

North Branch Area Public Schools Q Comp Annual Report 2025-2026 School Year

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.

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, The teacher leader positions implemented this year aligned with the approved Q Comp plan. Each site maintained designated facilitators responsible for coaching, mentoring, and leading collaborative teams.

If no, please explain what changes have occurred and why? **N/A**

Impact

How did the work of teacher leaders through coaching, observing, mentoring, facilitating Professional Learning Communities (PLC) teams and performing other responsibilities impact classroom instruction?

Facilitators (i.e. Admin., Instructional Coach, Site Leader, PLC Facilitator) are highly effective in shaping classroom instruction, with 83% of staff members agreeing they have a positive impact. This positive influence is reflected in average ratings of 4.12 for classroom instruction on a five point scale.

Teacher facilitators play a vital role by structuring meaningful conversations, fostering collaboration, and guiding problem-solving. Through these interactions, they promote instructional shifts and help teachers respond more effectively to student needs. They also facilitate data analysis and feedback to ensure instruction aligns with student needs and learning goals. Furthermore, facilitators offer crucial mentorship and guidance in areas like classroom management and curriculum implementation

How did the work of teacher leaders impact student achievement?

The survey revealed that 77% of staff members agreed that facilitators (i.e. Admin., Instructional Coach, Site Leader, PLC Facilitator) positively impact student achievement. This positive influence is reflected in average ratings of 4.03 for classroom instruction on a five point scale.

Teacher facilitators play a crucial role in boosting student success through several key actions:

- **Collaboration and Idea Sharing:** The most frequent benefit was the ability to collaborate with teammates, share engagement strategies, teaching tips, and new ideas, and implement them directly into classroom instruction. This included using team knowledge to understand and teach specific skills (like morphology and phonics), and gaining insight from observing learning labs and colleagues' practices.
- **Curriculum Alignment and Planning:** PLC time was consistently used for collaborative planning, ensuring activities, lessons, and assessments were aligned with standards, critical content, and pacing across grade levels. This involved dissecting lessons, planning scope and sequence, reviewing and implementing pilot curriculum materials (ELA, Phonics/Morphology, Math), and creating/adjusting rubrics and proficiency scales.
- **Data-Driven Adjustments:** Many respondents used the collaboration time to analyze student performance data (including common and intervention assessments) to reflect on instruction, determine if current methods were working, inform decision-making, and plan for necessary interventions, extensions, or small-group instruction.
- **Instructional and Classroom Improvement:** Discussions led to implementing higher-level thinking questions, focusing on student-centered learning, adjusting instruction to align with Marzano elements, and trying new classroom management techniques and procedures. New teachers specifically cited veteran teachers' guidance, resources, and advice as highly impactful.

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?

- **Facilitation and Organization:** PLC Facilitators and Site Leaders lead weekly PLC meetings and monthly leadership meetings, discuss upcoming events, and check in on team progress. Facilitators guide meetings and model protocols, while overseeing the organization of tasks like Learning Labs.
- **Information Sharing and Communication:** These roles serve as a form of communication, gathering new information and learning opportunities (especially related to new curriculum like Arts and Letters or SAVVAS) and sharing it with the teams. They provide updates on district initiatives and building goals to help staff stay focused and aligned.
- **Support, Coaching, and Feedback:** Facilitators guide teachers through learning and growth, offer additional information and support throughout the year, and provide assistance on curriculum, strategy, and classroom management questions. Site leaders help review documentation in iObservation and offer ideas for improvement, while instructional coaches provide assistance based on observations.
- **Observations and Guidance:** Instructional coaches conduct observations and provide feedback. PLC facilitators lead learning labs for Tier 2 staff.

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 survey results show that Teacher Leaders feel confident, knowledgeable, and supported in their job. This positive self-perception indicates they are well-equipped to make significant contributions to:

- The professional growth of their colleagues.
- The overall success of their educational community.

Recommendations

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

Here's how the district plans to enhance teacher leader training and support:

- **Expanded Ongoing Professional Development:** The district will strengthen continuous training opportunities to further develop teacher leaders' instructional expertise, leadership capacity, and understanding of effective classroom practices.
- **Foundational Leadership Preparation:** Teacher leaders will participate in foundational leadership training designed to equip them with the skills and confidence necessary for success in their roles.
- **Facilitator Capacity Building:** Additional emphasis will be placed on developing facilitators' abilities to lead purposeful discussions, analyze and interpret instructional data, and guide collaborative decision-making that supports student achievement.
- **District-Wide Training:** This training will ensure clear alignment of district Q-Comp goals across all school sites, fostering a more consistent and impactful experience for all educators.

