

FAQ: Coaching, Q Comp and other stipends

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Disclaimer: This publication is for informational purposes only and is not intended as a substitute for specific legal or other professional advice. If you have specific questions about your legal or contractual rights, contact your Education Minnesota field representative. This guidance will be updated periodically based on new information and guidance, so please refer back to this link for the most current information.

1. What will happen with stipends for spring sports and other spring extracurricular activities?

Right now there is not a consistent answer across the state, and this issue is being handled on a district-by-district basis. We know this is frustrating for members. Some districts are paying a pro-rated amount for activities already completed, other districts are paying full stipends (usually when activities are also being provided in a distance format), and many districts are still in discussion with how to handle stipends moving forward. A full list of what districts around the state are doing with respect to coaching stipends for high school sports has been compiled based on information by athletic directors and shared by the [Minnesota High School Coaches Association](#). It is available [here](#). *If you believe any information in this document is incorrect, inform your athletic director and ask them to make the change.*

The bottom line is that you are entitled to be paid for work you have completed. However, if you are going to be providing remote participation opportunities, you should make sure you have the approval of your district.

2. But I thought the governor said no one would lose any money because of the school closures, and the district budgeted for these amounts. Can't you force them to pay me anyway?

For work that was completed prior to the school closures, yes, there are contractual claims that can be enforced, most likely through the grievance procedure if the stipends are part of your collective bargaining agreement. Unfortunately for work that has not yet been started, it is a more complicated situation, and there is not a straightforward legal claim that can be enforced. In addition, [Minn. Stat. § 122A.33](#) specifically allows districts to non-renew all coaching contracts at-will between seasons.

We are hopeful that districts will be willing to work with their coaches and advisors to continue spring activities as much as possible, and pay full or at least partial stipends.

3. [Updated 4-28-20] If I know I won't be getting my spring stipend, can I apply for unemployment?

If you have a full-time job, and your coach/advisor duties were in addition to that full-time job, then you would not be eligible for unemployment. The state of Minnesota requires that someone be unemployed or working substantially reduced hours in order to qualify for unemployment. While we recognize that coaches and

advisors work significant hours on their spring activities, work that is done in addition to a full-time job would not qualify for unemployment benefits.

4. What if the district pays over X pay periods throughout the year, and now I won't be coaching/advising my activity? Will I have to pay that money back?

If you have already been paid in part for work that has not begun or not been completed, we highly encourage you to work with your district to complete as much of the spring activity as possible. Specific instances of pre-emptive pay and potential liability to pay it back if no activities occur would need to be addressed based on what is included in the coaching or advising agreement. Please get in touch with your field representative if you are told you need to pay already distributed stipend money back.

5. What if I started work on the spring activity before the closures?

You are entitled to be compensated for this work, and if you are not paid for it, your local and Education Minnesota can help you enforce that right. It would likely be a pro-rated amount based on the work that was completed. However, your administration may be willing to allow you to continue the activity in a remote format and receive the entire stipend. As [this list](#) shared by the Minnesota High School Coaches Association demonstrates, some districts are allowing this option.

6. [Updated 4-28-20] What if I am meeting with participants using technology?

We encourage advisors and coaches to explore options for remote participation and provide opportunities for students that do not require in-person meetings. For example, much of yearbook production is now digital and this could be a strong option for the advisor to be able to get most of all of their stipend. Plays and concerts would be much harder, but with creativity and planning a virtual concert or a livestreamed play could be an option. Athletic events would be the most challenging, as it is extremely unlikely that any in-person sporting events will be held this season.

Many students (and their parents) want to remain physically active during this time, so coaches could consider creating virtual training programs in the same way that many gyms are doing for group fitness classes. See [this list](#) of Minnesota districts that are currently doing distance coaching. However, all coaches and advisors would need to be mindful about keeping these activities accessible and equitable, since not all students would have access to internet or video conferencing. **If you are currently providing options for participants using technology, you should check with your district about any changes that might need to be made as a result of the recent cancellation of the spring season by the Minnesota State High School League.**

7. [Updated 4-28-20] I'm not currently working with participants remotely, but I want to start. How do I do that?

You can approach your athletic director and school administration to communicate your desire to provide participation options in a distance or remote format. **It would be helpful to have a plan or proposal prepared to**

show how this is feasible and to address the cancellation of the spring season by the Minnesota State High School League (see next question for additional information). You could also provide [this list](#) of districts across the state that are paying coaches and advisors in full. Some of these districts are paying coaches with the expectation that they perform distance coaching; others are not.

8. [Updated 4-28-20] Has the Minnesota State High School League made any decisions about spring sports or activities?

Yes. On April 23, following the extension of distance learning for the remainder of the school year, the Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL) announced the cancellation of all sports and MSHSL activities for the remainder of the 2019-20 school year. This includes all participation in MSHSL events including, but not limited to, practices, tryouts, scrimmages, contests and competitions as well as post-season tournaments. With this cancellation, all athletics are out of season. The provisions of Bylaw 208—Non-School Competition and Training are in effect. It appears the most relevant portion of bylaw 200.08 is summer practices, which does allow for “camps, clinics/non-school teams, provided that these summer activities are voluntary and they are not influenced or directed to participate by a salaried or non-salaried member of the student’s sophomore, B-squad, junior varsity or varsity high school coaching staff in that sport.” See the full bylaws [here](#).

This action may impact your ability to provide any remote or distance options for sports or spring activities. It is also possible that districts that have been allowing remote options will now change course as a result of the official cancellation of spring activities. If you have been operating an athletic program or extracurricular activity that is overseen by MSHSL remotely, we recommend contacting your local union leadership to help engage your athletic director and/or district administration in a discussion regarding the remainder of the season.

9. Is anyone else advocating that we be paid in part or in full as coaches and advisors?

The Minnesota High School Coaches Association has released a statement urging all districts to pay coaches and advisors in full for spring activities. They include a detailed rationale that may be helpful when advocating with districts that are not currently planning to pay coaches and advisors any of their stipends. It can be [found here](#).

10. What about Q Comp?

Q Comp is also somewhat in flux. However, most people expecting Q Comp should be able to receive all or part of it. MDE has released a [set of guidelines](#) around Q Comp and Teacher Development and Evaluation. All parties should work together to maximize flexibility and practicality so that educators can focus on the unprecedented task of providing equitable distance learning to students. Any changes to Q Comp plans should be made through MOUs so that all parties are clear on obligations and so that they are enforceable. Those MOUs should include a sunset and language explaining that they are intended to address the particular circumstances of this year.

Additional guidance from Education Minnesota on Q Comp and TDE during distance learning is [available for members only here](#).

11. What if I've already completed the majority of the work for Q Comp?

Our position is again that you are entitled to be paid for the work you have completed. If you have a district telling you that you will not receive payment for already completed work, please contact your local union leadership or Education Minnesota field representative.