

CREATING AND ENHANCING 21ST CENTURY INDUCTION PROGRAMS FOR AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION TEACHERS

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The single greatest challenge facing middle and secondary agricultural education is recruiting, preparing, and retaining a cadre of effective career teachers. So, what can be done to maintain a quality staff of effective agricultural education teachers? Noted leaders and researchers in education suggest attention to teacher development and meeting their professional needs is critical to maintaining effective teachers. One of the most important and valuable initial forms of professional development for entry-level teachers is a teacher induction program. Retention of the most talented teachers is enhanced when the education community provides induction programming and activities to satisfy the psychosocial, instructional effectiveness, socialization, professional development needs of their least experienced teachers.

Lets examine one approach to establishing induction programs for entry-level agricultural education teachers. Research and experience from many researchers and program leaders have contributed to a two phase approach with a accompanying tasks to establish a quality induction program. The initial phase is *Establishing a Foundation for Initiating an Induction Program*. Note the major steps to complete before moving on to Phase II. These phases provide the framework for the materials on this website for creating and enhancing induction programs

PHASE I: Establishing a Foundation for Initiating an Induction Program

Tasks:

- Establish an understanding of the career experiences of lifelong teachers
- Develop a clear understanding of the joys and challenges of entry-level teachers
- Know the value of quality pre-service teacher education programs
- Value the importance and impact of professional development for teachers and students
- Create an awareness that induction programs are a recognized solution for addressing the challenges of early-career teachers
- Develop familiarity with the features and benefits of quality induction programs
- Understand the benefits, costs, and challenges of managing and sustaining programs

PHASE II: Work with Partners in Planning, Conducting, and Evaluating a Sustainable Induction Program

Phase II encompasses each of the steps of creating a quality program. Considerable vision, effort, and resources ensure desired outcomes, especially when careful attention has been given to each of the tasks in Phase I. Many of the tasks in Phase II can occur simultaneously, thus allowing involvement by many interested stakeholders.

Tasks:

- Confirm induction program partners
- Reach consensus upon the features desired for your induction program
- Establish programming capacity of the induction team
- Create statements of the program vision, mission, goals, and values
- Securing funding for program support
- Design programming for a sustainable induction program
- Involve effective coaches, guides, and mentors in the induction program
- Strategies for evaluating the goals and outcomes of the program
- Effective communication strategies
- Marketing the induction program
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