

Q Comp Requirements and Guiding Principles

Program Purposes

The purpose of the Q Comp program is for participating school districts, intermediate school districts, integration districts, state schools/academies and charter schools to recruit and retain highly qualified teachers, encourage highly qualified teachers to undertake challenging assignments, support teachers' roles in improving students' educational achievement and provide incentives to encourage teachers to improve their knowledge and instructional skills in order to improve student learning.

Contents

This document describes the unacceptable practices, practices required by statute and recommended best practices for each of the core components within the Q Comp Program. Districts and Charter Schools should use this document for writing, updating, implementing and reviewing plans. The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) will use this document in the review of applications and program updates.

The statutory requirements are based on Minnesota Statutes, section 122A.414 which outlines the Q Comp requirements. Minnesota Statutes, section 122A.413 Educational Improvement Plan, Minnesota Statutes, section 122A.60 Staff Development Program, Minnesota Statutes, section 122A.40 Employment; Contracts; Termination and Minnesota Statutes, section 122A.41 Teacher Tenure Act; Cities of the First Class; Definitions are also included because of statutory links with Q Comp statutory requirements.

[View statute 122A.414.](#) [View statute 122A.413.](#) [View statute 122A.60.](#) [View statute 122A.40.](#) [View statute 122A.41.](#)

NOTE: Definitions related to understanding statutory terms are included in the glossary at the end of this document.

For questions or further information please contact mde.q-comp@state.mn.us.

Core Component: Career Advancement Options

Statute:

122A.414 Subd. 2(b) The alternative teacher professional pay system agreement must:

- (1) describe how teachers can achieve career advancement and additional compensation;
- (2) describe how the school district, intermediate school district, school site, or charter school will provide teachers with career advancement options that allow teachers to retain primary roles in student instruction and facilitate site-focused professional development that helps other teachers improve their skills...

| Unacceptable Practices | Practices Required by Statute | Recommended Best Practices |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher leader roles are unclear or are not focused on supporting other licensed staff members to improve instructional skills. • Teacher leaders are released from the classroom without term limits in the positions. • Teacher leaders are provided with only existing salary with no release time or additional compensation for the leadership responsibilities they assume. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The plan describes teacher leader (career ladder) roles that licensed staff members may assume, while maintaining a primary role in instructing students, and outlines the additional compensation provided for these responsibilities. • Teacher leader roles are focused on facilitating site-based professional development to help other staff improve instructional skills. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teacher leader roles and job descriptions are posted within the district. The selection process includes an application process and a personal interview. • Additional compensation for teacher leaders (time or money) is based on the time required for teacher leaders to complete the additional job responsibilities. • Teacher leaders are responsible for facilitating learning team meetings, coaching, conducting observations, mentoring, and field-testing or researching instructional strategies. • Teacher leaders receive ongoing feedback and are formally evaluated in the leadership roles at least annually, and the evaluation results identify growth areas and impact the awarding of the salary augmentation or the continuation in the roles for the teacher leader positions. • Teacher leaders receive initial and ongoing training. |

Core Component: Job-Embedded Professional Development

Statute

122A.413 Subd. 2 The educational improvement plan must be approved by the school board and have at least these elements:

- (4) a rigorous research and practice-based professional development system, based on national and state standards of effective teaching practice applicable to all students including English learners with varied needs under section 124D.59, subdivision 2 and 2a, and consistent with section 122A.60, that is aligned with educational improvement and designed to achieve ongoing and schoolwide progress and growth in teaching practice...
- (7) a teacher induction and mentoring program for probationary teachers that provides continuous learning and sustained teacher support...

122A.414 Subd 2(b) The alternative professional pay system agreement must:

- (4) provide for participation in job-embedded learning opportunities such as professional learning communities to improve instructional skills and learning that are aligned with student needs under section 122A.413, consistent with staff development plan under section 122A.60 and led during the school day by trained teacher leaders such as master and mentor teachers...

