

Integrated Field Review Report

REPORT

March 4, 2020

Mount Mansfield Unified Union School District
Draft Final Report
Site Visit: December 5, 2019

Compiled by

The Visiting Team of Mount Mansfield UUSD

Submitted by

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Schools & Enrollment

School	Approximate Enrollment	Grade Span
Brewster Pierce Elementary	133	PK-4
Browns River Middle School	370	5-8
Camels Hump Middle School	332	5-8
Jericho Elementary School	320	K-4
Mt. Mansfield UHS (Not Visited)	797	9-12
Richmond Elementary School	289	PK-4
Smilie Memorial Elementary School	73	PK-4
Underhill Central School	138	K-4

Mt. Mansfield Unified Union School District (MMUUSD) participated in the Vermont Agency of Education’s Integrated Field Review (IFR) on December 5, 2019.

Prior to the IFR, the Visiting Team reviewed artifacts provided by MMUUSD. During the full day visit, the Visiting Team participated in interviews of the Superintendent, Director of Curriculum/Grants Manager, Business Manager, counseling staff, intervention staff, teaching staff, students, parents, and administrators. In addition, the Visiting Team observed classroom instruction and other MMUUSD learning environments through observations and facilities tours led by students. Mt. Mansfield UHS was not visited as part of the IFR.

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
Brittany Perry	MS Special Educator	Washington Central UUSD
Casey McGill	Grade 9-12 ELA	Orleans Southwest SU
Charlie Gordon	MS Educator	Lamoille South SU
Christine Fitch	HS Science Teacher	Washington Central UUSD
Jade Hazard	Curriculum Director	Lamoille North SU
Jan Epstein	Principal	Lamoille North SU
Jeff Reed	Music Teacher	Orleans Southwest SD
Jen Miller-Arsenault	Director of CIA	Washington Central UUSD
Jenn Dale	Education Quality Assurance Coordinator	AOE
Jesse Roy	Assistant Director of FESP	AOE
Josh Souliere	Assistant Director of Education Quality	AOE
Justine Guthrie	Principal	Orleans Southwest SD
Kathryn Joy	Second Grade Teacher	Lamoille South SU
Kevin Doering	Education Quality Assurance Coordinator	AOE
Marianna Charalabopoulos	Education Quality Assurance Coordinator	AOE
Matt Foster	Principal	Orleans Southwest SD
Merri Greenia	Principals	Orleans Southwest SD
Peter Drescher	State Director of Technology Integration	AOE
Seth Marineau	HS French Teacher	Lamoille South SU
Toni Marra	Education Quality Assurance Coordinator	AOE
Wendy Savery	Principal	Lamoille North SU

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. Interview evidence indicates that in some schools there is a consistent implementation of literacy and math curriculum in K-8.

Instructional Practices

1. Observations throughout the district indicate that the district uses technology resources, such as SMART boards and 1:1 devices, to support instruction.
2. There is evidence to indicate that Social Emotional Learning (SEL) practices such as Responsive Classroom (RC) and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) are used to support academic learning.

Local Assessment System

1. Artifacts submitted by the district featured a local comprehensive assessment plan K-8, including an assessment calendar. In addition, interview evidence supports that there are common math and literacy assessments district wide including Primary Number and Operations Assessment (PNOA) and Fountas and Pinnell (F&P).
2. Based on evidence from interviews, teachers meet with coaches to analyze student work and plan next instruction.

Proficiency-Based Learning

1. Some learning targets were posted and some students were able to articulate their learning based on evidence from observations.
2. Evidence from interviews reveal that Proficiency Based Learning (PBL) and grading is unclear among many stakeholders.

Commendations

1. MMUUSD should be commended for their job embedded professional development approach, which includes using curriculum coaches to help teachers plan data informed instruction.
2. The district is commended for the Social Emotional Learning practices used to support academic learning throughout MMUUSD.

Recommendations

1. MMUUSD should continue to refine the process of Proficiency Based Learning and distribute clear communications regarding all aspects of Proficiency Based Learning, including grading, to 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. Schools are using the Naviance platform and students are supported by staff and other resources in the development of their Personalized Learning Plans (PLPs).
2. At the elementary level, staff interviews and observational evidence indicates that students are active participants in having choice and voice about many learning options and project selections.
3. During interviews, parents and students expressed mixed reactions to how well they understood the purpose of the Personalized Learning Plans and how they were being utilized.

Flexible Pathways

1. There is evidence from interviews and observations that all students are offered technical, college and virtual learning options.
2. Stakeholders reported awareness of course and pathway options their students would have in advance of attending high school (e.g., college courses, online learning, technology skills).

Full Breadth of Courses

1. Schools offer a wide variety of courses, including foreign language (even at some elementary schools), music, and the arts, in addition to core curriculum options.
2. Schools and staff are intentional in their work to ensure that all students can access all courses, regardless of disability or socio/economic status.

