

Q Comp Annual Report 2020-21

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*: June 24, 2021

***The Q Comp Annual Report is to be submitted annually to the Board for review by June 15. However, this year's report is being presented to the Board at its June 24 meeting to allow sufficient time to gather the data necessary to create this Annual Report.**

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)?

Response: 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 gather data from teachers, administrators, and peer evaluators. A survey was constructed and administered to all licensed teachers at STRIDE soliciting their input about the Q Comp program.

The data collected show ample evidence that the work of the Q Comp Peer Evaluators had a positive impact on classroom instruction. Over 90% of the respondents indicated that they “received meaningful feedback” from their Peer Evaluator in the post-conference following the classroom observation. 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 Gwen Anderson 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 leaders impact student achievement?

Due to the cancellation of the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA) exams in the spring of 2020, student MCA achievement scores from the spring of 2019 will be used for comparison with the student achievement scores of STRIDE students from the MCA tests administered in the spring of 2021. We anticipate that the disruption of teaching and learning caused by the COVID-19 Pandemic may make it difficult for STRIDE to reach its academic achievement goals based on MCA test results. The full effect of this disruption will not be known until the release of this test data in late August of 2021.

Nonetheless, there is anecdotal data to suggest that the work of teacher leaders had a positive impact on teaching and learning. Specifically, teacher leaders were highly instrumental in assisting teachers in developing instructional practices to implement Distance Learning, and in helping teachers transition back into in-school learning in the spring of 2021. However, only 49% of the teachers who responded to the end-of-the-year Q Comp survey indicated agreement with the statement, ***“PLC meetings had a positive impact on my teaching this year.”*** Sixty percent of teacher leaders serving as Peer Evaluators agreed with the survey statement, ***“I saw improvement in teaching among the teachers I observed this year.”***

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 in 2012, Administrators and Teacher Leaders have been trained to provide evaluation and coaching for teachers. Beginning with the 2016-17 school year, the Q Comp training, conducted by Dr. David Peterson, has 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 consists of two phases, with the first being a group session in which peer evaluators learn the skills of data gathering. By the end of this session the evaluators make 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 consists of one-to-one training in which Dr. Peterson shadows peer evaluators as they conduct a post-observation conference with one of their assigned teachers. Additionally, the consultant examines the observation notes and written reports of each peer evaluator, noting areas of strength and making suggestions for further refinement of these evaluation documents.

There is ample evidence that this training has had a positive impact on the performance of the peer evaluators. For example, over 90% of the teachers agreed or strongly agreed with the survey statement, ***“The Peer Evaluator provided me with useful feedback on my teaching in our post observation conference.”*** Likewise, over 90% of teachers agreed that the Peer Evaluators were effective listeners and that they conducted effective pre- and post-conferences.

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?

The 2020-21 school year presented a series of challenges for all teachers in Minnesota due to the impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic. Instruction for students alternated between virtual and in-person throughout the school year, which required teacher leaders to use creative approaches in observing the work of their peers. Likewise, the evaluation of the teacher leaders required the use of both in-person observations as well as other methods to assess the effectiveness of their work.

The data collected throughout the year by Principal Gwen Anderson indicates that the teacher leaders were effectively implementing the Q Comp system. The teacher leaders adapted well to the challenges by using appropriate methods to assess and coach teachers. For example, the first of the three required observations consisted of a conference with the teacher to assess

their adaptations to Distance Learning, and this was valuable in providing support to teachers, all of whom were adapting to this new learning format. Another of the observations was virtual, where the Peer Evaluator observed a remote learning lesson by the teacher, and the final observation was in-person in the spring when students and staff returned on-site.

Survey data were collected from teachers in May of 2021, providing another means of evaluating the effectiveness of the teacher leaders in their work as Peer Evaluators. Over 95% of the teachers responding indicated that the Peer Evaluators implemented their classroom observations according to the Q Comp plan, and that they demonstrated effective skills in gathering data during the classroom observation, listening to the teachers' concerns, and providing meaningful feedback on their teaching skills.

Recommendations

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

The findings noted in the Q Comp review, both from the teacher leader survey data and from direct observation of their work with teachers, showed continuing improvement in the effectiveness of teacher leadership with the implementation of the Peer Observation component of the Q Comp program. Additionally, the survey data from teachers and Peer Evaluators suggest further refinements to the Q Comp program for next year, including increasing the number of Peer Evaluators, due to an anticipated increase in the number of licensed staff, as well as considering modifications in the methods for gathering data from classroom observations and providing feedback to teachers.

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 no

- a. 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?

The 2020-21 school year presented many challenges for teaching and learning at STRIDE Academy due to the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic. Instruction alternated between Distance Learning and on-site learning depending upon state and local health guidelines. These conditions required an immediate need to embed professional development activities, to help teachers learn techniques to implement Distance Learning strategies.

In addition to the need for training and development in Distance Learning, the Professional Learning Communities at STRIDE continued to focus on instructional strategies targeting improvements in student achievement in math and reading. Additionally, the school continued

to emphasize concepts associated with Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Teaching and Learning.

Data collected from the Q Comp Teacher Survey, collected in May of 2021, show mixed results regarding the impact of learning teams on the instruction of teachers. In response to the statement, ***“The PLC Meetings at STRIDE had a positive impact on my teaching,”*** 48% of the respondents Agreed or Strongly Agreed, and 52% replied either Neutral or Disagree with this statement.

