



**Your Future Starts Here**

**THE CAMELOT EXPERIENCE:**  
**Learning in a Safe Environment at**  
**Accelerated and Transitional Schools**

A Report prepared for the  
Camelot Board of Directors'  
Safety and Security Committee, Dr. Thomas C. Boysen, Sr., Chair

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# **THE CAMELOT EXPERIENCE: Learning in a Safe Environment at *Accelerated and Transitional Schools***

## **PREFACE**

Camelot Education provides alternative schooling for students who have not experienced success in conventional schools. Ninety percent of students in our *Accelerated Schools* for credit deficient high schoolers have two years growth per academic year and graduate with an actionable plan for post-secondary success in careers or in further study. Students in our *Transitional Schools* for students with behavioral infractions spend from 45 days to a year with us and have an academic growth rate twice national averages. Those accomplishments have been built on the Company's customized and personalized teaching and learning program.

Over ten years, Camelot has refined a program that promotes the safety of its students. The record – discussed in this report – documents the positive outcomes of the Camelot experience. In the last several years, two instances of employee misconduct, which were reported in the media, departed from our philosophy of learning and our values. While each was addressed immediately, Camelot's leadership and its Board of Directors determined to inquire in depth into the safety of our students and the protections we afford them. Even one instance is a breach of the solemn commitment we make to students and their families.

In March 2017, the Board determined to commission a third-party analysis of student safety, to be conducted independently of the Company and reported directly to the Board. The members believed that the best judges of student safety would be the students themselves. We sought to work with a firm that could produce an analysis with the following characteristics.

- Anonymous and confidential reporting directly from the students
- Reporting that would come from and be returned to the contractor
- Reporting that would add voluntary comments from students, also anonymous, in addition to fixed-choice responses
- Analysis that would locate quantitative data from the students and from Company sources with qualitative data, again collected and reported with assurances of anonymity and confidentiality.

This report was produced by Interactive, Inc., a company with 30 years of experience conducting 200+ evaluations of education programs nationally and internationally. The firm is listed on the US Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences *Registry of Outcomes Evaluators*. Its founder and managing director is Dale Mann, Ph.D., who is a professor emeritus from Columbia University where he was appointed to the faculties of the School of International and Public Affairs and Teachers College.

Part of Camelot's continuing success is its commitment to respect student voices. Their opinions, attitudes and beliefs are recorded in this analysis. The Company's executive

leadership join the Board in considering how we may both continue and improve on the safety of our students.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tom Boysen".

Dr. Thomas C. Boysen, Sr., Chair  
Safety and Security Committee,  
Board of Directors, Camelot Education

## **THE CAMELOT EXPERIENCE: Learning in a Safe Environment at *Accelerated and Transitional Schools***

### **1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Camelot is an alternative education company with schools serving three categories of students.

- *Accelerated Schools* enroll high school and middle school students who have fallen behind on credit accumulation.
- *Transitional Schools* enroll students who have been expelled for disciplinary problems and are often disruptive, have low school achievement and are truant.
- *Therapeutic Day Schools* enroll students with special education needs, typically severely emotionally disabled or multi-needs (those schools are not included in this analysis).

The Company's ability to advance the education of the 2,700 students who have graduated from high school has been documented in third-party program evaluations. That educational success is surrounded by a concern to keep its students safe. As one student put it, "Security is the background: learning is the foreground." This analysis focuses on aspects of student safety, especially employee-to-student interaction.

#### Camelot compared to previous schools

Students compared the safety of the Camelot school to their previous school: 93% said Camelot was safe, a gain from the 83% who thought their previous school was safe. Ten percent had been fearful of "getting hurt in my old school."

★*I'm way safer at this school than my last school cuz of the staff.* [★ indicates student quote]

#### The Camelot Model: Aspects of safety

▶ Compared to all public schools in the US, students in Camelot schools report less than half as much bullying.

▶ Nationally, 25% of schools report at least one incident dealing with illegal drugs. For Camelot schools, 15% report at least one incident.

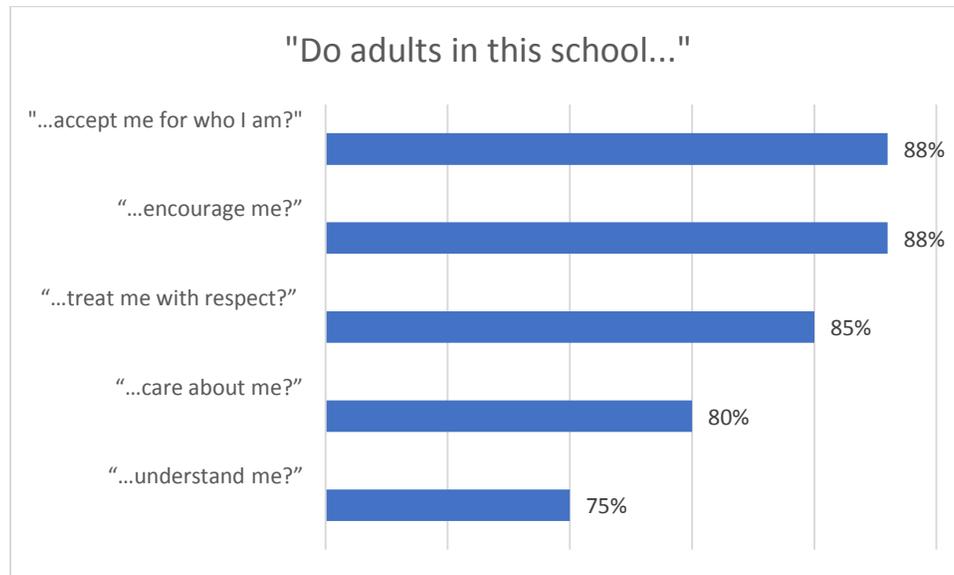
▶ Nationally, there are 132 suspensions per 1,000 students: for Camelot, there are 112 suspensions per 1,000 students – even though the proportion of previously expelled and suspended students served by Camelot schools would predict a much higher incidence.

Camelot emphasizes the positive management and guidance of behavior through a range of interventions. 87% say "I understand why this school has so many norms."

