



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 30, 2022

Contract Term: FY 2018 - FY 2022

Program Type: Accelerated (Grades 9-12)

PROGRAM LEADERSHIP

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WALKTHROUGH REVIEW TEAM

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INSTRUCTIONAL MODEL

The model of El Centro de Estudiantes is focused on incorporating project-based learning and extending the learning experiences with community internships.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Here is a brief description of different aspects of the program, these descriptions were shared by the program and observed as part of the Instructional Walkthrough.

Daily Structure – The program is designed to nurture meaningful relationship-building and give young people agency over their learning. This is exemplified through the following key features:

- Project Based Learning Courses- The student classroom experience is inquiry-based, project-based, and accelerated learning approach. The program is intentional about representation, using culturally relevant texts, centering and celebrating Black and Brown history and joy, and creating an inclusive culture that nurtures diversity and acceptance
- Advisory- Upon enrollment, each student is paired with an Advisor who they stay with until graduation. Advisors meet one-on-one with their advisors bi-weekly to assess their progress and make any necessary modifications to their ILP collaboratively. Advisories are where the core of intentional social-emotional learning (SEL), academic coaching, and tutoring take place.
- Real World Learning (RWL)- All students are also paired with a grade level RWL Coordinator who helps students navigate the RWL program: a two-day per week scaffolded approach to career and identity exploration. Students conduct workplace site visits, shadow days, informational interviews, and learn professional competencies like cover letter and resume writing before advancing to professional internships.
- Resiliency Services- Three adolescent mental health professionals, Resilience Specialists, provide comprehensive social-emotional, wellness, basic needs, and family systems support to all students and staff.

Teacher Feedback – The Principal meets bi-weekly, at minimum, with each Advisor (the program’s title for teachers), where they discuss informal observations, lesson plans, and resources and tools needed to ensure positive student outcomes.

Intervention – The detailed Individualized Learning Plans (ILPs) create space for students to engage with modalities of learning—and at a pace of learning—that works for them. The program uses an inverted triangle model MTSS to ensure, at baseline, all curricula use an accelerated approach to differentiation and teachers scaffold appropriately to support all students in achieving grade level or above competency. MTSS informs the instructional program curricula as well as individual targeted intervention plans by monitoring and tracking three areas: students’ instructional performance, behavior, and attendance.

Professional Development – Professional development sessions are held for the full staff every Thursday morning from 8-9:30am during the school year and for a week and a half during the summer. With ninety minutes set aside each week for professional development to both develop staff capacity as a whole and respond to educators’ individual requests and needs on an ongoing basis. A topic for professional development can be suggested by any staff member and is prioritized by the Principal in accordance with timeliness of need and whether outside expertise or additional research is required before the session is held.

Parent Communication – El Centro’s philosophy is that families are enrolled, not just students. Students’ families or support teams are welcome on campus anytime, and are formally invited a minimum of one time each term to review their student’s Individualized Learning Plan, Grade Reports and to attend their Exhibition of Learning. In addition to this, Advisors provide regular updates to families by phone or email. The El Centro Principal distributes a weekly newsletter to families to keep them apprised of school activities, and holds school-wide events for students and their families several times each year.

Use of Data – Students’ literacy and numeracy grade levels are assessed at the beginning, middle, and end of the school year using Renaissance STAR tests. The RTI Committee and Advisors use these scores as one of multiple criteria informing MTSS to determine how best to scaffold grade level appropriate content for each student. Additionally, Advisors share progress reports with students and families and/or support team which include: a summary of work completed, work assessments, incomplete work, an attendance record, and an explanation of how the student is or is not meeting their ILP goals. At the end of each term, students present an Exhibition of their academic and social-emotional learning to a panel of their peers, parents, teachers, and mentors.

SUMMARY OF PROGRAM AREAS OF STRENGTH

- Teachers designed and utilized relevant lesson activities for their students and their students' interests.
- The teachers and staff have developed a positive environment where students felt comfortable both in building rapport with teachers, but also asking for help or for support with non-academic needs.
- The culture in the school encourages students to be ready to learn and engage in the work. There were several examples where students demonstrated a high level of curiosity.
- There were strong student/staff relationships observed, both in the way students accepted redirection as well as in the more positive interactions with staff.
- During the classroom observations there were a variety of instructional materials and strategies used, allowing students to engage with the content.

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 2021-2022 Instructional Walkthrough.

