THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILADELPHIA

OPPORTUNITY NETWORK
INSTRUCTIONAL WALKTHROUGH 2018-2019
Program Name: Ombudsman Northwest Accelerated
Provider: Ombudsman Educational Services, Ltd.

INSTRUCTIONAL WALKTHROUGH OVERVIEW

Instructional Walkthroughs for all Opportunity Network contract programs focused on the instructional vision and implementation of the vision at the classroom level required to deliver high quality instruction to students. Instructional Walkthroughs assessed program performance across three domains: 1) Overall Management; 2) Instructional Delivery; and 3) Conditions for Learning. Taken together, the three domains encompass key instructional expectations that are required to ensure effective instruction that facilitates meeting the program's contract requirements with The School District of Philadelphia, as well as applicable federal, state and local laws.

Instructional Walkthroughs are one part of the School District's three-part approach to the formal annual evaluation of all contracted Opportunity Network programs. In addition to Instructional Walkthroughs, Operational Walkthroughs and Alternative Education Progress Reports (AEPR) provide qualitative and quantitative data for program performance that inform decisions related to contract renewal, termination, and program expansion. This report summarizes the program's performance for each of the three domains reviewed during the Instructional Walkthrough. Each domain has been considered, in terms of key indicators for the domain area, and were rated by the walkthrough team on a four-point scale. In addition, this report provides ratings for select contract requirements indicating whether the program met those requirements or standards based on evidence reviewed during the Instructional Walkthrough, interviews with key stakeholders, and observations in the classrooms.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Walkthrough Date: March 21, 2019

Contract Term: FY 2014- FY 2022

Program Type: Accelerated (Grades 9-12)

CONTACT INFORMATION

2111 Eastburn Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19138

Phone: 215-924-8950

Webpage: https://www.ombudsman.com/

INSTRUCTIONAL MODEL

Students complete courses using several online platforms. They receive additional instruction in a small-group setting with a teacher to review learning topics from the course and receive individualized assistance and monitoring during the session to ensure they are progressing through the content. The instruction is self-paced.

PROGRAM LEADERSHIP

Scott Russell, Regional Vice President, Northeast and South Central

Julita Byrd, Regional Director, Philadelphia

WALKTHROUGH REVIEW TEAM

Dr. Tracy Ocasio, Director, Instructional Resources, Opportunity Network

Majeedah Scott, Director, Office of Multiple Pathways to Graduation

Elvis Mucaj, Strategy Analyst II, Opportunity Network

Francesca Newberg, Director, Instructional Technology

Rachel Malloy-Good, Special Education Case Manager

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Ombudsman Northwest Accelerated Academy is a program that offers students the opportunity to participate in a four-day program using a composite of online platforms to offer instruction for credit acceleration. The program is designed to provide students with self-paced instruction online while offering a system for requesting individualized support in addition to the opportunity for additional instruction for intervention.

Daily Structure
- Students complete coursework on the online platform
- The instructional day consists of daily four-hour blocks of time
- Students receive face-to-face instruction a small – group setting for Mathematics and History 3 times per month per the student report during the interviews
- There is a daily intervention block listed in the schedule for students based on their performance on the STAR assessment

Teacher Feedback
- The site administrator provides feedback using the Danielson model
- The site administrator periodically reviews lesson plans for the small group instructional block

Intervention
- There is a daily intervention block listed in the schedule for students based on their performance on the STAR assessment for English Language Arts and Mathematics
- Teachers provide small group instruction using components from the online platform
- Teachers meet with students as needed based on students' requests for additional help using the school's request procedures

Professional Development – the instructional staff have received feedback on the following topics:
- District initiatives that are relevant to the effective implementation of the program's instructional model
- Climate and culture topics related to attendance and behavior
- Compliance topics associated to state, federal and local mandates

Parent Communication – Parent communication occurs during regularly scheduled parent conferences.
- Parents are contacted intermittently to discuss student needs

