

Integrated Field Review Report

REPORT

May 26, 2020

Essex North Supervisory Union
Draft Final Report
Site Visit: March 10, 2020

Compiled by:

Essex North Visiting IFR Team

Submitted by

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Schools & Enrollment

School	Approximate Enrollment	Grade Span
Canaan Elementary	110	PK-8
Canaan Memorial H.S.	85	9-12

Essex North Supervisory Union (ENSU) participated in the Vermont Agency of Education's Integrated Field Review (IFR) on 10 March 2020.

Preceding the visit, the Visiting Team reviewed artifacts provided by ENSU. During the full day visit, the Visiting Team participated in interviews of the Superintendent, Director of Student Support, Business Administrator, counseling staff, intervention staff, teaching staff, students and parents. In addition, the Visiting Team observed classroom instruction and other ENSU learning environments through observations and facilities tours led by students.

The Visiting Team gathered data regarding the implementation of Education Quality Standards across the system related to Academic Proficiency, Personalization, Safe Healthy Schools, High Quality Staffing, and Investment Priorities.

Visiting Team

Name	Role	Organization
Jenn Lindert	H.S. Special Education	Caledonia Central SU
Mike Moriarity	Curriculum Coordinator	Orleans Central SU
Angelique Brown	Principal	Orleans Central SU
Josh Souliere	Asst Director of Education Quality	VT Agency of Education
Kevin Doering (lead)	Education Quality Coordinator	VT Agency of Education

Academic Proficiency

The Vermont Education Quality Standards prioritize a coordinated curriculum in all subjects for each Supervisory Union/District that is aligned to the standards adopted by the State, instruction in all subjects and the transferable skills, a local assessment system for determining student achievement, multi-tiered systems of support for learners in meeting those standards and participation in the State assessment system.

Findings:

Curriculum Coordination

1. Vertical alignment of curriculum is in progress for content areas in different grade levels.
2. Teachers are provided collaboration time to focus on aligning curriculum and instruction.

Local Assessment System

1. Teachers use common local assessments (PNOA, F&P) to support learning in the lower grades.
2. Teachers use the NWEA (MAPS) in math, reading and writing to benchmark student learning in grades 2-11.

Instructional Practices

1. Teachers use a variety of instructional methods to support instruction (i.e, 1:1 check-ins, small group, whole group, individual).
2. Classroom visuals support the learning that is happening in the classroom.

Proficiency-Based Learning

1. ENSU is in the process of shifting to a proficiency-based system and has identified transferable skills.
2. Parents and students report a lack of understanding of what Proficiency-Based Learning (PBL) is.

Commendations

1. There is a local assessment system in place to support students meeting academic proficiencies in math and literacy. Furthermore, there are supports in place for students who need intervention and enrichment which is based on data.
2. Teachers have common planning time to support the alignment of curriculum, as well as to have conversations about student data and conversations about instructional pedagogy.

Recommendations

1. ENSU is encouraged to draft a “why” statement for Proficiency Based Learning, a professional development plan for Proficiency Based Learning, and a communication plan for students and parents to support their understanding of Proficiency Based Learning.

Personalization

The Vermont Education Quality Standards prioritize development of personalization through the creation and use of Personalized Learning Plans, flexible pathways to graduation, Career and Technical Education and instructional strategies that personalize learning for students.

Findings

Personalized Learning Plans

1. There is substantial evidence for personalized learning at the secondary level, but there is no documented Personalized Learning Plan format or process for the middle grades.

Flexible Pathways

1. Students report that they have a lot of flexible pathway opportunities at the 9-12 level, including dual enrollment, early college, online learning, work-based learning and online classes.

Full Breadth of Courses

1. Although small with less potential course selection available, ENSU has figured out how to provide learning opportunities to address student needs through partnerships with CCV, White Mountain Community College, other local schools, community partnerships, and other opportunities.
2. ENSU provides access to additional courses and opportunities and provides financial support and transportation for all classes attended.
3. Students and parents express appreciation of the interstate partnership agreement which provides additional learning opportunities for students.

Student Voice and Choice

1. Although we did observe some choice in the direction of learning at the middle school level, students reported minimal choice until the 9th grade.
2. Students at the middle and secondary level reported they had voice and choice through their student council and builders club.

Commendations

1. ENSU has developed a CTE program and multiple flexible pathways to meet student needs.
2. ENSU is commended for understanding declining enrollment and their inability to meet all of their student's needs by initiating key educational partnerships and exploring an interstate collaboration with neighboring schools.

Recommendations

1. ENSU should develop a formalized Personalized Learning Plan process that begins at the 7th grade, includes involvement of parents and students in the development process, and learning communicated through student led conferences.

