

# Integrated Field Review Report

## **REPORT**

February 27, 2018

**Orange East Supervisory Union**

**Final Report**

**Site Visit: January 24, 2018**

**Submitted by Jesse Roy**



## Schools & Enrollment

School	Approximate Enrollment	Grade Span
Bradford Elementary	220	K-6
Newbury Elementary	138	K-6
Oxbow Union Middle/High School	349	7-12
Thetford Elementary	190	K-6
Waits River Valley School	223	K-8

Orange East Supervisory Union (OESU) participated in the Vermont Agency of Education's Integrated Field Review (IFR) on January 24, 2018.

During the afternoon of the IFR training, the Visiting Team reviewed artifacts provided by OESU. During the full day visit, the Visiting Team participated in interviews of the Superintendent, Director of Curriculum/Grants Manager, Business Manager, Director of Student Services, counseling staff, intervention staff, teaching staff, students, parents, and administrators. In addition, the Visiting Team observed classroom instruction and other OESU 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
Mark Blount	Principal	White River Valley SU
Holly Mugford	Teacher	White River Valley SU
Keenan Haley	Teacher	White River Valley SU
John Payson	Teacher	White River Valley SU
Jaime Rainville	Teacher	White River Valley SU
Ami Beaudoin	Teacher	White River Valley SU
Linda Gendreau	Teacher	White River Valley SU
Greg Bagnato	Principal	White River Valley SU
Mindy Farnham	Counselor	White River Valley SU
Ollie Brown	Teacher	White River Valley SU
Hope Yeager	Teacher	White River Valley SU
Doug Heavisides	CTE Director	Hartford SD
Nelson Fogg	Principal	Hartford SD
Rick Dustin-Eichler	Principal	Hartford SD
Meg Porcella	Education Programs Coordinator	Agency of Education
Jesse Roy	Education Programs Coordinator	Agency of Education
Marianna Charalabopoulos	Education Programs Coordinator	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. OESU staff groups report that there is no consistent SU-wide curriculum for math, language arts and social-emotional learning.
2. Per interviews and observations, autonomy in determining the scope and sequence of material taught extends to individual classrooms, though establishing common plan time is prioritized in scheduling at most OESU schools.

### Instructional Practices

1. An emphasis on project-based learning, a focus of recent OESU-wide professional development, is reported by staff and students and is observed across buildings.
2. Per reports, various farm-to-school programs reflect the priorities of the community and promote family involvement in school activity.
3. Per staff reports and observations, technology devices are widely available but are used inconsistently in teaching and learning.

### Local Assessment System

1. Per administrators and staff, OESU has implemented Track My Progress as an SU-wide interim assessment, K-6.
2. Some OESU staff have been trained in Data Wise approaches to collaborate data analysis, with early implementation of practices reported in some buildings.

### Proficiency-Based Learning

1. Per staff reports, steps to prepare for proficiency-based learning and grading, such as developing shared understandings of grade level expectations, are still largely in the planning phase.
2. Students, staff, and families report varying understanding of proficiency-based learning.

### Commendations

1. Prioritized common plan time and the SU-wide adoption of the Track My Progress assessment represent promising steps towards increased coordination of curriculum and instruction across OESU schools.
2. There is a clear OESU-wide commitment to project-based learning, supported by professional learning.

### Recommendations

1. To promote equity, excellence and transparency in learning, OESU schools should adopt consistent standards-aligned curricula.
2. OESU should continue work to build cohesive systems that will support a shift to proficiency-based learning and grading.

## 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. Per parents and student reports, there is a wide range of understanding and implementation of PLPs throughout OESU.

#### Flexible Pathways

1. For older students, systems exist in OESU that support student choice, creating multiple pathways to graduation.
2. Per stakeholder reports across OESU, there is a range of interpretations of the meaning of “flexible pathways.”

#### Full Breadth of Courses

1. Per staff and parent reports, course offerings for older students have become more limited in recent years.
2. Observations and staff interviews indicated disparities in enrichment offerings from one elementary building to the next.

#### Student Voice and Choice

1. All stakeholders indicate there is strong evidence of student choice across OESU, particularly in project-based learning.

### Commendations

1. Instructional practices and resources in OESU schools support student choice and personalization.
2. Leadership, staff, parents, and students are enthusiastic about improving their schools through personalization of learning.

### Recommendations

1. OESU should continue work to develop consistent understanding and implementation of personalized learning plans and approaches to personalizing learning across schools.
2. OESU should continue to explore opportunities to enhance the breadth of courses and learning opportunities available to students of all ages.

