

EDUCATIONAL EQUITY AND EXCELLENCE AUDIT REPORT

ENCORE JR./SR. HIGH SCHOOL FOR THE
VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS



NATIONAL CENTER FOR URBAN SCHOOL TRANSFORMATION



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ABSTRACT

This report highlights many strengths within Encore Jr./Sr. High School, while comparing its equity-focused practices and structures with those in high-achieving schools, where every demographic group outperforms state averages. This high bar is likely to yield suggestions for improvement that more typical visit reviews do not specify. The findings in this report reflect an effort to look comprehensively at the school, including triangulating multiple data sources. Still, we base this report on a snapshot of Encore Jr./Sr. High School. Teaching and learning observed on the days of the visit may or may not be representative of typical teaching and learning occurring at Encore Jr./Sr. High School. Also, the responses provided during interviews may or may not represent the sentiments and opinions of all teachers and administrators at the school. That said, we heard from many educational partners and observed many lessons, and clear themes emerged from the data.

For reasons specified in the previous paragraph, we acknowledge that some education partners at Encore Jr./Sr. High School may disagree with the findings or recommendations. In such cases, please keep in mind that the NCUST equity visit team leader is open to engaging in conversations about the report with the school principal, leadership team, staff, or other education partners. Beyond addressing specific concerns and questions, the equity visit leader can facilitate identifying and implementing strategies for acquiring additional objective evidence to influence their understanding of the issues discussed in this report.

Our three recommendations are:

1. **Positive Transformational Culture:** Educators at Encore Jr./Sr. High School should agree upon and implement a strategy for leading students to perceive themselves as young scholars who are capable of learning challenging academic content. (page 10)
2. **Access to Challenging Curricula for All Students:** To help ensure that Encore Jr./Sr. High School students master some of the most important critical academic skills, district leaders, school leaders, and teachers should work together to identify a small number of critical academic standards (in mathematics, English language arts, and science) that will receive special attention and extra time. (page 14)
3. **Effective Instruction that Leads to Engagement and Mastery:** Encore Jr./Sr. High School educators should work together to identify two instructional practices that have the potential to accelerate learning, especially for students who, historically, have not experienced academic success. Intensive efforts should be made to ensure that teachers at Encore Jr./Sr. High School demonstrate these practices in every lesson, with a high level of fidelity, and in ways that are likely to generate higher levels of student success. School leaders should endeavor to brand these two practices as part of “the Encore Jr./Sr. High School way of teaching.” (page 22)

By deliberately pursuing these recommendations, NCUST is confident that Encore Jr./Sr. High School will develop many more strengths, elevating learning outcomes for all student groups.

BACKGROUND

In 2005, San Diego State University founded the National Center for Urban School Transformation (NCUST) to help urban school districts and their partners transform urban schools into places where all students achieve academic proficiency, evidence a love of learning, and graduate well prepared to succeed in post-secondary education, the workplace, and their communities. To this end, NCUST identifies, celebrates, and studies urban schools where all demographic groups achieve outstanding educational successes. Our annual America's Best Urban Schools Award Program provides us the opportunity to learn from schools that exemplify both equitable and excellent learning results. We strive to disseminate all we learn from these schools as we endeavor to support other schools and districts that are eager to pursue similar outstanding results.

Our research has resulted in a substantial knowledge base regarding the beliefs, characteristics, structures, systems, and practices that lead all groups of students to excellent learning outcomes. Key findings are documented in these books: *Teaching Practices from America's Best Urban Schools* (2012), *Leadership in America's Best Urban Schools* (2017); *Five Practices for Improving the Success of Latino Students: A Guide for Secondary School Leaders* (2018); *Teaching Practices from America's Best Urban Schools, 2nd edition* (2019); and *When Black Students Excel: How Schools Can Engage and Empower Black Students* (2022). This knowledge base is the benchmark we utilize when conducting our equity audit process and is the focus of our work aimed at building the capacity of other educators. We have found impressive similarities across the high-performing schools we have studied despite differences in location, size, enrollment characteristics, grade-level configurations, expenditures, and other factors. In short, the educators in these schools improved curricula by teaching more rigorous content to a greater depth of understanding than other urban schools. They planned and delivered instruction in ways that were more likely to lead their students to mastery of the concepts and skills they were teaching. They fostered school cultures in which all students, teachers, parents, and support staff felt safe, cared for, valued, and respected. They built and implemented a coherent educational improvement system – a set of interdependent structures designed to support the ongoing improvement of student outcomes across a variety of indicators (e.g., achievement, extracurricular engagement, graduation, etc.). And, perhaps most importantly, these actions were guided by their shared belief in the capacity of all of their students to succeed.

On May 8-9, 2023, NCUST conducted an equity audit for Encore Jr./Sr. High School in the Hesperia Unified School District. This audit was designed to explore the similarities and differences between the practices and structures in place at Encore Jr./Sr. High School and those that NCUST has identified in schools that have been very successful in educating all demographic groups of students. During the audit process, NCUST examined critical school characteristics, such as school culture, student access to rigorous curricula, and the quality of teaching and learning. In each of these areas, NCUST considered how processes, structures, and systems influenced what we found and how they could influence powerful, sustained improvement efforts. What follows is a description of our audit process, key findings emerging from the data, and recommendations intended to help Encore Jr./Sr. High School develop, refine, and prioritize their improvement plans in ways that will lead to higher levels of success for the diverse populations of students they serve.

METHODOLOGY

To begin the audit, the equity audit team compiled a variety of data regarding school demographics, achievement, attendance, student behavior, and school success. In most cases, these data were disaggregated to highlight similarities and differences among different demographic groups.

NCUST staff conducted informal observations of the school's common areas, offices, cafeteria, library, playgrounds, and general school environment. These observations provided general information about the physical facility, how the facility was utilized to support teaching and learning, and how the facility influenced the culture of the school.

The equity audit team members visited 29 classrooms. An NCUST classroom observation protocol was utilized to document the part of the lesson observed, the number and demographics of students, and the cognitive demand of the activity in which students were engaged during the observation. In addition, evidence was collected regarding the climate and culture of the classroom, a variety of teaching practices utilized, teacher clarity and focus on mastery, student engagement, and levels of understanding exhibited by various groups of students.

In addition to the observations, the school principal was interviewed, and one other school-level administrator was interviewed. Also, focus-group interviews were conducted with 35 individuals, including teachers (N=14), other certified/credentialed school staff members (N=0), other non-certified/credentialed school staff members (N=6), students (N=11), and parents (N=4). Standard protocols were used and included open-ended questions relevant to the expertise of participants. As well, a few questions were common across groups to gather perspectives about core practices from multiple perspectives. Generally, participants were asked about their roles and responsibilities, experiences at school, and their opinions about strengths and needs at Encore Jr./Sr. High School. All stakeholders were thoughtful and reflective and contributed significantly to our understanding of Encore Jr./Sr. High School. Artifacts, such as master schedules, bell schedules, curriculum documents, school profiles, and data reports, also informed our study and understanding.

