

Rethinking Mentoring: Comparing Policy and Practice in Special and General Education

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Abstract

Although teacher mentoring is now mandated in most states, high quality research in this area remains scarce (Rockoff, 2008). In particular, there is a great need to understand how mentoring policies are implemented (Smith, 2007). The purpose of this study is to compare state and district mentoring policies with the mentoring experiences of practicing special and general education teachers. Survey data were collected from 232 teachers in one state and compared with policy information from the Teacher Rules, Roles, and Rights (TR³) database. Results indicated uneven implementation of policy, particularly in policy set by districts. A new model is proposed to promote implementation of research-validated practices in teacher mentoring.

Introduction

The field of education is facing ever-increasing pressure to improve teacher quality and to ameliorate high rates of turnover. Teacher mentoring is one such strategy, as quality mentoring is thought to be related to both retention and increased teacher effectiveness (Smith, 2007). Although teacher mentoring policies are now mandated in most states, reports of mentoring practices vary (Whitaker, 2000). Very little is known about mentoring policies or practices, either in general or special education (Gehrke & McCoy, 2006). At issue is whether the mentoring of special and general education teachers follows formal policies. This new knowledge can inform stakeholders attempting to develop policies and implement programs that will assist all teachers (Smith, 2007).

The Need for Mentoring

Mentoring has been proposed for years as a potential solution to several serious issues in both general and special education, including high rates of teacher attrition and poor teacher quality. As these concerns have continued to plague the education system over the past few decades, reliance on teacher mentoring as a strategy to address them has continued to increase (Smith, 2007). In addition to the common turnover that plagues most teaching fields, teacher shortages in special education are a particular concern. These shortages have been characterized as “chronic, increasing, and serious” (Boe & Cook, 2006, p. 455). Overall, national estimates of the percent of special education teaching positions each year that remain unfilled have ranged from nine to 11 percent. These conditions have forced the field into a situation in which the majority of its novice teachers are hired from other teaching fields or otherwise lacking sufficient preparation (Boe & Cook, 2006).

Researchers have proposed several solutions to these shortages, such as increasing administrative support, changing working conditions, and targeting professional development (Billingsley, 2003). In her comprehensive review of the literature on teacher attrition and retention in special education, Billingsley (2003) urges a focus on special educators' early careers, as that is when most teachers leave the field. Although comprehensive teacher induction, including planned communication with administrators, orientation, additional planning time, and other resources, appears to be the most effective type of support for new teachers, mentoring is the most commonly mandated induction experience. In fact, mentoring is often seen as synonymous with induction, and "is identified by researchers as the most critical component of induction programs and by teachers as most helpful" (Serpell, 2000, p. 14).

In special education as well as general education, there appears to be a general consensus in the literature that quality mentoring is related to retention and increased teacher quality. For example, support from fellow teachers, general education colleagues, and administrators have all been linked to at least short-term teacher retention (Gersten, Keating, Yovanoff, & Harniss, 2001; Whitaker, 2000). Quality mentoring policies identified by the professional literature include careful mentor selection (i.e. a "master teacher" with the same assignment in the same building); observation of the novice's teaching by the mentor; and sustained mentor-novice contact (Griffin, Winn, Otis-Wilborn, & Kilgore, 2002; Wasburn-Moses, 2006). In sum, mentoring is highly touted in both special and general education as a potential solution to serious concerns in the field.

Mentoring Policy and Its Effects

This widespread concern about teacher turnover, along with the need for increased teacher quality, has prompted the great majority of states to implement formal mentoring programs (Smith, 2007). As of 2007, at least 45 states had mandated mentoring for novice teachers (NCTQ, 2007). Of these, at least 31 require mentor training and at least 21 require some type of observation of the novice's teaching. Other common policies mandated by states and/or districts include release time, payment for mentors, matching by subject area, and requirements as to who assigns the mentor to a new teacher (NCTQ, 2007). However, these policies make no distinction between general and special education teachers (Griffin et al., 2003; White & Mason, 2006).

