



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. *NOTE: Due to the COVID pandemic, availability of some academic data was affected. Academic data may be available in part, whole or not at all.* 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.

**During the 2020-21 school year, due to Covid related health restrictions meant that instruction was being conducted remotely. All Instructional Walkthroughs were conducted virtually as well, including meetings with leadership, class video conference observations, interviews with staff and students, and review of documentation. Initial feedback from the walkthrough was also given at the end of the visit to the program.*

GENERAL INFORMATION

Walkthrough Date: March 8, 2021

Contract Term: FY 2018 - FY 2022

Program Type:

CONTACT INFORMATION

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INSTRUCTIONAL MODEL

Students participate in this program to provide them with the opportunity to successfully transition into a high-school setting of their choice as a result of an intense focus on academic and behavioral goals.

PROGRAM LEADERSHIP

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PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Excel Middle Years Academy is an Opportunity Network contracted program that offers students the opportunity to participate in a transitional program in order to assist students with achieving academic and behavioral goals that will assist them in being accepted and ultimately successful in the high school program of their choice. The program is designed to provide students with opportunities to develop social and emotional skills necessary for successful participation in the next school setting as well as maintain and continue to develop academic skills necessary for grade promotion at the middle school level. To this end, the program incorporates a social and emotional learning component during the instructional day.

Daily Structure - the instructional day consists of:

- A full academic schedule, including a lunch break Monday through Thursdays
- A whole school community meeting to begin the day, this is known as Townhouse or GGI, which serves to help directly support students Social Emotional Learning needs.
- Fridays are A-synchronous days, where students are supported with various structures to engage in their work independently (including an Instagram Live hype video and an Academic support period where students can meet with their teachers.)

Teacher Feedback

- Teachers receive feedback on their lesson plans each week to ensure they are standards aligned and meeting school expectations
- Teachers are observed informally by leadership team members as well as support staff both daily and weekly
- Teachers are supported with peer observations through the school's "Rounds" structure
- Teachers are also given at least two formal observations, followed by a coaching and written evaluation from the principal

Intervention

- Supports this year have been targeted with push in and pull out supports during the week, and on Fridays
- Additionally, there are several supports put in place to help students navigate any access challenges with remote instruction
- When a student is highlighted by the academic team, a "Red Flag Meeting" is held to discuss the student's progress and determine what other supports can be used to get the student to make stronger progress

Professional Development – The staff at Excel Middle Years has at least a week of professional development to begin the year, as well as ongoing PD in alignment with the SDP calendar. They also have Common Planning Time each week, which is teacher led and based on feedback from the Rounds structure. Some of those topics have included:

- Time management
- Reading and writing in a virtual classroom
- Online resources for remote instruction
- Providing accommodations virtually

Parent Communication – Excel Middle Years Academy has adapted communication with parents/guardians to remote instruction by utilizing virtual resources such as Zoom, emails, and Google Classroom. They continue to communicate with families via phone, Instagram posts, home visits, and newsletters mailed home.

Use of Data – administration and instructional staff use the following to monitor student performance

- Students take the TABE assessment three times per year
- Sites conduct regularly scheduled data meetings with the leadership team and with the staff

SUMMARY OF PROGRAM AREAS OF STRENGTH

- School had established a warm and welcoming environment in all classes observed (including the GGI to begin the day)
- Teachers were clearly making efforts and had established strong rapport with students
- Some classroom observed had strong checks for understanding
- In classrooms with a second staff member, their presence was helpful and contributed to the lesson
- There was evidence of data being utilized in decisions and shared with students
- A variety of engagement tools and approaches were observed
- Student to student interactions were positive and in some cases contributed to the learning

PERFORMANCE SUMMARY OF ALL DOMAINS

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 2020-2021 Instructional Walkthrough.

DOMAINS	PROGRAM PERFORMANCE	TOTAL POSSIBLE	PERCENTAGE
Domain I: Overall Management	17	20	
Domain II: Instructional Delivery	20	28	
Domain III: Conditions for Learning	23	28	
TOTAL	60	76	

** Percentages were not calculated due to COVID and full-time virtual teaching and learning, this structural change does not support comparison of the report for the 2020-21SY to previous or future school years.*

DOMAIN 1: OVERALL MANAGEMENT

Management for a Safe and Orderly Environment	N/A	Did Not Meet Expectations (1)	Nearing Expectations (2)	Expectations Met (3)	Exceeding Expectations (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 created a similar welcoming environment in the virtual space, as they have created in person. Teachers all began their lesson in a way that was both engaging and welcoming of students (be that using a game, an interesting image to think about, or just bitmojis of the virtual classroom space.) In addition, teachers were consistent in setting and then reinforcing classroom expectations and norms. There was a very positive atmosphere being created through positive praise and feedback to students, this was done not only by the teacher, but support staff as well.