Upon completion of the interviews and observations, the NCUST team examined the data collected, identified themes, and compared the school's practices with the practices found in the high-performing schools NCUST has awarded and studied. The findings in this report reflect a triangulation of the multiple data sources cited above; however, it is important to note that the findings are based on a snapshot of the school. Teaching and learning observed on the days of the visit may or may not be representative of typical teaching and learning occurring at Encore Jr./Sr. High School. Similarly, the interviews conducted may or may not be representative of the sentiments and opinions of all teachers and administrators at the school. That said, we were able to hear from many stakeholders, and clear themes emerged from the data across multiple stakeholder groups. As well, this aligned with our observations and patterns in the quantitative data.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Students at Encore Jr./Sr. High School

According to the California School Dashboard, Encore Jr./Sr. High School served approximately 722 in grades seven through twelve in the 2021-2022 academic year. During the 2021-2022 academic year, approximately 49.7% of the students were qualified as socioeconomically disadvantaged. The largest racial/ethnic group served was Latino/Hispanic, comprising 55.1% of the student population. The second largest racial/ethnic group was White, comprising 23.8% of the student population. The third largest racial/ethnic group was Black/African American, comprising 16.6% of the student population. Additionally, 0.7% of the students were Asian, 2.4% of the students were Two or More Races, 1% of the students were American Indian, 0.1% of the students were Pacific Islander, and 0.3% of the students were Filipino. Approximately 9.3% of the students were designated as English learners, 14.7% of the students received special education services, and approximately 0.8% of the students received foster care during the 2021-2022 academic year.

Leadership at Encore Jr./Sr. High School

At Encore Jr./Sr. High School, the principal has led for approximately one year, while the executive director has led for approximately 18 months.

Student Attendance at Encore Jr./Sr. High School

During the 2021-2022 academic year, 29.3% of students at Encore Jr./Sr. High School were chronically absent, according to the California School Dashboard. This means that 29.3% of Encore Jr./Sr. High School students were absent from school on at least 10% of school days. This percentage was qualified as “very high,” according to the California School Dashboard, and was slightly below the overall state average for chronic absenteeism (30%). Some subgroups of students had chronic absenteeism rates higher than the school average. Subgroups with the highest rates of chronic absenteeism at Encore Jr./Sr. High School in the 2021-2022 academic year included Students with Disabilities (32.4%), White students (39.7%), and Socioeconomically Disadvantaged students (31.8%). The two other subgroups with “very high” chronic absenteeism rates but rates that were below the overall schoolwide average included Black/African American students with a chronic absenteeism rate of 22.5% and Latino/Hispanic students with a chronic absenteeism rate of 28.4%.

Each school that earns NCUST’s America’s Best School Award demonstrates average daily attendance of at least 92%, and many achieve 95% or 96% average daily attendance. As well, many of America’s Best School Award winners have 10% or fewer of their students who are classified as chronically absent. Generally, students who attend school regularly are more likely to learn important academic concepts and are more likely to succeed in school.

Efforts to decrease chronic absenteeism at Encore Jr./Sr. High School may positively influence efforts to improve academic achievement.

English Learners at Encore Jr./Sr. High School

Encore Jr./Sr. High School served 67 English learners in the 2021-2022 academic year, according to the California School Dashboard. The school utilizes the English Language Proficiency Assessments for California (ELPAC) to determine each student’s level of proficiency in communicating in English. In the 2021-2022 academic year, 52.9% of English learners at Encore Jr./Sr. High School were making progress toward English language proficiency. This is qualified as a “medium” rate of English learner progress and was slightly higher than the overall state average of 50.3% of English learners making progress toward English language proficiency.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Student Discipline at Encore Jr./Sr. High School

In some cases, administrators at Encore Jr./Sr. High School have suspended students from school. This means that students missed one or more days of school because of a disciplinary incident. In total, during the 2021-2022 academic year, 3.5% of students were suspended at least once. Encore Jr./Sr. High School's rate of suspension is considered to be a "medium" rate and was slightly above the California state average suspension rate of 3.1%. Subgroups of students that had a suspension rate higher than the statewide average of 3.1% included Black/African American students (6.3% of 126 students), Latino/Hispanic students (3.2% of 444 students), Socioeconomically Disadvantaged students (4.1% of 440 students).

Encore Jr./Sr. High School Suspension Data 2021-2022 Data from CA School Dashboard			
Subgroup	Number of Students in Subgroup	Percentage of students suspended at least one day	Number of Students Suspended
LATINO/HISPANIC	444	3.2%	~ 14 students
BLACK/AFRICAN AMERICAN	126	6.3%	~ 8 students
WHITE	193	2.1%	~ 4 students
TWO OR MORE RACES	21	0%	~ 0 students
SOCIOECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED	440	4.1%	~ 18 students
STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES	121	3.3%	~ 4 students
ENGLISH LEARNERS	76	2.6%	~ 2 students

In the high-performing schools NCUST awards, the numbers of students suspended and the total number of days students are suspended are remarkably low for every demographic group (less than one day of suspension for each student in the demographic group). The low rate of suspension is indicative of a culture in which students and teachers work well together. The low rate of suspension also ensures better school attendance and better academic achievement. The medium rate of suspension at Encore Jr./Sr. High School presents an opportunity for improvement.

Student Achievement at Encore Jr./Sr. High School

Students at Encore Jr./Sr. High School take the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP). Students in grades seven, eight, and eleven take the English language arts assessment and the mathematics assessment. Additionally, students in grades eight, ten, eleven, and twelve take the California Science Test (CAST). The most recent assessment results are from the assessment administered in the 2021-2022 school year.

The data indicates that the percentage of Encore Jr./Sr. High School students who performed at the proficient or advanced level in English language arts is below the statewide average in grades seven and eight and above the statewide average in grade eleven. The data also indicate that the percentage of Encore Jr./Sr. High School students who performed at the proficient or advanced level in mathematics are far below the statewide percentage at each grade level. Additionally, the data indicate that the percentage of Encore Jr./Sr. High School students who performed at the proficient or advanced level in science are below the state-wide percentage in grades twelve and eleven and far below the statewide average in grades eight and ten.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Encore CAASPP Data 2021-22	Total # of Students with scores	School % Met or Exceeded Standards in ELA	State of CA % Met or Exceeded Standards in ELA	School % Met or Exceeded Standards in MATH	State of CA % Met or Exceeded Standards in MATH	School % Met or Exceeded Standards in SCIENCE	State of CA % Met or Exceeded Standards in SCIENCE
OVERALL	314	31.21%	47.06%	7.94%	33.38%	15.84%	29.45%
GRADE 7	93	17.21%	49.22%	5.32%	32.04%		
GRADE 8	131	25.19%	46.64%	6.82%	29.24%	9.78%	29.20%
GRADE 10						11.97%	22.37%
GRADE 11	90	54.44%	54.80%	12.36%	26.97%	25.00%	30.79%
GRADE 12						20.19%	26.82%

