

Integrated Field Review Report

REPORT

November 30, 2018

Rutland City Supervisory Union

Final Report

Site Visit: November 29, 2018

Submitted by Kevin Doering



Schools & Enrollment

School	Approximate Enrollment	Grade Span
Northeast Primary School	204	K-2
Northwest Elementary School	231	K-2
Rutland Intermediate School	515	3-6
Rutland Middle School	300	7-8

Rutland City Supervisory Union (RCPS) participated in the Vermont Agency of Education's Integrated Field Review (IFR) on November 29, 2018.

During the afternoon of the IFR training, the Visiting Team reviewed artifacts provided by Rutland City SD. 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 Rutland City SD 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.

The District had made an arrangement with AOE personnel prior to the visit requesting that the High School be excluded from this IFR due to a NEASC review this fall.

Visiting Team

Name	Role	Organization
Bob Myers	Middle School Teacher	Rutland Northeast SU
Cathy Darley	Elementary Teacher	Addison-Rutland SU
Cindy Cassidy	Teacher	Greater Rutland County SU
Erica Eckrote	HS Special Educator	Rutland Northeast SU
Eva McDonough	Nurse	Addison Central SD
Kate Leathe	Dean of Students/PBL Coach	Addison-Rutland SU
Zach Eastman	HS Classroom Teacher	Greater Rutland County SU
Laurie Greenberg	Asst. Principal	Mount Abraham Unified USD
Lea Gipson	HS Classroom Teacher	Addison Central SD
Lyndsey Riter	Elem. Interventionist	Greater Rutland County SU
Matthew DeBlois	Elementary Principal	Addison Northwest SD
Sarah Ingersoll	Interventionist	Addison Central SD
Kevin Doering	Education Quality Coordinator	Agency of Education
Ron Ryan	Manager for Licensing Office	Agency of Education
Emma Louie	MTSS Coordinator	Agency of Education
Laura Baker	Learning Disabilities Consultant	Agency of Education
Greg Young	STEAM Specialist	Agency of Education
Donna Stafford	Education Quality Manager	Agency of Education

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. According to interviews, some schools are aware of and using standards to inform instruction.
2. According to observations and interviews, curriculum in some schools is highly prescribed, while in others there is little consistency.

Instructional Practices

1. A variety of research-based instructional practices that support academic and social-emotional learning were observed in some schools.
2. According to interviews and observations, intervention for math and reading takes place in small groups outside of the classroom.

Local Assessment System

1. Data is collected and shared through Infinite Campus in all schools.
2. Student progress is formally reported twice per year based on end of year goals.

Proficiency-Based Learning

1. According to interviews, students are able to articulate differences between proficiency levels.

Commendations

1. Most students can articulate the differences between a 1-4 in the proficiency-based learning (PBL) model.
2. Diverse cultures, histories and peoples are reflected in the curriculum and student work.

Recommendations

1. RCSD should improve curriculum coordination and consistency and the related communication to parents and teachers.
2. It is recommended that professional development include time for teachers to collaborate around PBL, assessment, etc.

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. Staff expect all students in the middle grades to complete personalized learning plans (PLPs)
2. Interviewees report that an advisory committee helps students develop the PLP and that members have received relevant professional development.

Flexible Pathways

1. Observations reveal that in some schools, student data is used to make decisions about student pathways.
2. Evidence gained from observations and interviews indicates that MTSS allows for all students to be known from a strengths and challenges point of view.

Full Breadth of Courses

1. Based upon interviews, there are generally few opportunities for student choice in elementary schools.
2. Aside from the core subjects taught, student opportunities for electives/specials extend beyond the elementary level.

Student Voice and Choice

1. Students choose and help set up celebrations.
2. Based upon interviews, more personalization at the primary level happens outside of tier 1.

Commendations

1. Some teachers recognize the need to adapt curriculum to real life situations that align with the changing needs of the students.

Recommendations

1. It is recommended that student voice and choice as well as personalization be increased at the pre-K - 8 level.

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 have developed a framework of multi-tiered academic and social-emotional support with some variation in practices between buildings.
2. Principals, teachers and paraprofessionals reported the need for additional personnel to effectively implement their MTSS program. They asked for more paraprofessionals, counselors, and interventionists, specifically.