122A.60 Subd. 1a Staff development activities must:

- (1) focus on the school classroom and research-based strategies that improve student learning;
- (2) provide opportunities for teachers to practice and improve their instructional skills over time;
- (3) provide opportunities for teachers to use student data as part of their daily work to increase student achievement;
- (4) enhance teacher content knowledge and instructional skills, including to accommodate the delivery of digital and blended learning and curriculum and engage students with technology;
- (5) align with state and local academic standards;
- (6) provide opportunities to build professional relationships, foster collaboration among principals and staff who provide instruction, and provide opportunities for teacher-to-teacher mentoring...

| Unacceptable Practices | Practices Required by Statute | Recommended Best Practices |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional development for all licensed staff members is an activity with limited follow-up or connection to strategic goal and plan. • Professional development is focused solely on district level needs instead of site needs or student needs. • Professional development is facilitated by someone other than teacher leaders or by teacher leaders not trained for their roles. • Professional development occurs outside the school day. • Professional development activities are limited to only one of the following types: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Individual. ○ Team. ○ Schoolwide. • Staff and administrators work independently when designing professional development. • Professional development is not focused on improving instructional skills and increasing the achievement of all students. • Staff uses data infrequently. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Licensed staff members receive ongoing, site-based professional development facilitated by trained teacher leaders. • Professional development is designed to improve content knowledge and the instructional skills of licensed staff members to increase student achievement through the examination of data and professional learning. • Professional development occurs regularly during the school day through individual, team and schoolwide learning activities and allows licensed staff members to improve instructional skills to meet identified student needs. • Professional development is collaborative in nature and builds professional relationships among staff members and with administrators. • Professional development is aligned with district and site staff development plans and state and local academic standards. • A teacher induction and mentoring program is in place to provide continuous learning and sustained support to probationary teachers. • Professional development focuses on the needs of all student groups. • Staff uses data frequently. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Licensed staff members receive ongoing professional development through individual (coaching and mentoring), team, and schoolwide activities either weekly or every other week. • Licensed staff members receive a minimum of 180 minutes per month of regular professional development. • When ongoing professional development occurs in teams, all members have a reasonable opportunity to actively participate. • Learning from professional development applies directly to classroom instruction with coaching and support provided as needed. • Learning from professional development applies directly to classroom instruction with coaching and support provided as needed. • Learning from professional development provides continuing support and is connected to classroom practices and evaluations. • The leadership team at each school facilitates the processes used to set and monitor ongoing progress toward the schoolwide SMART goal(s). • The leadership team guides the selection and monitors the implementation of evidence-based instructional strategies to be used schoolwide. • Staff uses data to plan professional development. |

Core Component: Teacher Evaluation

Statute

122A.413 Subd. 2 The educational improvement plan must be approved by the school board and have at least these elements:

- (2) A rigorous research and practice-based professional development system, based on national and state standards of effective teaching practice applicable to all students including English learners with varied needs under section 124D.59, subdivision 2 and 2a, and consistent with section 122A.60, that is aligned with educational improvement and designed to achieve ongoing and schoolwide progress and growth in teaching practice...

122A.414 Subd. 2(b) The alternative teacher professional pay system agreement must:

- (iii) an objective evaluation program under section 122A.40, subdivision 8, paragraph (b), clause (2), or 122A.41, subdivision 5, paragraph (b), clause (2)...

122A.40 Subd. 8(b) To develop, improve, and support qualified teachers and effective teaching practices and improve student learning and success, the annual evaluation process for teachers:

- (2) must establish a three-year professional review cycle for each teacher that includes an individual growth and development plan, a peer review process, and at least one summative evaluation performed by a qualified and trained evaluator such as a school administrator. For the years when a tenured teacher is not evaluated by a qualified and trained evaluation, the teacher must be evaluated by peer review...