Additionally, the state assessment data for Encore Jr./Sr. High School students reveal variations in the performances of students from different demographic groups. For example, 36.8% of Encore Jr./Sr. High School's White students performed at the proficient or advanced level in English language arts; however, only 30.23% of Hispanic/Latino students, only 27.09% of Black/African American students, and 0.00% of English language learners at Encore Jr./Sr. High School performed at the proficient or advanced level on the same assessment. Similarly, 10.96% of Encore Jr./Sr. High School's White students performed at the proficient or advanced level in mathematics; however, only 6.90% of Hispanic/Latino students, only 8.33% of Black/African American students, 0.00% of English language learners, and 0.00% Students with Disabilities at Encore Jr./Sr. High School performed at the proficient or advanced level on the same assessment. However, it should be noted that in mathematics, all subgroups of students at Encore Jr./Sr. High School performed far below the overall statewide average (33.38%) and the statewide average for each of their individual subgroups.

Encore Student Groups	Total # of Students with scores	School % Met or Exceeded Standards in ELA	State of CA % Met or Exceeded Standards in ELA	School % Met or Exceeded Standards in MATH	State of CA % Met or Exceeded Standards in MATH	School % Met or Exceeded Standards in SCIENCE	State of CA % Met or Exceeded Standards in SCIENCE
ALL STUDENTS	314	31.21%	47.06%	7.94%	33.38%	15.84%	29.45%
ASIAN	N/A	N/A	75.27%	N/A	69.46%	N/A	59.47%
BLACK/AFR. AMERICAN	48	27.09%	30.33%	8.33%	15.93%	12.90%	13.71%
FILIPINO	N/A	N/A	70.02%	N/A	54.16%	N/A	46.72%
HISPANIC/LATINO	172	30.23%	36.40%	6.90%	21.24%	12.95%	18.26%
2 OR MORE RACES	10	N/A	59.88%	N/A	47.05%	11.76%	43.31%
WHITE	74	36.48%	61.36%	10.96%	48.18%	23.64%	44.25%
SOCIO-ECON DISAD.	144	25.69%	59.88%	10.41%	47.05%	14.42%	18.50%
STU. W/O HOMES	N/A	N/A	27.79%	N/A	15.90%	N/A	13.41%
ELL	15	0.00%	12.47%	0.00%	9.71%	0.00%	2.63%
RFEP	37	48.65%	58.75%	8.11%	36.38%	16.67%	28.63%
STU. W/ DISABILITIES	37	10.81%	15.61%	0.00%	11.41%	3.45%	8.36%

GENERAL INFORMATION

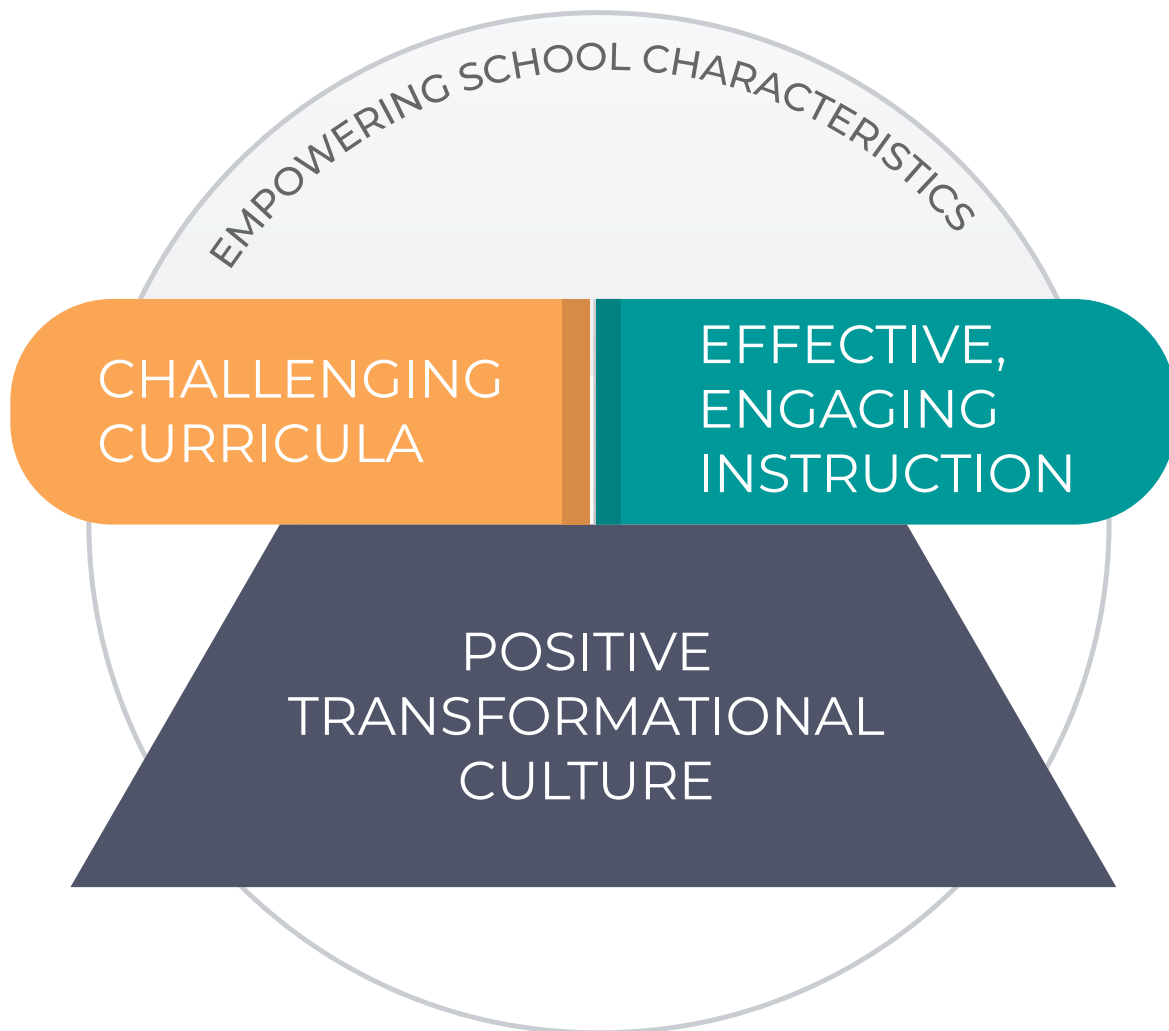
Schools that receive NCUST's America's Best Schools Award demonstrate multiple academic successes for the students they serve. In the award-winning schools, the percentage of students achieving at the proficient or advanced level is greater than the statewide percentage at most grade levels and most subject areas. As well, in schools that receive NCUST's America's Best Schools Award, each racial/ethnic group served outperforms overall statewide percentages. This report is designed to help educators at Encore Jr./Sr. High School chart a course toward ensuring that all of their students and each racial/ethnic group achieves at levels that exceed overall state percentages.