Student Voice and Choice

1. According to interviews and observations, students were given choices in book selection, writing assignments, and math problem solving.
2. Students are given multiple opportunities to drive their learning outcomes via projects, using differing technology, and in developing their schedules.

Commendations

1. MMUUSD is commended for offering a variety of learning options and pathways for students to engage in their educational journey.
2. MMUUSD is commended for offering and encouraging students to have voice and choice in their education.

Recommendations

1. The district is encouraged to set time aside for students, parents and staff to work together to develop a common understanding on the use and purposes of Personalized Learning Plans.

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. MMUUSD has a district-wide Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS) framework, which addresses behavioral, academic and social emotional needs and embeds Responsive Classroom, Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports and Trauma Informed Practices into the classrooms.
2. All district Multi-tiered System of Support decisions are made by a team of teachers, through the Education Support Team (EST) process based driven by data. Tier 1 and 2 Interventions are provided by general educators, counselors and special educators, however there has been an increase in special education referrals related to trauma and anxiety. Currently, teachers and administrators report a need for development of Tier 3 Interventions.

Social/Emotional Health

1. Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports implementation across the schools has resulted in clear behavioral expectations and processes that students were readily able to identify. Students also communicated positive attitudes toward the associated acknowledgements and celebrations.
2. The social-emotional well-being of students was a demonstrated priority across schools with personnel, techniques, opportunities and physical spaces dedicated to helping students communicate and regulate their emotions.

Physical Well-Being

1. MMUUSD supports the sensory and physical self-regulation needs of its students through the observed common use of flexible seating options, self and staff directed movement breaks, soothing classroom music and lighting, and the clear posting of safe, expected physical behaviors.
2. The district emphasizes physical well-being through a range of outdoor learning activities and extracurricular options across all grade levels.

Physical Environment

1. During observations, schools were noticed to be clean and well maintained, and classrooms were neat and organized. Students work is hung throughout the schools both in the halls and in classrooms.
2. The students and parents expressed that they spent an ample amount of time outdoors, including for academic classes.

Commendations

1. MMUUSD has committed significant energy and resources to meeting the social-emotional needs of all students.

2. MMUUSD has leveraged the physical environment, both interior and exterior, to create learning opportunities that accommodate a range of learners.

Recommendations

1. MMUUSD should consider analyzing the perceived need to further develop and strengthen their tiered resources and interventions.

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, the staff find the professional development and in-service training offered to be useful and relevant to the school and the district.
2. Interview evidence indicates that the use of coaches across the district is consistent, helpful and positively received.

Staff Evaluation

1. Interview evidence indicates that the staff evaluation process is delineated, specific, and has explicit steps.
2. During interviews, teachers expressed that their personal goal setting process as part of their evaluation is flexible, useful and practical.

Leadership

1. Parent and teacher interviews indicate strong, collaborative, and supportive leadership at the school level.

Staffing

1. Interview evidence revealed that parents and students have a great appreciation for their teachers.
2. Parents expressed concerns during some interviews that some staff (nurse, librarian, guidance, mental health) are only there a few days a week due to the size of schools.

Commendations

1. Positive climate and morale between administration, teachers, parents, and students driven by strong school administrative leadership was present across the district.
2. Teachers across the district feel well supported through their evaluation process and also feel that their needs are being met through professional development opportunities.

Recommendations

1. MMUUSD should consider examining concerns regarding part-time staffing in some positions and how to ensure the supports these staff provide are available and implemented with fidelity when they can not be present.

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. Evidence indicates that parents, community members, and in most cases faculty, are not aware of the continuous improvement plan and work that surrounds it.
2. MMUUSD has created a dynamic set of documents that outline capital improvement planning and technology hardware recycling timelines.

Student Data System

1. MMUUSD uses the Vermont Comprehensive Assessment Tool (VCAT) as one of their tools to assess their academic data across all schools.

Financial Alignment

1. Parents in interviews expressed general concerns about the busing schedule and students being on the bus for an extended period of time partially due to a lack of bus drivers in the state and nationally.
2. Interview evidence indicates that administrators establish priorities to drive budget building and although parents interviewed were not personally involved in establishing budget priorities, they felt the process was equitable throughout the district.

Communication

1. Parents indicate that there is consistent communication from the schools on a variety of topics from academics, to school events, to classroom blogs.
2. Both interviews and observations reveal that there is strong technology support for students, faculty and administration. Parents across the district indicate access to technology for their students feels adequate and equitable.

Commendations

1. MMUUSD is commended for using a variety of communication mediums between schools and parents.
2. Administratively, there was a consistent message about the development of budget priorities across the district.

Recommendations

1. MMUUSD should consider working to improve awareness, communication and involvement around continuous improvement planning across all stakeholders.
2. MMUUSD should consider examining concerns about their busing schedule and routes, especially after the recent merger.