

Integrated Field Review Report

REPORT

November 7, 2018

**Mount Abraham Unified School District
Final Report
Site Visit: October 23, 2018**

Submitted by Kevin Doering



Schools & Enrollment

School	Approximate Enrollment	Grade Span
Mt. Abraham Middle and High School	656	7-12
Bristol Elementary	256	PK-6
Beeman Elementary	96	K-6
Monkton Central School	153	K-6
Lincoln Community School	118	K-6
Robinson Elementary	155	K-6

Mount Abraham Unified School District participated in the Vermont Agency of Education's Integrated Field Review (IFR) on October 23, 2018.

During the afternoon of the IFR training, the Visiting Team reviewed artifacts provided by Mount Abraham Unified School District. During the full day visit, the Visiting Team participated in interviews with the Superintendent, Director of Curriculum/Grants Manager, Business Manager, counseling staff, intervention staff, teaching staff, students, parents, and administrators. In addition, the Visiting Team viewed classroom instruction and other Mount Abraham Unified School District 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
Andy Kepes	Director of CIA	Rutland Northeast SU
Casey O'Meara	Director of Curriculum	Addison-Rutland SU
Christine Kamm	Director of Student Services	Greater Rutland County SU
Glenn Olson	STC Director	Rutland City Public Schools
Jay Slenker	Principal	Rutland City Public Schools
Kathryn Byrne	Special Educator	Greater Rutland County SU
Linda Horn	Math Instructional Coach	Rutland Northeast SU
Linda Mullin	Elementary Teacher	Greater Rutland County SU
Melissa Theis	Guidance Counselor	Greater Rutland County SU
Pat Quenneville	Elementary Teacher	Rutland Northeast SU
Sabrina Westdijk	Classroom Teacher	Addison Central SD
Vicki Wells	Assistant Superintendent of Student Services	Addison Central SD
William Lawson	HS Principal	Addison Central SD
Kevin Doering	Education Quality Coordinator	Agency of Education
Ron Ryan	Manager for Licensing Office	Agency of Education
Liza Hartlyn	Education Quality Coordinator	Agency of Education
Greg Young	English/Language Arts Coordinator	Agency of Education
Amy Scalabrini	Education Program Coordinator	Agency of Education
Toni Marra	Personalization Team	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. Evidence revealed significant changes to implementation to ensure consistency and coordination of curriculum across the SD.
2. Evidence indicated work underway to coordinate curriculum within individual schools with less evidence that this is occurring throughout the district.

Instructional Practices

1. In K-6 schools, the classrooms were multi-aged but students are divided according to age for instruction in Mathematics and English Language Arts.
2. Learning targets were posted in some, but not all of the classrooms observed.
3. Observational data indicated a high percentage of student engagement in most classrooms visited.

Local Assessment System

1. Evidence revealed that MAUSD uses district-wide universal screeners.
2. Evidence indicated that MAUSD uses a standard cut off score for passing students, and for level three interventions.

Proficiency-Based Learning

1. Evidence accrued through artifacts and interviews indicates that proficiency based learning is being adopted with challenges.
2. Observational data indicated that learning targets were posted in some, but not all of the classrooms.

Commendations

1. Observations indicated that there was a high level of student engagement in all visited classrooms.
2. Evidence from interviews revealed a consistent theme of support for students and community.

Recommendations

1. MAUSD should consider emphasizing the importance of posting learning targets in all classrooms, across all schools.
2. As change occurs, MAUSD staff should be transparent about communicating changes clearly.

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 revealed inconsistent use of personalized learning plans throughout the district.
2. Staff reported a continuum is being developed to help increase the use of personalized learning plans.

Flexible Pathways

1. Evidence revealed that the district is offering flexible pathways to students, including career and technical education and dual enrollment.
2. Students reported having access to multiple career center opportunities.

Full Breadth of Courses

1. Evidence revealed a full breadth of courses is available for higher level students with less options at the lower grades.
2. Evidence showed that Art, Music and PE are offered at all levels.

Student Voice and Choice

1. Observational evidence revealed multiple teachers offering students voice and choice during instruction via technology.
2. Observational evidence revealed choices offered in the classroom environment, including flexibility in seating, choices about with whom they worked, and choices regarding when and where they completed their work.

Commendations

1. As noticed in observations, student voice and choice is fostered at all levels in the district.
2. Evidence indicated that students in upper grades are using a variety of flexible pathways offered.