In the following pages, we present the findings of this audit by comparing the culture, curricula, and instruction found in very high-performing public schools that serve large populations of students from low-income families to what we have learned about Encore Jr./Sr. High School. In light of the audit findings, we provide recommendations for action.

FINDINGS

EMPOWERING SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS

Schools that achieve equity and excellence for all of the students they serve possess three empowering school characteristics: a positive, transformational culture; access to rigorous curricula for all students; and effective instruction that leads to engagement and mastery.



FINDINGS

POSITIVE TRANSFORMATIONAL CULTURE

Definition: A positive, transformational school culture provides the foundation for equitable and excellent learning outcomes. We define the culture as positive because high-performing schools displayed overwhelmingly healthy learning environments where administrators, teachers, staff members, and families treated one another as valued partners in the education of their students. Trust and mutual respect were evident in the relationships between and among all school personnel. Students from every demographic group perceived that the adults in the school knew them well and were committed to their success in school and beyond. Children and adults felt respected, valued, and appreciated. Adults took painstaking efforts to ensure that everyone felt safe and comfortable, both physically and emotionally. The culture was transformational because students, teachers, support personnel, and administrators were always focused on improving. Students from every racial/ethnic group described strategies educators had employed to transform traditional school practices and procedures to help ensure their academic success. Even when the school had achieved at levels far beyond typical expectations, educators were asking, “What can we do better to ensure the success of more of our students?”



Key Findings at Encore Jr./Sr. High School:

- **When equity audit team members observed classrooms at Encore Jr./Sr. High School, they particularly examined classroom climate.** On a scale of “one” to “five,” with “one” being harsh/cold and “five” being caring/warm, observers reported an average rating of 3.5. The most common rating was “four.” Also, on a scale of “one” to “five,” with “one” being disdainful/disrespectful and “five” being respectful/courteous, observers reported an average rating of 3.4. The most common rating was “four.”
- **As mentioned above, chronic absenteeism and suspension rates at Encore Jr./Sr. High School present opportunities for improvement.** As stated in the prior section, during the 2021-2022 academic year, 3.5% of students were suspended at least once, and 29.3% of Encore Jr./Sr. High School’s students were chronically absent. Challenges in these areas may be influenced by the extent to which students perceive a lack of strong, positive, caring relationships with their teachers and other school personnel. Research indicates that positive teacher-student and student-student relationships help shape student experiences in school, even among students with home-based challenges, particularly in relation to attendance and behavior. Continued efforts to integrate SEL-based disciplinary approaches, restorative practices, and trauma-informed care can help to make students feel valued and capable, reduce misbehavior, and increase attendance.

SUMMARY

POSITIVE TRANSFORMATIONAL CULTURE

The Equity Audit Team found several indicators of strength related to the culture experienced by students at Encore Jr./Sr. High School. Those strengths include the following:

- Warm, caring, and respectful environment for students
- Performing arts opportunities are a plus for students
- Evidence of strong relationships between staff and students and between students
- Willingness amongst staff and administration to improve the learning experiences for all students
- Students are supported and made to feel welcome and capable in the performing arts
- Students expressed a strong sense of community and pride for their school

Additionally, the Equity Audit Team found several indicators of concern related to the culture experienced by students at Encore Jr./Sr. High School. Those concerns include the following:

- Lack of cleanliness of classrooms
- Lack of student work showcased on walls or academic visual supports
- Lack of sports or other non-performing arts type activities
- Students shared concerns of a divide between performing arts and core classes with expectations and engagement
- Lack of a school-wide behavior management program
- Students shared concerns about fights and misbehavior of students, especially in bathrooms
- Lack of school-wide social-emotional support
- Educators should ensure student interaction and instruction is grade level and academically appropriate - more intentional distinction between middle and high school students

Also, the Equity Audit Team found several indicators of strength related to the culture experienced by teachers and other school personnel at Encore Jr./Sr. High School. Those strengths include the following:

- Teachers and classified staff shared that they enjoyed working at this school
- The performing arts focus is a sense of pride for the staff
- Supportive and encouraging new administrative team
- Awareness and willingness of staff to improve

Finally, the Equity Audit Team found several indicators of concern related to the culture experienced by school personnel at Encore Jr./Sr. High School. Those concerns include the following:

- Division noted between performing arts and core staff
- Lack of consistency with communication, procedures, protocols, etc., was shared by staff
- Teachers noted a lack of collaboration time
- Lack of consistent professional development opportunities

Based on these strengths and concerns, the team offers the following recommendations:

RECOMMENDATIONS

POSITIVE TRANSFORMATIONAL CULTURE

1. Educators at Encore Jr./Sr. High School should agree upon and implement a strategy for leading students to perceive themselves as young scholars who are capable of learning challenging academic content.
 - A. **Professional Development:** Educators at Encore Jr./Sr. High School should engage in professional development that helps them learn about strategies that have worked well to help diverse groups of students think of themselves as capable scholars. For example, some approaches can be found [here](#) or [here](#). Encore Jr./Sr. High School does not necessarily need to replicate one of these programs. Instead, the professional development should lead educators to consider the following questions:
 - What are the habits of young scholars that all Encore Jr./Sr. High School students should develop? Specific scholarly habits should be specified, displayed prominently in classrooms and hallways, and discussed regularly.
 - How can educators and support staff acknowledge and celebrate the progress of students in demonstrating the habits of young scholars? Educators should agree upon specific strategies for recognizing students who exhibit scholarly behavior. There should be frequent opportunities to celebrate students as they exhibit scholarly behavior. Educators should be thoughtful about ways to engage parents in the celebration of students' scholarly behavior.
 - How can educators structure tasks and questions in ways that challenge students to grow as young scholars? Educators should commit to offering students challenging tasks and questions that push them to apply the concepts they are learning to real-life situations. Each day, in every class session, there should be at least one task that encourages students to feel like they are being empowered to use what they are learning to address real and important issues.
 - B. **Schedules, Routines, Procedures:** Based upon insights acquired through the professional development described above, educators at Encore Jr./Sr. High School should agree upon and commit to specific schedules, routines, and procedures that might help ensure that all Encore Jr./Sr. High School students perceive themselves as capable scholars. All school personnel should develop a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in contributing to a powerful, school-wide effort to influence how students perceive themselves.
 - C. **Teacher Collaboration:** Based on the school-wide commitments made (regarding the changes to schedules, routines, and procedures described above), teacher collaboration teams should support each other in developing and implementing lesson strategies that are likely to lead students to perceive themselves as capable scholars and leaders.
 - D. **Classroom Observation and Feedback:** Classroom observations and feedback should be structured to acknowledge and celebrate teachers' progress in implementing agreed-upon strategies and promoting students' sense of academic efficacy. As well, observations and feedback should offer teachers practical, useful suggestions for improving their implementation of agreed-upon strategies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

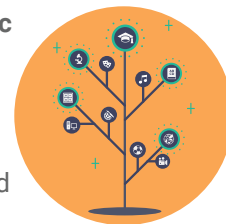
POSITIVE TRANSFORMATIONAL CULTURE

- E. Communication from Leaders:** Written and oral communication from school leaders should emphasize progress observed throughout Encore Jr./Sr. High School in establishing environments in which students are more likely to perceive themselves as young scholars and leaders.