Use of Data – the administration and instructional staff use the following to monitor student performance
- Information gleaned from the online platforms
- Small group performance and individualized consultation with the instructors
- Performance on the weekly writing prompts
- STAR Assessment for progress monitoring

SUMMARY OF PROGRAM AREAS OF STRENGTH

- Staff relationships were evident during the visit as evidenced by student statements and observed interactions.
- The climate is conducive to learning where students seem clear about the expectations and the procedures for engagement with the online platforms.
- The staff actively monitored and provided students with redirection as needed and with assistance to re-engage with the content by meeting with individual students and small groups.
- Students reported that interactions with the staff were not only pleasant but seen as beneficial to their learning.
- The program has maintained a positive reputation with families and the local community.
- The interactions were positive with all stakeholders and mutual respect was observed between students and staff.
- It was evident that the program administrator has caring relationships with staff and students as described during the interviews and observed by the team.
- Clear systems were in place and were described as the basis for administrative decisions during the administrative interview.
- The program highlights multiple points of student success and student work is posted.
- The students are aware of their progress and keep copies of their transcripts. Many students are highly motivated to attain credits for graduation.
- The staff shared multiple data points that were identified as opportunities for creating personalized learning plans creating a data-rich environment that can be used to gauge student performance.
- There is a system for students to receive assistance from a teacher if they become unclear while working with the online platform.
- Students indicated during the interviews that they were aware of their progress in obtaining credits toward graduation.

PERFORMANCE SUMMARY ON THE THREE DOMAIN AREAS

The table below summarizes performance by category on elements that are conducive to effective instruction and are consistent with the academic performance measures in the contract during the 2018-2019 Instructional Walkthrough.

DOMAINS	PROGRAM PERFORMANCE	TOTAL POSSIBLE	PERCENTAGE
Domain I: Overall Management	20	20	100
Domain II: Instructional Delivery	10	20	50
Domain III: Conditions for Learning	21	24	88
TOTAL	51	64	80

DOMAIN 1: OVERALL MANAGEMENT

Management for a Safe and Orderly Environment	N/A	Did Not Meet (1)	Nearing Target (2)	Target Met (3)	Exceeding Target (4)
1. The program is welcoming and inviting.					X
2. School – wide rules and procedures operating effectively.					X
3. Classroom rules and procedures are operating effectively.					X
4. Acknowledgement of students who are/are not following rules and procedures is evident in classroom/school-wide.					X
5. Teachers display awareness of conditions.					X

Summary: The program has established school-wide expectations that have been effective in maintaining a safe and orderly environment. The instructional staff consistently reinforce the expectations. Student recognition has been an integral part of ensuring these outcomes. Program staff monitor the climate and respond to student needs. There have been very few discipline issues at this location.

DOMAIN II: INSTRUCTIONAL DELIVERY

Components of Effective Instruction	N/A	Did Not Meet (1)	Nearing Target (2)	Target Met (3)	Exceeding Target (4)
1. Teachers model the thinking and learning process. *The team observed teachers working with students individually explaining items from the platform. The one teacher helped to create a visual with the student to demonstrate graphing a math equation. The members of the team shared that the need for a more interactive platform might assist with increasing student success and ensuring deeper learning.* *Members of the team observed direct instruction in math. The teacher used problems from the online platform that were focused on differentiating between and algebraic sequence and a geometric sequence. The teacher clicked through the problem set with the students. The lesson was connected to the standard; however, the student outcome and demonstrated understanding fell short of the standard. The students responded saying that the item was correct or incorrect, because they had clicked on it. The students should have been able to articulate the nuances and key differences between the two sequences. They should have also been able to articulate the connection to a proportional relationship (content first exposed in the sixth-grade math standards) to a geometric sequence and how the algebraic*		X			