Although mentoring policies are now commonplace, few controlled studies have been conducted on the effects of such policies, or on the relationship between local and state mentoring policies. Overall, strong induction programs have been tied to increased retention and increased achievement (Fletcher, Strong, & Villar, 2008; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). Other studies have linked state policy (including strong induction programs, more rigorous teacher preparation, and stronger licensing standards) to increased student test scores (Darling-Hammond, 2000). However, many of these studies do not separate mentoring from other supports, and as a result, strong empirical data on the implementation of mentoring policy or its effects is lacking (Grossman, Thompson, & Valencia, 2001; Smith, 2007). In sum, "over one million new teachers received mentoring between 1993 and 2003, but we know little about the magnitude of the benefits they have received or how the impact of mentoring varied across different types of programs" (Rockoff, 2008, p. 2).

However, several recent studies do provide some insight into the status of research and practice in this area. In 2004, Ingersoll and Kralik reviewed 150 studies on teacher mentoring, only ten of which met their criteria for high quality research. From the results of these ten studies, the authors concluded that they could not support the claim that mentoring programs have a positive impact on retention or teacher quality, but they cautioned that these findings were “seriously limited by the fact that most of [the studies] were not able to control completely for other factors that also might have affected the outcomes noted” (p. 1). In 2007, Smith examined pre-existing databases in order to determine the relationship between state-level induction policy and both type of mentorship and teacher turnover. Results indicated that mentoring is indeed more common in states in which it is mandated, and that such mandates may improve the quality of the mentorship. Although states requiring a mentor/novice match by subject, grade, or school were no more likely than other states to succeed in these efforts, these states do have mentoring programs that appear to be more effective at reducing turnover (Smith, 2007).

As stated previously, mentoring has been mandated by districts as well as by states. “While studies of educational change have largely ignored districts ... a number of researchers believe that districts can play a pivotal role in facilitating the implementation of state policies” (Grossman et al., 2001, p. 3). In one of the only carefully controlled studies on teacher mentoring at the district level, Rockoff (2008) investigated the effects of mentoring policy on teacher turnover and teacher quality on New York City teachers. He found strong relationships between quality of mentoring and novices’ ratings of self-efficacy as teachers, but weaker relationships between quality of mentoring and teacher absences, teacher retention, and

student achievement. However, the strongest, most consistent finding was that teacher retention within a particular school was higher when a mentor had previous experience working at that same school. The author concluded that, although “time spent with a mentor does appear to improve teaching skills” (Rockoff, 2008, p. 1), the lack of quality research renders judgment about the impact of mentoring policy difficult.

Educational Policy and Special Education

In addition to the general dearth of quality research in this area, even less is known about mentoring in special education (Gehrke & McCoy, 2006; Griffin et al., 2002). Some claim that mentoring policies should distinguish between general and special education teachers, because of the great differences between their roles and necessary skill sets (Griffin et al., 2003). For example, some special educators teach more than one subject simultaneously, a rarity in general education (Wasburn-Moses, 2005). Some special education teachers claim they are excluded from school-wide decision-making processes that require the input of their general education colleagues (Kaff, 2004; Shoho, Katims, & Meza, 1998). Often the overwhelming load of paperwork requires teachers to work many hours beyond the typical school day (Coleman, 2001; Kaff, 2004). Conflicting and ambiguous roles are commonplace (Coleman, 2001; Wisniewski & Gargiulo, 1997). These conditions of teaching illustrate the unique needs of special education teachers.

Some evidence in the literature does point to the possibility of a gap between policy and practice in the mentoring of special educators. For example, researchers have noted that “[mentoring in special education] appears to vary significantly from a relationship that exists in name only to a relationship where the mentor and beginning teacher work together daily and

have developed a close personal and professional relationship” (Whitaker, 2000, p. 557).