Safe Healthy Schools

The Vermont Education Quality Standards prioritize the establishment of learning environments that promote the social and physical health of students, facilities that promote learning and security, support for preventing disciplinary infractions and responding appropriately when transgressions occur and engaging in inter-agency work to support students beyond the school day.

Findings

Multi-tiered System of Supports

1. Interventionists were found to work across grade levels; ENSU offers a What I need (WIN) block where students can access support from their teachers directly.
2. According to staff interviews, there has been a recent dramatic improvement in special education services and collaboration.

Social/Emotional Health

1. According to artifact, observational, and interview evidence, Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports is now instituted and is in its first or second year per school. A significant amount of professional development has been invested in Positive Behavior Intervention and Support training.
2. ENSU is working on social- emotional using a partnership with NEKLS, an in-place counselor and a weekly behavioral counselor visit.

Physical Environment

1. According to artifact evidence, students are offered an array of athletic opportunities and secondary students are able to draft independent fitness plans.
2. According to observation and student interviews, students are offered a variety of snack choices and eating times if they are hungry.
3. Interior spaces were welcoming and bright and restrooms appeared safe, private and accommodating.

Physical Well Being

1. According to observational and interview evidence, certain school building maintenance has been neglected for years, for example, inconsistent heating throughout both buildings.
2. A one million bond was just passed and much of this is expected to be used for building upgrades and addressing accessibility issues.

Commendations

1. ENSU is commended for the improvement in special education along with culture and climate which was reported upon by many of the interviewees.
2. ENSU is commended for their work with Multi-tiered System of Supports and intervention work on behalf of its students.

Recommendations

1. ENSU is encouraged to continue their renewed efforts in the physical maintenance needs of their building and should address unsafe situations as soon as possible.

High Quality Staffing

The Vermont Education Quality Standards prioritize the role of all school leaders in improving student learning and establish the expectation that school leaders will have sufficient time to carry out their responsibilities in order to focus on improving student learning by ensuring that professional staff are appropriately licensed, a system of appropriate needs-based professional learning is available and aligned with staff evaluation and supervision policies, continuous improvement.

Findings

Professional Development

1. Staff report 7 professional development days per year; most stated they have input into the subject matter selected for the professional development days.
2. There has been a recent emphasis on Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports and other social/emotional training.

Staff Evaluation

1. The Danielson model is used, along with Teach Scape and walk throughs.
2. Staff report twice a year evaluations for the first 5 years, and once a year through their 10th year. After that there appears to be no annual requirements, however all report leadership visits to their classrooms.

Leadership

1. Due to their size, dual roles for many staff are expected and implemented as needed.
2. According to interview
3. evidence, there is a general degree of respect for leadership within ENSU.

Staffing

1. According to interview evidence, turnover rates for teachers is a serious concern.
2. According to artifact and interview evidence, there is a concerted effort to collaborate with NH teachers in order to provide more opportunities for ENSU students.

Commendations

1. ENSU has fostered a positive staff- administration relationship which is seen in evaluations, professional development, and the willingness of staff to take on additional roles whenever needed.
2. ENSU is reaching out to expand learning opportunities for its students by having staff work with counterparts in adjacent NH Districts.

Recommendations

1. ENSU should consider conducting additional surveys from recently departed as well as current staff, in order to learn more about the causes and possible remedies for reducing staff turnover.

Investment Priorities

The Vermont Education Quality Standards require that Supervisory Unions carry out their work in accordance with the fundamentals of accounting procedures, provide the full range and breadth of resources, and facilities to support student learning while doing so at a funding level supported by the local community and conduct the business of schooling in accordance with laws that govern education.

Findings

Continuous Improvement Planning

1. Teachers, parents and students report they are not a contributing member in the development of the school's Continuous Improvement Plan, and only teachers indicated they were aware that one exists.

Student Data System

1. Essex North utilizes Web2School as their student information and management system, which teachers indicate meets their needs to begin to inform data- based decision making, along with other local and state assessment data.

Financial Alignment

1. The Essex North Supervisory Union and a neighboring New Hampshire School Administrative Unit have formed a study committee to explore options to better serve area students and communities academically and fiscally.
2. Evidence indicates students and teachers have access to the instructional and professional materials they need, including access to technology in the classroom.

Communication

1. Evidence from teacher and parent interviews indicate the school effectively communicates through various channels, including phone calls, face to face meetings, the website, Facebook, and letters home.

Commendations

1. ENSU has effective and consistent communications with parents, students and teachers through several methods of delivery.
2. ENSU continues to explore financial improvement, most recently with a neighboring New Hampshire SAU.

Recommendations

1. ENSU should explore ways to better involve students, teachers, and parents in the development and communication of their Continuous Improvement Plan.