

Integrated Field Review Report

REPORT

May 23, 2019

Grand Isle Supervisory Union
April 17, 2019

Submitted by Grand Isle Visiting Team



Schools & Enrollment

School	Approximate Enrollment	Grade Span
Grand Isle	178	K-8
Alburgh	227	PK-8
Folsom	131	K-8
Isle la Motte	27	PK-6
North Hero	61	PK-6

Grand Isle Supervisory Union participated in the Vermont Agency of Education's Integrated Field Review (IFR) on April 17, 2019.

During the afternoon of the IFR training, the Visiting Team reviewed artifacts provided by GISU. During the full day visit, the Visiting Team participated in interviews of the Superintendent, Director of Curriculum, Grants Manager, Business Manager, Technology Coordinator,, counseling staff, intervention staff, teaching staff, students, parents, and administrators. In addition, the Visiting Team observed classroom instruction and other GISU 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
Josh Souliere	Assistant Director	VTAOE
Peter Drescher	Director of Education Technology	VTAOE
Stephanie Sumner	Administrator	Champlain Valley SD
Monique Tetreault	ML Teacher	Champlain Valley SD
Sarah Pierson	WL Teacher	Champlain Valley SD
Rob Reardon	Principal	Essex-Westford SD
Ben Beatty-Owens	High School Special Educator	Essex-Westford SD
Carrie Dickinson	Assistant Technology Director	Essex-Westford SD
David Hoppe	Guidance Counselor	Essex-Westford SD
Callie Reinker	Middle School Math Teacher	Winooski
Heidi Brown	EL Elementary Teacher	Burlington
Judy Klima	Integrated Arts Coach	Burlington
Sarah Murphy	Guidance Counselor	Winooski
Suzan Locke	Administrator	Champlain Valley SD
Amy Murphy	Special Education Monitoring	VTAOE
Sigrid Olson	Personalized Learning Coordinator	VTAOE
Martha Deiss	Education Programs Coordinator	VTAOE
Kevin Doering	Education Quality Coordinator	VTAOE
Jenn Dale	Education Quality Coordinator	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. Evidence indicates grade level clusters within schools have aligned curriculum, but we lacked evidence to support aligned curriculum across the Supervisory Union.
2. Research and standards based programs are being used across the Supervisory Union in math and language arts.

Instructional Practices

1. A variety of instructional and differentiation strategies are used to meet the needs of students.
2. Technology integration is in the beginning stages of substitution and augmentation.

Local Assessment System

1. Evidence indicates that parents and community have a need for additional professional learning regarding Proficiency-Based Learning and reporting.
2. There are a variety of reporting measures and systems used and aligned across the schools.

Proficiency-Based Learning

1. There is a wide variety of understanding and implementation of Proficiency-Based Learning practices across the Supervisory Union.
2. Evidence indicates that students are working at levels that are appropriate for their proficiency.

Commendations

1. A variety of evidence-based instructional and differentiation strategies are implemented throughout the Supervisory Union to address the diverse needs of students.
2. The curriculum across grade levels is aligned and being implemented with fidelity.

Recommendations

1. GISU should continue to strengthen their Proficiency-Based Learning and reporting model and ensure the model is effectively communicated to all stakeholders to increase the efficacy of implementation and understanding.
2. GISU should continue to explore and develop a curriculum map that identifies common essential content standards for grade levels across the Supervisory Union.

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 are in place, however, they are being implemented differently across schools.
2. Teachers in a variety of settings emphasized a goal-setting process with students.

Flexible Pathways

1. Students have the opportunity to learn from mentors and community members in addition to their teachers.
2. After learning about and visiting various schools, students and their families are able to personalize their learning by choosing which high school to attend

Full Breadth of Courses

1. Exposure and opportunity to participate in world language, art, music and P.E. varies across the Supervisory Union.
2. Evidence indicates the educational experience students have prepares them for high school. For example, participation in project based learning.

Student Voice and Choice

1. Students have choice in things like project selection, capstone program, subtopics within a unit, flex/WIN time.
2. Students report they have the opportunity to communicate thoughts, ideas, and concerns with adults.

Commendations

1. Students across the Supervisory Unions express they have the opportunity and comfort to have a voice and choice in their learning and how that learning is demonstrated.
2. There are several ways in which students personalize their learning opportunities and how that learning is obtained.

Recommendations

1. GISU should continue to work on the implementation of Personalized Learning Plans, including ensuring implementation is consistent from school to school.
2. GISU should ensure that all students across the Supervisory Union have equitable access to learning opportunities.

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. PBIS implementation is found in all schools, however how it is being implemented differs from school to school across the Supervisory Union.
2. Although Multi-tiered Systems of Supports and initiatives exist in each school, it was difficult to measure consistent implementation across district.

