THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILADELPHIA

OPPORTUNITY NETWORK
INSTRUCTIONAL WALKTHROUGH 2021-2022
Program Name: Excel Academy South
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: March 28, 2022

Contract Term: FY 2018 - FY 2022

Program Type: Accelerated (Grades 9-12)

CONTACT INFORMATION

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INSTRUCTIONAL MODEL

"At SESI our mission is to provide educational services for K-12 students who require specialized educational and positive behavioral supports to overcome challenges that impede their success in a traditional school setting. We believe that all children deserve an education that goes beyond academics and enables them to grow into responsible, self-sufficient adults."

PROGRAM LEADERSHIP

Milton Alexander, Deputy Superintendent

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WALKTHROUGH REVIEW TEAM

Daniel Turner, Director of Instructional Resources

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Amy McCourt, Office of Multilingual Services Manager

John Hale, Prevention and Intervention Liaison

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 instructional day at Excel South begins with a virtual student-led Townhouse and moves into individual SEL discussion (GGI) led by each teacher with support from the program's Operations Team. The school day consists of five instructional periods each 70 minutes long. Each day also ends with an in-person student-led Townhouse. In addition to these daily structures, on Mondays, new teachers meet after school for Lesson Planning Workshop led by the Academic Team. Additionally, on Wednesday mornings, the whole staff meets for Common Planning Time (CPT) to review strategies that support their Instructional Goals and Data Driven Instruction.

Teacher Development and Feedback – Teachers are provided weekly lesson plan feedback on Monday mornings and a lesson planning workshop is offered on Monday afternoon. All teachers also receive weekly informal observations followed by post-observation reflections, either as an in-person meeting or email. Formal observations are conducted 2-4 times a year, based on experience and performance, preceded by pre-observation meetings and followed by post-observation conferences. The program also utilizes a teacher-led peer observation system allows teachers to participate in inter-visitations and support one another with feedback and support.

Multi-Tiered System of Supports – The program has a system of supports. All students complete the STAR exam and then are assigned interventions as necessary. For example, students 2+ grade levels below per their STAR exam are marked as Tier 2 in the program's MTSS system and given an intervention strategy. Achieve3000 Literacy & Math are used as intervention strategies for students weekly or twice a week. STAR Class Reports, STAR Individual Reports, and Achieve3000 progress reports are reviewed monthly in department meetings to maintain focus skills and measure success. Adjustments are made to the level of support students receive based on changes to their STAR testing score during midyear or end-of-year testing.

Professional Development – Teachers receive professional development at Excel South takes place every Wednesday morning during Common Planning Time, during specified District Professional Development half days, and during Professional Development week leading up to the beginning of the school year. All new teachers receive an additional professional development training on Monday afternoons focusing on Lesson Planning strategies and techniques. This year, the program's PD has focused on strategies to increase the levels of student voice and student engagement. The other PD focus areas are based on the program's goals in their Campus Improvement Plan, data analysis of classroom observations and student assessments, and surveying staff to determine high need areas. All professional development trainings end with a reflective closure or exit ticket modeled after the lesson plan, to measure understanding and receive feedback.

Parent and Family Engagement – The program utilizes their social media accounts, such as their Instagram page to keep parents informed and aware of upcoming events. The program also relies on an email list serve, the remind app, and "snail-mail" to consistently communicate with families. In addition, the program's community Liaison, Mr. Griffin, leads their attendance team, ensuring families are communicated with regularly. The program holds monthly virtual evening parent meetings (per parent survey data), to keep families informed, up-to-date, and involve them in upcoming events. Quarterly Honor Roll Ceremonies and Parent Teacher Conferences are other opportunities for families to celebrate their children with the program and get to know their student's teachers.

