

Novice Teacher Mentoring Manual



School Year 2023-24

Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Office of Educator Effectiveness and Licensure



**DIVISION OF ELEMENTARY
& SECONDARY EDUCATION**



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Program Overview

Arkansas state law requires that each novice teacher employed at a public 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 through their formative years through professional development training, coaching, and guided practice. Although most support should be offered in person, virtual support is also available through emails, surveys, and individual online meetings. Mentoring plans for each district that ensure all novice teachers receive training and support shall be readily available upon request from the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE).

Eligibility for Participation

All novice teachers in the state are required to have mentoring support during their formative years. Teachers with 3 or more years of student-facing teaching experience are not eligible to participate in grant-funded mentoring programs as they are not considered a novice teacher.

Definition of a Novice Teacher

Novice teachers are individuals with less than three (3) years of total student-facing teaching experience as determined by the following criteria:

- Assigned a [6-digit course code](#) for coursework from an eSchool requiring a license or involving a class taken for concurrent credit
- Reported by the district in the eFinance software system as having 0, 1, or 2 years of total teaching experience
 - The “Years in Total” field does not affect the years of service toward retirement as collected by the Arkansas Teacher Retirement System. This field does not determine where a teacher falls on the pay scale.
 - Districts may choose to count classified employment experience (e.g., paraprofessional experience) toward pay scale placement for individuals who are technically in their first year of teaching. However, *the years of experience fields in the eFinance General Employment tab need to reflect the total number of years an individual has been employed in a teaching position.*
- Teachers who are first-year teachers in Arkansas but **have 3 or more years of teaching experience** are *not considered novice teachers*.
- Teachers returning to the profession with **3 or more years of teaching experience** are *not considered novice teachers*.
- Private or charter school teachers with 3 or more years of experience are not required to participate in mentoring if the district chooses to report these years of experience to the state.

Novice Teachers Who Currently Hold a Standard License

Novice teachers who currently hold a standard license should be assigned a **support person** in their building and/or district. Support person responsibilities and qualifications can be found starting on page 6.

Novice Teachers Who Do Not Currently Hold a Standard License

Teachers who do not currently hold a standard license will have varying expectations and levels of support depending on where they are in the licensure process. These novice teachers should be assigned an **experienced mentor teacher**. Experienced mentor teachers will carry out the responsibilities of a support person but will also have additional responsibilities and required qualifications. More details can be found on pages 8-9.

Novice Teachers Enrolled in an Educator Preparation Program

Alternative Educator Preparation Program (EPP) Enrollees

Novice teachers enrolled in an alternative EPP should be supported by an EPP clinical supervisor in addition to their district assigned experienced mentor teacher. EPPs and districts should collaborate on an **Alternative EPP Enrollee Support Plan** for the novice and communicate frequently on the novice's progress. These plans should be kept on file at the district and made available upon DESE request.

Novice teachers enrolled in an alternative EPP are expected to hold a provisional teaching license. Those that do not will need to include how the provisional licensure requirements will be met in their **Alternative EPP Enrollee Support Plan**. Novices can learn more about what provisional licensure requirements are missing by contacting the Office of Educator Effectiveness and Licensure by phone (501-682-4342) or email (ade.educatorlicensure@ade.arkansas.gov). Mentoring program specialists at the co-ops also provide licensure assessment support, if needed.

Provisionally licensed novices employed in any of the following areas must have a **Science of Reading Proficiency Plan** if they have not demonstrated proficiency in the knowledge and practices of scientific reading instruction by October 2023:

- Elementary school teachers in grades kindergarten through six (K-6) teaching math, science, social studies, or English language arts
- K-12 special education teachers
- Teachers of English language learners in grades K-6

Traditional EPP Enrollees Working under an Aspiring Teacher Permit

Novice teachers working under an aspiring teacher permit should have met all requirements necessary to be eligible for the internship/residency portion of their EPP, including passing scores on all required licensure assessments.

Aspiring novice teachers will be serving as teacher of record for a classroom under the supervision of an experienced mentor teacher and EPP clinical supervisor. The EPP clinical supervisor and districts should collaborate on an **Aspiring Teacher Permit Support Plan** for the novice and communicate frequently with the novice on his/her progress. The Aspiring Teacher Permit Support Plan will be submitted to the DESE Licensure Unit as part of the aspiring teacher permit application process.

Novice Teachers Who Do Not Have a Pathway to Licensure

Novice teachers who do not have a pathway to licensure need to collaborate with their employing district on a **Licensure Pathway Plan**. These plans should be kept on file at the district and made available upon DESE request. DESE's Office of Educator Effectiveness and Licensure has a team of advisors that can help with plan development. Districts can request this type of support by emailing ade.eel@ade.arkansas.gov. Mentoring program specialists also provide licensure assessment support, if needed.

