

Overview

Teaching is an extraordinarily complex task and doing it well requires years of study and practice. Historically, novice teachers have been inducted into the profession with a “sink or swim” approach that led many to leave the field before they could develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that would lead them to become excellent practitioners. The ever-increasing demands for educator accountability in raising achievement levels for all students, including the federal mandate that teachers be highly qualified in their content areas and the state professional standards that outline what New Jersey expects teachers to know and to be able to do, have made it even more essential that districts hire, support, and retain novice teachers who can grow into full-fledged professionals serving their communities for years to come.

In December 2003, the New Jersey State Board of Education adopted revised licensing regulations that included the requirement that all novice teachers participate in a rigorous one-year mentoring program aligned with the New Jersey Professional Standards for Teachers. The regulations assign responsibility for development of the district’s standards-based mentoring plan to the local professional development committee (LPDC). Each local committee is responsible for developing a plan that will support novice teachers’ professional growth relative to their ability to deliver instruction aligned with the Core Curriculum Content Standards.

What the Regulations Say

The regulations require that local mentoring plans outline goals to enhance novice teachers’ knowledge of and strategies for using the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards to facilitate student achievement, to identify skills and practices necessary to acquire and maintain excellence in teaching, and to assist novice teachers in adjusting to the demands of the profession. Local mentoring plans must also include a mentor application process and criteria for mentor selection, identification of mentor responsibilities and provisions for comprehensive mentor training. Finally, local mentoring plans must include implementation logistics including consideration of collaborative arrangements with colleges or universities, and provisions for the use of any available state funds.

The regulations require that districts assure local plan alignment with the New Jersey Professional Standards for Teachers when approving local mentoring plans, report annually on the effectiveness of plan implementation, and budget any state funds appropriated for the district mentoring program.

This toolkit provides districts with all they need to satisfy the state regulations, which align with the “beginning” column on the plan approval rubric (page F3-R8). For districts that want to continue to grow, the toolkit provides a wealth of resources to support the development of a sustained, effective program of mentoring for quality induction.

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What is the Mentoring Resource Toolkit?

The Mentoring Resource Toolkit is a guide created to support each school district's local professional development committee in formulating, implementing, and assessing the local mentoring plan. It has been organized as a series of folders. Each folder has an introductory page identifying the primary users, a list of guiding questions, a glossary, and resources to facilitate the use of the folder contents.



Folder One *Understanding Mentoring for Quality Induction*, provides the rationale and research base that undergirds the initiative, places mentoring within the context of a comprehensive program of induction, and offers program guidelines.



Folder Two *District Mentoring Plan: Development and Approval Processes*, provides detailed information on the required components of a local mentoring plan and numerous resources to support LPDCs in designing an effective standards-based mentoring program. This folder also provides the criteria boards of education will use to approve local mentoring plans.



Folder Three *District Mentoring Plan: Program Evaluation Process*, provides a detailed outline of the program evaluation process and information LPDCs need to design an evaluation that assesses both the implementation and impact of the local mentoring program. This folder provides resources at several levels to assist LPDCs, school leaders, and boards of education in planning, conducting, and reporting an evaluation of the local mentoring program.



Folder Four *District Mentoring Plan: Components of Mentor Training*, focuses on the portion of the local mentoring plan that addresses mentors, including: qualities of effective mentors; criteria for mentor selection; mentor roles and responsibilities; and components of comprehensive mentor training. This folder provides numerous resources to guide the selection, training, and ongoing support of mentors.



Folder Five *District Mentoring Plan: Components of Novice Teacher Training*, focuses on the portion of the local mentoring plan that addresses novice teachers, including: role and responsibilities of the novice teacher; stages of teacher development; training components; and mentor-novice teacher interactions. This folder provides numerous resources for teacher development, professional learning activities, and ongoing support for novice teachers.



Folder Six *The School Leader's Role in Mentoring for Quality Induction*, focuses on assisting school leaders in: selecting qualified mentors; supporting the mentor-novice teacher relationships; and supervising novice teachers during their provisional year of teaching. Investing carefully in this work will result in greater success for teachers, quality programs, and increased student learning.



Folder Seven *Plan Approval and the Local Board of Education*, focuses on assisting boards of education in understanding the components of the mentoring plan and the approval process. Once approved, the local mentoring plan is sent through the county superintendent to the Department of Education. This folder provides numerous resources to assist local boards of education in fulfilling their responsibilities.

