



FAQs for New Teachers and Service Providers

Here you will find essential information about induction programs designed to help you – as a **new teacher or related service provider** – become even more effective and help you develop professionally in your new career, or...

...as a **veteran teacher or service provider** working in a *new school or district*, or...

...as a **teacher or service provider new to Colorado**.

The following **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)** and answers are addressed to *all new or new-to-Colorado initially-licensed* teachers, service providers and those holding Authorizations.

What: What is induction?

Induction is a formally approved support program designed for new educators. Though most induction programs include mentoring, information about ongoing professional development and school/building acculturation, a Colorado induction program also introduces new educators to a school/school district's policies regarding performance-based standards and expectations, and what's required to qualify for professional licensure in the state.

The Colorado Revised Statutes [22-60.5-102 (7)] define "Approved Induction Program" as,

"a program of continuing professional development for provisional licensees that meets the standards of the state board of education and that upon completion leads to a recommendation for licensure by the school district or districts providing such induction program."

Why – Part I: What's the reason for having to go through Induction? What's in it for me?

Induction programs are intended to:

1. ...provide support for an educator's first-year experience, whether it concerns the educator's new career, State, or school district; and to
2. ...familiarize the educator with his/her district's interpretation and implementation of local, State or national policies, procedures and practices.

...And to enhance the performance of educators and related service providers, through the district's identification and demonstration of:

- a. effective practice(s);
- b. ways to enhance the educational experience for all students;
- c. proven approaches to ensuring student success, especially as it affects student achievement and academic progress;
- d. methods of planning for effective instructional delivery to accommodate the learning styles and needs of diverse populations of students.

...And, are designed for new-to-the district/school educators to be an introduction to:

- a. the culture of the school system, district, community and/or education profession;
- b. district/building policies;
- c. performance-outcome expectations.

...And to help the new-to-the-district educator develop professionally, through:

- a. the establishment of a support structure developed to assist the teacher in becoming familiar with his/her new school and/or school district; and
- b. professional responsibilities; and
- c. as a mechanism used to provide information about available opportunities for professional growth and ongoing professional development.

Why – Part II: Are Colorado school districts required to offer an approved induction program?

- Yes (unless waived by the SBE for a valid reason)
- Colorado law even states that *initial* educator licenses are valid only in districts *providing* a SBE-approved *induction program*.
- Most licensed educators begin their careers with an *initial* license. Induction represents a facet of professional development intended to lead to a Colorado *professional* license.
- All school districts, BOCES and accredited independent schools employing licensed Colorado educators are required to implement SBE-approved induction programs, based on SBE-adopted rules.

Who: Is there someone in charge?

Yes. If you are not contacted about Induction, your principal should be able to provide you with:

- Contact information about your district's induction program and
- Induction program details (e.g. where and when...)

When: When am I expected to participate?

Most induction programs begin before the start of the school year and may continue as part of special "in-service" days or activities scheduled throughout the school year. Some induction activities may be scheduled as part of the regular school day.

What: Are all induction programs the same?

Schools, districts and BOCES use a variety of individualized approaches for induction programs – and *should* differ based on the type and experience of the educator and the information and orientation that the district has determined will be helpful.

What: Where's the bathroom – and other necessary information!

- Induction should cover district philosophy, objectives, expectations, professional development opportunities, and other "big picture" items.
- Induction shouldn't just be "big picture" items, though. Sometimes "new" folks' needs just boil down to such basic questions as: Where's my room? My supplies? Where's the bathroom? Where's the copy machine – if there IS a copy machine – and how can I use it? Where is my mailbox? Where do I go if I need something or have a question? These "basics" and others should be covered by the time you begin Induction, but if not, ask!

Now What: Ok, now that I know my way around building -- how's the induction program going to help me learn what to do?

You are going to learn, for example, how your school and school district approaches assessing students annually to meet the requirements of CSAP (Colorado's Student Assessment Program). You will also learn about such things as:

- Scheduling (Is the school on a block schedule, or will you be teaching the same students in your room each day?);
- "Teaming" (will you be part of a grade-level team, or will you have full responsibility for your students and courses?);
- Grading (When are report cards due? How are grades recorded? What is the grading system?);
- Special Students (How are IEP's or ILP's handled? What special support services are there to assist students with special needs?);
- Curriculum (which courses are required; which are electives?);
- Community and community relations (how diverse are the students; is the PTA the major group for school/community interactions?);
- Culture (what's the school culture like; what do I need to know to get comfortable with it?);
- Climate (are school administrators supportive; is this an upbeat, positive working environment?);
- Committees (What are the leadership committees? Is there a liaison committee? Who determines who's on a committee?).

