

Integrated Field Review Report

REPORT

December 9, 2019

Central Vermont Supervisory Union

Draft Final Report

Site Visit: October 24, 2019

Compiled by: The IFR Visiting Team for Central Vermont SU

Submitted by: Kevin P. Doering



Schools & Enrollment

School	Approximate Enrollment	Grade Span
Northfield Elementary	305	PK-5
Northfield Middle/High School	295	6-12
Orange Center School	80	5-8
Washington Village	95	PK-4
Williamstown Elementary	245	PK-5
Williamstown Middle/High School	280	6-12

The Central Vermont Supervisory Union (CVSU) participated in the Vermont Agency of Education's Integrated Field Review (IFR) on the 24th of October, 2019. .

Prior to this date, the Visiting Team reviewed artifacts provided by the CVSU. During the full day visit, the Visiting Team participated in interviews of the Superintendent, Co-Director of School Transformation, Director of Finance, counseling staff, intervention staff, teaching staff, students, parents, and administrators. In addition, the Visiting Team observed classroom instruction and other CVSU 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
Jennifer Farnsworth	Special Educator	Barre SD
Katelyn Bouffard	Middle School Teacher	Harwood UUSD
Nick Gordon	Middle School Teacher	Harwood UUSD
Shannon Lesseley	Director of Curriculum and Assessment	Harwood UUSD
Stephanie Hudak	CBMS Principal	Harwood UUSD
Susan Koepplinger	Elem SPED Teacher	Harwood UUSD
Anna Hipko	Communications Specialist	Montpelier Roxbury SD
Katherine Leman	Math/Language Arts Educator	Montpelier Roxbury SD
Rachel Aldrich-Whalen	Kindergarten Educator	Montpelier Roxbury SD
Dorinne Dorfman	Student Support Director Middle/HS	Orange Southwest SD
Linda Berthiaume	Special Education	Orange Southwest SD
John Hansen	Principal	Windsor Central SU
Mary Beth Banios	Superintendent	Windsor Central SU
DeVeau Sleeper	Elementary Math Interventionist	Windsor Central SU
Jenn Dale	Education Quality Coordinator	AOE
Josh McCormack	Licensing Specialist	AOE
Greg Young	Integration Coordinator	AOE
Kevin Doering (lead)	Education Quality Coordinator	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. Grade 1-12 departmentalization allows for better curricular coordination, though many from this year's senior class, (according to interviews) are engaging in much of their education off campus.
2. Many teachers have been trained in the Orton Gillingham reading program, and Mahesh Sharma's instructional strategies in mathematics.

Local Assessment System

1. Most elementary teachers regularly administer local assessments, common assessments, meet in teams to analyze the data, and according to interviews, revise instruction and student instruction groups accordingly.
2. STAR 360 is used in grades K-10 twice a year. Students receiving interventions are tested every four weeks.

Instructional Practices

1. Students are encouraged to demonstrate learning through various methods such as project-based learning, experiential learning, writing, and speaking.
2. According to interview evidence, a top priority is for students to attend Tier I core instruction. For the 30% of students who receive interventions, most sessions are scheduled outside of core instruction. ELA and Math interventions occur one hour/day.

Proficiency-Based Learning

1. All teachers observed posted the daily learning intentions and the school-wide Habits of Success.
2. Proficiency indicators drive learning according to district curriculum information.

Commendations

1. The investments in high-quality professional development for teachers and other staff are making a positive impact on student engagement and performance.
2. CVSU is commended for its instructional training work, as well as working to ensure that students receiving interventions do so outside of Tier 1 instruction.

Recommendations

1. Since CVSU has many educational opportunities that occur off campus, it is recommended they consider regularly examining curriculum alignment with those off campus educational providers to ensure learners needs are being met.

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. Students work on goal setting with their advisor and then lead parent conferences to share their progress. Artifacts are gathered in content classes in order to demonstrate proficiency.
2. Organization of Personalized Learning Plans and portfolios are organized digitally or physically.

Flexible Pathways

1. A good majority of students take advantage of a breadth of flexible pathways offerings: pursuing early college, participating in an outdoor learning classroom on project based assignments tied to core curriculum, attending a tech program, working in the community, pursuing individual projects under the guidance of a faculty advisor and community mentor, and more.
2. A distinct and versatile, school-based Pathways Program exists for students looking to engage in an alternative environment, follow a passion, or pursue a work-based experience.

Full Breadth of Courses

1. Elementary teachers operate under a Content Speciality model - each teacher is focused on one content area and specializes in it. This helps ensure both depth and breadth of course content. Some utilize programming such as Orton Gillingham for literacy and Maheesh Sharma for math.
2. Evidence indicates a good breadth of courses that cover more than one content area including examples such as Art/ Anatomy or Food Science.
3. Student interview evidence indicated that there was a lack of advanced courses at the secondary level for those who chose to stay at their school.

