

Integrated Field Review Report

REPORT

Date:
December 2,
2019

Lamoille South Unified Union Supervisory District
Final Report
Site Visit: 22 October 2019

Compiled by: The Lamoille South Unified Union SD Visiting Team

Submitted by: Kevin P. Doering



Schools & Enrollment

School	Approximate Enrollment	Grade Span
Elmore School	15	1-3
Morristown Elementary	275	K-4
Peoples Academy	290	9-12
Peoples Academy Middle Level	260	5-8
Stowe Elementary	340	K-5
Stowe High School	250	9-12
Stowe Middle School	190	6-8

Lamoille South Unified Union Supervisory District (LSUUSD) participated in the Vermont Agency of Education's Integrated Field Review (IFR) on October 22, 2019.

Preceding the IFR date, the Visiting Team reviewed artifacts provided by LSUUSD. During the full day visit, the Visiting Team participated in interviews of the Superintendent, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Director of Finance, counseling and intervention staff, teaching staff, students, parents, and administrators. In addition, the Visiting Team observed classroom instruction and other LSUUSD 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
Denise Maurice	Assistant Principal	Lamoille North SU
Erin Paquette	Teacher (Elementary)	Lamoille North SU
Michelle Piche	Special Educator	Lamoille North SU
Beverly White	Special Education Director	Mt. Mansfield UUSD
Sally Hayes	Principal	Mt. Mansfield UUSD
Victoria Graf	Principal	Mt. Mansfield UUSD
Heather Freeman	Director of Student Services	Orleans Southwest SU
Moss McCurdy	Special Educator	Orleans Southwest SU
Jessica Heinz	School Counselor	Washington Central UUSD
Kathy Christy	PD Coach & Literacy Teacher	Washington Central UUSD
Sharon Spector	School Counselor	Washington Central UUSD
Andrew Prowten	Program Technician	AOE
Josh Soulier	Asst. Director, Education Quality	AOE
Tom Faris	VTmtss Coordinator	AOE
Kevin Doering (lead)	Education QA Coordinator	AOE
Martha Deiss	PBL Global Citizenship Coord.	AOE
Peter Drescher	State Director, Ed. Technology	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. Teachers indicate that there are more than adequate resources in all curriculum areas throughout the district.
2. Curriculum coordination is well supported and evidenced by the Curriculum Council and Camp.

Local Assessment System

1. The Local Assessment Plan, specifically evidenced by the use of STAR, is utilized across the LSUUSD.
2. The development of Mastery Scales in the overall structure of proficiencies is evidenced by discussions with teachers and students.
3. Students indicated that they often needed to be the initiators in learning how they were doing in classes and overall academically.

Instructional Practices

1. Technology is readily accessible across schools and grade levels, and it is evident it provides a high level of support in differentiating instruction.

Proficiency-Based Learning

1. Parents and students expressed multiple concerns about proficiency-based grading and the ways it is interpreted from classroom to classroom.
2. Parents and students expressed confusion and anxiety about multiple systems of transcribing and the impact at college admissions time.

Commendations

1. Curriculum coordination is well regarded by teachers. They feel that curriculum coordination is spot-on, and they have adequate input into the process and believe they are well supported overall.
2. LSUUSD is effectively using technology to support differentiated instructional practices.

Recommendations

1. LSUUSD should consider examining the need to strengthen communicating, streamlining and coordinating proficiency based reporting--i.e. report cards in general, transcripts, consistency in benchmark grading.
2. LSUUSD should consider putting in place some mechanism where all students are regularly conferenced on their progress with teachers and parents whenever possible.

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. The approach to Personalized Learning Plans is not consistent across the LSUUSD.
2. Despite differences in implementation and organization of Personalized Learning Plans, students overall had a positive outlook regarding Personalized Learning Plans and how they can benefit from them.

Flexible Pathways

1. Students reported multiple ways of demonstrating proficiency. One school has a designated Pathways coordinator.
2. Based on interviews with parents, some concerns were raised about the impact on choosing courses and its relationship to the selection of a Flexible Pathway.

Full Breadth of Courses

1. There is a wide variety of courses available across schools, especially at the secondary levels, including the arts, advanced classes, and access to several foreign languages.
2. According to parent interviews, differences in course offerings between schools was seen as an inequity.

Student Voice and Choice

1. Students reported feeling valued, and that their voices mattered.
2. Students seem to understand their role in their educational journey, process, and outcomes.

