

Integrated Field Review Report

REPORT

December 18, 2018

**Greater Rutland County Supervisory Union
Final Report**

Site Visit: December 4, 2018

Submitted by Kevin Doering



Schools & Enrollment

| School | Approximate Enrollment | Grade Span |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|------------|
| Middletown Springs Elementary | 78 | PK-6 |
| Poultney Elementary | 217 | PK-6 |
| Poultney High School | 192 | 7-12 |
| Proctor Elementary | 138 | PK-6 |
| Proctor Jr./Sr. High School | 114 | 7-12 |
| Rutland Town School | 326 | PK-8 |
| Wells Village School | 93 | PK-6 |
| West Rutland School | 344 | PK-12 |

Greater Rutland County Supervisory Union (GRCSU) participated in the Vermont Agency of Education's Integrated Field Review (IFR) on December 4, 2018.

During the afternoon of the IFR training, the Visiting Team reviewed artifacts provided by GRCSU. During the full day visit, the Visiting Team participated in interviews of the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Director of Curriculum, Director of Student Services, Director of Technology, counseling staff, intervention staff, teaching staff, students, parents, and administrators. In addition, the Visiting Team observed classroom instruction and other GRCSU 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 |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Amy Sears | Special Educator | Addison Central SD |
| Barbara Collette | Interventionist | Addison Central SD |
| Catharine Canavan | Classroom Teacher | Addison Central SD |
| Christine Noonan | Elementary Teacher | Rutland Northeast SU |
| Fernanda Canales | Elementary Principal | Addison Central SD |
| Jim Avery | M/HS Principal | Rutland Northeast SU |
| Kate Geno | Social Studies Teacher | Rutland City Public Schools |
| Kate Troy | Academic Interventionist | Rutland City Public Schools |
| Natasha Causton | HS Language Arts | Addison Central SD |
| Nathan Morris | HS Science Teacher | Addison-Rutland SU |
| Peter Garrect | Special Educator | Addison Northwest SD |
| Sara Audy | Literacy Coach | Mount Abraham Unified USD |
| Stephanie Taylor | HS Principal | Addison Northwest SD |
| Sue Brileya | Elem. School Counselor | Addison Northwest SD |
| Sue Cody | Elementary Teacher | Rutland City Public Schools |
| Teann McCrea | Primary Teacher | Addison-Rutland SU |
| Kevin Doering | Education Quality Coordinator | Agency of Education |
| Ron Ryan | Manager for Licensing Office | Agency of Education |
| Emma Louie | MTSS Coordinator | Agency of Education |
| Laura Baker | Learning Disabilities Consultant | Agency of Education |
| Greg Young | STEM Coordinator | Agency of Education |
| Toni Marra | Personalization Team | Agency of Education |
| Liza Hartlyn | Education Quality Coordinator | Agency of Education |
| Donna Stafford | Education Quality Assurance Manager | Agency of Education |
| Amy Scalabrini | Education Program Coordinator | Agency of Education |

Academic Proficiency

The Vermont Education Quality Standards prioritize a coordinated curriculum in all subjects for each Supervisory Union 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. Teachers reported that early release Tuesdays allow teachers time for professional development and collaboration.
2. Based on observations in multiple schools, including elementary schools, the SU offers foreign language classes.

Instructional Practices

1. Learning targets were posted in several places in classrooms across the district.
2. Based on observations, classrooms across the district exhibit a wide range of technology for students to use.
3. In some schools, there is evidence of growth mindset, based on signage displaying growth mindset and perseverance.
4. Parents expressed concern over poor reading scores connected to a lack of reading emphasis - students must test out of reading before taking a language, a graduation requirement, and many students are having difficulty doing that.

Local Assessment System

1. Based on teacher interviews in multiple schools the SU uses Jump Rope as a Proficiency Based Gradebook.
2. Interviewees report that assessment is connected to the curriculum, and staff use results to inform decisions about instruction and interventions.

Proficiency-Based Learning

1. Based on teacher, parent and student interviews, the SU is in various stages of implementing a proficiency-based grading system.
2. Multiple teachers and parents report proficiency based grading is potentially reducing student motivation in some schools and adversely impacting transferable skills (deadlines etc.)

Commendations

1. Observations reveal that learning was student-centered; students have freedom of choice and are engaged in their learning in preK-12.
2. Based on observations in multiple schools, there is strong evidence of technology use and integration in the SU.

Recommendations

1. The SU should consider focusing on improving reading proficiency so that students can stay on track for graduation.

2. SU needs to review alignment between proficiency-based standards and grading, communicate with parents, students, and staff about the processes, and coordinate additional proficiency-based grading professional development.

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. Evidence indicates that Personalized Learning Plan (PLP) development and understanding is disparate across the SU, which varies from lack of awareness, knowledge, and understanding of PLPs to initial and full implementation.
2. Evidence reveals that schools are using a variety of systems to develop and maintain PLPs, including Naviance, Protean, and Google Sites.

Flexible Pathways

1. The SU reports offering multiple opportunities for flexible pathways at the 7-12 level, including internships, dual enrollment, onsite college courses, and online course opportunities. Opportunities in elementary schools were varied.