Novice Teachers Who Have Completed an Educator Preparation Program but Have Not Met the Requirements for a Standard License

Novice teachers who have completed an educator preparation program but have not met the requirements for a standard license should have a **Licensure Pathway Plan**. These plans, collaborated on by the novice teacher, their completed EPP, and the district where they are employed, should be kept on file at the district and made available upon DESE request. Mentoring program specialists also provide licensure assessment support, if needed.

Provisionally licensed novices employed in any of the following areas must have a **Science of Reading Proficiency Plan** if they have not demonstrated proficiency in the knowledge and practices of scientific reading instruction by October 2023:

- Elementary school teachers in grades kindergarten through six (K-6) teaching math, science, social studies, or English language arts
- K-12 special education teachers

Teachers of English language learners in grades K-6.

Mentoring Staff Roles, Responsibility, and Assignment

Mentoring Program Specialist

All public school districts have the opportunity to participate in a DESE Office of Educator Effectiveness and Licensure **grant-funded mentoring program**. Each grant-funded mentoring program is required to employ a full-time **mentoring program specialist**. Contact information on mentoring program specialists and a list of districts served by each grant-funded mentoring program can be found here: [Contact Information for Mentoring](#).

Mentoring program specialists have a variety of responsibilities depending on each supported district's needs. Responsibilities may include:

- Ensuring all grant-supported districts, specifically the district point(s) of contact (POC) and building principal, have a copy of this manual.
- Ensuring districts receive directions on how to accurately report data related to novice teachers through the Statewide Information System (SIS) and any additional data collection required by DESE to monitor mentoring program effectiveness.
- Providing training and support for individuals responsible for mentoring implementation, such as building and district leaders, **mentoring POC, support persons** (including **experienced mentor teachers**), and **EPP clinical supervisors**.
- Providing training and support to novice teachers on topics identified as high need by districts or the state (e.g., trainings aligned to the needs of novice teachers based on years of experience or trends identified in novice **professional growth plans**).
- Facilitating the process used to prepare novice teachers for a summative evaluation under TESS, which is a **novice mentoring completer** requirement.
- Providing individualized support for novice teachers identified by their district as at risk for being placed in **intensive support status**.
- Assisting in selection of high-quality support persons and experienced mentor teachers.
- Supporting the collaborative development of plans outlined in this manual.

All training and support provided by the mentoring program specialist will be outlined in a **mentoring support plan** developed by the mentoring program specialist and signed by appropriate representatives of the districts they support. It is recommended that these plans be individualized based on district need; therefore, collaboration with districts during plan development is encouraged. Mentoring support specialists are required to share support plans with the Office of Educator Effectiveness and Licensure by the last day of September 2023.

Mentoring programs also receive funding to provide licensure assessment support. This support is not limited to novices but is available to any school employee actively seeking licensure or adding an area to their license. Contact the [mentoring program specialist](#) for more information.

Mentoring Point of Contact

All districts employing novice teachers are required to assign a **mentoring point of contact (POC)**. If the district is participating in a **grant-funded mentoring program**, the mentoring POC will work closely with the educational cooperative's **mentoring program specialist**. If a district chooses not to receive support from a grant-funded mentoring program, their mentoring POC will work with the state mentoring specialist housed at DESE.

POC responsibilities may include:

- Ensuring the district is complying with all requirements outlined in this manual.
- Ensuring the appropriate district employees understand how to accurately report data related to novice teachers through the SIS.
- Assisting the mentoring specialist with any additional survey distribution and/or data collection used by DESE to monitor mentoring program effectiveness.

Contact information for district mentoring POC and mentoring program specialists can be found here: [Contact Information for Mentoring](#).

Novice Teacher Support Person

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 person**. A support person should be employed by the same district as the novice. Novice teachers who do not hold a standard license will be assigned a support person who meets the qualifications of an **experienced mentor teacher**. This includes **residents** who are **traditional or alternative EPP** candidates and complete a **1-year supervised residency**.

