



# MISSISSIPPI TEACHER MENTORING AND INDUCTION

*For School  
Districts*



A Guidebook for Developing Teacher  
Mentoring & Induction Programs

## **Introduction**

Mentoring and induction contributes to the success of beginning teachers, increases student learning and achievement, and leads to improvements in beginning teacher retention. Mentoring and induction equips beginning teachers with the necessary support to be successful. In Mississippi, beginning teachers are those who have taught from 0-3 years.

Mississippi Statute (§37-9-201 through 37-9-213) requires each school district in the state to formally assign new teachers with a mentor(s) who has demonstrated mastery on various pedagogical constructs (i.e. instructional practice, student achievement, etc.) within the profession.

The guidelines below are offered to provide districts with an overview of the state's requirements for each district-level mentoring and induction program. Even though districts have flexibility in developing their respective mentoring and induction programs, the criteria below should be comparable within each district across the state.

### **KEY PROVISIONS FOR THE MENTORING AND INDUCTION PROGRAM:**

The overall purposes of a district-level mentoring and induction program are threefold: (1) improve the pedagogical skills of beginning teachers; (2) retain beginning teachers by offering them support; and (3) assist beginning teachers as they transition from preservice to their professional appointments.

### **Role of the Mentor**

- Overall, a mentor's role is to provide assistance through guidance and support for beginning teachers. Mentor qualifications are at the discretion of school and/or district leadership; however, it is recommended that he/she has been identified as an effective educator as indicated by results from the Mississippi Educator and Administrator Professional Growth System (PGS). A mentor should also have more than three years of teaching experience. Mentors must demonstrate the appropriate skills and dispositions necessary for working with adult learning/learners. Examples of mentor roles and responsibilities may be found on the [Mississippi Department of Education's \(MDE\) website](#).
- Mentors must be willing to dedicate the time necessary to serve as an effective mentor for beginning teachers as indicated by state statute.

- Mentors may choose to become involved in teacher leadership networks offered by the MDE, professional teacher organizations, higher learning institutions, etc.

### **Required Elements of the Program**

Each district's mentoring and induction program **must include** the following at a minimum:

- A clear vision for mentoring, induction, and support from all administrators and district leadership
- A mentor selection committee (or application process)
- Mentor training, professional development/learning, and preparation
- Allocation of time for mentee-mentor collaboration and/or other mentoring activities
- A mentee professional growth and collaboration plan
- Evaluation of the program's successes (i.e. increased teacher retention, student achievement, etc.) and areas of improvement

### Vision and Support

It is imperative that all mentoring and induction programs have the support of district and school leadership. Leaders should be able to outline the goals and expected outcomes of their program. The program should also be well-defined for mentors, mentees and the entire district/school. Focal points for the program should be to increase support for beginning educators and teacher retention.

### Mentor Selection Committee

Each school district should develop a mentor selection committee of no less than 3 individuals. The individuals that serve on the committee may be chosen by district leadership. Suggested members of the committee may include, but are not limited to, building administrators, human resources representatives, teacher leaders or other district leaders, mentor program leaders (if applicable), professional teacher association leaders, veteran teacher leaders, former or current mentors, college/university clinical and tenured faculty, and/or National Board Certified teachers. In addition, districts may choose to employ a formal interview process for mentors based on a criteria outlined within their personnel guidelines.

The responsibilities of the mentor selection committee should include:

- Developing criteria for selecting mentors
- *Attempting* to pair mentors with mentees with similarities (i.e. content, interpersonal skills, etc.)
- Conducting periodic informal assessments of mentor-mentee interactions

- Developing a contingency plan if mentors are reassigned, replaced, or resigned

Committee members should consider pairing mentors with mentees as close to the first day of school as possible. If the committee chooses, out-of-building mentors may be considered for teachers in some subjects (e.g., art, world languages) for which only one position exists in the building.