Full Breadth of Courses

1. Evidence reveals that at the elementary level, instruction focuses on the needs of struggling learners; there is less focus on the needs of students who are excelling.
2. At the high school level, evidence indicates that students are offered enrichment courses, but fewer opportunities for intervention.

Student Voice and Choice

1. Evidence indicates that students have many choices about learning topics and strategies for demonstrating learning.
2. In general, students have options to tailor their learning environment, for example- text options, seating arrangements, etc.,

Commendations

1. Students have many options for course work, such as online courses, college courses, independent studies, etc.
2. Students have many opportunities to make choices about their learning environment and how they demonstrate learning.

Recommendations

1. The SU should consider a consistent, articulated approach to PLPs through professional development, parent/community involvement, and student involvement.
2. The SU should consider equity in breadth of coursework and instructional supports to accommodate the needs of students who are proficient or excelling and students who are below proficient.

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. Evidence demonstrates that the SU provides behavioral supports to meet student needs, including PBIS, Responsive Classroom, and staffing configurations.
2. Evidence reveals that academic supports are provided through tiered instruction from highly qualified educators using data for decision making, and the use of flexible, fluid groupings to meet student needs.

Social/Emotional Health

1. Staff report that PBIS is being used in varying degrees across the supervisory union, with some schools using it for several years with great results, and others just starting or not using it.
2. Staff report that they have adequate support staff available to accommodate most academic and behavioral needs of students. Additionally, they plan to analyze academic and behavioral data for additional needs, such as trauma or other mental health issues.

Physical Well-Being

1. Students and staff report feeling safe at school and parents also express that they believe the school is a safe place.
2. Schools provide opportunities for students to access physical activities and resources inside and outdoors to contribute to overall physical health and well-being.

Physical Environment

1. Behavioral expectations, student work, student projects, positive messages, resources for supports, and instructional resources are included/displayed in classrooms, hallways, and other learning environments.
2. Observational data reveal flexible seating arrangements and configurations across grade levels (primary, elementary, middle, high school) to meet student learning and social emotional needs.

Commendations

1. Students and parents across the supervisory union speak highly of the teachers, staff, and administrators within their buildings and felt they were safe, well supported; they report having a trusted adult to whom they could approach with concerns.
2. Staff report embracing a growth mindset about addressing the changing needs of their students in both the academic and behavior/social-emotional sides of the MTSS model.

Recommendations

1. Based on reports from families, staff and students, the SU should secure additional staffing and resources to support students affected by trauma and other mental health issues.

2. As the district continues to move through the merger process, the SU should consider building capacity locally by identifying and spreading existing strengths among schools.

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. Evidence indicates that all schools in the district have an early release day on Tuesday's for Professional Learning Communities, and this is the first year that PLCs are being used district wide.
2. Evidence indicates that much of the district sponsored professional development opportunities are focusing on personalization of learning and proficiency based learning and assessment.

Staff Evaluation

1. Teachers report that that the principal routinely completes staff evaluations.
2. It was clear through interviews with teachers that there is a district wide process that is still being formalized that is used for evaluating staff.

Leadership

1. Through interviews with staff and parents, local school leadership is held in high esteem.
2. From interviews with parents and staff, there still is some discomfort around the merger into a single Supervisory Union.

Staffing

1. Staffing levels and student teacher ratios vary from school to school within the Supervisory Union.
2. It was evident that there was a wide range of experience of teachers throughout the district.

Commendations

1. Students and parents demonstrated respect for their strong teaching staff throughout the district.
2. Staff report that they now have a technology coach that supports their schools/both teachers and students.

Recommendations

1. According to interviews with parents and staff, clearer communication around the policy, procedures, programming, staffing, and distribution of resources need further clarification.
2. Continue developing staff evaluation process.

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. Observational data demonstrates math and literacy interventionists/coaches facilitate Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and team meetings in grade level cluster groups.
2. As per interviews, central office staff report the need for coaching for staff in the area of social-emotional learning and mental health support for students.
3. Students and teachers report lack of awareness of the CIP process, and whether students or teachers had participated.

Student Data System

1. The GRC SU has many different platforms for student management, data management and financial data (e.g., Alpine, Infinite Campus, Jump Rope)
2. Interviewees report a lack of consistency across schools regarding the use of student data to inform decision making.

Financial Alignment

1. Teachers, parents and students report a 1:1 Chromebooks initiative in technology for grades 7-12; however, the Wi-Fi needs improvement and students in grades K-6 have only a shared classroom set of Chromebooks.
2. Some teachers report inequities in resource distribution, based on classroom budgets, while others share that classroom budgets are more than adequate for materials and resources.

Communication

1. While students and teachers report lack of awareness of the CIP process and uncertainty regarding educator input, central office personnel claim they sought input and feedback from schools.
2. With a variety of platforms for communication (e.g., Alpine, JumpRope, Infinite Campus, Naviance, and Google Sites), some parents report that students and teachers may lack clarity about the purposes of each.

Commendations

1. Schools seem to be adequately resourced with technology and other supplies.
2. The SU is using their financial resources to promote educational innovation, such as online learning, independent learning opportunities, and focusing on proficiency-based teaching and learning.

Recommendations

1. The SU should improve communication strategies between central offices and schools and between schools and families.
2. The SU should increase staff participation in the development of the CIP and the budget.