FINDINGS

ACCESS TO CHALLENGING CURRICULA FOR ALL STUDENTS

Definition: Educators in high-achieving schools worked to ensure that *all* demographic groups of students (including students whose first language was not English, students who were performing two or three years below their grade level, and students with learning disabilities) had access to challenging curricula balanced with rich opportunities to engage in the visual and performing arts, world languages, technology, and other non-tested subjects. Teachers in each course of study engaged collaboratively to identify and develop a shared understanding of the key standards students in each grade must master. Together, teachers carefully designed instruction to provide every student the opportunity to learn and master the knowledge and skills necessary. Assignments and instructional activities were purposeful with clear learning objectives and explicit success criteria. Students perceived their work as meaningful and relevant to their backgrounds and futures. Teachers had a common method for assessing student mastery of course content. Regularly, after common assessments were administered, teachers and administrators met, reviewed data, identified strengths/needs, and planned improvement strategies.



Key Findings at Encore Jr./Sr. High School:

- **In high-performing schools, educators teach state standards, but they also work as a team to ensure that their approach to the state standards is at least as rigorous as required by state assessments and as rigorous as the curricula taught in schools that serve affluent communities.** The equity audit team found that educators at Encore Jr./Sr. High School approached state standards in a manner that was rigorous in some classrooms and less rigorous in others. Evidence included:
 - During our visits to classrooms, we found inconsistency in the level of rigor associated with lessons and assignments across classrooms within the same grade level, across the campus, and between core/academic classes and the performing arts classes.
 - This suggests that the curriculum students access and learn is primarily dependent upon the classroom to which they are assigned. Also, during our classroom observations, we rated each lesson from “one” to “five,” where “one” indicated that the activities observed were not likely to lead any students to grade-level mastery and where “five” indicated that the activities observed were likely to lead all students to grade-level mastery. On average, we rated the lessons observed as 2.7. This suggests that only some lessons challenged students with a level of rigor that was likely to lead students to high levels of mastery.
 - When conducting classroom observations, we also attended to issues of cognitive demand. During our classroom observations, we rated the cognitive demand of lesson activities from “one” to “five,” where “one” indicated that the classroom activities observed only required memorization and recall of basic facts, and “five” indicated that the classroom activities observed required students to extend their thinking and address and solve real problems. On average, we rated the cognitive demand of classroom activities observed as 2.7. This suggests that only some classroom activities required a high level of cognitive demand. Similarly, during classroom observations, we rated the cognitive demand of the questions students were expected to answer from “one” to “five,” where “one” indicated that the questions only required memorization and recall of basic facts and “five” indicated that the questions required students to extend their thinking and address and solve real problems. On average, we rated the cognitive demand of questions observed as 2.6. This suggests that only some questions required a high level of cognitive demand.

SUMMARY

ACCESS TO CHALLENGING CURRICULA FOR ALL STUDENTS

The Equity Audit Team found several indicators of strength related to the curriculum experienced by students at Encore Jr./Sr. High School. Those strengths include the following:

- Teachers shared that they use their standards (performing arts and core) to plan for their lessons
- Evidence of technology support for the curriculum and instruction
- Students had access to individual resources to support their learning in the performing arts

Additionally, the Equity Audit Team found several indicators of concern related to the curriculum experienced by students at Encore Jr./Sr. High School. Those concerns include the following:

- Lack of consistent and systematic curricular planning and mapping between and amongst core and performing arts classrooms
- Low rigor and expectations throughout the classes

Based on these strengths and concerns, the team offers the following recommendations:

RECOMMENDATIONS

ACCESS TO CHALLENGING CURRICULA FOR ALL STUDENTS

2. To help ensure that Encore Jr./Sr. High School students master some of the most important critical academic skills, district leaders, school leaders, and teachers should work together to identify a small number of critical academic standards (in mathematics, English language arts, and science) that will receive special attention and extra time. Concentrated effort should be devoted to helping ensure that teachers teach these standards in ways that result in students achieving deep understanding and mastery. By building the capacity of teachers to succeed with a small number of standards, school and district leaders can increase the likelihood that educators understand how planning processes are intended to influence lesson implementation. Implementation of this recommendation will consume time in ways that might decrease the likelihood that teachers cover all of the standards assessed. NCUST, however, has observed many schools that have benefited substantially from this investment of time. “Covering” content has little value if it does not lead students to high rates of understanding and mastery.

A. Professional Development: Teams that include Encore Jr./Sr. High School teachers, leaders, and district specialists should convene to identify one or two critical academic standards in each discipline (especially, but not limited to mathematics, English language arts, social studies, and science). The one or two standards selected should be challenging standards that Encore Jr./Sr. High School students have not typically mastered when they took state assessments. As well, the standards selected should be sufficiently important that, when students demonstrate mastery, their performance on state assessments should improve measurably, and students’ perception of their ability to learn challenging standards should be elevated considerably. The teams of teachers, leaders, and specialists should spend time working together to describe in depth the concepts and skills students would need to master to perform well on the standards selected. Teachers who participate in these conversations should acquire a clear and detailed understanding of the level of rigor students need to demonstrate to have a high likelihood of demonstrating mastery. As part of professional development, teachers should develop, adopt, or adapt (from other sources) short common formative assessments that provide a clear indication of whether each student has mastered a specific standard.

B. Schedules, Routines, and Procedures: Each team should establish a tentative schedule for teaching the concepts and skills students will need to master related to each standard. The schedule should include anticipated dates for administering common formative assessments, immediately scoring the assessments, and providing intervention and enrichment in response to the assessment results.

Additionally, school leaders should commit to expending a considerable amount of time each week observing teachers as they seek to teach the one or two critical academic standards selected. Every classroom teacher should benefit from at least two short observations each week.

C. Teacher Collaboration: Lesson planning processes should be interwoven into teacher collaborative planning processes related to the one or two standards selected. Teachers should have abundant support in planning lessons that have a high likelihood of leading students to master the standards. In particular, lesson planning should emphasize strategies for helping students relate to and see the importance of the concepts and skills they are being asked to learn.

