Minnesota Department of
Education

Q Comp Model Plan
For Rural Districts

Q Comp Planning Process

Please note for the purposes of this document:

- "District" is defined collectively as exclusive representative of the teachers/licensed staff, management and the school board members.
- All eligible entities (schools, school districts, intermediates and charter schools) will be referred to as "district."
- "Site" is defined as any organizational unit in a district for which student enrollment data is reported in MARSS and staff data is reported in STAR.
- The term "teacher leader" will be used to refer to all positions outlined under Component 1: Career Ladder/Advancement Options for teachers in the district approval letter or plan change approval letters.
- The term "instructional level" is used to refer to elementary, middle school, high school and other sites such as alternative learning centers, early childhood and adult education.
- "Licensed staff" and "teacher" refer to all licensed staff members who are part of the teacher bargaining unit.
- "Licensed staff specialist" is defined as noninstructional staff such as counselors, nurses, school psychologists, and social workers who are part of the teacher bargaining unit.
- "Learning team" refers to a teacher learning team or professional learning community (PLC) (e.g., grade level teams, department teams) that meets regularly for professional development.

For questions or assistance, please contact mde.q-comp@state.mn.us.

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How to Use this Model Plan

The purpose of this Model Plan is to provide rural districts with examples of how other rural districts with similar population and organizational characteristics have structured their Q Comp plans. The examples provided are designed to promote discussion and generate ideas that will work in individual districts depending on their structures and their responses to the consideration questions included for each component.

This Model Plan can be used by districts at various stages of the Q Comp program planning process. For districts that are in the early stages of planning or are still investigating if Q Comp is a good fit, it is recommended that the planning team begin by going through the steps outlined in the Planning Process section. This outline is designed to help districts identify which components are already in place in the district and what resources are available on which to build the final Q Comp plan.

If a district has gone through the identification process or if a district is already in the plan development stages but is struggling with how best to address a specific component, it should use the individual component sections, designed to encourage responses to questions and offer examples to help show how others have addressed the issues. Districts can then generate their own models to meet their needs and the expectations of the program.

The Model Plan is designed to work in conjunction with the Q Comp Guidelines document, which outlines in detail all of the application requirements and expectations. This resource is available on the Application section of the Q Comp page of the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) website.

The examples included in this Model Plan come from a range of rural districts currently implementing Q Comp. These districts range in size from 300 students to 5,000 students, from 30 teachers to 150 teachers and from being located all in one building to being spread across a large geographic area.

Where does a district begin?

The Q Comp program is a school reform model that is designed to improve the instructional skills of teachers and increase student academic achievement. An effective Q Comp plan is one that aligns with the other school improvement efforts in the district and becomes a natural part of day-to-day operations. In order to develop a plan that will be effective and meets the needs of the district, it is recommended that districts begin by using the following outline to explore the structures, processes and initiatives already in place in the district and identify the needs of teachers and students that may still exist.

Once existing structures and needs are identified, each district should begin developing a Q Comp plan using the Q Comp Application, the Q Comp Application Guidelines and other resources referenced on the Q Comp web page. It is recommended to begin the process by identifying the total available funding. After that, it has proven most efficient to plan and know the structure of Components 2 and 3 before planning Component 1 so it is clear what teacher leader positions are needed. Components 4 and 5 are best designed last.

Step 1: General Needs Assessment

Questions to consider before beginning the application
The following outline is offered as a guide to help districts explore what is already in place and identify what needs exist.

❖ Outline your district structure.

  ➢ Contract time or student day.

    ▪ What is your daily schedule structure?

      • What is the time frame of the student-contact day and the teacher-contract day?

    ▪ What contractual flexibility do you have in the contract day?

  ➢ Staff development, initiatives, and other programs already in place.

    ▪ What are the district initiatives, funding sources and programs to think about?

    ▪ Which initiatives require goals?

      • Which are focused on increasing student achievement?

      • Which are focused on improving teacher quality?

    ▪ Does professional development align with current district and building curriculum and initiatives?

