

**Instructional Visit Summary**  
**OIC Career and Academic Development Institute (CADi)**

**Provider:** OIC of America  
**Contract Term:** FY 2018 - 2022

**Site Visit Date:** Tuesday, March 6, 2018 - 9:00 a.m.  
**Program Capacity:** 150

**Site Visit Review Team:**

Christina Grant, Assistant Superintendent,  
Opportunity and Innovation Networks  
Majeedah Scott, Director, Multiple Pathways to  
Graduation, Opportunity Network  
Rodreen Howell, Transition Liaison, Opportunity  
Network  
Leta Johnson-Garner, Director of Evaluation, SDP  
Leadership Development & Evaluation

**Program Staff:**

Michelle Beech, Career Counselor  
Benjamin Latimore, Director of Literacy  
Lester Lowery, Case Manager  
Kelly Lugo, Special Education Liaison  
Dr. Pamela Thomas, Principal

**Overview of Instructional Site Visits:**

Instructional site visits consist 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** includes standardized questions that focus on: data and academic outcomes; academic outcomes versus goals; and preparation for classroom observations. **Academic Success Questions with Teachers** includes standardized questions that focus on: the use of academic assessments; academic outcomes versus goals; and the school's overall academic performance. **Academic Success Questions with Students** includes standardized questions that focus 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. **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

**Academic Outcomes.** OIC CADI presented and discussed the program's key academic data, including literacy and numeracy growth, retention rate, graduation rate, percentage of students attending at least 85% of school days, and Special Education data. OIC CADI aggregated and analyzed its own data as a demonstration of the program's ability to make data-informed decisions for positive student outcomes. OIC CADI's leadership explained some of the key drivers of their academic outcomes. Gains in literacy and numeracy were attributed to targeted interventions that are provided to all struggling students by the program's Special Education Coordinator. OIC CADI often uses a push-in model to provide academic supports to students who need extra help. All students in need receive either one-on-one or small group instruction in the classroom. In addition, the program uses the Fuel Education blended learning platform to accelerate student skills growth and credit accumulation. OIC CADI has invested in more Counselors over the last several years, which allows students to receive frequent checks for academic progress and to discuss and resolve any personal challenges in an individualized setting. This year, the program established a no cell phone policy for students. Program leadership noted that the new cell phone policy has had positive impacts on the learning environment in that students are more focused on academics and communicating with their teachers and peers about school work.

**Academic Outcomes versus Goals.** OIC CADI determines professional development topics for teaching staff based on the Principal and Lead Teacher's formal and informal observation of classrooms. Professional development topics are also determined based on the program's focus areas for improvement. One recent professional development session focused on the program's goal to improve student attendance. Teachers learned about the impacts of chronic absenteeism on academic achievement, and the role that teachers can play to improve this outcome. The program's leadership analyzes trends in course marks on a class by class basis to inform a teacher's professional development needs. For example, if the majority of students are failing the same class, then the Principal investigates the root causes through conferences with the teacher and students assigned to his or her classes. Classroom observations then become more frequent for the teacher, and the Principal works with the teacher to develop improvement plans with actionable steps. OIC CADI's program-wide goal for applying to postsecondary institutions requires that all graduating seniors apply to at least three colleges or trade schools. The program self-reported that 80% of seniors have applied to postsecondary institutions already this year. **Classroom Observation Preparation.** When asked what we should see in classrooms, the program's Principal noted 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. The Principal noted that there are two new teachers who she and the Lead Teacher have been working very closely with. The program's new Science teacher has been receiving support related to improving classroom management. The program's new English teacher has been receiving support to develop stronger and more engaging lesson plans.

### Classroom Observations

Review team members observed a History class for six minutes that was already in progress, and nine students were present in class during the observation. All students were on-task and engaged with the lesson. Recent student work, classroom procedures, and instructional resources were on display in the classroom. The class agenda, including the lesson objective and warm-up activity were posted on the whiteboard. The class was learning about the influence of West African music on African American musical genres. The mode of instruction observed was lead and assist, and lead and monitor. Students were challenged to analyze and apply information related to the features of West African and African American music. Students were also challenged to evaluate features of African American music against those of traditional West Africa. The teacher used questioning and polling to check for understanding.

