

Integrated Field Review Report

REPORT

January 3, 2018

Two Rivers Supervisory Union

Final Report

Site Visit: November 14, 2017

Submitted by Josh Souliere



Schools & Enrollment

School	Approximate Enrollment	Grade Span
Black River UHSD	139	7-12
Cavendish Town Elementary	109	K-6
Chester-Andover USD	245	K-6
Green Mountain UHSD	321	7-12
Ludlow Elementary	108	PK-6
Mt. Holly Elementary	102	PK-6

Two Rivers Supervisory Union participated in the Vermont Agency of Education's Integrated Field Review (IFR) on November 14, 2017.

During the afternoon of the IFR training, the Visiting Team reviewed artifacts provided by TRSU. During the morning of day one of the visit, the Visiting Team participated in interviews of the Superintendent, Director of Curriculum, Director of Student Services, Director of Information Technology, Director of Finance, counseling staff, intervention staff, teaching staff, students, parents, and administrators. In addition, the Visiting Team observed classroom instruction and the TRSU learning environments through classroom observations and facilities tours led by students.

The Visiting Team gathered data regarding the implementation of Education Quality Standards in the school system related to Academic Proficiency, Personalization, Safe Healthy Schools, High Quality Staffing, and Investment Priorities.

Visiting Team

Name	Role	Organization
Anne Aas	Elementary Educator	Mill River Unified Union SD
Bindy Hathorn	High School Principal	Springfield SD
Stacey Alexander	Assistant Director of Student Services	Windham Northeast SU
Gayle Wetzler	Elementary Educator	Mill River Unified Union SD
Michael Ruppel	High School Math Teacher	Springfield SD
Joseph Smith	Guidance Counselor	Windham Northeast SU
Mandy Walsh	Art/Librarian	Windham Northeast SU
Gary Ackerman	Flexible Pathways Coordinator	Windsor Southeast SU
Angie Ladeau	Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment	Windsor Southeast SU
Peg Brown	Elementary Teacher	Windham Southeast SU
Lisa McKenney	Guidance Counselor	Windham Southeast SU
Joe Rivers	Social Studies Teacher	Windham Southeast SU
Caitlin Campbell	Middle School Teacher	Windham Southeast SU
John Broadley	Assistant Principal	Windham Northeast SU
Holly Falzo	English Teacher	Windham Northeast SU
Ellen Rago	Middle School Teacher	Windham Southeast SU
Josh Souliere	Assistant Director of Education Quality Reviews	VTAOE
Lori Dolezal	Education Quality Assurance Manager	VTAOE
Susan Yesalonia	Health and Physical Education Consultant	VTAOE
Tom Faris	MTSS Coordinator	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:

Curriculum Coordination

1. TRSU does not have a coordinated curriculum across the SU in all subjects, although evidence indicates they are working towards this goal and are close to having a coordinated curriculum in Mathematics.
2. Per evidence collected through interviews and observations, elementary schools visited are using research-based practices in math, spelling, and reading in all schools, with varying levels of fidelity.

Instructional Practices

1. In most classrooms observed, teachers were integrating technology into instruction.
2. Interview and observation evidence indicate that classroom management strategies are consistently implemented across all schools.

Local Assessment System

1. Each school maintains its own reporting system, and those systems are standards based for math and literacy.
2. TRSU has a process in place to use local assessment data, along with state testing data, to inform continuous improvement efforts SU-wide.

Proficiency-Based Learning

1. TRSU is in the process of implementing their proficiency based learning system, including the development of performance indicators for grade clusters in content areas, consistent reporting methods, and incorporating transferable skills into learning opportunities.
2. Parents, students, and teachers reported the need for more education and communication regarding Proficiency Based Learning.

Commendations

1. TRSU has committed to providing technology to students and teachers, who have used it to drive instruction and enhance options for learning throughout the SU.
2. TRSU has data driven processes and procedures in place to use local and state data to drive continuous improvement efforts that is consistent across the system.

Recommendations

1. TRSU should continue their work towards developing a common, coordinated curriculum across all schools in all subject areas.
2. TRSU should provide additional professional learning opportunities to students, parents, and teachers in the area of Proficiency Based Learning and Grading to ensure consistent implementation and understanding by all stakeholders.

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 most educators, students and parents are aware of Personalized Learning and Personalized Learning Plans, but express concern over how they will be implemented and managed in the future due to decreasing resources and possible mergers.
2. Some parents interviewed expressed their need to know more about Personalized Learning, and hoped have greater input their child's Personalized Learning Plan.

Flexible Pathways

1. Students and staff at the high school level are well versed in the aspects of Flexible Pathways and the options available to them as educators and learners.
2. Some parents expressed concerns of some learning opportunities not being available in the future due to budget cuts and possible mergers.

Full Breadth of Courses

1. Evidence collected through interviews with students, parents, and teachers indicates possible inequities between schools in terms of the courses, programs, and opportunities offered to students.

Student Voice and Choice

1. Most schools provide students the opportunity to have input into their learning opportunities and how that knowledge is then presented and shared with others.
2. High school students have opportunities for selecting and initiating informal interest-based learning, for example, World of Difference. Building Bridges and the Environmental Club.
3. Students are given the opportunity to advocate for their learning when scheduling Student Enrichment Time, Impact, and Hub time in middle and high schools.