Components of Effective Instruction	N/A	Did Not Meet (1)	Nearing Target (2)	Target Met (3)	Exceeding Target (4)
expression that describes it assists them in solving the problems when the numbers increase in size. The outcome observed during this lesson was students indicating an awareness of the procedural knowledge connected to the problems they had seen on the online platform. The team suggested that the teachers offer mini lessons using alternate materials to ensure students can articulate conceptual knowledge and ultimately reach procedural fluency with the math concepts being addressed as the teacher establishes relevance that extends the learning experience.					
2. Teachers make the curriculum relevant for their students. *The team discussed opportunities to ensure students are mastering content and ways to incorporate additional resources to assist students with developing conceptual understanding and deeper levels of learning for extending the concepts being taught with relevant learning experiences.*			X		
3. Lessons are rigorous. *The online platforms include challenging content that has alignment to grade-level expectations. One of the platforms in particular that is used for the core content has a less interactive nature where the majority of the coursework requires students to read and answer questions. This may be less fitting for students reading several grade levels below and does not ensure more meaningful connections and deeper understanding.* *Lessons including those in the small - group instruction classroom were connected to the appropriate standard; however, the team discussed opportunities for reaching deeper levels of understanding using alternative resources and mini-lessons that provide opportunities for extension, relevance, connections to other concepts, deeper levels of mastery and visualization.*			X		
4. Students are working harder than their teachers. *Students were engaged in the learning process and took ownership for completing the work. There is a loose system of monitoring to ensure that students complete work requirements and efforts to ensure that students are completing work in all assigned subject areas have been made. There was an advisory block that has been incorporated into the schedule where periodic check ins occur and there is a system for ensuring that students can request the help they need. The students did say that they felt they benefited from direct instruction when provided estimating that it occurred two to three times a month on average in history and math only. They also reported that they must wait to receive help and find other things to do given the small number of staff that have been available (two teachers until recently when a third was hired).*				X	

Components of Effective Instruction	N/A	Did Not Meet (1)	Nearing Target (2)	Target Met (3)	Exceeding Target (4)
5. Evidence of data is visible. *Students have printouts of their transcripts and know what their progress has been. The administrator also maintains a record of credits attained. The team suggested that posting progress on a data wall may support the staff being able to ensure students are attaining the required number of credits. The data from the notebook shared during the leadership team interview demonstrated 25% of the students regressing on the STAR assessment despite the average reading level of many students being identified in the late elementary grades. This also suggests the need for a more dynamic, interactive platform and the assurance of maintaining the schedule that offers intervention each day at the start of the day using the Reading Plus platform.* *The reports from the platform were described as opportunities for differentiating support for students. It was not clear how these reports help to tailor the instruction or ensure appropriate intervention occurs in the service of increasing student learning.*			X		
6. Teachers question all students with the same frequency. *As a result of using the online platform, this element does not apply.*	X				
7. Teachers ask all students questions at different levels of cognitive complexity. *As a result of using the online platform, this element does not apply.*	X				

Summary:

The program uses multiple sources of data from the various online platforms. There is a scheduled intervention block that is part of the instructional vision and small-group instruction is offered to students to ensure that they are mastering content. The schedule is not implemented with consistency and there are opportunities for growth in providing opportunities for students to demonstrate standards-aligned outcomes. Additional professional development that focuses on implementing and supporting students in achieving standards-aligned outcomes is needed to support teachers in this area.

Opportunities for Growth:
1. **Ensure adherence to the schedule to provide consistent intervention and face-to-face support to students on gap skills in response to data.** There is an intervention block in the schedule that is not always provided based on attendance and other factors. Regular adherence to the master schedule would ensure that the students receive additional instruction to address areas of need as a result of the data analysis from the screener.
2. **Provide support to teachers to ensure opportunities for exposure to and reinforcement of state standards.** The current online platforms offer instruction that appeared to be aligned to the standard and appeared to require similar levels of aligned student outcomes in what was observed that day. The schedule that permits students face-to-face instruction was not

consistent and did not ensure that students have this reinforcement to ensure learning is occurring at a deeper level. The instruction offered by the teacher should assist students with areas of confusion but also provide opportunities to understand the content at deeper, more meaningful levels that provides opportunities for them to draw conclusions about the content and test these conclusions against related content areas while demonstrating standards-aligned outcomes. The team discussed the opportunity for students in the math classroom to discuss why a particular expression was placed in a specific category and what the significance was in terms of the different categories as students would be able to articulate the patterns that were associated to the expressions and conceptual understanding for each category.