The Q Comp Leadership Team will use these results to engage the PLCs in a discussion of how to set meaningful goals and implementation strategies for improvement of instruction for the upcoming school year.

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 2020-21 school year. Each of these professional development activities was designed to have a specific, targeted effect on improving outcomes in student academic achievement. Of equal importance were the professional development activities associated with helping students adjust to the demands of Distance Learning, specifically the social and emotional impacts of the Pandemic.

The data from the Independent Review of the Q Comp program documented high-quality discussions that took place among teachers during their PLC meeting, resulting in teachers and students becoming more resilient in adapting to changes in the instructional setting throughout the school year.

Review Findings

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

PLC groups at STRIDE used student achievement data, gathered using 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. Additionally, the learning teams shared strategies for engaging students during Distance Learning activities and supported each other as these strategies were implemented.

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 and this information provided guidance to colleagues on how to tailor their instruction to meet the needs of students, in particular those strategies related to Distance Learning. 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.

Additionally, the data from the Teacher and Peer Evaluator Surveys show a need to revise procedures for PLC meetings, and to develop a plan for monitoring the work of these groups. In response to the statement, ***“The PLC meetings I attended were well-organized and productive,”*** 52% responded Agree or Strongly Agree, while 48% responded Neutral or Disagree. This data suggests that a plan be designed and implemented to 1) clarify the role of leadership of the PLC group, and 2) determine the level of effectiveness of each PLC group in meeting established goals.

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 **X no**

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

Response: The need to move the school's instructional program to Distance Learning for part of this school year led Peer Evaluators to implement one change in the rubrics used for evaluation of licensed teachers, as follows:

Original Criteria/Destructor: 2.C Managing Classroom Procedures

Replace with:

New Criteria/Destructor: 2. A. Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport

Rationale for Change: Much evidence exists to suggest that Distance Learning limits the ability of teachers and students to develop relationships that lead to a productive learning environment. Teachers at STRIDE felt that developing rapport with students was a more appropriate criteria than managing classroom procedures, as the “classroom” of distance learning looks quite different from in-person learning. Therefore, teachers at STRIDE worked deliberately to develop strategies designed

to promote a positive online relationship with students, and the Peer Evaluators gave them coaching tips on how to implement these strategies.

Impact

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

The need to implement Distance Learning for portions of the school year, and the ongoing impact of the Pandemic presented many obstacles for implementing the teacher observation portion of the Q Comp program this year. Nonetheless, the observation/evaluation process impacted classroom instruction in several positive ways during the 2020-21 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 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?

Final MCA scores will be available in August of 2021, and at that time a more definitive analysis can be made of the impact of the observation/evaluation process on student achievement. Because of the disruption of the educational program caused by the Pandemic, MCA test scores may not be a reliable measure of determining the effect of the observation/evaluation process on student achievement. However, there is ample anecdotal evidence to indicate that student achievement was impacted positively by the observation/evaluation process. For example, peer evaluators noted how teachers were able to design plans to improve instruction, such as with gaining proficiency in implementing Distance Learning strategies.

Review Findings

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

During the 2020-21 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 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 session 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 ensuring 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 in previous school years 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 benefited 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. In the survey conducted in May of 2021, over 95% of the respondents agreed with the statement, ***“During the classroom observation the Peer Evaluator gathered data (took notes) and shared those with me 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 2020-21 school year with the teacher evaluation component of the Q Comp protocols, and provided data to improve the system in the future. In 2020-21, the same set of criteria were used for the evaluation/observation phase of Q Comp as the previous year, with one exception, noted below:

Component 1e. Designing Coherent Instruction

Component 2c. Managing Classroom Procedures (Deleted)

Replaced with:

2. A. Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport

- 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, including the substitution of Criterion 2a. for 2c., and recommends that the Q Comp Committee consider using these criteria again in the 2021-22 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 **no**

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)? **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?

As in previous years at STRIDE, approximately 75% 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?

Approximately 95% of licensed teachers at STRIDE received a full stipend for performance pay.

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 school wide goals, measures of student achievement and observation/evaluation results)?

Yes. A stipend was awarded for licensed teachers who met the standards for being active participants in their PLC meetings, as evidenced by at least 85% participation, documented by minutes from these meetings noting the members in attendance. Additionally, each PLC member created three Growth Targets related either to the concepts of Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Teaching and Learning or Distance Learning strategies. Classroom observations by the STRIDE Administrative staff documented the level of completion of these PLC goals.

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 by developing measurement rubrics for determining the degree to which licensed teachers implement PLC-based initiatives into their classroom instruction. STRIDE teacher leaders, in collaboration with STRIDE administrative staff, will determine the focus for PLC groups for next year.

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.

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 noted many anecdotal examples of how the Q Comp program has produced positive outcomes in promoting collaboration among staff.

The observation and evaluation component of the Q Comp 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 2017. 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 driving force in improving 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 have laid 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.

The Q Comp Review for 2020-21 revealed gaps in the perceived effectiveness of Professional Learning Communities to develop and implement professional development activities for teachers. Survey data showed that teachers continue to 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. However, only than 51% of the licensed teachers surveyed agreed with the statement ***"PLC meetings were well-organized and productive."*** The STRIDE Q Comp Leadership Team intends to develop specific strategies for the 2021-22 school year to increase the perceived value of PLCs in delivering job-embedded professional development for teachers.

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.