

2016 EdVisions Off Campus 3 Year Self-Study

Introduction

EdVisions Off Campus is a comprehensive online learning program that is a public charter school in Minnesota. Open in 2005, EOC continues to honor its mission with a focus on personalized project based learning with a student centered approach, EOC is an innovative and successful online school. Overall, EdVisions Off Campus, has an educational program which is exemplary in many standard areas recognized by iNACOL.

Executive Summary of Program

This Report is in accordance with Minnesota Statute 124D.095 in which the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) reviews all online programs on a three year cycle. For 2016, this is submitted by the Online Schools as an Self-Review outlined by MDE. EOC completed its eleventh school year June 2016.

Recent accomplishments include achieving a high Hope with students, several overnight field trips, including trips to Washington DC, North Carolina, Yellowstone, Apostle Islands and France that included 20-40 students per school year. EOC continues to be a model Project Based Learning and Site Based managed school. EOC maintained student enrollment over the past three years (98-105), and retention continued to be 72-80% with an Average Daily Membership of 98-101. The staff to student ratio was 8:1 and all licensed staff members returned from 2013- 2016.

EOC held its tenth graduation ceremony in June of 2016. The graduating class included 12 seniors that had completed a “capstone” project which they presented in a public venue during the month of May. Each year, the seniors plan their ceremony which includes time for personal reflections, advisor reflections on each of the graduates, alumni speeches and a picnic.

Retention is a problem for many online and charter schools. Over the past three years EOC had a retention of 72-80%. Additionally, as indicated by student surveys the students feel they are becoming more independent learners who feel advisors treat them fairly and have high expectations.

Professional development at EOC has been streamlined to correspond with the school wide goal of math as indicated in the approved Q Comp proposal. The professional development plan meets the state required staff development legislation enacted for 2014-2015 school year.

Challenges continue to include basic skills proficiency and year to year student retention.

Strategic Goals

Based on the self-review team and staff recommendations, there are three focus points to the current EOC strategic plan. These goals include: an increased use of Individualized Academic and Life Skills Rubrics for students, creation of Individualized Coding Coursework, and increased Staff/Student Wellness. Each of these strategies include a 3-5 year plan of implementation and aspects that are also included in the four annual goals of EOC for 2016-2017. These goals are described in detail in [Strategic Planning](#) section of this report.

Self Study Team

1. Team Members

- Cathy Diaz, Co-Director
- Gigi Dobosenski, Co-Director
- Jill Downing, Parent
- Cadence Eischens, Student
- Jess Eischens, Board Member/Parent
- Tricia Gallahue, Parent
- David Jones, Board Member/Parent
- Chris Lepper, Advisor (Teacher)
- Patty Monson Geerts, Board Member/Advisor (Teacher)
- Sheri Nord, Parent

2. Dates

Meetings were held as a whole team March 1 2016, April 12,2016 and May 10, 2016. Additionally smaller groups met between meetings for data collection and the school board reviewed the final report on July 21, 2016.

3. Process

1. March: Met as a group to discuss plan of action and determine sub-groups for each area: institutional, teaching and learning, support and evaluation
2. Sub-groups use the [rubrics](#) provided by MDE to determine current support documents available to demonstrate each area, and also determine which areas needed more documentation or possible strategies
3. April: Team reviewed reports from each sub group and determined areas of weakness to be sent to board and staff for consideration in 3-5 year strategic plan and/or 2016-2017 goal plans.
4. Staff considered board and OLL Self Review Team Recommendations deciding what aligned with current strategic planning and what areas needed additional support.
5. May: OLL Self Review Team reviewed strategic plan and gave recommendation to board that the strategic plan does in fact align with Self-Review Team findings. Board approved 3-5 year strategies and also 2015-2016 annual goals.
6. June/July: Report Compiled for School Board Approval for submission in late July.