    ▪ How are you going to align all initiatives with the Q Comp program?

    ▪ What initiatives or programs are working well and could be enhanced?

    ▪ What initiatives or programs are not working that could be replaced or improved?

  ➢ Curriculum.

    ▪ What content areas of the curriculum have been mapped?

    ▪ Do teachers have a curricular framework to follow?

    ▪ Are teachers aware of the curriculum (standards) that are covered in other courses and grade levels?

    ▪ What is the greatest need for teachers in the area of curriculum alignment?

      • Do these needs align with the district staff development plan?

  ➢ Teacher Evaluation/observation.

    ▪ What system is in place for teacher evaluation/observation?

      • For whom is the current teacher evaluation/observation system used?

      • Who is responsible for conducting teacher evaluations/observations under the current system?

- What tools or resources are available for training evaluators/observers and ensuring inter-rater reliability?

  ➢ Mentoring.

  - What are the greatest needs for tenured and probationary teachers?

  ➢ Resources.

  - What is the availability of resources?

  - How can technology be used to a greater degree in the professional development program or to meet training needs?

  ➢ Team composition.

  - What team structures are already in place within the district?

    • Grade level teams?

    • Vertical content teams?

    • Department or Content teams?

    • Specialist teams?

    • Interdisciplinary teams?

  - Which teachers should meet to collaborate in order to best improve instruction and student achievement?

  - How does the district handle meetings and collaboration between remote sites (if any exist)?

  ➢ Teacher leaders.

  - What existing roles and responsibilities are already in place in the district?

  - What type of teacher leader positions are needed in the district?

  - What has already been discussed about job-embedded professional development, observations, and mentoring?

❖ Identify student needs.

  ➢ Analysis of student data.

  - What standardized assessments are used by the district?

    • Which sites use the MCA, and which have only grades that are not tested?

    • Are there other standardized assessments used?

  - What district-created assessments are used?

  - What formative assessment process is in place to monitor student growth over time?

  - What are areas of strength regarding student achievement?

- What are areas for growth regarding student achievement?

- What is the greatest need for students in terms of academic achievement?

➢ Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)

- Are all school sites and the district making AYP?

- If not, what are the district or school AYP needs?

❖ Consider other issues.

➢ Teachers.

- What needs do teachers have that will help them to improve instruction and increase student achievement?

- Are all the needs that teachers have for improving instruction met through the initiatives and staff development?

  - What needs are already being met?

  - What needs still need to be met?

    - How might Q Comp meet the identified needs?

➢ Q Comp Readiness.

- What is already in place in the district that would align with a Q Comp plan?

- What process for goal setting (and goal achievement) is already in place?

- What are other sources of funding that align with a Q Comp plan and can be used to complement a plan?

- Which Q Comp application deadline is the district going to use? When do you want to implement and when do you want to submit?

- The approval letter is a binding contract with the commissioner. Are you willing to commit to this?

- Is this doable for your district?

➢ School-specific programming or needs.

- Are any of the schools in the district identified as Priority or Focus Schools under the new waiver system?

  - If so, how will a Q Comp plan align with the improvement plans being implemented under these designations?

- Are there any other school-specific initiatives in place to improve instruction or increase student achievement?

  - If so, what are they and how might a Q Comp plan align with them?

Step 2: Job-embedded Professional Development

Questions to consider for Component 2 of the application
These questions are provided only as a guide to aid districts in developing their own plans based on the most common existing structures.

- ❖ What student achievement goals are already in place at the district and site levels?

  - ➢ Educational Improvement Plan (EIP) or strategic plan goals?

  - ➢ District or School Improvement Plan goals?

  - ➢ Other student achievement goals?

- ❖ What standardized assessments are used at each site?

- ❖ What time is available during the teacher-contract day for teachers to meet together in learning teams focused on professional development?

- ❖ What configuration of teachers is most reasonable for each site and for the needs of the teachers?

  - ➢ Are there several teachers who teach the same grade level or subject area?