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Who Should Use This Mentoring Resource Toolkit and Why?

All traditional and alternate route novice teachers, including novice special education teachers, in New Jersey are required to participate in a rigorous one-year mentoring program as part of their induction into the teaching profession. The Mentoring Resource Toolkit will help LPDCs develop and implement a local mentoring plan that is aligned with the New Jersey Professional Standards for Teachers and complies with the mentoring regulations as outlined in *N.J.A.C. 6A:9-8.4*. The toolkit will help districts build capacity in all schools to provide a rigorous program of induction-level mentoring support for all novice teachers.

Local professional development committees are responsible for developing the local mentoring plan. LPDCs are the primary audience for this Mentoring Resource Toolkit, which is designed to guide the creation of the local plans that districts will use to implement and assess their mentoring for quality induction programs.

Local boards of education are responsible for approving the local mentoring plan, ensuring implementation of the program outlined in the plan, and reporting annually to the department on the effectiveness of plan implementation. The Mentoring Resource Toolkit will guide boards in assessing and approving local mentoring plans and in meeting their evaluation and reporting responsibilities.

The Department of Education will use the Mentoring Resource Toolkit as the basis for training and technical assistance provided to districts. The toolkit answers questions about implementation issues and provides guidance on all aspects of meeting the state regulations. Other mentor training providers can also use the toolkit as a guide to creating training programs that fulfill goals outlined in the local mentoring plan.

District and building administrators have an important role in supporting the development of the local mentoring plan, in implementing and evaluating the mentoring program, and in communicating to the school and the wider community the importance of mentoring for quality induction of novice teachers. The Mentoring Resource Toolkit provides school leaders the information and resources they need to be effective advocates for a quality-mentoring program.

Mentors and novice teachers will find an array of resources to help them structure, personalize, and enrich the mentoring relationship. These resources include suggested activities, questions to promote self-reflection, sample mentoring agreements, guidelines for post-observation conferencing, sample meeting logs, and growth plans. The emphasis of the Mentoring Resource Toolkit is on supporting collegiality and reflective practice between mentors and novice teachers.

Mentoring program coordinators will find the Mentoring Resource Toolkit a valuable guide to understanding the overall process and each of its component parts, supporting their efforts to administer and advocate for the program. The program evaluation folder will be particularly useful in assessing program effectiveness and guiding refinements to enhance the district mentoring program.

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The Department of Education’s intent in developing and disseminating a statewide resource toolkit is to provide systemic induction-level mentoring support for all novice teachers through a rigorous mentoring program aligned with the New Jersey Professional Standards for Teachers. The state’s goal in establishing the mentoring for quality induction initiative is to support districts as they:

- Align district mentoring programs with the New Jersey Professional Standards for Teachers;
- Apply the guidelines developed for mentoring for quality induction programs;
- Use the contents of the resource toolkit to build capacity in all districts to provide a rigorous mentoring for quality induction program for all novice teachers;
- Enable students of novice teachers to make academic progress comparable to that of students of experienced teachers; and
- Reduce the isolation of novice teachers by providing them with opportunities to learn and collaborate with colleagues who support their professional growth.

Each district will need to establish appropriate goals for its mentoring program and use those goals as the basis for the local mentoring plan. The goals will need to be measurable and aligned with both the New Jersey Professional Standards for Teachers and the eight elements of high quality professional development outlined in the No Child Left Behind legislation. Examples of goals that have been established by districts already involved in mentoring and induction include:

- To enhance teacher knowledge of and strategies related to the Core Curriculum Content Standards in order to facilitate student achievement;
- To identify exemplary teaching skills and educational practices necessary to acquire and maintain excellence in teaching;
- To assist novice teachers in the performance of their duties and adjustment to the challenges of teaching;
- To assist novice teachers in adjusting to the culture of the school, district, and community by providing orientation to district programs, procedures, and services;
- To build a foundation for continued professional growth through structured interactions with mentors, administrators, and veteran teachers; and
- To integrate the mentor program with professional development efforts in order to promote the personal and professional growth of the novice teacher.

Questions and Technical Assistance

For implementation assistance, contact Victoria Duff, Coordinator, Mentoring for Quality Induction Initiative, Office of Academic and Professional Standards, New Jersey Department of Education by phone at 609-292-0189 or email mentoring@doe.state.nj.us.