Use of Data – Academic growth is measured by the STAR exam, administered three times a year. The program also uses Achieve3000 Literacy and Achieve3000 Math to monitor students' reading and math skills and support our MTSS goals. Data Mondays are used to share data with the program's Resource/Administrative Team. There are also monthly department meetings are opportunities for teachers to review and analyze data trends, Common Planning Time is utilized to monitor data trends in regards to grades and attendance., and Team Meetings are held to review behavior, academic and attendance trends, and monitor the program's MTSS intervention strategies.

SUMMARY OF PROGRAM AREAS OF STRENGTH

- The program has developed a strong welcoming environment, which begins with a Townhouse to start the day, but continues through interactions and other structures until students have been dismissed.
- The program had a high level of student voice, one strong example of this was the fishbowl discussion which involved everyone in the class, and a high-level of rigor and student-to-student interactions.
- Strong systems and routines are well established and led to a more productive learning environment. This was true at both the program and classroom level.
- There were relevant classroom activities and materials chosen in nearly every classroom, and it was clear relevance is a priority in planning and selecting instructional materials.
- Student engagement was extremely high, likely because of relevant engaging activities, but also the strong student/staff relationships.
- Teachers consistently demonstrated strong management, and all staff observed were able to deliver quality redirections.
- The program implemented strong engaging openings with a visual support as well as reflective closure activities.
- The program adopted Achieve 3000 as an adaptive program, and the lessons observed had high student engagement and was executed with fidelity.

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	19	20	3.8	Exceeds Expectations
Domain II: Instructional Delivery	21	28	3	Expectations Met
Domain III: Conditions for Learning	24	28	3.4	Expectations Met
TOTAL	64	76	Overall Percentage: 84%	

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:

Overall, the program has created an environment at Excel South that is both very comfortable and conducive to learning. This ranged from the many different ways that the program was welcoming, not only in their greeting and interactions with staff and teachers, but also in their well decorated classrooms. In addition to the welcoming nature, the school also developed strong routines and procedures that allowed teachers to implement a variety of structures and seating arrangements aligned to the activity and conditions in the classroom. Staff quickly addressed the rate of off-task behavior in a way that allowed students to refocus and re-engage with the work. One piece to consider is the accessibility of the group visual, and making sure that all students can read and see the shared screen or document easily.

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.				X	
5. Evidence of data is visible.				X	
6. Teachers question all students with the same frequency. *While in many classrooms engaged ALL students and made sure all contributed to the lesson, other classrooms with smaller numbers of students allowed them to somewhat disengage and not answer teacher questioning. At times, this may have been intentional, but in other cases, it felt like the most willing volunteers were able to dominate the conversation. However, in rooms where the teacher was aware of this behavior, it was addressed very appropriately. More consistency would improve you performance in this area.*			X		
7. Teachers ask all students questions at different levels of cognitive complexity.				X	

DOMAIN II: INSTRUCTIONAL DELIVERY, *continued*

Summary:

The program has an instructional program that is standards aligned, engaging, and there was an effort to utilize student data in making instructional decisions. In addition, there was strong evidence of teachers choosing materials and designing lessons so that they would be relevant for their students. This was further supported by strong modeling in many classrooms, and in some cases very strong. The questioning of students was done at a variety of levels, with students frequently being asked to defend their response or explain their thinking. There were however, some classrooms where higher-level questioning took place, but some students were allowed to disengage, and volunteers provided most of the answers.

Opportunities for Growth:

1. (Standard 6) **The program should provide professional development and coaching for teachers on how to monitor and ensure that all students are being questioned at a high level.** There are some teachers in the program that are already successfully ensuring that all students are being questioned, and so they may be helpful as exemplars.

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:

During the walkthrough, the program had very high levels of student engagement across classrooms. This was supported both by the many student/staff relationships that have been built, as well as the different techniques and approaches that teachers were using. In addition, teachers were effective and appropriately addressing students when they were engaged in off-task behaviors. There is an opportunity to increase the number of structured activities that have students interacting with one another, including the structure and expectations of group work activities, such as shifting from doing parallel work seated in groups, to working together.