El Centro de Estudiantes

Provider: Big Picture Philadelphia

Program Type: Accelerated

Grades 9-12

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Instructional Walkthrough Report

SY 2022-2023

Instructional Walkthrough Overview

Instructional Walkthroughs for all Opportunity Network contract programs focused on the instructional design and implementation of this design with consistency and fidelity at the classroom level required to deliver high quality instruction to all 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.

Walkthrough Date:	February 28, 2023
Contract Term:	FY2023 – FY2027

General Information

Program Mission:	*El Centro de Estudiantes is an accelerated high school program that immerses students in a highly personalized, real-world based educational experience. A goal of the school is to inspire and empower students to take charge of their learning and become life-long learners.*		
Program Leadership:	Tia Hall *Interim Executive Director*	Jacquie Tisdale *Principal*	Nina Bilysky-Ristics *Director of Human Services*
Walkthrough Review Team:	Daniel Turner *Director of Instructional Resources, Opportunity Network* Kia Woods *Case Manager, Legal Compliance*	Majeedah Scott *Director, Multiple Pathways to Graduation*	Marc Johnson *College and Career Manager*

Program Overview

The following is a brief description and summary of different aspects of the Opportunity Network program. These descriptions were shared by the programs prior to the walkthrough and informed by observations as part of the formal Instructional Walkthroughs.

Daily Structure

Program Snapshot

Enrollment	125 (as of April '23)
Instructional Model	Direct Instruction

Daily Student Schedule

Mom/Wed/Thur/Fri	8:15 am – 3:18 pm
Tuesday	10:00 am – 3:18 pm

Course Frequency

Core Courses	4 times a week (Thursday-Real World Learning)

Class Duration

Core Courses	57 minutes (52 on Tues)
Advisory	60-75 minutes

Number of Classes

Number of Courses Students Can Take	5 courses plus two credit recovery courses on Edgenuity

School Culture

The program has a student Town Hall bi-weekly, and begins each day with a circle after breakfast.

Core Curriculum Resources

Math	Citizens Math
English	SDP Novel List
Science	SDP Curriculum
History	Stamped Remix- Phila Freedom Schools

Student Supports

✓ Achieve 3000 Literacy
✓ Achieve 3000 Math
✓ Small Group Instruction

Intervention Period
✓ Co-Teaching/Push-In Support
✓ Community/External Partners (ex: ELECT, etc.)

Additional Supports:

The program works to provide individualized projects for students that reflect the skills they need to build as identified by the MTSS team.

College & Career Readiness

✓ Service Learning Opportunities
✓ Internship Program
✓ 1-on-1 Counseling

Certifications Offered
• Youth Mental Health First Aide
• Mandatory Reporter (Act 31)
• Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)-Various Areas

Additional/Other Certification Opportunities:

The program has also developed partnerships for internships in Early Childhood Education, Culinary Arts, and Pharmacy Technician.

Culture of Academic Success

✓ Honor Roll
✓ Public Recognition
✓ Restorative Practices

Additional/Other Academic Success

The program also supports students with Resilience Specialist, three counselors that support students with overcoming their barriers to success.

Summary of Program Areas of Strength

Below are short descriptions of areas where the program has shown sustained strength, as informed by the school visit, student and staff interviews, and a review of the provided artifacts.

- **Student Participation**
  Students were engaged and participating in all classrooms, which appeared to be related to the high levels of relevance that students found in the lesson topics and materials being used in most classes.

- **Caring and Supportive Staff**
  Teachers were very caring and supportive of students- often times striking a balance between students finding ways to be comfortable in the space, while also remaining engaged, demonstrating an improved awareness of conditions from prior visits.

- **Clean and Organized Spaces**
  Classrooms were cleaner and more well organized than they have been in the past, reflecting a more structured and welcoming environment.

- **Push-In Supports**
  Push-in supports were taking place for students needing that level of support, which aligned well with the interview comments from staff and students who mentioned feeling well supported.

Performance Summary- All Domains

The table below summarizes the number of standards by category that met expectations consistent with contract requirements during the 2022-2023 Instructional Walkthrough. Information regarding how standards in each domain are measured can be found in the Performance Framework for Opportunity Network contract programs.

