

THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILADELPHIA

Opportunity Network

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Camelot Academy East Instructional Site Visit Summary May 31, 2017

Provider: The Camelot Schools of
Pennsylvania, L.L.C
Contract Term: FY 2013-2016, 1-year
extension
Program capacity: 200

Site Visit Date: Monday, March 27, 2016 - 9:00 a.m.
IEP Compliance: 100%
Average Daily Attendance: 81%

Review Team:

Christina Grant, Assistant Superintendent
Dr. Wanda Jenkins, Director, Operations
Marcus De Vose, Assistant Director, Transition
Allison Smith, Manager
Nefertiti White, Special Education Case Manager
Marlon Riddick, Transition Liaison
Darryl Johnson, Transition Liaison
Elvis Mucaj, Strategy Analyst

Program Staff:

Milton Alexander, Vice President, Region I
Scott Cruttenden, Regional Manager
Kevin Marx, Executive Director
Alyssa Boyle, Principal
Jennifer Green, Program Manager
Melita Johnson, Special Education Director

Overview of Instructional Site Visits:

Instructional site visits consisted of four main parts: **Academic Success Questions with Leadership**; **Academic Success Questions with Teachers**; **Academic Success Questions with Students**; and **Classroom Observations**. **Academic Success Questions with Leadership** was driven by standardized questions that focused on: data and academic outcomes; academic outcomes versus goals; and preparation for classroom observations. **Academic Success Questions with Teachers** was driven by standardized questions that focused on: the use of academic assessments; academic outcomes versus goals; and the school's overall academic performance. **Academic Success Questions with Students** was driven by standardized questions that focused on: student backgrounds and previous educational experiences; academic expectations set by Teachers; tests, grading procedures, and supports from Teachers; overall level of satisfaction with the program and recommendations for improvement; the program's mission; the program's Special Education services; and food and health services. **Classroom Observations** was guided by a standardized Classroom Observation Form that assessed elements of: the classroom environment; instruction; and assessments.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Academic Success Questions with Leadership

Camelot Academy East leadership discussed and presented the overall strengths and opportunities in regards to their program. The leadership team highlighted experience staff working with the program and supporting newer staff and having a district liaison in the building. The staff feel challenged with the co-located space and close proximity to another school program. The leadership presented baseline data in Reading and Mathematics skills and course passing rates. The program administers the SMI/SRI to determine students' baseline skill levels. The test is given within 10 days of enrolling and at scheduled intervals throughout the school year. Program Leadership noted that, on average, high school students begin the program with sixth grade Mathematics and Reading skills, and middle school student on the second grade level. In addition to diagnostic assessments, the program reviewed their course passing data. For the second quarter, 86% of students passed all or all but one course. The course passing data is comparable to the average daily attendance rates. Attendance is a part of the

students' grades and ensures that students are not simply making up work but strive to participate in daily instruction and learning activities. Camelot Academy's Leadership attributes student success to their focus on high quality instruction, teacher support, and making ongoing improvements to their academic program.

As a new program, Camelot Academy East leadership discussed successes that the program has had this school year. The academic environment has greatly improved from the previous program, as evidenced by an average daily attendance of 81% for the current school year. Camelot Academy leadership credits this to the engaging academic environment that they have worked to create, not having school bus issues, and having convenient public transportation stops. The program instituted a 70-minute block schedule that gives students a better chance of receiving the help they need in class. Additionally, leadership noted that they now begin the high school selection process with middle school students earlier in the school year. Leadership is confident that they are moving in the right direction toward continued program-wide academic achievement. They noted that their average daily attendance suffered a bit in December due to the mass transit strike. Most students rely on SEPTA to get to school.

Camelot Academy Leadership discussed their recognition of different student subgroups. They discussed the trends they see with Special Education students, students who are new to the program, students have been enrolled in the program for longer periods of time, 8th graders going through the high school selection process, and graduating seniors. Camelot Academy tracks the performance of each subgroup and offers differentiated supports (academic and social-emotional) that address their unique needs as a group. For example, leadership noted that they have been receiving a lot of 45-day special education interim assignments. The Director of Special Education will meet with students and parents to find strengths to assist in push-in/pull-out support. Most times, teachers will identify that other students need help as well, and they will receive the same support, which helps to not isolate the diverse learners. Seniors have a capstone course in college preparation, college visits and completing the SAT. Having the SAT offered at the school this year was beneficial resulting in better turnout of students showing up to take the test.

Camelot Academy East utilizes the Jobs for the Future Common Instructional Framework to ensure that students engage deeply with course content. Camelot Academy uses a standard lesson-planning template and lessons are designed with three tiers in mind: rigor, higher order questioning, and essential skills. To support new teachers, the Leadership does modeling and coaching to set expectations and trust. In addition, Leaders may redo professional development for support. Veteran teachers assist in maintaining consistency and reiterating instructional practices.

