

Guidelines for Induction and Mentoring Programs

Draft for Stakeholder Feedback – February 2025

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) is charged with providing guidelines for the design and implementation of educator induction and mentoring programs, per [603 CMR 7.12-13](#). Induction and Mentoring Guidelines were [last released in 2015](#) and are being updated in 2024-2025 based on ongoing stakeholder feedback, including support from an advisory group of district and school leaders, mentors, and mentees.

The purpose of these guidelines is to provide clear guidance on the required components of induction and mentoring programs based on state regulations, with a focus on providing educators from diverse backgrounds, experiences, and preparation pathways with the targeted support that they need to well serve all students. The guidelines set standards for effective and equitable induction and mentoring programs while acknowledging the varied local contexts in which these guidelines will be applied.

The following draft guidelines will be shared for stakeholder feedback through **March 14, 2025**. Feedback collected will be incorporated into the draft and finalized guidelines will be released by early summer 2025.

Alongside the final updated guidelines, DESE will release a new **Handbook for Teacher Induction and Mentoring** that will offer evidence-based practices, recommendations, tools, and resources to support implementation of the guidelines. Districts will be able to use or adapt this handbook as needed. Through this feedback period, DESE will solicit input into the components of the guidelines to be further defined and illustrated through the handbook.

Questions, suggestions, or additional feedback may be directed to educatordevelopment@mass.gov.

Please share feedback on the draft guidelines via this survey by March 14, 2025:

<https://survey.alchemer.com/s3/8168992/IMGuidelines2025>



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DRAFT for Stakeholder Feedback – February 2025

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Purpose

Induction and mentoring programs provide essential support to beginning and incoming educators as they transition into their roles. They are a fundamental component of developing and sustaining a diverse and effective educator workforce and ensuring that all students, in every school and classroom, have access to excellent educators.

Induction and mentoring is required for teachers and administrators in their first year of practice ([603 CMR 7.12-13](#)) and strongly recommended for other new educators, such as specialized instructional support personnel, as these targeted supports can benefit all new educators and, ultimately, all students in Massachusetts.

These guidelines describe expectations for induction and mentoring programs in Massachusetts based on [603 CMR 7.12-13](#) and provide a framework for districts and schools to use in developing, implementing, and refining induction and mentoring programs for educators new to the profession, the district, and/or their roles.

Guiding Principles

The Guidelines for Induction and Mentoring Programs in Massachusetts are grounded in a set of guiding principles for effective induction and mentoring in Massachusetts, which are that induction and mentoring programs:

- Are designed to develop culturally and linguistically sustaining educators who engage in ongoing reflection and learning to support all students to thrive.
- Are rooted in evidence-based practices that enable strong and supportive mentor-mentee relationships.
- Utilize differentiated, job-embedded professional learning tailored to beginning and incoming educators' individual needs.
- Are part of a professional learning continuum from preparation through onboarding, development, evaluation, and retention, grounded in the [Standards of Effective Practice](#).
- Represent a core element of school and district improvement strategy towards building and sustaining a diverse and effective educator workforce.

These Guiding Principles are integrated into the expectations set forth within these Guidelines and will be further illustrated through supplemental resources and supports from DESE.

Required Program Components

The following table outlines the required components of induction and mentoring programs (as stated in [regulations](#)), applied to different types of educators. Expectations for each of these required components are detailed in sections below.

Induction and Mentoring Program Required Components	Beginning Teacher (new to the profession)	Incoming Teacher (new to the district/role)	Beginning Administrator (new to the profession)	Incoming Administrator (new to the district/role)
Orientation	✓	✓	✓	✓
Assigned Mentor	✓	Recommended	✓	Recommended
50 Hours of mentoring beyond induction year	✓	Varies ¹	Recommended	Recommended
Support team, including at a minimum a mentor and qualified evaluator	✓	Recommended	✓	Recommended
Release time for mentor and mentee	✓	Recommended	✓	Recommended
Time and resources to learn hiring, supervision and evaluation methods included in the Professional Standards for Administrators	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	✓	Recommended
Additional induction supports in years 2 and 3	Recommended	Recommended	Recommended	Recommended

¹ A teacher new to the role or district who holds a Professional license has most likely already received 50 hours of mentoring beyond the induction year and would not be required to complete additional mentoring. However, a teacher who holds an Initial license who is either new to the role or district must fulfill this requirement in order to obtain a Professional license.