Domains	Program Performance	Total Possible	Average Rating	Category
Domain I: Overall Management (Page 4)	15	20	3	Expectations Met *(SY2021-2022: Expectations Met)*
Domain II: Instructional Delivery (Page 5)	17	28	2.4	Nearing Expectations *(SY2021-2022: Nearing Expectations)*
Domain III: Conditions for Learning (Page 8)	20	28	2.9	Expectations Met *(SY2021-2022: Expectations Met)*
Total	52	76		Overall Percentage: 68%

Domain 1: Overall Management

Management for a Safe and Educationally Supportive Environment	Observation Notes (notes are provided for standards rated Nearing or Did Not Meet Expectations)	Performance Rating
1. Program Environment Maintains a school environment where students feel welcome and invited.		Expectations Met *(SY2021-2022: ▼ Exceeding Expectations)*
2. School-wide Rules and Procedures The program ensures school-wide rules and procedures are operating effectively.		Expectations Met *(SY2021-2022: Expectations Met)*
3. Classroom Rules and Procedures The program ensures classroom rules and procedures are operating effectively.		Expectations Met *(SY2021-2022: Expectations Met)*
4. Acknowledgement of Students The program's acknowledgement of students who are/are not following school-wide and classroom procedures is evident.		Expectations Met *(SY2021-2022: ▲ Nearing Expectations)*
5. Awareness of Conditions Teachers display an awareness of conditions.		Expectations Met *(SY2021-2022: Expectations Met)*

Observation Summary

The program has created a welcoming environment for students. Staff were friendly and greeting students, and students both welcomed each other but also visitors into the classrooms. School wide rules and systems were in place, such as hall passes to transition to the bathrooms or another classroom. The cell phone policy was not as evident, but cell phones were not observed to be a distraction in classrooms. Teachers had a variety of systems in place that reflected both their content and teaching style. Teachers were aware of student engagement as well as their behavior, and were able to redirect as needed. There is an opportunity to provide even more positive recognition of those who were participating and following school rules, as this was not as frequently observed as the redirections.

Domain 2: Instructional Delivery

Components of Effective Instruction	Observation Notes (notes are provided for standards rated Nearing or Did Not Meet Expectations)	Performance Rating
1. Instructional Modeling Teachers model the thinking and learning process.	There were few examples of teachers providing a strong model of the project product or of the skill being presented in the lesson. In some classes like English where the teacher provided clear modeling of how to make targeted revisions to their writing pieces, modeling was supportive for students. There were also multiple models of gerrymandering shared in the history class as well, helping to develop student understanding of the practice. However, this was not consistent across classrooms, and in some cases students needed more modeling to understand the objective skill or content.	Nearing Expectations *(SY2021-2022: Nearing Expectations)*
2. Curriculum Relevance Teachers make the curriculum relevant for their students.		Expectations Met *(SY2021-2022: Expectations Met)*
3. Curriculum Rigor The program ensures all lessons are rigorous.	Some lessons were not aligned to state standards and the rigor of the tasks students were asked to complete did not align to the rigor of the state standards (two classes were aligned: ELA and Social Science). While the content in other classes was relevant and the concepts presented had the potential to be higher level- the activities that students engaged in were not aligned to the rigor of the standards.	Nearing Expectations *(SY2021-2022: Nearing Expectations)*
4. Student Effort Courses are developed and implemented to ensure students are working harder than their teachers.	There were few observed examples of students independently practicing or applying the skills mentioned by the teacher.- Often, students were asked to listen or engage in conversation with the teacher, but there were few opportunities for everyone to practice or participate in the conversation at the same time or to respond to teacher questions in writing.	Nearing Expectations *(SY2021-2022: Nearing Expectations)*
5. Classroom and Instructional Data Evidence of data is visible.	In most classrooms observed, the teacher did not circulate and scan student work (in many cases there was little student work to scan), and few checks for understanding were elicited of all students. One example of a teacher utilizing data was in ELA where the teacher referenced student topics and their needed revisions.	Nearing Expectations *(SY2021-2022: ▲ Did Not Meet Expectations)*
6. Teacher Questioning Teachers question all students with the same frequency.		Expectations Met *(SY2021-2022: ▲ Nearing Expectations)*

Components of Effective Instruction	Observation Notes (notes are provided for standards rated Nearing or Did Not Meet Expectations)	Performance Rating
7. Cognitive Complexity Teachers ask all students questions at different levels of cognitive complexity.		Expectations Met *(SY2021-2022: ▲ Did Not Meet Expectations)*

Observation Summary

In general, for Instructional Delivery, the program is meeting expectations for questioning and making the work relevant for students. While attendance in many classes was low, teachers made a visible effort to engage all voices in the conversation and in lesson activities. In addition, teachers looked for ways to make the work relevant- this was done both through having a high level of choice in lesson activities or making them relevant to the local community (such as choosing a Philadelphia-based persona to obtain a car loan, or how Pennsylvania congressional districts have been gerrymandered). There is an opportunity for improvement when it comes to rigor and the choice of lesson activities, the modeling of objectives or skills, and finally the use of data to inform instruction. Making sure that all classrooms are following the curriculum, and providing students access to the rigor of the standards are important areas for improvement.

