Q Comp Annual Report

This template, which may be changed as needed, is designed to help formulate the Quality Compensation (Q Comp) Annual Report. Per Minnesota Statutes, section 122A.414, subdivision 3(a) the report must be submitted to the school board by June 15 of each year and include findings and recommendations for the program. We also recommend that the report include a summary of what was implemented for the year, to help provide context for the findings and recommendations.

Please address the following questions for each program component describing the implementation of the approved plan, the impact of implementation, findings from the program review and recommendations to improve program effectiveness. All information reported should be based on the current school year. We recommend that each question be addressed with a brief summary of 3-7 sentences.

Core Component: Career Advancement Options

Implementation

Are the teacher leader positions that were implemented this year the same as those outlined in the approved plan (approval letter and subsequent plan change approval letters)? Yes.

- If no, please explain what changes have occurred and why?

Impact

How did the work of teacher leaders through coaching, observing, mentoring, facilitating learning teams and performing other responsibilities impact classroom instruction?

This year we had three new elementary teachers at Minnesota New Country School (MNCS). Through observation and coaching, we were able to help them acclimate to the culture of learning MNCS and facilitate teacher-led project-based instruction. For example, our 2nd and 3rd grade teacher worked with students to create a play to perform in our community. They collaborated with students on writing a script, designed and constructed props for the stage, and located and practiced the music that served as the soundtrack for the play. It was a massive undertaking and one that students took a great deal of pride in. When all the rehearsals had been finished and prep work completed, they performed the play at a community venue in front of 250 community members. This was a powerful learning experience and the sort of project-based work we encourage as teacher leaders.

The Minnesota New Country School is a teacher-led learning community. That means we run our school cooperatively and democratically, through various committees and professional development teams. As learning team facilitators, part of our work involves working with these teams to be thoughtful about the goals we set each fall. For instance, this year we knew we wanted to build our site based goal around reading comprehension. This meant working with our Reading Team to evaluate data and develop a robust, yet achievable, goal for our elementary, as well as our secondary. Of course, setting a goal is only the beginning of
the process. At our secondary school, we set aside 45 minutes each day for quiet reading. To achieve our goal, which we did at our secondary for the first time in several years, we connected with students in the fall to help them locate the right books for their year. With some students, we encouraged them to participate in structured literature circles to improve their reading comprehension.

**How did the work of teacher leaders impact student achievement?**

At the secondary school, our goal was to move from 48% (in the spring of 2017) to 53% (in the spring of 2018) of students meeting their projected RIT growth on their NWEA Reading test. We exceeded that goal, with 55% of students meeting their target RIT growth. While our elementary did not meet their goal of having 50% of their students meet their target RIT growth on their Reading NWEA, they did make gains toward their goal, with 46% of students meeting their target RIT (up from 44%).

**Review Findings**

**How did the training teacher leaders received impact their ability to fulfill the responsibilities of the position and meet the needs of the licensed staff members?**

One valuable thing we did this year was continue our site review process with EdVisions Off Campus (EOC). Our video conference with the teacher leaders at EOC caused us to rethink our observation cycle. In turn, we will be amending our original observation process (via our Q Comp plan) as we transition into next year. This will allow us to adjust our timeline so that we can complete the performance pay rubric earlier in the spring.

**What did the results of the evaluations of the teacher leaders in their leadership roles demonstrate about the impact they had on the effectiveness of the licensed staff members?**

We need to continue to clarify our roles with other site based teams to ensure that we are not overlapping in duties and responsibilities. For example, this year we identified there was not a clear process in place for pursuing a professional development opportunity. In response, we created an electronic template staff are able to submit for the opportunities they wish to engage with. This has streamlined our process, added clarity for staff, and helped us maintain a better budget for professional development.

**Recommendations**

**How will the district use the review findings to improve the effectiveness of teacher leadership?**

As we have become a bigger district over the past five years, we now have specialists employed in areas of technology, mental health, and Title I. It has become clear we need to have more individualized performance pay rubrics to accommodate for the roles of their job descriptions. In turn, this summer we will be reviewing and revising our performance pay rubrics.

**Core Component: Job-embedded Professional Development**

**Implementation**
Are learning teams configured and meeting as outlined in the approved plan (approval letter and subsequent plan change approval letters)? Yes.

- If no, please explain the changes that have occurred and why?

**Impact**

*How did teacher learning from learning teams and other job-embedded professional development activities impact classroom instruction?*

One of our professional development teams at MNCS is dedicated to learning about project-based learning (PBL). When the team met in the fall, they identified a need to take a deeper dive into learning about what PBL can look like at the elementary level. In turn, we conducted research and located a book by Dayna Laur and Jill Ackers called *Developing Natural Curiosity through Project-Based Learning: Five Strategies for the PreK-3 Classroom*. We launched a book group and unpacked how ideas presented by Laur and Ackers might be applied to our project work at MNCS. This book caused elementary members of the group to rethink how to design and implement a PBL curriculum.

Our school social worker braved a blizzard to attend the Minnesota School Social Workers Conference in Duluth this winter. One activity they happened upon at the conference had to do with identifying the strength of the relationships between staff and students. At our staff retreat in May, she incorporated this activity so that we could better visualize our community connections. Through this, we were able to notice students with many positive community relationships with adults, as well as students who may be in need of more relationship building opportunities.

*How did teacher learning from learning teams and other job-embedded professional development impact student achievement?*

Students need to feel like they belong in a community before they can be successful learners in that community. The activity previously mentioned helped staff recognize students who could have stronger relationships within our learning community. Through this recognition, we have been able to develop school-based and extra-curricular strategies to further involve students in our community.

