

THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILADELPHIA

Opportunity Network

440 N. BROAD STREET, 2nd Floor
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19130

Christina Grant
Assistant Superintendent

Telephone (215) 400-5827
Fax (215) 400-4179

OIC Career and Academic Development Institute (CADI) Mid-Year Evaluation May 31, 2017

Provider: OIC of America
Contract Term: FY 2013-FY 2017
Program capacity: 130

Site Visit Date: Tuesday, March 21, 2017- 9:00 a.m.
Child Count Compliance: 100%
Average Daily Attendance: 78.2%

Walkthrough Review Team:

Majeedah Scott, Director, Multiple Pathways
Cameo Posey, EOP Program Manager
Kevin Feaganes, Re-engagement Center Case
Manager
Kristin Combs, Executive Director, School
Organization

Program Staff:

Dr. Pamela Thomas, Principal
C. Benjamin Lattimore, Director, National Literacy
Programs, OIC of America
Kelly Lugo, Special Education Coordinator

Overview of Instructional Site Visits:

Instructional site visits consisted of four main parts: **Academic Success Questions with Leadership**; **Academic Success Questions with Teachers**; **Academic Success Questions with Students**; and **Classroom Observations**. **Academic Success Questions with Leadership** was driven by standardized questions that focused on: data and academic outcomes; academic outcomes versus goals; and preparation for classroom observations. **Academic Success Questions with Teachers** was driven by standardized questions that focused on: the use of academic assessments; academic outcomes versus goals; and the school's overall academic performance. **Academic Success Questions with Students** was driven by standardized questions that focused on: student backgrounds and previous educational experiences; academic expectations set by Teachers; tests, grading procedures, and supports from Teachers; overall level of satisfaction with the program and recommendations for improvement; the program's mission; the program's Special Education services; and food and health services. **Classroom Observations** was guided by a standardized Classroom Observation Form that assessed elements of: the classroom environment; instruction; and assessments.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Academic Success Questions with Leadership

OIC CADI leadership discussed and presented the program's TABE growth data for the previous school year. All students tested made gains in reading and mathematics. In reading, 51% of students made a half year worth of gains, 14% of students made one year worth of gains, 20% made 2 years worth of gains, and 14% made 3 to 5 years worth of gains. In mathematics, 40% of students made a half year worth of gains, 16% made one year worth of gains, 8% made 2 years worth of gains, and 12% made 3 to 5 years worth of gains. The program's Principal acknowledged that the school is making improvements steadily, year over year. She attributed gains to work that the Special Education Coordinator does with pushing into classrooms. All struggling students, both regular education and special education, receive one-on-one and small group supports in the classroom. In addition, the program has doubled down on encouraging students to be more self-reliant and to advocate for themselves when it comes to academics. The Principal also attributed gains to school improvements, such as having computers every classroom so that students have more access to individual instructional materials; the program began using the Fuel Education blended learning platform this school year. Counselors check in more regularly with students, and the program releases grades on a biweekly basis so that students are well aware of

what they have left to do and how well they have been performing. The program has increased the number of Counselors to three over the last several years. The program saw a significant improvement in graduation and retention rates as a result of having more Counselors on staff to support students. The graduation rate and retention rate for last school year was 87% and 77%, respectively.

OIC CADI discussed the use of interim reports as a way to track their progress towards performance goals set for the program. Students receive interim reports once each quarter, and grades are updated biweekly. The program holds an open house for families to receive their students' interim reports, and program leadership acknowledged the importance of keeping families involved with students' progress. The program celebrates students who are doing well or who have made significant improvements in their studies. OIC CADI gives out stars as an incentive to those students, which allows students to earn giveaways and special honors. In the past, stars were issued to students only at the end of each quarter. The program has changed this strategy to acknowledge students on a more frequent basis.

OIC CADI staff meet every Wednesday to review the progress of all students. Staff come with laptops and tablets so that they can collectively look at grade trends in the program's Engrade system and Google docs. The program uses Google docs to streamline the sharing of data between staff. Staff meetings result in Teachers working more closely together to develop interventions for struggling students and to share best practices. Teachers also now conduct peer observations to learn instructional strategies from each other to provide each other with constructive feedback. Teachers keep a lot of case management notes in Engrade, so that they can share very descriptive instructional strategies with each other. Teachers use this sharing to implement the same strategies for students across different subjects, and also to prepare for students that they will have in their classes in the coming quarters.

When asked what we should see in classrooms, the program Principal thought that we should see students and Teachers engaged in teaching and learning. Teachers should be passionate about the work and students should be excited to learn. We should also see order in classrooms, student uniforms, pride in student work, and classroom environments that are colorful and inviting.

Classroom Observations

Review team members observed an Algebra I class for approximately 10 minutes and 12 students were present in class during the observation. The class was in progress and all students remained engaged throughout the observation. Classroom walls displayed recent student work, classroom procedures, and instructional resources. The class was solving for the variable X using a worksheet, and the Teacher was at the board modeling the equation. The Teacher used questioning techniques that required students to demonstrate their understanding of the concepts and to analyze and apply previous learning. The class transitioned to a project-based activity in which students would be required to develop a store advertisement with discounted products at a certain percentage off. The class on par with the Teacher's schedule for the week, and the lesson plan was clearly aligned to Pennsylvania Common Core Standards.

Review team members observed an American History class for approximately 10 minutes and 19 students were present in class during the observation. Classroom walls displayed recent student work, classroom procedures, and instructional resources. The class was already in progress and was approaching the end of the class period. All students were on task, with the exception of four students who were not participating in the class activity. The Teacher redirected students who were off task and they eventually engaged in the class activity. The goal of the lesson was for students to be able to describe various aspects of slavery in the United States using primary sources. The Teacher projected primary sources using a PowerPoint presentation. The lesson required students to analyze and apply sources, and also to synthesize and evaluate information.

