## Minnesota Department of Education

# Q Comp Annual Report 2019-20

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

Please provide the following **District Identification Information**.

**District Name: STRIDE Academy**

**District Number: 4142-07**

**Date Presented to the School Board: July 30, 2020\***

**\*The Q Comp Annual Report is to be submitted annually to the Board for review by June 15. This year, however, the school year changed abruptly in mid-March, with students being sent home and STRIDE implementing its Distance Learning Plan. The Q Comp program also changed at that time, and it has taken additional time to gather data about the implementation of the program; thus the delay in presenting this report to the STRIDE Board of Education.**

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.*** It is recommended 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?**

As part of the review process for the Q Comp Program, STRIDE retained an independent program evaluator, Dr. David Peterson, to conduct interviews with teachers, administrators and peer evaluators. The data collected from these interviews present ample evidence that the work of the Q Comp Peer Evaluators had a positive impact on classroom instruction.

In the interviews with the consultant, Peer Evaluators gave examples of how they suggested resources and strategies to teachers for improving instruction, and they gave examples of how these suggestions were implemented and did indeed improve the effectiveness of instruction. Peer Evaluators also mentioned how the observations they conducted helped inform their own teaching and led to improvement of instruction. Thus, the learning was mutually beneficial for both the Peer Evaluators and the teachers and resulted in improved opportunities for student learning.

Additionally, Principal Diane Moeller conducted observations and evaluations of teachers as part of the Minnesota Teacher Development and Evaluation system. Her observations verified that instructional strategies suggested by peer evaluators, as well as the strategies emphasized in the school’s professional development program, made a positive difference in improving instruction by teachers.

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

Due to the cancellation of the MCA’s in the spring of 2020, student achievement scores were not available. Thus, only anecdotal evidence, cited above, is available to assess the impact of instruction on student achievement.

### 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?**

From the beginning of the Q Comp Program at STRIDE Academy, Administrators and Teacher Leaders have been trained to provide evaluation and coaching for teachers. In the 2017-18 school year the program moved from a primarily administrator guided program to one that relied primarily on Teacher Leaders to guide the efforts of the program. This teacher-led system continue through the 2019-20 school year, with positive results in teacher satisfaction and with validity and reliability in assessing the proficiency of teachers in implementing high-quality instruction.

Dr. David Peterson, who has trained over 700 peer coaches and evaluators in 20 different Q Comp schools in Minnesota over the past 15 years, provided the training for STRIDE Peer Evaluators in October of 2019. This training focused on four skills that are necessary to become proficient Peer Evaluators:

1) Gathering objective data during a classroom observation,

2) labeling and classifying the data using an established rubric,

3) determining the quality level of teaching behavior and assigning a valid and reliable rating, and

4) coaching and mentoring teachers through effective conferencing skills.

The training consisted of two phases, with the first being a group session in which peer evaluators learned the skills of data gathering. By the end of this session the evaluators had made significant progress in assigning valid ratings for teacher behavior, which demonstrated that the STRIDE Q Comp system possessed inter-rater reliability.

The second phase of the training consisted on one-to-one training in which Dr. Peterson shadowed peer evaluators as they conducted a post-observation conference with one of their assigned teachers. Additionally, the consultant examined the observation notes and written reports of each peer evaluator, noting areas of strength and making suggestions for further refinement of these evaluation documents.

**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?**

During the 2019-20 school year, the STRIDE Q Comp Teacher Leaders who served as peer evaluators were evaluated in using two methods. First, Dr. Peterson, Q Comp Consultant, conducted a site visit to observe the Peer Evaluators who had been trained earlier in the fall. He observed each peer evaluator conduct a post-observation conference, and then shared feedback and conducted a coaching session with each participant. Dr. Peterson also examined samples of each Peer Evaluator’s observation notes and post-observation evaluation reports and provided feedback to each evaluator. This review provided coaching for each individual Peer Evaluator, and also provided assurance that all evaluators possessed the skills to conduct fair and reliable evaluations.

Phase 2 of the evaluation of Peer Evaluators was conducted on July 13-14, when Dr. Peterson returned to STRIDE and conducted individual phone meetings with each Peer Evaluator and with Diane Moeller, STRIDE principal during the ’19-20 school year. The intent of these sessions was to gather data about the impact that the work of the Peer Evaluators had on the teaching practices and overall effectiveness of the licensed teachers. It was clear that the Peer Evaluators gained much from the evaluation, feedback and coaching from the principal as well as the Q Comp Consultant.