DOMAINS	PROGRAM PERFORMANCE	TOTAL POSSIBLE	AVERAGE RATING	Category
Domain I: Overall Management	15	20	3.0	Expectations Met
Domain II: Instructional Delivery	13	28	1.9	Nearing Expectations
Domain III: Conditions for Learning	18	28	2.6	Expectations Met
TOTAL	46	76	Overall Percentage: 61%	

DOMAIN 1: OVERALL MANAGEMENT

Management for a Safe and Educationally Supportive 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. <i>While several classrooms had very few students in the room, most were engaged. In English class a student who was using a cell phone was quietly redirected, however, students were observed using phones or earbuds on in other classes. It is unclear if students are allowed to use the phone (eg, to take/make calls, look up answers, etc).</i>			X		
5. Teachers display awareness of conditions.				X	

Summary:

The program has a very warm and welcoming space, which was mentioned not only in student interviews, but was reflected in the greetings that staff gave to students as they entered the room, as well as the well decorated classrooms that reflected not only the content area, but also the personalities of the teacher and students. Program wide, there were many small things done to make students feel comfortable, from access to food and drinks, to flexible seating options. While these welcoming aspects were in place, in other areas, expectations were not as consistent, such as the use of cell phones and movement between classrooms during instruction. There was also a range of awareness levels of the teachers; some were able to identify and support students when they were struggling to grasp a concept, while others did not nor did not always address when students were off task using a device or disengaged from the lesson.

Opportunities for Growth:

- (Standard 4) **The program should clarify and establish more consistent norms around the use of technology during class time, and develop staff to more effectively address students when these norms are not met.** Creating norms can be done with student and staff support, but the ultimate goal should be to reduce the number of distractions and time disengaged from the lesson. Consider how you can leverage your approach with students and accessing food/drinks, as this norm was stronger and did not lead to distractions/disengagement from instruction.

DOMAIN II: INSTRUCTIONAL DELIVERY

Components of Effective Instruction	N/A	Did Not Meet Expectations (1)	Nearing Expectations (2)	Expectations Met (3)	Exceeding Expectations (4)
<p>1. Teachers model the thinking and learning process. <i>Modeling was inconsistent among classrooms. Some teachers effectively modeled their thinking around a concept, while others had a designed structure for students to think through a concept. However, there was limited modeling observed in several of the other classrooms. Consider more modeling of how to complete tasks or think through a process in a more normed approach across classrooms.</i></p>			X		
<p>2. Teachers make the curriculum relevant for their students.</p>				X	
<p>3. Lessons are rigorous. <i>Most lessons observed today were designed to be on grade level, and, for the most part, the content chosen was aligned to the appropriate state standards. That being said, the lesson execution did not meet that rigor of the state standards. Many times, the teacher was doing the heavy thinking or just sharing the information with students, rather than engaging them in the rigorous task of exploring or learning the content.</i></p>			X		
<p>4. Students are working harder than their teachers. <i>Students were involved in many different ways during the lessons observed today, and were able to experience some productive struggle, however, there were many missed opportunities for student engagement. In several classrooms the teacher led the discussion and only expected short answers from students. In addition, there were very few student-to-student interactions observed, which greatly reduced the number of students actively working.</i></p>			X		
<p>5. Evidence of data is visible. <i>There were very few observations of teachers collecting and/or responding to student data in the moment, or referencing past student data in their framing of the lesson. The leadership expressed that using formative assessments rooted in student conversations is a key way of assessing student learning and making adjustments, however, this was not observed in alignment with the stated vision.</i></p>		X			
<p>6. Teachers question all students with the same frequency. <i>There was almost exclusively whole group questioning, and at times, because of small class sizes, that meant everyone was participating, however, there were very few examples of cold calling and intentionally working to involve all students.</i></p>			X		

Components of Effective Instruction	N/A	Did Not Meet Expectations (1)	Nearing Expectations (2)	Expectations Met (3)	Exceeding Expectations (4)
<p>7. Teachers ask all students questions at different levels of cognitive complexity. <i>The questioning was lower-level, mostly at DOK 1 or 2, and few students were prompted to explain or build upon their answers. Consider ways to have students delve more deeply and either further develop their answers or build upon the answer of a peer.</i></p>		X			

Summary:

It was clear that the program has established as a priority that students should see relevancy in the material they are learning, which was observed in all classrooms. Teachers planned grade-level appropriate lessons that were aligned to state standards, however, this was not always executed effectively. The program had few classrooms where questioning was not whole group or reached levels three or four in depth of knowledge. Teachers, while leading engaging activities, did not allow students to own the thinking load and were not observed using data, neither in the moment nor from prior lessons, to inform instruction.