Definitions

Beginning educator refers to an individual entering into teaching or administration with a Provisional or Initial license. Beginning educators may also be referred to as novice educators.

Educator refers to any person employed by a school or school district in a position requiring a license ([603 CMR 7.02](#)), including teachers and administrators ([603 CMR 35.02](#)). *Note: The term “new educator” is used in this document to include both beginning and incoming teachers and/or administrators.*

Incoming educator refers to someone who has experience in teaching or administration, but is new to the district or their role within a district. *Note: Districts are encouraged to adapt components of their induction programs to differentiate between the needs of beginning and incoming educators.*

Induction program is a planned program of professional support for new teachers and administrators provided by the school district, including orientation, opportunities for classroom observation and conferencing, and peer group meetings ([603 CMR 7.02](#)).

Mentoring is one component of a comprehensive induction program. It refers to the relationship between a beginning or incoming educator (mentee) and an educator (mentor) who has demonstrated effectiveness with improving student outcomes and supporting the professional development of colleagues.

Mentee refers to a beginning educator or an incoming educator being assisted by a mentor. A mentee may also be an educator participating in a performance assessment or a district-based program for licensure being assisted by a mentor.

Mentor refers to an educator who has at least three full years of experience under an Initial or Professional license and who has been trained to assist a beginning educator in the same professional role with their professional responsibilities and general school/district procedures. In addition, a mentor may assist an experienced educator who is new to a school, subject area, or grade level. A mentor may also assist an educator who is participating in a performance assessment or a district-based program for licensure ([603 CMR 7.02](#)).

Orientation begins the comprehensive induction program and is an opportunity to learn key information about the district and school.

Professional Teaching Status (PTS) refers to teachers who have served in a district for three previous consecutive school years and are entitled to PTS awarded by the superintendent ([M.G.L. c.71, §41](#)).

Induction Programs

Induction is a planned program of support for new educators that helps them develop their practice, familiarize themselves with their school and district, and better understand their professional responsibilities. It is a core part of a district's professional development plan and a key strategy for supporting and sustaining a diverse and effective educator workforce.

Induction and mentoring is required for teachers and administrators ([603 CMR 7.12-13](#)) and strongly recommended for other new educators, such as specialized instructional support personnel. See [Supporting New Specialized Instructional Support Personnel](#) supplement for more information.

Induction Programs for Teachers

There are two categories of teachers when it comes to induction – beginning teachers and incoming teachers.

Beginning teachers are individuals who hold an Emergency², Provisional or Initial license and have not yet participated in an induction program. For beginning teachers' first year of practice, districts are required to provide induction programs that include an orientation, mentor, support team, and release time (as described below). In order to obtain Professional licensure, teachers are required to complete an additional 50 hours of mentoring beyond the induction year ([603 CMR 7.04\(2\)\(c\)\(2\)](#)). Districts are encouraged to extend induction programs through a beginning teacher's second and third years of teaching, in alignment with the Developing Educator Plan for teachers who do not have professional teaching status ([603 CMR 35.06 \(3\)\(e\)\(1\)](#)).

Incoming teachers are those with prior teaching experience but who are new to the district or their roles and have previously participated in an induction program. These educators are required to receive an orientation but it is up to the district to determine whether the other elements of the induction program, such as mentoring, should be modified and offered to these teachers.

See the section on [Differentiating Supports to Develop Educator Effectiveness for more information](#) on designing induction and mentoring programs based on educators' individual needs.

² DESE was authorized to issue Emergency licenses until November 7, 2023. as a temporary measure due to the COVID-19 public health state of emergency.

Induction Programs for Administrators

School districts are required to provide an induction program for all administrators in their first year of practice ([603 CMR 7.13 \(1\)](#)). Administrators include Supervisors/Directors, Special Education Administrators, School Business Administrators, Principals, Assistant Principals, Superintendents, and Assistant Superintendents.

Beginning administrator induction programs include an orientation, mentor, support team, adequate time for the mentor and beginning administrator to engage in professional conversations on learning and teaching as well as building leadership capacity within the school community and other appropriate mentoring activities, and adequate time and resources to learn how to use effective methods of personnel selection, supervision, and evaluation that are included in the Professional Standards for Administrators ([603 CMR 7.13\(2\)](#)).

Incoming administrators are required to receive an orientation but it is up to the district to determine whether the other elements of the induction program, such as mentoring, should be modified and offered to these administrators.

