

# Integrated Field Review Report

<b>REPORT</b> December 20, 2017	<b>Mill River Unified Union SD</b> <b>Final Report</b> October 17, 2017
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**Submitted by Josh Souliere**



## Schools & Enrollment

School	Approximate Enrollment	Grade Span
Clarendon Elementary	179	Pk-6
Mill River UHSD	467	7-12
Shrewsbury Mountain School	81	Pk-6
Tinmouth Elementary	56	Pk-6
Wallingford Elementary	159	Pk-6

Mill River Unified Union SD participated in the Vermont Agency of Education's Integrated Field Review (IFR) on October 17, 2017.

During the afternoon of the IFR training, the Visiting Team reviewed artifacts provided by MRUUSD. During the morning of day one of the visit, the Visiting Team participated in interviews of the Superintendent, Director of Curriculum, Director of Academic Operations, counseling staff, intervention staff, teaching staff, students, parents, and administrators. In addition, the Visiting Team observed classroom instruction and the MRUUSD 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
Kelly Ryan	Director of Special Education Services	Springfield SD
Courtney Brooks	HS Science Teacher	Springfield SD
John Davis	Ludlow Elementary and Black River Assistant Principal	Two Rivers SU
Emma Vastola	Elementary Teacher	Two Rivers SU
Robin Bebo-Lang	Sixth Grade Teacher	Two Rivers SU
Missy Wilkins	Curriculum Director/Grants Manager	Windham Northeast SU
Sean Gould	Assistant Principal	Windham Northeast SU
Eric Cummings	Guidance Counselor, Grades K-8	Windham Southeast SU
Aimee Levesque	Elementary Teacher	Windham Southeast SU
Sandra Cortes	Academic Support Teacher	Windham Southeast SU
Paul Smith	Curriculum Coordinator	Windham Southeast SU
Jessica Wilmot	Elementary Teacher	Windsor Southeast SU
Josh Souliere	Assistant Director of Education Quality Reviews	Vermont Agency of Education
Lori Dolezal	Education Quality Assurance Manager	Vermont Agency of Education
Toni Marra	Dual Enrollment & Early College Program Coordinator	Vermont Agency of Education
Tom Faris	MTSS Coordinator	Vermont Agency of Education
Marianna Charalabopoulos	Education Quality Assurance Coordinator	Vermont 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:

1. A common curriculum has been developed and is shared at the elementary level across the SD; however, interview evidence indicates fidelity of implementation was inconsistent in English Language Arts.
2. Evidence indicates most schools at the elementary level are integrating several curriculum areas into their instruction, specifically evidenced in English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Art.

Based on student and teacher interviews, evidence collected indicates there is no scheduled time devoted to academic intervention and enrichment during the school day in most schools.

Per observations and interviews, Learning Targets are visible and driving instruction in most classrooms.

1. MRUUSD has an assessment plan document that includes the priorities of completing formative assessments, selection of assessment, and a timeline for assessing. Formal structures are in place to support this work, for example, common meeting time for elementary teachers across the SD.
2. Proficiencies and performance indicators have been developed across the SD and are in the beginning stages of implementation.

### Commendations

1. MRUUSD has developed common Learning Targets and Performance Indicators to drive instruction that are implemented consistently across the SD.
2. MRUUSD intentionally integrates various curriculum areas into classroom instruction in most elementary schools in the SD, specifically evidenced in English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Art.

### Recommendations

1. MRUUSD should examine the current schedule structure in most schools, and if needed, create opportunities for remediation, enrichment, and/or structured intervention during the school day.
2. MRUUSD should continue to monitor the implementation of the common assessment plan and curriculum across all schools in order ensure consistent implementation and to generate coordinated SD-wide data to guide practice and policy.

## 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. Although Personalized Learning Plans have been developed across the SD, evidence reflects implementation is in the beginning stages, with more consistent implementation at the middle/high school level, and emerging implementation at the elementary level.
2. Most parents' report they have little to no knowledge about their child's Personalized Learning Plan and are not involved in plan development.

#### Flexible Pathways

1. Many opportunities exist inside and outside of the classroom for individualized learning in a variety of disciplines, including assisting teachers, work-study, work based learning and internships that all offer pathways to demonstrate proficiencies in non-traditional ways.
2. Per interviews with teachers and students, most report they have several options for experiential learning, including students' posing their own educational learning opportunities.

#### Full Breadth of Courses

1. Most parents and students report the utilization of different pathways to learning and access to a full breadth of courses to meet their learning needs.
2. Several flexible pathways were evidenced, such as online courses; work based learning internships, and independent studies.

#### Student Voice and Choice

1. Some students expressed a disconnect between their Personalized Learning Plan and what they are actually provided for learning opportunities.
2. Teachers, students, and parents reported that parent-teacher conferences are student led and a beneficial process for all involved.