Recommendations

1. MAUSD should continue to apply the continuum toward increased use of personalized learning plans, and develop students' strengths, interests, and goal development.
1. MAUSD should ensure a more diverse breadth of course offerings at all levels for students.

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. Observations revealed the use of a Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports model. Schools are in various stages of implementation.
2. Evidence revealed that all schools have a dedicated intervention block in which teachers and interventionists provide data-driven support to students.

Social/Emotional Health

1. At all schools, students reported having a trusted adult whom they could turn to for support.
2. Students, staff, and parents reported a strong sense of community
3. Evidence revealed that the district has a social emotional coach and interventionist.

Physical Well-Being

1. Students, parents, and staff reported that they feel safe at their schools.
2. Evidence revealed that most schools allocated sufficient time for lunch and recess.
3. Observational evidence indicated that students throughout the district were provided numerous opportunities to move throughout the day.

Physical Environment

1. Observational data revealed that schools were clean, organized, and free of debris; classrooms appeared bright, inviting, and well-supplied.
2. Observational data revealed that student work was displayed in classrooms and hallways.
3. Evidence revealed that schools have safety measures in place.
4. Staff, parents, and students reported having concerns about the physical condition of some buildings and grounds.

Commendations

1. Schools environments are welcoming and stakeholders feel safe and valued. Students are well-known by adults.
2. Students have a high-level of supports and are able to articulate behavioral expectations.

Recommendations

1. MAUSD should increase opportunities for staff input and ensure that changes are clearly communicated to the community.
2. MAUSD should evaluate and consider investment in the physical environment of some 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. Interviewed staff reported a need for a more cohesive professional development system that is aligned to current district priorities.
2. Artifacts and interviews indicated that schools are implementing Positive Behavior Intervention Supports and Proficiency Based Learning and Assessment; staff could not report a unified definition or approach to these systems.

Staff Evaluation

1. Staff reported district wide use of a supervision and evaluation document, based on the Danielson model
2. District personnel reported that goal setting is universal.

Leadership

1. Staff reported that the new merger has created opportunities to redefine roles and protocols around communication and decision-making.
2. Staff reported that the new unification structure has presented communication challenges, due to the shift from local to district level control.

Staffing

1. Interviewed teachers reported a need for clarification of roles and responsibilities of district personnel.
2. Observational data revealed a disparity in class sizes across and within buildings, resulting in perceptions of inequity among visiting team members.

Commendations

1. MAUSD offers multiple opportunities for community engagement, including hosting community forums to gather feedback from community members.
2. MAUSD administration has added roles and refocused positions to provide more targeted support to students and staff, despite budget cuts.

Recommendations

1. MAUSD should clarify protocols (i.e., for communication, decision-making, feedback, community involvement, and staff input) from central office to schools and community.
2. MAUSD should communicate clear, professional learning expectations and provide targeted professional development of Proficiency-based Learning, Positive Behavior Intervention Supports, and other adopted systems to help ensure fidelity in implementation.

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. Artifact and Interview data revealed that the district has a systemic, district-wide Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP); the plan focuses on assessment, equity, social/emotional learning and expertise in learning.
2. Artifact and interview data indicated that the CIP aligns with district goals and student outcomes.
3. Evidence revealed that the CIP is not well communicated among the schools and community.

Student Data System

1. Evidence revealed that MAUSD has efficient data systems and clear performance criteria, and results are clearly communicated to parents and community members.
2. Evidence revealed that student data systems support MAUSD's mission and vision to improve student outcomes.

Financial Alignment

1. Evidence indicated that most of the budget planning and decision making has moved to the district level, with principals providing input on a much smaller percentage of school budgets.
2. Observational data indicated that buildings are clean, well maintained, and classrooms were well equipped to support student learning.
3. Interviewees reported that financial concerns focused on personnel and less on resources or facilities.

Communication

1. Interviewees indicated that the MAUSD mission and vision were collaboratively developed among stakeholders and has been well communicated. However, staff also reported uncertainty about how they will be achieved.
2. MAUSD seeks budgetary input at community forums but teachers reported that they do not have a voice in the budget building process since consolidation.

Commendations

1. Since consolidation, MAUSD has demonstrated more efficiencies and continuity between schools, including synched schedules and work toward common Education Support Team systems.
2. MAUSD's CIP is clearly focused on improving learning for all students. Budgetary choices are influenced by the goals in the plan.

Recommendations

1. MAUSD should consider a technology audit to examine how students and teachers use technology.
2. MAUSD should continue to communicate with staff and other stakeholders about the implementation of the mission and the vision, and how they will measure the effectiveness of current strategies.