

Integrated Field Review Report

REPORT

April 11, 2018

Rivendell Interstate School District

Final Report

Site Visit: January 9, 2018

Submitted by Marianna Charalabopoulos



Schools & Enrollment

School	Approximate Enrollment	Grade Span
Rivendell Academy	210	7-12
Samuel Morey Elementary	180	PK-6
Westshire Elementary	110	PK-4

Rivendell Interstate School District (RISD) participated in the Vermont Agency of Education's Integrated Field Review (IFR) on January 9, 2018.

During the afternoon of the IFR training, the Visiting Team reviewed artifacts provided by RISD. During the full day visit, the Visiting Team participated in interviews of the Superintendent, Chief Financial Manager, Director of Special Education, Director of Information Technology, teaching staff, students, parents, and administrators. In addition, the Visiting Team observed classroom instruction and other RISD 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
Bruce Labs	Superintendent	White River Valley SU
Jenny Lane	School Counselor	White River Valley SU
Janis Boulbol	Teacher	White River Valley SU
Maryann Driscoll	Elementary Teacher	Hartford SD
Diane White	MS Teacher	White River Valley SU
Peter Drescher	State Director of Education Technology	VTAOE
Richard Boltax	Multi-Tiered System of Support Coordinator	VTAOE
Marianna Charalabopoulos	Education Quality Assurance Coordinator	VTAOE
Josh Souliere	Assistant Director of Education Quality Reviews	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:

Curriculum Coordination

1. Evidence from teacher interviews indicates there is a curriculum in place for most subjects; however, there are inconsistencies in the coordination and implementation of that curriculum from school to school.
2. Most teachers report when the RISD had a Curriculum Director, the curriculum was implemented with more fidelity due to accountability and coordination of support.
3. Teachers are provided time to collaborate with their colleagues on a regularly scheduled basis.

Instructional Practices

1. Learning Expectations/Outcomes were posted in some classrooms, but it was not a consistent practice across all schools and classrooms.
2. Several instructional practices were observed, including differentiated instruction, allowing students to personalize their learning, universal design for learning, and teachers checking for understanding.

Local Assessment System

1. Primary Numbers and Operations Assessment (PNOA) is used to assess grade level math skills, locally made assessment is used for math 8th-9th grade, and the Primary Observation Assessment (POA) is used to assess degrees of reading at the elementary level.
2. Title I tracking sheets are used in elementary schools to collect data throughout the year to assess needs in reading or math.

Proficiency-Based Learning

1. Proficiency Based Learning practices were more evident at the elementary level.
2. Proficiency Based Reporting was evident in some schools across RISD.
3. Most parents report they liked how their children's grades were reported at the elementary level, but are confused about the meaning behind the grades at the secondary level.

Commendations

1. Report cards at the elementary level are standards based and include detailed narratives of student performance allowing parents to easily understand their child's education.
2. Several evidenced based instructional strategies are implemented and practiced throughout the schools, creating an atmosphere where students were engaged in their learning.

Recommendations

1. RISD should work to create and implement a consistent proficiency-based grading and reporting system throughout the district.
2. RISD should examine their current implementation of their curriculum to ensure it is being implemented with fidelity and consistency across all 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. Evidence at the elementary level indicates a process for personalization of learning is provided for all students.
2. Evidence collected through interviews with teachers, students and parents report that formalized Personalized Learning Plans are not being implemented at the secondary level.

Flexible Pathways

1. Evidence from artifacts and interviews with students and teachers indicates a variety of Flexible Pathways to graduation, including community partnerships, dual enrollment, community service requirements, College Steps program and career and technical center opportunities with cooperating districts.

Full Breadth of Courses

1. Evidence from artifact reviews and interviews indicates a full breadth of courses are offered to students, which include online classes, language arts, several clubs and organizations, The Upper House Project, sports and other opportunities.
2. Some parents and students report that even though they have a variety of learning opportunities, they would like to see world language arts provided at an earlier age level and more opportunities for learning in the area of computer sciences.

Student Voice and Choice

1. Most students at all levels report they have opportunities to provide input into their learning, and how those learning opportunities are achieved; however, some parents and students report that what they learn and how they learn it is more structured at the middle levels.

Commendations

1. Although RISD is a small district, the system works to provide students with multiple Flexible Pathways to support achieving their educational goals.
2. RISD schools are intentionally providing students with opportunities to have their voices heard when provided learning opportunities, and students often have several ways to demonstrate choice in their learning.

Recommendations

1. RISD should work to implement formal Personalized Learning Plans for students at the secondary level.
2. RISD should consider looking at ways to increase the educational opportunities offered in the area of technology and computer sciences.

