

# Integrated Field Review Report

**REPORT**

12/18/2019

Orange Southwest Supervisory District  
Draft Final Report  
Site Visit: November 7, 2019

Compiled by

The Orange Southwest SD Visiting Team

Submitted by

Marianna Charalabopoulos



## Schools & Enrollment

School	Approximate Enrollment	Grade Span
Braintree School	89	K-6
Brookfield Elementary	69	K-6
Randolph Elementary	329	K-6
Randolph Union High School	394	7-12

Orange Southwest SD (OSSD) participated in the Vermont Agency of Education's Integrated Field Review (IFR) on November 7, 2019.

Prior to the day of the IFR, the Team reviewed artifacts provided by OSSD. During the full day visit, the Visiting Team participated in interviews of the Superintendent, Special Education Director, Business Manager, counseling staff, intervention staff, teaching staff, students, parents, and administrators. In addition, the Visiting Team observed classroom instruction and other OSSD 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
Brenda Waterhouse	Spaulding High School Principal	Barre SU
Steve McKinstry	CVCC Instructor	Barre SU
Tim Sanborn	Barre Town Middle School Teacher	Barre SU
Abigayle Smith	Special Educator	Central VT SU
Michaela Martin	Co-Coordinator of School Transformation	Central VT SU
Bridget Mahabir	Elementary Educator	Harwood Unified Union SD
Heather Lawler	Associate Principal	Windsor Central SU
Raphael Adamek	Director of Instructional Technology	Windsor Central SU
Jenn Dale	Education Quality Assurance	AOE
Kevin Doering	Education Quality Assurance	AOE
Toni Marra	Education Quality Assurance	AOE
Ryan Parkman	Mathematics Specialist	AOE
Josh Souliere	Assistant Director of EQA	AOE
Marianna Charalabopoulos	Education Quality Assurance	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. Per interviews, there has been work completed in the district aligning the elementary curriculum and 7-12 curriculum, but there has not been work completed on aligning the curriculum during the transition from 6th to 7th grade.
2. It was noted during the IFR, that the OSSD does not have a Director of Curriculum.

#### **Instructional Practices**

1. A variety of instructional strategies were observed being used in classrooms, including: station work, small group direct instruction, whole class instruction, 1:1 instruction.
2. The elementary schools had numerous visuals posted on the classroom walls to reflect student work and allow students to access and recall previous learning.

#### **Local Assessment System**

1. All of the elementary schools have a common assessment calendar, which includes both summative and formative assessments.
2. Per interviews and artifacts, Track My Progress is used throughout the district.

#### **Proficiency-Based Learning**

1. During interviews it was revealed that some parents reported confusion and a lack of understanding regarding proficiency-based learning.
2. Interviews indicated that students in the upper grade levels reported inconsistencies in the grading of proficiency-based learning projects and classes.

#### **Commendations**

1. OSSD should be commended for the curriculum alignment that has occurred at the elementary and secondary levels.
2. OSSD should be commended for the presence and use of visuals and student work in the elementary classrooms.

#### **Recommendations**

1. It is recommended that OSSD develop a system for aligning the entire curriculum K-12, and examine the potential benefits of having a Director of Curriculum.

2. It is recommended that OSSD continue to pursue developing consistency amongst all stakeholders in proficiency-based learning throughout the entire district.

# 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 mixed evidence on whether or not Personalized Learning Plans (PLPs) are required; with interview evidence indicating that some parents and students do not understand or believe that they are required.
2. At the elementary level, there is ample evidence indicating individualized student created work as well as a clear connection between teachers, their students, and their personal interests.
3. Evidence indicates that many of the critical elements of personalized learning (i.e. goal setting) are evident K-12.

### Flexible Pathways

1. There is much evidence to support a variety of Flexible Pathways, and during interviews secondary students expressed positive reactions to the options they were being offered.
2. During interviews, students and parents revealed considerable confusion on how students will attain credit for much of their alternate work.

### Full Breadth of Courses

1. During interviews and observations, it was revealed that there are no world language offerings at the elementary level, however the middle level begins to offer Spanish and French.
2. The arts, music and digital/library education are offered throughout all of the elementary schools.

### Student Voice and Choice

1. Evidence indicates that students have substantial choice with regards to reading and writing, even at the younger grades. Students have even more choice in research and study topics as they progress into upper elementary and middle school grades.
2. Building capacity for student choice starts at the early grades throughout the district.
3. Interviews and artifacts suggest that there are many opportunities for students to engage in social justice, climate change and racial justice matters at the secondary level. Students are encouraged to support their individual interests.

### Commendations

1. OOSD should be commended for the variety of multiple learning options offered, especially at the secondary level.
2. OSSD works hard to ensure that all elementary students receive an equitable amount of arts, music, and other offerings.

3. Teachers and students throughout OSSD are working together on goal setting and trying to meet the best interests of the students at all levels.

### **Recommendations**

1. OSSD is encouraged to explore methods of standardizing the evaluation of Flexible Pathway work as well as how these courses are counted for credit towards graduation.