★*Sometimes I don't like the rules but I understand why they're here and why we have them.*

### Interactions with Camelot staff

Students responded to the question: "Do adults in this school..."



- ★ *The staff is cool. They look out for me and help me to get out of here.*
- ★ *The staff has helped me get my life back on track and graduate.*

### The Camelot Model: Aspects of instruction

The sites use Personal Learning Plans, direct instruction and inquiry learning. In 2015-16, *Accelerated* and *Transitional* students averaged two years of academic growth in one school year (2.1 for Reading and 2.3 for Math). Students made a summary judgement about Camelot – two-thirds said, "I like being at this school."

- ★ *If I had to choose to go back to my old school or stay here I would choose to stay at Camelot. Here we actually get taught things.*
- ★ *I didn't want to come and now I don't want to leave.*

Interactive, Inc. compared the attitudes and experiences of students enrolled in *Accelerated* schools with those in *Transitional* schools. *Transitional* students have a history of suspensions and expulsions and can be expected to be more negative than their colleagues. On inspection though, they are as positive about the Camelot experience as their colleagues with 90% and more praising the Company's safety-related behavior management and instructional procedures.

- ★ *I would have died or been in jail because that's where my life was going but these people here have changed my life to something better and for me to understand that I have got to keep fighting because I can be someone and not a no one.*

Camelot Education aspires to provide safe and productive schooling. Camelot students validate both the academic and the security parts of that promise.

- ★ *Coming to this school changed my life around physically and mentally and I love being here and coming here every day.*
- ★ *This school might not have the best reputation but it gives us more help than any other school has.*
- ★ *Camelot saved my life.*

## 2.0 BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF THIS ANALYSIS

Camelot Education has refined its model of alternative schooling over ten years and with the experiences of 6,000 students. That model focuses on a culture of positive norms, academic rigor, direct instruction and clear expectations. Camelot couples intense security to intense care. This analysis focuses on student safety and in particular, the safety of students in staff-to-student interactions.

Interactive, Inc. provides third-party empirical documentation of educational programs. The firm is listed on the US Department of Education's *Registry of Outcomes Evaluators* and has completed 200+ education program evaluations.

## 3.0 CAMELOT EDUCATION, ITS SCHOOLS AND STUDENTS

Camelot's vision for each student who graduates is that they become functional, self-sufficient contributors to society. Camelot is an alternative education company with schools serving three categories of students.

- *Accelerated Schools* enroll high school and middle school students who have fallen behind on credit accumulation necessary to graduate and/or those who have dropped out or failed the 9<sup>th</sup> grade at least once. These students are typically over-age and under-credited. To date, 2,700 students have graduated from high school.
- *Transitional Schools* enroll students who have been expelled for disciplinary problems and are often disruptive, have low school achievement and are truant. These students often need temporary placement because of behavioral infractions.
- *Therapeutic Day Schools* enroll students with special education needs, typically severely emotionally disabled or multi-needs. Those schools have not been included in this analysis.

The academic success of Camelot Education has been documented in several jurisdictions. In Camelot's Philadelphia schools, a quasi-experimental study documented the graduation rate and credit accumulation advantages to Camelot students compared to others. In a comparative analysis of the "Option school" providers working with the Chicago Public Schools, Camelot was the most effective. An analysis of Camelot's Houston, Texas school documented similar gains<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> A quasi-experimental analysis of basic skills acquisition in Philadelphia school, [http://www.mathematica-mpr.com/publications/PDFs/education/Phila\\_accelerated\\_schools.pdf](http://www.mathematica-mpr.com/publications/PDFs/education/Phila_accelerated_schools.pdf); an analysis of Camelot's original instructional model, <http://www.jff.org/publications/education/remediation-acceleration-early-lessons-t/1319>; and a matched comparison group study of graduation rates in Philadelphia schools, [http://cameloteducation.org/wp-content/uploads/RFA\\_-\\_Accelerated\\_Schools\\_Report\\_Aug\\_2012\\_Final.pdf](http://cameloteducation.org/wp-content/uploads/RFA_-_Accelerated_Schools_Report_Aug_2012_Final.pdf). C. Le & L. Allen, (2011) "From Remediation to Acceleration: Early lessons from two Philadelphia Back on Track

At the end of the 2016-17 academic year, Camelot enrolled 3,551 students in 26 *Accelerated* and *Transitional* schools in five states. This analysis is of 2,636 responses (74%) of the enrollment.

CAMELOT ACCELERATED AND TRANSITIONAL SCHOOLS WEB-SURVEY RESPONDENTS BY GENDER		
	<i>Accelerated</i> Schools	<i>Transitional</i> Schools
Enrollment	1,840 (52%)	1,711 (48%)
% Female/% Male	47% / 53%	37% / 63%

Two-thirds identify as “Black or African-American;” about a fourth are “Hispanic;” and 5% identify as “White.” Ten percent report that the main language spoken at home is not English.

The Company’s schools focus on students who have not been successful in previous schooling and, many of whom have created problems at their previous schools<sup>2</sup>. Students have one and often more than one of the following: behavioral difficulties, trauma-based reactions, psychiatric diagnoses, developmental disorders, substance abuse problems, learning issues, sensory issues, communications limitations, anger management, impulse control issues and juvenile justice involvement.

A Camelot school day is seven hours. Staffers greet students outside the school, a procedure that provides an initial assessment of the students’ readiness to learn and that also facilitates physical safety. Students enter through metal detectors and surrender cell phones. The day begins with an all-student *Townhouse* meeting that goes beyond a conventional ‘home room’ and builds Camelot’s normative culture, *esprit de corps*.

On average, a student is enrolled in Camelot for 119 days. A typical American academic year is 180 days: Camelot’s average of 119 days reflects mid-year enrollments or assignments, returns to the sending school, etc. Of the 119 enrolled days, the average student is present at a Camelot site 92 days (half that of a public school year exposure). Thus, the Company has an unusually limited window of opportunity to help its students, especially the *Transitional* group. For those students, Camelot’s job is to prepare them to re-enter and succeed in the sending school.



