

State Funded Mentor Stipends

Required mentoring for licensure purposes

Since 2008, all educators on initial licenses have been required to complete mentoring in order to upgrade to the professional level license. Beginning in 2015, LEAs have been required to submit and implement mentoring programs for approval based on meeting a set of mentor program guidelines. Adjusted guidelines for teacher mentor programs occurred in 2017, resulting in the need for LEAs to submit program updates. The mentor program guidelines for school specialists and leaders did not change and remain as adopted in 2015. Teachers on initial licenses must be delivered a 2 year approved mentor program in order to upgrade to the professional license.

Mentor teacher stipends

Occurring separately but parallel, the legislature enacted statutes in 2000 to provide grant money for the purpose of providing stipends to **CLASSROOM TEACHERS** who mentor new-to-the-profession teachers. Budget allocations to fund the stipends stopped for a period of time, but the legislature again provided a budget allocation to fund mentor stipends in 2017-18. **In order for a mentor teacher to qualify to receive a stipend, the mentor must meet specific statutory requirements.** These requirements vary somewhat from mentor requirements set forth in the mentor program guidelines that LEAs follow for mentor program approval. Districts should continue to deliver mentoring programs as approved. However, **some of the mentors providing the mentoring program may not be eligible to receive a stipend.**

Qualified Mentor Requirements

Regardless of the program plan submitted, approved and implemented by districts and their mentors, **IN ORDER TO QUALIFY FOR A STATE FUNDED STIPEND, the MENTOR TEACHER MUST** meet the following requirements:

- hold a professional level license (or an accomplished license)
- hold an assignment as a classroom teacher
 - (educator type 1 through 5 as reported in the EDCS/LPR report)
- have three consecutive school years of employment in the school district where they are providing the mentoring
- cannot be mentoring more than two new-to-the-profession classroom teachers.
 - New-to-the-profession means novice teachers who have not yet completed their 3rd year of teaching. (reported with total years of experience of 0, 1, or 2 in the EDCS/LPR report and educator type 1-5).
- have completed a mentor training program (based on the mentor program guidelines)

What does this mean for districts and/or outside program providers?

- Districts should continue to deliver mentoring programs as approved. A district must have an approved program to receive funds to distribute as mentor stipends. Remember: accountability measures are required for your approved mentor program. KSDE may collect data or statistics.
- Districts must have selected and assigned the district mentor teachers eligible for the stipend.

Applying for a grant award for mentor stipends:

- Districts must submit a grant application prior to **September 27, 2021** by entering names of eligible mentors who are mentoring teachers (new to the profession) into the **Mentor Program KSDE Authenticated application**.
 - Enter any mentor providing mentoring to teachers in their 1st three years of teaching (mentee has 0, 1, or 2 total years of experience entered into EDCS).
- Districts will certify or re-validate the list of mentors/mentees in the spring and submit for payment. Mentor Program application will reopen April 1 – **May 1, 2022**
- The LEA where the mentor teacher is working (employed by) and providing the mentoring submits the grant application by entering the mentor and receives the grant award to distribute to the qualified mentor. **Cooperatives and Interlocals** are also eligible as the employing LEA to submit a grant application by entering their mentors, and will receive the grant award to distribute as the mentor stipend to their qualified mentors.
- If an outside provider (such as a Service Center staff person) serves as a mentor to mentees in participating districts, that mentor is not eligible to receive a stipend. (They are not employed as a teacher in the district where the mentoring is being provided.) Full release mentors who are serving more than two mentees are not eligible to receive a stipend. These mentors are perfectly acceptable to provide an approved mentor program – just not eligible to receive a stipend.

Distribution of funds:

- All funding must be used for mentor teacher stipends only.
- Funds cannot be used to fund a district mentoring program.
- Funds and stipends are paid at the end of the 2021-22 school year after certifying eligible mentors.
- A mentor will receive only one stipend – even if assigned two mentees.
- Stipends will be a prorated amount based on the total number of eligible mentor teachers across the state. The exact stipend amount will not be determined until the total number of eligible mentors is certified in the spring of 2022.
- Qualified mentors of 1st year teachers will be funded first – remaining grant allocations will be distributed on a pro-rated basis to qualified mentors of 2nd year teachers.
- When the prorated amount is determined, LEAs will be reimbursed the prorated amount times the # of eligible mentor teachers to be paid out as stipends to the mentors.
- Funds will be deposited as a reimbursement to the district's general fund at the end of the school year and must be distributed as a stipend to the mentor teacher(s).
- Teachers providing only one semester of mentoring are eligible to receive a partial stipend equal to 50% of the prorated stipend amount.
- Private schools are not eligible to apply for mentor grants.