A benefit for the program was starting the year with a low enrollment and setting a good foundation for instruction and culture. Within the last few months, the enrollment has grown rapidly. Camelot Academy East is building on the momentum by instilling in students to make a positive difference. It has turned around and developed the program with academics and student services, and with partnerships and administration.

Camelot East is looking to develop vocational programs and integrating other supportive services. It has begun offering outside grief counseling to help students deal with trauma. The addition of Science labs, restoring the gym, and planning afterschool programming are future endeavors. At the conclusion of its inaugural year, Camelot Academy East will re-evaluate goals and data in June to build upon the program.

In preparation for classroom observations, Camelot Academy East leadership discussed what we would expect to see in classrooms. All Teachers created curriculum maps in the beginning of the year, which should be evident in lesson plans. Each classroom uses the same class structure: warm-up activity, direct instruction, collaborative learning (e.g., group work), practice activity, and checks for understanding.

Classroom Observations

Review team members observed a 7th grade Science class for 15 minutes while the lesson was in progress. The class had 12 students present. The class agenda and lesson objectives were posted. Classroom walls displayed recent student work, as well as classroom procedures. The modes of instruction observed were direct and lead and monitor. Review team members observed all students on-task. During the observation, the teacher circulated the class to support struggling students. A significant degree of student voice was observed, and students were challenged to demonstrate understanding, analyze and apply, as well as model and demonstrate. The teachers used questions to assess students' understanding of the material. Overall, the class was consistent with Camelot Academy East Leadership's comments regarding class structure, and the environment was conducive to meeting the program's goals for student achievement.

Review team members observed an 8th grade Math class that was already in progress. The class was taught by had 9 students were present. The class agenda and lesson objectives were posted. Classroom walls displayed recent student work, classroom procedures, and instructional resources. Review team members observed all students on-task. The methods of instruction observed were modeling and demonstration. Students were engaged in independent practice using worksheets and calculators. Students also asked questions and teacher circulated the classroom to assist students. A review noted that high-order questions were not observed during the portion of the class visit. Overall, the class was consistent with Camelot Academy Leadership's comments regarding class structure, and the environment was conducive to meeting the program's goals for student achievement.

Review team members observed a middle school art class at the start of the class period. Ms. Blair taught the class and 20 students were present. The class agenda, lesson plan, and objectives were posted. Classroom walls displayed recent student work, classroom procedures, and instructional resources. Review team members observed approximately 5 students off-task, and all others were on-task. Several students were unclear on what to the "Do Now" was. Most Students were engaged in a Do Now activity, some were talking to other students. The teacher asked how did students see the pictures and allow students to answer and support their differences in opinion. Ms. Blair's mode of instruction was lead and monitor. Therefore, the mode of instruction observed was independent practice. Students worked on an art project. An additional staff member assisted other student with the class work. Review team members were only able to observe the opening activity; however the posted lesson plan indicated that the remainder of the class period would include guided group practice, more independent practice, and an exit ticket. Overall, the class was consistent with Camelot Academy Leadership's comments regarding class structure, and the environment was conducive to meeting the program's goals for student achievement.

Review team members observed a high school Environmental Science class. The class had 15 students present. The class agenda, lesson plan, and objectives were posted. Most students were observed to be on-task. The teacher responded off-task behaviors by settling students saying, "Ladies and gentleman, quiet please." The depths of engagement observed were demonstration of understanding and synthesis and evaluation. Overall, the class was consistent with Camelot Academy Leadership's comments regarding class structure, and the environment was conducive to meeting the program's goals for student achievement.

Review team members observed an Algebra class for 25 minutes that was already in progress. The class had 14 students were present. The class agenda, lesson plan, and objectives were posted. Classroom walls displayed recent student work, classroom procedures, and instructional resources. All students were on-task. Students were finishing up worksheets. The class then transitioned to direct instruction. The teacher used a smart board to display lesson. Students were in preparation for a quiz and learning mathematical definitions. The teacher held students to high expectations and accountable for their answer. Overall, the class was consistent with Camelot Academy Leadership's comments regarding class structure, and the environment was conducive to meeting the program's goals for student achievement.

Review team members observed a high school English class for 15 minutes that was already in progress. The class had 20 students present. All students were on-task as they worked in small groups on their illustration of book characters. The Teacher used station teaching, discussion and modeling. The teacher challenged students to synthesize the concepts. The lesson agenda and objectives were posted. Students used textbooks and their work product as manipulatives. Students gave each other feedback on their group member's work. As a check for understanding, all students regrouped at the end of class to review details of the book. Overall, the class was consistent with Camelot Academy Leadership's comments regarding class structure, and the environment was conducive to meeting the program's goals for student achievement.

