



219 North Main Street, Suite 402
Barre, VT 05641 (p) 802-479-1030 | (f) 802-479-1835

Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP) Example Grand Isle Supervisory Union

Highlighted Plan Strength: Broad Area(s) of Focus

“Academic Proficiency

- Performance on the 2016-2017 Smarter Balanced Assessment had all grade levels performing lower than 47% proficient in the math portion. This shows a decline from 2015-16 when the highest percent proficient was 53%. Also, performance by grade level when broken out by school was highly variable.
- Performance on the ELA Smarter Balanced assessment is higher than math, but when looking at the aggregate SU data, there is no grade level hitting 70% proficient or higher.
- Special Education testing has increased, as well as number of students on IEPs, though many students being tested for IEPs are not qualifying for special education.
- Our report from the Integrated Field Review pilot indicated that an articulated, vertically aligned curriculum was needed to enhance core instruction.”

“Safe and Healthy Schools

- More than 30% of students across GISU are receiving an academic or behavioral intervention in addition to core instruction.
- Out of district placements for students with extreme behaviors has increased.
- As evidenced by, SWIS and local data, students' social-emotional and behavioral needs are increasing in intensity and frequency as student demographic change with incoming kindergarten classes.”

“High Quality Staffing

- Through professional learning surveys, teachers indicate a need for more supports, content and program specific training, and dedicated time to collaborate and analyze data.
- Our attrition rate is about 30% every year. Attracting, hiring, and retaining high-quality staff is a challenge as is maintaining momentum on major SU projects.
- The high number of new teachers each year requires a robust mentoring program. Mentors are reporting fatigue and not enough time to even adequately support new teachers.”

AOE Comments: Broad Areas of Focus chosen are supported by details from a variety of state and local measures. Narratives describe the current state of academic, behavior and staffing outcomes, rather than the state of potential change ideas. Connections to the Education Quality Standards are clear.

Highlighted Plan Strength: Problems of Practice

“1. A lack of a clearly defined, aligned curriculum is leading to poor student outcomes on local and state assessments. School-specific percent proficient scores vary greatly from school to school. Teachers do not feel prepared to teach ELA and mathematics to all students, specifically those who struggle.

2. A disproportionate number of students are in need of additional academic or behavioral instruction or support outside of core instruction, which has resulted in higher special education referrals and out of district placements.
3. Attracting, hiring and retaining high quality staff is a challenge. We need a robust mentoring, induction and instructional coaching model to increase teacher efficacy that will attract and support talented, dedicated staff.”

AOE Comments: Priority Problems of Practice are logically derived from the data described within each Broad Area of Focus and are clearly and succinctly stated.

Highlighted Plan Strength: Root Cause Analysis

“1. Academic proficiency is low in ELA and Mathematics and has been for several years. Two years ago, the SU selected core programs for ELA and mathematics but did not provide enough training or support to implement it. Many teachers do not have a math background and struggle with the adopted program, EngageNY. In all subject areas, a lack of defined priority standards and proficiency scales lead to a wide variety of implementations and teachers teaching the program, not the essential content, concepts, and skills. In addition, our small schools mean that there are teachers teaching multiple grade levels at once with no partner with whom they can collaborate. Even in our bigger schools, there is only one teacher per grade level. Our attrition rates mean that there are teachers coming into our system with no training on our programs, and with little support in place, they struggle to be effective. In addition, our teachers do not feel like they have the training and skills to meet the needs of all learners in their core instruction. A lack of an instructional framework with consistent instructional practices means that many students do not receive the differentiated support they need nor universal supports that allow them to access grade level expectations. Finally, our assessment system does not give the teachers enough actionable data on where students are performing relative to grade level standards, leaving teachers less empowered to effectively design their curricula, differentiate instruction and provide effective support for all students in their core instruction.”

“2. As a corollary to POP1, we have a large number of students receiving academic and behavioral supports due to the need for improved Tier I instruction and a change in demographics entering our younger grades. Our universal supports for students struggling with academic and social-emotional skills are not effective at this time for a variety of reasons. One is the availability of evidence-based programs and strategies. We do not have a robust offering of interventions for these students. The quality of intervention relies upon the expertise of the personnel in the school. Another is knowing what skills/concepts/strategies a student needs help with. Our current assessments give us some insight, but better universal screeners, diagnostic assessments, and progress monitoring tools are needed to truly measure what students know and are able to do and what they need in an intervention. A third, is that a majority of faculty do not feel like they have the skills to support students who are struggling and over-rely on interventionists, paras, BIs, and other support staff to meet the needs of the students, leaving the students who need the most support with the least skilled staff. The changing demographics are bringing more students with high levels of need due to adverse childhood experiences, lack of exposure to literature and vocabulary building experiences, severe maladaptive behaviors, and developmental delays. The number of students enrolling, moving in and presenting with more severe academic and social-emotional needs are putting strains on already limited support staff and teachers feel unprepared to help them.”

“3. High-quality staffing is an issue at all levels of our organization. There have been three superintendents in the last 5 years, 3 Curriculum Directors, 3 business managers, turnover at the principal level (2 this year alone), 4 special educators on provisional licenses because qualified candidates could not be found, vacancies for paraeducators, BIs and even crossing guards. The islands are

geographically isolated and the proximity to Chittenden County means that teachers often will leave GISU to go to higher paying jobs, if they are able. The massive turnover has left the SU and teachers reeling as things continuously start and stop and get interrupted by the transitions. Most of the incoming teachers are within their first few years of teaching, meaning they need more support learning how to effectively manage a classroom and teach effectively. Currently, we struggle to find mentoring matches. In third and 4th grade, we have 3 new teachers and either mentors were not available or not willing to mentor the new teachers. We also do not have instructional coaches that support all teachers to achieve their highest levels and dig in with embedded supports when they struggle. This leads to us having a rather inexperienced staff who are still learning how to meet the needs of all students.”

AOE Comments: Root Cause Analysis narratives demonstrate strong knowledge of local practices and system components (“drivers”) that impact Problems of Practice. Proposed drivers are supported by qualitative data such as interviews and observations.

Highlighted Plan Strength: Theory of Improvement/Action

- “1. By establishing an aligned PK-8 proficiency-based curriculum in all subject areas, consistency in student performance will increase and overall student performance will increase.
2. By focusing on more effective assessment and intervention tools for targeted and intensive tiered support, intervention will be more effective with more students discontinuing support outside of their core classroom.
3. By investing in professional supports for teachers, they will be more prepared and able to support all students including those with the most significant support needs, feel effective, and want to stay in our system.”

AOE Comments: Theories of Improvement preview goals for student outcomes, paired with priority drivers for realizing these goals.