Commendations

1. Students felt valued and that their voices mattered; furthermore, they understood their own role in their educational journey.
2. There is a wide variety of courses offered across the schools.

Recommendations

1. LSUUSD should consider strengthening communication with parents regarding Flexible Pathways and the impact (if any) on course selection available to students.
2. LSUUSD should consider examining the current implementation of Personalized Learning Plans to see if a more common universal approach would benefit stakeholders.

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. According to the evidence accumulated, there is a significant difference on how Multi-tiered System of Supports is being perceived and implemented across LSUUSD.
2. According to observational evidence, there is a disparity from one classroom to another, regarding how adults are being utilized to support student learning.

Social/Emotional Health

1. Students report that they appreciate their teachers, and believe they are very supportive of them.
2. Parents generally report satisfaction with staff and how they work with their children.

Physical Well-Being

1. Gardens are being used at most schools as an educational resource, as well as producing food for students.
2. Evidence shows that there are multiple opportunities for physical movement during the school day.

Physical Environment

1. Student work was prominently displayed throughout the halls in the schools.
2. Interview evidence, (especially from parent interviews) indicated a perceived difference in spaces/limitations between schools, including concerns expressed about full bathroom accessibility for all students.

Commendations

1. There is a focus on the physical well-being of students as evidenced by school gardens, farm to school initiatives, and the opportunities students have for physical movement throughout the day.
2. Parents repeatedly expressed satisfaction with what they perceived as the school climate in schools throughout the LSUUSD.

Recommendations

1. It is recommended that LSUUSD review and consider unifying their multi-tiered System of Support process throughout their schools.
2. LSUUSD is encouraged to review its building spaces and uses and communicate with its community about any findings or potential changes.

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. Interviewee evidence indicates that Camp is a key piece of their professional development, and that there is high attendance even though it's voluntary.
2. Evidence indicates that staff have a voice in their professional learning, and they are encouraged and supported to pursue those opportunities.
3. Evidence indicates the LSUUSD has rearranged schedules in a way that give teachers ample time for planning and collaborating with each other.

Staff Evaluation

1. There is a strong evaluation model in place across the LSUUSD.
2. There is strong support that evaluations take place for the first three years, but evidence indicates it's inconsistently administered after that.

Leadership

1. Most parent, student, and teachers interviewees report being pleased with their leadership.
2. Some parents report inconsistencies in the timeliness of the communication received from administration.

Staffing

1. Students and parents generally expressed a high degree of support for and satisfaction with their teachers.
2. Some observational and interview data indicates possible inconsistencies in the use of paraeducators from school to school, although it was difficult to determine due to the lack of context when being observed.

Commendations

1. LSUUSD has a dedicated, strong focus on delivering professional learning, valuing the educator in the process, and aligning it with SU-wide goals.
2. LSUUSD has strong leadership in place who create a welcoming, warm and supportive environment for stakeholders.

Recommendations

1. LSUUSD should review their evaluation model and practices for veteran teachers to ensure there is consistent feedback for all teachers along the continuum.
2. LSUUSD should consider examining their use of paraeducators, including professional learning opportunities.

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. District and school level Continuous Improvement Plans are established and point towards specific, unified goals.
2. According to accrued interview evidence, staff, parents and students were generally unaware of having Continuous Improvement Plans in their schools.

Student Data System

1. The district utilizes Powerschool, Alpine, Seesaw, Renaissance Learning, STAR, Schoology and others, to support student learning and communicate with students, families and teachers.
2. Parents and students expressed challenges in understanding of how data is used to drive classroom instruction.

Financial Alignment

1. Students and parents expressed strong concern over funding inequity in arts, field trips and athletics, including between boys and girls sports funding across some schools.
2. Inconsistencies and concerns about how to best utilize technology in the classroom were expressed in observations and interviews.

Communication

1. Many families expressed great satisfaction with communication and community involvement that can be an exemplar for the district as a whole.
2. Staff expressed satisfaction with relationships with current school administration across the district and feels feedback is well received.

Commendations

1. LSUUSD has well articulated Continuous Improvement Plans.
2. LSUUSD uses several student management systems to communicate learning, expectations, and drive instruction.

Recommendations

1. LSUUSD is encouraged to examine perceived inequities and distribution of funds for extracurricular activities including arts, athletics, (boys vs. girls athletics) and field trips.
2. LSUUSD should consider examining current use of integrating technology into instruction to ensure consistent practices across the District.