4. Areas of Focus

The areas of current focus determined by the Self-Review Team included:

- A wider use of rubric for evaluating projects, including a focus on applicable standards/life skills
- Examination of student support in terms of organization and implementation of organizational support. Tools and advisor trainings to facilitate organizational support.
- Assistance to parents/community for logging into blackboard for school board meetings- Tech

- support in terms of personal support, instructional documents, and/or videos
- Action plans should be based on Hope Survey data.
- Guidance support, for online learning and post secondary planning. Post Secondary support is on website, does there need to be more advisor support/training?
- Things that were considered but not expected to be addressed at this time: Parent "Group" (the parents continue to suggest they can organize themselves if needed), Official Faculty Support Procedures for new staff, EOC Organizational support as a program, More professional development in Project Foundry and Aleks, and a Larger Variety of Evidence for projects.

Program Overview

1. Institutional

EdVisions Off Campus is well organized and governed following state and federal standards and statutes. Although, future planning is considered in multiple forms at EOC, the governing board continues to work on creating formal strategic plans that focus 3-5 years into the future.

The mission of EOC is clear and easily accessible on documents such as the website, school board agendas, staff meeting agendas and annual reports. Furthermore, best practices dictate an annual review of the mission wording and alignment.

The governance board of EOC is a teacher majority, as allowed by Minnesota Charter Board Law. In addition to meeting statutory requirement for open meeting law, EOC school governance is also assessed by the charter authorizer, Innovative Quality Schools (IQS). EOC continues with best practices governance including ongoing board training and policy review.

Leadership at EOC is defined as a teacher leadership model which features a flat management style and team-based management. The decisions are focused on the mission of the school and student-centered learning. The teams participate in longer term strategic planning as well as shorter term annual goals.

Integrity and Accountability are achieved through the transparency of decision-making and implementation at EOC. Transparency of the EOC program is probably one of the most significant aspects of the program. Weekly staff meetings and teams meet to ensure that the school is accountable to all stakeholders. Individual teams meet to ensure the operational integrity of the program. The school board is informed of all issues or changes by the Co-Directors to ensure that all stakeholders have the same information. Additionally, as a charter program in Minnesota, EOC is reviewed three times annually by authorizer Innovation Quality Schools (IQS).

Relevant Artifacts:

[Mission and Visions Statements](#)

[School Board Agendas and Board Members](#)

[School Board Policies](#)

[Annual Report/World's Best Workforce 2015](#)

Possible Areas of Improvement:

Assumptions are made that stakeholders are aware of the locations of the resources and reports that support Institutional standards for EOC. In addition to making sure that the available resources are kept as up to date as possible, it is necessary to remind parents, students, community, school board members and others of where to find the documentation they need to make informed decisions.

2. Teaching and Learning

EdVisions Off Campus works individually with students to help them grow personally in all areas of their life. As such, atypical to a traditional asynchronous online environment, curriculum is not purchased and offered en-mass to students. Students have individual learning plans and advisors (licensed teachers) assist students in completion of their learning plans. Furthermore, course design revisions are unnecessary.

EOC curriculum is based on a student-directed Project Based Model. Project subjects are student driven by interest; and also accommodate all learning styles and abilities. Many schools promise individualized/personalized learning, at EOC, no two students are the same and neither are their projects. There is value given to the relationship between advisor and student and the recognition that it plays a critical role in learning. Advisors know their students well, work with them at their level, and give them the one-on-one attention they need to learn and grow. Parent input is also highly valued, because no one knows a child better—and include them in the parent-student-advisor team.

EOC students meet required state standards as set forth by MDE. This is achieved through cross curricular project and evaluated by a team of teachers and documented in a project management system called Project Foundry. Life Skills and Project Completion skills are also evaluated based on locally developed rubrics.

EOC student projects are comprehensive. Cross Curricular projects combine academic learning and life skills needed for success. The instruction provided is in synchronously in real time through video conferencing. Additionally, advisors (teachers) coach and assist student in obtaining reliable resources to develop in-depth learning experiences. The instructional model also includes continuous professional development and expectation of professional growth. This is measured through the Q Comp/Staff Evaluation plan in place.

