

Integrated Field Review Report

REPORT

February 28, 2018

Marion Cross School

Final Report

Site Visit: January 24, 2018

Submitted by Josh Souliere



Schools & Enrollment

School	Approximate Enrollment	Grade Span
Marion Cross School	296	K-6

The Marion Cross School participated in the Vermont Agency of Education's Integrated Field Review (IFR) on January 24, 2018.

During the afternoon of the IFR training, the Visiting Team reviewed artifacts provided by the Marion Cross School. During the full day visit, the Visiting Team participated in interviews of the principal, teachers, student, parents, and education assistants. In addition, the Visiting Team observed classroom instruction and other Marion Cross School learning environments through observations and a facilities tour.

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
Chelsey Hook	Elementary Teacher	WRVSU
Richard Boltax	MTSS Coordinator	VTAOE
Josh Souliere	Assistant Director of EQR	VTAOE

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:

1. There is a curriculum committee for every subject matter that meets regularly to discuss the curriculum, ensure vertical and horizontal alignment, cross coordination between educators, and to oversee overall implementation.
 2. The Science curriculum is in the process of being updated to better align with the Next Generation Science Standards.
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1. All Teachers observed had access to a Smartboard and/or other technology in their classroom to support the delivery of their instruction.
 2. Observation and interview evidence indicates several evidence-based practices implemented, including Differentiated Instruction, Universal Design for Learning, and teacher facilitating learning.
 3. The instructional practice of Learning Targets were utilized in some classrooms, but not consistently used in all classrooms observed.
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1. Marion Cross School has proficiency-based report cards that most teachers, parents, and students appreciate and understand.
 2. Some students report they understand what they are going to learn before a class begins, but many report not understanding until they are well into the lesson.

Commendations

1. Marion Cross School is devoted to a systemic approach to the implementation of a curriculum led by Curriculum Committees that meet regularly, have diverse membership, and focus on all areas of curriculum development, revision, and implementation.
2. Marion Cross teachers have committed to using various evidence based instructional practices, including the integration of technology to support the delivery of their instruction, to meet the needs of their students.

Recommendations

1. Marion Cross School should examine their use of Learning Targets across all grades, or another evidence based instructional practices, to improve student's understanding of what they are expected to know, understand, and do.

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. Personalized Learning Plans do not exist, but students' educational opportunities are personalized, including allowing choice in some academic areas and electives.

Flexible Pathways

1. Students are provided several pathways to learning, including electives, outdoor learning, and experiential education opportunities.

Full Breadth of Courses

1. French is taught to most students K-6, and opportunities to learn other foreign languages are available.
2. Every five weeks new electives are introduced and students grades 5-6 have a choice which to attend, some of which include Mandarin Chinese, Shakespeare, Ukulele, and Outdoor Experience.

Student Voice and Choice

1. Students report having voice in their electives, in completing some projects, and how they demonstrate their understanding of what they have learned.

Commendations

1. Marion Cross School provides unique learning opportunities through electives for children grades K-6, and allows students to choose which learning opportunities interests them.
2. Marion Cross School provides their students with personalized learning through choice in some academic areas and electives, choice on how to achieve their learning, and how they demonstrate their understanding of what they have learned.

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. Some teachers report the amount of interventions that happen outside of the classroom has been reduced in recent years, mostly due to funding.
2. Most report the majority of intervention and enhancement typically takes place within the classroom and is provided by the classroom teacher.
3. A K-4 reading interventionist continues to provide reading support outside of the classroom.

Social/Emotional Health

1. Teachers use multiple classroom management strategies, which include positive affirmation, opportunities to respond, and hands on learning.
2. There is an Owl Team consisting of administration and teacher membership that meets regularly to address behavioral and social-emotional concerns within the school.

Physical Well-Being

1. All students have access to physical activity throughout the day, including Forest Friday, outdoor classrooms, and multiple recesses.
2. Most students report they bring their own lunch to school because they do not like the quality and options of the school lunch offerings.
3. Some teachers report they wish they had a cafeteria where students could interact, and some preferred students continued to have lunchtime in the classroom.

Physical Environment

1. Evidence from observations and interviews indicates stakeholders feel they have a clean, well-maintained, organized learning environment.
2. Stakeholders report that there is ample outdoor space for recess, and regularly scheduled outdoor learning and after-school activities.

Commendations

1. Marion Cross School is focused on the Social/Emotional health and physical well-being of their students, led by the Owl Team, which is comprised of administrators and teachers.
2. Marion Cross School is committed to and invested in the facilities, both indoors and outdoors, in which students learn.

Recommendations

1. Marion Cross should use a Multi-tiered System of Support framework to assure the intervention and enrichment system clear, consistent criteria and processes.
2. Marion Cross School should examine their school lunch program to ensure its best meeting the needs of teachers and 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. Teachers report they find a lot of value in the professional development they receive from SAU, at the local level, and what they are able to self-identify as areas in need of improvement.
2. Marion Cross School has \$25,000 in funding available for all teachers to apply for to receive mini-grants related to self-identified professional development focus areas.

Staff Evaluation

1. The evaluation model consists of a document that includes goals, several walkthroughs over the course of the year, and a final feedback report.
2. Some teachers' report they feel the process is too informal, and do not always receive feedback that is properly aligned to their identified goals.

Leadership

1. Interview evidence indicates the communication and supportive demeanor of the administrators as a strength of the school.

Staffing

1. Some teachers report the reduced Title I funds have affected the support they received educational assistants and some other positions.
2. Most teachers report frustrations finding substitutes in a relatively timely manner due to the lack of substitutes in the area, and the financial compensation does not compete with neighboring school systems.

Commendations

1. Marion Cross School is committed to meeting their staff's professional development needs through systemic professional learning opportunities, local opportunities, and self-identified opportunities.
2. Marion Cross School has created an environment where teachers, students, and parents feel welcomed, valued and appreciated by those in leadership positions.

Recommendations

1. Marion Cross School should examine the feedback model within their evaluation system to ensure teachers are receiving relevant input related to their needs.
2. Marion Cross School should continue to examine the impact that losing positions has had on teachers, the system, and if those impacts have affected learning outcomes of students.

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. Marion Cross School does not have an overarching formal Continuous Improvement Plan that guides improvement efforts, but one at the SAU level.
2. Parents and teachers report no knowledge of, or participating in the development of, a Continuous Improvement Plan.

Student Data System

1. The school uses the Track My Progress database to track local assessment information.
2. Parents report they do not have access to an online portal where there can access their children's learning, and some report it would be a useful tool.

Financial Alignment

1. Evidence indicates the school has invested in classroom technology for teachers and students.
2. Evidence indicates a conscious effort to keep the staffing levels consistent with a slowly declining student enrollment.

Communication

1. Parents report clear, timely communication from teachers and administration.

Commendations

1. Marion Cross School has invested in technology to ensure teachers and students have the technological resources they need in the classroom.
2. As enrollment has declined, Marion Cross School has continuously examined staffing levels to keep staffing at a consistent ratio with student enrollment.

Recommendations

1. Marion Cross School should develop a Continuous Improvement Plan to guide the efforts of implementing the Education Quality Standards, SAU goals, and other priority areas determined by comprehensive needs assessments.
2. While Marion Cross School has a database for student academic information, they should examine if the use of an online portal that allows parents to access their children's learning would be beneficial to stakeholders.