Common problems such as obtaining appropriate experienced mentors (e.g. special educators with similar assignments, working in the same building as the novice) appear to lead to further discrepancies between policy and practice (Ingersoll, 2001; Pan, Mutchler, Kelly, Bush, & Glover, 2000; Whitaker, 2000). Several researchers have found a link between special education teacher retention, satisfaction with mentoring experiences, and similar mentor placement.

Similar mentor placement refers to having mentors who are also special educators, and who are working in the same school at the same grade level as the novice (Griffin et al., 2003; White & Mason, 2006). Some even advocate dual mentoring to introduce novice special educators to both special and general education systems within the specific school context (Pugach, 1992; Wasburn-Moses, 2006; Whitaker, 2000). Thus, mentoring may be yet another area in which policy and practice differ, particularly for special educators.

Purpose of the Study

Clearly, research in teacher mentoring in both special and general education is crucial. Despite its possible impact on both retention and teacher quality, the relationship between formal mentoring policies and mentoring practices remains virtually unexplored (Smith et al., 2007). Further, little is known about the experiences of either mentors or novices in special education (Griffin et al., 2002). The purpose of this study is to compare official state and district mentoring policies with the mentoring experiences of practicing special and general educators in two large school districts in one state. This knowledge is imperative in order to guide policymakers in setting policy that has the greatest potential to improve teacher quality and

increase retention (Smith, 2007). Therefore, the current study examines three research questions:

1. How do formal mentoring policies in two large urban districts in one state compare with the experiences of individual special and general education teachers?
2. How do mentoring experiences compare by type of teacher (general versus special education)?
3. How can mentoring practices be characterized in the absence of formal state or district policies?

Method

Participants

One Midwestern state was selected for this study because of the availability of personnel data from the state Department of Education website. The two largest city school districts in terms of population were selected to correspond with districts included in the Teacher Rules, Roles, and Rights (TR³) database, which provides comprehensive policy information on two selected school districts from each of the 50 states (NCTQ, 2007). “District A” was rated by the state as Category 3 out of a possible ranking of 6. This school district did not make AYP for the 2007-2008 school year, has a graduation rate of 71%, and a daily enrollment of approximately 53,000. Approximately ¾ of its students are non-white, and 98% are economically disadvantaged. “District B” was rated by the state as Category 2 out of a possible ranking of 6. This school district did not make AYP for the 2007-2008 school year, has a graduation rate of 62%, and a daily enrollment of approximately 50,000. Approximately 85% of

its students are non-white, and 84% are economically disadvantaged. The two districts are considered to be “similar districts” by the state (ODE, 2008).

Because relatively similar experiences were expected among participants, approximately 210 respondents were required to achieve a 5% sampling error (Salant & Dillman, 1994). Therefore, 450 teachers (225 special education and 225 general education teachers) were selected at random from a list of all general and special education teachers teaching in the approximately 200 schools in the two selected districts (ODE, 2007).

After data collection was complete, responses had been received from 232 teachers, comprising a 51.6% response rate. Of the 232 participants, 39 indicated having been both novice and mentor in that district. Sixty-seven were neither mentor nor novice. Twenty were mentors and not novices, and 78 were novices and not mentors. Participants’ average number of years teaching was 16.7, with a standard deviation of 8.8. On average, they had spent 14.7 years teaching in their current district. This data compares to state-level data indicating the average teaching experience of teachers in District A is 14 years, and District B is 15 years (ODE, 2007). Just over half (51.3%) were special education teachers, and the remainder was general education teachers. More responses were received from District B (53.7%) than District A (46.3%).

Procedure

Instrumentation. The questions included in survey instruments used in this study correspond to those asked by researchers compiling the TR³ database (NCTQ, 2007). The TR³ database includes nine questions under the topic of mentors:

1. Is a mentor available to a new teacher?
2. How long is the mentorship program for a new teacher?
3. Who selects teachers to be mentors?
4. Is it expected that a mentor will have experience in subject area/grade related to the teacher's teaching assignment?
5. What is the minimum number of years of experience a teacher must have to be eligible to be a mentor?
6. Is a mentor paid?
7. Are mentors provided with training?
8. Does a mentor have reduced teaching responsibilities or release time?
9. Does a mentor observe the teacher teaching?