RECOMMENDATIONS

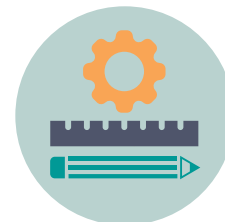
ACCESS TO CHALLENGING CURRICULA FOR ALL STUDENTS

- D. Classroom Observation and Feedback:** Classroom observations should be tailored to ensure that teachers are implementing lessons in ways that reflect the quality of their planning efforts. Leaders should highlight exemplary lessons in ways that help other teachers see how their colleagues are successfully leading Encore Jr./Sr. High School students to learn challenging academic standards. As teachers encounter difficulty implementing the lessons they planned, practical support should be provided. Additionally, feedback should emphasize growth as teachers improve their ability to teach the critical academic standards.
- E. Communication from Leaders:** Written and oral communication from Encore Jr./Sr. High School's leadership team should highlight the progress teachers are making in increasing the likelihood that students engage in challenging academic activities, answer thought-provoking questions, and demonstrate deep understanding and mastery of grade-level standards. As well, written and oral communication should emphasize suggestions for strengthening questions and lesson activities so that students are more likely to demonstrate mastery of challenging objectives and standards.

FINDINGS

EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTION THAT LEADS TO ENGAGEMENT AND MASTERY

Definition: Effective instruction results in students engaging in efforts to learn and growing closer to mastering the content the teacher endeavors to teach. In high-performing schools, NCUST researchers found educators utilizing instructional practices that 1) led all students to feel valued and capable and 2) focused on ensuring getting all students to understand and master key concepts and skills. Both of these goals were facilitated when teachers provided clear instruction; ensured that lessons were culturally, socially, and personally relevant to their students; checked student understanding, provided feedback, and adapted instruction accordingly; built student fluency with gatekeeper vocabulary; promoted successful student practice, and nurtured students' love of learning. With such instruction, students from all racial/ethnic, linguistic, and socio-economic backgrounds thrived academically.



In an effort to understand the kind and quality of instruction provided at Encore Jr./Sr. High School, the equity audit team observed almost every classroom. The team used an observation protocol designed to capture the similarities and differences between the characteristics of teaching and learning found in high-performing schools and those observed in Encore Jr./Sr. High School classrooms. Additionally, interviews with school administrators and focus groups with teachers, parents, and students provided additional insight regarding instruction at Encore Jr./Sr. High School.

Key Findings at Encore Jr./Sr. High School:

- Lessons observed at Encore Jr./Sr. High School occasionally were conducted in ways that made all students feel valued and capable.** Equity audit team members rated the extent to which each lesson observed was conducted in a manner that made students feel valued and capable. In 42% of the lessons, observers perceived that there was considerable evidence or exemplary evidence that Encore Jr./Sr. High School students felt valued and capable. Additionally, in 14% of classrooms, observers perceived slight evidence that the teacher was leading students to feel valued and capable. During those lessons, observers noted that teachers were supportive and encouraging to students. They gave specific, positive feedback to each student and created space for students to make adjustments. They stated their belief in students' competence and encouraged risk-taking. On the other hand, in 44% of the lessons, there was no evidence that the teacher was leading students to feel valued and capable. Lessons would have been more likely to lead all students to feel valued and capable if teachers had more frequently increased positive comments towards all students, acknowledged all students, and showed evidence of their persistence to build high-quality relationships with all students over time. In addition, lessons would have been more likely to lead all students to feel valued and capable if teachers maintained high academic and behavioral expectations for students while consistently demonstrating respect towards students.

FINDINGS

EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTION THAT LEADS TO ENGAGEMENT AND MASTERY

- In high-performing schools, teachers planned and delivered lessons aimed at leading students to master the lesson objective the first time it was taught.** Equity audit team members rated the extent to which each lesson observed was conducted in a manner that led all students to develop a deep understanding and mastery of lesson objectives. In 29% of the lessons, observers perceived that there was considerable evidence or exemplary evidence that teachers at Encore Jr./Sr. High School delivered lessons that helped all students develop a deep understanding and mastery of lesson objectives. In 21% of lessons, observers perceived that there was slight evidence of this practice. In those lessons, equity audit team members noted that teachers listened to each student group to ensure they demonstrated mastery and provided differentiated and individualized support for students with greater needs. On the other hand, in 50% of the lessons, observers noted no evidence of this practice. Lessons would have been more likely to lead students to develop understanding and mastery if teachers had more frequently focused on student success with the learning objectives by checking in with each student to gauge their level of understanding during multiple parts of the lesson. Further, teachers could ensure that their lesson planning structured lesson activities to maximize the likelihood that students would master the lesson objectives. Teachers could ensure they had structures in place for what to do when students did not master the objective the first time it was taught.
- A factor that influences the pursuit of understanding and mastery of lesson objectives is the extent to which the lesson objective is clear to students.** In each classroom observation, observers rated the extent to which the lesson objective was clear to them. A score of “one” meant that the rater had difficulty determining the lesson objective. A score of “five” meant that the rater perceived that the lesson objective was specific and clear. The average rating for all lessons observed was “three.” Similarly, for each classroom observation, observers rated the likelihood that the lesson objective was clear to students. A score of “one” meant that the observer saw no evidence that the teacher had done anything to ensure that students understood what they were learning and why. A score of “five” meant that the students demonstrated that they understood specifically and clearly what they were expected to learn and why. The average rating for all lessons observed was “three.” This suggests that only some lesson objectives ensured that students understood specifically and clearly what they were to learn and why.
- In high-performing schools, teachers designed lessons to enhance students’ clarity about key lesson concepts and to minimize students’ misconceptions.** Equity audit team members rated the extent to which each lesson observed at Encore Jr./Sr. High School was conducted in a manner that promoted clarity. In 31% of the lessons, observers perceived that there was either considerable or exemplary evidence that teachers at Encore Jr./Sr. High School delivered lessons that enhanced students’ clarity about key lesson concepts. In 35% of lessons, observers perceived that there was slight evidence of this practice. In those lessons, observers noted that teachers shared the purpose of the lesson and its application, clearly reviewed expectations, and gave consistent and specific feedback. In contrast, in 34% of the lessons, observers found no evidence of this practice. Lessons would have been more likely to promote clarity among students if teachers had more frequently ensured that students clearly understood what they were expected to learn and the criteria for success. Also, lessons might have been more likely to promote clarity among students if teachers had planned and implemented strategies to help students avoid common misconceptions about important lesson concepts.