### Recommendations

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

The findings noted in the Q Comp review showed continuing improvement in the effectiveness of teacher leadership, in particular with the implementation of the Peer Observation component of the Q Comp program. This year STRIDE allocated funding for an additional Peer Evaluator, and with five evaluators, the caseload was reduced to 7-8 teachers per evaluator, a much more manageable load than the previous year. The effectiveness of the teacher leaders, functioning as Peer Evaluators, was improved significantly through the findings of the review process.

STRIDE Academy plans to build on the success of this year’s program by continuing to use five peer evaluators as the primary source of observations and evaluation of teachers next year.

## 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)? [x] yes [ ] no**

* 1. 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?**

During the 2019-20 school year, learning teams (Professional Learning Communities) at STRIDE continued to focus on instructional strategies targeting improvements in student achievement in math and reading. Additionally, the school provided a year-long series of trainings in concepts associated with Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Teaching and Learning.

Data collected from interviews conducted by Dr. Peterson, Q Comp Consultant, with teacher leaders at STRIDE show clearly that there were a number of positive outcomes that had a direct impact on classroom instruction. In particular, faculty members consistently expressed appreciation for the manner in which the school administration provided leadership in providing professional development for staff, and also followed through with accountability measures to insure that PLCs were focused and structured in discussing and implementing the concepts associated with the Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Teaching and Learning.

For example, teachers at the primary level learned and implemented several techniques for gaining the attention of students through songs, chants, and non-verbal cues. Teachers at the intermediate level implemented strategies related to vocabulary development, in particular with using visual representations of words to help English Language learners have a better chance of understanding the meaning of words.

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

Learning teams engaged in a variety of activities, including those noted in the previous section, during the 2019-20 school year. Each of these professional development activities was designed to have a specific, targeted effect on improving outcomes, both in student academic achievement, as well as developing the motivation to learn, and the resiliency and determination to persevere in the face of several challenges.

The data from the Independent Review of the Q Comp program documented that high-quality discussions took place among teachers during their PLC meetings during the 2019-20 school year. Teachers shared strategies to help their peers with specific problems relating to student achievement and behavior. The large group PLCs allowed for multiple grade levels to share ideas and strategies related to data and student achievement. The small group PLCs allowed for teachers to focus more specifically on individual students, groups of students, and standards to improve student achievement.

### Review Findings

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

PLC groups at STRIDE regularly used student achievement data, gathered through the use of interim assessments, to identify instructional strategies to increase student achievement. Teams also discussed specific research-based teaching strategies designed to help English Language Learners increase their ability to meet standards in math and reading. For example, teachers regularly discussed the impact of Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Teaching strategies and their impact on students, and through these discussions several adaptations were made in classroom instruction that had a positive impact on the implementation of this strategy. The decision to implement the Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Teaching and Learning program was likewise identified by both the administration and PLCs as a way of meeting the needs of a student population that continues to reflect an increasingly diverse population of students.

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

The learning teams shared data on a regular basis during PLC sessions which provided guidance to colleagues on how to tailor their instruction to meet the needs of students. Instructional strategies were presented and discussed during large group PLCs, and follow up discussions were held at small group and large group PLCs on a regular basis throughout the school year.

### Recommendations

**How will the district use the review findings to improve the effectiveness of job embedded professional development?**

Based on the results of the Q Comp review process, the Q Comp leadership team recommends the continuation of the Professional Learning Community structure in the school, including both small groups and larger group settings. Within these settings teachers will learn and share ideas for implementing the initiatives in curriculum and instruction that the school leaders identify as high priority strategies for improving student learning. The Leadership team also recommends that the Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Teaching program continue as one of the key initiatives for shaping the work of individual teachers, and of the work of small and large-group PLCs.

## Core Component: Teacher Evaluation

### Implementation

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Are licensed staff members observed/evaluated as outlined in the approved plan (approval letter and subsequent plan change approval letters)? [x] yes [ ] no

* 1. 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?**

The observation/evaluation process impacted classroom instruction in several positive ways during the 2019-20 school year. Both administrators and peer evaluators conducted pre-conferences, observed classes, gathered data and provided feedback to teachers in a post-conference. In these feedback sessions conducted by the trained Peer Evaluators, teachers identified strategies to meet the needs of their students. Data collected from interim assessments were also reviewed in these feedback sessions in order to design strategies for improved instruction. In the Review Process, the peer evaluators each cited examples of how teachers on their caseload were able to use feedback in the post conference to design improvement plans that would improve their teaching.