122A.41 Subd. 5(b) To develop, improve, and support qualified teachers and effective teaching practices and improve student learning and success, the annual evaluation process for teachers:

- (2) must establish a three-year professional review cycle for each teacher that includes an individual growth and development plan, a peer review process, and at least one summative evaluation performed by a qualified and trained evaluator such as a school administrator...

| Unacceptable Practices | Practices Required by Statute | Recommended Best Practices |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The evaluations are subjective. • The evaluations are focused on standards other than those for effective teaching practice. • The educational improvement plan and individual evaluation are unaligned. • Individual evaluations are not designed to achieve progress and growth in teacher practice. • The evaluation program uses a single criterion to measure teacher performance. • Training for evaluators is minimal and does not ensure evaluations will be valid and reliable. • Multiple, unaligned evaluation programs are used throughout the district or charter school to set performance standards, evaluate teachers and provide feedback. • Summative evaluators are unqualified. • There is no peer review process. • There is no individual growth and development plan component. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The evaluations are objective and based on multiple, valid and clearly defined criteria. • Evaluations are aligned with the educational improvement plan and designed to achieve ongoing progress and growth in teacher practice. • The evaluation program and activities align to other district and charter school teacher evaluation practices and measures. • Summative evaluators are qualified and trained to perform summative evaluations every three years. • Peer review occurs in years without summative evaluation by trained peers. • An individual growth and development plan is included in the evaluation process that focuses on student and teacher growth. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All components of the evaluation program aligns with Minnesota’s Teacher Development and Evaluation statute and other related state and federal requirements. • Annual differentiated training for new and returning teachers includes the teacher evaluation process, the use of the scoring rubric, and activities to help define high-quality instruction. • All eligible teachers (licensed staff members) participate multiple classroom observations by at least two different trained observers. • Each formal evaluation cycle includes a pre-observation conference, observation and post-observation conference with conferences occurring within two weeks of each observation. • A locally selected team of evaluators and peer reviewers is highly qualified and trained to conduct observations and provide support. • Coaching and other forms of support are provided to promote teacher growth. • Written feedback, including comments and areas for further coaching, is provided after each evaluation that allows teachers to track growth and progression toward attaining performance standards. • Teachers receive ongoing formative feedback on practice, student growth, student engagement, and specific goals named in their individual growth and development plan each year. • At least sixteen hours of training for new evaluators and peer reviewers, is provided that covers the process for conducting evaluations by examining rubrics and forms, evidence gathering techniques, and methods of coaching and |

| Unacceptable Practices | Practices Required by Statute | Recommended Best Practices |
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| | | <p>providing feedback.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least eight hours of annual training for all evaluators and peer reviewers occurs annually and includes one or more high-quality, inter-rater reliability activities. • Evaluators and peer reviewers are required to demonstrate inter-rater reliability on an ongoing basis. • The rubric for teacher evaluations aligns with state standards of effective practice for teachers and includes three or more performance levels that are clearly defined. |

Core Component: Performance Pay and Alternative Salary Schedule

Statute

122A.414 Subd. 2(b) The alternative teacher professional pay system agreement must:

- (3) reform the “steps and lanes” salary schedule, prevent any teacher’s compensation paid before implementing the pay system from being reduced as a result of participating in this system, base at least 60 percent of any compensation increase on teacher performance using:
 - (i) schoolwide student achievement gains under section 120B.35 or locally selected standardized assessment outcomes, or both;
 - (ii) measures of student growth and literacy that may include value-added models or student learning goals, consistent with section 122A.40, subdivision 8, clause (9), or 122A.41, subdivision 5, clause (9), and other measures that include the academic literacy, oral academic language, and achievement of English learners under section 122A.40, subdivision 8, clause (10), or 122A.41, subdivision 5, clause (10); and
 - (iii) an objective evaluation program under section 122A.40, subdivision 8, paragraph (b), clause (2), or 122A.41, subdivision 5, paragraph (b), clause (2)...

122A.40 Subd. 8(b) To develop, improve, and support qualified teachers and effective teaching practices and improve student learning and success, the annual evaluation process for teachers:

- (2) must establish a three-year professional review cycle for each teacher that includes an individual growth and development plan, a peer review process, and at least one summative evaluation performed by a qualified and trained evaluator such as a school administrator. For the years when a tenured teacher is not evaluated by a qualified and trained evaluator, the teacher must be evaluated by a peer review;
- (9) must use data from valid and reliable assessments aligned to state and local academic standards and must use state and local measures of student growth and literacy that may include value-added models or student learning goals to determine 35 percent of teacher evaluation results;
- (10) must use longitudinal data on student engagement and connection, and other student outcome measures explicitly aligned with the elements of curriculum for which teachers are responsible, including academic literacy, oral academic language, and achievement of content areas of English Learners...