The campuses are often in high-poverty neighborhoods with gangs and other criminal activities. This reports what

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Schools” Jobs for the Future. R.D. Goddard and R.J. Miller (2015) “2013-2014 Performance Evaluation of the Behavior and Academic Intervention Program Operated by Camelot Schools of Texas for the Houston Independent School District.

<sup>2</sup> These are students who have failed at schooling and who have been failed by their previous schools – both.

Camelot students think and feel about their safety in Camelot and their previous schools, in their homes and neighborhoods and among their peers and the Company's staff.

#### 4.0 FEELINGS OF SAFETY BY LOCATION: SCHOOLS, HOMES AND NEIGHBORHOODS

Students reported whether they felt safe at their old school and at the Camelot school. Students compared the safety of the Camelot school to their previous school: 93% said Camelot was safe, a gain from the 83% who thought their previous school was safe. Ten percent were fearful of "getting hurt in my old school:" at Camelot, only 7% have that worry.

★ *I'm way safer at this school than my last school cuz of the staff*<sup>3</sup>.

These students feel safer at Camelot facilities – 4.1 average 'agree' compared to 3.9 for the old school.

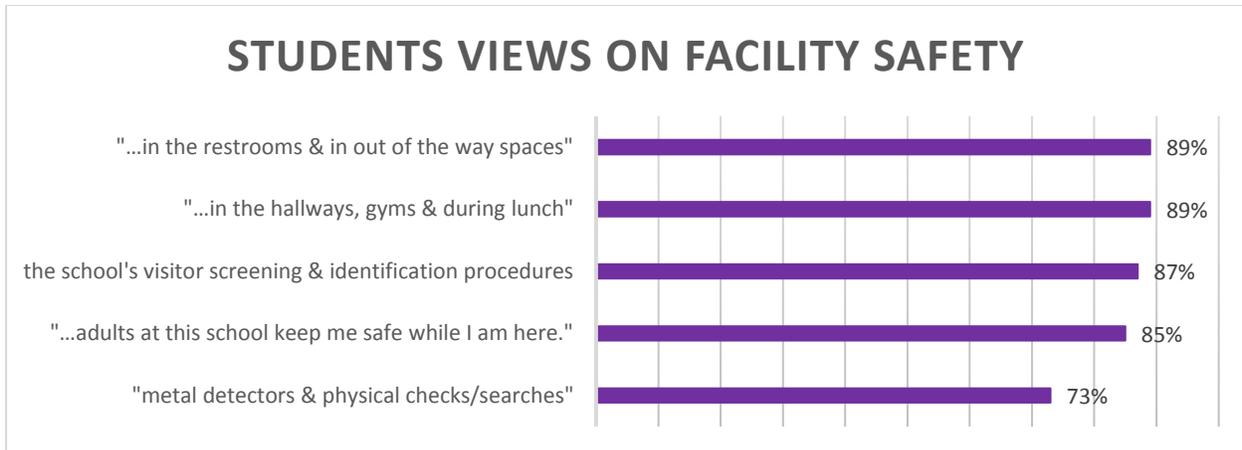
★ *Things run so much better and differently here. I know every day when I come in the building I will be safe. In the (other) high school, I had to worry about who was behind my back and had to watch where I was going and be aware of who was in the bathroom. Staff hasn't given up on me yet even though I gave plenty of reasons to give up on me. Sad to say I will miss this place.*

Most Camelot students – 54% – came to Camelot because they had been "...suspended or expelled from my other school and had to enroll in Camelot."<sup>4</sup> A smaller group – 44% – volunteered. Because students enrolled in *Transitional Schools* are more likely to have had discipline and behavior incidents in their previous schools, we would expect them to respond differently to the question of safety. With more behaviors that were unacceptable in their previous schools, they may also have felt more unsafe. But the differences are not large: students from *Transitional* schools are only a little less likely to feel safe in the Camelot school – for *Transitional* students, 92% felt safe compared to 95% for *Accelerated*.

Camelot schools operate in difficult neighborhoods. One school administrator described getting phone calls from gang leaders to warn him of impending violence around the school (but not in the school). We asked students what they thought of the safety of the facilities.

<sup>3</sup> Italicized material, prefaced by ★ are quotations volunteered by Camelot students in the anonymous web-survey of their experiences.

<sup>4</sup> Of the total enrollment, 48% are in *Transitional* schools that enroll previously suspended or enrolled students. Fifty-four percent of all the respondents (from either type of school) said they had come to Camelot as a result of being expelled. Thus, some students in the *Accelerated* schools have also been expelled.



And, 85% credit Camelot: "The security measures that Camelot uses keep me safe."

We asked several questions about the perceived safety of the students' surroundings:

- I feel unsafe in my neighborhood – 10% agreed (11% are uncertain)
- I am fearful of getting hurt in my neighborhood – 14% agreed (16% are uncertain)
- I feel unsafe in my home – 2% agreed (3% are uncertain)

There were no interpretable differences between female and male students.

## 5.0 INTERACTIONS WITH OTHER STUDENTS

Four out of five Camelot students report getting along with their peers. Asked how much they agreed or disagreed that, "I got along/get along with people from other cultural or ethnic backgrounds," 81% said 'Yes' for their former school and 83% say 'Yes' for Camelot – a slight advantage.

Proactive student participation in school affairs is a lever in Camelot's work with its students (see 7.0 "The Camelot Model," below). Three-fourths of the students say they "...support my peers to help keep this school positive and safe." Six percent deny doing that. Given how important peer relations are in adolescence, that super-majority involvement with peer support is a wholesome response.



There is a darker side to amicable relations. Students responded to two questions about bullying – both with reference to their experience at Camelot – Had they been bullied? And had they bullied others? Nine percent say they have been the target of bullying<sup>5</sup>. That figure for Camelot students is less than half what other middle and high school students reported in 2017 – the national figure is that one in

<sup>5</sup> For all the items that asked about bullying, the uncertain group ranged from 15% to 20%.

five complained of being bullied at school<sup>6</sup>. Four percent report being bullies, that is, that they “...bullied other students...” And, predictably, *Transitional* students were more likely to bully others than were *Accelerated* students – 7% compared to 4%.