Academic Success Questions with Teachers

Teachers Mr. Cave (high school Social Studies), Ms. Blair (middle school Art) and Ms. Pierre Louis (middle school English) participated in the Academic Success Questions. All the teachers talked about using the following assessments to monitor student learning: TABE/SMI/SRI reading and math, Do Now's & exit slips daily for content assessment, questioning and observing student practice, tests, quizzes, partner practice and peer checks, as well as student demonstrating math work up at the board. The Teachers talked about using the assessments to help generate material and content, based on student levels; Teachers also use the data to differentiate instruction. In addition, the teachers use the daily classroom assessments to reflect on their praxis and review/revisit material, if needed, with the class the next day.

The Teachers discussed their strategies for targeting support to students after they receive data. They use "fun" strategies to engage students at a high level. Similarly, they use manipulatives in class to make theoretical content more concrete. Teachers talked about repeating learning themes using different content to better gauge students' progress over time. They keep the notes that students take for an entire year as a way to monitor progress and determine the supports needed. They use popcorn reading and guided reading to assist students with building their content knowledge. Teachers also talked about providing a lot of one-on-one help to struggling students as a way to deliver targeted supports.

Teachers discussed the academic data that they share with parents/guardians. They constantly stay in touch with parents via telephone with positive updates, as well as concerns. Parents are aware of the grades that their children have earned on assignments; they have access to grades via the program's website. Assignment grades are uploaded weekly so that parents know their children's pattern of behavior and participation in class. Teachers also talked about having face-to-face conferences with parents. Teachers keep track of all contact with parents via Google Docs, which allows them to see what contact has been by all staff.

The Teachers talked about the program-wide grading scale, which includes points for participation in class. Ms Koberlein, the Academic Coordinator, helps to support the Teachers to develop strategies that support student achievement across all classes. The Teachers explain that they have informal observations with the instructional and Support teams to assist in teaching practices, classroom management and differentiated supports. The teachers also participated in classroom rounds, in which teachers will visit a classroom of their peers to help gain a different perspective. The teachers explained that it helps both them and their peers in areas that they may be struggling.

Mr. Cave, Ms. Blair and Ms. Pierre-Louis talked about the supports that they receive with managing problematic student behaviors in class. Camelot Academy has behavioral support staff, who monitor classes closely and also sit in classes to prevent disruptions or further disruptions. The Teachers talked about Camelot Academy's strong school culture and norms. Norms are standard throughout the school and assist students with being great students. The feedback from their students is encouraging to the staff. Students expressed to the staff that they caring and never give up on them. Overall, the Teachers thought that Camelot Academy East is doing well academically, and that the program does a good job of preparing students academically and behaviorally to return to traditional school settings. The staff expressed loving their job and appreciating the Leadership support.

Academic Success Questions with Students

Three students from Camelot Academy East participated in the Academic Success Questions with Students. The students were: David (10th grade, age 14, from Swenson Arts/Tech High School), Sierra (10th grade, from Northeast H.S.); Sadiyah (12th grade, from Kensington H.S.). All of the students felt that their Teachers at Camelot Academy East expect a lot from them. They talked about Teachers motivating them to do well and show care and concern. The students noted that their Teachers at Camelot Academy East are better than their teachers from their previous schools. The students talked about Teachers not giving up on them and setting high expectations from getting their work done to coming to school. They expressed appreciation for the structure and guidelines because it creates an environment where they want to come to school and do their best.

The students talked about the achievement recognition they receive from Camelot Academy East staff. Students who do well get shout-outs in Town House (daily, all-school meeting), and Teachers also congratulate students on an individual basis. Camelot Academy uses a school-wide ranking system for students that is based on grades, attendance, and behavior. High-ranking students receive leadership privileges that include regular incentives (e.g., special lunches) and other privileges (e.g., no uniform days). The students stated how it works and helps them to self-manage and push to get the incentive.

All of the students stated that they plan to attend college after high school. Students talked about the support services they receive from Camelot Academy East staff in preparing for college. The students discussed with the review team the benefits of going away and staying local for college. The counselor helps with the college application process, including SAT testing. The students expressed concerns about going back to a traditional school. They did not want to lose the momentum that they have gained and stay on track.

Camelot Academy East's students were very clear about the tests that they take throughout the year and the reasons why. They talked about taking class quizzes and tests, Benchmarks, Keystones, and the SMI/SRI. The students were aware of being able to look online to see where they were academically. Receiving interim reports also kept them and their parents up to date as to where they stood with their grades.

The students expressed that Camelot Academy East is a good school and that every day the staff strive for students to be better. The staff believes in them and pushes them like their own kids. Students expressed that they feel safe and supported even with several students enrolling recently. The students stated that they could go to any staff person if there is an issue. Students have a teacher or staff member that they can talk to if there are concerns. Sadiyah and Sierra stated that they have learned to "ignore pity issues with girls" and "grow up and not resort to fighting." David expressed that Camelot Academy East has helped him to "think before acting" and is preparing him for life outside of school. When asked what they wish that Camelot Academy East, the students expressed extra-curricular activities and more electives. The female students express that there was basketball for boys, not girls. David, who came from a CTE school, would like to see CTE classes.