Additionally, participants were asked: (1) whether they had served as mentors, novices, or neither in that district; and (2) their number of years of teaching experience, in order to determine their familiarity with mentoring.

Data collection. The 450 randomly selected teachers were sent a survey invitation via direct mail. Following the first mailing, postcard reminders were sent in two weeks. A second complete mailing targeting all non-responders was sent four weeks after the initial mailing.

Data analysis. Simple descriptive data (frequencies) was calculated to determine percentages of participants' responses to yes/no questions. Means were calculated to determine responses to ordinal and scale data such as participants' perceptions of their tutoring experiences and their average number of years of teaching experience. Chi-square

tests were conducted to determine differences in responses between teachers in the two districts studied, and between general and special education teachers.

The current mentoring laws in the state were implemented in 1996. Because number of years experience might affect participants' responses on mentoring (i.e. participants' experiences in mentoring might have taken place before 1996), correlations were taken between years teaching experience and responses to the nine mentoring questions asked. Years experience did not correlate significantly with responses to any of the questions asked in the survey.

Results

For each of the nine mentoring policies reported in the TR3 database, participants' responses were compared to both state and district policy. Two of these policies are required by the state; four are required by one or both districts, but not the state; three lacked requirements at both levels (NCTQ, 2007). Responses of general and special education teachers were also compared. A summary of results is shown in Table 1.

<Table 1 about here>

First, two of the nine mentoring policies were required by the state: that a mentor is made available to a new teacher, and that the length of the mentorship is "up to one year" (NCTQ, 2007). Overall, 70.7% of the respondents indicated that a mentor was made available to a new teacher in their district. This finding was unrelated to the number of years experience of the teacher, and to teacher type (general versus special education). Findings differed by district. More teachers in District A (82.1%) reported availability of a mentor than teachers in District B (60.8%), $\chi^2(1) = 7.938, p = .005$. Length of mentoring program was reported as one year by

85.9% of respondents. No significant differences were found either by district or by type of teacher.

Second, four of the nine policies were required by one or both districts, but not by the state. With respect to selection of mentors, District B required selection by the principal, but no requirements were specified by either District B or the state. Overall, 64.9% of respondents indicated that school administrators selected mentors, and there was no significant difference between responses of participants in District A and District B. Both districts required that mentors be paid, although not mandated by the state. However, only 24.8% of participants responded that mentors were compensated for this service. A significant difference was found between responses of special and general education teachers, with 15.2% of special education teachers indicating that mentors were paid, as compared to 32.2% of general education teachers, $\chi^2 (1) = 4.003, p = .04$.

District B required “release time... if deemed necessary by the principal” (NCTQ, 2007). Overall, 14.7% of participants indicated that mentors received reduced teaching. Surprisingly, participants from District A were more likely to indicate mentors receiving a reduced teaching load (23.8%) than those in District B (8.5%), $\chi^2 (1) = 4.562, p = .03$. District A required observation of novice teachers, whereas the state and District B did not have a formal policy regarding observation of novice teachers. Overall, 55.3% of teachers involved in this study reported observation of novices.

Third, three types of policies were not stated expressly either in state or district documents. Just over half (51.7%) of participants reported that mentors and novices were matched by grade or subject. More special education teachers (62.3%) than general education

teachers (41.9%) reported such a match, $\chi^2 (1) = 4.727, p = .03$. Also, 30.2% indicated the presence of mentor training. The most common responses for number of years experience required for teachers to become mentors were five years (55.1%) and three years (24.4%). There were no differences by district or by type of teacher.

