

# Integrated Field Review Report

**REPORT**

May 8, 2019

Maple Run Unified SD

Final Report

March 27, 2019

**Compiled by the Maple Run Unified SD Visiting Team**

**Submitted by Josh Souliere**



## Schools & Enrollment

| School                                 | Approximate Enrollment | Grade Span |
|--|------------------------|------------|
| Bellows Free Academy Union High School | 846                    | 9-12       |
| Fairfield Center School                | 247                    | PK-8       |
| St. Albans City Elementary             | 760                    | PK-8       |
| St. Albans Town Educational Center     | 785                    | PK-8       |

Maple Run Unified SD (MRUSD) participated in the Vermont Agency of Education's Integrated Field Review (IFR) on March 27, 2019.

During the afternoon of the IFR training, the Visiting Team reviewed artifacts provided by MRUSD. During the full day visit, the Visiting Team participated in interviews of the Superintendent, Curriculum Director, Special Education Director, Early Childhood Programs, Business Manager, counseling staff, intervention staff, teaching staff, students, parents, and administrators. In addition, the Visiting Team observed classroom instruction and other MRUSD 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          |
|--------------------------|---|-----------------------|
| Justin Pinard            | MS Guidance Counselor                           | Franklin Northeast SU |
| Kris Hoyt                | Technology Teacher/Proficiency Coach            | Franklin Northeast SU |
| Michelle Weed            | Elem. Guidance Counselor                        | Franklin Northeast SU |
| Heather Beauregard       | Elem. Teacher                                   | Franklin Northeast SU |
| Dan Palmer               | Middle School Principal                         | Franklin Northwest SU |
| Christie Martin          | Elem. Principal                                 | Franklin Northwest SU |
| Christina Reider         | HS Special Educator Teacher                     | Milton Town SD        |
| Leslie Read              | Elementary School Teacher                       | Milton Town SD        |
| Robin Gagne              | Assistant Director of Special Programs          | Franklin Northeast SU |
| Kristen Hughes           | Math Interventionist                            | Franklin Northwest SU |
| Emma Stevens             | Literacy Interventionist                        | Franklin Northeast SU |
| Anissa Seguin            | Elem/Middle School K-8 Principal                | Franklin Northeast SU |
| Toni Marra               | Personalization Team                            | AOE                   |
| Cathy Wilkins            | Licensing Specialist                            | AOE                   |
| Donna Stafford           | Education Quality Manager                       | AOE                   |
| Nancy Hellen             | Multi-Tiered System of Supports Coordinator I   | AOE                   |
| Marianna Charalabopoulos | Education Quality Coordinator                   | AOE                   |
| Josh Souliere            | Assistant Director of Education Quality Reviews | 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. Evidence indicates there is a system in place to support curriculum development and implementation, which includes common planning time and relevant discussions regarding curriculum alignment.
2. Students, teachers and parents indicate there is not a clear system for credits, proficiencies, and weighting classes, and that they are not aware of any conversion system between proficiencies and scores related to dual enrollment, industry credentials, and college admissions processes.

#### Instructional Practices

1. Interview and observation evidence indicated that there are several promising practices in the areas of student support (social/emotional, academic), instructional strategies, professional development, and implementation of instructional best practices; however, the level of implementation varies from school to school.
2. District staff report commitment to ensuring that all schools have equitable access to technology for instructional use.

#### Local Assessment System

1. Evidence shows that data is used to determine behavioral interventions and supports, but there is a lack of evidence as to how data is used, formatively, to drive instruction.
2. The district has a local assessment plan that has been a focus this year, and some evidence indicates teachers feel they are moving in a positive direction with alignment of assessments across the district.

#### Proficiency-Based Learning

1. Parents, staff, and students report: frustration with the lack of alignment between transcripts and proficiency-based graduation requirements; anxiety about the information being passed along to colleges; and confusion related to the lack of clarity in the overall reporting system.

#### Commendations

1. MRUSD has dedicated resources and systemic focus to ensuring data-driven decisions when determining behavioral interventions and supports.
2. MRUSD teachers and students have access across the district to technology, which has been embedded into instructional strategies and practices.

#### Recommendations

1. MRUSD should consider examining their current proficiency based learning, grading and reporting system to ensure that it: is transferable; accurately represents student learning; and is adequately communicated to stakeholders.

2. MRSUD should consider examining their systems in place to deliver support for staff and classroom teachers on social emotional/trauma learning, interventions and best practices for providing differentiated instruction and support to ensure consistent implementation among schools.

## 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. Parents, students, and teachers report a wide range of understanding about personalized learning plans, the development of plans, platforms used and the level to which plans are utilized.

#### Flexible Pathways

1. Parents, teachers and students report that the schools provide all students access to flexible pathways, and that there are multiple options that meets the needs of stakeholders.
2. Most parents, students and teachers report that the schools provide personalized instruction to meet the needs of students.