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, Learning teams operated as outlined in the approved plan, meeting regularly with structured agendas and objectives. Teams were encouraged to align work with site goals and student data.

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

Impact

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

The survey revealed that a strong majority, 82.4% of staff members, agreed that professional development positively impacted classroom instruction. This consensus is strongly supported by evidence showing that job-embedded professional development, especially when integrated within Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), significantly benefits teachers. This leads directly to improved teaching and better student learning.

Feedback reveals a strong culture of collaboration centered on practical classroom impact. Here are the recurring themes identified across the responses:

- **Enhanced Lesson Planning:** Teachers improved lesson planning by focusing on standards, embedding clear learning targets, and utilizing diverse resources.

- **Improved Classroom Management:** Collaboration with colleagues proved invaluable, leading to better classroom management strategies and the sharing of best practices.
- **Effective Problem-Solving:** Teachers worked together to effectively solve problems related to specific student needs.
- **Data-Driven Instruction:** Analyzing data played a crucial role in informing instruction, helping teachers identify areas for improvement and provide targeted support.
- **Refined Strategies and Assessments:** Teachers implemented peer-recommended strategies and refined assessments, better aligning them with student needs.
- **Support for New Teachers:** New teachers especially valued the insights and support gained through team meetings.
- **Growth for Experienced Educators:** Experienced educators appreciated opportunities for reflection and professional growth.

Overall, job-embedded professional development fostered a collaborative and supportive environment. This allowed teachers to learn from each other, refine their teaching practices, and ultimately create a more positive and effective learning experience for their students.

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

The positive effects of professional development embedded within PLCs were clear: average ratings were 4.24 for instruction and 4.03 for achievement on a five point scale. 77.5% of the staff members agreed that professional development positively impacted student achievement.

The survey revealed staff members strongly agreed that professional development positively impacted student achievement. This was largely due to job-embedded professional development, which significantly boosted student success in several ways:

Data-Driven Change

- The most prominent theme is the use of data to make instructional changes.
- **Targeted Reteaching:** Teachers used MCA scores, "Quick Quizzes," formative assessments, and progress monitoring to identify exactly which skills students lacked.
- **Flexible Grouping:** Data allowed for the creation of flexible learning groups across entire grade levels, meeting students where they were rather than sticking to a fixed pace.
- **Spiral Review:** Teams identified low-scoring areas from previous years (like 3rd-grade MCAs) and built spiral review into flex time to shore up gaps before testing.

Collaborative-Resource Sharing

Teachers moved away from working in isolation ("stuck in a bubble") toward a shared instructional toolbox.

- **Shared Materials:** Staff shared everything from slide decks and rubrics to "best practice" engagement games (e.g., Gimkit, Blooket).

- **Unpacking New Curriculum:** Time was devoted to collaboratively navigating the new **Arts and Letters** and Savvas curricula, which many noted would have been overwhelming to tackle alone.
- **Standard Alignment:** Collaboration ensured that all students in a grade level received consistent, high-quality instruction regardless of who their teacher was.

Student-Centered Problem Solving

PLCs provided a sounding board for dealing with the most complex classroom dilemmas.

- **Behavior and SEL:** Teams discussed Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) strategies and classroom management tips for challenging groups, such as implementing visual expectations for ELL students or specialized behavior rubrics.
- **Inclusive Environment:** Feedback helped general education teachers improve their accommodations and modifications for special education students.

Professional Vulnerability and Reflection

The structured nature of the PLC (specifically the use of Protocols and Learning Labs) fostered a culture of open feedback.

- **Peeling the Onion:** Teachers presented dilemmas and received constructive criticism, leading to sharper planning and more responsive teaching.
- **Intentionality:** Many noted that knowing they would be reflecting on their lessons during PLC made them more thoughtful in their preparation and more likely to post clear learning targets.
- **Peer Observation:** Seeing how colleagues managed their classrooms or handled specific situations provided valuable insight that was immediately applied.

Customization of Curriculum

Staff did not just follow the book; they adapted resources to fit their specific students.