Discussion and Implications

The results of this study do provide some insight into the relationship between mentoring policy and practice. In general, it appears as though mentoring practices enacted locally may not always follow policy, either district- or state-mandated policy. State policies investigated in this study appeared to produce greater compliance, in that participants were more likely to report practices that aligned with state policy initiatives than with district initiatives. The results of this study also indicated surprisingly few differences between the mentoring experiences of special and general education teachers. Knowledge about policy implementation, in conjunction with new insights about effective components of mentoring, illuminates some potential problems with current mentoring efforts. A new model to promote implementation of mentoring policy is proposed.

Policy-to-Practice Gap

Even areas in which both the state and district had set very basic policies did not appear to result in universal implementation. For example, only about 70% of participants indicated that mentors were in fact assigned to new teachers in their district. Because this finding was unrelated to number of years experience as a teacher, it is unlikely that teachers were referring to a time before mentorship was mandated. Further, when one district had set a certain policy but the other did not, practices did not always follow a predictable pattern. For example,

although District B stipulated reduced teaching for mentors would be available when necessary, teachers in District A were more likely to indicate that the district offered reduced teaching for mentors. Increased levels of compliance were found with state-mandated policies than with either district-mandated policies or practices for which neither state nor district had a stated rule. Surprisingly, greater “compliance” with common mentoring practices were sometimes found in the absence of either state or district policies. For example, more than half of participants reported that mentor-novice pairs were matched by grade and/or subject (which is not mandated by either the state or the districts), but only about ¼ indicated the presence of mentor compensation, which was required by both districts.

Figure 1 depicts the current relationship between mentoring policy and practice. Using a traditional top-down approach, policies originate at the state and district level and are expected to be translated into practice with teachers. State policies appear to have more influence than do district policies in reaching teachers, but some policy intent is lost in implementation, between the district and the teachers. This lack of efficiency in translation of policy to practice results in uneven implementation.

<Fig. 1 about here>

Increasing Compliance

How can compliance with state and district mandates be increased? The findings of this study appear to indicate the need for a more complex understanding of how to create the conditions that will result in a more efficient relationship between mentoring policy and practices. Simply mandating certain mentoring policies at the state level may not be sufficient to ensure compliance, particularly as the relationship between state and district policy is not

just give-and-take (Fullan, 1991; Sarason, 1990). Increasing the number or type of “enforcement” of state mandates does not provide a realistic solution either, as “most states lack the capacity to ensure compliance [with reform efforts]” (Fuhrman & Elmore, 1990, p. 86). An uneven implementation of state policy such as the type shown in this study has been attributed to a variety of factors, including amount of political mobilization, the varied use of incentives, and districts’ individual relationships with the state (Benveniste, 1986; Cuban, 2003; Cusick, 1992; Sarason, 1990).

Pursuing more district mandates may not eliminate compliance issues either, as districts’ mandates in this study appeared to have even less influence than mandates set by the state. Spillane (1998) explains that a vast bureaucracy and “segmented” structure can inhibit large districts (such as the two examined in this study) from accomplishing policy goals. Yet the power of the district to implement reform efforts should not be underestimated (Furhman & Elmore, 1990); in fact, accomplishing policy implementation depends upon local conversation and local efforts, regardless of the origin of the policy (Fullan, 1991).

However, increasing compliance with policy or changing mandates that may or may not follow research in best practices may be counterproductive. As mentioned previously, new research has attempted to tie mentoring policies to teacher attrition, and even to the “gold standard” of teacher education research; namely, student outcomes. Current policies may not align well with these findings, though. For example, Rockoff (2008) found that hours of mentoring had a positive impact on student achievement, yet only nine states had a policy mandating a minimum number of hours of mentoring as of 2003, and not all states even specify a minimum time frame (e.g. one year) for the mentorship program (Education Week, 2003;

NCTQ, 2007). Rockoff also found that other common state policies that had no effect on novices' teaching, including matching by subject area (13 states) and requiring mentors to have a minimum number of years of experience teaching (16 states) (NCTQ, 2007). Although number of years teaching in the novice's school on the part of the mentor had a positive impact on the novice's teaching, only one state has that requirement (NCTQ, 2007). In fact, Smith (2007) found that funding induction and requiring matches by subject area may in fact be reducing mentoring quality, and that other common policies did not contribute to the reduction of teacher turnover. These findings call into question many routine practices of districts, practices that guide current state and local policy. They also point to the need to intensify research efforts in the area of teacher mentoring.