**NOTE:** Districts also have the option to institute a formal application process for selecting those educators willing to serve as mentors.

#### Mentor Training & Professional Development

For mentoring programs to be effective, mentors should have training and professional development opportunities that will support them in becoming an effective mentor. Because mentors are tasked with providing assistance to adults, there may be new strategies and knowledge that mentors must learn to be most effective. Professional development topics may focus on broader mentoring guidance like adult learning theory, strategies for effective conversations, building relationships, and/or peer-to-peer coaching strategies/techniques. Also, professional development may focus on more content-driven topics such as time management, goal setting, pedagogical support, curriculum standards, instruction, data-driven teaching, and student assessments.

Mentors may collaborate with faculty and other professionals from higher learning institutions to continue professional development that lends to supporting new teachers through the pre-service to in-service transition.

#### Mentor-Mentee Sanctioned Time Allocation

Each district (or school) should decide on how, when, and where mentors and mentees should engage in mentoring activities. To be effective, mentors and mentees need adequate time and opportunity for mentoring activities and debriefing sessions to take place. Schools/districts may establish days and times that do not interfere with other instruction times. This may include conferences and/or professional development days, early morning hours, after school, summer orientation, planning sessions, employing substitutes or a combination of these. Districts may also choose to have preset times/days each week or month allocated for mentor-mentee activities.

#### Mentee Professional Growth & Collaboration Plan

Each mentee should have a professional growth and collaboration plan that captures data on his/her professional development needs and activities, log of mentor-mentee activities and/or collaboration with other colleagues, and a self-

reflection of preset professional goals. Beginning teachers should develop their professional growth and collaboration plan with assistance from his/her mentor.

### Evaluation of Program Successes

Because increased teacher retention and student achievement are the two focal points for a mentoring and induction program, it is important that districts identify, collect, and analyze data to evaluate the effectiveness of the program.

Evaluation of teacher mentoring programs is done for the purposes of accountability, continuous program improvement, and to add effective mentoring practices to the broader community. At a minimum, evaluation of mentoring and induction programs should include:

- Measures of expected outcomes which include teacher retention. Other outcome measures (e.g., increase teacher engagement, improved school climate/teaching conditions, increased teacher effectiveness, increased student achievement, etc.) may also be included at the school or district's discretion.
- Mentor and mentee feedback
- Effective teaching practices and student learning outcomes (professional growth system)

Districts may add other evaluative measures as deemed necessary.

### **Mentoring Activities**

Mentors are primarily tasked with providing intensive coaching and support to beginning teachers to improve their instructional practices. To advance these practices, districts may encourage mentoring activities that include (but are not limited to) joint lesson planning, coaching, peer-to-peer observations, parent-teacher conferences/interactions, instructional feedback, formative and summative assessment training, and/or curricula-related activities using [Mississippi College and Career Readiness Standards](#). In addition, mentors across the districts may develop mentor support groups or monthly mentor meetings to serve as a mechanism for continuous support for mentees.

Mentees must describe in their professional growth plans a defined set of activities in which they will engage with his or her assigned mentor.

### **Mentor Stipends**

*According to Mississippi Statute §37-9-211(2), a district may: (a) compensate mentor teachers from any available funds for additional duties to support a beginning teacher which are performed after regular school hours; (b) grant additional release time to mentor teachers for additional duties to support a beginning*

*teacher which are performed after regular school hours; and (c) employ and compensate substitute teachers from any available funds for assuming the regular teaching duties of mentor teachers who are participating in the beginning teacher program.*

### **Principal Roles and Responsibilities**

Administrator support is key in impacting whether or not a beginning teacher will remain in the profession (Learning Policy Institute, 2017). National research indicates that one of the top reasons teachers leave the profession is lack of support from administrators (Ingersoll, 2001). One way administrators can support beginning teachers is to provide orientation to the school, including, but not limited to, a review of school policies, procedures, culture, and expectations. Administrators may also offer additional feedback to beginning teachers after classroom observations using the methodology outlined in the [Mississippi Educator and Administrator Professional Growth System \(PGS\)](#) and provide strategies to help them become successful and effective practitioners. In addition, they should ensure that mentor-mentee times are protected and address any challenges faced by the mentor.

