

Integrated Field Review Report

REPORT

January 23, 2018

Windsor Southeast Supervisory Union

Final Report

Site Visit: November 8, 2017

Submitted by Josh Souliere



Schools & Enrollment

School	Approximate Enrollment	Grade Span
Albert Bridge School	60	K-6
Hartland Elementary School	288	K-8
Weathersfield School	211	K-8
Windsor School District	540	K-12

Windsor Southeast Supervisory Union participated in the Vermont Agency of Education's Integrated Field Review (IFR) on November 8, 2017.

During the afternoon of the IFR training, the Visiting Team reviewed artifacts provided by WSESU. During the morning of day one of the visit, the Visiting Team participated in interviews of the Superintendent, Director of Curriculum, Director of Student Support Services, Curriculum Director, counseling staff, intervention staff, teaching staff, students, parents, and administrators. In addition, the Visiting Team observed classroom instruction and the WSESU 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. Over 800 evidence statements were collected and used to develop the Findings, Commendations, and Recommendations in this report.

Visiting Team

Name	Role	Organization
Mike Lannon	Elementary Teacher	Mill River Unified USD
Dan Seiden	Music Educator	Mill River Unified USD
Nate McNaughton	Assistant Principal	Springfield SD
Darlene Petke	Special Education Teacher	Springfield SD
Brett Mastrangelo	Science Teacher	Two Rivers SU
Jillian Getmen	High School English Teacher	Two Rivers SU
Braelyn Ingvaldstad	High School Art Teacher	Windham Southeast SU
Nancy Johnston	School Improvement Coordinator	Windham Southeast SU
Mary Ross	Teacher	Windham Southeast SU
Josh Souliere	Assistant Director of EQR	VTAOE
Lori Dolezal	EQA Manager	VTAOE
Tom Faris	MTSS Coordinator	VTAOE
Marianna Charalabopoulos	Education Programs 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. There has been significant progress in curriculum coordination across the SU, with the English Language Arts content being in the forefront of this work.
2. Some teachers report the amount of time teachers have to work on curriculum development varies from school to school.

Instructional Practices

1. The implementation of Learning Targets being visually posted in the classroom and/or discussed at the beginning of instruction was inconsistent across the SU.
2. Several evidence-based instructional practices were implemented throughout the SU, including differentiation, checking for understanding, exit cards, diverse groupings, pair-share opportunities, and the use of technology to drive instruction.

Local Assessment System

1. Track My Progress is a common assessment used and implemented with consistency K-8 throughout the SU in English Language Arts and Mathematics.

Proficiency-Based Learning

1. Most students and parents expressed frustration with proficiency-based grading and wish to receive more communication, information, and additional learning opportunities regarding the process.
2. Across the SU, there are varying levels of understanding of the implementation of proficiency-based grading, the pedagogy, and implications of this system, as well as inconsistency for local professional development time devoted to the implementation proficiency-based grading.

Commendations

1. WSESU has committed to strengthening their curriculum coordination across the SU and interviewees report the steps have been beneficial to them professionally, and to the process of student learning.
2. WSESU uses common assessments K-8 that provides consistent and equitable access to information for stakeholders horizontally and vertically throughout the SU.

Recommendations

1. WSESU should provide teachers, students, and parents with consistent messaging, information and professional learning regarding proficiency-based learning to increase understanding and implementation.
2. WSESU should increase the consistency and use of learning targets to drive instruction to provide students with a deeper understanding of their learning.

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. There is a strong commitment to support personalized learning, including interest inventories, an exploratory class, and specific support structure to support Personalized Learning Plans development.
2. While schools have an online platform to implement Personalized Learning Plans, they continue to seek a platform that will better meet their needs and improve the implementation of Personalized Learning Plans for all stakeholders.

Flexible Pathways

1. Some students expressed they did not feel fully supported by teachers and administrators in pursuit of their personal interests.
2. The number of Flexible Pathways have increased in recent years, and include community service learning, dual enrollment, internships, and early college programs.

Full Breadth of Courses

1. Students, teachers and parents report there is an extensive list of courses and opportunities available to students at most levels.
2. At the elementary level, students had opportunities for brain breaks, Friday in the woods, outdoor classrooms, and other options, including having choice of electives.

Student Voice and Choice

1. Students report feeling comfortable communicating with teachers and administration, but feel their voice is not always considered in decision-making.

Commendations

1. WSESU has a strong commitment to beginning personalized learning at the elementary level, strengthening the practice at the middle level and then supporting full implementation at the high school level.
2. WSESU continues to increase their offerings to meet educational needs, providing their students with Flexible Pathways and a full breadth of courses and learning options for them to choose from.