Clearly, teacher mentoring is important, but the results of this study show that mentoring mandates may be implemented inconsistently, particularly at the district level. How, then, can we ensure that states and districts are using research-based mentoring practices, and that they are implemented with fidelity? Fuhrman and Elmore (1990) provide a framework for ensuring local policy implementation, asserting that "states that have significant effects on local education agencies rely more on multiple mechanisms of influence than on direct control" (p. 90). They provide several alternative methods of achieving policy implementation, including mobilization of opinion through a variety of means, and the use of state waivers to encourage creativity in local programming.

Based on the research, it appears that requiring: (1) assigning of mentors to all novice teachers, (2) a minimum amount of mentor-novice contact (Rockoff used at least 80 hours per year as the cutoff in his study), and (3) the use of mentors who have experience teaching in

their current school, are all important to producing the desired effects (namely, improving teacher quality and reducing turnover). In the absence of more decisive research on other mentoring strategies, perhaps these three basic strategies should be the focus of mentoring policies. Concentrating on a small set of minimum requirements eliminates elements that may or may not be effective, and also allows districts the freedom they need to create programs with a minimum of state intervention (Fuhrman & Elmore, 1990).

A New Model for Mentoring

How should these guidelines for achieving reform be implemented? Figure 2 depicts a new model of mentoring policy and practice, using Fuhrman and Elmore's guidelines. As per this model, the state would set minimum policies, as explained above, and then use indirect measures to influence districts, who would be responsible for developing more detailed mentoring programs. The programs then have direct influence over the lives of teachers. The role of research and data-driven decision-making would be critical to program development, as states and districts would implement, study, and compare models to determine best practices. The "top-town" model thus becomes circular, in that districts "fill in the blanks" by assisting states in determining effective elements of mentoring programs, which can in turn be modified for implementation in other districts.

<Fig. 2 about here>

The indirect measures selected by the state to increase policy implementation are crucial to the success of any educational reform. Fuhrman and Elmore outline several effective ways to "market" educational reform, including utilizing business influences, publicizing data, and organizing committees of educational experts to oversee implementation. Such

mobilization results in “highly visible statements of the rationale for educational reform” that are recognized and advocated by all stakeholders (p. 90). This strategy could meet the need for consistency in compliance with basic mandates such as assigning a mentor to a novice.

How can these indirect measures be applied to teacher mentoring? As for planning for the development of more detailed mentoring programs, a carefully chosen committee of experts can create such a plan to market the need for high quality teacher mentoring throughout the state. A minimum state policy provides freedom to the committee as well as to districts and schools to develop and evaluate model programs. States can advertise what is known about effective mentoring programs by highlighting districts’ successes (including both low- and high-achieving schools and the work of both general and special education mentor-novice pairs). Successful mentor-novice pairs could be recruited to speak to stakeholders across the state about their experiences. Pre- and post- performance data on new teachers can be collected and organized statewide, and tied to mentoring. Collecting, analyzing, and disseminating such data creates an opportunity for universities and businesses, which have expertise in this area.

Additionally, states could provide waivers to existing mentoring requirements to districts that propose creative, data-driven mentoring programs. Working closely with district-level special education as well as general education professionals can help ensure that implementation remains equitable across teacher type. Thus, the state focuses on improving state-district relations through increased reliance on local efforts and local personnel, rather than on tightening policy that may be more or less effective. Bringing in a variety of stakeholders capitalizes on the strengths of other disciplines, many of which use mentoring,

data, and advertisement in highly effective ways. Policy reformers have always emphasized the strength of community mobilization, warning against attempting educational reform without consideration of factors external to the school system (Sarason, 1990).