- **User-Friendly Tweaks:** Teachers broke down curriculum assessments into student-friendly and age-appropriate formats (especially in 1st grade).
- **Identifying Gaps:** Teams looked at standards and filled the holes where the new curriculum didn't quite meet the required rigor or expectations.
- **Key Takeaway:** The PLC served as a bridge between raw data and student success. By focusing on alignment, shared expertise, and rapid response to student needs, teachers felt more supported, and students saw measurable progress in their learning targets.

Review Findings

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

Effective Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) are crucial for boosting student achievement. Through collaborative discussions, teachers within PLCs effectively identified areas where students needed the most support. This teamwork directly led to the development of specific instructional strategies aimed at improving student performance.

Key aspects of effective PLCs included:

- **Data-Driven Focus:** PLCs analyzed data to pinpoint student needs.
- **Strategy Sharing:** Teachers actively shared and refined instructional strategies.
- **High Engagement:** Discussions were purposeful and directly supported by school-wide goals and instructional leadership.

The Instructional Coaches and Site Leads also played a vital role, working closely with both PLCs and administration to contribute valuable strategies. Furthermore, leadership teams consistently met to analyze student data and discuss next steps or specific strategies needed to further enhance student achievement, ensuring a comprehensive approach to improvement.

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

Weekly Professional Learning Community (PLC) meetings were centered on using data to improve instruction. Here's how teams approached this:

- **Collaboration on New Curriculum:** Dedicated time was provided for staff to collaboratively unpack and navigate the newly adopted Arts and Letters and Savvas curricula. Teachers consistently noted that having structured opportunities to work together made the transition significantly more manageable and productive. Many expressed that independently learning and implementing the new materials would have been overwhelming due to the depth, pacing, and instructional expectations of the programs.
- **Developing Common Assessments:** Teams created common formative assessments to measure student understanding.
- **Analyzing Data:** After lessons, they analyzed the assessment data to identify both student strengths and weaknesses.
- **Informing Next Steps:** This analysis directly informed their next steps, including differentiated instruction and selecting the most impactful teaching strategies.

This continuous cycle ensured that teaching methods were constantly adapted to meet student needs.

2025 - 2026 Student Achievement Data

SY25 Q-Comp Results

North Branch Early Learning Center and Sunrise River Elementary Goal

The percentage of students enrolled in grades K through 5 as of October 1 who either:

- score at or above the proficiency target as measured by FAST aReading,

Those students who did not meet proficiency

- meet or exceed their reading growth goal will increase from 68.96% in the Spring of 2025 to 69.96% in the Spring of 2026.

Result: In the Spring 69.08% of students met or exceeded growth or maintained a score at or above proficiency.

North Branch Area Middle School Goal

The percentage of students enrolled in grades 6 through 8 as of October 1 at NBAMS who either:

- 1) meet or exceed their reading growth goal,
- 2) maintain a score at or above the proficiency target as measured by FAST aReading,

will increase from 70.9% in the Spring of 2025 to 71.9% in the Spring of 2026.

Result: In the Spring 73.50% of students met or exceeded growth or maintained a score at or above proficiency.

North Branch Area High School Goal

In the spring of 2026, the percentage of NBAHS students in the class of 2027 who score an ACT composite score of 22 or higher will increase from 40.3% to 41.3% when compared with the results from the spring of 2025.

Result: The percentage of students scoring a 22 or higher on this roster was 24.6%, which falls significantly short of the 41.3% target and is lower than the previous spring's 40.3% baseline.

North Branch Norse Area Learning Center Goal

By June of 2026, the percentage of students enrolled on October 1, 2025, who score low risk on the aReading test will increase from 33.3% in the Fall of 2025, to 34.4% in the Spring of 2026.

Result: In the Spring of 2026, the percentage of students enrolled on October 1, 2025, who scored low risk on the aReading test decreased from 33.3% to 20%.

North Branch Distance Learning Academy Goal

By June of 2026, the percentage of students enrolled full time on October 1, 2025, who score low risk on the aReading test will increase from 55.56% in the Fall of 2025, to 56.56% in the Spring of 2026.