Support Person Responsibilities

The support person will be responsible for providing onboarding and buddy support. Buddy support may consist of any of the following types of support (Boogren, 2022):

Physical support. Examples include:

- Help arrange the physical layout of the classroom
- Give a tour of the building and district
- Describe a typical day at school
- Help prepare for the first week of school (and beyond)
- Establish classroom procedures
- Assist with technology
- Review absence and substitute procedures
- Prepare for special populations of students
- Help initiate communication with families

Institutional support. Examples include:

- Explain the school culture
- Introduce collaborative teams
- Foster relationships with coworkers
- Help create a personalized learning network
- Help secure membership in professional organizations
- Offer suggestions for attending education conferences and professional development opportunities
- Explore educational research

Emotional support. Examples include:

- Engage in active and supportive listening
- Check in regularly
- Validate the new teacher's feelings
- Send encouraging messages
- Celebrate successes
- Offer alternative communication opportunities
- Provide self-care resources
- Share strategies for closing the stress cycle

Support Person Qualifications

A support person is required to:

- Have three (3) years of classroom teaching experience
- Hold a standard Arkansas teaching license
- Have evidence of a summative evaluation with a rating of “effective” or higher
- Be employed in the same school district as the novice teacher (same building preferred)

Support Person Assignment

The support person will be assigned by the building principal. If the building is participating in a grant-funded mentoring program, the mentoring program specialist may assist in support person selection.

Additional Responsibilities for a Support Person Who Is an Experienced Mentor Teacher

Novice teachers who do *not* hold a standard license will be assigned an **experienced mentor teacher**. This includes **residents**, who are traditional or alternative EPP candidates completing a **1-year supervised residency**.

In addition to the physical, institutional, and emotional support required for all support persons, experienced mentor teachers will be required to provide instructional support focusing on:

- Establishing a common language of instruction
- Employing a process for increasing expertise
- Providing opportunities to observe and discuss effective teaching

Qualifications for a Support Person Who Is an Experienced Mentor Teacher

An experienced mentor teacher is required to:

- Have a minimum of three (3) years of teaching experience
- Have evidence of a summative evaluation effective or higher ratings
- Hold a standard Arkansas teaching license
- Be rapidly available to provide supervision, guidance, and support to the novice teacher/resident

Additional Requirements for an Experienced Mentor Teacher

In addition to the qualifications listed above, a master or lead designation on the experienced mentor teacher's Arkansas teaching license and documented training of participation in a DESE-approved coaching model are required if the mentor teacher is:

- Serving as a journeyman for an **Arkansas Registered Apprentice**
- Seeking merit pay for serving as an experienced mentor teacher
- Serving as an experienced mentor teacher for someone employed under an **Aspiring Teacher Permit**.

Additional qualifications for the experienced mentor teacher can be required by the building administrator or EPP.

Experienced Mentor Teacher Assignment

Experienced mentor teachers will be assigned by the building principal. If the building is participating in a grant-funded mentoring program, the mentoring program specialist may assist in selecting an experienced mentor teacher.

Experienced mentor teachers should have a caseload of no more than two novice teachers. If the school does not have enough staff qualified to serve in the position of experienced mentor teacher with a caseload of no more than two novices assigned to them, the building principal should work with a mentoring program specialist to assign someone outside of the district who meets the state

requirements. If the novice teacher is enrolled in an educator preparation program, the EPP program supervisor may be involved in the experienced mentor teacher assignment.

If the experienced mentor teacher is not licensed in the same subject area as the novice teacher, the building principal should work with their cooperative's mentoring program specialist to secure additional content specific support. If the novice is currently enrolled in an EPP, their clinical supervisor may be able to help.

Novice Teacher Mentoring Completer Requirements

Mentoring programs and school districts will support novice teachers during their formative years through professional development training, coaching, and guided practice. Although most support should be provided in person, virtual support through individual online meetings and collaboration may also occur.

Novice teachers are expected to:

- Participate in mentoring provided by a state-funded mentoring program or their district's novice teacher support plan.
- Attend training required by the state or as part of a licensure pathway plan, alternative EPP enrollee support plan, aspiring teacher permit support plan, or professional growth plan for novice teachers.
- Show growth towards effectiveness as defined in the TESS Classroom Teacher Rubric (or Aspiring Teacher TESS Rubric if hired as an aspiring teacher).

Code of Ethics Training

All novice teachers are required to receive code of ethics training within 1 month of student-facing work. Novices who have completed an Arkansas-approved EPP or are employed under a provisional license have already received code of ethics training. DESE-sponsored training opportunities can be found on the [PLSB Training](#) webpage.

Professional Growth Plan

The aim of a novice teacher's **professional growth plan (PGP)** during formative years is to prepare him/her for a TESS summative evaluation rating of "effective." The building principal and novice teacher, working together, shall develop a PGP that:

- Identifies professional growth outcomes to advance the teacher's professional skills.
- Links personalized, competency-based professional learning opportunities to professional growth outcomes.