EOC students are authentically assessed. From when a student starts at EOC they are immersed in structures that require them to monitor their learning progress. The learning at EOC is based on personalized projects. In the designing of these projects students set goals for themselves, include timelines, and deadlines. The software (Project Foundry) keeps track of these deadlines and notifies students of approaching and missed deadlines. These projects are also connected to learning standards and at anytime students can use Project Foundry to monitor progress on meeting these standards. The software also allows for setting goals toward these standards and

gives reports on that progress. Students also are required to log their learning time on a daily basis. This forces them to reflect on and monitor their progress on a daily basis. They can use this time log information to determine if they are making adequate progress toward credits earned and grade completion as credits at EOC are partially based on the time put into projects. A team of advisors (teachers) then assess the students projects in real time on an individual basis with the students presenting their evidence and advisors (teachers) asking assessment questions, much like one would find when defending a thesis statement in a post secondary environment.

EOC measure student attainment of the project's educational goals. Every project that a student proposes includes goals from the beginning. Those goals will include things the student wants to get out of the project, goals the advisor deems important, and will also include goals for state standards. To finalize and get credit for a project students must show that they have reached the goals of the project. On a larger scale students must show they have attained the school's goals for them to graduate and get a diploma. Additionally, students demonstrate Engagement, Autonomy and Belongingness through measures such as the Hope Survey. "Hope predicts GPA and retention in college, and hope scores are more robust predictors of college success than high school GPA, SAT, and ACT scores." (Shane J. Lopez, Ph.D., Gallup Student Poll).

Relevant Artifacts:

[Project Based Learning Process](#)

[Project Based Learning Products](#)

[Product examples](#)

[Student Flexibility](#)

[Annual Report/World's Best Workforce 2015](#)

[Annual Report 2014](#)

[Graduation Requirements on website](#)

[Family Handbook 2015-2016](#)

[Senior Project on Website](#)

[Example Project Proposal, Product and Credit](#)

[Example Seminar Project Proposal, Product and Credit](#)

[Example Personalized Learning Plan](#)

[Hope Survey Results](#)

[Seminars List](#)

[Student Resources](#)

Possible Areas of Improvement:

The development of more individualized rubrics will help students attain rigor as determined by advisors, students and parents. This is also a way to further augment the documentation of standards. Furthermore, EOC will continue to provide seminars, which are direct taught courses of interest, to help students supplement their own project design.

3. Support

EdVisions Off Campus works closely with parents, students, and advisors to be sure that students are given support they need. Additionally, all staff members are given support to grow as professionals through a variety of opportunities including evaluations, observations, and professional development opportunities. EOC continues to work and find OLL training opportunities that best fit a synchronous, individualized learning model.

New staff at EOC undergo an induction process and are then assigned a mentor or partner teacher for the year. The induction process starts by the staff working diligently to hire someone with a compatible teaching philosophy. EOC is not a traditional school or a traditional online school, teachers working here must be willing to think differently. A newly hired teacher will then be invited to “attend” EOC if possible while school is in session to get a feel for the school. There is also a list of recommended books that are helpful to develop the philosophy of the school in the new teacher. The summer before working at EOC the new teacher will attend the EdVisions Summer Institute. This is a 3 day training session designed to assist teachers new to the EdVisions model in understanding how it works. This training includes an opportunity for the new teachers to work through a project and begin to understand the details of the project process. This institute also includes information on the theory behind why we do what we do. Also during the summer each existing teacher at EOC will take a day or two to explain how to do a needed skill for EOC. This may be how to use Project Foundry, the process for attendance, project planning, math, helping to plan field trips, or any number of other things. The new teacher is then partnered with another teacher for the year, this pair is a project planning team. Each of these teachers will see all the projects for each other’s students, and will meet at least twice each week to discuss student work and other topics as necessary. It is important to note that the project planning teams are an integral part of EOC, every teacher is part of such a team so the opportunity for working together is not just a first year opportunity.

