

**Instructional Visit Summary
Camelot Academy East**

Provider: The Camelot Schools of Pennsylvania, L.L.C.
Contract Term: FY 2018 - 2022

Site Visit Date: Thursday, March 15, 2018 - 9:00 a.m.
Program Capacity: 200

Site Visit Review Team:

Dr. Wanda Y. Jenkins, Director, Special Projects,
Opportunity and Innovation Networks
Dr. Khadijah Bright, Principal, Crossroads at Hunting
Park
Jacqueline Jones, Transition Liaison, Opportunity
Network
Elvis Mucaj, Strategy Analyst II, Opportunity Network
Tiana Wilson, Program Manager, Re-engagement
Center, Opportunity Network

Program Staff:

Jennifer Green, Executive Director, Camelot Academy
East
Alyssa Boyle, Principal, Camelot Academy East
Krista Mangle, Director, Student Services, Camelot
Academy East
Sarah Koberlein, Academic Coordinator, Camelot
Academy East
Melita Johnson, Director, Diverse Learners, Camelot
Academy East
Elizabeth Vaden, Clinical Director, Camelot Academy
East

Overview of Instructional Site Visits:

Instructional site visits consist 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** includes standardized questions that focus on: data and academic outcomes; academic outcomes versus goals; and preparation for classroom observations. **Academic Success Questions with Teachers** includes standardized questions that focus on: the use of academic assessments; academic outcomes versus goals; and the school's overall academic performance. **Academic Success Questions with Students** includes standardized questions that focus 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

Academic Outcomes. Camelot Academy East presented and discussed the program's key academic data, including literacy and numeracy growth, retention rate, graduation rate, percentage of students attending at least 80% of school days, and Special Education data. Camelot Academy East aggregated and analyzed its own data as a demonstration of the program's ability to make data-informed decisions for positive student outcomes. Camelot Academy East is pleased with the overall growth in academic outcomes, but also recognizes there is still room for improvement in areas such as student attendance. Program staff prioritizes behavioral goals with all of their students – the goal is to first cultivate a proper learning environment that will ultimately allow for improved academic outcomes. Program leadership maintains rapport with students at an individual level by checking-in with each and every one to ensure that all students' needs are being met. Camelot Academy East also utilizes the services of PATH (People Acting To Help), a behavioral health agency located in the building, to provide the extra supports needed to combat social-emotional barriers and trauma issues. Program staff make phone calls home on a daily basis to chronically absent students and conduct phone calls to wake students up for school, especially the group of seniors. Additionally, because students come from many different parts of the city, staff constantly monitor to ensure students are receiving transpasses. The program continues to implement a rewards system for students with good attendance in hopes of improving attendance. Program leadership believes that improvement in attendance rates will also lead to higher academic outcomes. Moreover, Camelot Academy East believes that showing students a path to graduation is a major driver to academic success. Students become highly motivated when advisors show them how they can remain or get back on track to graduation (whether they are a couple of years away or a handful of semesters away from graduating). At the end of the prior school year, program staff recognized writing as a need for improvement. This year, each teacher has emphasized writing by incorporating more writing based projects and requiring students to complete a written "do-now" at the start of each class. Camelot Academy East reported that special education students and English Language Learner (ELL) students are performing well. The program has a comprehensive process in place for special education students and ELL students. Special education coordinators first monitor for compliance for any students with special education identifiers (if anything is out of compliance, a coordinator works with the sending school and the District's Transition Liaison to update the student's special education profile). The program then meets with each student's family prior to enrolling to get a better understanding of the student's needs, the family's concerns, and to make parents feel comfortable that special education services will be transferred. Program leadership have also created a Google Doc profile for every student in the program. The student profile includes Individualized Education Plan (IEP) information and Personalized Learning Plans (PLPs) for special education students and ELL students, which are shared amongst all teachers and updated regularly. Staff meetings are held weekly to discuss students. Additionally, Camelot Academy East utilizes Study Island, a research-based online platform that has Reading, Math, and Social Studies components with standards-based assessment, instruction, and test preparation e-learning programs. Teachers closely monitor students to help them getting through the assessment. Camelot Academy East articulated the various ways they support middle grade students in the District's school selection process and high school students with postsecondary planning and access. For 8th graders, the program helps students apply to at least 3 schools/programs within neighborhood schools through the SDP's School Selection Process. For high school

students, Camelot Academy East has a bulletin board tracker for potential graduates, which shows what colleges they have applied to and how many job applications they have completed. Trips are coordinated for visits to college campuses as well as for colleges to visit Camelot Academy East's program to speak with students. The program offers students to take the SAT on-site for free, and ensures that all seniors complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FASFA) and three (3) college applications or three (3) job applications. Camelot Academy East also looks for opportunities at trade schools for studies in hospitality, medical science, culinary arts, and construction, as they realize not all students want to go to college. Program leadership stated a big push for next year is to help students apply for union jobs by building partnerships with unions and working more with Year Up; the goal is to expose students to a wide variety of options. In order to improve the transition experience for students, this year the program has started a transition group, to enhance the preparation process for student re-entry and to give students strategies on how to deal with the possible stigma they may receive when returning to school. Transition group sessions occur six (6) weeks before restoration.

