

Integrated Field Review Report

REPORT

March 28, 2019

Rutland Northeast Supervisory Union
Final Report
Site Visit: February 27, 2019

Compiled by the Rutland Northeast Visiting Team

Submitted by Donna Stafford



Schools & Enrollment

School	Approximate Enrollment	Grade Span
Barstow Memorial School	215	PK-8
Lothrop Elementary School	201	PK-6
Neshobe Elementary School	417	PK-6
Otter Creek Academy at Whiting	24	Pre School
Otter Creek Academy at Leicester	24	K-4
Otter Creek Academy at Sudbury	28	5-6
Otter Valley Union Middle/High School	557	7-12

Rutland Northeast Supervisory Union (RNESU) participated in the Vermont Agency of Education's Integrated Field Review (IFR) on February 27, 2019.

During the afternoon of the IFR training, the Visiting Team reviewed artifacts provided by RNESU. During the full day visit, the Visiting Team participated in interviews of the Superintendent, Director of Curriculum/Grants Manager, Business Manager, Instructional Coaches, counseling staff, intervention staff, teaching staff, students, parents, and administrators. In addition, the Visiting Team observed classroom instruction and other RNESU 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
Jenna Abateill	Teacher	Greater Rutland County SU
Rick Beal	Middle School Principal	Greater Rutland County SU
Amanda Bodell	Middle School Health Teacher	Mount Abraham Unified USD
Wayne (Skip) Cooke	Elementary Principal	Addison-Rutland SU
Krista Desabrais	Classroom Teacher	Addison Central SD
Andrew Hirsch	Classroom Teacher 5th grade	Addison Central SD
Bonnie Lenihan	Building-based Special Education Director	Addison-Rutland SU
Jeff Lester	School Counselor	Addison Central SD
Travis Park	Principal	Mount Abraham Unified USD
Greg Schillinger	Assistant Principal	Rutland City Public Schools
Nancy Spalding Ness	Guidance	Rutland City Public Schools
Caitlin Steele	Director of Teaching and Learning	Addison Central SD
Kevin Doering	Education Quality Assurance Coordinator	AOE
Ron Ryan	Program Manager for Educator Licensing	AOE
Greg Young	STEAM Specialist	AOE
Laura Baker	Learning Disabilities Consultant	AOE
Donna Stafford	Education Quality Manager	AOE

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 reveals that most schools within the district have regularly scheduled Professional Learning Communities (PLC) with areas of focus related to math and literacy.
2. Evidence indicates coordination in mathematics curriculum, with schools utilizing Bridges Math up to grade 5 and Illustrative Math in Grades 6-8.

Instructional Practices

1. Evidence indicates numerous academic support options available for students (e.g., before and after school supports, math and ELA coaches, and access to the Learning Center).
2. Evidence reveals that the SU is in the early stage of a multi-year consultant contract with the purpose of connecting proficiency-based learning to instructional practices at the upper level.

Local Assessment System

1. Evidence shows that some elementary schools use a standards-based report card.
2. Reports indicate that some schools are in the process of implementing student-led conferences, based on the age of the student. Other schools are already conducting and implementing student-led conferences.

Proficiency-Based Learning

1. Students across the SU report disparity in the level of understanding and/or experience with proficiency-based learning.
2. Parents report some push-back during the transition to proficiency-based report cards, since they did not fully define graduation proficiencies.

Commendations

1. The SU is making progress on many of the supporting elements required in a shift towards proficiency-based learning, including support services and flexible pathways.
2. The SU is being mindful about rolling out a core curriculum toward proficiency-based learning, while tending to the desires of the community and stakeholders.

Recommendations

1. The SU should consider leveraging their strengths to facilitate transition from a credit-based system to a proficiency-based system.
2. The SU should consider developing a multi-year plan and communication protocol, with stakeholder input, to transition to a proficiency-based learning system.

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. Students at the elementary level set personalized learning goals either monthly or each trimester.
2. Students at the upper levels have started to explore Personalized Learning Plans (PLP) but are still unclear about the purpose and use.

