



## Teacher Quality Committee Guidance

### Frequently Asked Questions

**1. Is a Teacher Quality Committee (TQC) still required?**

Yes. Iowa Code 284.4 is still in effect.

**2. Are TQC meetings subject to open meetings law?**

Yes

**3. Do we need to publish or post our minutes in the paper to meet the requirements for open meeting laws?**

Yes. Posting the minutes would be in compliance with the open meeting law requirement. It is not necessary to publish them in the paper.

**4. Who is responsible for creating the TQC?**

Per Iowa Code, the school board must carry out all aspects of Teacher Quality, therefore the board is responsible to see that a TQC is established.

**5. What is the recommended composition of the Teacher Quality Committee?**

The committee should have an equal number of teachers and administrators but the number of members is not defined. Teachers should be appointed by the certified employee organization if one exists, and if not, by the district's or agency's administration. Administrator members should be appointed by the school board. There is no recommendation as to the size of the committee but equal representation from grade-levels, content areas and stakeholder groups is recommended.

**6. We have an efficient professional development team in place. Can the district propose that an existing leadership or professional development team serve as the TQC?**

Yes. There may be current groups or teams in place in a district that can serve in the capacity of the Teacher Quality Committee or as advisors to the Teacher Quality Committee. The most important consideration is that the members of the committee are able to commit to fulfilling the responsibilities presented in Iowa Code.

**7. May the administration appoint a teacher to serve on the Teacher Quality Committee as one of the administrator "slots?"**

For example can the administration appoint a non-association member teacher to serve on the committee as an administrative designee? Iowa Code 284.4(1)"c" states, "The committee shall have equal representation of administrators and teachers. The teacher members shall be appointed by the certified employee organization if one exists, and if not, by the school district's or agency's administration." The only case where administration may appoint teachers to the committee is in the situation where there is no certified employee organization. Even in that situation, teachers appointed do not fill administrator "slots." The administrators appointed must be acting in an administrative role within the district. The members of the Teacher Quality Committee may mutually agree to have additional ex officio members to advise them on effective professional development design and practice (e.g. AEA curriculum specialists). Districts with existing consortia agreements for PD may also elect to meet with other district Teacher Quality Committees in order to better inform their decisions.

**8. What are the responsibilities of the Teacher Quality Committee?**

- A. Monitor the implementation of the requirements of statutes and administrative code provisions relating to this chapter (284), including requirements that affect any agreement negotiated pursuant to chapter 20.
- B. Monitor the evaluation requirements of this chapter to ensure evaluations are conducted in a fair and consistent manner throughout the school district or agency. The committee shall develop model evidence for the Iowa teaching standards and criteria. The model evidence will minimize paperwork and focus on teacher improvement. The model evidence will determine which standards and criteria can be met with observation and which evidence meets multiple standards and criteria.
- C. Determine the use and distribution of the professional development funds calculated and paid to the school district or agency as provided in section 257.9 or section 257.10 based upon school district or agency, attendance center, and individual teacher and professional development plans.
- D. Monitor the professional development in each attendance center to ensure that the professional development meets school district or agency, attendance center, and individual professional development plans.
- E. Determine the compensation for teachers on the committee for work responsibilities required beyond the normal work day

**9. May a district opt out of receiving the professional development funds?**

No, all districts and AEAs must participate in all aspects of the Student Achievement and Teacher Quality program, including professional development.

**10. Does the TQC approve professional development plans (district, attendance center or individual)?**

No. The TQC does not have the authority to develop nor approve any professional development plans. The Committee does have the responsibility to determine the use and distribution of professional development funds to support the various types of plans. The use of the funds should be "balanced" with the three overall levels of professional development plans: district, attendance center, and individual.