Thirty-seven percent report that “Fighting between students is a problem at this school” (17% strongly agreed and 20% agreed). While students report a concern about fighting, small groups – 1% or 3% of a school’s enrollment (*Accelerated* and *Transitional* schools, respectively) – account for the most incidents (see below, 7.0 “The Camelot Model: Aspects of Safety”) and the recorded incidents are not daily but across a school year. Almost a third of the students said, “Physical bullying is a problem at this school” (32%). But, although a fraction of the student body report ‘fighting’ and ‘bullying’ – in the school – only 7% felt “physically unsafe around other students at this school:” 79% thought themselves safe.

★*They [the Camelot staff] make sure kids don’t get into fights.*

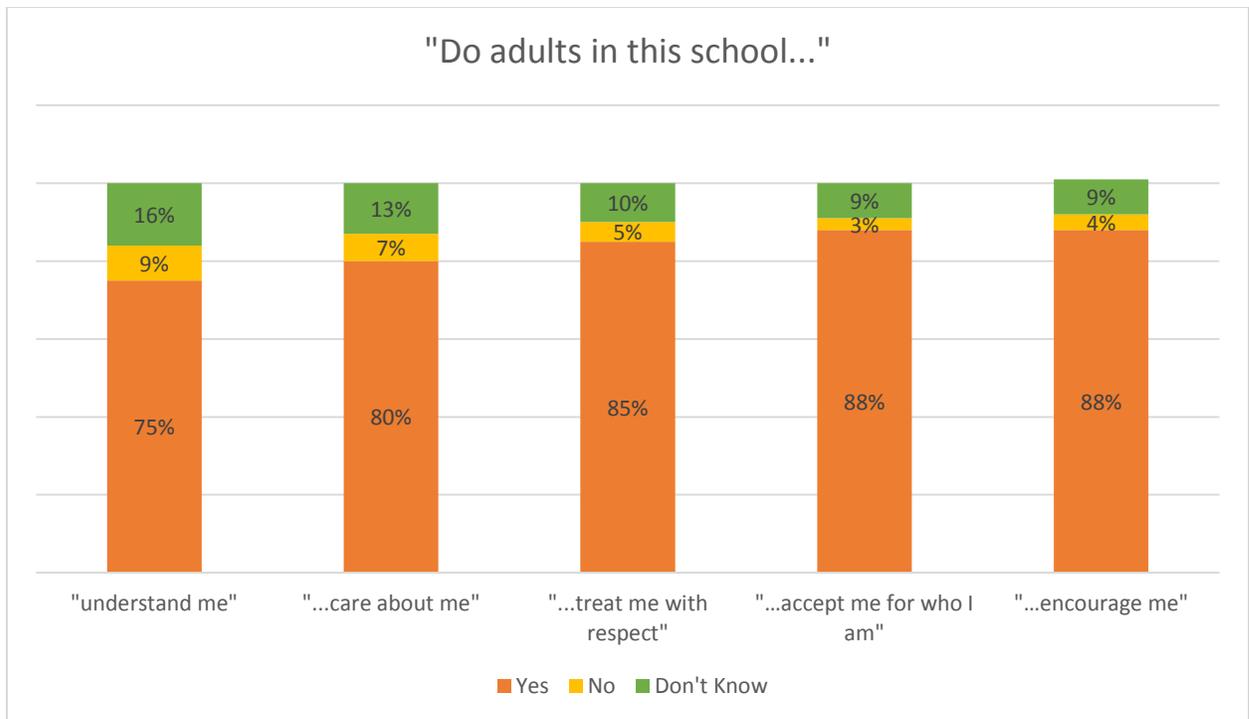
More students report verbal than physical bullying – 38% (18% strongly agreed and 20% agreed). Thirteen percent feel “emotionally unsafe around other students at this school.” Seventy percent felt safe, emotionally. While there are differences between *Accelerated* and *Transitional* students (see above), there are not differences between male and female students, that is, Camelot keeps both safe.

## 6.0 INTERACTIONS WITH CAMELOT STAFF

We asked Camelot students a disarmingly simple question – did they feel themselves to be accepted in the Camelot school? Eighty-seven percent said ‘Yes:’ 5% said ‘No:’ and 8% were on the fence. Given the prior experience of these students – many of whom have been expelled or suspended from their previous schools – 87% is a resounding vote of confidence.

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<sup>6</sup> M. Danilova, “Report: Bullying persists in schools, sex assault reports up,” May 16, 2017, AP NEWS, WDC. Note that 15.5% reported being bullied electronically during 2016. *C.f.*, Musu-Gillette, L., Zhang, A., Wang, K., Zhang, J., and Oudekerk, B.A. (2017). *Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2016* (NCES 2017-064/NCJ 250650). National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, and Bureau of Justice Statistics, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. Washington, DC.



It is doubtful that super-majorities of these students would credit their former teachers with 'accepting them,' 'encouraging them,' 'caring about them,'<sup>7</sup> 'treating them with respect,' or 'understanding them.'

★ *The staff is cool. They look out for me and help me to get out of here.*

★ *The staff has helped me get my life back on track and graduate.*

Schools can be stressful and problematic with issues pressing on the students from different directions. Would they, could they turn to the staff for help? Eighty-five percent said they would "...get support from adults at this school" when they had a problem: 4% said 'No,' and 11% were undecided.

★ *I like it in the Camelot program. They care about each and every one of us and don't want to see anyone left behind.*

We pressed – if the student had a problem about safety with another student, would Camelot staff listen? Eighty-four percent said they would listen: 8% doubted that: and another 8% were undecided.

We also asked about possible problems between the students and the staff.

- Eighty-seven percent "feel physically safe around adults at this school" (4% did not feel safe: 9% were ambivalent).

<sup>7</sup> In previous research about Camelot and its students, only 45% said that "Teachers at that [previous] school cared about me." Half of the respondents in that study characterized their previous school as "A good school but did not meet my needs." D. Mann, et al., (2015) "Documenting Student, Program and Other Outcomes from *Camelot Education*," Ashland, VA., Interactive, Inc.

