

Integrated Field Review Report

REPORT

March 21, 2018

Hartford School District

Final Report

Site Visit: February 8, 2018

Submitted by Josh Souliere



Schools & Enrollment

School	Approximate Enrollment	Grade Span
Dothan Brook School	272	PK-5
Hartford High School	504	9-12
Hartford Memorial Middle School	316	6-8
Ottauquechee School	203	PK-5
White River School	214	PK-5
Hartford Area Career and Technology Center	330	10-12

Hartford SD participated in the Vermont Agency of Education's Integrated Field Review (IFR) on February 8, 2018.

During the afternoon of the IFR training, the Visiting Team reviewed artifacts provided by Hartford SD. During the morning of day one of the visit, the Visiting Team participated in interviews of the Superintendent, Special Education Director, Assistant Superintendent, Business Administrator, counseling staff, intervention staff, teaching staff, students, parents, and administrators. In addition, the Visiting Team observed classroom instruction and the Hartford SD learning environments through classroom observations and facilities tours led by students.

The Visiting Team gathered data regarding the implementation of Education Quality Standards in the school system related to Academic Proficiency, Personalization, Safe Healthy Schools, High Quality Staffing, and Investment Priorities.

Visiting Team

Name	Role	Organization
Kristina Safford	Elementary Teacher	Orange East SU
Kim Goody	Interventionist	Orange East SU
Dan Lemay	High School Teacher	Orange East SU
Merry Puffer	HS Teacher	Orange East SU
Heather Long	School Counselor	Orange East SU
Edith Fogarty	Technology Integrationist	Orange East SU
Michael Galli	Dean of Students	Rivendell Interstate SD
Kerry Browne	Science Teacher	Rivendell Interstate SD
Emily Waterman	Elementary Teacher	Rivendell Interstate SD
Maureen Moran	Title I Math Teacher	Rivendell Interstate SD
Sasha Irish	Elementary Teacher	Rivendell Interstate SD
Josh Souliere	Assistant Director of EQR	VTAOE
Richard Boltax	MTSS Consultant	VTAOE
Peter Drescher	Director of Education Technology	VTAOE
Marianna Charalabopoulos	Education Programs 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:

1. Curriculum work is intentional about having diverse membership, including teachers, school counselors and other stakeholders, to participate in planning, coordination and redesign to align with proficiencies.
Teachers appreciate being provided regularly scheduled time to be involved in the development of proficiencies and transferrable skills.
1. There were varying ways in which classrooms provided Learning Objectives for each lesson, from posting them, providing them verbally, to not providing them at all.
2. Technology to support instruction was available in all classrooms; however, only observed for instructional purposes in a few classrooms.
3. Interview and observation evidence indicates students are engaged in their learning and reported feeling supported and respected by teachers
4. Evidence indicates educators utilize the data from assessments to inform instruction for individual students, and to drive the creation of intervention and enrichment groups.
1. In addition to state accountability testing, several local assessment are given on a regularly scheduled basis, including Primary Number and Operations Assessment, Fountas & Pinnel, some English Language testing from World Class Instructional Design Assessment, School-wide Information System behavior assessment and STAR.
2. Rubrics for transferable skills at the secondary level include critical thinking and problem solving, curiosity and imagination, communication, collaboration and ability and adaptability.
1. Students, parents, and teachers report being engaged in the discussions and on-going process of developing Proficiency Based Learning and Proficiency Based Reporting.
2. Parents and other stakeholders report they would like more information when it comes to their child's learning outcomes, where intervention and/or enrichment are needed, and how to access those opportunities.

Commendations

1. Hartford SD has a strong commitment to the ongoing implementation of curriculum across all grade levels, which includes diverse membership and aligning their curriculum with what is being developed for Proficiency Based Learning.
2. Hartford SD has a local assessment system that is formalized, one where teachers are knowledgeable about the system, and that produces data that drives decision making to inform instruction, intervention, and enrichment.

Recommendations

1. Hartford SD should continue to engage stakeholders in the development of their Proficiency Based Learning and Reporting model, ultimately developing a system where parents and others stakeholders are more informed about learning outcomes, intervention and enrichment opportunities.

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. The Personalization process begins in Middle School, where students, teachers, administrators, and parents report the process is strong, well communicated and that all are involved in the process.
2. Schools within the SD prepare their students for personalization through various exploratory learning opportunities, including career job shadowing, student led initiatives, student driven project based learning, and the EYE program.
3. Some stakeholders feel there is a disconnect between the personalization process that begins at the middle school level and the personalization process and practices at the high school level.

Flexible Pathways

1. Hartford SD provides multiple flexible pathway options for 9-12 students, including traditional paths, online coursework, dual enrollment opportunities and the Hartford Area Career and Technology Center.

Full Breadth of Courses

1. A full breadth of courses and learning options are provided for student's grade 9-12, including online coursework, courses through Hartford Area Career and Technical Center, college courses, and advanced placement courses.
2. Grammar and 9-12 students interviews indicate some students feel scheduling courses they're interested in can be difficult, and they sometime they feel obligated to take certain course due to a "track" they are on.

Student Voice and Choice

1. Students are able to participate in several opportunities where their voice can be heard, including the student advisory committee that meets once a month and provides input on continuous improvement efforts.
2. Project Based Learning provides students a voice in what they are learning, how they are learning, and how they present their learning.

Commendations

1. Hartford SD provides their students a breadth of learning opportunities and flexible pathways to apply that learning towards graduation.
2. Hartford SD has committed to providing opportunities for student voice to be heard when it comes to learning opportunities, a voice in continuous improvement efforts, and for student choice in learning and demonstrating that learning.