Flexible Pathways

1. Students in the high school have multiple pathways for gaining graduation credits, including the career center, the outdoor learning program, and internships.

Full Breadth of Courses

1. The high school offers a variety of traditional courses, AP level courses, and electives in World Languages, Arts, Technology, Health Sciences, Business, and Family and Consumer Science.

Student Voice and Choice

1. Students report having choices in areas of learning, including “passion projects,” integrated arts, and technology.

Commendations

1. Staff report a consistent expectation of personalized goal setting at the elementary schools.
2. The evidence shows that the district has prioritized flexible pathways and personalization in support of student learning.

Recommendations

1. It is recommended that the SU consider hosting a student-led forum on the purpose and development of PLPs.

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. Observation and interview data reveal that many schools demonstrate evidence of general behavior support programs.
2. Evidence indicates variation in development, implementation and staff understanding of MTSS, across schools.

Social/Emotional Health

1. Many schools are providing multi-agency support for students dealing with social/emotional issues and concerns.
2. Evidence reveal resources (e.g., fliers, student data teams, and teacher advisory systems) to address bullying and build social-emotional awareness.

Physical Well-Being

1. Students and parents report feeling safe in the schools.
2. Evidence reveals multiple ways in which schools use media to communicate with parents and the community.

Physical Environment

1. According to interview and observation evidence, school buildings range in age with some of the older buildings showing need for repairs and accessibility updates.
2. Safety drills and evacuations are practiced regularly in all schools, as reported by students and administration.

Commendations

1. Evidence shows resources have been devoted to the emotional health and well-being of students at many schools.
2. Evidence shows consistent dedication to resources for bullying prevention in all schools.

Recommendations

1. The SU should consider working on increasing understanding and implementation of MTSS within all schools.
2. The SU should ensure the quality and accessibility of all buildings, grounds, and resources in order to provide equitable access to resources for all students.

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 reveals that staff professional development connects to SU and school initiatives and goals, and is encouraged and supported by administration
2. Time is built into the calendar year for professional development, and staff input is welcomed.

Staff Evaluation

1. Evidence indicates that the SU has a supervision evaluation model in place, although it is not implemented consistently throughout the district. The model is effective for the first two years, but tails off in effectiveness after that point according to staff input.
2. Artifacts indicate that Superintendent and building level teacher evaluations occur annually.

Leadership

1. Evidence shows the SU has a mentoring program in place for new teachers.
2. Interview evidence indicates that staff feel empowered to make decisions with the support of the administration.
3. Evidence shows that leaders in all schools are able to articulate a vision for their schools, noting specific priorities.

Staffing

1. The evidence from Central Office indicated there are no unlicensed teachers in this SU.
2. Interviewees report that there are staff in the district with many years of experience and that there is low turnover.

Commendations

1. Interview evidence indicates positive school environment as evidenced by low staff turnover and high student and staff satisfaction.

2. The SU is commended for promoting staff professional development during in-service days.

Recommendations

1. The SU should ensure that the supervision and evaluation plan is implemented consistently across the district.

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. According to artifact and interview evidence, there is a SU wide task force focusing on two goals related to district configuration.
2. Evidence indicates that district wide PLC teams meet regularly to review data.

Student Data System

1. According to interview evidence, student demographic data and equity issues were leading factors in the realignment of grades K-6.

Financial Alignment

1. According to observations and interview evidence, financial priorities are being organized around building upgrades and facility needs throughout the SU.
2. According to parent and staff interviews, there is some concern about part time personnel movement between schools causing lack of stability and consistency.

Communication

1. The SU is using a communication application called, "Let's Talk Communication" which allows community members to contact school personnel anonymously.
2. Interview evidence indicates that there is good communication between the SU office and the schools.

Commendations

1. The SU is commended for using a variety of tools to facilitate communication between all stakeholders.
2. The visiting team commends the SU's allowance of time for teachers to work in PLCs.

Recommendations

1. It is recommended that the SU continue to address issues related to the conditions and use of all buildings, equipment, and resources in the supervisory union.