- Asked if they felt “emotionally safe around adults at this school,” 81% said ‘Yes’ (7% disagreed and 12% were uncertain). The anonymously volunteered remarks of four students (two-tenths of one percent of the responding group) were negative about this aspect of their interaction with Camelot staff.

If they had a perceived problem of safety coming from a Camelot employee, would a staff member listen to them? 82% said they would get a hearing (8% said ‘No:’ and 10% were unsure). We repeated the same question with slightly different wording, “...(A)n adult at this school would listen to me if I had a problem with an employee at this school.” The pattern of results confirms the first responses and ‘Yes, a Camelot staffer would listen.’

## 7.0 THE CAMELOT MODEL: SAFETY ASPECTS

Camelot is a continuing demonstration of effective behavior management. Students are recognized and rewarded; and, where appropriate, they are sanctioned. For example, nationally, there are 132 suspensions per 1,000 students: for Camelot, there are 112 suspensions per 1,000 students – even though the proportion of previously expelled and suspended students served by Camelot schools would predict a much higher incidence<sup>8</sup>. Camelot schools – and their students – operate in an unusual context. The sites record “discipline incidents.” The table below compares discipline problems generated by *Accelerated* and *Transitional* students. *Transitional* students have three times more reported incidents<sup>9</sup>.

Comparison of Discipline Incidents Per Year: <i>Accelerated</i> versus <i>Transitional</i> Students (n = 2600)		
Number of incidents per student	<i>Accelerated</i> (%/count)	<i>Transitional</i> (%/count)
0	87% (1144)	51% (613)
1	10% (127)	42% (507)
2	3% (37)	3% (36)
3+	1% (11)	3% (33)

For student safety, an in-your-face obvious feature of Camelot schooling is the exceptionally tight security, intense control of students. When classes are in session, a student that wants to

<sup>8</sup> Diliberti, M., Jackson, M., and Kemp, J. (2017). Crime, Violence, Discipline, and Safety in U.S. Public Schools: Findings from the School Survey on Crime and Safety: 2015–16 (NCES 2017-122). U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. Washington, DC. Retrieved 080117 from <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch>.

<sup>9</sup> The most recently available national evidence about crime in schools is: “During the 2009-10 school year, 85 percent of public schools recorded that one or more crime incidents had taken place at school... 1.9 million crimes... a rate of 40 crimes per 1,000 public school students...” Robers, S., Zhang, A., Morgan, R.E., and Musu-Gillette, L. (2015). Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2014 (NCES 2015-072/NCJ 248036). National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, and Bureau of Justice Statistics, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. Washington, DC.. p v. Note: The Camelot data show reported behavior incidents, not “crimes.”

use the bathroom will be accompanied to the hallway door where the student's teacher will shout "Male in the hallway." That alerts a behavior specialist in the hallway to accompany and/or monitor that student and, *not* to allow a second student into the hallway until the first returns. There are no blind spots in Camelot hallways or staircases: every adult is in eye contact with at least one other adult throughout the day. To the metal detectors and pat-down searches, Camelot blankets students with rules and expectations that are recorded, publicized, monitored, and consistently and universally applied with rewards and sanctions. For teachers, safety is a necessary component of instruction. For Camelot's 'behavior specialists,' safety is the job. The Company recruits candidates to fill the behavior specialist role who have appropriate credentials.

★ *The reason I feel safe at this school is because... we always have someone watching.*

★ *I feel safe in this school because they check and search people. They help us have better conduct and better attitude and that keeps us doing a good job.*

### 7.1 Teaching student behavior

Camelot schools communicate an obvious and pervasive environment of security. Part of that is rules and procedures that 'manage' the students with explicit boundaries, rewards and sanctions. But Camelot does more than manage behavior, it teaches behavior. As one executive put it, "We teach middle class behavior. We teach what kids need to succeed in the world." Does a teen-ager make eye contact? Speak audibly? Dress acceptably? Keep appointments? Accept direction? Respond to expectations? Or, are they resentful, surly, slovenly, irresponsible and hostile? Camelot accepts young people who have not had many chances to learn how to succeed and, over time, equips them with more functional skills and attitudes.

★ *This school helps me with a lot like how to control myself and how to talk to people and the school keeps me on the right track.*

Some critics may bristle at Camelot's "middle class" aspirations as bourgeois and culturally insensitive. Some of those critics also charge schools with running a 'school-to-prison pipeline.' Camelot runs a school-to-school or school-to-work pipeline: of the 92% of *Accelerated* enrollees who have graduated, 99% have gone on to post-secondary education or employment. Of the four Chicago-based Camelot schools, 96% of the eligible students have graduated from high school. It is worth asking, what do young people need to succeed? Do they need to be reliable, punctual, attentive, civil and supportive? One of Camelot's prescriptions for success is, "middle class behavior."



★ *You guys put me on the right path.*

### 7.2 Managing student behavior

The same super-majority of Camelot students that have endorsed other dimensions of their experience, also appreciate

Camelot's rules: 87% say "I understand why this school has so many norms<sup>10</sup>" (5% disagree and only 8% are undecided).

★*Sometimes I don't like the rules but I understand why they're here and why we have them.*

The reasons for the norms and knowledge about the norms draw similar responses. Asked if "I know the five basic norms at this school" the response pattern is the same. A smaller group, but still more than three-fourths of the respondents say, "The five basic norms of this school help me make better decisions." Those norms are:

1. No one has the right to hurt another person.
2. Education and the classroom are sacred.
3. Never behave in any way that will discredit yourselves, your family, your peers or your school.
4. Take pride in Camelot's school
5. A Camelot student is always a lady or gentleman.

### 7.2.1 Statures and privileges

Camelot makes a sequence of statures available as part of its guidance and reinforcement of student pro-social, pro-personal behavior, e.g., *Pledge* ➔ *Eagle* ➔ *Exec* statures, each with privileges and markers such as distinctive shirts.

Students must earn privileges including eligibility for field trips, a hierarchy of school uniforms, use of student government lounge, "freedom from walking in protocol," etc.