**11. Who decides or approves the PD plan?**

The district PD plan is part of the Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP) and the procedures for approving the CSIP must be followed. **If the TQC doesn't decide on the individual plans, how can we make decisions about the distribution of funds for the three levels of plans?** Individual professional development plans are developed between the evaluator and the educator. These plans can be developed individually or with a team of teachers. The content of these plans is not public and TQC meetings are subject to open meeting laws. It is recommended that a majority of the money go to district and attendance center plans. This is based on the research that shows the professional development most likely to improve student achievement is a collective-team effort, data driven, frequent and sustained over time and connects pedagogy, content and students.

**12. If the TQC agrees to recommend equal distribution for funds and administration agrees, will this be acceptable?**

Yes. The TQC can recommend equal distribution of funds between the three groups. The use of funds shall be balanced between school district, attendance center, and individual professional development plans, making every reasonable effort to provide equal access to all teachers.

**13. Does the selected professional development need to be evidence or research based?**

Yes. IAC 284.6 does state that all professional development plans, including district, attendance center, and individual plans must follow the IPDM as outlined. Professional development must contain evidence or research based instructional strategies aligned with the school district's student achievement needs and the improvement goals established by the district.

**14. One of the duties of the TQC is to monitor the district teacher evaluation requirements. Does this monitoring include teacher dismissal processes per Iowa Code Chapter 279?**

The TQC responsibility to monitor the evaluation is limited to the processes outlined in Iowa Code Chapter 284 and that those processes are "conducted in a fair and consistent manner throughout the school district or agency." Other employment issues are addressed in Iowa Code Chapter 279 and are not the responsibility of this committee.

**15. Does the monitoring of the teacher evaluation requirements include having the committee review an individual teacher's evaluation?**

No, "monitor" means to review the process by which teachers are evaluated to ensure the overall process is fair and consistent. Any concerns about the evaluation process should be highlighted by the committee and reported to the certified employee organization and the board.

**16. Can the building administrator determine the individual teacher professional development plan goals?**

All goals are to be based, at a minimum, on the needs of the teacher, the Iowa Teaching Standards, and the student achievement goals of the attendance center and the school district. There is a provision in the Teacher Quality Act that the individual plans are to have goals beyond the attendance center PD plan. The goals are to be set in cooperation with the career teacher and the teacher's evaluator. The individual plan should align with the attendance center and district plan. It is clear that the plan needs to be developed in cooperation with the teacher and evaluator (with consultation with the supervisor if the evaluator is not the supervisor.) It is appropriate for the individual plans to be a team plan, and it is possible for all plans to be the same or similar if teachers have cooperatively developed similar goals as part of a collaborative process.

**17. How will the work of the TQC be monitored?**

The district plan is monitored via the CSIP process. The distribution of PD funds is reported on the Basic Educational Data Survey (BEDS).

**Additional Information Regarding Professional Development Funding:**

Professional development funding (Iowa Code Chapter 284.6) The Legislature provides funding to be used for local district and AEA professional development purposes as stipulated in Iowa Code 257.9. The use of the funds includes "...providing professional development to teachers, including additional salaries for time beyond the normal negotiated agreement; pay for substitute teachers, professional development materials, speakers, and professional development content; and costs associated with implementing the individual professional development plans."

The district administration/board no longer have sole authority to determine use of these funds. These funds may not supplant existing funding for professional development activities (e.g. general fund, federal funding sources, carryover of state P.D. funds from the previous school year, etc.). Districts are required to certify to the Iowa Department of Education (DE) how funds received were used.