Review team members observed a Health class for ten minutes and 24 students were present in class during the observation. The class was in progress, and about ten percent of students were observed to be off task with no redirection from the Teacher. Classroom walls displayed class procedures and instructional resources; no recent student work was observed. The class was watching a media presentation of a TED Talk on sexually transmitted diseases and body consciousness. Review team members did not observe any classroom based assessments, and the lesson plan they received was for the next period class.

Review team members observed an English 3 class for ten minutes and 9 students were present in class during the observation. Classroom walls displayed recent student work, classroom procedures, and instructional resources. The class was already in progress, and one student was observed to be off-task and was redirected by the Teacher. The focus of the lesson was to understand and write thesis statements. Students practiced writing thesis statements using a handout. During group instruction, the Teacher used questioning as one strategy for delivering the lesson content. The Teacher circulated the room while students worked on their handouts. The depth of engagement observed was basic recall.

Academic Success Questions with Teachers

Ms. Malachi (Social Studies) and Ms. Sturgil (Mathematics) participated in the Academic Success Questions with Teachers. The Teachers reported using quizzes, projects, written assignments and oral presentations as assessment methods for monitoring student learning. These assessments, along with homework assignments, inform their teaching and help them to determine if certain concepts need to be re-taught differently in order for students to grasp the concepts. Ms. Sturgil has found that connecting math lessons to real-world examples makes the content relatable to students, which helps with mastery. Ms. Malachi has found that historical artifacts and primary sources help to get students engaged with history lessons.

When asked what data they share with parents/guardians, Teachers noted that they rarely share data directly with parents. Parents have access to the program's Engrade system, where course and assignment marks can be viewed. Teachers stated that they have a close relationship with a few parents, and that the Principal and Counselors reach out to parents regularly. Teachers relay student challenges to the Principal, and she and the Counselors then reach out to parents with that information.

Teachers noted that program's all staff meetings on Wednesdays are very helpful for learning effective teaching strategies from each other. The meetings also provide a forum for discussing individual student progress, and methods that other Teachers have found to be effective for reaching struggling students. They find it helpful to learn how students are progressing in different classrooms.

When asked how they remain up to date with their content knowledge and learning standards, the Teachers discussed checking their lesson plans against Pennsylvania Common Core Standards several times each school. They both noted that they engage in continuing education to ensure that they are aware of the latest trends in their fields. Teachers map out their curricula by semester, and they submit their lesson plans and curriculum to the Principal each semester for approval. The Principal provides Teachers with feedback on curricula and lesson plans, and she ensure that the materials and content are appropriate for the subject matter and program.

Teachers discussed attendance as a school-wide performance goal that needs improvement. They noted that student progress suffers when students are absent from school. They also noted that it is important for them to ensure high student attendance because of their students' previous experience of disengaging from school. Teachers credited the program's Counselors with supporting students with low attendance, and for helping to improve the program's attendance rate overall.

In general, both Teachers reported that they very much enjoy working at OIC CADI and planned to stay at the program for the long haul. One Teacher noted that this was the first school that she experienced where none of

the staff had any major issues and everyone gets along and is respectful. Both Teachers noted that they receive support when they need it and quality feedback from the program's leadership.

Academic Success Questions with Students

Review team members met with two juniors and two seniors who were selected by OIC CADI leadership to participate in the Academic Success Questions with Students. Two of the students were enrolled in September and the other two enrolled in November. One of the students has since referred her brother to OIC CADI and then referred her brother. The brother then enrolled a short time later as a result of seeing the success that his sister had at the program.

Students felt that their course work was very manageable. They stated that they received syllabi from their Teachers that outlined course content, assignments, and general expectations for learning. Students noted that Teachers consistently communicated what students need to do to bring their grades up. They highlighted that Counselors review their progress with them on a weekly basis. Students know when they have done a good job based on their work being celebrated on the wall with a star in the building.

Two students stated that college is very important to them. One student stated that she was unsure about college. One young man stated that he is interested in joining the military after he graduates. They were all excited about Career Day, which was taking place the next day. All acknowledged that they planned to visit different college/trade school representatives to help inform their postsecondary decisions. Students acknowledged that they received several presentations throughout their time at CADI from college/trade school representatives. They also said that they received help with financial questions and completing the FASFA application.

Students talked about taking the TABE test at the beginning of the year or at the start of their enrollment. They said that they have weekly quizzes in all classes (usually on Thursdays or Fridays), and by the next week they receive quiz results back from their Teachers. Students also talked about final exams in all classes at the end of each quarter. If a student does not do well on a quiz, then Teachers provide those students with extra work or a different quiz. Students receive notebook checks from their Teachers to ensure that they have taken good notes. Students who need help may have individual meetings with a Teacher or Counselor. They felt that if a student studied then they should not have a problem passing a test or quiz.

Overall, students were very adamant that they receive help from OIC CADI Teachers, Counselors, and Principal whenever they are in need. They acknowledged that the focus at OIC CADI is to help them graduate and lead a successful life after high school. They appreciated the fact that expectations are clear and consistent throughout the program.

Recommendations

The review team recommends that OIC CADI continue to make steady, program-wide improvements by analyzing data and developing strategies for attendance and student learning. Some of the class projects observed were not rigorous, and the program should work to ensure that projects and class lessons consistently require students to analyze and apply information, as well as synthesize and evaluate content. Targeted professional development centered around instructional strategies and lesson planning could be helpful with improving the program-wide depth of engagement for students. Lastly, review team members recommend that the program revisit their parental outreach policy to determine if Teachers are better suited to inform parents of their students' progress in certain instances.