Each site deploys a system to monitor and record student behaviors against known criteria, the "Rating System." This has three levels<sup>11</sup>.

Level 1 – *Opportunity*. Includes eye contact; polite forms of address; knowledge of school procedures and staff (by name); punctuality; "Understand how norms and redirection are utilized;" and "grow personally, cognitively and behaviorally..."

Level 2 – *Development*. Includes, "adjust to the normative culture;" "...redirect the negative behavior of peers;" support the normative culture; and "grow personally, cognitively and behaviorally."

Level 3 – *Strength*. School personnel watch for consistent behavior on the above criteria, personal decision-making skills, potential for leadership, and diligent, purposeful application of time at school.

<sup>10</sup> Public schools have "rules" and "regulations" and "codes of conduct." Camelot intentionally labels its expectations as "norms" to differentiate them and to emphasize its practices.

<sup>11</sup> While all campuses use a rating system, and while the purpose and increments are similar, there are local variations in, for example, the descriptive titles for the levels.

An unusually large proportion of students – 94% – say that they “...understand what I have to do to earn my status:” only 3% disagree and only 3% remain uncertain. More than four out of five (82%) “...know my weekly rating and what it means<sup>12</sup>.”

★*I like the teachers and director here because they pushed me to get better grades and never hang around the wrong people again and they pushed me to get my black shirt which I have on now.*

More than four out of five students (83%) say that, “I am recognized when I do good work or make good grades.”

Each site has a student government that recognizes positive behavior and is “...responsible for the development of positive leadership, the support of positive norms and .... Coordinating campus activities.” In public schools, student government is often a popularity context. In a Camelot school, students earn their way into the school’s governance: grades are monitored and recorded, functional participation is another part of determining eligibility. Seventy percent say that “Having a student government makes this school better.” And fully 85% “...understand what it takes to become a member of student government.” It is not likely that students at Camelot were part of the government of their previous schools: that such high fractions endorse Camelot’s provision of such opportunities and know how to be eligible is an endorsement from the students. And that, in turn, may be part of why four out of five students (81%) report that “We learn things about ourselves and life in addition to regular subjects...”

★*This is a great school for students that need to learn about respect.*

### **7.2.2 The Structure of Camelot Behavior Norms**

In the Company’s ten years, it has refined a set of beliefs about students and educators that include a positive peer culture with

- high expectations (e.g., that students will involve themselves in guiding other students)
- insights and prescriptions from social science research (e.g., “emphasize behavior change and life skills development,” view students as “basically good and worthy of respect,” “treat disruptive youth as normal”) and
- rules (standards that are enforced by hierarchal authority) replaced with norms (standards enforced by the peer group).

Staff estimate that it takes two to four weeks for a student newly come to Camelot to understand and appreciate Camelot’s system. *Transitional* school enrollees spend on average of 90 days in a Camelot school before they are returned to their previous school. That relatively short exposure combined with their presenting characteristics (academic and behavioral issues) challenges the ability of Camelot to impact these students.

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<sup>12</sup> In previous research about Camelot students, 46% reported that, in their old school, it was hard to find out how they were doing at school. Camelot’s weekly measures and reports are a service to young people seeking guidance. D. Mann, *ibid*.

If Camelot were only strict rules strictly enforced, it would not succeed. Camelot sites operate with five basic behavioral norms.

1. No one has the right to hurt another person.
2. Education and the classroom are sacred.
3. Never behave in any way that will discredit yourselves, your family, your peers or your school.
4. Take pride in Camelot’s school
5. A Camelot student is always a lady or gentleman.

And, there is a sequence of increasingly severe consequences for failing to follow the norms.

1. An Action plan	7. An In-school suspension
2. A Student conference	8. Assignment to “Concern” status
3. Loss of status activities	9. Removal from extra-curricular activities
4. A Parent conference	10. Referral to probation officer
5. A Special assignment	11. Appropriate legal action
6. Restitution	12. Arrest, where appropriate

Note: The “Concern” status is an interval on the students’ weekly “Force Field” rating. The “Concern” designation is assigned if the student resists expectations, poses physical safety threats, requires frequent redirection, disrupts learning, is not self-controlled, does not accept responsibility or is an obstacle to the learning environment (Operations Policies and Procedures, 2016-17).

### 7.2.3 Levels of intervention

For problems of student behavior, Camelot deploys “progressive discipline,” a sequence of interventions. *Note Bene:* Although the sequence of interventions described below ends with physical restraint, that restraint is only to be used to prevent harm to the student or others. Camelot specifically separates discipline and restraint. “At no time will discipline take the form of corporal punishment” and, “The student Behavioral Management Plan shall take the form of positive, constructive interaction between the student and staff members.” (Camelot Operations Policies and Procedures, 2016-17).

Peer Support. One early stage intervention expects students to confront/assist other students. If an interaction from one student to an acting-out student is insufficient, students have the option to “ask your peers for help” (Student & Parent Handbook). Intervening students are cautioned that it is unacceptable “...to touch other students or restrain them when dealing with peer behavior.”

When staff become involved, all the staff are trained in five successive steps of de-escalation.

De-escalation Technique #1 - Friendly Non-Verbal. Gestures delivered with empathy.

De-escalation Technique #2 - Concern Non-Verbal. “...(S)tern and forceful facial gestures, hand gestures or other non-verbal gestures.

De-escalation Technique #3 - The Helpful Verbal. “Verbally communicate, in a cordial manner, their concern with the student involved in the incident. “

De-escalation Technique #4 - Concern Verbal – “...(I)nform the student in question, that his/her actions are fast becoming a major concern to that staff member. Intervening staff would accomplish this by using different voice levels, facial expressions and non-physical actions.”

De-escalation Technique #5 - Staff Support - “Staff support is given through both non-verbal and verbal communications such as different voice levels and facial expressions. In addition, supporting staff also observe the de-escalation to ensure that all act professionally and prepare the physical environment to ensure safety if the student has become a threat to himself/herself or others.”