FINDINGS

EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTION THAT LEADS TO ENGAGEMENT AND MASTERY

- **In high-performing schools, teachers designed lessons to include frequent opportunities to check students' understanding, provide feedback, and adapt instruction accordingly.** Equity audit team members rated the extent to which each lesson observed was conducted with frequent checks for student understanding, frequent teacher feedback, and appropriate adaptation of the lesson in response to checks for student understanding. In 35% of the lessons, observers perceived that there was considerable evidence or exemplary evidence that teachers at Encore Jr./Sr. High School delivered lessons in ways that modeled frequent checks for understanding, frequent teacher feedback, and appropriate adaptation of the lesson. In 17% of lessons, observers perceived that there was slight evidence of this practice. Observers noted that teachers in these lessons gave students specific and targeted feedback with clear next steps, they conferred with individual students regarding their work and used questioning to elicit responses from students to gauge their understanding of the lesson. In contrast, in 48% of the lessons, observers noted no evidence of this practice. Lessons would have been more likely to model strong checking for understanding, providing feedback, and adapting instruction if teachers had planned specific questions they could ask or strategies they could use to elicit responses from many or all students. Teachers might have planned to ensure that they spoke less and their students spoke more. Also, lessons would have been more effective if teachers had planned strategies they could use if students made errors that were fairly predictable.
- **In high-performing schools, teachers designed lessons that were responsive to the cultural, social, and personal backgrounds of the students they served. Often lessons helped students see connections between key academic standards and their own cultural, social, and personal backgrounds and interests.** Equity audit team members rated the extent to which each lesson observed was presented in a manner that helped students relate (culturally, socially, or personally) to the content being taught. In 24% of the lessons, observers perceived that there was either considerable evidence or exemplary evidence that teachers at Encore Jr./Sr. High School delivered lessons that helped all students relate to the content being taught. In 24% of lessons, observers perceived that there was slight evidence of this practice. In those lessons, observers noted that teachers brought real-world problems into the learning, used videos and examples related to world concepts, and shared personal experiences that related to students. In contrast, in 52% of the lessons, observers noted no evidence that suggested lessons were responsive to students' cultural, social, and personal backgrounds. The promotion of culturally, socially, and personally responsive teaching might have been enhanced if collaborative teacher planning could have helped teachers consider, "How could this concept be presented in a way that would resonate with our students at Encore Jr./Sr. High School? How might we make this concept seem less foreign to our students and more connected to their backgrounds and experiences?"

FINDINGS

EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTION THAT LEADS TO ENGAGEMENT AND MASTERY

- **In high-performing schools, teachers provided lessons that built their students' fluency with gatekeeper vocabulary. Often lessons gave all students many opportunities to use key lesson vocabulary in ways that helped students develop familiarity and comfort with the vocabulary.** Equity audit team members rated the extent to which each lesson observed helped students build fluency with vocabulary that was central to the lesson content and helped students integrate the lesson vocabulary into their speaking vocabulary. In 17% of the lessons, observers perceived that there was either considerable evidence or exemplary evidence that teachers at Encore Jr./Sr. High School delivered lessons that built their students' fluency with gatekeeper vocabulary. Further, in 31% of lessons, observers perceived that there was slight evidence of this practice. In these lessons, observers noted that teachers repeated key vocabulary terms and exposed students to vocabulary through presentations or on whiteboards. Observers heard students use academic language frequently in their visual and performing arts classes. On the other hand, in 52% of the lessons, equity audit team members observed no evidence of this practice. Lessons would have been more likely to help students build fluency with gatekeeper vocabulary if teachers had more frequently engaged students in meaningful conversations that required students to use the vocabulary frequently. Prior planning could help teachers design activities, simulations, games, skits, and other strategies that would engage students in using gatekeeper vocabulary frequently.
- **In high-performing schools, teachers designed lessons that promoted students' successful practice of concepts and skills. Teachers allowed students to practice skills independently only when they knew that independent practice was likely to be successful.** Equity audit team members rated the extent to which, in each lesson observed, students were allowed to practice independently only when they had demonstrated a reasonable likelihood of success. In 38% of the lessons, observers perceived that there was considerable evidence or exemplary evidence that teachers at Encore Jr./Sr. High School delivered lessons that promoted students' successful practice of concepts and skills. Furthermore, in 24% of lessons, observers perceived that there was slight evidence of this practice. In these lessons, observers noticed teachers successfully facilitating guided practice by making sure students understood each portion of the lesson before allowing them to work independently. These teachers also provided real-time feedback to the students while they practiced the concepts and skills on their own. On the other hand, in 38% of the lessons, observers noted no evidence of this practice. Lessons would have been more likely to help students experience successful practice if teachers had more frequently checked to make sure that students had a reasonable level of understanding before releasing students to pursue tasks independently.

FINDINGS

EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTION THAT LEADS TO ENGAGEMENT AND MASTERY

- **In high-performing schools, teachers designed lessons that led students to love learning. Students became excited about learning academic content because their teachers helped them understand how the content was relevant to their current or future lives. Students often perceived lessons as relevant because teachers engaged them in interesting projects. Teachers used interesting applications of technology to inspire engagement and mastery. Teachers maximized student engagement and mastery by creating frequent opportunities for students to interact with and learn from each other.** Equity audit team members rated the extent to which each lesson observed contributed to students developing a love of learning. In 38% of the lessons, observers perceived that there was considerable evidence or exemplary evidence that teachers at Encore Jr./Sr. High School delivered lessons that led students to love learning. Furthermore, in 28% of lessons, observers perceived that there was slight evidence of this practice. Observers noticed that teachers who taught these lessons exhibited enthusiasm, created warm and caring environments where students demonstrated eagerness and excitement for their work, and they praised students with positive affirmations that resulted in students taking risks and seeking further guidance. In these classrooms, all students were expected to participate and engage in their learning. In contrast, in 34% of lessons, equity audit team members found no evidence of this practice.

When students perceive that academic content is relevant to them, they are much more likely to love learning. Equity audit team members rated the extent to which students were likely to perceive the learning activities observed as relevant to the students' lives. A score of "one" meant the observer believed none of the students in the classroom were likely to perceive the classroom learning activities as relevant to their lives. A score of "five" meant the observer believed all students in the classroom were likely to perceive the classroom learning activities as relevant to their lives. The average rating for all lessons observed was "three."

Likewise, when students are engaged in talking with their peers about lesson concepts and ideas, they are more likely to enjoy lessons and learn to love learning. Equity audit team members rated the extent to which students talked with their peers or with the teacher about the lesson concepts and ideas. A score of "one" meant the observer did not observe any students speaking with their peers or with the teacher about the lesson concepts and ideas. A score of "five" meant the observer saw all students in the classroom frequently speaking with their peers or with the teacher about the lesson concepts and ideas. The average rating for all lessons observed was 2.5.

Furthermore, observers rated the extent to which students were likely to perceive their classroom as engaging. In each classroom observation, equity audit team members rated the classroom climate as "one" if they perceived students found the class uninteresting or tedious. Observers rated the class as "five" if they perceived students found the class engaging and stimulating. On average, classrooms observed were rated "three."