## 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. While most OESU schools hold regular Educational Support Team (EST) meetings, the goals, format and processes for student identification and support vary.
2. Staff and administrators describe limited data-driven instructional decision-making across buildings, but OESU has identified the implementation of MTSS as an important area for growth.

#### Social/Emotional Health

1. Staff and parent groups report that guidance and counseling programs are inconsistent in availability and nature between buildings.
2. A variety of programs are used to support social emotional-learning across OESU, including Responsive Classroom, PBIS, Conscience Discipline, and Second Step, with fidelity of implementation varying.

#### Physical Well-Being

1. Parents widely report feeling that their students are safe at OESU School.
2. Emergency procedures, allergy warnings, and health and safety reminders are posted throughout OESU schools, per observations.
3. Per parent and staff reports, there are varying degrees of satisfaction with efforts to address bullying and disruptive student behavior in some OESU schools.

#### Physical Environment

1. Per observations, a variety of posters or signs encouraging pro-social behavior, healthy habits and functional skills are prominently displayed at all OESU schools.
2. All exterior doors were locked and posted emergency procedures were observed across school spaces.
3. Student work and accolades are displayed prominently in all buildings.

#### Commendations

1. OESU schools demonstrate a clear commitment to ensuring the physical well-being of their students, with secure buildings, emergency planning and health and safety supports reported and observed across buildings.
2. OESU schools demonstrate a clear commitment to supporting the social-emotional health of their students.

#### Recommendations

1. OESU should consider assessing the availability of personnel to support student emotional and behavior needs across schools, ensuring that staffing levels are appropriately paired to needs.
2. OESU should formalize and promote the implementation of a system for data-driven multi-tiered support of student needs.

## 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. Although there has been OESU wide-professional development in some areas (e.g. project-based learning) some staff believe there should be additional cohesive PD.
2. Throughout the SU, teachers have the ability to set individual professional development goals.
3. OESU does not feature a formal mentoring program for first year teachers, though less formal pairing of new teachers with veteran staff members occurs.

#### Staff Evaluation

1. Per staff reports, staff evaluations are completed inconsistently across the SU. Some staff attributed this to regular leader turnover.
2. OESU uses both the Danielson model and the teacher growth rubric for staff evaluations.

#### Leadership

1. Administrative and staff interviewees report that a high rate of turnover in administrative positions has led to difficulty sustaining initiatives.
2. Several OESU staff groups indicate that building-level administration is supportive of their needs.

#### Staffing

1. At most, OESU schools, parents, and students indicated they are not part of the hiring process for new staff.
2. Throughout OESU, there was a high adult-to-student ratio observed in classrooms.
3. Per staff interviews, SU experiences challenges in recruiting and hiring special education staff.

#### Commendations

1. Despite administrative turnover, most OESU teaching staff believe that administration is supportive of their ideas and needs.
2. OESU allows teachers to identify their own professional development needs.

#### Recommendations

1. OESU should work to implement staff evaluations with fidelity and consistency, guiding professional growth and promoting transparency.
2. OESU should work to implement a formalized mentoring program for first year teachers, promoting early success and retention.

## 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. Per staff reports, knowledge of and involvement in continuous improvement planning varies widely between OESU schools.
2. Supervisory union administration reports that three overarching goals guide the development of school continuous improvement plans, though artifacts indicate a range of focuses at each building.

#### Student Data System

1. While most OESU schools have created and implemented calendars of measurements, staff report that data is not consistently analyzed and applied to decision-making around instruction.
2. Per administrator reports, all OESU schools use MMS to track attendance and student demographic data, with two schools also using the gradebook feature. Others use VCAT for report card generation.
3. Per administrator reports, there is no universal system for collecting student performance data.

#### Financial Alignment

1. Observations and numerous staff reports indicate inequities in the availability of personnel to support social-emotional health, provide academic interventions and facilitate technology integration.
2. Per administration and staff reports, there is limited centralization of resource procurement and building services, outside of transportation.

#### Communication

1. Parents across the SU reported differing degrees of satisfaction with school-level communication.

#### Commendations

1. Emerging efforts towards continuous improvement planning are apparent in the CIP documents, and OESU has identified and prioritized universal goals.
2. OESU schools have adopted calendars of measurement of student performance.

#### Recommendations

1. OESU should consider evaluating the methods and consistency through which internal and external communication occurs at all levels of the system and in all locations, promoting understanding, transparency and coherence.
2. OESU schools should work to centralize purchasing and building services, realizing greater financial efficiency.