**Review Findings**

*How did the sites or learning teams identify needs and instructional strategies to increase student achievement?*

We located the right resources to help us access ideas for strengthening our PBL curriculum at the elementary, as well as improve the quality of staff and student relationships throughout our district.

*How did learning teams use data and implement the selected instructional strategies and follow-up on implementation?*

We explored NWEA scores, credit and standard progress, DIBELS information, Hope Study, and school climate data (via Survey Monkey) to help us set goals for the year and determine the direction(s) we need to move as a district.
**Recommendations**

_How will the district use the review findings to improve the effectiveness of job-embedded professional development?_

The elementary will implement additional strategies to make math instruction more effective during their second year with Math Pathways. There is an opportunity for them to engage in additional phonics instruction. They are also planning to utilize a character education curriculum to create a common language norm for students and staff.

There has been an identified need for professional development teams at the secondary to attend trainings as a team in their respective content areas. For instance, our math team might attend a regional math conference or our reading team explore a literacy training.

**Core Component: Teacher Evaluation**

**Implementation**

Are licensed staff members observed/evaluated as outlined in the approved plan (approval letter and subsequent plan change approval letters)? Yes.

- If no, please explain the changes that have occurred and why?

**Impact**

*What impact did the observation/evaluation process, including coaching, have on classroom instruction?*

Our observation process and feedback loop allowed us to have meaningful conversations in the name of improving student learning. In one observation, a teacher leader brainstormed an opportunity for an advisor to streamline their review of fundamental skills in a lab setting by having a safety course as a prerequisite. This would allow students to be familiar with important safety procedures prior to entering a lab experience and enable the advisor to launch directly into their lab lesson.

*What impact did the observation/evaluation process, including coaching, have on student achievement?*

Sometimes making small adjustments can yield positive results. We found this to be true through our observation/evaluation process this year. For example, one post observation meet up led to analyzing the layout of a classroom and how it could be made more accommodating for a small group. When the teacher translated this into their practice, students were more focused and readily able to complete their learning objectives.
**Review Findings**

*How did the feedback teachers received from each observation/evaluation assist in self-reflection and improved instructional practice?*

Affirming the best practices of colleagues has become an important part of our observation process. Education can be an isolating field. Ascribing worth to the many things our colleagues do well can help them understand they are paddling in the right direction.

Observations of student engagement and student progress have led to referrals for students to receive additional support/services.

*How did the training observers/evaluators received throughout the year impact inter-rater reliability and their ability to provide constructive and meaningful feedback to all licensed staff members?*

We did not have any formal Q Comp training this year.

**Recommendations**

*How will the district use the review findings to improve the effectiveness of teacher evaluation?*

This summer we need to develop performance pay rubrics for our specialists. We also intend to re-align our observation process so that staff are being observed twice a year (instead of three times). Finally, we learned that we need to reframe our site based goal for reading next year. For example, some staff had students that missed their target RIT goal this year, but were still meeting or exceeding their grade level reading scores. Next year we will build a goal that includes students who maintain expected grade level outcomes.

**Core Component: Performance Pay and Alternative Salary Schedule**

**Implementation**

Are the performance pay amounts and standards the same as outlined in the approved plan (approval letter and subsequent plan change approval letters)? Yes.

- If no, please explain the changes that have occurred and why?
- Is salary schedule movement or base salary increase based on the same measure of performance as outlined in the approved plan (approval letter and subsequent plan change approval letters)?
- If no, please explain the changes that have occurred and why?
Impact

What percentage of all licensed staff met the standard to earn performance pay for the measures of student achievement? %57.1

What percentage of all licensed staff met the standard to earn performance pay for observation/evaluation results? %100

Is performance pay awarded for another area (besides schoolwide goals, measures of student achievement and observation/evaluation results)? Yes, projects.

If yes, what percentage of all licensed staff members met the standard to earn performance pay for this other area? %95

Recommendations

1. How will the district use the data to improve the effectiveness of this core component?
2. This summer the Q Comp team will be meeting to revise and improve our observation/evaluation rubrics, as well as design rubrics for our specialists.

General Program Impact and Recommendations

5. What overall impact on instruction has the district or charter school seen as a result of implementing the Q Comp program?
6. Sharpen the Saw is one of the 7 Habits of Highly Effective People, and we think it translates to organizations, as well. According to Stephen Covey, sharpening the saw means “preserving and enhancing the greatest assets you have.” At MNCS, the greatest asset we have is one another and the Q Comp team plays a role in keeping one another sharp. We do this by investing in each other and encouraging professional development through conferences, in-services, and through our observation/evaluation process.
7. The Q Comp program helps us make decisions that are data driven. Though quality relationships are integral to our community flourishing, it is also important for us to remain focused on what the data gives us. In turn, the objectivity provided via data helps us balance out some of the subjectivity that can move through the individualized nature of our community. Indeed, it is the data that helps us establish our academic goals for the year.
8. What overall impact on student achievement has the district or charter school seen as a result of implementing the Q Comp program?
9. At the secondary, we met our site based reading goal for the first time in three years. At the elementary, we narrowly missed our site based reading goal, but still had 87% of students increase their RIT scores. Important gains were made in the area of reading at MNCS this year, and we intend to continue that growth as we transition into the next school year.
17. How will the district use the review findings to improve the overall effectiveness of the program?

18. Every year we collect data is a year for us to analyze how we can collect better data and maximize the use of that data. Every year we set site based goals is a year for us to learn how we can establish more effective goals. We set an attainable site based goal this year (and met it at one of our sites), but it wasn't perfect, and we now have ideas of how we can improve our goal for next year. Reviewing our findings and gleaning wisdom from those findings is a crucial part of how we reach to achieve bigger and better things at Minnesota New Country School. As teacher leaders, we noticed many positive things at MNCS this year, and our resolve is as strong as ever that the best is yet to come.