Finally, it is important to reinforce the crucial role of research in improving the implementation and the effectiveness of mentoring policy. We are still in the nascent stages of our understanding of the impact of mentoring policy, particularly on student achievement and teacher turnover (Smith, 2007). The results of this study point to a need to ensure compliance even with the most basic of mentoring mandates, particularly those required by the district. Perhaps most central to this issue, rigorous evaluation studies must continue in order to add to our limited knowledge of mentoring policy and its effects on teacher retention and quality. The ultimate goal is to create and implement new, research-based models of teacher mentoring—namely, ones that increase teacher effectiveness and reduce turnover.

Limitations and Conclusion

This study has several limitations that affect generalizability. First, the study was conducted with a relatively small number of participants in one state. The two districts were comparable, but were selected because of their compatibility with another database. Second, the limited number of individuals with direct experiences as a mentor also affects interpretation of data. Finally, the sample is not truly random, as it was selected to include equal numbers of special and general education teachers. Special education teachers generally comprise a relatively small number in comparison with their general education peers.

In conclusion, the results of this study showed great variability in mentoring practices, regardless of state or district policy. In particular, several district policies did not appear to

produce consistent implementation; in one instance, the district lacking a formal policy appeared to “comply” with the practice to a greater extent than the district with the policy. All of these findings can be seen as a call to action to ensure that research-based mentoring policies are set and implemented with all novice teachers. However, the relationship between state and district policy is not straightforward, and high levels of implementation may not be achieved with a traditional top-down approach. Adopting an alternate model to ensure implementation for all teachers and to add to the research knowledge base on effective programming may be a more effective course of action. Policymakers, educational leaders, and researchers need to work together in order to scale up research in quality mentoring to reach all novice teachers.

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Table 1

Summary of Findings

Question	Policy	Findings	Difference By District	Difference By Teacher Type
Mentor availability	State: yes District A: yes District B: yes	70.7% yes	District A higher	n.d.**
Length of mentorship	State: up to one year District A: n/a* District B: n/a	85.9% one year	n.d.	n.d.
Mentor selection	State: n/a District A: n/a District B: principal	64.9% administrator	n.d.	n.d.
Match by subject / grade	State: n/a District A: n/a District B: n/a	51.7% yes	n.d.	special education higher
Years experience	State: n/a District A: n/a District B: n/a	55% five years	n.d.	n.d.
Compensation for mentoring	State: n/a District A: yes District B: yes	24.8% yes	n.d.	general education higher
Mentor training	State: n/a District A: n/a District B: n/a	30.2% yes	n.d.	n.d.
Reduced teaching	State: n/a District A: n/a District B: yes, if necessary	14.7% yes	District A higher	n.d.
Observation of novice	State: n/a District A: yes District B: n/a	55.3% yes	n.d.	n.d.

* not specified in the scope of the documents studied by NCTQ (NCTQ, 2007)

