

THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILADELPHIA

Opportunity Network

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Ombudsman Northwest Mid-Year Evaluation
December 22, 2016

Provider: Ombudsman Educational Services, Ltd.

Contract Term: FY 2013-FY 2017

Program capacity: 90

Site Visit Date: Thursday, December 15, 2016- 9:00 a.m.

Child Count Compliance: 100%

Average Daily Attendance & Number of Students Present:
84% (38 students present out of 45 students enrolled) *Morning session only*

Walkthrough Review Team:

Majeedah Scott, Director, Multiple Pathways

Kevin Feaganes, Case Manager

Ebony McCormick, Asst. Program Coord.

Luciana Terrell, Administrator, DHS

Education Support Center

Cheryl Logan, Chief Academic Support

Officer

Program Staff:

Julita Byrd, Regional Director, Philadelphia,

Ombudsman Educational Services

Domains and Performance Levels:

Programs were rated according to seven domains: Vision for Learning, Family & Community Relationships, School Safety, Positive Environment, High Quality Instruction, Talent Development, and Data. The domains are aligned to the School District's evidence-based "High Performing School Practices" and "Essential Features of Alternative Education Programs", as well as the Pennsylvania Department of Education's Leadership Framework. Each domain includes three to seven components that are individually rated according to three broad performance levels: **Failing**, **Needs Improvement**, and **Proficient**. In general, a **Failing** rating indicates that a program could not demonstrate or did not develop practices identified within a domain component. A **Needs Improvement** rating indicates that overall a program has made some progress or effort toward practices identified within a domain component, but has not sufficiently developed the practice. A rating of **Proficient** indicates that, in general, a program has made adequate progress toward the implementation of practices identified within a domain component.

Comments/ Considerations:

Ombudsman Northwest received ratings of **Proficient** in all components within each domain assessed during this mid-year evaluation.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Vision for Learning

Ombudsman Northwest was rated **Proficient** in all of the five components within this domain: strategy for literacy and numeracy skill building, orientation for new student, family engagement plan, retention plan implementation, and individual graduation plans.

Ombudsman Northwest administers the STAR exam to assess students' baseline reading and math levels. Test results come with an individualized report that outlines the specific skills that a student needs to work on. The

program rosters very low level readers for the Reading Plus program, which is an intervention program to improve students' reading skills. The program retests students mid-year to gauge growth and uses the results to inform interventions and instruction. The program also retests students at the end of the year to determine final growth data for the school year. Although Ombudsman Northwest is a computer-based program, it delivers small group instruction to students with similar skill deficiencies.

Ombudsman Northwest now uses Study Island as a Keystone test preparation program. The program is also now using Lexia for students with very low reading levels (K-4) as an intervention tool to increase their levels.

Ombudsman Northwest uses the PODIO web-based tracking system to document parent outreach. The review team was given a live demonstration of the system, however, the Center Director was unable to pull up the attendance log that is used to document attendance interventions. The program discussed a number of efforts related to engaging families, most of which occurs via telephone or through individual meetings. The program makes positive phone calls home to update parents about good student progress. The program also meets with parents, via phone and in person, to discuss academic or behavior challenges. Ombudsman Northwest uses behavior, attendance, and academic contracts with students and parents when challenges persist. The review team recommends that Ombudsman Northwest create a comprehensive family engagement plan that lays out efforts for outreach and collaboration with parents. The program did not have such a plan at the time of the walkthrough. Ombudsman Northwest does not have a retention plan. In addition, the program had not completed any individual graduation plans with students this year. The program presented a senior portfolio that was completed last school year.

Family and Community Relationships

Ombudsman Northwest was rated **Proficient** in all of the five components within this domain: communication logs, parent surveys, parent/community outreach, and partnerships with employers and postsecondary institutions, and strategy to improve family engagement.

Ombudsman Northwest presented evidence of family events that were held this year. Thirty parents came out for report card conferences and fifteen new parents attended the program's Meet and Greet in addition to regular orientation. In addition, the program has developed parent events for every month of the school year, which was presented to the review team. One father volunteered to teach students about nursing careers, which is profession. This has spurred the program to create a career workshop series in which parents can teach students about their own professional trajectories.

Ombudsman Northwest discussed its partnerships with Community College of Philadelphia, Art Institute of Philadelphia, Cheyney University, Philadelphia Continentals, and the National Guard. These organizations provide on-site or special admission testing sessions for Ombudsman students, in addition to general information sessions about those options. The Philadelphia Continentals partners with the program to provide one graduating senior with a college scholarship. The program also discussed its partnerships with local businesses that provide incentives (i.e., gift cards) for the program. The program gathers information related to SAT and ACT, college and job fairs, admissions events, etc., and places the information on the "Career Wall" inside the program. The review team recommends that Ombudsman Northwest develop a strategic plan for exposing all students to postsecondary options and for providing comprehensive counseling and supports for college matriculation and career attainment.

School Safety

Ombudsman Northwest was rated **Proficient** in all of the six components within this domain: average daily attendance (ADA), number of students present in each classroom, orderly daily routines, use of Scholarship with fidelity, attendance policy & truancy plan implementation, and program-wide positive behavior system.