In addition to these things, you will also learn about:

- School disciplinary matters; for example, who has what authority, and what role do I play in "bully proofing," preventing student harassment, etc.?
- Emergency procedures;
- School budgets and oversight: what I control, what I do not control; what opportunities are available to improve my classroom resources and those of my students; how you requisition supplies;
- Contracts, payroll matters, and personnel matters;
- Teacher organizations and other organizations;
- Non-teaching duties (e.g., bus, lunch, etc.) and after-school programs/opportunities.
- In-service days and other district programs for training and professional development;
- My assigned mentor teacher.

SPECIFIC QUESTIONS ABOUT MENTORING

What: What's the difference between induction and mentoring?

- Mentoring is an essential component of induction, but is treated as a one-on-one support mechanism for individual inductees; induction is a sustained, comprehensive activity involving multiple educational professionals.
- Mentors are assigned to work with a new teacher or service provider on a day-to-day basis, to help provide the new professional with a safety net, to be someone to lean on when facing perplexing tasks and to provide survival tips.
- Induction focuses more on the "big picture," i.e. teaching school or school district policies, goals for school and student achievement, state rules for qualifying for professional licensure, etc.
- Mentoring is generally short-term, perhaps for a year; induction is a longer term, recurrent and ongoing program, generally for three years.

Who: Who's my mentor?

- Your mentor is a role model, chosen to work one on one with you;
- As a personal/professional advisor who helps you acclimate to your school and community, your mentor can "show you the ropes";
- The primary roles of the mentor are to help new teachers/service providers adjust to their jobs and better learn their responsibilities and provide one-on-one, on-the-job assistance to help new professionals become effective educators.
- Your mentor is a friend: someone to talk things out with; someone who can knowingly listen to your questions, and someone who can offer solutions.

How: How's my mentor chosen?

- Mentors are chosen because they are interested and they have received training in mentoring new educators.
- Mentors generally are chosen for new teachers following an initial induction session;
- "Matching" up mentors with mentees is usually the responsibility of the principal;
- Matches may be made along content discipline lines, or result from other considerations (such as choosing someone from your teaching team);

What: What are some of my mentor's specific responsibilities?

- Your mentor will be following formalized district/school guidelines that set specific goals, tasks and strategies to help you succeed in your first few years of teaching;
- Your mentor is there to support you, provide guidance, help you work through day-to-day crises, and otherwise helps you get through whatever arises;
- Your mentor will also work with you to help you establish a professional development plan for the first few years of your probationary period, and provide support and feedback;
- Your mentor will also help you document professional growth toward achieving professional licensure, and providing formative evaluations of your progress, but he/she will not be responsible for summative evaluations.

What: What are my mentor's qualifications?

- First, your mentor is an experienced, non-probationary educator;
- Second, your mentor is knowledgeable about standards/performance-based education;
- Third, your mentor has been qualified to be a mentor by the school/district, because this person has demonstrated expertise in a variety of educational experiences;
- Fourth, and most importantly, your mentor has expressed a willingness to mentor new educators.

Where: I'm new to my school, but not to teaching or my role as a service provider. Is there an approved induction program for veteran teachers or service providers like me?

Generally, induction for veteran teachers and service providers is provided in the building for those new to the school, but not to the profession or to the district. Typically, your induction is arranged, formally or informally, around specific building/classroom topics. *Such topics might include:*

- the school's role and function within the district; site orientation; how things are organized administratively; how the curriculum and scheduling are handled;

- how well the school is doing toward meeting the district's goals of achieving and measuring student success;
- the place of the school within the community; what special populations are served; what the school culture is; any particular climate issues;
- information about networking and collaboration in the school; expectations and opportunities for professional growth and development;
- policies: discipline, parent/teacher interactions, emergency procedures, non-teaching duties/supervision (e.g., bus, lunch, hall, etc.).

In addition to these topics, budget and resources will be covered (e.g., supplies, A.V. equipment, copier use, resource acquisition, library use, classroom budget, etc.).

Who: *Will I have a mentor teacher/service provider?*

Generally, a mentor is not assigned to veteran teachers/service providers. Usually, the principal or an assistant principal, or department chair, will work with a veteran teacher new to the building to help with the acclimation process. Typically, mentor teachers/service providers work with beginning, probationary educators, over a period of two to three years, while they work toward achieving a professional license. Induction for veteran teachers and service providers, who are new to a school, but not to the district, generally lasts only a few weeks into the professional's first term on the job.