Social/Emotional Health

1. All schools have developed a PBIS program, recognizing positive behavioral contributions from their students and rewarding them in a variety of ways.
2. All schools offer free after school programs for kids to engage in multi-faceted explorations with teachers and community members. Transportation home from this program is also offered free of charge.
3. Students feel they have a trusted adult and were safe at school. Teachers echoed this sentiment.

Physical Well-Being

1. Lunch programs are provided at all schools, meeting the needs of their children's nutritional needs. The fruit and veggie program provides healthy snacks all day long, and the elementary schools provide free lunch to all of their students; even those who do not qualify for free and reduced lunch.
2. Students, parents, and staff report concerns over the frequency of physical violence and disruption to the learning environment in at least two schools. All stakeholders indicate the need for additional resources to help curtail bullying, emotional meltdowns, physical outbursts, and violence at school.
3. Elementary students receive only one physical education class per week.

Physical Environment

1. Student work and positive messages are prominently displayed in all schools.
2. Safety measures such as locked doors, camera buzz-in systems and sign in procedures are utilized at all schools.

Commendations

1. This district's commitment to providing large scale, diverse and accommodating after school opportunities for all students is commended.
2. The leaders, teachers and community members at each school create a welcoming, positive, and nurturing environment for their students to succeed.

Recommendations

1. Personnel are needed, both for academic intervention support and social emotional/behavioral intervention.
2. Observations demonstrate a need to focus more professional development and resources on understanding and supporting the needs of students experiencing social-emotional distress and trauma.

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 with staff, district-wide in-service does not meet personalized needs of staff.
2. According to staff and administration interviews, more professional learning is needed in the area of social emotional, mental health, trauma, and proficiency-based learning.

Staff Evaluation

1. The district has a supervision and evaluation model based on Danielson and Skillful Teacher.
2. Teachpoint is used as a support to the supervision and evaluation model to provide immediate feedback to teachers.

Leadership

1. Through a national search, hired a superintendent with demonstrated experience in increasing diversity, equity, community connection, and a background in trauma informed practices to support all students.
2. The hiring procedure has changed to allow for more local control at the school level.

Staffing

1. Many interviewees perceive that the distribution of resources among schools is inequitable.
2. According to data and information provided, there has been a decline in student enrollment and an increase in the number of paraprofessionals.

Commendations

1. We commend the district for a thorough supervision and evaluation model that encompasses all staff.
2. We commend the district for changes in the hiring process, which reflect the changing needs of the student population.

Recommendations

1. We recommend the district provide greater opportunities for staff to participate in personalized professional development.
2. Based on staff interviews, we recommend that the district consider providing professional development/in-service opportunities on trauma informed practices and proficiency-based learning and assessment.

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. The district has a continuous improvement plan that focuses on personalized learning and student achievement in literacy and math.
2. Artifacts reveal that the district uses PDSA (Plan Do Study Act) cycles and data collection to focus on family engagement, as well as middle school math and literacy.

Student Data System

1. The district uses a student data system (Infinite Campus) for tracking assessments, behavior, and personalized learning plans.
2. The district uses Alpine Achievement for Student Information System data, student supports and plans to eventually use it to support investment priorities.

Financial Alignment

1. Equalized spending per student is near the state average, but interviewees from the finance office reports concern that additional special education costs could disrupt this significantly.
2. Interview evidence suggests that the high school is in good financial condition due to past resource allocations; however, other schools in the district are disproportionately underfunded.

Communication

1. Staff report that information is disseminated through school team leaders.
2. The community has developed Project Vision, which supports the schools with information and resources, primarily aimed at historically marginalized students within the Rutland City community.

Commendations

1. The district is making an effort to align investment priorities to needs surfaced from data in their SIS platform.
2. Project Vision combines resources from non-traditional partnerships and is leading to innovative approaches to some of the broader community issues (opioids, homelessness, food security, etc.).

Recommendations

1. The district should consider reallocating district-wide resources to ensure equity across schools.
2. The district should continue to explore innovative solutions (such as Project Vision) to address substantial community challenges from a "Root Cause A542analysis" perspective, instead of traditional reactive approaches.