Lessons would have been more likely to lead students to love learning if teachers had more frequently demonstrated enthusiasm about the content students were learning and engaged students in projects or other activities that required students to apply the concepts being learned in meaningful, relevant ways. This might include engaging students in deep discussions about lesson concepts or engaging students in activities that required the integration of the content being learned with high-interest areas such as art, music, drama, physical education, technology, etc.

SUMMARY

EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTION THAT LEADS TO ENGAGEMENT AND MASTERY

The Equity Audit Team found several indicators of strength related to the instruction experienced by students at Encore Jr./Sr. High School. Those strengths include the following:

- High engagement in most performing arts classrooms and some core classrooms
- Targeted and individual feedback in most performing arts classrooms
- In many classrooms, instruction was relevant to students
- Many lessons were culturally and personally appropriate for learners

Additionally, the Equity Audit Team found several indicators of concern related to the instruction experienced by students at Encore Jr./Sr. High School. Those concerns include the following:

- Low cognitive demand in most classrooms
- Lack of expectations for students to master grade-level standards
- Limited opportunities for students to engage in academic discourse
- Lack of clarity regarding lesson purpose, objective, and the criteria for success
- Missed opportunities for expanding academic language/vocabulary and other academic supports and scaffolds
- Concerns with the structure of study hall/study skills classes

Based on these strengths and concerns, the team offers the following recommendations:

RECOMMENDATIONS

EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTION THAT LEADS TO ENGAGEMENT AND MASTERY

3. Encore Jr./Sr. High School educators should work together to identify two instructional practices that have the potential to accelerate learning, especially for students who, historically, have not experienced academic success. Intensive efforts should be made to ensure that teachers at Encore Jr./Sr. High School demonstrate these practices in every lesson, with a high level of fidelity, and in ways that are likely to generate higher levels of student success. School leaders should endeavor to brand these two practices as part of “the Encore Jr./Sr. High School way of teaching.” Every educator should be encouraged to commit to exemplifying these two practices.

A. Professional Development: Regular professional development activities should engage teachers in examining the selected teaching practices and discussing 1) **why** the practices are more likely to result in higher levels of student success, 2) **what** teachers do to maximize the effectiveness of the practices, and 3) **how** the practices are different from efforts that might be less effective in improving learning results. Teachers should be challenged to create rubrics for determining the quality of their implementation of the practices. Professional development activities should include opportunities for teachers to discuss the practices; see the practices being implemented; discuss the factors that contribute to successful implementation; try to implement the practices in a supportive environment; receive helpful, constructive support; and try again. District specialists and school leaders should work to identify teachers who model the two practices particularly well. Efforts should be made to videotape lessons that model these two practices.

B. Schedules, Routines, and Procedures: Educators at Encore Jr./Sr. High School should work together to develop routines that allow teachers opportunities to observe each other’s classrooms. Teachers should be encouraged to volunteer to have their lessons observed by colleagues. Colleagues should utilize the rubrics established to reinforce the positive elements that contribute to the desired teaching practices. Efforts should not focus on criticizing. Instead, efforts should focus on acknowledging and celebrating growth and improvement. After listening to positive comments from colleagues, school leaders, and district specialists, each teacher who was observed should have the opportunity to ask, “How could I have used this practice in a way that did an even better job of helping my students learn the concept I was trying to teach?” These interactions should be designed to ensure that teachers feel supported and respected.

Additionally, school leaders should commit to expending a considerable amount of time each week observing teachers as they seek to implement the two selected teaching practices. Every classroom teacher should benefit from at least two short observations each week.

C. Teacher Collaboration: Collaborative planning meetings should be focused on helping teachers implement these two practices well. District leaders should work with the Encore Jr./Sr. High School principal and Encore Jr./Sr. High School teachers to refine collaborative planning meeting protocols in ways that help teachers implement the two practices well. To ensure that planning results in higher quality lesson delivery, in each collaborative planning meeting, an amount of time should be devoted to reviewing clips of lessons and providing constructive feedback about the use of the two teaching practices.

RECOMMENDATION

EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTION THAT LEADS TO ENGAGEMENT AND MASTERY

- D. Classroom Observation and Feedback:** School leaders should utilize the rubrics developed in recommendation 1A above in regular observations of lessons. Feedback should be tailored in ways that reinforce the strengths related to each of the two practices. As well, feedback should include constructive ideas that could help teachers maximize the impact of the two practices.
- E. Communication from Leaders:** Leaders should send weekly reports to teachers that highlight strengths observed (e.g., In 90% of the observations this week, teachers were observed getting at least 3/4th of their students to respond to questions that required some higher order thinking). Reports should emphasize growth and improvement in teaching practices and the impact on student learning.

NEXT STEPS

This report provides a large amount of information about school culture, curriculum, and instruction at Encore Jr./Sr. High School. We recommend that school personnel take time to read and understand the various findings and recommendations contained herein. While reading the report, it is important to keep in mind that the report is based on a snapshot of Encore Jr./Sr. High School. While the equity audit team endeavored to look comprehensively at the school and acquire input from an array of stakeholders, the report is based on information acquired over a narrow span of time from a limited number of stakeholders. As well, it is important to keep in mind that the report compares Encore Jr./Sr. High School with schools that NCUST has awarded, where every demographic group outperforms state averages. This high bar is likely to suggest areas of improvement that would not be specified in more typical audit reviews. If there are questions regarding any of the findings or recommendations, we encourage school leaders to contact the equity audit team leader. NCUST is happy to engage in conversations about the report with the school principal, with the school's leadership team, or with the school's faculty.

Secondly, we acknowledge that stakeholders may disagree with the findings and/or recommendations in this report. Where there are disagreements concerning important issues, school personnel may wish to consider identifying and implementing strategies for acquiring additional objective information about issues of concern. The equity audit team leader would be happy to help suggest ways that school personnel can collect additional information to influence their understanding of important issues discussed in this report.

The report includes many recommendations. It is important for stakeholders to review and prioritize these recommendations. Stakeholders should consider which recommendations are most likely to yield important improvements for Encore Jr./Sr. High School students. We encourage schools to limit the focus to three or four important recommendations.

When high-priority recommendations are identified, we encourage attention to each of the steps specified. It is particularly important for school personnel to determine how they will monitor their progress toward implementation.

Finally, it is important for everyone involved to commit to pursuing high-priority recommendations with a spirit of teamwork and support. It will be important for stakeholders to remind each other that the reason for each improvement effort is grounded in their common interest in seeing all demographic groups of students at Encore Jr./Sr. High School excel. As well, it will be important for all stakeholders to understand their roles in implementing each improvement effort and to feel that they have abundant support designed to ensure their success. It will be especially important to identify and celebrate both small and large successes. Furthermore, it will be important to determine how stakeholders will support each other constructively through setbacks and disappointments. This report highlights that Encore Jr./Sr. High School has many important strengths. By deliberately pursuing a few high-priority recommendations, we are confident that Encore Jr./Sr. High School will develop many more strengths that elevate learning outcomes for all groups of students.