Recommendations

1. Hartford SD should examine the Personalized Learning process throughout the SD to ensure alignment between personalization practices, and that the process and practices are horizontally and vertically supporting one another.

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. Most schools reported they have ample amount of interventions and enrichment that occurs, but they wish they had a more formalized system to access and exit interventions and enrichment.
2. Evidence indicates all schools have a regularly scheduled, well-functioning EST that provides teachers with additional instructional practices and interventions for the classroom.

Social/Emotional Health

1. Students, staff, and parents report a positive culture and climate in all schools across the SD.
2. All students interviewed report feeling safe and supported at school, and most felt they had at least one adult in the school with whom they had a strong connection.
3. Most school staff interviewed reported they have strong partnerships with community organizations and provide strong wrap around supports for students and families.
4. Some interviewees report the need for additional behavioral interventionist and classroom management professional development, primarily to support growing trends of students who have experienced trauma.

Physical Well-Being

1. Schools work with community organizations and resources to provide some basics for students and families that are in need, including programs providing meals, snacks, clothing, and dental care.
2. All schools have full time nursing and health related services that meet required standards.

Physical Environment

1. All buildings across the system were clean, organized, and well maintained; however, most expressed a concern over needing additional physical space.
2. Clear expectations, student work, and positive reinforcing statements were posted throughout the hallways all buildings observed.
3. Teachers, students, and parents indicate the buildings are safe, secured structures where they feel valued and welcomed.

Commendations

1. Hartford SD has a robust system in place for academic and behavioral interventions, enrichment opportunities, and well-functioning Educational Support Teams.
2. Hartford SD has committed to developing strong partnerships with local community organizations to enhance student learning opportunities, student health and wellness, and access to additional supports for families.
3. Hartford SD has committed to providing safe, well-maintained, clean, organized learning environments for staff and students.

Recommendations

1. Hartford SD should look at their current multi-tiered system of supports to ensure there is a formalized framework that bring all of the components together, and provides clear entrance and exit criteria for interventions and enrichment opportunities.
2. Hartford SD should continue to explore ways to provide teachers with the resources and professional development needed to work with students who exhibit challenging behaviors.

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. Interview evidence indicates they have a strong mentoring system that has been valuable to many, but wish it were available to all teachers as it once was.
2. Interview evidence indicates school-wide and individual professional development initiatives are supported with both time and financial resources.
3. Administrators report that teachers can use funding up to the equivalent of two University of Vermont 3 credit courses to meet professional learning needs, but it has to be in alignment with the Hartford SD Action Plan.

Staff Evaluation

1. Educators feel comfortable with administrators and other teachers visiting their classroom, and feel that they are supported when it comes to receiving useful feedback on their teaching practices.
2. Teachers report they have a structured evaluation system in place, and most report that the system is valuable to them

Leadership

1. Evidence indicates there is a high level of collaboration and support between educators and administration at the local and SD level.
2. Students and teachers report that administration maintains an environment that welcomes regular feedback and input into school-wide improvement efforts.
3. A distributed model of leadership is implemented in most schools to share responsibilities and disseminate information.

Staffing

1. Staff generally report low turnover rates, high levels of collaboration and high overall job satisfaction.
2. Most students and parents interviewed, and some teachers, report that they are unaware of student or parent involvement in the hiring process and wished to be a part of that.

Commendations

1. Hartford SD has committed to providing and supporting effective, collaborative professional learning opportunities aligned with identified needs.
2. Hartford SD has an evaluation model in place that is implemented with consistency, and is valuable to most teachers throughout the system.
3. Hartford SD has committed to providing leadership that is engaging, communicates well with stakeholders, and collaborates with all stakeholders creating inclusive, distributive leadership environments.

Recommendations

1. Hartford SD should examine their hiring process to ensure all stakeholders, particularly students and parents, have opportunities for input into the hiring process.

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 one Continuous Improvement Plan for Hartford SD in which all schools then align their goals within their plans to, allowing implementation to be individualized for each system's needs.
2. Most parents and some teachers interviewed had little knowledge about any improvement plan or planning efforts.

Student Data System

1. Some schools expressed the need to implement a student data system that has an online platform for report cards, keeping consistent student assessment data and that is used consistently across the SD.
2. The use of data to make decisions about academic and behavioral needs was evident throughout the district.
3. Some parents are able to monitor their child's progress through Infinite Campus, however; some parents expressed an interest about having that ability at the elementary level.

Financial Alignment

1. Some schools feel that more investment needs to be made in the area of technology for student use to ensure 1:1 access for all students.
2. Teachers and students report they are provided ample funds to purchase classroom supplies, and that the process and procedures to do so is clear and efficient.
3. Parents, teachers, and some students expressed the desire for foreign language at an earlier grade and increased music and art offerings.

Communication

1. There is a strong effort to build a presence on social media to facilitate communication.
2. Parents and students report there is adequate, quality communication from teachers and administrators specific to student learning and other operational logistics.

Commendations

1. Hartford SD has developed a continuous improvement model that uses data to inform improvement efforts, is consistent throughout the SD, where the SD has developed a plan with overarching goals that each schools aligns their plan to, and professional development efforts aligned with identified needs.
2. Hartford SD has committed to providing timely, effective, and efficient communications to their stakeholders across all schools and at the SD level.

Recommendations

1. Hartford SD should examine the development of continuous improvement plans to ensure all stakeholder groups are represented and have knowledge of continuous improvement efforts.
2. Hartford SD should examine current online platforms they are using, or new platforms, for the possibility of including online reporting, access to all student assessment information, and consistent implementation throughout the SD.