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

Due to the cancellation of the MCA’s in the spring of 2020, STRIDE Academy was not able to determine school wide growth as measured by a standardized assessment. However, despite this lack of objective data in the form of test scores, there is ample anecdotal evidence to indicate that student achieve was impacted positively by the observation/evaluation process. For example, peer evaluators noted how teachers were able to design plans to improve instruction, and also to observe how students were responding positively to the efforts of the teachers. It is reasonable to assume that student achievement would improve, and teachers were disappointed to not be able to see the objective evidence of this that the MCA scores would likely have shown.

### Review Findings

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

During the 2019-20 school year the Q Comp system continued to use the pre- and post- observation conferences as an opportunity for self-reflection by the teacher. In the pre-conferences the teachers were asked not only to review their objectives for the lesson, but also to anticipate possible areas for adjustment during the upcoming lesson. Likewise, the post-observation conference was re-designed to make increased use of open-ended, reflective questioning strategies in an effort to increase the ability of teachers to analyze their own lessons and make improvements in teaching strategies. In the Review Process peer evaluators reported that they regularly were able to see examples of deep self-reflection on the part of teachers in response to receiving feedback in post conferences.

**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?**

The training program provided by the consultant and trainer helped observers/evaluators gain skills in:

 **Inter-rater Reliability –** In the training sessions at the beginning of the school year participants reviewed several video segments of instruction, ones which had been rated and normed by several other peer observers in other Q Comp districts. As a result of this training, the peer evaluators were able to rate segments of instruction with a high degree of consistency and reliability. Later in the school year, in actual practice of these skills with their peers, these evaluators rated teachers in similar fashion, demonstrating that the training was successful in helping them see instruction in a similar fashion, thus insuring validity and reliability in the Q Comp evaluation system. A review of the final ratings of teachers showed a high degree of consistency between evaluators for each teacher.

 **Providing Constructive Feedback to Teachers** – The one-to-one training provided by the consultant provided intensive training in giving feedback to teachers in a post-conference setting. In the review session at the end of the year, the teachers gave several examples illustrating the value of the feedback from the peer evaluators. One feature they particularly appreciated was the timeliness of the feedback, which almost always occurred within 24 hours after the observation. Teachers also benefitted from the detailed notes that the peer evaluators took during the observation, and from the manner in which the peer evaluators shared that data in the post conference.

### Recommendations

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

The review findings pointed to the successes that STRIDE had during the 2019-20 school year with the teacher evaluation component of the Q Comp protocols, and also provided data to improve the system in the future. In 2019-20, a new set of criteria were used for the evaluation/observation phase of Q Comp, ones that were more likely to be observable in classroom instruction, and ones that would produce higher achievement gains by students. These criteria were used:

Component 1e. Designing Coherent Instruction

Component 2c. Managing Classroom Procedures

Component 2d. Managing Student Behavior

Component 3a. Communicating with Students

Component 3b. Using Question and Discussion Techniques

Component 3c. Engaging Students in Learning

Component 3d. Using Assessment in Instruction

Component 3e. Demonstrating Flexibility and Responsiveness

In the Review Process, Peer Evaluators each expressed satisfaction with these 8 criteria, and STRIDE will use these same criteria in the 2020-21 school year.

## 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 XX [ ]  No

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

Due to the cancellation of the MCA test in the spring of 2020, no data were available to make a determination of whether or not any individual teacher would qualify for the Q Comp stipend for meeting this student achievement goal. In order to preserve the integrity of the Q Comp system for allocating stipends, STRIDE chose to reassign the stipend for meeting this student achievement goal to the stipend for the teacher observation and evaluation component.

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)? [x] yes [ ] no

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?**

76% of teachers received payment for either fully or partially meeting their individual goal for student achievement, based on the results of student growth on assessment testing measures.

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

97.0% received a full stipend for performance pay, and 3% received a partial stipend for performance

**What percentage of tenured licensed staff met the standard to earn performance pay for observation/evaluation results?**

This question is not applicable, as Stride is a Charter School and there is no distinction between tenured and probationary licensed staff, as all staff are employees at will.

**What percentage of probationary licensed staff met the standard to earn performance pay for observation/evaluation results?**

This question is not applicable, as Stride is a Charter School and there is no distinction between tenured and probationary licensed staff, as all staff are employees at will.