Due to the limited number of individuals who may enter administrative positions in a given district, districts may either choose to design and implement administrator induction programs on their own, partner with another district(s), or partner with an educational organization that would oversee the administrator induction program on the district's behalf. Districts may also consider hiring retired administrators to serve as mentors.

Induction programs for administrators provide the structure and support that these educators need to develop their leadership skills, build collegial school and/or district cultures as well as develop an understanding of the [Standards for Effective Administrative Leadership](#). As with induction programs for teachers, these programs are a fundamental part of the district's professional development plan as well as the district and school improvement plans.

Program Components

Induction programs for teachers and administrators include four components:

- Orientation
- Mentoring
- Support Team
- Ongoing Professional Learning

Orientation

An orientation is required for all beginning and incoming educators, including educators new to the profession and educators new to the district or their role. The orientation occurs prior to

the start of the school year (or upon hire) and launches the comprehensive induction program. It provides an opportunity for the educator to learn about the students, school, district, and community, as well as introduces the structure, components, and goals of the induction program.

Mentoring

All beginning teachers and beginning administrators should be assigned to a mentor within the first two weeks of the school year or, where applicable, date of hire. Mentors provide instructional, social-emotional, and logistical support to novice educators as they navigate their new position.

Mentoring can occur in a one-on-one format or in a group setting, and should include activities such as, but not limited to:

- Collaboration around implementation of the [Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks](#) and [Standards of Effective Practice](#), including the enactment of culturally and linguistically sustaining practices;
- Opportunities for the mentee to observe the mentor and/or other colleagues;
- Opportunities for the mentor to observe and provide feedback to the mentee;
- Reflection and discussion about the beginning educator's successes, challenges, and general experiences in their new role; and
- Support with navigating school and district processes and procedures.

Districts must provide release time during the school day for both the mentor and mentee to engage in regular classroom observations and other mentoring activities ([603 CMR 7.12 \(2\) \(d\)](#)).

To be eligible to serve as a mentor, an educator must have at least three full years of experience under an Initial or Professional license and serve in the same professional role as the beginning educator (e.g., a teacher or administrator). Assignment of mentors to mentees should be done with the goal of establishing a strong and supportive relationship for the novice educator. This includes considerations such as pairing mentors and mentees based on common subject area, grade-level, or educational setting when possible and appropriate.

Districts are responsible for providing mentors with training on their role prior to the start of the mentoring program and ongoing support as needed throughout the year. It is recommended that mentors receive refresher training on an annual or biannual basis as determined by the district.

Topics for mentor training and support include:

- The responsibilities of their role, such as:
 - Facilitating regular mentor-mentee meetings
 - Supporting reflective practice and goal setting
 - Observing and providing feedback to mentees

- Connecting mentees with professional learning, resources, and supports as needed
- Confidentiality
- Effective, culturally responsive practices for mentoring new educators, such as:
 - Building trusting relationships and establishing effective communication
 - Valuing and leveraging mentees' backgrounds and experiences as assets
 - Supporting mentee's professional learning, growth, and agency
- Grade-level content standards and evidence-based, culturally and linguistically sustaining practices as articulated in the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and Standards of Effective Practice

Support Team

Districts are required to assign all beginning teachers and beginning administrators a support team that consists of their mentor and an administrator qualified to evaluate teachers or other administrators ([603 CMR 7.12 \(2\)\(c\)](#)). It is recommended that this be the beginning educator's evaluator. The support team may also include other individuals involved in ensuring a supportive and comprehensive induction experience for the beginning educator.

The support team's role is to monitor and promote coherence in the professional learning and supports being provided to the beginning educator and ensure that the beginning educator is receiving needed supports, including guidance on advancing their license, if applicable. The support team should meet with the beginning educator(s) at the beginning of the school year to review the criteria and procedures by which the educator will be formally evaluated, schedule regular meetings to answer any questions or address concerns that the educator may have and discuss plans for ongoing support and professional learning.

Ongoing Professional Learning

Beginning teachers are required to complete a one-year induction program with a mentor and at least 50 hours of mentored experiences beyond the induction year in order to advance to the Professional license ([603 CMR 7.04](#)). To satisfy this requirement and sustain educators in these critical years, districts are encouraged to design a comprehensive multi-year program of ongoing professional learning and support that provides beginning teachers with opportunities to learn from and with effective and experienced peers. These may or may not be formal mentor relationships but should be directly aligned and tailored to the needs of the novice teachers rather than broad professional development offered to the district.