** no significant differences

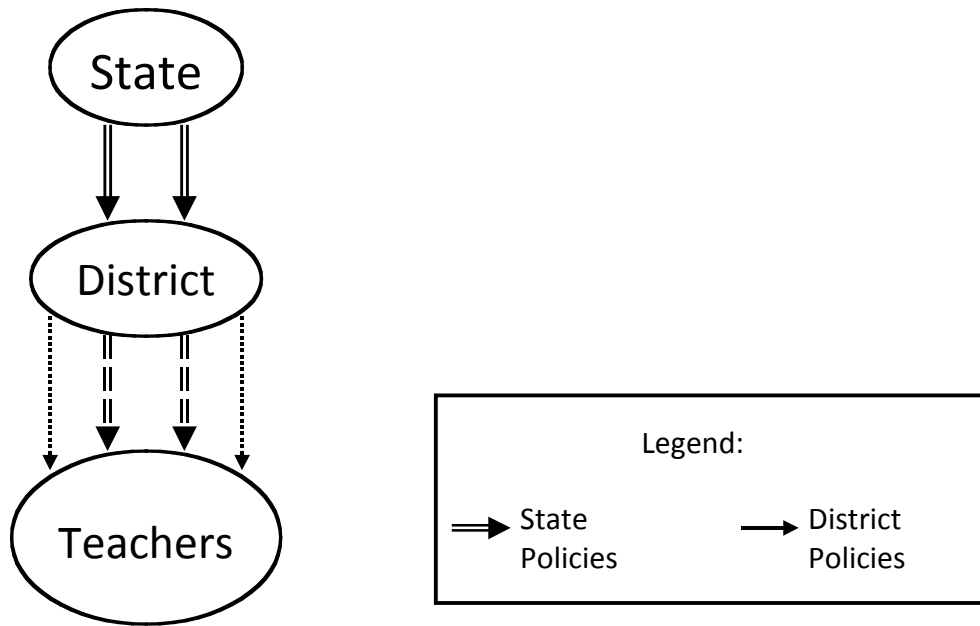


Figure 1. Current mentoring policy model. The top-down model depicts the way in which state and district policy is expected to reach teachers. State policy produces higher levels of compliance, but both state and district policy intent is diluted as it reaches teachers.

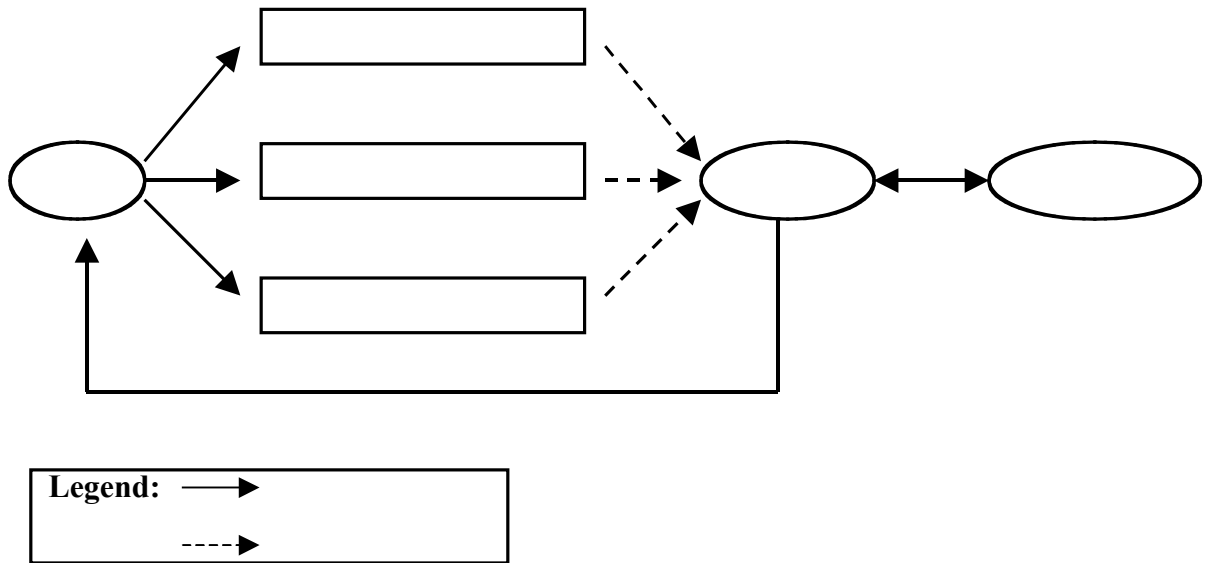


Figure 2. Proposed mentoring policy model. The state influences mentoring policy indirectly through a variety of measures. The district develops the mentoring models, which reach teachers. Data collection by the district identifies effective mentoring programs, which in turn influences state policy.