Preparation for a TESS Evaluation

An overall summative evaluation rating is not required during a formative year; however, districts should have a process in place to ensure novice teachers are actively preparing for an "effective" rating on a TESS summative evaluation after completion of novice support.

Mentoring programs and districts are encouraged to use the TESS Focus Components for Novice Teachers (see the appendix) to emphasize certain components of TESS during novice teachers' formative years. The TESS Focus Components promote a consistent instructional focus, but it is important to note that the approach can be modified based on a novice teacher's level of preparation, performance, or professional growth needs.

District Reporting Requirements

All districts are responsible for accurately reporting years of experience data to the state through the SIS. Districts are encouraged to share the guidance document “[Accurately Reporting Novice Teacher Data](#)” with data stewards that oversee human capital data input in the eSchool and eFinance data systems. If districts are participating in a **grant-funded mentoring program**, reach out to your **mentoring program specialist** to request guidance or training on data entry. Training can also be requested by emailing ade.eel@ade.arkansas.gov.

Districts should be keenly aware of the licensure status of all novice teachers so appropriate plans can be developed and made available upon DESE request. Plans related to licensure status are as follows:

- Licensure Pathway Plan
- Alternative EPP Enrollee Support Plan
- Aspiring Teacher Permit Support Plan

Districts participating in a **grant-funded mentoring program** should report mentoring POC to their **mentoring program specialist** by July 31. Any district choosing not to receive support from a grant-funded mentoring program is expected to notify the DESE Office of Educator Effectiveness and Licensure and report their mentoring POC by July 31. Notification can be emailed to ade.eel@ade.arkansas.gov. These districts will provide their own funding for novice teacher support.

All novice teachers should be assigned a support person or experienced mentor teacher, depending on the requirements outlined in this manual. Districts should maintain records of these assignments and make them available to DESE upon request.

All novice teachers should have completed code of ethics training within 1 month of student-facing work. Districts should maintain records confirming this requirement has been met and make them available to DESE upon request.

Districts will report novice mentoring completers to DESE each year. A mentoring completer is prepared to receive a summative evaluation rating of “effective” under TESS and will no longer be considered a novice.

Monitoring Mentoring Effectiveness

DESE will monitor the fidelity of implementation of the mentoring program by collecting and analyzing data for measures that focus on the extent to which the mentoring program is being implemented as intended. Fidelity of implementation measures may address: (1) exposure: program content that was delivered, (2) adherence: program components being delivered as prescribed, (3) quality of the delivery, (4) participant responsiveness: engagement of participants during delivery, and (5) program differentiation: unique features of the delivered program. Grant-funded mentoring programs have [performance targets](#) set by DESE that incorporate fidelity of implementation measures.

DESE will also use the performance targets to evaluate the effectiveness of the mentoring program on the following goals: (1) provide training and support to novice teachers to increase teacher retention, (2) establish norms of professionalism, and (3) increase effective teacher performance, which will lead to improved student achievement. Each goal includes multiple performance measures and target levels of performance. For further information about the mentoring program goals, performance measure, and target levels of performance, see the [Arkansas Department of Education \(ADE\) Performance Report for Grant-Funded Mentoring Programs](#). DESE will use the following records and data sources in an effort to evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of the mentoring program:

- Mentoring program staffing and assignments
- Mentoring program plans
- Novice teacher participation in training, including code of ethics and TESS
- Licensure assessment
- Novice teacher survey
- Administrator survey
- Teacher TESS evaluation ratings
- Teacher value-added measures
- Teacher retention

All data will be analyzed and used to continually revise and improve the mentoring program.

Districts choosing not to receive support from a grant-funded mentoring program will also be subject to ADE monitoring.

The DESE reserves the right to incorporate changes to this document as the program evolves.

Mentoring Manual Definitions

Alternative Educator Preparation Program: A program of study leading to first-time teaching licensure designed for individuals who have already earned a bachelor's degree and proved their proficiency in the content area in which they are seeking licensure. These programs allow candidates the opportunity to teach under a provisional license while learning the pedagogical skills necessary to be an effective educator.

Alternative EPP Enrollee Support Plan: A support plan for a novice teacher enrolled in an alternative educator preparation program developed by the educator preparation program and employing district.

Arkansas Registered Apprentice: See the following [Guidebook](#).

Aspiring Teacher Permit: A permit that allows an intern or resident in a traditional EPP to serve as the teacher of record with support from an experienced mentor teacher.

Aspiring Teacher Permit Support Plan: A support plan for a novice teacher employed under an Aspiring Teacher Permit developed by the EPP and employing district.

