

# SREB States Take Action to Support Beginning Teachers

## SREB

*“While we have made progress, we have not yet shown the resolve nor dedicated the resources to guarantee that every child has qualified teachers.”*

*Resolve and Resources to Get a Qualified Teacher in Every Classroom, SREB, 2004*

The 16 member states of the Southern Regional Education Board are making progress in supporting new classroom teachers, but they should provide even greater support if effective, well-qualified teachers are to be recruited and retained. Teachers will need more and better training as many schools cope with rising numbers of students from diverse backgrounds, from low-income families and those with limited proficiency in English. States should provide beginning teachers with the support and training they need to help every student make academic progress.

We know:

- Teachers leave the profession at much higher rates in the first five years of teaching — in fact, almost half leave within that period.
- Reducing turnover of beginning teachers is key to reducing teacher shortages.
- Beginning teachers are twice as likely to leave the classroom after the first year if not supported by formal support or induction programs.
- Ten SREB states require beginning teachers to participate in state-supported induction or mentor programs.
- When induction programs for schools are voluntary or are left to districts to develop, beginning teachers in high-poverty or small districts may be left behind.
- Too often, schools and colleges do not work together to support beginning teachers.

Currently, all SREB states offer some type of support program for new teachers. Programs vary widely in size and scope. In 10 of the 16 SREB states, the programs are mandated by the state. For teachers in five of the states, program participation is required to attain regular licensure.

The current number of state-mandated programs represents an increase of two from just five years ago, when there were eight states with such programs. Both Arkansas and Delaware now have extensive, mandated programs supporting new teachers for up to three years. Both also have established incentive benefits for teacher mentors. Arkansas currently provides an annual stipend of \$1,200 and awards the mentor teacher with 30 hours of professional development credits for

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one year of mentoring. Delaware has a similar program that provides mentor stipends of up to \$1,500 annually and the possibility of applying mentoring hours toward professional development hours required for license renewal. Arkansas and Delaware join four SREB states — Kentucky, South Carolina, Texas and Virginia — that currently provide the opportunity for mentors to receive credit toward professional development for their work with beginning teachers.

	Is there a state-mandated support program for all beginning teachers?	How long may beginning teachers receive support?	What incentives are provided for veteran teachers to become mentors for beginning teachers?
<b>Alabama</b> <i>Teacher Induction and Mentoring Program</i>	No; state has developed and pilot-tested program materials for districts that wish to implement a support program.		
<b>Arkansas</b> <i>Beginning Teacher Support Program</i>	Yes; required to retain continuing licensure.	1 to 3 years	Stipend of \$1,200 annually. Mentors also receive 30 professional development hours.
<b>Delaware</b> <i>New Teacher Mentoring Program</i>	Yes; required to retain continuing licensure.	3 years	Stipend of \$750 to \$1,250 based on number of beginning teachers mentored. Lead mentors receive stipends of \$1,500 annually. Mentoring hours may count toward professional development hours required for license renewal.
<b>Florida</b>	No; required for alternative-route teachers only. State provides voluntary online mentoring program. State encourages districts to implement support programs for all beginning teachers and is developing statewide guidelines for new-teacher support.	To be determined	Teachers who hold National Board Certification may earn a mentoring bonus from the state Department of Education for working with new teachers. Districts may use a portion of funding from the state Department of Education to provide a stipend for mentors who do not hold National Board Certification.
<b>Georgia</b> <i>Mentor Teacher Program</i>	No; participation is voluntary.	No limit, but priority is given to first-year teachers.	
<b>Kentucky</b> <i>Teacher Internship Program</i>	Yes; required to retain continuing licensure.	1 year	Stipend of \$1,400 annually. Mentor training hours may count toward professional development hours required for license renewal.
<b>Louisiana</b> <i>Teacher Assistance and Assessment Program</i>	Yes; required for all beginning teachers.	2 years	Parishes may choose to use a portion of funding from the state Department of Education to provide a stipend.
<b>Maryland</b>	While it does not mandate a program, the state supports Local Education Agencies (LEAs) through Maryland Initiatives for New Teachers (MINT) and encourages LEAs to make use of state money to support their own mentoring programs, as well as the direct services of MINT itself.	New teachers may receive services for up to five years.	