DOMAIN II: INSTRUCTIONAL DELIVERY

Components of Effective Instruction	N/A	Did Not Meet Expectations (1)	Nearing Expectations (2)	Expectations Met (3)	Exceeding Expectations (4)
1. Teachers model the thinking and learning process.				X	
2. Teachers make the curriculum relevant for their students.					X
3. Lessons are rigorous. In the lessons observed, there were several classes that were standards aligned and included rigorous activities for students. However, some classes were covering topics that were very relevant and interesting to students, but were not aligned to grade level appropriate standards. Similarly, in another course, the exit ticket which was meant to measure student success that day- was not aligned to the lesson taught.			X		
4. Students are working harder than their teachers. In lessons observed today, there were engaging questions and tasks posed to students- but they were almost all answered verbally and with a high degree of teachers support. There is a need to give students more independence and an increased number of opportunities to write out their response (this can be done in the chat or with other tech tools). One classroom did this well, as the teacher shared their screen and then follow student directions to complete a task.			X		
5. Evidence of data is visible.				X	
6. Teachers question all students with the same frequency.				X	
7. Teachers ask all students questions at different levels of cognitive complexity.				X	

Summary:

The program has set and maintained clear expectations for an active instructional period. Teachers presented lessons that included topics and activities that students would find relevant in their own lives (reflecting on the role of women in sports, etc.). Some lessons observed were not well aligned to the exit ticket or to the state standards of that course. While teachers were welcoming and supportive, there is space for students to take more responsibility and own more of the learning process. Checks for understanding were varied and engaged all students.

Opportunities for Growth:

1. Provide teachers with support in designing lessons that are both relevant and rigorous. It is clear that work has been done to support teachers with designing relevant lessons for students, and this is valuable for student engagement. Consider supporting teachers with more development on how you may need to adjust or alter resources that are relevant/engaging to maintain the rigor of the standards.

DOMAIN II: INSTRUCTIONAL DELIVERY, *continued*

More Opportunities for Growth:

2. Provide teachers with more development and coaching on using tech tools to encourage more student writing. Consider revisiting some of the professional development that has happened during your CPT session focused on online learning tools, to dive deeply into using those tools to solicit written responses from students. With more opportunities to provide a written response, teachers will not only increase the rigor of their tasks, but also gather valuable data on student understanding.

DOMAIN III: CONDITIONS FOR LEARNING

Establishing Conditions Necessary for Learning	N/A	Did Not Meet Expectations (1)	Nearing Expectations (2)	Expectations Met (3)	Exceeding Expectations (4)
1. Teachers are aware of non-engagement.				X	
2. Teachers use a variety of engagement strategies.				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.				X	

Summary:

The program has created strong conditions for learning, adopting and using a variety of tools to drive engagement and student engagement. During the visit, student to student interactions observed were appropriate and even support of one another. This was the result of intentional community building, and the modeling that students are able to observe from teachers. Teachers showed a great deal of interest in their students. Students were willing to answer and share with teachers, and received positive feedback for doing so. There was clearly a school wide focus on engaging instruction and culture building, which was reflected in each of the classroom visits.

SUPPLEMENT: SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING

SEL Foundation and Execution

As a part of program contract requirements, Transition and Continuation Programs provide explicit Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) instruction by which students can acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions (Collaboration for Academic Social and Emotional Learning -CASEL). SEL is an integral part of education and human development, and positively impacts life and learning. In the social skill development approach for school and life, the SEL observations provide a focus on foundations and execution that promote SEL through a modified SAFE (Structured/Sequential, Active/Engaging, Focused, and Explicit/Evaluative) model for effective SEL.

Summary:

Staff began the SEL session by setting expectations for participation and the value of sharing. The facilitator maintained a safe and inviting environment by creating positive energy and reviewing norms. The facilitator offered a guiding question for the session on how time flies and connected it to the CASEL competency of Self Awareness. The topic was not explicitly focused on a particular skill but Time Management was referenced. The facilitator turned the session over to a student leader, which provided student voice and leadership to the session. In this lesson, there was no gradual release of the theme/concepts for the student to pick up on the topic and guide peers through discussion. The session did not have a clear objective, key points and takeaways. Staff encouraged students to engage and contribute. Staff praised and supported students when they participated. The session did not make full use of its time and students' learning/reflection was not assessed in session. The program provides a great opportunity for student ownership in the SEL session and noted that SEL is incorporated in content classes. One example was seen in Science class with character traits ascribed in the acronym DRIP, a colloquial term familiar to students. By planning SEL sessions with objectives, focused topics and skill development activities, the program will continue to build on its SEL foundations and structures.