Educator Preparation Program: A program of study leading to an Arkansas educator license.

Educator Preparation Program Clinical Supervisor: A representative from an EPP who assesses, supports, and develops a candidate's knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions during clinical experiences.

Experienced Mentor Teacher: A qualified support person assigned to a novice teacher who does not hold a standard license.

Grant-Funded Mentoring Program: A mentoring program funded by the DESE Office of Educator Effectiveness and Licensure, which supports districts in their implementation of requirements outlined in the Arkansas Mentoring Manual.

Intensive Support Status: See [Educator Support Rules 6.13](#).

Licensure Pathway Plan: A plan developed by the employing district for an unlicensed novice teacher who does not have a pathway to licensure. If the novice previously completed an EPP but does not meet the requirements for licensure, the EPP should be involved in the plan development.

Mentoring Point of Contact: The person assigned by a district to ensure the district is in compliance with all requirements outlined in the Arkansas Mentoring Manual.

Mentoring Program Specialist: A person employed by a grant-funded mentoring program who ensures all supported districts have the resources necessary to be in compliance with all requirements outlined in the Arkansas Mentoring Manual.

Mentoring Support Plan: A plan that outlines the support provided to a district by a grant-funded mentoring program.

Novice Mentoring Completer: Someone who has received training, support, and practice during their formative years and demonstrates effectiveness across all domains of the Teacher Excellence and Support System (TESS) as reported by their employing district.

Novice Teacher: Individual assigned to a [6-digit course code](#) in eSchool that requires a license or is taken for concurrent credit and is reported by their district as having 0, 1, or 2 years of total teaching experience in eFinance.

One-Year Supervised Residency: The culminating experience of an EPP (approved by the state of Arkansas), which will be a requirement for program completion beginning in spring 2027.

Residents will receive:

- Experience in all domains of TESS
- Substantial coaching and support from an experienced mentor teacher and EPP clinical supervisor

Professional Growth Plan: An individual educator's plan that is designed to meet the specific growth needs of the educator. These plans are developed annually through collaboration between the educator and the evaluator.

Resident: A traditional or alternative EPP candidate completing a 1-year supervised residency.

Support Person: A licensed teacher assigned to a novice teacher in their employing district who provides onboarding/buddy support.

Traditional Educator Preparation Program: A program of study leading to first-time teaching licensure that requires program coursework and supervised clinical experiences to be completed before the candidate is allowed to serve as teacher of record. Traditional routes are embedded in a degree (primarily bachelor's degrees) and are offered through institutions of higher education.

Appendix

TESS Focus Components

Appendix

TESS Focus Components

TESS Focus Components for Novice Teachers

Table A-1 should be used during school year 2023-24 to design, select, and deliver novice teacher training and activities that target focus components by year. While identifying essential components promotes a consistent instructional focus during the mentoring program, it is important to note that this approach can be modified based on a novice teacher’s level of preparation, performance, or professional growth needs.

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
<p>DOMAIN 1 1b: Demonstrating Knowledge of Students 1d: Demonstrating Knowledge of Resources</p> <p>DOMAIN 2 2a: Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport 2c: Managing Classroom Procedures 2d: Managing Student Behavior 2e: Organizing Physical Space</p> <p>DOMAIN 3 3a: Communicating with Students</p> <p>DOMAIN 4 4a: Reflecting on Teaching 4c: Communicating with Families 4f: Demonstrating Professionalism</p>	<p>DOMAIN 1 1c: Setting Instructional Outcomes 1e: Designing Coherent Instruction 1f: Designing Student Assessment</p> <p>DOMAIN 2 2b: Establishing a Culture of Learning</p> <p>DOMAIN 3 3b: Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques 3c: Engaging Students in Learning 3d: Using Assessment in Instruction</p> <p>DOMAIN 4 4b: Maintaining Accurate Records 4e: Growing and Developing Professionally</p>	<p>DOMAIN 1 1a: Demonstrating Knowledge of Content and Pedagogy</p> <p><i>Practice all components to effectiveness</i></p> <p>DOMAIN 2 <i>Practice all components to effectiveness</i></p> <p>DOMAIN 3 3e: Demonstrating Flexibility and Responsiveness</p> <p><i>Practice all components to effectiveness</i></p> <p>DOMAIN 4 4d: Participating in a Professional Community</p> <p><i>Practice all components to effectiveness</i></p>

* All components are introduced in year one; however, this table shows the year components are focused on for professional growth. These components should be reviewed each additional formative year until the novice teacher reaches effectiveness.