And, if none of the previous interventions have been effective and if – and *only if* – the behavior is a risk to the student or others, then Camelot moves to “Emergency Safety Interventions (ESI’s)”

ESI #1: Restrictive Procedures – *Staff Escort*. “The sole purpose of the Staff Escort is to provide the student with a final attempt to gain self-control. The Staff Escort shall be conducted by staff who places one hand on the student’s wrist and the other on the student’s elbow. The purpose of this technique is to communicate to the student that the behavior is becoming a major concern to the safety of others. The student’s response will determine if the intervention will be de-escalated or if a restrictive procedure is necessary. If at any time during the Staff Escort, the student becomes out of control and a threat to injure himself/herself and/or others is present, a restrictive procedure will be utilized.”

ESI #2: Restrictive Procedures - *Handle with Care*. “If all de-escalation techniques have failed and the student becomes a threat to himself/herself and/or others, staff members trained in *Handle with Care* restrictive procedures will restrain the student according to *Handle with Care* protocol. The restraining staff will use the least amount of physical restraint as possible until the student is no longer out of control or a threat to himself/herself and/or others. At this time, staff will take this opportunity to talk with the student and use the incident to help the student mature and grow.”

Do students understand that sequence? We asked, “I received an explanation and was given a copy of the levels of intervention when I enrolled at this school.” Eighty-seven percent agreed that had happened: 6% said ‘No’ (which is not likely to be accurate) and 7% were unsure (a value that is less than half of the ‘undecided’ group for many other items).

Most students “...see the teachers and behavior specialists at this school use the levels of intervention...” (83%, ‘Yes;’ 6%, ‘No;’ and 11% unsure). And, 80% endorse the result – “The levels of intervention help make this school safe.” Eighty-four percent of the students recognize that “Adults...help students to de-escalate negative behaviors;” (6% disagree and 10% ‘don’t know’).

### 7.2.4 Behavior specialists

Camelot schools are staffed with “behavior specialists” who focus on safety. Their job is to protect learning by preserving order and, where necessary, to apply the more intrusive forms of student restraint that are specified in the Company’s safety procedures.

*★I’m so distracted by the drama going on around me. I feel like other people get mad because they have to do the work and that sets them off and it makes it hard to complete assignments.*

Many secondary schools deploy school guards who patrol the hallways, monitor the entrance and exit and, in an emergency, help with security. Camelot’s behavior specialists are responsible for those tasks but also for supporting student progress. The job requires the equivalent of a Bachelor’s degree in Education, Social Services or Criminal Justice and goes beyond discipline and behavior management. The Behavior Specialist job description includes:

- Responsible for daily operations including climate, safety and environment for all students, staff and visitors.
- Knows each student in their assigned classrooms and makes every effort to identify with them on a personal level while maintaining appropriate staff and student boundaries.
- Promotes student, school and program success by working directly with students and implements effective behavior improvement programs...
- Fully supports the academic goals of the students and understands and supports current curriculum and instructional approaches for students including students with special needs.



What is the reaction of previously, even chronically un-successful students to Camelot’s intensive safety procedures? Resentment? Resistance? Resignation? Or something else? Asked if (a) the teachers and (b) the behavior specialists ‘make me feel safe?’ Camelot’s students respond to each group similarly – 78% agree they’re present for safety, 6% disagree and 16% are undecided. Students are interpreting Camelot staff with the same conclusion –

they promote safety. Camelot’s sequence of interventions deploys teachers and then behavior specialists, a group whose responsibility it is – when nothing else works – to use physical restraints. The last resort physical presence of the behavior specialists is welcomed although not by the six percent some of whom have likely been restrained. That conclusion is strengthened by responses to a related question, “The behavior specialists make my classrooms run better.” A small fraction (6%) disagree including the student who said:

*★The school is not safe because the behavior specialists are too rough.*

Of the 155 substantive (and anonymous) comments volunteered by Camelot students, four were critical of Behavior Specialists.

Camelot’s enrollment can be volatile and disruptive. Ensuring attention to learning requires ensuring order in classrooms and that is the joint responsibility of teachers and behavior

specialists. More than three-quarters of the students credit the behavior specialists with contributing to the classroom environment (7% dissent and 17% are undecided).

### 7.2.5 The Possibility of abuse from staff to students

Because 54% of Camelot’s enrollment reports having been suspended or expelled from other schools, there is a continuing possibility of student-initiated physical or verbal abuse in the Camelot setting. That is borne out in the one-third of the respondent group who thought that physical fighting and verbal abuse were problems at their school<sup>13</sup>. The levels of intervention are a structural, processual safeguard and one that students endorse (see 7.2.3 “Levels of Intervention” above). But they aren’t a 100% guarantee that in heated exchanges adults may make mistakes in applying the levels or that students may perceive that they have been mistreated. What then?

Camelot has developed detailed procedures and safeguards to govern staff interactions with the 54% who have been expelled or suspended. Student intake begins by identifying risk factors for aggressive or assaultive behavior with “Safety plans... for each identified risk student to prevent behavior escalation, emphasizing the least restrictive but appropriate and effective plan for prevention of injury to self and others.” (OPPS Behavior Management, 2016-17)

And, the staff is prohibited from:

- “...(U)sing any form of discipline that does not fall under PBIS (positive behavior interventions and supports). This includes hurting the student with force, object, physical activity or yourself” and
- “No student shall be subjected to behavioral management procedures that are out of proportion to the particular inappropriate behavior.” (Camelot New Hire Orientation, 2016-17)

Where out-of-control student behavior is a danger to the student or others, some (but only some) Camelot staff are authorized to apply the most physical of restraints – an “Emergency safety intervention.” Designated staff are trained in and required to adhere to an eight-step, detailed protocol for that use of protective force.

Asked if they would “...report a crime that happened to me at school,” 61% said they would, 20% said they would not, and 19% were undecided. The question’s language did not specify where the crime might come from – another student or a staff member. A bigger group – 78% – agreed that “I understand what kinds of problems or incidents I should report at this school.” And 83% said that, “If I reported a problem of physical or sexual abuse, the school would investigate what I said.”