These activities may include, but are not limited to:

- Professional learning communities that convene cohorts of beginning educators around shared focus for learning with support from a mentor;

- Training related to school or district procedures or goals, specific to the needs of the beginning educators;
- Peer observations, debriefed with a mentor;
- Self-directed learning aligned to professional goals and/or district priorities, with support and feedback from a mentor.

Professional learning should be driven by educators' needs in relation to individual, school, and district goals and regularly assessed on its outcomes for educator practice and student learning. See the [Quick Resource: 50-Hour Requirement for Professional Licensure](#) for more information.

Differentiating Supports to Develop Educator Effectiveness

Recognizing that educators enter the profession or begin in their roles with a multitude of different prior experiences and types of preparation, it is the responsibility of the district to assess new educators' strengths and areas for growth in order to provide support tailored to educators' needs, with the goal of leveraging the assets they bring to their role to deepen and advance their competencies in relation to the Standards of Effective Practice.

Induction and mentoring supports should be differentiated based on prior experience and the pathway that the educator took into the profession, as well as differences across roles such as by grade-span or content area.

All teacher candidates in approved Massachusetts educator preparation program must meet expectations based on the [Candidate Assessment of Performance \(CAP\)](#). CAP is a performance assessment completed during practicum that mirrors the educator evaluation process with a focus on the Essential Elements³, a subset of practices considered essential to new teachers' readiness to be effective from day one for all students, particularly for students from historically marginalized groups and communities.

For educators entering teaching through these programs, it may be beneficial to focus induction and mentoring supports on standards that the new educators were introduced to or practiced during their preparation but may not yet have fully demonstrated, thereby creating a seamless continuum between preparation and in-service employment. This guidance can be found in the [Professional Standards for Teachers](#), which define the pedagogical and professional knowledge and skills required of all teachers who complete Massachusetts-based

³ The seven essential elements in the 2024 CAP Guidelines are: I-A-1 Subject Matter Knowledge, I-C-2 Adjustments to Practice, II-A-1 High Expectations and Support, II-A-3 Inclusive Instruction, II-B-2 Safe Learning Environment, III-C-1 Collaboration on Student Learning and Well-being, and IV-A-1 Reflective Practice.

educator preparation programs. Similarly, expectations for school leadership candidates are outlined in the [Professional Standards for Administrators](#).

Teachers who have not completed a formal teacher preparation program may benefit from prioritizing induction and mentoring supports around the Essential Elements that are otherwise emphasized in traditional preparation. These elements are representative of essential knowledge and skills across all four standards and can serve as an umbrella for other skills outlined in the standards.

See [Induction and Mentoring Resources](#) for more information and tools to differentiate induction and mentoring programming.

Program Evaluation and Reporting

Districts are responsible for monitoring the implementation, impact, and outcomes of induction and mentoring programs with regards to improved educator practice, educator retention, and student learning. This includes collecting feedback from mentors and mentees to inform continuous improvement of the program.

Districts are required to submit an [annual report](#) to DESE that includes information about induction and mentoring program activities and outcomes. Reports are required of traditional school districts, Horace Mann charter schools, and educational collaboratives and are optional for Commonwealth charter schools. The purpose of this reporting is to:

- Encourage district reflection on induction and mentoring practices in order to identify strengths and areas for further development.
- Provide DESE with data to identify promising induction and mentoring practices the agency can share across districts and to understand the needs of districts in order for the agency to provide additional supports and resources to districts.

The report will be submitted electronically pursuant to instructions provided by DESE.

Conclusion

Induction and mentoring programs build on the assets that new educators bring to their roles in order to deepen their understanding and application of the Standards of Effective Practice. This support is part of a continuous learning process that occurs throughout an educator's career, typically beginning in pre-service preparation and continuing through in-service professional learning, evaluation, and career advancement. By aligning supports at each stage to the

Standards of Effective Practice, educators experience a coherent trajectory of growth and development focused on evidence-based practices for being an effective educator and well-serving all students.

Investing in robust induction and mentoring supports for educators new to their role or new to the district is a key component in developing and sustaining a diverse and effective educator workforce and ensuring that all students, in every school and classroom, have access to excellent educators.

Please share feedback on the draft guidelines via this survey by March 14, 2025:

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