Opportunities for Growth

1. Standard 1: Teachers model the thinking and learning process.

   The program should provide professional development and coaching for teachers, as well as lesson plan feedback, on the most effective and impactful modeling strategies for their content.
   Consider how the task of making an exemplar may be a helpful addition or adjustment to your lesson planning routines, and further support teachers in providing a strong model. This evolution could be supported first with group professional development and planning, then with ongoing practice and refinement in PLCs that is monitored and supported with school leader classroom observations and informal feedback.

2. Standard 3: Lessons are rigorous.

   The program should provide coaching as well as lesson plan feedback for teachers so that the lesson activities are grade-level appropriate and aligned to the state standards.
   Consider how closer adherence to the program's curriculum and the core resources that it identifies may support this work. In the past, we have given feedback on the complex nature of the Instructional Planning documents from El Centro (unit plans that are aligned to Competencies, other pacing documents aligned to state standards, etc.). Consider how lesson plan expectations and the guiding documents might be improved so that teachers have more clarity on what to teach and how to meet the rigor of the standards. Lesson plan and observation feedback should consider all aspects of the standard, often the activities are at a lower level because the standard is not fully realized, for example, if the activity allows for a single text or web-based source but the standard requires multiple sources from a range of mediums and asks the student to compare and contrast or evaluate.

3. Standard 4: Students are working harder than their teachers.

   The program should provide professional development and coaching on engaging lesson activities that are aligned with the objective and allow students to fully own the thinking load.
   The focus here should be on tasks that will push students to create written work and/or models, with less of an emphasis on listening and discussion. These products should also provide teacher insight into the student thinking and understanding of the lesson topic or skill and will also support data collection to check for understanding and mastery.

4. Standard 5: Evidence of data is visible.

    The program should provide professional development and coaching for teachers on how to collect and respond to formative data during the lesson.
    One strategy for this is to have teachers scan written student responses to a prompt or problem, and then identify a trend among those responses to address with the whole class. The trend might be a common misunderstanding or a recognition of one part of the skill where students have demonstrated success.

Domain 3: Conditions for Learning

Establishing Conditions Necessary for Learning	Observation Notes (notes are provided for standards rated Nearing or Did Not Meet Expectations)	Performance Rating
1. Non-Engagement Teachers are aware of non-engagement in their classrooms.		Expectations Met *(SY2021-2022: ▲ Nearing Expectations)*
2. Engagement Strategies Teachers use a variety of engagement strategies.	Some tools during the lessons observed included videos, presentation slides, and handouts. However, there was almost no text for students to read, and very few checks for understanding that required students to write. The majority of participation was verbal and teacher led.	Nearing Expectations *(SY2021-2022: ▼ Expectations Met)*
3. Student Engagement Students appear to be engaged in the lesson.		Expectations Met *(SY2021-2022: Expectations Met)*
4. Peer Interactions Students are interacting appropriately with other students.		Expectations Met *(SY2021-2022: ▲ Nearing Expectations)*
5. Teacher Interest Teachers demonstrate a clear interest in their students.		Expectations Met *(SY2021-2022: Expectations Met)*
6. Student Responsiveness Students are appropriately responsive to teacher interactions.		Expectations Met *(SY2021-2022: Expectations Met)*
7. School-Wide Focus There is clear evidence of the school-wide focus in the classrooms.		Expectations Met *(SY2021-2022: ▲ Nearing Expectations)*

Observation Summary

The program has generally created the conditions that students need for learning. Teachers had an interest in their students, asking for their opinions and viewpoints in many of the class discussions. Students were often most engaged when they were sharing about something they disagreed with, teachers were often aware of who was not participating and would engage them in the conversation as well. It is important to note that class sizes were very small (often fewer than 10 students), but despite the smaller group, students would contribute when prompted by the teacher. The school-wide focus is on making progress toward Act 158 requirements (all mid-year graduates met their requirements) and increased participation in their end-of-term exhibitions, which the program achieved. There is an opportunity to improve in the area of engagement strategies and look for more ways to have students engage with text (vs. videos or images) and to engage in more written work.

Opportunities for Growth

1. Standard 2: Teachers use a variety of engagement strategies.

    The program should provide professional development for teachers on how to include more text-driven lesson activities as well as engagement strategies that require writing.
    Teachers may also need some support in how to provide scaffolds or modeling (with sentence starters, graphic organizers, etc.) so that students can engage in the writing activities. Consider how structures like think/pair/share or small group work may also help to improve engagement with these rigorous tasks. These strategies should be school-wide to create a literacy focused culture for students that feels seamless across the content areas and courses and such that no matter what a student's roster, they are getting regular support with developing literacy skills.