THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILADELPHIA

OPPORTUNITY NETWORK
INSTRUCTIONAL WALKTHROUGH 2021-2022
Program Name: Excel Academy North
Provider: The Camelot Schools of Pennsylvania, L. L. C.

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: April 4, 2022

Contract Term: FY 2018 - FY 2022

Program Type: Accelerated (Grades 9-12)

CONTACT INFORMATION

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INSTRUCTIONAL MODEL

Students complete courses in this accelerated high school program with a focus on grade-level instruction that is supported by intentional efforts to establish a supportive school culture that meets the individual needs of the students.

PROGRAM LEADERSHIP

Milton Alexander, Deputy Superintendent

Scott Cruttenden, Regional Director

Kevin Marx, Executive Director

Michelle Hilt, Principal

Cassie Oshinsky, Instructional Specialist

WALKTHROUGH REVIEW TEAM

DawnLynne Kacer, Executive Director, Opportunity Network

Daniel Turner, Director of Instructional Resources

John Hale, Prevention and Intervention Liaison

Marlon Riddick, Student Transition Liaison

Bret Botwinis-Zaba, Special Education Advisor

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 – Students participate in five classes each day. Before class each day there is a Townhouse, which is the daily start to the school day led by student government members and provides an opportunity for staff to welcome students, share any announcements or updates, and celebrate successes. In addition to academic courses, there is Group Guided Instruction that gives students the space to discuss the Casel Framework's 5 competencies for systemic social and emotional learning, current events happening in the world, or celebrations relevant to the month. This ensures that the program is supporting the growth of student's characters and building their capacity as citizens of their community. There are also weekly grade and credit checks twice a week. Lastly, behavior counselors (BCs) are active participants in each classroom and work hand-in-hand with teachers to encourage student participation, as well as resolve any behavioral issues the students may have without disrupting the lesson.

Teacher Development and Feedback – The overall focus for instruction this year was on ratio (eg, teacher-think vs student-think) and intentional planning (eg, utilizing unit questions, pacing guides, assessments to drive planning), with movement towards rigor. Lesson plan and teacher observation feedback, as well as coaching meetings, are held weekly both virtually (eg, feedback on planning documents) and formally (eg, coaching meetings and formal observations).

Multi-Tiered System of Supports – The MTSS program has several components, including one called "Forcefield." Here, a team meets weekly to discuss and determine each student's status based on attendance, behavior, and academic performance. There are also MTSS meetings where students flagged during team meetings, are given a tier and an attendance, behavior, or academic concern focus. Students are discussed on a daily basis as a leadership team. An additional key support is Achieve3000, which is used to support students in Math and Literacy. In specific classes, students also receive support from the teacher and the Diverse Learning team when appropriate. As a team the program determines when students need intensive support and what that looks like.

Professional Development – The program provides PD on designated days throughout the school year. The focus has been on ratio and intentional planning, with movement towards rigor, as well as analyzing and using schoolwide and student data. Some PD structures include Common Planning Time, as well as a weekly time for the team to collaborate and learn from each other. Another core structure is coaching meetings, which take place weekly between the teacher and the principal and allows for teachers to receive individualized coaching and development based on their evaluations and goals.

Parent and Family Engagement – The main method of parent and guardian communication the program uses is their daily communication log all staff members have access to. The program makes daily phone calls to students and utilizes emails and text messages to stay in contact with them and their families. The program also uses social media to connect with families, students and alumni via direct messages, stories, and frequent posts to share celebrations, updates, shout outs, and other resources. Along with direct contacts from staff, the program has continued the use of an automated system to share key information (eg, school updates and announcements, closures, etc). Additionally, during team and resource meetings, the program identifies which students need home visits based on their attendance and academics.

Use of Data – The program uses STAR data to determine if students are on track, need additional support, or need to potentially be retested. Other academic data is discussed at the Team Meeting each week, as well as during Common Planning Time. These conversations determine if students are needing additional support in specific areas. The program began using LiveSchool as a tool to analyze academic and behavioral data.

SUMMARY OF PROGRAM AREAS OF STRENGTH

- The program has established a very warm welcoming environment (this is done in part with the Townhouse, and the leadership of the culture team.)
- The culture of the building was one in which students were comfortable academically and socially (ie, safe space to take risks, and had the confidence to do so).
- There was a very rigorous, engaging, and relevant lesson conducted as a Mock Trial in Civics lesson.
- In a strong implementation of the Common Core shifts, text was present and driving instruction in 5 of 6 classrooms observed during the walkthrough.
- During the student interviews, students consistently spoke to the strong adult relationships they have built with staff members in the program.