**NOTE: The [2017 changes](#) that may affect use and distribution of funds:  
Flexibility Account**

*2017 Iowa Acts chapter 154, House File 565 increased district flexibility in how unexpended, unobligated amounts from certain categorical funds can be used by creation and utilization of a Flexibility Account within the General Fund. Effective with the budget year beginning July 1, 2017 (fiscal year 2018), a school district may authorize transfer of all or any portion of unexpended, unobligated amounts remaining at the end the fiscal year from the following categorical funds to the Flexibility Account: Preschool Foundation Aid, Professional Development Supplement, and Home School Assistance Program. Additionally, a school district may transfer all or a portion of any unexpended and unobligated moneys in any other school district fund or school district general fund account if the program, purpose, or requirements for the expenditure of such moneys have been repealed or are no longer in effect.*

*Before the board of directors may adopt a resolution approving expenditures from the Flexibility Account, it must hold a public hearing on the proposed resolution, which must include certain information prescribed by statute. The board is required to publish notice of the time and the place of the public hearing not less than ten nor more than twenty days before the hearing in the same manner as required in Iowa Code section 24.9, using the form prescribed by the Department.*

**18. Once the TQC determines how the PD funds will be distributed, does the school board need to approve?**

No. The statute says this committee is to “determine” use and distribution of funds, not “make a recommendation” about use and distribution of funds. However, if funds are moved into the flexibility account, the use of those funds is a board decision.

**19. What if the TQC cannot reach an agreement on the use of professional development funds?**

The funds may only be used for professional development purposes and would be carried into the following school year. If agreement is not reached, the funds may not be equally distributed to teachers as salary. Note that the district must report annually to the Department how professional development funds are used. If your committee is having a hard time reaching consensus, then it may want to obtain some technical assistance on consensus building and decision making. If no decision is made, then the money needs to be carried over to the next year.

**20. Can professional development funds be used to hire substitutes for teachers' classrooms so the teacher may participate in professional development?**

Yes. Once that decision has been made about the content for district or attendance center professional development, the TQC may determine how to use funds to support the district or attendance center plans as long as that professional development selection follows the Iowa Professional Development Model.

**21. How does the board determine what constitutes the difference between a hiring bonus vs. salary incentive?**

A hiring bonus is a one-time recruitment tool used for initial hiring of a teacher into a position. The bonus is not subject to negotiation and bargaining. A salary incentive is used as a retention tool and is subject to negotiation and bargaining.

**22. Can TQC funds be used to pay teachers for curriculum writing or to hire substitutes to release teachers during the workday to write curriculum?**

Curriculum writing by itself is not considered PD. When the individuals make the decisions about the content of PD plans, they need to be aware that the research shows the need for a guaranteed and viable curriculum. However, PD should be focused on the skills and strategies that educators need to implement the curriculum in the classroom. The IPDM and rules for district and attendance center plans require that professional development include student achievement data and analysis, theory, classroom demonstration and practice, observation and reflection, teacher collaboration and study of implementation and coaching. The analysis of curriculum and the analysis of instructional strategies used in the classroom may be a part of the planning cycle as described in the IPDM. Committee work to adopt, map, or maintain curriculum should not replace the time needed to learn new instructional practices. Other district funds should be used to support these efforts.

**23. Is it okay to buy equipment such as projectors, Smart Boards, etc., with PD funds?**

No. That was not the intent of this legislation.

**24. What professional development for nurses will meet the requirements for the Teacher Quality Act?**

School nurses who are eligible for the TQ program must complete an Individual Teacher Professional Development Plan, including the requirement that professional development be based on the Iowa Teaching Standards. When determining how to apply the Iowa Teaching Standards to the learning of a nurse, school nurses are encouraged to focus on the standards and consider nursing practices that align with the standards rather than focusing on the criteria statements that describe teaching practices. The individual plan also needs to address: • the needs of the "teacher" – (replace "teacher" with "nurse") • the student achievement goals of the district - consider professional development related to the health and well-being of students that school nurses need to know and be able to do that will contribute to student learning. Developing learning opportunities for nurses may be best accomplished through collaboration within AEAs or cross-district collaboration.

## **Iowa Code – Additional Teacher Quality Committee Citations**

[Iowa Legislature website](#)

- 257.9(9) professional development supplement
- 284.6 teacher quality professional development requirement  
Iowa Administrative Code (rule):
- 281 98.26 use of the professional development funding
- 281 83.6 professional development program