122A.41 Subd 5(b) To develop, improve, and support qualified teachers and effective teaching practices and improve student learning and success, the annual evaluation process for teachers:

- (2) must establish a three-year professional review cycle for each teacher that includes an individual growth and development plan, a peer review process, and at least one summative evaluation performed by a qualified and trained evaluator such as a school administrator;
- (9) must use data from valid and reliable assessments aligned to state and local academic standards and must use state and local measures of student growth and literacy that may include value-added models or student learning goals to determine 35 percent of teacher evaluation results;

(10) must use longitudinal data on student engagement and connection and other student outcome measures explicitly aligned with the elements of curriculum for which teachers are responsible, including academic literacy, oral academic language, and achievement of English learners;

| Unacceptable Practices | Practices Required by Statute | Recommended Best Practices |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher compensation is reformed in only one or two of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The steps and lanes salary schedule, or the base salary improvement system, is revised to link performance to increased compensation. ○ No teacher’s compensation is reduced. ○ At least 60 percent of a teacher’s increase in compensation must be based on the performance gains in three areas: (1) schoolwide student achievement on a standardized assessment, (2) measures of student growth and (3) teacher evaluation. • Movement on the steps and lanes salary schedule, or base salary improvement system, is based on continued service or a performance element other than one of the three requirements. • Teacher salary is reduced by the Q Comp program. • Less than 60 percent of a teacher’s increase in compensation is based on the performance gains in three areas: (1) schoolwide student achievement on a standardized assessment, (2) measures of student growth and (3) teacher evaluation. • The indicator for each required performance gain area is not linked to student or teacher results. • The measure of student achievement is teacher rather than student focused, more rigorous for some groups than for others, or difficult to measure. • The standard for teacher performance on | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher compensation is reformed to address all of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The steps and lanes salary schedule, or the base salary improvement system, is revised to link performance to increased compensation. ○ No teacher’s compensation is reduced. ○ At least 60 percent of a teacher’s increase in compensation must be based on the performance gains in three areas: (1) schoolwide student achievement on a standardized assessment, (2) measures of student growth and (3) teacher evaluation. • The schoolwide student achievement goal on a standardized assessment is measurable, and it can be clearly determined if the goals has been met and compensation is earned. • The measure of student growth is measureable and can be clearly determined if the standard of student performance has been met and compensation is earned. • The standard for teacher performance is clearly defined and can be measured through the evaluation program. There is a process in place to determine if a teacher has met the standard and earned compensation. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The salary schedule reform links movement in one direction (step movement) to performance gains in three areas: (1) schoolwide student achievement on a standardized assessment, (2) measures of student growth and (3) teacher evaluation. • Schoolwide goals assess rigorous annual gains and are written in specific/strategic, measurable, attainable, results-based and time-bound (SMART) format. • Schoolwide student achievement goals are consistent with goals set in the district strategic plan and other state or federal programs, such as world’s best workforce. • Schoolwide goals are written to compare year-to-year achievement of all students tests and include additional measures (e.g., closing achievement gaps, increasing performance levels for all students and student groups). • The measure of student growth is measured by a valid and reliable assessment, aligned to state standards. The growth goal may focus on student groups, classroom, grade level or building wide. A review and reporting process is used to ensure equity and rigor among all staff members and to determine if compensation has been earned for the measure of student growth goal or goals. • The standard of teacher performance is rigorous and demonstrates effective teaching. • Student growth and literacy data should be disaggregated for all student groups |

| Unacceptable Practices | Practices Required by Statute | Recommended Best Practices |
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| evaluations is subjective and applied inconsistent. | | including English Learners. |

Statutory Terms of Reference

Academic Literacy: for English learners in Minnesota, development of English language proficiency in the areas of reading, writing, speaking and listening concurrently with academic language to succeed in school in all content areas. In Minnesota's English language development framework, the features of academic language are linguistic complexity, language forms and conventions, and vocabulary usage.

