



# First Class Teacher Induction Program

Providing early-career educators structured support and professional resources to develop effective instructional practices

### WHY IS THIS INITIATIVE NEEDED?

In Oklahoma, approximately 3,000 new public school teachers enter the profession every year. Some have engaged in robust teacher preparation programs, while others are certified through alternative or emergency routes and have limited experience in teaching practices. No matter their pathway, [all early-career teachers benefit from the support of mentors and job-embedded guidance as they develop the knowledge, skills and actions that will make them effective teachers](#). Research indicates that robust teacher induction programs may help close achievement gaps and encourage teacher retention.

### HOW WILL THIS INITIATIVE WORK?

The First Class Teacher Induction Program will match early-career teachers with site-based mentors during their first year of teaching. Mentors will work closely with teachers on classroom management and instructional strategies. In their second and third years, teachers will be matched with virtual instructional coaches, who will help them develop more advanced teaching skills through goal-setting, collecting data and adjusting teaching strategies. The OSDE will provide professional learning workshops for participating teachers, mentors and instructional coaches.

The past four years, the Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE) has facilitated the First Class program for approximately 100 new teachers annually. The expanded program will serve approximately 500 teachers per school year, including those in their second and third years of teaching.

### WHAT IS THE RESEARCH BASE FOR THIS INITIATIVE?

- [Strong & Ingersoll's 2011 study](#) found that 40% to 50% of new teachers leave the profession within the first five years. However, new teachers who receive support show positive outcomes in teacher commitment and retention, instructional practices and student achievement.
- A [recent supply and demand report](#) shows that only 23% Oklahoma of teachers remained after five years of teaching. The stresses of the pandemic have exacerbated this problem, with [a recent survey](#) indicating 1 in 5 teachers is considering leaving the profession.
- [New teachers report the benefits of mentor guidance](#) received in teacher induction programs.

### WHAT IS THE OSDE'S TOTAL INVESTMENT IN THIS INITIATIVE?

The OSDE will invest approximately \$2.4 million of its federal relief funding through December 2024 to pay for targeted professional learning, resources and compensation for mentors, instructional coaches and early-career teachers.

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## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **How will this initiative impact students?**

Students in classrooms of early-career teachers will benefit from their teachers learning classroom management and instructional practices from skilled mentors and instructional coaches. The apprenticeship model will target mentoring and coaching guidance on specific skills new teachers are developing.

### **How will early-career teachers be selected and compensated for the program?**

All early-career public school teachers in Oklahoma will be invited to enroll in the First Class program. Teachers will be accepted in the order of enrollment on a space-available basis, with a balance of rural, suburban and urban districts represented. Teachers will be compensated a minimum of \$500 for the first year, \$750 for the second year and \$1,000 for the third year of participation.

### **How will mentors be selected and compensated?**

Mentors will be teachers at the same school site as first-year teachers. School or district administrators will select these teacher leaders to serve in the mentor role. Mentors will be paid at least \$750 per academic year.

### **How will instructional coaches be selected and compensated?**

Instructional coaches will be selected from a pool of talented teacher leaders in the state. The OSDE will rate applicants on a rubric, and preference will be given to National Board Certified Teachers, awardees of the Presidential Award for Excellence in Math and Science Teaching, and school, district and state Teacher of the Year finalists and winners. Instructional coaches will be compensated \$1,125 per teacher coached, and all coaching work will be virtual and take place outside of contracted district hours.

### **How will virtual instructional coaches work with second- and third-year teachers?**

Collaboration between early-career teachers and instructional coaches will occur via a secure digital coaching platform. Teachers and coaches will be organized into hubs in the platform to allow for the sharing of videos of instructional practice, timestamped feedback on videos, lesson plans and documents.

### **How will the program's effectiveness be evaluated?**

The OSDE will conduct an annual evaluation of the program. Teachers, mentors and coaches will provide feedback through surveys, data collection from coaching cycles, logs of activities and input from a randomly selected focus group.

*For questions about the First Class Teacher Induction Program, contact Susan Pinson, Executive Director of Professional Learning, at [Susan.Pinson@sde.ok.gov](mailto:Susan.Pinson@sde.ok.gov).*

*For information about federal relief funding, please see the [American Rescue Plan FAQs](#).*

