



Guidance for Q Comp and Teacher Development and Evaluation

As Minnesota educators transition to distance learning for students, questions about teacher development and evaluation (TDE) and Q Comp requirements have been raised. MDE realizes this may not be your top priority in the coming weeks. Our intent with this resource is to provide broad guidance and answers to frequently asked questions for local districts and unions, so that in partnership, they can work together to ensure every child has access to the education they need and deserve through distance learning.

This document will be regularly updated as more information is learned and more questions are asked.

Updates and changes posted on 4/27/2020 are highlighted.

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General Guidance for TDE/Q Comp

- Because Q-Comp plans are locally negotiated, both TDE and Q Comp are collaboratively developed and implemented by school districts and the teachers' unions. When needed, a joint oversight team representing both district and union should be in place to provide rapid cycle problem solving during this period. We continue to encourage charter schools to form oversight teams that include teacher representation as well. When necessary, oversight teams should be empowered to modify local TDE/Q Comp plans for the duration of distance learning without the need to go to full membership or boards for approval. Most of the responses to the frequently asked questions in this document defer to local decision-making through the local oversight teams.
- The core of TDE and Q Comp are about supporting teachers to continuously improve instruction. Given the need to rapidly move to distance learning environments, you may need to consider how TDE and Q Comp oversight teams can leverage the professional learning systems and staff already in place to make this transition as smooth as possible.
 - In a distance learning plan, the first responsibility of teachers is to equitably provide direct support to their students in the best way possible.
 - Teacher leaders (e.g., peer coaches) may have new responsibilities focused on supporting the capacity of teachers to lead distance learning. Teacher leaders can provide school and district training, one-on-one and/or small group coaching, among other supports throughout this period.
 - Professional learning communities (PLCs) may not be meeting per usual and may be meeting differently (through distance technology such as Zoom or Google Hangout), and they now may be focusing more heavily on supporting teachers as they implement their distance teaching and learning plans.

- Teacher leaders and other teachers on special assignment may be called on to substitute for absent classroom teachers and support distance learning in other ways that do not reflect their normal position responsibilities.
- Though instruction will be delivered differently as part of distance learning plans, school and teacher leaders can support teachers and possibly can still facilitate conversations about instruction.
- Schools can leverage the experiences of school leaders who operate online learning environments. Colleagues from Connections Academy, Cyber Village, and TRIO Wolf Creek [shared some ideas for facilitating instructional feedback in a virtual learning environment](#). However, it is important to keep in mind that online learning is only one tool for distance learning, and not all distance learning plans will incorporate online learning.

Q Comp Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Do we need to submit a “plan change form” that reflects changes while districts are implementing distance learning plans?

A: No, districts and charters do not need to submit a plan change form to MDE to reflect temporary, short-term changes to their Q Comp plans during this time. If permanent changes are being made, then a plan change form is still required once the distance learning period comes to an end. The Q Comp team is available to consult with districts as they consider ideas, options, or changes of any kind.

Q: We have not completed all of our classroom observations/evaluations in order to determine performance pay. Should we finish our planned observations/evaluations?

A: No, classroom observations/evaluations should be suspended during the distance learning period.

The team should base performance pay decisions on existing data collected before **March 18**--the date schools were ordered to close in order to prepare for distance learning per the Governor’s executive order. **Teachers must be eligible for the full amount of the performance award as determined in the local Q Comp plan. Awards for observation/evaluations should not be prorated or reduced.**

Based on previously released guidance, some stakeholders are asking whether peer or administrative observations that are strictly for supporting teachers as they work during distance learning would be allowed. Yes, if the purpose for observations is strictly for supporting teaching and learning (and not for evaluations or determining performance pay), then local oversight teams may decide to continue this particular practice.

Given the systemic impact of racism and the emerging evidence of the disproportionate impact of distance learning, existing supportive peer coaching focused on racial equity can continue where they already exist and when they are based on growth.

Q: Many Q Comp plans tie movement on the salary schedule to teacher observation/evaluation results. What does MDE recommend here?

A: The team should base **decisions about movement on the salary schedule** on existing data collected before **March 18**-- the date schools were ordered to close in order to prepare for distance learning per the Governor's executive order.

Q: Because standardized tests will not be administered this spring, what are our options for the site goals and performance pay?

A: "Site goals" is Q Comp shorthand for a legal requirement specific to schoolwide student achievement gains as measured by a standardized test. If standardized tests (including but not limited to MCA, NWEA MAP, Fastbridge, and ACT) are not administered, then performance pay for site goals cannot be awarded.

Local oversight teams (including representation from the teachers' union) should work together to rededicate their budgets. Options may include:

- Reinvesting in existing or new professional learning supports for teachers in this or future years.
- Temporarily changing site goal performance award amounts in future school years (e.g., double the site goal award in 2020-21). Be clear with teachers that this new amount would not be permanent.
- Reallocating the budget that was dedicated to site goals to increase the performance award for one or both of the other two areas (observation/evaluation and measure of student growth).

Q: What should we be thinking about regarding the "measure of student growth" performance pay requirement?

A: For the duration of this school year, local Q Comp oversight teams should amend these measures/goals so that performance pay can be awarded when student growth is demonstrated based on data. Similar to the "site goal" question above, in order to award performance pay for this area of local Q Comp plans, the assessment results should demonstrate that the goals set by teachers were met. The difference with the measures of student growth component is that these goals are not always dependent on a standardized test. Most plans allow for the use of classroom assessments.