Opportunities for Growth:

- (Standard 1) **The program should develop and coach teachers on how to model concepts or skills in a more explicit fashion.** While it is important to provide students with opportunities to explore and investigate, there should also be a balance with modeling. Consider adopting a core set of strategies or ways that students can see skills or concepts being applied in context, and then support teachers in adopting those strategies in their daily lessons.
- (Standard 3) **The program—with possible support from the district—should develop and coach teachers on planning and executing lesson plans, where students are allowed to own the thinking and fully attempt the skill identified in the day’s objective.** This may mean spending more time with teachers to build the skill of internalizing an objective and clarifying their vision of what it looks like for students to own the thinking and or fully attempt the objective, which will likely impact other standards as well.
- (Standard 4) **The program should adopt a stronger vision for students owning the thinking, and incorporate more student-to-student interactions into each lesson in order increase the amount of academic engagement by students.** This could include an expectation for a minimum number of student to student interaction opportunities (eg, think turn and talks, group tasks, etc.). Consider how you will monitor and support teachers who are not able to execute this shared vision effectively.
- (Standard 5) **The program—with possible support from the district—should develop and coach teachers on using the data from formative assessments (or checks for understanding) to adjust instruction in the moment and better support students in reaching objective mastery.** This will help to not only increase engagement from students, but likely also improve academic outcomes as students receive the support they need in the moment. Being transparent about the group or individual progress toward the daily objective will also help to build student investment and encourage more questioning and self-awareness of their academic progress.
- (Standard 6) **The program should establish an expectation for strategic cold-calling and develop and/or coach teachers to meet that expectation.** This will likely build off the need of collecting and using data to inform instruction. Consider how to make sure that teachers understand the value in purposefully questioning students to determine what they have or have not understood from the lesson.
- (Standard 7) **The program should develop teachers on crafting questions that are levels three or four in Depth of Knowledge and how to identify key points in the lesson where these questions can be addressed.** Consider how this may impact your lesson planning forms and the feedback given on classroom observations around questioning. The goal here is to have students engage at a deeper level to demonstrate their understanding of the objective or skill they are focused on.

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)
<p>1. Teachers are aware of non-engagement. <i>In several classrooms observed, there was an unclear cell phone policy, and teachers did not consistently address when students were on their phone or other devices and disengaged from the lesson. Teachers were somewhat more consistently observed addressing other off-task behaviors (eg, heads down, talking, etc.).</i></p>			X		
<p>2. Teachers use a variety of engagement strategies.</p>				X	
<p>3. Students appear to be engaged in the lesson.</p>				X	
<p>4. Students are interacting appropriately with other students. <i>There were very few opportunities observed that would require or encourage student-to-student interactions. For example, there were several classes that had a discussion, though these were often only teacher-to-student interactions, rather than student-to-student interactions or students building and responding to other ideas.</i></p>			X		
<p>5. Teachers show interest in their students.</p>				X	
<p>6. Students are appropriately responsive to teacher interactions.</p>				X	
<p>7. There is evidence of the school-wide focus in the classrooms. <i>Implementation of various program-wide focus elements was inconsistent. Focus areas were clearly present in some classes—particularly in English—and less so in others, notable in African American History. Evidence of planning for these focus areas and expectations being shared was noted, but less so for fidelity of implementation, especially for grade-level standards and academic content. Consistent prioritizing of student voice was not observed and opportunities for teachers to have students go deeper in inquiry and support with rigorous academic content was rarely observed.</i></p>			X		

Summary:

During the program observations, it was clear both teachers and staff had developed strong relationships with their students, which was evident in their interactions and in the way students responded to teachers' directions and redirections. Strong relationship building was also evident in the way students were able to share with a teacher if they needed support or were not ready to engage in a task or activity. Teachers utilized a variety of engagement strategies and methods (eg, videos, games, discussion prompts, etc.), and students were engaged during those activities. That being said, at other times during the lesson, students were distracted and not always addressed by staff—this was notably true if a student was on their phone or another device.

Opportunities for Growth:

1. (Standard 1) **The program should clarify their devices policy and support teachers with professional development and coaching in monitoring and addressing students who are off task (Similar to the action step for Domain 1, Standard 4).** Consider how to ensure technology-use policies are both in alignment with program culture, but also supports students in remaining focused and engaged in their classes. Being consistent and aware will allow teachers to better support students. The approach the program has taken to addressing food and sleeping may provide a good template for this work.
2. (Standard 4) **The program should provide professional development and planning support to teachers on including more opportunities for student to student interactions.** Consider adding this as a topic for common planning time where teachers can collaborate and plan where best to include these opportunities and best practices for success.
3. (Standard 7) **The program should clarify and provide more support for its focus areas especially with implementation.** Consider perhaps narrowing the list of focus areas, so that more coaching and accountability can be provided to ensure that these are implemented with fidelity across all classrooms. In addition, consider how you can involve other key groups, such as support staff, students, and even families in helping to implement these changes.