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

Yes. A stipend was awarded if teachers met the standards for being active participants in their PLC meetings, as evidenced by at least 85% participation, documented by minutes from these meeting noting the members in attendance. Follow up observations by the school’s principal and by Peer Evaluators verified the implementation of PLC-based initiatives being implemented in classroom instruction. Those initiatives were based on the PLC’s training in the concepts of Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Teaching and Learning.

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

100% of participants met this goal.

**What percentage of all licensed staff met the standard to earn movement on the salary schedule or an increase in base salary?**

100% of participants met this goal.

**What percentage of tenured licensed staff met the standard to earn movement on the salary schedule or an increase in base salary?**

This question is not applicable, as Stride is a Charter School and there is no distinction between tenured and probationary licensed staff, as all staff are employees at will.

**What percentage of probationary licensed staff met the standard to earn movement on the salary schedule or an increase in base salary?**

This question is not applicable, as Stride is a Charter School and there is no distinction between tenured and probationary licensed staff, as all staff are employees at will.

### Recommendations

**How will the district use the data to improve the effectiveness of this core component?**

 STRIDE Academy will use the data collected in the Review Process to make further refinements in this core component for the upcoming school year. Specifically, the school will refine its policies and procedures for assigning performance pay for PLC participation, in particular with developing measurement rubrics for determining the degree to which licensed teachers implement PLC-based initiatives into their classroom instruction. This past year the focus was on Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Teaching and Learning. STRIDE teacher leaders will determine the focus for PLC groups for next year, and will also insure that teachers implement teaching strategies based on their PLC training.

Additionally, STRIDE will use this year’s experience of moving to Distance Learning in developing goals for student achievement for next year. We will continue to use the MCA test scores as a measure of student achievement, and to provide stipends for teachers if the school makes its goals for student achievement. However, if the MCA exams are not administered the STRIDE Q Comp plan will be modified to use other measures of student achievement, such as student growth rates, to determine student achievement.

## General Program Impact and Recommendations

**What overall impact on instruction has the district or charter school seen as a result of implementing the Q Comp program?**

The Q Comp program has had several overall positive impacts on the school program at STRIDE Academy during the years of its implementation. The Q Comp program has provided a structure for school improvement that we believe will propel us into a new era of improved student achievement in the future.

Most notable among the positive impacts is the increased collaboration among teachers at all grade levels, which certainly would not have occurred without the structure and impetus provided by the Q Comp program. For example, the independent review conducted by the Q Comp consultant this year contained many anecdotal examples of how the Q Comp program has produced positive outcomes.

The observation and evaluation component of the program was also successful in producing positive outcomes for teachers. In particular, the modification of the components for observation made a significant difference in the focus of the peer evaluators in gathering data and giving meaningful feedback to teachers.

**What overall impact on student achievement has the district or charter school seen as a result of implementing the Q Comp program?**

Student Achievement at STRIDE Academy has been stabilized in recent years, after experiencing a series of declining test scores in reading and math between 2012 and 2016. The recent gains in student achievement can be attributed to several factors, including a new leadership team, reduced attrition of teachers, and teacher training tailored to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse student population.

Along with these changes, the Q Comp program also has been a significant feature in driving student achievement. The change from having this program being implemented largely by administrators to the current model in which peers are performing the observations and evaluations has also produced positive results. These factors, acting in concert with each other, have caused improvement in student achievement at STRIDE, and provide the foundation for additional student achievement gains in the future.

**How will the district use the review findings to improve the overall effectiveness of the program?**

These Q Comp review findings, gathered on an annual basis, are an important component of our school’s plans for meeting its goals. These findings, combined with other data collected by the school, allow STRIDE to reflect on their past and present performance and to develop goals for improvement in the future.

These review findings document the consistency demonstrated by the peer evaluators in their observations and evaluations. Also noted was their ability to gather objective data during classroom observations, as well as the consistency of their evaluations when compared to peers.

Of particular note in the review findings was the continued effectiveness of Professional Learning Communities. Teachers have a high regard for the opportunity to meet on a regular basis with colleagues to discuss strategies for improving instruction and reflect on the success of those strategies. This past year’s focus on Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Teaching and Learning built, and the previous year’s focus on Data Driven Instruction, set the stage for a successful PLC focus for next year and on into the future.

The review findings continue to be a valuable source of information upon which to make decisions relating to the instructional program at STRIDE. We believe in our staff, our parent community, and in the value of the Q Comp program to focus our efforts to promote high-quality teaching and learning.