Additional Compensation: teacher leader compensation, such as stipends, release time, additional contract days and salary increases, for additional leadership responsibilities

Assessment: formal and informal measures of student learning that provide information about performance and progress over time

Compensation increase: all new money provided to teachers through movement on the salary schedule, one-time performance awards, or both

Continuous: occurs on a regular, defined basis; happens more than once per month, once per term, or once per year

Foster collaboration among principals and staff: principals and staff working together to identify student and staff needs in order to design and implement professional development

Integrated ongoing: occurs on a regular, defined basis; happening more than once per month, once per term, or once per year; and provides a focus for schoolwide and differentiated efforts to improve student achievement and teacher practice

Multiple criteria: teacher evaluations examine many facets of practice using a variety of measurements

Objective evaluation program: teacher evaluations using a set of criteria that is fair, measurable, and evidence-based standards aligned to the state standards of effective practice for teachers to comprehensively assess individual performance over time

Oral Academic Language: for English learners in Minnesota, development of English language proficiency in the area of oral academic skills in all content areas. In Minnesota's English language development framework, the features of academic language are linguistic complexity, language forms and conventions, and vocabulary usage. Jeff Zwiers and Marie Crawford (2011) have identified five key oral academic skills as:

1. Elaborate and clarify;
2. Support ideas with examples;
3. Build on and/or respectfully challenge a partner's ideas;
4. Paraphrase; and
5. Synthesize conversation points

Over time: occurs on a regular, defined basis; happens more than once per month, once per term, or once per year

Peer Reviewer: qualified and trained peers that provide evaluations for colleagues in years when there is not a summative evaluation

Periodically trained evaluators: select individuals who receive sufficient, ongoing training to conduct valid and reliable evaluations

Reform steps and lanes: connecting increases in teacher compensation to one or more of the performance gains in the following areas: (1) schoolwide student achievement on a standardized assessment, (2) measures of student achievement and (3) teacher evaluation

Research-based strategies: teaching practices and methods used to engage students in acquiring or extending knowledge or understanding. They are designed to intentionally move all students toward clearly defined learning goals and standards and may involve any or all learning experiences provided in an educational setting. The specific instructional strategies should be scientifically research-based with proven results in improving student academic achievement, translatable to a wide variety of content areas, and selected based on student achievement trend data and needs. They must be rooted in current research and knowledge of learning processes, learners and content

Retain primary roles in student instruction: teacher leaders who maintain their role with students while assuming leadership responsibilities or have a set term length with a return to the licensed role after the term limit

Rigorous: clear, high and increasing standards; additional work or effort may be necessary to meet the expectation

School day: the teacher-contract day, which may or may not be limited to the student-contact day

Schoolwide student achievement gains: an increase in academic performance set by one or more schoolwide goals comparing results from one year to the next as measured by Minnesota accountability tests or another standardized assessment

Site-based professional development activities: individual, team or schoolwide learning opportunities (through coaching, observation, mentoring and other collaborative learning activities) that teacher leaders facilitate focused on instructional strategies, techniques and practices to improve the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of instruction

Site-focused professional development: professional development focused around the needs of the students and licensed staff members at the school and provided on an individual, team or schoolwide basis

Standardized assessment: an assessment with these elements:

- constructed from a pool of items which were field-tested with an appropriate sample using a specific norm- referenced or criterion-referenced test design defined for the given population
- administered with specific structured procedures and instructions given to the test-taker by the test administrator or read by the test-taker
- test results that allow comparison of data from large numbers of students or subgroups of students
- standardized scores that allow comparison of student performance from year to year
- performance standards determined by a formalized process for either a norm-referenced or criterion- referenced interpretation of results

Summative Evaluators: qualified and trained individuals such as school administrators who provide summative evaluation for all teachers at least once every three years

Teacher: all licensed staff members included in the bargaining unit or directly employed by a charter school

Trained teacher leaders: licensed staff members who assume teacher leader (career ladder) roles and have the skills or receive training to ensure they have the skills necessary to perform the job responsibilities