Social/Emotional Health

1. Evidence indicates that social emotional supports and resources were inconsistent from school to school.

Physical Well-Being

1. Emphasis seen for safety processes for students and staff with appropriate reminders. Students know processes and requirements.
2. Students have a variety of opportunities for physical exercise during the day, and students and parents report they would like more opportunities for extra-curricular activities.

Physical Environment

1. Some schools are maintained differently than others, and have different indoor and outdoor resources.
2. Student work and behavior based visuals were consistently found in classrooms and hallways, creating a sense of community and pride.

Commendations

1. There is a strong commitment to the physical well-being of students across schools within the Supervisory Union , with some of the focuses being safety, building strong relationships, physical activity and taking pride in their school.
2. There is consistency in what practices being implemented across the SU.

Recommendations

1. Although there is consistency in what practices are being implemented across schools, GISU should examine how they can create more consistency in the level of implementation across schools.

2. GISU should consider examining that resources are distributed and implemented equitably across schools within the SU.

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. While there is a consistency in developing professional development based on identified areas of improvement, some reported wanting more building based focus to work on professional learning aligned with their individual needs.

Staff Evaluation

1. Evidence indicates that consistent staff evaluations occur for new teachers, but not necessarily those teachers past the two year mark.
2. The evaluation process seems to be inconsistent for veteran teachers and is not managed by their supervisor within their discipline. For example, a principal will evaluate a special educator instead of the Director of Special Education completing the evaluation. Evidence indicates the SU is aware and changes are being implemented.

Leadership

1. Evidence indicates that consistent turnover at the school and central office level has impacted following an aligned, collectively developed mission and vision.
2. Most parents reported that building level leadership was strong, but there is a lack of transparency at the district level due to a lot of turnover.

Staffing

1. Because of the small community feel across the SU, most parents feel like they have good rapport and easy access in communication channels with teachers.
2. There is a real need for adding and maintaining teachers in the specials areas, (music, art, band, etc.) and for clinical specialists for the needs of the student population. For example OT and SLP specialists are covering a wide area and a growing caseload with limited staffing.

Commendations

1. Teachers go to great lengths to support students, and parents have clear appreciation for teachers' efforts regarding accessibility, student support and feedback.
2. Obvious efforts are being made by leadership and general staff to provide consistent and long term growth and solutions for challenges facing the district. Clearly the Supervisory Union has identified their most challenging problems and is prioritizing them.

Recommendations

1. GRSU should consider developing a consistent teacher evaluation process for all educators, regardless of length of time under employment and maintain evaluations in an equitable fashion that adheres to proper peer disciplines and roles of supervisors.
2. GRSU should consider developing and maintaining a clear, consistent, and transparent communication system from the Supervisory Union level to engage all families.

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 awareness across the SU that a continuous improvement plan exists. There are varying degrees of familiarity with the contents and connection to instruction that depend upon which school with which staff or families are associated.
2. There is evidence that a new and growing connection exists between the professional development activities that are offered by both the SU, as well as individual schools, and the Continuous Improvement Plan.

Student Data System

1. Evidence indicates lack of a comprehensive student data system in the SU. A desire exists on the part of leaders, staff, and parents for a more robust local assessment system that can be reported to students and families with fidelity.

Financial Alignment

1. The SU would like to increase resources allocated to mentoring and professional development of teachers. Revisions to the budgeting process are informing a more systematic development of budgets and addressing issues of equity in resource allocation between schools.
2. There are good infrastructure supports in place with regard to the network existing in the SU. Evidence indicates possible inequity and inconsistency of resources and replacement cycling for equipment.

Communication

1. Parents sense of connection is strong to their schools. The parents do express a disconnection with the SU functions, which may be a result of the political impact of the merger process in this community and turnover. In some cases, this seems to be impacting family engagement in some schools.
2. There does not appear to be a comprehensive communication strategy that is used with consistency across schools and contexts.

Commendations

1. The Supervisory Union has completed comprehensive needs assessments that drive their continuous improvement planning efforts, and they have aligned their professional development needs with their problems of practice within their CIP.
2. The Supervisory Union should be commended for their commitment to serving students' needs with the resources that they have. There is a culture of creativity, efficiency, and service that exists almost universally across all settings. Adults who work in the district tend to have solutions-oriented approaches that always exemplify service to students.

Recommendations

1. The GISU leadership and staff community may consider a comprehensive system of communication to coordinate information, messaging, and reporting. The opportunity to craft the narrative of the evolution of the GISU culture as you navigate merging may help you to align and coordinate your stakeholders in ways that serve the vision and goals of the schools/ SU.
2. The GISU leadership team may consider investing in a student data system coordinating student information, instructional performance data, student behavior data, attendance, and other sources of data that may feel relevant in the school setting. The system's role could be two-fold; engaging school level staff in review of individual and cohort performance, as well as facing outward to families so that they can monitor their students' progress in 'real time'.