For ongoing professional development there is a peer review process for to meet staff evaluation and Q Comp requirements. The informal part of peer reviewing has teachers talking to each other about students, curriculum, projects, issues, and school business on a regular basis. This may not be direct feedback about a teacher’s performance, but will help shape a teacher’s performance. Regular feedback also happens in the formal piece of the peer review process. The staff is divided into groups that review each other’s professional development plans for the year and meet monthly or so to hold each other accountable to the growth proposed in that plan. The end of the year brings a formal conclusion to this process and each staff person receives formal feedback both verbal and written regarding his or her professional development and performance for the year. EOC provides opportunities for professional development for all, but strongly encourages staff to engage in opportunities particularly suited for them. Teachers will take advantage of conferences both in-state and national, some teachers may take courses related to their areas of interest or needed areas at EOC. In essence teachers are expected to set up learning projects for themselves each year, EOC will support those endeavors as needed with technical support and resources.

Each student begins his/her EOC career with a face to face visit from his/her advisor (teacher).

This is an opportunity to get the needed signatures on paperwork and talk about student interests and goals, but is also a time to make sure that each student can connect to the school with his/her computer. Once a student can connect to the school most other technology issues can be dealt with. The advisor also talks about what it takes to be successful at EOC, attending advisory group, scheduling meetings, asking questions, and many other things. After this initial meeting the student's advisor will be the initial contact for all issues. If their computer is not working they need to call their advisor, if they cannot figure how to use Project Foundry they contact their advisor first. Academic and administrative services for students come from their advisor (teacher). This is part of the underpinnings of the EdVisions model – advisors work with their students to understand who they are, who they want to become, and help them make a plan to get there. EOC's goal is to help students get to their next phase of life and spends its time helping students set reasonable goals for themselves, help make plans for students to achieve those goals, and encourage students to persist in reaching those goals. EOC strives to personalize the learning experience for each student.

The standard for teacher to student communication is more a way of doing school than a written policy. EOC advisors have a daily advisory group meeting. This is a synchronous online meeting with everyone in the advisory group – usually the advisor and 15 students. This is an opportunity where students can talk, type, listen, show pictures, or use their webcam to communicate with the advisor and the advisory group. Teachers also schedule regular one on one meetings with their students. For some students these meetings are daily, others maybe only weekly. These meetings are a time for students and advisors to communicate about academics, projects, goals, upcoming events, resources, and anything else needing talking about.

EOC has set a recommended process for receiving technical support. A student's first contact with any issues will be his/her advisor. This is the same first step for all issues at EOC, so the students do not need to remember any extra steps for technical support. Advisors will work to troubleshoot technology issues depending upon personal ability and comfort level. If this does not resolve the issue the advisor may pass the issue on to the staff technical person – probably one of the advisors. This advisor will then work on the issue. Depending on the nature of technical problems the situation may be handled in various ways. Home networking issues are usually handed back to the family to work with their internet provider. Students with school issued internet cards will be directed to the cell provider. Computer issues will either be directed to the computer manufacturer, or replacement computer may be shipped to the student. In all cases EOC uses technical issues as a learning opportunity for the student. Joint phone calls may be necessary for the student to interact with a provider, advisors will provide this support to the students. Most issues are resolved within a day. Replacement computers might take 2 to 3 days depending on the destination.

The parents first receive information about EOC before enrolling their child, this is usually through other people in the school, through the website or through phone calls to the school. Once a student is enrolled EOC uses the advisors as the main information providers for parents. As advisors meet with parents/guardians they discuss the best way to stay connected. Some parents prefer to communicate through emails, others through phone calls, still others through their students. Whatever the communication method it is important for the advisor to keep those lines open with frequent offerings of information. EOC advisors provide weekly updates to parents and

conduct conferences 4 times a school year. Parents also have access to student information with a login to Project Foundry. At any time parents with internet access can look at student projects, timelogs, progress toward standards, and make notes and comments on these. And of course the staff will contact parents when concerns arise outside of the scheduled contact times.