The number of students observed in the afternoon session matched the program's self-reported ADA of 84% on the day of the site visit (38 students present out of 45 students enrolled). Ombudsman Northwest presented its sign-in sheets from the morning session, as well as the Scholarship attendance report. The review team observed students working diligently on their computer-based lessons and Teachers walked the room to monitor students and provided extra help when needed.

Ombudsman Northwest recognizes a Student of the Month for outstanding performance, and also rewards students who have perfect attendance. Incentives include gif cards, certificates, and certain special privileges. Students can also earn incentives by improving their reading and math levels. The program has its code of conduct posted on the walls of the center. Although the program implements an incentive program, sets expectations and consequences for students, it does not have a program-wide *system* for positive behavior.

Positive Environment

Ombudsman Northwest was rated **Proficient** in all of the four components within this domain: engagement of students and families in building a positive environment, respectful interactions between staff, students and families, staff have a good rapport with students, and team building activities for staff and students.

Ombudsman Northwest discussed their engagement of students and families in building a positive environment. New student orientation sets the tone for climate in the program. During orientation, students and parents learn about Ombudsman Northwest's behavior, academic and attendance expectations. In addition, Ombudsman Northwest uses the Skills Streaming program with students, which delivers a character development curriculum that includes physical activities to reinforce learning. The program implements an incentive program in which one student receives a gift card each week for maintaining or improving attendance and academics. Ombudsman Northwest implements Fun Fridays, which are team building activities between staff and students. Activities have included Jenga games and Family Feud. The program held a voter registration drive for students 18 years of age and older. The program recognizes students with perfect attendance and those who have exceeded earned more than 100 apples in a month from the A+ Learning System. These students are rewarded with gift cards and their names are posted on boards in the school.

High Quality Instruction

Ombudsman Northwest was rated **Proficient** in all of the seven of components within this domain- students actively engaged in class, students enrolled in the classes they need to graduate, identifying students eligible for Keystone exams, early warning system for academic interventions, strategies to prepare students for Keystone exams, postsecondary bridging plan, and postsecondary exploration and preparation.

Ombudsman Northwest is a computer-based program in which students receive most of their instruction via the A+ Learning System. As a result, Ombudsman Northwest's early warning system for academic interventions includes running reports from A+ Learning System to monitor student progress. The program does a daily appraisal of students' progress in A+ Learning, and is alerted of struggling students who have tried an activity in the system more than 5 times. Staff then dig deeper to determine what specific area students are struggling in. Teachers then sit with students one-on-one to provide extra help. During the school day, Teachers monitor students by walking around the program and looking to see if students are on-task or look confused or frustrated, which may indicate a need for extra help. Students are issued a three ring binder from the program, and the binder is checked by Teachers to ensure that students are taking notes from the computer-based lessons.

Ombudsman Northwest discussed its strategy to prepare students for Keystone exams. Preparation consists of reviewing subject matter with students and teaching general test taking tips. The review team recommends that the program improve upon its strategy by ensuring that Keystone standards are covered during instruction. This may involve small group instruction and/or an alignment of A+ Learning standards with Keystone standards.

Talent Development

Ombudsman Northwest was rated **Proficient** in all of the seven components within this domain: differentiated staff supports, staff turnover, staff selection process, professional development calendar, principals conduct regular observations and provide constructive feedback, new staff induction, and common planning time for teachers.

Ombudsman Northwest presented its yearlong professional development calendar, as well as agendas and sign in sheets. However, the program does not have common planning time for Teachers. The Center Director provides differentiated staff supports by assessing the strengths and weaknesses of each Teacher. Formal evaluations are conducted once a month, and a completed evaluation was presented to the review team. Ombudsman Northwest discussed its low staff turnover rate and attributed the rate to its maintenance of a well structured school environment where Teachers feel supported and appreciated.

Ombudsman Northwest discussed webinars available through Ombudsman Educational Services that are used for new staff orientation. The program presented a list of new staff webinars available through the company, and also presented a calendar of Ombudsman sponsored trainings. However, the review team saw no evidence that new staff actually participate in those trainings. The review team recommends that Ombudsman Northwest supplement Ombudsman Educational Services' generic new staff induction with a special orientation process that accounts for the uniqueness of Philadelphia's students and the program's contract with the District.

Data

Ombudsman Northwest was rated **Proficient** in all of the four components within this domain: formative and summative assessments, strategy to track student academic progress and provide interventions, system to collect and analyze data, and program improvement plans and related data reports.

Ombudsman Northwest uses STAR, Reading Plus, Lexia, Study Island and the numerous assessments available through A+ Learning System. In order to progress through the computer-based coursework, the system requires students to pass chapter tests and quizzes, as well as end of course exams. The A+ Learning System comes with a host of reports that simplify the process of tracking student progress.

Ombudsman Northwest presented its program improvement plan. The plan included one goal for improving attendance. Attendance strategies described in the plan were specific and measurable. There was nothing in the program improvement plan to suggest that Ombudsman Northwest is monitoring its progress towards the goal that was set. Based on this evaluation, the review team recommends that the program create additional goals for postsecondary and individual graduation plans, retention strategies, and Keystone exam preparation.