

Integrated Field Review Report

REPORT

November 21,
2019

Montpelier/ Roxbury Supervisory District
Final Report
Site Visit: October 15, 2019

Reported by

The Montpelier-Roxbury Visiting Team

Submitted by

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Schools & Enrollment

School	Approximate Enrollment	Grade Span
Main Street Middle School	370	5-8
Montpelier High School	340	9-12
Roxbury Village School	50	PK-4
Union Elementary School	525	PK-4

The Montpelier-Roxbury Supervisory District (MRSD) participated in the Vermont Agency of Education's Integrated Field Review (IFR) on October 15, 2019.

Preceding the visit date, the Visiting Team reviewed artifacts provided by the MRSD. During the full day visit, the Visiting Team participated in interviews of the Superintendent, Director of Curriculum, Business Manager, counseling/ intervention staff, teaching staff, students, parents, and administrators. In addition, the Visiting Team observed classroom instruction and other MRSD 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
Jessica Barewicz	Director of CIA	Barre UUSD
Mya Violette	High School Teacher	Barre UUSD
Karen McMahon	Elementary Teacher	Central Vermont SU
Theresa White	Elementary Teacher	Central Vermont SU
Brigid Nease	Superintendent	Harwood UUSD
Duane Pierson	Middle School Principal	Harwood UUSD
Jane Spina	Elementary Teacher	Harwood UUSD
Sage Tallman	Elementary Teacher	Harwood UUSD
Caty Sutton	Associate Principal	Orange Southwest UUSD
Lisa Floyd	High School PBL Teacher	Orange Southwest UUSD
Andrew Prowten	Program Technician	VTAOE
Lori Dolezal	Education Quality Manager	VTAOE
Kevin Doering (lead)	Education Quality Assurance Coordinator	VTAOE
Ryan Parkman	Mathematics Specialist	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. MRSD is identifying priority standards in each content area by using a 2 year cycle focusing on curriculum development and instructional practices.
2. Evidence indicates gaps and overlaps exist in the curriculum; however teachers report that work is underway to vertically align the curriculum.

Local Assessment System

1. The district is highly engaged in developing a local comprehensive assessment system for all grades K-12.
2. Formative and summative assessments are used to shape intervention supports, which are developed utilizing collaborative planning and grouping.

Instructional Practices

1. Teachers employed a variety of instructional strategies, such as small groups, Think-Pair-Share, Echo, use of math menu, independent work time, and more.
2. Teachers demonstrated higher order thinking questions, as well as open ended prompting, facilitating student discussion.
3. According to observational evidence, there is an inconsistent display of learning and behavioral expectations posted in classrooms across MRSD and there was a similar inconsistency in observed behavior and student engagement in some classrooms.

Proficiency-Based Learning

1. Evidence indicates a disconnect between teachers and students regarding Proficiency Based Learning. Teachers seem to appreciate how Proficiency Based Learning promotes understanding of content, while students seem unclear on the expectations and purpose.
2. Teachers report how they have flexibility, but still see a need for making the Proficiency Based Learning system more authentic.
3. According to students during interviews, the learning expectations and graduation proficiency is unclear.

Commendations

1. Based on interviews, a systematic approach is being used to vertically align the curriculum.
2. MRSD is utilizing diverse teacher instructional strategies across its schools.

Recommendations

1. MRSD is encouraged to explore working more with its' student body and teachers on Proficiency Based Learning and its expectations and purpose.

2. MRSD should promote more communication and guidance regarding learning expectations that lead to graduation.

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 at the secondary level have a flexible structure which supports a high level of personalization and student self-efficacy.
2. At the middle level all students have Personalized Learning Plan documentation sites and Personalized Learning Plan work is embedded in the curriculum.
3. According to student interviews, students are unclear about the purpose and value of adding information to their Personalized Learning Plan documentation site.

Flexible Pathways

1. There are financial and structural investments to develop a flexible pathways and personalized learning programs.
2. Dual enrollment, early college, community based learning and personal learning opportunities are all pathways that are available to students to meet their goals and graduation requirements.

Full Breadth of Courses

1. According to interview evidence, gaps in course offerings are supplemented by flexible pathways opportunities.
2. According to interviews, Student Services is fully invested in helping to support high school students in achieving their personal learning goals.
3. Middle level students have access to an array of specials, including world languages, a variety of music courses, family and consumer sciences, and Crafter's Edge.