Results: In the Spring of 2026, the percentage of students enrolled on October 1, 2025 who scored low risk on aReading increased from 55.56% to 66.67%

Chisago County Schools' Life Work Center

By May 2026, 70% of the 1st year students continuously enrolled in the Chisago County Schools' Life Work Center and participating in "LWC" PAES (Practical Assessment Exploration System) will show a minimum increase of 25 points in their PAES Lab aptitude scores. Baseline data will be collected by the end of trimester one in each of the 5 career fields during fall 2025

Results: 85% of the 1st year students continuously enrolled in the Chisago County Schools' Life Work Center and participating in "LWC" PAES (Practical Assessment Exploration System) will show a minimum increase of 25 points in their PAES Lab aptitude scores.

Recommendations

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

The district's analysis of job-embedded professional development highlighted several key areas for improvement:

- **Ensure Understanding of the Continuous Learning Cycle:** It's crucial that all Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) fully grasp this fundamental framework for ongoing improvement
- **Support PLCs for Non-Classroom Staff:** We need to find better ways to support PLCs for staff members who aren't classroom teachers, as current procedures often cater primarily to classroom-based roles.
- **Flexible Meeting Groupings:** To maximize impact, PLCs should have flexibility to meet with other PLC's to improve communication and strengthen student outcomes.
- **Connect School-Wide Initiatives with Team-Based Problem-Solving:** Facilitators will receive support in bridging broader school goals with the specific problem-solving efforts happening within their teams.
- **Reflection Questions:** Analyze current questions and reform them to better meet the needs of staff. These efforts will help ensure that job-embedded professional development is effective and accessible for all staff, leading to improved outcomes across the district.

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, Observations and evaluations were implemented according to the approved plan. Staff participated in multiple observations, followed by feedback and coaching sessions.

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

Impact

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

Our district's observation and evaluation process is significantly improving both classroom instruction and student achievement. A strong 76.9% of staff members agree it positively influences classroom instruction. This positive view is widely supported by staff comments that highlight the collaborative nature of observations conducted by both teacher leaders and administrators.

Teachers particularly value feedback that helps them refine their teaching, finding peer observations especially insightful.

This process fosters a culture of continuous improvement, helping teachers grow professionally and enhance their teaching practices. It promotes a learning community where educators work together to support each other's growth and ultimately improve student learning. The collaborative observations and emphasis on reflection create a supportive, growth-oriented environment that benefits both teachers and students.

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

In the same survey, 76.3% of staff members agreed that their observation and evaluation process impacted student achievement. Their comments generally highlighted two key areas:

- **Increased Student Engagement:** The process led to students being more engaged in the classroom.
- **Enhanced Teaching Through Collaboration:** Staff noted that collaboration within their PLCs allowed them to improve their teaching and lessons for students by incorporating diverse perspectives.

Review Findings

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

Observations are vital for fostering professional growth and improving student learning. Staff consistently reported that observations provided:

- **Constructive Ideas:** Clear, actionable suggestions for improvement.
- **Clear Direction:** Guidance on how to achieve better student outcomes.

Teachers felt comfortable and open to the support offered, and many successfully put the suggestions they received into practice.

Key aspects that contributed to their value include:

- **Valued Peer Feedback:** Teachers especially appreciated feedback from their peers, noting that consistent observation feedback significantly contributed to their growth.
- **Tailored Instruction:** Site reviewers confirmed they used this feedback to tailor instruction and enhance critical areas such as lesson timing and classroom management.

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?

- Before the school year began, both PLC facilitators and staff members received initial training. Additional follow-up training was provided throughout the year as needed.
- During PLC meetings, discussions frequently focused on Marzano elements and their corresponding "look-fors" (observable behaviors or indicators of those elements in practice).

Recommendations

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

For the 2026-27 school year, the district will prioritize training for all leaders to ensure high-quality and consistent feedback.

- **Comprehensive Training for New Personnel:** Leaders will receive training to prepare them for their roles.
- **Continued Inter-Rater Reliability:** Teacher Leaders and Administration will receive ongoing training to ensure consistency in observations and feedback across the board.
- **Sustained Professional Development:** All groups will participate in continuous training and conversations throughout the year to foster ongoing growth and skill development.

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, The Q Comp program continues to positively affect both instructional practice and student learning. Staff feel supported, engaged in meaningful professional development, and empowered to implement new strategies based on collaborative learning.