Review team members observed an Environmental Science class for seven minutes that was already in progress, and 19 students were present in class during the observation. Classroom procedures, instructional resources, and recent student work were on display in the class. Approximately 50% of students were off-task during the observation. The teacher did not have a consistent response for off-task behavior and did not redirect disengaged students. The class was taking an “open book group quiz” on the topic of minerals, and students were encouraged by the teacher to refer back to their notes for answers. The teacher’s depth of questioning required students to recall basic facts about the lesson. Students were not challenged to demonstrate their understanding of the lesson, nor were they challenged to analyze or evaluate information.

Review team members observed an English class for ten minutes that was at the start of the lesson, and five students were present in class during the observation. Classroom walls displayed class rules, instructional resources, and the lesson agenda. Students were required to use the word “obligation” in a 3-5 sentence paragraph. One student asked the teacher to describe “obligation” again because he did not grasp the definition well enough to write a paragraph. The teacher did not have additional resources or a model paragraph to help the student. Instead, the teacher referred to the student’s personal involvement with law enforcement as the model for how to use the word “obligation”. This reference noticeably upset the student and confounded the rest of the class’ understanding of the word because they were not aware of their classmate’s issues with law enforcement.

Review team members observed a Spanish class for ten minutes that was already in progress, and 18 students were present in class during the observation. All students were on-task, and the transition from one activity to another was orderly and efficient. Classroom walls displayed instructional resources and the lesson agenda was posted. The method of instruction observed was question and answer, and whole-group discussion. The teacher asked students to translate different words into Spanish. The teacher called out the English word and students responded by calling out the word in Spanish. Students used textbooks, workbooks, and worksheets during the lesson. Students were engaged with the lesson and there was a significant degree of student voice observed.

### **Academic Success Questions with Teachers**

Ms. Malachi (Social Studies teacher) and Ms. Seidel (English teacher and Lead Teacher) 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. Ms. Malachi noted that oral exams not only serve as diagnostic and summative assessments, but that they also serve as a scaffolding technique for students who enter the program with very low level writing skills. Teachers talked about differentiating the learning environment so that all students can access the content regardless of whether they are visual, auditory or tactile learners. For example, Ms. Malachi created a visual progress chart to track the completion of senior projects for students. The teachers noted that they receive a great deal of support from the program's Principal when it comes to communicating with parents. The Principal will address student behavior, attendance, and academic progress with the parents of students who are struggling. The Principal reports back to teachers and helps them to development improvement plans for students based on the outcome of parental conferences. Overall, teachers thought that the program is now doing well academically. They noted that they and the rest of their colleagues are now focusing on delivering rigorous instruction. They thought that it was important to challenge students so that they will graduate with the high level skills they need to be successful.

### **Academic Success Questions with Students**

Review team members met with three graduating seniors who were selected by OIC CADI leadership to participate in the Academic Success Questions with Students. All three have been enrolled in OIC CADI since September, and all will graduate either this June or August. When asked what was the best thing about their program, students talked about their ability to earn credits and graduate quickly. Students also talked about how being in the program has helped them to become more disciplined because their teachers and Principal have high expectations for them. As a result, they noted that they are getting more work done and learning more than they ever did before in school. Students liked the environment of the program and how there is no fighting and arguing, which they said also helps them to stay focused on school work. They noted that teachers and the Principal keep their word to students and that they stay on top of everything that students do or do not do. Students admitted that sometimes they need an extra push to stay on track. The three graduating seniors talked about their senior projects. Students' discussion of their projects showed that they have learned a great deal of information about the topics they chose. Students noted that completing the senior project is stressful, but that they are enjoying the challenge nonetheless and that they are getting the help they need from their English teacher. When asked what they would change about the program, if anything, students talked about computer-based classes (i.e., Fuel Ed blended learning platform). Students would like the ability to pick which classes they take on the computer and which classes they take with a teacher. They noted that subjects like Art and Health are okay for them to take on the computer, but subjects like Algebra 2 are more difficult for them and they need a teacher in front of them to get the work done.

## **Recommendations**

The review team recommends that OIC CADI continue to focus on providing rigorous instruction in an environment where students feel safe and valued. The program should continue to set and achieve yearly goals that go above and beyond the minimum expectations for program outcomes. The program should continue to monitor the performance of its two new teachers and provide them with the tools they need to make quick and lasting improvements to their pedagogy. After comprehensive supports have been provided, the program's leadership should quickly address any teacher who is determined to not be a good fit for the program.