Recommendations

1. WSESU should continue to seek student voice in decision-making and seek more in-depth ways to involve them in the decision making process to increase their voice and support learner's needs.
2. WSESU should continue to intentionally improve their personalized learning framework, including continuing to increase student choices in learning, and researching a platform that better meets the need of the system.

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. Schools report having a Multi-tiered Systems of Support framework in place; however, some staff and parents report it takes too much time to get access to the interventions.
2. Some staff and parents report that special education processes are unclear to them and inconsistent at some schools.

Social/Emotional Health

1. Most parents, teachers, and students report that there is a strong sense of community in their school, and that they feel welcome and safe.
2. There are multiple programs and practices in place to address trauma, bullying and other social emotional concerns, including bullying programs, professional learning focused on trauma, good internet practices, and therapy dogs; however, some interviewees report bullying concerns in school and inconsistencies in the amount of professional development opportunities in regards to trauma.

Physical Well-Being

1. Students across the SU have several opportunities for physical activities during the school day, integrating physical activity into instruction, after-school activities and through athletics.
2. Most interviewees report that they are happy with the school lunch program offered at the school and the options available to them.

Physical Environment

1. Evidence from observations and interviews indicates all schools within the district are clean, organized, and well-maintained learning environments.
2. While some interviewees stated the desire to have additional space, all schools in the district are innovative in the ways they make use of the space available to them.

Commendations

1. WSESU is committed to developing a strong sense of community within their schools, making them welcoming places where parents, teachers, and students feel welcome.
2. WSESU is committed to providing students with several opportunities for physical activity during the school day, after-school, integrating physical activity into instruction and through school sports.

Recommendations

1. WSESU should examine their Multi-tiered System of Support framework to ensure students in all tiers are receiving access to needed intervention and enrichment in a timely manner.
2. WSESU should examine their professional development offerings to ensure all stakeholders receive consistent and adequate professional learning, specifically in the area of trauma.

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. WSESU Mentoring is moving towards being provided in house through trained district staff with clearly defined guidelines to better meet their needs.
2. Interview evidence indicates staff are provided several opportunities to provide input into their professional learning needs, and most report their needs are being met.

Staff Evaluation

1. Staff report having a clear understanding of the evaluation process and timeline, that they are evaluated consistently, and that the process has value to them.
2. Teachers and administrators report that Teach Point is being implemented consistently this year to communicate and receive professional feedback.

Leadership

1. Parents, students, and staff report that leadership at the central office and schools are supportive of their needs and easy to communicate with.

Staffing

1. The SU has a coordinated hiring plan that is used consistently throughout the SU, but evidence indicates they have a difficult time receiving application from highly qualified applicants.
2. Some interviewees reported they would like to see improved communication and coordination between general and special education teachers.

Commendations

1. WSESU gathers input and reviews data to determine professional learning needs, and possible trends where future professional learning may be needed.
2. WSESU has a clear staff evaluation process and timeline that is implemented consistently across the SU and valued by educators.

Recommendations

1. WSESU should explore ways in which special education teachers and general education teachers can feel more connected, and their efforts more coordinated, when it comes to student learning.
2. WSESU should explore ways in which they can increase the number of qualified applicants applying for open positions.

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. WSESU works to align their investments with continuous improvement planning efforts identified by the SU, as evidenced in the review of artifacts and interviews.
2. Parents and most teachers report they are not aware of the continuous improvement plan for their school, and have not participated in the development of the plan.

Student Data System

1. Power-school is used throughout the SU and parents report they have easy access to their children's learning through the online portal.

Financial Alignment

1. Evidence collected and local data indicate there has been a financial commitment to technology, integration of technology into instruction and technology support across the SU.
2. There has been a financial commitment to increase student accessibility to electronic devices, and evidence suggests they are now at 1:1 levels across the SU grades 3-12

Communication

1. Most parents interviewed report that teachers, administrators, and central office staff are effective in communicating with them about their children's education, budgets, and school board information through various communication platforms.

Commendations

1. WSESU has committed resources and energy into ensuring their students and teachers have access to technology, and that they are supported when using it.
2. WSESU has strong communication channels that are utilized to inform all stakeholders of information regarding their education system, including child specific information for parents, and budget and other financial information for other stakeholders.

Recommendations

1. WSESU should increase the role of stakeholders in the development of continuous improvement efforts, including parents, teachers, and students.
2. WSESU should utilize their strong communication channels to effectively disseminate information about their continuous improvement process and future education initiatives.