data Use:** Allocate time for teacher and staff teams to analyze student assessment data collaboratively and use findings to improve instruction focused on student needs.

Mentor Teacher Development

Experienced teachers benefit significantly from training and coaching to enhance their skills as teacher-leaders (Sancar et al., 2021). They need high-quality professional learning and resources to hone their skills in coaching and supporting adults.

Having a highly trained, highly qualified mentor plays a significant role in the successful development and retention of teachers (Kraft & Papay, 2020). A successful mentoring program should establish clear objectives that align with the professional learning of mentors, the growth of novice teachers and the district or organization's overall goals. Targeted training should help mentors build trust with their mentees by maintaining consistency, listening actively and providing actionable feedback on classroom observations.

Mentor professional learning should emphasize the importance of professionalism, including clear boundaries and respect for confidentiality. It should equip mentors with the skills to adopt a non-judgmental and non-evaluative attitude. It should also provide mentors with strategies for encouraging novice teachers' well-being. Mentors should learn to facilitate regular discussions about goal setting and progress monitoring (Templeton et al., 2021).

Additionally, professional learning should include opportunities for mentors to evaluate and celebrate their own progress as instructional leaders.

Elements for Success

District, school leaders and mentors should do the following:

1. **Role Development:** Provide mentors with professional learning on their responsibilities in developing novice teachers, with emphasis on maintaining a non-evaluative mindset, supporting both professional and personal growth, navigating complex situations with integrity, exhibiting professionalism and promoting a culture of respect, trust, confidentiality and accountability.

2. **Adult Learning:** Deepen mentors' understanding of how adults learn. Include concepts such as honoring prior experience, practicing effective communication and using strategic questioning to foster self-reflection.

3. **Goal Setting:** Instruct mentors in the techniques that bring clarity and focus to the mentoring process, such as supporting novice teachers in identifying short- and long-term goals, applying strategies to track progress and celebrating milestones.

4. **Feedback Practice:** Develop the skills of mentors to conduct observations and offer non-evaluative, actionable input in a supportive environment. Expand mentors' content and pedagogical knowledge to foster continuous improvement.

5. **Learning Design:** Build the skills of mentors to create and deliver professional learning experiences that meet the evolving needs of novice teachers.

6. **Wellness Support:** Strengthen mentors' capacity to promote novice teacher well-being by listening actively, showing empathy, recognizing signs of distress, building trust and leveraging available resources.

7. **Data Use:** Develop mentors' understanding of how to collect and document data and use metrics to assess accomplishments within the mentor-mentee partnership.

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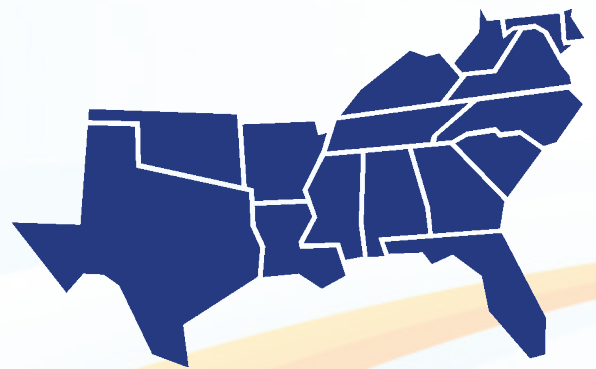
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