We encourage local oversight teams to maximize flexibility for teachers during this time to demonstrate their impact on student growth. Teachers should review the assessments in their student growth goals to determine whether the assessments can be appropriately used in the distance learning setting. If changes are necessary, then we recommend that districts allow teachers to revise assessments so that they can be used in a distance learning context.

If a local Q Comp plan utilizes a standardized assessment for their measure of student growth, and that standardized assessment is not administered this spring, then the local oversight team should allow teachers to revise the goals and assessments to be used so that they can be used in a distance learning context.

Q: Are professional learning communities (PLCs) required during distance learning?

A: No. For the duration of this school year, local Q Comp oversight teams may discontinue PLCs or can amend PLC practices to support their distance learning plans. Changes to meeting frequency, length, topic and scope are all within the purview of the local oversight team. Some local Q Comp plans have performance pay tied to PLC work, and the local oversight team should amend this area as well so that teachers may earn this award in the context of their distance learning work.

Teachers may still want to meet in PLCs, and many teachers would find value in PLCs continuing to meet as a support for adult personal and professional needs during this trying time. PLCs may be meeting differently (through distance technology such as Zoom or Google Hangout) or with different frequency. Discussions may be focusing more heavily on instructional problems of practice in a distance learning environment.

Q: What are the requirements for the annual report that is due June 15, 2020?

A: For the duration of this school year, local oversight teams may decide to:

- Provide a full annual report to the Board by the statutory deadline or at a later date,
- Provide a partial annual report (including activities that occurred prior to March 18, 2020) by the statutory deadline or at a later date, or
- Forgo the annual report for 2019-20 school year. Activities conducted in 2019-20 can be reported along with activities conducted in the 2020-21 school year and reported by the June 2021 annual report due date.

Teacher Development and Evaluation (TDE) Frequently Asked Questions

Q: We have probationary teachers who are required to have three observations/evaluations annually. How should we approach this requirement? Can we do fewer than three?

A: For the duration of this school year, local districts should discontinue remaining **formal** observations/evaluations of probationary staff.

Contract decisions should be based on the existing **body of evidence** and data collected before March 18--the date of the Governor's executive order related to school closure and preparation for distance learning.

Given the systemic impact of racism and the emerging evidence of the disproportionate impact of distance learning, existing supportive peer coaching focused on racial equity can continue where they already exist and when they are based on growth.

The days of instruction during distance learning **as well as the eight planning days** count towards the required 120 days of teaching service as required under Minnesota Statutes 122A.40, Subd 5, paragraph (e) and 122A.41, Subd 4, paragraph (d).

Q: Because standardized tests will not be administered this spring, what are the implications for the TDE requirement to base 35% of evaluation results on student academic growth?

A: Given significant changes in instructional and assessment practices because of distance learning, local oversight teams may forgo student academic growth measure activities (also known as student learning goals) this school year.

All teachers are summatively evaluated as part of a three-year professional review cycle, so evidence of teacher impact on student learning that is required to be 35% of summative evaluations should focus on the other two years of that cycle. If the local oversight team selects this option, then student growth data from 2019-20 would not apply to summative evaluations in this or future years.

Q: We have tenured/continuing contract teachers who are due this year for a summative evaluation. How should we approach this requirement?

A: For the remainder of this school year, local teacher development and evaluation oversight teams may decide to:

- Postpone summative evaluations until the fall of the 2020-21 school year, or
- Use existing data collected before March 18 to complete summative evaluations.

If summative evaluation activities are postponed until the fall of the 2020-21 school year, summative evaluators must work with teachers whose evaluations were postponed to schedule all remaining activities as soon as possible in the fall.

If existing data collected before March 18 will be used to complete summative evaluations, districts may need to adapt their summative evaluation practices to fit the context of their distance learning plans. Even though the requirement for 35% of a teacher's summative evaluation to be based on student growth may be impacted as described in the previous question, summative evaluations may take place as scheduled using available evidence across multiple years where applicable. Summative evaluations may not collect evidence across all elements of an instructional framework or rubric during distance learning.

Given the systemic impact of racism and the emerging evidence of the disproportionate impact of distance learning, existing supportive peer coaching focused on racial equity can continue where they already exist and when they are based on growth.

Social distancing practices should be followed when conducting summative evaluations. Therefore, activities cannot be done in person and should be conducted via videoconferencing platforms, conference calls, or reviews of artifacts.

Q: We have teachers who are due for a peer review who did not get an opportunity for this activity prior to March 18. Should peer review activities for teachers continue during distance learning?

A: No observations or other activities should be conducted for the purposes of evaluation during distance learning. However, if teachers want or need to connect with a peer for support during distance learning, those types of observations or activities can be conducted.

Given the systemic impact of racism and the emerging evidence of the disproportionate impact of distance learning, existing supportive peer coaching focused on racial equity can continue where they already exist and when they are based on growth.

Q: We have teachers who are in a teacher improvement process (TIP) due to previously being identified as not meeting standards in our TDE system. What are the implications for teachers in a TIP with distance learning?

A: A teacher improvement process (TIP) includes a support plan that identifies the area(s) of performance concern, clear performance expectations for the teacher, the methods of support for the teacher, and a timeline that specifies when activities will happen, including when the teacher will be evaluated again to determine if performance improved as a result of the TIP.

Updated 4/27/20

With a significant transition from face-to-face to virtual delivery of instruction, a teacher in a TIP may need a modified support plan. This should be reviewed on a case-by-case basis based on how instruction is being delivered during distance learning and what new supports a teacher might need to improve practice.