Relevant Artifacts:

[Annual Report/World's Best Workforce 2015](#)

[Annual Report 2014](#)

[Budget](#)

[Staff Procedures](#)

[Staff Training List](#)

[Life Skills Rubric](#)

[College Planning Website](#)

[Post Secondary Plan Template](#)

[Seminars List](#)

Possible Areas of Improvement:

In preparation of new staff in future years, staff procedures and training list should be updated. The continued development of organizational support for students through professional development and sharing of current best practices among the staff would further support students. Parents have several opportunities together together during field trips and all school field trips throughout the year. The parents have indicated that they want to support one another as needed, but are not asking that EOC lead the way.

4. Evaluation

EdVisions Off Campus conducts internal reviews with parents, students and staff. EOC continues to look into external evaluations that will be informative to future planning, while maintaining fiscal prudence and also honoring EOC values.

EOC conducts annual internal evaluations through Program Satisfaction Surveys; and Parent and Student Staff Evaluation Surveys. These surveys are conducted toward the end of each school year in an online format. The results of these surveys are incorporated into the annual planning meeting held by the staff. These results also inform personnel decisions. The results of these surveys are also included in the World's Best Workforce/Annual Report so the school's authorizer (IQS), MDE, and the general public can gain a picture into the school as needed.

EOC uses internal measurements each year to help evaluate the effectiveness of its program. Currently these measurements include a transcript credit review, project quality and life skills comparisons. The credit review is a way to determine how well the school is meeting the individual needs of students toward graduation. Students should earn 10 credits each year, but working at their own pace some students may earn more than that, and some less. From grades 9-12 a student needs 40 total credits. At 10 or more credits per year a student will graduate on time or early. At 8 credits per year a student will need to attend EOC for an additional year. Less than 8 credits and student will need to attend more than one additional year. This credit review

gives EOC a valuable picture of where students are at credit wise. EOC also understands that this is not the be all end all measurement of success. Many students will need extra project quality comparison helps EOC determine which areas are difficult in production of quality products. EOC does not want student to become “stuck” on project quality. The Life SKills evaluation allows for students to be evaluated on life skills in communication, creativity & technology, career aspirations, and happiness.

EOC does not currently validate internal evaluations with periodic contracted external evaluations. EOC has had external evaluations completed as a new EdVisions program in regards to fidelity to the EdVisions Design Essentials. EOC’s program scored “exemplary” on this review. EOC also receives annual reviews from its authorizer, IQS and EOC also receives periodic reviews from MDE through the online renewal process. In addition EOC receives indirect external review as the EdVisions model might be reviewed. Recently, along with other EdVisions type schools, EOC underwent a review by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation as part of a Deeper Learning Initiative review process. Other past external reviews of the EdVisions model have shown positive results, one of them was a Seven Attributes of Effective Schools in 2004 by AIR/SRI.

While EOC does not contract with an external evaluator for personalized assessment, EOC does use the data from external organizations such as the Hope Survey and NWEA to help determine progress toward its goals. This information is also used to inform progress toward mission and changes to a strategic plan. The Hope Survey gives information especially useful around the mission of EOC. “EOC strives to produce adults who can achieve their goals.” The Hope survey measures a student’s disposition toward setting goals, planning for goals, and persisting to achieve those goals. In essence the Hope Survey measures how well EOC is meeting its mission. In addition the Hope Survey gives information on how the school is doing on the constructs that actually build Hope in students. It is one thing to have a mission for students to achieve goals, it is another thing to actually have a school measure that mission, and it is still another that has information to inform professional development around meeting that mission.