Student Voice and Choice

1. Middle and high school students give feedback to inform the development and direction of student government, activism, clubs, extra-curriculars, and academic pursuits.
2. Evidence from elementary schools demonstrates that with an exception or two noted, students at varying grade levels are offered developmentally appropriate voice and choice.

Commendations

1. Secondary education sets a good example for how to effectively implement community based learning/flexible pathways to enhance student outcomes.
2. Personalized Learning Plans are prioritized at the middle and high school levels.

Recommendations:

1. MRSD is encouraged to identify and utilize opportunities for elementary students to make developmentally appropriate choices and set goals, especially at the upper elementary grades.
2. MRSD is encouraged to work with students to clarify the value and purpose of the Personalized Learning Plan process and seek feedback about how to improve it.

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. In Middle and High School levels, blocks of time are scheduled for academic and/or social/emotional support, as well as opportunities for students to pursue other interest areas through community based learning.
2. Evidence indicates inconsistencies with staff understanding and implementation of the Multi-tiered Systems of Support process within the district.

Social/Emotional Health

1. Some, but not all spaces clearly outlined shared expectations of behavior and/or academic expectations.
2. Schools have created safe spaces within the schools for students to self-regulate, calm down, regroup and receive positive redirection.

Physical Well-Being

1. There are Farm-to-School opportunities to promote healthy nutrition and education.
2. Many engaging opportunities are offered after school for students beyond traditional athletics (clubs, mountain biking.)

Physical Environment

1. Overall school spaces are well utilized, neat, clean, and inviting. Schools purposefully plan to make ongoing improvements to their buildings and grounds.
2. Schools utilize outdoor space appropriately, and an example of this are several growing gardens which crops are used to share with community organizations and within their own food service programs.

Commendations

1. Schools provide many opportunities for redirection and safe spaces for social/emotional needs to be met.
2. MRSD relies on strong community connections to support learning and social/emotional health.

Recommendations

1. MRSD is encouraged to continue efforts to align and communicate the Multi-tiered Student Support process across all grade levels within the district.
2. MRSD should work with schools to ensure consistent expectations of behavior are posted in age-appropriate language across the district for all students to see.

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. According to interviews, approval for professional development is based either on licensure needs, teacher preference, observation related to evaluation, or school-based priorities.
2. Professional learning on Professional Learning Communities has occurred and they are working on implementing the practice within the district.
3. Based on interviews evidence, teachers are not contributing to the planning and implementation of district professional development opportunities (i.e. inservice).

Staff Evaluation

1. The Danielson model for evaluation is established. Three cycles (newly hired, veteran, and focused assistance) are engaged through TeachPoint.
2. Interview evidence indicates that supervision and evaluation loads are not equitable across schools.

Leadership

1. The district leadership team is new and beginning to develop cohesion.
2. The district leadership is making progress in identifying common district goals that sometimes differ from school-based focus areas.
3. While leadership opportunities exist for teachers, interview evidence indicates it is unclear how teachers should access such opportunities.

Staffing

1. Students generally respected their teachers and expressed a good connection to them. Through interviews and class discussions, it was evident that students believe teachers want the best for them.
2. There is a high teacher retention rate throughout the district.

Commendations

1. Students throughout the district feel teachers take an interest in them and their learning, supported them in many ways, and that they feel connected to teachers.
2. The district attracts highly qualified educators that tend to remain in the district.

Recommendations

1. MRSD leadership is encouraged to collaborate with teachers to plan meaningful professional learning that influences classroom practice and promotes alignment across the recently formed District.
2. MRSD should consider clearly communicating leadership pathways and opportunities to teachers and incentivizing involvement in their development.

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. Staff report that the Continuous Improvement Plans are school based and loosely connected to the district goals.
2. Teachers report having little to no knowledge of, or input into, the continuous improvement planning process.

Student Data System

1. Artifacts and interview evidence indicates the district is using the PowerSchool performance management system PK-12, but reports indicate there is work to be done in improving the elementary progress reporting system.
2. The district utilizes Star 360 K-12.

Financial Alignment

1. Teachers and students report having adequate access to technology, including some 1:1 programs.
2. Interviewees report that budgetary practices support teacher development, intervention practices and resource and student needs, including adjusting travel accommodations for middle school students.

Communication

1. The district employs social media in various forms to communicate with families.

Commendations

1. The District's overall budget strongly supports professional development and student services.
2. Schools are equipped with a level of technology supported by staff and students.

Recommendations

1. The district should continue making progress in defining the district goals for continuous improvement planning and further expand staff and community involvement.