3. **Provide focused professional development opportunities for teachers.** During the interviews with leadership and staff as well as reviewing supporting documentation, it appeared that there was not a plan for professional development that would increase the effectiveness of the instructional delivery. Many professional development opportunities appeared to be isolated or unconnected to an overall plan of continuous improvement focused on strategies for addressing opportunities for growth. There is support from the organization that is on-site periodically; however, staff indicated a desire for additional professional development on topics connected to pedagogy. Many topics had an operational theme including those related to using the online platforms.

DOMAIN III: CONDITIONS FOR LEARNING

Establishing Conditions Necessary for Learning	N/A	Did Not Meet (1)	Nearing Target (2)	Target Met (3)	Exceeding Target (4)
1. Teachers are aware of non-engagement.					X
2. Teachers use a variety of engagement strategies. *As a result of using the online platform, this element does not apply.*	X				
3. Students appear to be engaged in the lesson.				X	
4. Students are interacting appropriately with other students.					X
5. Teachers show interest in their students.					X
6. Students are appropriately responsive to teacher interactions.					X
7. There is evidence of the school-wide focus in the classrooms. *There are systems for students to receive additional assistance. There is a schedule that is not always used as described for addressing student areas of need. Examining the platforms to offer more interactive learning conditions where students receive instruction that provides virtual teacher directed lessons, online manipulatives, opportunities for content visualization, modeling and video simulations might increase student engagement and*			X		

Establishing Conditions Necessary for Learning	N/A	Did Not Meet (1)	Nearing Target (2)	Target Met (3)	Exceeding Target (4)
deeper connections to the student outcomes that demonstrate the grade – level standards. *Students reported receiving assistance but stated that the assistance may not be as readily available as they would like. They reported finding the direct instruction to reinforce the computer work to be beneficial but limited to history and math and only occurring 2 to 3 times a month.*					

Summary:

The program uses multiple platforms for online learning. Some of the platforms were less interactive and dynamic. In order to ensure student learning, the team recommended streamlining the number of platforms being utilized. The team also believed that a key strength for this program was the administration and suggested that there be articulated policy and procedures in place to ensure consistency.

Opportunities for Growth:

1. **Consider streamlining the online platforms used; the team suggested that the program consider adopting fewer platforms for offering core instruction.** There was discussion that Edgenuity was considered for the math content but that the students found it more challenging resulting in selecting a different platform that is not as interactive. In order to be engaging and effective, the staff may want to review platforms that are standards-aligned and offer interactive content. This would also assist in narrowing the amount of data that the teachers use to plan face-to-face instruction.

2. **Consider articulating in writing the systems that have ensured the smooth operation of the program.** There is evidence of systems being used by the program administrator that are not only effective but consistent; however, staff are not as clear about the policy and procedures that govern the work. For example, it may be helpful to ensure that there is a manual that describes for the staff how to place students in courses and the use of the platforms for each area of study. This effort would ensure that staff understood how students are accepted, how to assign courses and how to ensure credits are awarded appropriately in the absence of the program administrator. During the staff interviews, the individuals who were present appeared unclear in this area. Other areas that would benefit from tighter systems alignment include but are not limited to: an outline of systems for things such as course placement, use of data, and tracking student success points to ensure students are on track; feedback aligned to expectations for ensuring rigor and standards-aligned outcomes; and a targeted professional development plan.