



## **Novice Teacher Mentoring Programs**

### *Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)*

**Q1 What support will teachers receive during their novice years?**

Arkansas state law requires that each novice teacher employed at a public or open-enrollment charter school participate in mentoring that: (1) provides training and support to novice teachers to increase teacher retention, (2) establishes norms of professionalism, and (3) leads to improved student achievement by increasing effective teacher performance (Teacher Support System Legislation, [A.C.A. 6-17-2806](#)). There are two primary components of novice teacher mentoring in Arkansas. One is training and preparation for an effective summative evaluation rating under the Teacher Excellence and Support System (TESS). The other is individualized support provided by a qualified support person. Mentoring programs and school districts are expected to support novice teachers during their formative years through professional development training, coaching, and guided practice.

**Q2 Who is considered a novice teacher?**

Novice teachers, also called early career professionals, are individuals with less than three (3) years of total classroom teaching experience as determined by the criteria in the Novice Teacher Mentoring Manual.

**Q3 If a district hires a teacher who has a teaching license from another state, are they required to be mentored?**

Schools and ESCs provide mentoring for all novice teachers during their first three years of employment. Experienced educators new to Arkansas or returning to the profession might benefit from attending informational meetings on the Teacher Excellence and Support System (TESS) and Code of Ethics for Arkansas Educators. Contact the mentoring program specialist at your local Education Service Cooperative for more information.

**Q4 What are the qualifications for an educator who mentors novice teachers?**

In an effort to meet retention targets, all districts, whether participating in a grant-funded mentoring program or not, are expected to assign each novice teacher to a support teacher, experienced mentor teacher, or journeyman as specified in the state's mentoring manual.

**Q5 Can a mentor be assigned more than one novice teacher?**

Building administrators and ESC mentoring program specialists should work collaboratively to determine a reasonable mentor/mentee ratio based on the level of support each novice teacher needs. Mentoring responsibilities should never interfere with the mentor teacher's responsibilities to effectively teach their own students.

**Q6 If I have additional questions regarding teacher mentoring, who should I ask?**

You may find answers in the state's [Novice Teacher Mentoring Manual](#). For any other mentoring questions, please contact your building administrator, the mentoring program specialist as your local Educational Service Cooperative (ESC), or a State Mentoring Specialist at ADE/DESE.