Commendations

1. TRSU provides their students with several options for Flexible Pathways and other learning opportunities.
2. TRSU strives to include their students in their learning through providing students with voice and choice in the development of their learning opportunities and how to measure the impact of that learning

Recommendations

1. TRSU should examine their academic and non-academic offerings provided across schools to ensure equitable access and consistent learning opportunities for all students throughout the SU.
2. TRSU should begin to develop a long-term plan for the implementation of Personalization and Flexible Pathways, including a way to effectively communicate this plan to community members to help ease stressors due to potential mergers and budget cuts.

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. TRSU does not have a defined Multi-tiered System of Support framework guiding the instruction and intervention process at all tiers throughout the SU.
2. There are varying programs and practices in place to address behavior and social emotional learning from school to school, creating an atmosphere of confusion for some students and teachers.
3. Interviews and observations indicated that time provided for intervention and enrichment were inconsistent from school to school.

Social/Emotional Health

1. Evidence collected from interviews with parents, students and teachers indicate most schools in TRSU provide students with a safe and secure learning environment.
2. TRSU has focused on providing professional development in the area of understanding and implementing trauma-informed practices for teachers, leaders, and support staff.

Physical Well-Being

1. Per interviews and observations, crisis plans in TRSU schools are not up to date and reflecting correct names, position titles, and phone numbers.
2. Most schools in the TRSU value and implement physical activity and sensory breaks during the school day, as evidenced through interviews and observations

Physical Environment

1. Most interviewees expressed they were pleased with the physical environment in which they work.
2. Some parents expressed a lack of space for students to participate in outdoor physical activity during the winter months.

Commendations

1. TRSU has committed to providing their staff with trauma-informed professional development and practices for teachers, administrators and support staff across the SU.
2. TRSU has committed to providing their students, staff, and parents with safe, well-maintained learning environments.

Recommendations

1. TRSU should develop a Multi-Tiered System of Support guiding framework to implement SU-wide ensuring consistent implementation of academic and behavior programs across all tiers.
2. TRSU should examine their use of outdoor space to ensure equitable access to physical activities for all students during the winter months.

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. There are some inconsistencies in collaborative learning across the SU, as some teachers in most schools expressed there are substantial opportunities for collaboration and professional development with colleagues in other schools; however, some teachers reported they did not have a lot of collaboration with educators from other schools.
2. Collaboration between teachers and administrators within the SU has led to professional development offerings in proficiency-based education, personalized learning (including the Lift platform), and trauma-informed teaching.

Staff Evaluation

1. There is no formal evaluation model or schedule for evaluations for central office staff.
2. There is a system for professional and paraprofessional staff evaluations that is implemented with consistency; however, the administration of evaluations for administrators has been inconsistent.

Leadership

1. TRSU has a defined leadership model providing their system with guidance, which includes an Administrative Council comprised of central office staff and school administrators, and a Leadership Team at each school comprised of an administrator and teachers.

Staffing

1. Some schools within the SU have dedicated staff and resources that support Flexible Pathways, including work-based learning and dual enrollment.
2. Schools and educators within the SU demonstrate a high level of commitment to social-emotional learning through counseling and Flexible Pathways. Students in multiple schools express feelings of belonging and safety within their school.

Commendations

1. TRSU has structured Leadership Teams at the SU and school levels that drive continuous improvement efforts across the system and within their schools creating a culture of consistent improvement efforts.
2. TRSU has dedicated staff positions to oversee the implementation of several Education Quality Standard components, including Flexible Pathways, work-based learning, and dual enrollment.

Recommendations

1. TRSU should examine the implementation of their current evaluation model for administrators and central office staff, to ensure a clear, consistent, and regularly scheduled evaluative process.
2. TRSU should provide more opportunities for educators SU-wide to collaborate on professional development opportunities, sharing of instructional practices and the implementation of other SU-wide efforts.

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. TRSU has a Continuous Improvement Plan with identified SU-wide goals that address proficiency-based learning, improving safe healthy schools and address the educator's responsibility for student outcomes.
2. Global Best Practices is used as a resource to guide continuous improvement planning for TRSU.
3. TRSU is working towards aligning school Continuous Improvement Plans with the systemic needs of the SU, as well as school-specific issues identified locally.

Student Data System

1. While PowerSchool is the consistent student data system used across the SU, schools use it at varying levels, which include maintaining assignments, maintaining grades, and reporting grades.

Financial Alignment

1. Investments in online technologies, such as I-Vision, have streamlined central office and school based financial practices, including the process of teachers requesting resources and materials.
2. Some report inequities in financial commitment due to having two separate secondary schools providing different educational opportunities for their students.

Communication

1. Community input into local budgets are provided through school board meetings, and some schools have budget committees with community member participation.

Commendations

1. TRSU has invested in online technologies to streamline financial procedures when requesting resources and/or materials and investment opportunities.
2. TRSU has prioritized developing consistent continuous improvement efforts at the SU level, including the use of Global Best Practices as a resource, and are now working towards aligning continuous improvement efforts SU-wide.

Recommendations

1. TRSU should continue to align school-based continuous improvement efforts with the SU level goals, and support schools in identifying their own areas that are in need of improvement.
2. TRSU should examine the use of PowerSchool and other online student data platforms being used across the SU, to ensure all schools are using consistent platforms with fidelity.