  - ➢ Will licensed staff specialists (such as counselors and nurses) be included in the teams or make up a team of their own?

- ❖ What professional development do teachers need in order to improve instruction and help students meet the goal(s) on the standardized assessment(s)?

- ❖ What teacher leader positions will be necessary to implement the learning teams and other job-embedded professional development activities?

- ❖ What costs are associated with the implementation of this component?

Examples:
The examples provided are designed to promote discussion and the generation of ideas of what will work in each district depending on the structures in place and the responses to the consideration questions included for each component.

Teams: Who, What and When:
   A. Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) will be divided into three grade bands: kindergarten and first grade, second and third grade and fourth through sixth grade. Specialists will be divided so there is one on each PLC. These PLCs will meet every two weeks for 90 minutes in a rotating schedule with staff meetings. Teachers will also work with their team leader to design, implement, and reflect on their professional goal and their achievement of that goal through the completion of a professional growth plan. Final determinations regarding the professional growth plan achievement and the earning of performance pay related to plan achievement will be measured by the team leaders, building instructional leader or the school director using the plan itself as a guide.

   B. A total of 10 FTE teacher instructional coaches throughout the district will facilitate professional development teams of 3-10 grade level or department teachers to meet for a minimum of 50

minutes per week embedded during the teacher employment contract day. The teams will also have five late-start and early-release days for additional meetings. These meetings will include the professional development activities regarding modeling instructional strategies, demonstration teaching, team teaching, mentoring, lesson study, analysis of student work, peer or cognitive coaching and content coaching. Learning Teams will cover these topics:

- Review and refine the instruction of math vocabulary used in NWEA and the MCA.
- Review, share and refine instructional strategies for math, especially in the area of computation and number sense.
- Develop appropriate resources and supplemental materials for math instruction, especially in the area of computation and number sense.
- Review assessment data and its implications and applications to instructional planning and delivery (NWEA, MCA, CBM, and classroom assessments)

C. Teachers will be placed in teams by grade level. Teams will choose one strategy from math materials to implement during the year. Team members will be responsible for leading a ½ hour round-table discussion with a vertical team. A vertical team is made up of content-similar teachers districtwide. Time will be set aside for grade level and vertical teams to discuss and plan for implementation of the monthly differentiation strategy. Teams meet at these times:

- Weekly grade level team planning.
- Half-day substitute coverage in October and January.
- Staff development meetings (third Tuesday mornings monthly from 7:30–8:15 a.m.).
- Vertical teams may meet via Web meeting and conference call.

Finding the Time:
A. Teams meet monthly during late-start days (or early-release) to create a three-hour (180 minutes) block of time. Teams will focus on improving instruction, examining student work and analyzing data for 150 minutes of the time on these days. Administrative tasks are the focus for the remaining 30 minutes. In addition, learning teams meet weekly for 30 minutes either after school or during prep time.

B. Grade level PLCs meet every other week before or after school for 50 minutes. In addition, teachers meet in department PLCs every other week for 50 minutes during common planning or prep time.

C. Cross-curricular learning teams meet weekly for 50 minutes each week. In addition whole staff professional development occurs on staff development days and at the twice monthly staff meetings.

Overall Job-embedded Professional Development:
A. There are three primary elements tying the district job-embedded professional development plan together. These elements apply to all schools in the district.

- The district establishes the Framework for Effective Teaching, based on the best practice model of Charlotte Danielson. Teachers develop a professional growth plan aligned with chosen elements within the domains of this model. Trained colleagues and supervisors evaluate and coach teachers in those elements leading to continued professional growth.

- Sites develop site-specific, content-based strategies aligned with the building academic achievement goal. Introduction and training on those strategies are provided through the district and building staff development program. Trained teacher leaders, supervisors, and content area experts provide teaching and modeling.
- Sites establish a PLC team model to ensure integrated and ongoing dialogue and the implementation of instructional strategies aligned with each teacher's professional growth plan and building goals.

