

April 1, 2025

Dear Education Finance Committee,

I'm writing to you today to express my strong support for the Quality Compensation (Q Comp) program offered to Minnesota school districts and to implore you to reconsider cutting this vital resource. Such a cut would have a significant negative impact on both teachers and students in our state.

I currently work as a Peer Coach in our Q Comp program in the Forest Lake Area School District and this is my final of three years in this position. Over these last three years, I've had a front row seat to the mutual benefits that coaches provide to educators and their students. The experience observing other educators across the district has allowed me to help educators harness their strengths and learn from their peers in different buildings. It also gives coaches a unique opportunity for a system-wide view of strategies that are working well and where there are gaps that need to be addressed. Without the Q Comp program, our district would likely be unable to maintain a program of district-wide coaches and this crucial vantage point would be lost.

Teachers routinely express their appreciation for the support and guidance they receive from their peer coaches, and for the additional compensation that the program provides. In our district, the Q Comp payout for new teachers equates to five percent of their total salary, so losing this income would be a substantial hit for them financially. Nobody goes into teaching for the money, but teachers deserve a livable wage for the incredible work they do for their students.

If we expect teachers to invest in their students, then we need to invest in them as well. Coaching provides crucial feedback and training that helps educators to be their best by helping them to creatively problem-solve in a career that can often feel impossible. The responsibilities and expectations of educators are enormous to the point of being absurd; educators need support in order to continue their work in education. We've already seen the exodus of many talented, passionate educators driven out of the field by high demand and low pay. The removal of yet another support and supplemental compensation would only exacerbate the problem.

Again, I urge you to keep the Q Comp program intact because it is an incredibly beneficial investment in teacher learning and development. Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Kelley Ungerecht

Q Comp Coach
Forest Lake Area Schools