Academic Outcomes versus Goals. Camelot Academy East prioritizes behavioral goals first: "Our primary goal is to provide a safe climate – we try to offer a lot of counseling to our students." Program leadership reported that they have reviewed Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) testing results for literacy and numeracy growth and that students are on track for 1+ year growth for the academic year. Students are performing well in classes; the majority of students are getting at least a C in all major subjects. The program feels attendance is going well but noted that there is room for improvement, thus continues to work on strategies to increase the attendance rate. Program leadership articulated the following various ways in which academic outcomes are shared with staff, families, and students:

- Daily flash, administration team meets every day
- Teachers have common planning time every week
- PD held monthly to share results
- Students have data walls in every class
- Home calls are made for students who are struggling AND doing well. All phone calls are documented in Google Docs. The school also hosts a back to school night for families
- Ratings board updated weekly (behavior, attendance, and academics)
- All students have formal periodic reviews to track progress.

Camelot Academy East uses summative assessments – TABE, midterms and finals, state assessments AND formative assessments – quizzes, scaffolding, and group collaboration to track progress towards goal achievement. Program leadership focuses on growth, not just the results. Teachers submit midterms and finals to program leadership for review before administering the tests. Program leaders review all teachers' objectives, offer feedback on assessments, and provide counseling on instructional differentiation on a weekly basis. The purpose for Camelot Academy East is to "return students to mainstream schooling", in such that, leadership customizes professional development sessions to help teachers understand who students were before they came to the program and to provide strategies for how each teacher can scaffold lesson plans to help students. Teachers are also surveyed on things they would like to see changed and what they think students need most. Program leadership provides coaching for teachers on a weekly basis and teachers are encouraged to share best practices with each other. **Classroom Observation Preparation.** When asked what we should see in classrooms, the program's Principal and Academic Coordinator articulated the following projected instructional observations: **Art– Middle School:** collaborative group work (painting ceiling tiles, theme is "what is Camelot" students are coming up with ideas; **High School:** working on portraits. **English– Middle School:** poetry analysis; **High School:** struggling class because so many new students are having a hard time trying to catch up; students

will be working on novels, doing short stories; this class has co-teachers; **Math- Middle School:** working on computing percentages in real life, how to tip, quiz today; *High School:* solving multi-step equations, teacher struggles with content; Geometry – Pythagorean theorem, students who are ahead will be given additional work. **Science- Middle School:** working on astronomy; *High School:* working on scientific method, how to document investigation (incorporation of graphics because it is an area of weakness). **Social Studies- Middle School:** French revolution, civil rights; *High School:* early humans in civilization or supreme court and case studies. **Senior Capstone**– personal finance. The experience range for teacher is one-two years.

Classroom Observations

Review team members observed a Middle School Math class for 10 minutes which was already in progress; 10 students were present in class during the observation. Independent practice was being conducted and all students were on task. Students were using calculators and working in groups. There were four (4) groups in the room working under the learning objective: SWBAT find 20% tip/commission/ and simple interest through a story. All students were working on 15 Math problems with the task of attempting to convert tip/interest/ and commission on various values; it was a race to complete the problems. The environment had an instructional focus and all students were engaged with the task set forth by the learning objectives. The environment was conducive to meeting the program's curricular and achievement goals. It was evident that academic and behavioral expectations were internalized by all of the students. However, there was no evidence of rigor and no review of concepts learned even though there was a winner for the Math race. Moreover, there was no formal assessment tool used; the teacher did check responses against his answer sheet, but there was no exit ticket or check for understanding to ensure most students understood the concepts independently from their group.

Review team members observed a High School English class for 15 minutes which was already in progress; 19 students were present in class during the observation. Classroom walls displayed classroom procedures/rules and instructional resources/manipulatives; the lesson agenda and lesson objectives were also posted. All students were on task and used textbooks during the lesson. Modes of instruction were lead and monitor, team teaching (CCT/ICT), and independent practice. There was evidence of rigor and the lesson was consistent with the agenda. A Special Education teacher was in the room alongside the General Education teacher, to provide differentiation or accommodations for students who needed extra help. There was evidence of release as students were able to convey what happened in the story and what internal/external conflicts were built into the story. The teacher used an exit ticket as the formal assessment tool. Students were working parallel of each other but had to come up with an answer as a group for the exit ticket. The review team observed various students show their ability and understanding of how to cite evidence for cause and effect.