B. Staff development is led at the building level by PLC facilitators who meet with groups of approximately 10 teachers. The district uses a train-the-trainer model whereby the district leaders research best practice and then provide training to the PLC facilitators. They are brought together for three full days of training prior to the start of the school year and a full day of training prior to each late-start date. They go back to their respective sites and provide training on late-start days (5 late start days of 2 hours each) to teachers in their respective learning communities. There will also be 12 professional days. Between late-start days and professional days, they are meeting with small groups on a weekly basis for about 30-40 minutes each occurring during prep time or before or after school. They may use the services of the district substitute teacher team when assigned to their building to pull teachers together during the instructional day.

C. A typical, weekly group PLC meeting that occurs in between late starts will likely include the following:
- Review instructional goals of members of the group.
- Review relevant student work.
- Discuss strategies that worked and those that need refinement.
- Develop an action plan based on collected data.
- Implement action plan and report back.
- Practice the skills gained with each other before the next evaluation.

Step 3: Teacher Observation/Evaluation

Questions to consider for Component 3 of the application
These questions are provided only as a guide to aid districts in developing their own plans based on the most common existing structures.

- ❖ What observation/evaluation system is currently in place for tenured and probationary teachers?

- ❖ What rubric and forms are used in the current teacher observation/evaluation process?

- ❖ How does the teacher observation/evaluation program align with the site professional development plan?

- ❖ What standard of performance are teachers going to be expected to demonstrate through the observation/evaluation process?

  - ➤ At what point will teachers be expected to demonstrate this standard annually?

  - ➤ How will it be determined if a teacher has demonstrated the necessary standard?

- ❖ What training or resources will be needed to implement the system and ensure equity and transparency in the process?

- ❖ What teacher leader positions will be necessary to implement the observation/evaluation process?

  - ➤ How will these teacher leaders have time to conduct conferences and observations?

  - ➤ What kind of training will they need?

    - ▪ How will the training be provided?

- ❖ What costs are associated with the implementation of this component?

Examples:
The examples provided are designed to promote discussion and the generation of ideas of what will work in each district depending on the structures in place and the responses to the consideration questions included for each component.

Observation/Evaluation Team:
A. Licensed staff members will participate in three observations per year performed by Peer Collaborative Coaches or administrators.

B. All teachers will be observed twice by their Team Leader and once by an administrator. On each of these three observations, which will include a pre- and post-observation conference, teachers must demonstrate an overall rating of Proficient in order to earn performance pay.

C. The team that observers each licensed staff member will consist of the Elementary or Secondary Leader and the building principal. The Elementary or Secondary Leader will conduct two observations for each tenured teacher individually and will conduct one observation for each tenured teacher with an administrator.

Training to Ensure Inter-rater Reliability:
  A. The leaders responsible for teacher observation will all be trained during a full-day session using the Charlotte Danielson's Framework for Effective Teaching. Additionally, practice observations will take place followed by thorough discussions of ratings given with rationale. As the observations are completed, the administration and the leaders will meet to discuss the ratings given, and this meeting will compare discrepancies and alignments. Inter-rater reliability training will be an ongoing process throughout the year including training, videos, and practice observations. This will occur once during the fall workshop, once during first quarter, once during second quarter, and twice during third quarter.

  B. In order to ensure that the process is transparent, all teachers and administrators will attend a one-day training provided by Charlotte Danielson regarding her evaluation system. In addition, inter-rater reliability will be ensured by the following methods:
      - Team Leaders will practice teacher observations as part of their extended-day contract.
      - Refresher or follow-up training will be held periodically using the district Framework for Effective Teaching Assessment Rubric.
      - Team Leaders and administrators will work together to ensure that they are compatible in the rating of teachers.
      - Teachers will have the option of an additional observation with a different observer if inter-rater reliability is questioned.

  C. To ensure inter-rater reliability is maintained and the scoring process is valid, all observers will receive training that includes having the observers view and score videos of classroom teachers instructing students. The scored results will be compared and discussed to ensure consistency among teacher observers. Training will be ongoing to enable coaches to refine their coaching skills and to maintain consistency among coaches.