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. Evidence per interviews and observations indicate most schools provide scheduled time for intervention and enrichment, and include several tiered support strategies such as Learning Centers, Title supports, Everybody Wins programs, after-school programs, flex-time, behavioral interventions and Educational Support Teams.
2. While schools in RISD provide a full range of academic and behavioral supports, they do not have a formalized Multi-tiered System of Support framework to help support the process of accessing and/or transitioning from tier to tier.

Social/Emotional Health

1. Students, parents, and teachers report their schools are welcoming places where they feel supported.
2. The Responsive Classroom approach is used at the elementary level; however, the level of implementation varies school to school, classroom to classroom.

Physical Well-Being

1. Students are provided programming to improve student health, including regularly scheduled physical activity break throughout the day, outdoor programming, ski and snowboard programs, regular availability of school nurses, in-school dentistry programs.
2. Athletic programs have high student participation rates.
3. Evidence from interviews indicate that while some are satisfied with their lunch program, others are not satisfied with the quality of the food and options available to them.

Physical Environment

1. All schools are neat, clean, and well-organized environments.
2. Observation evidence indicates there is a wide variety of thematic and creative student work displayed in the hallways and other common areas throughout all schools.
3. Some interviewees indicated displeasure in having to transition from building to building, and the unsafe conditions that can occur.

Commendations

1. All schools in the ISD are clean, well-maintained, well-organized learning environments, which display relevant student work.
2. All schools have a climate where students, teachers, and parents feel welcomed and valued.

Recommendations

1. RISD should work to create and implement a formalized Multi-tiered System of Support framework and guidelines to be implemented by all schools in the SD.
2. RISD should examine the offerings provided in the school meals programs throughout the district, making sure to adhere to all federal and state regulations.

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. Professional development is collaboratively developed at the SD level and school level, allowing schools to identify their individual professional learning needs while also addressing systemic needs.
2. Teachers are pleased with the quality and quantity of professional development they receive; however, para-educators report they wish they had more professional development opportunities.

Staff Evaluation

1. Teachers are evaluated on a regular basis; however, up until this year administrators were not evaluated regularly.
2. The administrator evaluation system has been redesigned, and work has begun to redesign the teacher evaluation system.

Leadership

1. Most interviewees report they are pleased and supported by leadership at the school and SD level.
2. Teacher interviews revealed there is a history of turnover in administrative positions, which in some cases has led to certain innovations from being implemented with fidelity.

Staffing

1. Evidence indicates there is very little turnover in teaching staff, and that recent turnover is typically due to retirement.
2. Some staff feel they could use additional guidance counselors and school-based clinicians to address some of the student's social emotional needs.

Commendations

1. The district has worked to provide professional development that targets needs within the SD, including project-based learning, critical exploration, and responsive classroom, as well as the individual needs of schools.
2. RISD has school-based leadership that parents, teachers, and students feel supported by, and who are easy to communicate with.

Recommendations

1. RISD should continue to work to implement teacher evaluations with more consistency, and redesign both teacher and administrator evaluations as needed.
2. RISD should examine staffing patterns and professional development opportunities to ensure teachers have the tools to effectively address any social emotional needs the students may have.

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:

1. RISD does not have a current Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP) that drives the prioritized needs of the SD and schools.
2. Most teachers and parents report they have no knowledge of a Continuous Improvement Plan, and have never participated in the development of a CIP.

Student Data System

1. RISD utilized MMS as a data system across all schools, but most teachers report they do not regularly utilize the system to access local assessment data for data based decision-making purposes.
2. Most parents report they do not have easy, readily available access to their children's academic data and grades via an online platform.

Financial Alignment

1. Evidence indicates that the community regularly supports the district budget.
2. Although the staff and students have technology accessible to them (smart boards and netbooks), this technology is inconsistently used throughout the district during instruction, and to drive instruction.

Communication

1. Parents agree that there are several effective channels of communication used to disseminate information from the central office and building administrators to the community and parents.

Commendations

1. The community regularly supports the school budget and other fiscal decisions made by RISD and/or schools.
2. RISD has devoted time to ensuring systems are in place to effectively and efficiently communicate with parents and community members at all levels.

Recommendations

1. RISD should examine the use of their online platform for housing student data, and ensure there is a process and expectations in place for teachers to effectively and efficiently access student data for decision-making.
2. RISD should gather multiple stakeholders to create an updated Continuous Improvement Plan based on data from a Comprehensive Needs Assessment that drives the prioritized needs of the SD and its schools.