#### Commendations

1. MRUUSD offers flexible pathways to student learning, including virtual learning, work-based learning, independent studies, dual enrollment, advanced placement courses, and CTE.
2. MRUUSD provides their students with a full breadth of courses and learning opportunities to meet their students' personalized needs.

#### Recommendations

1. MRUUSD should continue to offer professional development on Personalized Learning Plans and the process of personalized learning to ensure effective and efficient implementation.
2. MRUUSD should look at ways to improve parent and teacher involvement in the development and communication of Personalized Learning Plans.

## 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. It is evidenced that all schools have an Educational Support Team with a well-defined process that is aligned to a multi-tiered system of support, with some variation between buildings.
2. There is a new intervention model in place, but it has yet to be assessed to determine whether it is effective as implemented.

#### Social/Emotional Health

1. Students, teachers, and parents all reported feeling safe at school, and that they were places with a strong sense of community.
2. Schools employ a variety of universal level social emotional learning programs, including PBIS, Responsive Classroom, and an older-younger student buddy system.

#### Physical Well-Being

1. Most schools have secured buildings where parents and students report they feel safe.
2. Parents and students report that school meals are healthy, enjoyable and they always have options that meet everyone's needs.

#### Physical Environment

1. Per interviews and observations, the schools are clean, well-maintained learning environments; however, few report they would benefit from more physical space for programming.
2. Most students and some teachers report they wish they had upgraded playground equipment, and in a few cases, more space for outdoor activities.

#### Commendations

1. MRUUSD is committed to providing safe, clean, well-maintained learning environments for all students, faculty, and parents where everyone feels welcome.
2. MRUUSD is committed to offering a variety of social emotional programs, including Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, Responsive Classroom and an older-younger Buddy System, and continues to assess student needs to implement high quality, beneficial programming.

#### Recommendations

1. MRUUSD should work to continue to monitor the implementation of their Multi-tiered System of Supports to ensure all schools are implementing a consistent, effective framework.
2. MRUUSD should continue to monitor and identify the physical needs of their buildings across the system to ensure and prioritize support to those schools in greatest need.

## 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. Most teachers report receiving an adequate amount of professional development that is differentiated to meet their needs; however, some report they desire to have more input into professional development opportunities.
2. Professional development is determined at the SD level, with a recent major focus based on proficiency-based learning.

#### Staff Evaluation

1. There is a clear process for teacher evaluations that alternate between administrative and peer observations (formal and informal) and most teachers reporting the process is effective.
2. Superintendent uses a hybrid of ISLACC Standards and local beliefs based on evaluation of best practices to evaluate administrators, and evaluations are completed on a regularly scheduled basis.

#### Leadership

1. Teachers, students, and parents report they have supportive, effective leadership that they are comfortable communicating with, at both the school and SD level.
2. There is a mentoring process in place where new teachers can receive support and guidance from teacher leaders within the system that evidence indicates is valued by most MRUUSD employees.

#### Staffing

1. MRUUSD intentionally uses data to determine their learners' needs and intentionally repurpose positions no longer needed to create positions focused on addressing those identified needs.

#### Commendations

1. MRUUSD has strong, effective leadership at the school and SD level as evidenced through stakeholder input.
2. MRUUSD demonstrates a commitment to flexible learning environments, staffing patterns and financial efficiencies based on changing student populations and needs.

#### Recommendations

1. MRUUSD should consider offering more collaborative and teacher driven professional development opportunities across schools, in addition to SD directed professional development.
2. MRUUSD should continue to implement their staff evaluation systems with fidelity to ensure high quality staffing and a valued 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. Most teachers and parents reported no knowledge of their Continuous Improvement Plan or input into the development of the plan.
2. MRUUSD has the elements of an effective Continuous Improvement Plan, which has been developed and implemented by the MRUUSD Leadership Team.

#### Student Data System

1. PowerSchool is the data platform used in all schools across the system, which supports systemic and local implementation efforts.
2. Most parents report they do not have, and would like to have, access to their children's data through an "online data portal" typically located on a school's website.

#### Financial Alignment

1. Parents, teachers, and students report they are pleased with the financial commitment to technology across the SD, which had increased equitable access to learning opportunities.

#### Communication

1. Based on an assessment of system needs, MRUUSD repurposed a position to create a Community Engagement Coordinator position to increase school to community engagement and communication.

#### Commendations

1. MRUUSD intentionally analyzes data to determine student needs to address and will repurpose positions no longer needed to address those needs.
2. MRUUSD has made a financial commitment to ensuring technology is available to all students and teachers throughout the SD.

#### Recommendations

1. MRUUSD should examine ways to increase the school to parent communication of their children's learning, including access to an online data portal.
2. MRUUSD should design input channels for parents and teachers to be more involved in continuous improvement planning efforts.