Reflection and Coaching:
  A. A teacher whose performance is judged below the district standard (Proficient) will be referred to the teacher assistance track until performance is brought up to standard. Teachers placed on the teacher assistance track will receive individual coaching and support from a trained teacher coach to help them improve their performance. The individual coaching methods will be used such as having the teacher coach model a specific form of instruction or having the teacher observe another staff member who excels in the area needing improvement.

  B. Teachers will be asked to complete a self-evaluation each time they are observed. Information from the teacher self-evaluation will be used at the post-observation conference. Following the observation, the teacher will engage in conversations with the observer, which will promote authentic professional examination of teaching practices in an atmosphere of mutual support, trust and continuous learning and improvement. The self-evaluation process will promote dialogue in conferencing and inform the formative evaluation process.

  Evaluators will discuss areas of growth identified on the rubric through pre- and post-observation conferences with staff. This information, along with the teacher self-assessment, review of student data and input from the PDP team regarding growth, will be used by evaluators as they come to a consensus regarding areas of strength and areas for growth to be reflected in the summative report.

A teacher whose performance is found to be below Proficient will be referred to the Peer Assistance and Review Team. An assigned member of that team will coach the teacher and provide resources to help the teacher grow as a professional and meet the required standard.

C. Three evaluation cycles will be completed throughout the school year. The first evaluation will be completed by the end of October, the second will be completed by the end of January and the final one will occur by the end of May. At least 1 ½ months will separate each evaluation cycle, allowing adequate time for coaching.

Within three days after the evaluation, the teacher observed and the Teacher Leader who conducted the observation will meet for a post-observation conference. This conference will give the teacher and the observer the opportunity to discuss the observation and rubric. Both the teacher and observer will identify strengths and areas needing improvement and will collaborate to write goals for areas of growth.

The Teacher Leader will provide the teacher with ideas, resources and coaching as appropriate to help the teacher address areas needing improvement so performance in these areas shows growth over subsequent observations.

Step 4: Career Ladder/Advancement Options for Teachers

Questions to consider for Component 1 of the application
These questions are provided only as a guide to aid districts in developing their own plans based on the most common existing structures.

- ❖ What teacher leader position positions are already in place in the district?

  - ➢ What role do these positions play in coaching teachers to improve instructional skills and increase student achievement?

- ❖ What teacher leader position is required to facilitate the job-embedded professional development system?

- ❖ What teacher leader position is needed to conduct the teacher observation/evaluation process?

- ❖ What release time will be provided to teachers filling the teacher leader positions?

  - ➢ How will release time be provided?

    - ▪ Will release time be provided on a daily or weekly basis through a partial contract?

    - ▪ Will release time be provided as needed through substitute teacher coverage?

      - • What is the maximum amount of coverage that can be provided in this manner?

    - ▪ If release time isn't being provided, how will teacher leaders with responsibilities for conducting observations/evaluations or coaching have time to complete their responsibilities?

  - ➢ What time commitment will each position be required to fulfill?

    - ▪ What is a reasonable compensation for this time given your budget and outside requirements of teachers?

  - ➢ What costs are associated with the implementation of this component?

Examples:
The examples provided are designed to promote discussion and the generation of ideas of what will work in each district depending on the structures in place and the responses to the consideration questions included for each component.

Teacher Leader Position Job Descriptions and Approximate Ratios:
A. *Q Comp Teacher Leader (.5)*
   Job description: The Q Comp Teacher Leader is the general coordinator of the Q Comp program.
   Ratio: A total of one for the entire district.

B. *Professional Learning Community Building Lead*
   Job Description: The Professional Learning Community (PLC) Building Lead is a person with advanced knowledge and expertise in PLCs, who will act as a PLC Team Leader and provide leadership, support and assistance to the other Team Leaders.
   Ratio: A total of one per building.