Relevant Artifacts:

[Annual Report/World’s Best Workforce 2015](#)

[Annual Report 2014](#)

[Goals for 2016-2017 \(in progress\)](#)

[Hope Survey](#)

[Satisfaction Survey](#)

[IQS Score Card](#)

[Directors Responsibilities- Board Checklist](#)

Possible Areas of Improvement:

As external organizations continue to request reports for accountability, it is important that EOC continue to strive for alignment of accountability measures so that the effort of the EOC continues be focused on students. Furthermore, the mission, vision and goals of EOC should be based on multiple data points rather than a single data point.

Conclusions

Based on the program self- review for EdVisions Off Campus, many aspects align with the expectations set forth by the categories and rubric description the Minnesota Department of Education sent to the Online Learning Programs Spring 2016. The findings of the team are being used for shorter term annual goals as well as incorporation into the longer term Strategic Plan of EdVisions Off Campus.

Strengths

- Governance is transparent and is accessible to public on website
- Seminar Topics based on student interests
- Staff training with regard to ALL MN Standards and Benchmarks
- Retention of staff
- Plan for supporting new staff and training
- Advisors provide personalized support to parents and students
- Organizational support
- Parent Communication and four times a year conferences with parents and students
- Parent and Student Surveys help monitor program

Areas of Improvement

- Continued support of stakeholders and public when they want to visit EOC online or attend a board meeting
- Project Foundry standards appear general, although details kept by advisors
- Use grading rubrics more widely
- More professional development in Aleks and Project Foundry
- Continued encouragement of a larger variety of evidence for projects
- If new staff brought on board, include formal 6 month check in on progress
- Continued training and support available for advisors to help with support of students
- Development of parent-led parent group
- More comprehensive use of multiple measures of assessment, using narratives, Hope Survey and informal assessments in conjunction with traditional assessment measures to guide startgic planning and goal setting..

Strategic Planning

1. Rubrics

What: EOC will increase project rubric use among students from the current use of the Senior Project Rubric to include the use among all grade levels and learning abilities. Additionally, 70% of students will demonstrate growth on the Life Skills Rubric with an average of one level of growth in each of the four measured areas on a year to year measure.

Who: Life Skills Team

When: During year one they will examine rubric examples that have been used for individual projects and seek additional training in rubric writing for teachers. During year two they will

implement rubric writing with students as a pilot and also seek additional training in rubric writing to train students on writing their own rubrics. During year three, individual rubrics will be implemented school wide as aligned with student needs. Throughout all three years, continued measures will be taken on the Life Skills Rubric implemented school wide in 2015-2016.

2. Staff and Student Wellness

What: In five years, EOC staff and student who invest time and energy in their wellness and interactions will feel have and keep agreements about how conflict will be resolved as demonstrated by student satisfaction surveys and continued staff retention..

Who: Wellness Team

When: During year one 60% of staff will participate in at least one staff wellness activity offered. Students will also be offered at least three wellness activities. During years two through three, a determination will be made regarding effective wellness activities to be implemented over the five years. Students will be offered 3 or more activities geared toward online and offline wellness.

3. Coding Courses

What: In two years, EOC staff will have developed seminars (courses) which are individualized to students needs with regard to coding and student engagement and excitement for coding will be increased.

Who: Technology/ Coding Team

When: During year one staff will assess their own abilities through coding courses already available online and there will be resources aligned to several paths for students to join in coding. During the second year staff will host a coding jam session and also create seminar experiences for students to learn at their individual rate while gaining support from their peers.

Appendices/All Artifacts:

[Rubric work by team and sub-teams](#)

[Mission and Visions Statements](#)

[School Board Agendas and Board Members](#)

[School Board Policies](#)

[Annual Report/World's Best Workforce 2015](#)

[Annual Report 2014](#)

[Site management teams as listed in Handbook](#)

[Project Based Learning Process](#)

[Project Based Learning Products](#)

[Product examples](#)

[Student Flexibility](#)

[Graduation Requirements on website](#)

[Family Handbook 2015-2016](#)

[Senior Project on Website](#)
[Example Project Proposal, Product and Credit](#)
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