Student Voice and Choice

1. Students in the 5th and 8th grade complete a Capstone Project. Upper level students pursue Flexible Pathways and have two Extended Learning Opportunity blocks at the end of each day for enrichment and support. Students in the 8th grade can choose to pursue high school performance indicators and can participate in higher level classes.
2. Students are positively reinforced with tokens representing currency that they can exchange at the school stores or save up for enrichment opportunities. Students report discovering their voice and being able to act as leaders for the middle and high schools.

Commendations

1. Student voice and choice is very evident in schools visited.
2. Flexible Pathway alternatives were positively discussed by staff and students.

Recommendations

1. CVSU is encouraged to research and identify a software system to organize Personalized Learning Plans and student portfolios.
2. CVSU may wish to consider researching and identifying more challenging offerings to satisfy the needs of upper level students who have not pursued early college or other outside programs.

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. All schools across the SU are implementing PBIS and Restorative Practices.
2. The SU uses data to inform decisions about interventions needed, often provided by classroom teachers and paraeducators.

Social/Emotional Health

1. Schools prioritize physical space for regulation.
2. Students report feeling supported and cared for by adults.

Physical Well-Being

1. Healthy meals and snacks are provided, some of which are through “Farm to School.”
2. School observational and interview evidence demonstrate clear consideration for meeting the needs of the whole child, including hygiene, movement breaks, and health information.

Physical Environment

1. The physical environment is set up thoughtfully for students as evidenced by posted hallway expectations, positive quotes, and comfortable classrooms.
2. Although spaces are thoughtfully provisioned, some older buildings have space limitations.

Commendations

1. CVSU should be commended for prioritizing and meeting the needs of the whole child. This priority is reflected in students' attitudes and school culture.
2. CVSU should be commended for having clear expectations through the use of positive reinforcements.

Recommendations

1. CVSU should consider (assuming not done recently) developing a list of building needs, including maintenance and space limitations where applicable.

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. Professional development is aligned to an SU-wide MTSS framework and targets academic content and social-emotional learning.
2. All elementary teachers are trained in Orton-Gillingham.

Staff Evaluation

1. All schools are using Danielson for teacher supervision and evaluation; however teachers report mixed results about their own evaluations and their effectiveness.
2. CVSU is developing new teacher evaluation rubrics to include proficiency-based learning and MTSS practices.

Leadership

1. Teachers are given the opportunity to take leadership roles within all buildings.
2. CVSU employs co-directors of school transformation to help oversee the SU-wide MTSS system.
3. CVSU conducts exit interviews with all staff members who depart.

Staffing

1. CVSU schools have different content area teachers for elementary education.
2. Students have access to content specialists for intervention across all schools.
3. Retention of teachers and administrators has been challenging over the last few years.

Commendations

1. CVSU has identified a need to improve their teacher evaluation system to better align with new initiatives, including PBL and MTSS practices.
2. CVSU is employing PD which is aligned to its' MTSS framework.

Recommendations

1. CVSU is encouraged to communicate broadly and frequently to staff throughout the creation and implementation of the new teacher evaluation rubrics.

2. CVSU should continue to work on evaluating the departures of teachers and administrators, and analyzing that data to continue to improve the climate and culture across the SU.

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. CVSU reports using data to inform decisions. Building leaders are encouraged to use data points to make individual decisions as long as they stay within guardrails (eg: MTSS Non-negotiables)
2. CVSU has a well defined Continuous Improvement Plan, and has a plan to capture data points for all elements of the plan. The school board has aligned data points to the mission statement, and these are aligned to the printed Continuous Improvement Plan goals.
3. According to interview evidence, school level participation in the cultivation of the Continuous Improvement Plan has been minimal.

Student Data System

1. CVSU collects behavioral data as well as progress, goals, and interventions and utilizes a couple of software tools (Star 360 and TIST) to do so.

Financial Alignment

1. Parents, teachers, and students reported that following the merger, resources have been shifted to other schools and some have been removed. Several positions have been lost because of the merger, according to interview evidence. Several empty rooms were observed and it was reported that they were not being utilized. Students report that they do not have the same opportunities as others in the district.
2. Students, Parents, and Teachers shared that they believe they have all the physical materials needed for learning, including 1:1 technology for students.

Communication

1. Parents, teachers, and students shared that they receive communication through the school website and email. They shared that communication has improved greatly this year.
2. Parents and students feel that teachers and principals are accessible and respond quickly and reliably to correspondence.

Commendations

1. The central office has been mindful about allocating resources for professional development backed by research and data for outcomes.

2. Teachers and students feel that they have the physical resources they need to be successful in teaching and learning.

Recommendations

1. CVSU should increase transparency to all stakeholders in understanding how investment priorities are made, and how long term planning impacts all schools in the SU. Increasing participation in the development of Continuous Improvement Plan is encouraged.
2. CVSU is encouraged to increase communication and to seek creative solutions/ formulate plans that will allow all students in the SU to take advantage of unique learning opportunities offered by its differing schools.