Review team members observed a High School History class for 10 minutes which was already in progress; 14 students were present in class during the observation. Classroom walls displayed recent student work, classroom procedures/rules, and instructional resources/manipulatives; the lesson agenda and lesson objectives were also posted. All students were on task and used worksheets during the lesson. Students were split up into small groups. Each student was attentive but they were not collaborating well with each other. The depth of engagement was moderate (15-35%). Students said that they try to finish their assignments faster by splitting up their work and sharing it with each other after they are done. Modes of instruction were small group and

station teaching. The environment was conducive to learning, but students needed a little more attention as a collective class to make sure that everyone understood the material. The teacher used questioning and an exit ticket as the assessment method and tool. Students were expected to review their peers' work as a form of student self-assessment. Checks for understanding were inclusive of all students, however, they were very brief and elementary questions. Students were given different explorers to analyze, but there was not enough time for students to synthesize the material and share their findings about the different explorers with each other. Additionally, students were not provided adequate time to freely summarize what they learned in order to see if they understood the material at a higher level because they were rushed to line up and transition to the next class.

Academic Success Questions with Teachers

Mr. Cave conveyed that utilizing repetition, modeling correct answers, and using an end of lesson/exit ticket (when classes are cut short, the next lesson begins by re-teaching the prior exit ticket) as strategies to target support. Teachers noted that all academic data is shared with parents and guardians online. Additionally, teachers provide qualitative feedback (both positive and negative) via phone or during report card conferences. Both teachers noted that program leadership meets with teachers daily. Teachers are given common planning time to review student academic performance and to implement leadership feedback into their lesson plans. Teachers also lead their own weekly team meetings to share data with each other. Teachers have been instructed to aim for two-years growth, per student (although 1+ year growth is required). Behavior growth is stressed, with the primary goal of students being able to successfully transfer back into a "traditional" school. Teachers feel that they have an adequate understanding of program performance expectations. Ms. Riley and Mr. Cave were very excited about the following changes and enhancements in Camelot Academy East's school-wide systems to support the achievement of academic goals: laptop carts provided to teachers, which are very helpful; partnership with PATH, which is a big influence and valuable outlet for students; after school programs have been implemented (a lot of writing; help with credit recovery); an afterschool Girl's Club; and the number of additional private services available for all students. Ms. Riley and Mr. Cave believe that the program is making strides academically, noting that Camelot Academy East received the grade of an A out of all the other Camelot locations. Both teachers would like to see improvements with student attendance and preparation strategies for standardized testing.

Academic Success Questions with Students

Review team members met with one-11th grader, one-12th grader, and two-8th graders who were selected by Camelot Academy East leadership to participate in the Academic Success Questions with Students. The senior will graduate this June; the junior and middle schoolers are set to transition to neighborhood high schools this September. When asked what was the best thing about their program, students stated the staff are the best thing and spoke highly of the program. Students feel supported and know that program staff have high expectations of them. They feel teachers want them to work hard and lead others. Additionally, they appreciate that there is no special treatment but that they can earn their privileges. Students made it clear that they are held accountable for their actions and are offered praise when they accomplish something good. Students articulated that they like Camelot because the program is structured. Students feel like they can do better with

their behavior because they do not have to fight all the time. When asked what the mission of the school was they agreed it was to “build character”. When asked about post-secondary planning – the senior talked about how he had taken the SAT in the Fall and his plans to apply to college; the junior expressed interest in attending college or a trade school. The senior was very excited about an after-school media arts program offered through Camelot Academy East and stated that Camelot Academy East is the reason he is graduating this year. The middle schoolers expressed interest in architecture, mechanics, and robotics. All students noted that teachers want students to learn- what motivates students to come to school, finish school, and go to high school or college/trade school or enter the workforce. When asked What after school activities they would like to see as part of the program, students stated basketball, robotics, and arts and craft. Overall, students truly enjoy going to Camelot Academy East because of the structured environment and academics, as all students noted that they have seen a drastic improvement in their academics since they enrolled in Camelot Academy East.

Recommendations

The review team recommends that Camelot Academy East take advantage of opportunities to push and incorporate academic rigor in their teaching practices, for higher-level thinking with students. In order to ensure that students completely understand the lesson, review team members recommend lessons end about three-five minutes earlier. Ending lessons three-five minutes earlier will allow teachers adequate time to close lessons by reviewing the skills taught, and having students reiterate the process, before students complete an exit ticket. Finally, Camelot Academy East should continue to maintain its structured positive environment for students, families, and staff and continue to enhance its program-wide positive behavior system.