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	17	20	3.4	Expectations Met
Domain II: Instructional Delivery	18	28	2.6	Expectations Met
Domain III: Conditions for Learning	21	28	3	Expectations Met
TOTAL	56	76	Overall Percentage: 74%	

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.				X	
5. Teachers display awareness of conditions.				X	

Summary:

The program has a very warm and welcoming environment that begins at the start of the day with Townhouse, and continues throughout the day with supportive comments from the support staff, as well as positive feedback and welcoming greetings from teachers. In addition, there were evident and consistent program-wide expectations that dramatically reduced the number of distractions and allowed for strong focus across classrooms. There was a consistently high level of positive reinforcement for students, and while not as consistent, there was a strong level of awareness of conditions across classrooms.

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.				X	
4. Students are working harder than their teachers. *In some classes students were pushed to carry the thinking load, partcilarly in Civics, African American History, and Chemistry, however, this was not consistent and in some classes where the teacher carried more of the thinking load isntead. In those classes, students answered questions, but the thinking load remained with the teacher.*			X		
5. Evidence of data is visible. *There was some awareness of students that were doing well, or had done well on a recent assessment, but in general, it was unclear how teachers were using in-the-moment data to make instructional decisions. For example, in Chemistry, there was increased questioning and prompting during the opening activity on chemical traits (a previous area of struggle), however, this was not consistent in other classrooms observed. There was either no differentiation planned for intervention, or it was marked N/A on lesson plans.*			X		
6. Teachers question all students with the same frequency.				X	
7. Teachers ask all students questions at different levels of cognitive complexity. *In some classes, students were frequently asked high-level questions, which in turn led to students owning the thinking load, however, this was not observed in other classes where the teacher owned most of the work.*			X		

DOMAIN II: INSTRUCTIONAL DELIVERY, *continued*

Summary:

Strong modeling was observed in some classrooms (eg, Science and Art), while in others areas, modeling could be stronger with more explicit sharing of the *why* or *purpose* in the modeling, meaning more of a think-aloud than just a demonstration of the skill or process. In general, students saw relevance in the lessons, which were rigorous, standards aligned, and grade level appropriate. Rigor was reinforced in many classes where text was at the center of the lesson, and students not only interacted with the document, but used it to justify many of their answers. The level at which students were asked to carry the cognitive load was inconsistent, and there is room for improvement in the area of differentiation and student supports. Improved checks for understanding that challenge all students at higher order thinking levels as well as providing data for the teacher to use in informing their instruction would allow for improved academic outcomes.

Opportunities for Growth:

1. (Standard 4) **The program should provide more professional development and coaching support so all teachers can have students own the full thinking load more consistently.** This may require more differentiated supports for teachers, but in general, having students own the thinking is the key next step. This may be done through having universal strategies, as well as lesson plan feedback and in-the-moment coaching on how to push the thinking onto students more often.

2. (Standard 5) **The program should provide professional development and coaching for teachers on how to use activities or questions that allow them to gather data from the whole class, and then make an informed adjustment in their lesson.** This may include adopting a small number of strategies for gathering data, such as an "Everybody Writes" prompt followed by scanning of student responses.

3. (Standard 7) **The program should provide professional development and coaching for teachers on high-order thinking questions, and best practices for engaging all students with these questions.** This is also supported by having these key questions identified in lesson plans, as well as a method for having students respond—ideally one that allows all students to respond, or the teacher to decide, such as cold calling.

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. *It is evident planning is occurring, and teachers spoke about how resources and supports are readily available to help them develop their instructional practice. Ensuring student voice was inconsistent across classrooms in the two key actions identified- encouraging all students to participate and being intentional to incorporate student voice within lessons. It was shared that rigor is starting with lessons and will move to Blooms Taxonomy later. While this was observed during the walkthrough, there is an opportunity to raise the level of rigor in student activities.*			X		

Summary:

Overall, student engagement was strong across classrooms observed during the walkthrough. This was done through a variety of techniques and approaches, such as mock trials, experiments, hands on art activities, and using technology for video clips. Teachers genuinely showed interest in their students and the work they were producing, which also meant the culture of strong student-to-student interactions was present as well. Students frequently engaged with their peers, both in individual conversations, but also building on one another's ideas during whole group discussion.

Opportunities for Growth:

1. (Standard 7) **The program should clarify and ensure all teachers and staff members understand the vision for the program-wide focus, and how they can help support making that vision a reality.** This may mean having a more consistent and manageable focus (just having all students participate, or just focusing on lesson rigor). There was evidence that the high number of focus areas were ambitious and resulted in inconsistent outcomes.