



# Teacher Induction Policy

The Governing Board of The Cottonwood School's commitment to providing a high-quality educational program is dependent upon the employment of certificated staff who are adequately prepared and have demonstrated proficiency in basic skills and in the subject matter to be taught.

The purpose of this Teacher Induction Policy is to accomplish the following:

1. Outline the California Credentialing System
2. Outline the Induction Program
3. Establish the Individual Learning Plan of a Participating Teacher
4. Establish an Early Completion Option
5. Outline the Qualifications, Selection and Training of Coaches
6. Outline the Selection of Participating Teachers
7. Outline Participating Teacher Competence for the Clear Credential Recommendation

**1. California Credentialing System:** California has a two-tiered credentialing system for teachers. Preliminary programs prepare candidates to obtain an initial teaching credential through successful completion of required coursework, fieldwork, and a performance demonstration of their knowledge, skills, and abilities. The second tier of preparation is a two-year job-embedded individualized induction program that is focused on extensive support and mentoring to new teachers in their first and second year of teaching. The Cottonwood School has partnered with the Center for Teacher Innovation ("CTI") to offer an induction program which is designed to provide a two-year, individualized, job-embedded system of mentoring, support and professional learning that begins in the teacher's first year of teaching.

**2. Induction Program Generally:** The Cottonwood School's induction program is a two (2) year program that provides reimbursement to participating teachers who satisfactorily complete the program and then remain employed by The Cottonwood School for up to an additional two (2) years, as provided below. Within the first thirty (30) days of the participant's enrollment in The Cottonwood School's induction program, the participant shall have a coach assigned by CTI according to the credentials held, grade level served and/or subject area taught, as appropriate to the participating teacher's employment. Each participating teacher shall receive an average of not less than one (1) hour per week of individualized support and mentoring coordinated and/or provided by the coach.

**3. Individual Learning Plan:** Within the first sixty (60) days of the participating teacher's enrollment in the induction program, goals for each participating teacher must be developed within the context of the Individual Learning Plan ("ILP"). The ILP shall be designed and implemented only for the professional growth and development of the participating teacher and not for evaluation for employment purposes.

The ILP is developed based on needs determined by the teacher and program provider, in consultation with the site administrator and guided by the Preliminary Program Transition Plan. The ILP must address identified candidate competencies that support the recommendation for the credential. CTI coaching support for participating teachers must include both “just in time” and longer-term analysis of teaching practice to help candidates develop enduring professional skills. The program’s design shall serve to strengthen the participating teacher’s professional practice and contribute to the participating teacher’s retention in the profession.

The ILP must address the *California Standards for the Teaching Profession* and provide the road map for the participating teachers’ induction work during their time in the program, along with guidance for the coach in providing support. The ILP must be collaboratively developed at the beginning of the Induction by the participating teacher and coach, with input from The Cottonwood School regarding the participating teacher’s job assignment, and guidance from the program staff.

The ILP must include the following:

- a. Candidate professional growth goals;
  - b. A description of how the participating teacher will meet those goals;
  - c. Defined and measurable outcomes for the participating teacher; and
  - d. Planned opportunities to reflect on progress and modify the ILP as needed.
- 4. Early Completion Option:** The Cottonwood School shall make available and advise participants of an early completion option for “experienced and exceptional” candidates who meet the program’s established criteria. In order to qualify for the early completion option, participating teachers must be in year one (1) of the induction program, have five (5) years of verified superior teaching experience, and have a letter of recommendation from their Supervisor.
- 5. Qualifications and Role of Coaches:** Coaches are supplied by CTI and selected on the basis of the following:
- a. Knowledge of the context and content area of the participating teacher’s assignment;
  - b. Demonstrated commitment to professional learning and collaboration;
  - c. Possession of a Clear Teaching Credential;
  - d. Ability, willingness, and flexibility to meet candidate needs for support; and
  - e. Minimum of three (3) years of effective teaching experience.

Coaches are required to provide “just in time” support for candidates, in accordance with the ILP, along with longer-term guidance to promote enduring professional skills. Coaches facilitate participating teacher growth and development through modeling, guided reflection on practice, and feedback on classroom instruction. The coaches connect participating teachers with available resources to support their professional growth and accomplishment of the ILP.

6. **Selection of Participating Teachers:** Each candidate is reviewed in the Commission on Teacher Credentialing database for credential verification and reviewed for early completion option eligibility.
7. **Participating Teacher Competence for the Clear Credential Recommendation:** The induction program shall assess the participating teacher's progress towards mastery of the *California Standards for the Teaching Profession* to support the recommendation for the clear credential. The documentation of participating teacher progress must reflect the learning and professional growth goals indicated within the ILP and evidence of the participating teacher's successful completion of the activities outlined in the ILP.

Prior to recommending a candidate for a Clear Credential, The Cottonwood School must verify that the participating teacher has satisfactorily completed all program activities and requirements, and that the program has documented the basis on which the recommendation for the clear credential is made. The Cottonwood School's verification is based on a review of observed and documented evidence, collaboratively assembled by the participating teacher, the coach and/or other colleagues, according to the program's design.

The induction program's recommendation verification process also includes a systematic process of reviewing documentation. If a participating teacher is not recommended for a Clear Credential, the participating teacher may rewrite or expand the reflection, revisit the context and illustrate a better understanding of the context and/or next steps. Alternatively, the participating teacher may complete a written appeal form available from the Executive Director providing additional evidence, as that participating teacher feels is appropriate. In the discretion of The Cottonwood School, a participating teacher may repeat portions of the program.

8. **Reimbursement:** Participating teachers will be reimbursed for the full cost of the program up to \$8,500 upon The Cottonwood School receiving verification that the teacher satisfactorily completed all program activities and requirements and received a recommendation for a Clear Credential. In consideration for such reimbursement, the participating teacher will teach at The Cottonwood School for one (1) full additional school year for each year that The Cottonwood School provided reimbursement. If the participating teacher is unable to fulfill his/her obligations due to serious illness, pregnancy, or another natural cause, the time period to complete the required years of service shall be extended by a maximum period of one (1) year. If a participating teacher otherwise resigns or involuntarily separates from employment prior to fulfilling their required year(s) of service, the teacher will owe The Cottonwood School for a prorated amount of the reimbursement. Unless otherwise agreed to in writing, the amount owed The Cottonwood School pursuant to this Policy shall become immediately due and payable upon termination of the participating teacher's employment with The Cottonwood School whether by resignation or involuntary separation.