#### Full Breadth of Courses

1. Interview evidence from parents, students and teachers indicate that enrichment opportunities within schools are inconsistent throughout the district.
2. Parents, students, and faculty state that students have a wide variety of course and career options at the secondary level, including technical options.

#### Student Voice and Choice

1. Students report choice around programs, classes, and methods for demonstrating learning,
2. Students report having opportunities to share their voice in school based decisions.

#### Commendations

1. MRUSD provides personalized instruction as part of universal instruction practices to meet student needs.
3. MRUSD provides a full breadth of courses at the secondary level, which is well received by parents, teachers, and students.

#### Recommendations

1. MRUSD should create a more consistent personalized learning process, use of platforms, and understanding among stakeholders.
2. MRUSD should examine enrichment opportunities across the district to ensure that students have the comparable opportunities across all schools.

## 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. Per observations, most school and class expectations are accessible or visible to everyone.
2. Per interviews, most parents and staff can identify school support systems, but there remains confusion about how to access and use these systems effectively.

#### Social/Emotional Health

1. Per interviews, students across the supervisory union report feeling connected with staff members and that building relationships with staff is important to their success and emotional well-being.
1. Per observations and interviews, there were several examples of peer learning experiences (e.g., older students teaching younger students how to sugar, peer helpers on academics, etc.).

#### Physical Well-Being

1. Students report feeling safe at school, but some feel that more needs to be done to uphold their safety when behavioral issues are reported.
2. Interviewees report a majority of schools offer healthy and accessible food options for lunch (e.g., share fridge, PreK backpack program, etc.); however, some evidence indicates more time is needed for students to eat.

#### Physical Environment

1. Per observations, most buildings showcase student murals, artwork, expectations, safety changes, and other student work.
2. Per observations, the physical environment of most buildings is organized and neat.

#### Commendations

1. MRUSD is commended on creating a student-centered, well maintained, safe environment, welcoming to all stakeholders.
2. MRUSD is commended for their focus on the physical well-being and social emotional needs of students, including offering healthy meal options and fostering atmospheres for peer mentoring.

#### Recommendations

1. MRUSD should consider examining the process in which behavioral issues and concerns are addressed, communicated, and implemented, to ensure stakeholders' trust.
2. MRUSD should examine their MTSS framework to ensure access to the system is clearly defined and the components of the system are clearly communicated to all stakeholders.

## 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. The district has been focusing their professional learning on trauma informed practices and social emotional/behavioral systems and practices.
2. Teachers report the desire for greater input on professional development opportunities.

#### Staff Evaluation

1. Evidence indicates inconsistencies in the evaluation tool and process across schools; however, the district is developing a new evaluation tool and process that aligns with their current vision and mission.

#### Leadership

1. Most schools have a teacher leadership team.
2. Evidence indicates now that merger decisions are complete, MRUSD leadership and school boards are focusing on building a more cohesive educational community.

#### Staffing

1. Interview evidence indicates that teachers are highly valued by students, parents, and administrators across the district, and their level of dedication and commitment to the kids and their communities is what drives district success.

#### Commendations

1. Teachers are the backbone of the educational community, and all stakeholders represented in this process recognize their commitment and value to their educational systems.
2. The district is continuing to focus on educational improvements, cohesion, and aligning their systems and practices to ensure consistency across all schools.

#### Recommendations

1. MRUSD should continue to develop their evaluation model, ensuring consistency across all schools and alignment with the district vision.
2. MRUSD should explore ways in which teachers and other educators can provide more input into their professional learning needs.



## 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. Parents and teachers report they have limited knowledge of the continuous improvement plan, including a lack of involvement in the development of the plan.
2. MRUSD has a continuous improvement focus on equity that drives their decision making across all schools and the system as a whole.

#### Student Data System

1. Teachers and parents report struggles with the changeover to PowerTeacher Pro, including needing more time to input their data and more professional learning on the system.

#### Financial Alignment

1. Interview evidence from teachers and parents indicates the need for more staffing to support students' social emotional needs.
2. The district has a five-year infrastructure plan to address needed physical improvements across all schools and at central office.
3. Teachers report they have access to all of the resources they need to do their jobs and any additional requests they may make during the school year.

#### Communication

1. Most parents report being pleased with the timely communication from central office, and they express appreciation for having opportunities for input into district decisions.
2. Some parents report desires for more timely communications from their children's school, specifically when it comes to student expectations.

#### Commendations

1. MRUSD is financially committed to supporting their staff with educational resources needed to teach students.
2. MRUSD is committed to strong communications with their stakeholders, including involving them in the decision-making process.

#### Recommendations

1. MRUSD should consider providing additional professional learning opportunities to stakeholders on their new student data system, PowerTeacher Pro, in efforts to increase understanding and improved utilization of the new platform.

2. MRUSD should explore ways to increase the engagement of stakeholders in continuous improvement planning efforts.