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

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? 27%

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

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

What percentage of probationary 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)? No

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

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

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

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

Recommendations

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

Analyze Barriers to Student Achievement Goal Attainment

With only 27% of licensed staff earning performance pay based on student outcomes, the Qcomp administrator and site advisors will conduct a root cause analysis to determine systemic or instructional barriers. Focus areas may include assessment design, alignment of goal rigor to instructional practices.

Refine Professional Development to Better Target Student Growth

While staff report high satisfaction with collaborative learning, professional development should be further aligned with instructional strategies proven to impact student achievement. As leadership teams meet to develop action plans, emphasis on targeted coaching and professional development should focus on meeting the needs of all students, formative assessment aligned to state benchmarks, and intervention strategies.

Tracking and Monitoring of Student Achievement

To enhance the effectiveness of performance pay it is recommended that the District Site Advisory Committee establish a formal process to regularly monitor student achievement data across buildings. This oversight should be used to evaluate progress toward schoolwide and Q Comp

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 continues to be a major force for teacher growth, instructional improvement, and shared leadership in our district. Both internal surveys confirm that PLCs, coaching, and evaluations are all effective tools for professional learning and student success.

The program's positive impact on instruction is clear in how it balances flexibility with structure for teachers. As staff members noted, this includes:

- **Flexibility and Choice in Growth Plans:** Teachers appreciate the freedom to develop their own professional development plans and choose their focus areas, which increases their engagement and motivation.
- **Structured Support for PLCs:** PLC Facilitators benefit from the clear framework of the Continuous Learning Cycle. This provides a structured process for collaboration, sharing best practices, and mutual accountability, offering crucial support for educators.
- **Meaningful Self-Reflection:** Teachers are engaging in deeper, more intentional self-assessments, directly aligning their reflections with school goals and student learning objectives. This targeted reflection leads to more effective teaching practices.

- **Clearly defining roles and responsibilities:** Teacher leaders will review roles and responsibilities to make sure we are supporting staff and students.

Teachers' comments consistently highlight the value of the program's components:

- "As a PLC our ELA team was able to discuss common assessments both formative and summative. We were able to discuss how we were grading certain assessments and looked for ways to improve student achievement through reteaching, small groups instruction."
- The PLC experience gave me insight into the processes of other teachers and it was awesome to learn from their methods.

These comments show a high level of engagement and a direct link between the program's initiatives and actual shifts in teaching.

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

The Q Comp program is positively impacting student achievement by promoting a data-driven approach to instruction. Here's how:

- **Increased Data Analysis:** Teachers are now placing a greater emphasis on analyzing student data, especially from formative assessments.
- **Informed Instructional Decisions:** This data directly informs instructional decisions, allowing teachers to customize their teaching to meet students' specific needs.
- **Responsive Classroom Environment:** The program fosters a more responsive classroom where educators can analyze data and take immediate action to address learning gaps.

This strong focus on using data to continuously improve instruction suggests a positive impact on student achievement.

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

Our commitment to the district's strategic vision is ongoing. We'll continuously evaluate and refine our support for the Q Comp Core Components, using insights from this report to pinpoint areas for improvement across all aspects of the program.

Here's how we plan to enhance our efforts:

- **Empowering PLCs:** Schools will be empowered to leverage Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to collaborate on formative assessments, analyze student data to identify needs and achievement gaps, and then develop targeted strategies to close those gaps.
- **Integrating Life Skills:** We recognize the importance of life skills and will prioritize its integration to foster well-rounded student success.
- **Ensuring Consistent Practice:** We'll continue calibrating across buildings to ensure consistent practices in professional development and instructional support.
- **Aligning Learning and Outcomes:** We'll prioritize visible alignment between the work of learning teams, observations, and student achievement outcomes, and align instruction to the rigor of standards.
- **Strengthening Administrator Support:** We will continue to support administrators in ensuring inter-rater reliability of teacher evaluations. By creating a structured process for improvement through coaching,

administrators will receive meaningful feedback on their evaluation practices, fostering accuracy, consistency, and growth across the system.

- **Clearly Defining Roles and Responsibilities:** Next year, the district will use a defined process to audit the responsibilities of the three building instructional coaches (elementary, middle, and high school). The primary goal is to ensure the work being executed aligns with the official responsibilities of the position. This process will be an audit of duties and role alignment, and will intentionally *not* evaluate the performance or effectiveness of the individuals in those roles.