C. *Peer Coach*
   Job Description: The Peer Coach will provide peer evaluation and feedback to each teacher. The Peer Coach will schedule pre- and post-observation conferences and will provide each teacher with a written report regarding observations, portfolio information, data and other evidence.
   Ratio: One for approximately every 22 licensed staff members.

D. *Mentor*
   Job Description: Mentors will be responsible for the personal and professional induction of new staff into the district and the profession. Mentors will support and coach new teachers as they transition into the district system and work toward tenure. This position requires a three-year commitment, with training occurring in year one.
   Ratio: One Mentor for every new licensed staff member.

Hiring Processes for Teacher Leader Positions:

A. **Hiring Process:**
   - The job vacancy will be posted in the staff lounge and emailed to all staff.
   - Interested teachers will submit an application to the hiring committee made up of Q Comp committee members and led by the director of learning and accountability. They will review the applications and interview qualified candidates.
   - The hiring committee will recommend candidates to the superintendent who will make the final hiring decision.

B. **Hiring Process:**
   - Position will be posted via email to all staff.
   - Interested teachers will submit applications to the hiring committee consisting of the Q Comp coordinator; the director of learning and accountability; and the principal at the building where the teacher leader will reside.
   - The hiring committee will review applications, conduct interviews with qualified candidates and make the final hiring decision.

C. **Hiring Process:**
   - Positions will be posted within the district.
     - Postings will include the qualifications and requirements of the position.
   - Interested applicants will apply to the superintendent and union president using the Q Comp Application form.
   - Qualified applicant names will be forwarded to the Q Comp Council members, who will be responsible for interviewing candidates and making a hiring recommendation.
     - In event that a Q Comp Council member has applied for the position, the selected alternate will serve on the Q Comp Council during the interview.
   - The superintendent and union president will make the final hiring decision.

Evaluation of Teacher Leader Positions in the Leadership Role:

A. **Evaluation:**
- Each teacher leader is evaluated by the building principals twice per year with input from Q Comp Teacher Leader and the PLC team leads in their respective building using a position-specific rubric.
    - o The Q Comp Coordination Committee will support this process.
- The teacher leader must demonstrate an average score of Proficient or higher in each rubric element in order earn the position salary augmentation and retain the position for the following year.

B. **Evaluation:**
- Teacher leaders are evaluated by their supervisors once per year using a position-specific rubric and survey with input from the Q Comp Teacher Leader and all teachers with whom they are assigned to work.
    - o The Q Comp Oversight Committee will support this process.
- The teacher leader must demonstrate proficiency in each rubric element to earn the salary augmentation for the position.

C. **Evaluation:**
- The evaluation will be done twice per year, via Survey Monkey, by the staff with whom they work.
    - o The Q Comp Council will receive and review the data from the survey given twice per year.
    - o The Q Comp Council will share the evaluation data with the teacher leader during a meeting at an appropriate time.
    - o Each teacher leader will also have time for personal reflection of their practices on their evaluation.
- If a teacher leader is found not fulfilling the duties for the positions, as determined by the Q Comp Council, and no reasonable solution can be reached, the position will be reopened, and the outgoing leader will receive a prorated salary augmentation.

Step 5: Performance Pay

Considerations for Component 4 of the application
The Performance Pay requirements are outlined in the Q Comp Application Guidelines. The main variation between plans is the amount of compensation that is tied to each requirement.

Step 6: Alternative Salary Schedule

Considerations for Component 5 of the application
The Alternative Salary Schedule requirements are outlined in the Q Comp Application Guidelines. The main variation between plans is what performance indicator(s) must be met to advance vertically on the salary schedule.

Step 7: Budget

Considerations for the budget portion of the application
The budget should align with the teacher leader costs, training and resource costs, and performance pay amounts identified in steps 2-5. Be sure to include benefits and the Teachers Retirement Association/Federal Insurance Contributions Act (TRA/FICA) costs within the calculations and explain any training or resource expenditures. Performance Pay costs should be calculated under the assumption that all teachers will earn the full amount of available pay.