Administrators also play a significant role in teacher assignments. It is recommended that administrators try to avoid assigning beginning teacher the most challenging classroom assignments to ensure they are provided adequate time to develop their skill and effectiveness in the classroom. If new teachers are assigned the most challenging classes, it is recommended that the mentor also assist them in structuring classroom management and instructional techniques accordingly.

### **Assistance from Colleges and Universities**

Districts may choose to partner with local colleges and universities to assist in designing and delivering professional development activities to mentors and mentees. Higher education professionals may also provide districts with content and subject area expertise, strategies for monitoring and/or evaluating the program, teacher recruitment assistance, etc. In addition, districts may solicit assistance from local higher education institutions by allowing their faculty/staff to serve as part-time external mentors for beginning teachers who may not have a mentor in certain specialty areas.

### **Adjustments in Mentoring and Induction Programs**

Each school district should have an anticipated plan of action in case there is a need to add or change mentors, adjust mentor roles, reassign mentees with new mentors, etc. Because addressing a beginning teacher's needs are vital to the mentoring and induction program, it is imperative that any concerns that arise should not interrupt the activities outlined in the program. It is recommended that all stakeholders involved in the mentoring and induction program offer regular feedback to guide program improvements.

## **Exit interviews**

Each district should have a formalized exit interview for all teachers who decide to resign from the district. Exit interview questions should be comprehensive, non-punitive, and address the concerns (if applicable) that the teacher has/had. Suggested exit interview questions include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Are there any particular reasons why you decided to leave the district?
2. What may have been done differently to change your decision to leave the district?
3. Is there anything the district can do now to change your decision?

Districts may ask other questions as they deem necessary.

## **Contact Information**

For questions regarding these guidelines, please contact the MDE's Office of Teaching and Leading at 601-359-3631.

## **References**

Ingersoll, R. (2001). *Teacher Turnover and Teacher Shortages: An Organizational Analysis*. Retrieved from [http://repository.upenn.edu/gse\\_pubs/94](http://repository.upenn.edu/gse_pubs/94). [Reprinted from *American Educational Research Journal*, Fall 2001, Volume 38, Issue 3, pages 499–534. Publisher URL: <http://hdl.library.upenn.edu/1017/13673>].

Learning Policy Institute. (2017, February 27). *The Role of Principals in Addressing Teacher Shortages* (research brief). Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute.

## Appendix

### **Quick Guide: Mississippi School District-Based Mentoring and Induction Program**

Each district must have a mentor selection committee comprised of 3 or more individuals. The responsibilities of the mentor selection committee includes:

- a. Developing criteria for selecting mentors
- b. Pairing mentors with mentees with similarities (i.e. content, interpersonal skills, etc.)
- c. Conducting periodic informal assessments of mentor-mentee interactions
- d. Developing a contingency plan if mentors are reassigned, replaced, or resigned

<b>Roles and Responsibilities</b>		
<b><i>Principal</i></b>	<b><i>Mentors</i></b>	<b><i>Mentees</i></b>
Offer district and/or school-level orientation and induction to new teachers	Assist mentees with professional development and growth plan	Request professional development as needed
Attend Professional Growth System administrator trainings	Attend mentor/coach professional development	Develop professional growth plan
Establish sanctioned mentor-mentee meeting time(s)	Track number of contact hours between mentor-mentee	Protect mentor-mentee meeting times/assignments
Offer professional development for both mentors and mentees regarding student data driven decision making.	Attend required district-level and/or MDE-sponsored mentor trainings	



# Mississippi Teacher Mentoring and Induction Visual Concept Map