## 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. Observations indicated a variety of instructional opportunities for students including student pull out for small group work, support push-in to classrooms, WIN (What I Need) and centers at the elementary level. Access to areas for self regulation, intentional opportunities to challenge student achievement, and call backs were observed at the middle/high school level.
2. The district has resources to support staffing, including how staff are utilized and their physical placement throughout the schools.

#### Social/Emotional Health

1. Per evidence, there are a number of social emotional supports and practices being used throughout OSSD including guidance counselors, zones of regulation, R.I.S.E. program (Recognizing and Inspiring Student Excellence), B.C.B.A. consultation (Board Certified Behavior Analyst), as well as self-regulated breaks.
2. Interviews with students indicate the feeling of safety in school diminishes as students get older.

#### Physical Well-Being

1. There was evidence that a variety of physical activities are being offered during and outside of school hours, such as Physical Education class, movement breaks, and a community 5k.

#### Physical Environment

1. There are up to date safety systems in some of the schools including buzzer systems, sprinklers, emergency evacuation maps, fencing and handicapped accessibility. However, these are not consistent throughout all buildings.
2. The size and quality of the furniture and playground equipment was inconsistent. Some schools had newer furniture while others had worn and used furniture. Some school furniture was not appropriately sized for older students.

#### Commendations

1. OSSD should be commended for having a large variety of academic supports, interventions, and opportunities for students at all levels.
2. OSSD has created a culture that values physical wellness, including movement and nutrition among community members as well.

#### Recommendations



1. While we recognize there has been progress made towards creating and addressing a robust behavior support system, continued training and implementation is recommended to continue improving overall OSSD student climate and feeling of safety.
2. Physical safety systems are present, but not consistently utilized throughout each building. It is recommended that each building conduct a safety audit to ensure that evacuation maps, buzzer systems, and response protocols are in place and followed consistently.

## 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. Per interviews, staff have diverse choices for professional development (PD) activities and opportunities. Professional development is also offered district-wide.
2. Staff have voice and choice in their own professional development and feel supported by administrators in their professional growth.

#### Staff Evaluation

1. Staff are evaluated dependent upon when they were hired. New staff are to be evaluated each year during the probationary period and every three years after that.
2. Peer evaluation and self-evaluation models are in practice, as well as a coaching model using videos and documentation of best practices.

#### Leadership

1. Interview evidence indicated that newly hired staff report appreciation for support through teacher mentorship programs.
2. Staff feel generally supported and trusted in their work and leadership opportunities granted by school and SD level administration.

#### Staffing

1. Staff have many different roles in all buildings. Even with many responsibilities and duties, staff feel that they are supported in all endeavors and students feel supported by staff and appreciate staff.
2. Schools share staff in specialist positions. Some staff do not have full-time schedules between buildings. There are current needs for additional staffing to support academic, social emotional, and allied arts efforts with students in all buildings.

#### Commendations

1. OSSD should be commended for its mentorship models, both colleague to colleague and staff to student.
2. OSSD should also be commended for the current system of providing professional development district-wide, and the ability for teachers to have voice and choice in their needs for professional growth.

## Recommendations

1. OSSD should examine staffing needs, and consider creative staffing such as accommodating schedules in buildings to combine positions/employee roles, or possibly creating positions with work plans dedicated to help cover and provide the support needed. This would lessen the duties and responsibilities of each individual staff person.

## **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. There is an OSSD Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP) developed with the Administrative team, and most teachers interviewed report they are involved in the process, however, most report there needs to be improved alignment in practices from school to school.
2. Most staff report they are involved in creating their Title investments, however, some report they are not as involved in the process as others.

#### **Student Data System**

1. OSSD uses similar data management systems throughout the district including PowerSchool and Track My Progress, as well as one local universal assessment, TeacherEase.

#### **Financial Alignment**

1. It was noted through observations that there are high staff to student ratios as well as a large investment in paraprofessionals in the district.
2. OSSD has dedicated many resources to the centralization of services, and interview evidence indicates centralization has been financially beneficial and created equitable distribution to schools.

#### **Communication**

1. The district provides parents with many different types of communication tools, including parent/teacher conferences, phone calls, emails, website, facebook and community forums, which are at times led by students.
2. Within the district there is a culture of seeking out feedback from stakeholders, and interviewees state they have seen improvements in this area since new leadership has been in place.

#### **Commendations**

1. Leadership at the Superintendent level and other leadership positions has positively contributed to stakeholders feeling the system is moving in a positive direction, especially around communication and the centralization of services.
2. OSSD should be commended for the variety of ways they communicate through forums, newsletters and Facebook, as they seem to be reaching all stakeholders and making them feel like the SD has an open door policy around feedback.

#### **Recommendations**

1. OSSD should consider completing a cost-benefit analysis on the investment in staffing used to support student achievement (para-professionals, student support, behavior interventionists, school counselors).
2. OSSD should consider reviewing their continuous improvement efforts to ensure alignment to district-wide goals.