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<b>Mississippi</b>	Yes, but no state funds are available. Local school districts are encouraged to use available funds to implement induction programs. The Mississippi Teacher Center gives technical assistance and training to districts that implement support programs.		
<b>North Carolina</b> <i>Beginning Teacher Induction Program</i>	Yes; required for all beginning teachers.	3 years	Districts may choose to use a portion of funding from the state Department of Education to provide a stipend.
<b>Oklahoma</b> <i>Residency Program</i>	Yes; required for all beginning teachers.	1 to 2 years	Stipend of up to \$500 annually.
<b>South Carolina</b> <i>Assisting, Developing and Evaluating Professional Teaching</i>	Yes; required to attain continuing licensure.	1 to 2 years	Districts may choose to use a portion of funding from the state Department of Education to provide a stipend. Mentoring hours may count toward professional development hours required for license renewal.
<b>Tennessee</b> <i>Model for Teacher Mentoring</i>	No; state provides mentor training and encourages districts to implement support programs.	2 years	Districts may choose to use a portion of funding from the state Department of Education to provide a stipend.
<b>Texas</b> <i>Beginning Educator Support System</i>	No; the system serves approximately 10 percent of beginning teachers.	1 to 2 years	Mentoring hours may count toward professional development hours required for license renewal. Some mentor teachers may receive a stipend.
<b>Virginia</b> <i>Mentor Teacher Program for Beginning Teachers</i>	Yes; required for all beginning teachers.	1 year	Local funds may be used to provide a stipend. Mentoring hours may count toward professional development hours required for license renewal.
<b>West Virginia</b> <i>Beginning Educator Internship Program</i>	Yes; required to attain continuing licensure.	1 year	Stipend of at least \$600 annually.

Sources: State departments of education and teacher licensure agencies in SREB states. Compiled by SREB staff, August 2006.

In addition to these new programs, there have been several changes in the past five years to established programs. Maryland, which had a limited system of support for new teachers, established Maryland Initiatives for New Teachers (MINT) in 2001. While not mandated, the program provides new teachers with extensive resources, including seminars, socials, a newsletter, and an upcoming online series of “monthly topics of interest.” New teachers also are linked to Maryland’s 24 Teachers of the Year for assistance and expertise.

Mississippi also made a significant change from a very limited teacher support program to a mandated induction program. The program is currently unfunded but represents a step forward in recognizing the importance of supporting new teachers.

Both North Carolina and South Carolina increased the amount of time new teachers may participate in their respective support programs by one year, and some local districts in Texas now offer stipends to their mentors.

As states continue to develop, implement and research the effectiveness of support programs for beginning teachers, many also are focusing on the differences between induction programs and mentoring alone. What is often thought of as induction includes a wider support system beyond that of one-on-one-mentoring — one that may include a team of mentors, links to the community, reduced workloads and a closer link between teacher preparation institutions and schools. A 2004 study by Smith and Ingersoll, which looked at turnover rates for new teachers based on various types of induction programs, found that “teachers with mentors from the same subject field and who participated in collective induction activities, such as planning and collaboration with other teachers, were less likely to move to other schools and less likely to leave the teaching occupation after their first year of teaching.”<sup>1</sup> The greater the number of induction activities beyond mentoring, the lower the rate of exit from the job.

One SREB state that has moved in the direction of a more comprehensive induction program is Louisiana. The Louisiana Teacher Assistance and Assessment Program is a two-year, mandated program for new teachers that is based on a planned program of support and assessment. Utilizing trained and compensated mentors, or mentor teams, matched by grade level and content area (when possible), as well as classroom assessments by an assigned team, the program aims to support new teachers, provide professional development and serve as a means for identifying whether or not teachers are qualified to receive regular certification at the end of the two years. The team aspect of support and assessment represents a change from the one-on-one mentorship programs of the past and helps to build a sense of community for the new teacher.

Since 2001, many SREB states have made progress in establishing and upgrading support programs for beginning teachers, an important step toward the *Challenge to Lead* goal of making sure every child is taught by a qualified teacher. By supporting new teachers and increasing the percentage of teachers who do not leave the profession, a more stable and experienced work force can be developed. As research continues into what actions and programs are most effective in keeping new teachers in the field, SREB states should continue working toward implementing successful strategies and push to develop more effective and outstanding teacher support programs.

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas M. Smith and Richard M. Ingersoll. “What Are the Effects of Induction and Mentoring on Beginning Teacher Turnover?” *American Educational Research Journal*, Vol. 41, No. 3, Fall 2004.