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<sup>13</sup> We note that the *Student & Parent Handbook* identifies as the number one “Non-Negotiable Behavior,” “Fighting” and states, “Student is placed in an ESI. Student is processed and neutralized. Parents contacted... Probation officers contacted... Student will be placed on Concerned Status for 2 school days. If... fight was premeditated, law enforcement will be contacted.” The same section deals with “Battery on Staff” (p 36).

## 8.0 THE CAMELOT MODEL: ASPECTS OF INSTRUCTION

Every Camelot student has a Personal Learning Plan (comparable to an Individual Education Plan). Across its 40+ campuses, the Company provides a Common Instructional Framework (the “CIF”) of intensive remediation in reading and math and features: (1) literacy groups; (2) writing to learn; (3) inquiry learning; (4) group work; and (5) connections to prior learning and prior experience<sup>14</sup>. The instructional strategies are supplemented with computer labs for interventions and credit recovery. Behavior specialists and peer tutors support classroom instruction.

Camelot’s academic accomplishments have been documented in previous independent research. In 2015-16, *Accelerated* and *Transitional* students averaged two years of academic growth in one school year (2.1 for Reading and 2.3 for Math).

*★If I had to choose to go back to my old school or stay here I would choose to stay at Camelot. Here we actually get taught things.*

One of Camelot’s most instrumental features is getting its students qualified to graduate high school. Eighty-nine percent say, “This school is preparing me to meet my graduation requirements” (and almost half of the 89% strongly agree that Camelot is helping). An even bigger group (93%) “...understand what I need to do to graduate.” Camelot schools, especially the *Accelerated Schools*, exist to get young people over the graduation hurdle: that more than nine out of ten understand what they need to do is an encouraging accomplishment.



*★This is a good school to get credit recovery and your grades up.*

Public schools have been criticized for clinging to orthodoxies that don’t work. That may be especially true for those that enroll students with low-achievement who are typically “held back” where they often repeat the same thing that didn’t work the first time. Camelot is different.

*★This is a great choice for anyone getting expelled because they have a support system like no other.*

Camelot is a combination, a balance of behavior and academics. The behavior norms promote safety but they also make teaching and learning possible. From the student’s perspective, security is the background, learning is the foreground. Students made a summary judgement about Camelot – two-thirds said, “I like being at this school:” 16% did not and 16% were undecided.

<sup>14</sup> Camelot also has a range of student support services that are more typical of a post-secondary institution than a conventional high school – career development and student placement; post-secondary education placement; scholarship and grant eligibility and support; diagnostic evaluation services; personal and/or academic counselling.

★*Camelot ensures that you are well treated when you are here. And that everything at home is OK... The teachers try to make you understand and help you on tough problems*<sup>15</sup>.

★*I didn't want to come and now I don't want to leave. I'm glad I was sent here. I made so many relationships with staff and students.*

Students responded to two questions – ‘My classwork is interesting’ and ‘My classrooms are inviting’ – the classwork gets high marks from two-thirds of the respondents (19% are ambivalent). The classrooms are judged “inviting” by 71% of the respondents (21% are ambivalent).

★*This school is the best when it comes to individual student help, staff and teachers are wide open to anyone who needs a hand or advice.*

★*Glad the teachers pushed me to be a better student.*

★*More schools should be like this.*

## 9.0 CONCLUSIONS

This analysis adds student voices about the safety of the Camelot experience to the schools’ record of academic accomplishment – recall, for example, the two years of basic skills acquisition in one year of instruction. Why does Camelot succeed where other schools do not *and* with students who have been unremittingly challenging for their whole prior school career? One part of the explanation may be that Camelot has what other schools do not – the ability to focus on, concentrate on the presenting needs of these young people. Public schools are tasked with dealing with everyone: Camelot can concentrate. There was a time when hospitals had general populations: they now have special facilities for cardiac patients, neo-nates, intensive care and so on. Camelot is the education version of specialized healthcare.



Nationally, 36% of urban schools have “sworn law enforcement officers routinely carry(ing) firearms while at school” [Diliberti, et al., 2017]. Camelot, dealing with concentrations of students who have been expelled or suspended has no armed law enforcement officers on its campuses. Camelot Education describes its model as integrating, “...behavior and academics to create an active and intentional positive normative culture where students learn to be accountable for behavior and reengage to fulfill their academic potential.”

★*This school gives me a better chance to work on myself and change.*

Nationally, 73% of urban schools report using “formal programs of social-emotional learning to prevent violence” [Diliberti, et al., 2017]. One hundred percent of Camelot schools deploy the comprehensive, detailed, layered program of social-emotional learning described here. And, “We make these outcomes possible through a consistent emphasis on positive norms, a

<sup>15</sup> Camelot schools also invite parent and community involvement with, for example, parent/teacher conferences; parent open houses; FASFA Night(s); twice yearly College & Career Fairs; and Spirit Weeks.

dedicated focus on academics, and personalized, caring environment to reengage our students to take ownership of their education” (source: *The Camelot Story*, 2017). The Company’s procedures do not treat either academics or behavior in isolation. If a student falls behind in the course work, Camelot asks, “Why? What explains that?” If the student acts out, Camelot asks, “That’s a problem, but what is underneath it?” Either way, the schools look for underlying causes which, if resolved, will help the students self-actualize. In pursuit of that, all the campuses are partnered with community-based social service agencies providing, for example, substance abuse help, family services, etc. Camelot’s is a holistic, all-cause, all-court press for student success that models what Justice Center of the Council of State Governments recommended in its *CONSENSUS REPORT: Strategies from the Field to Keep Students Engaged in School and Out of the Juvenile Justice System*. “The extent to which students are safe, connected, engaged, and supported in their classrooms and schools—collectively known as the ‘conditions for learning’—is critical to their academic and personal success. Schools that create welcoming and secure learning environments reduce the likelihood that students will misbehave, and improve educators’ ability to manage student behavior.” [Morgan, E., Salomon, N., Plotkin, M., and Cohen, R., (2014) *THE SCHOOL DISCIPLINE CONSENSUS REPORT: Strategies from the Field to Keep Students Engaged in School and Out of the Juvenile Justice System* (New York: The Council of State Governments Justice Center), p. xi.]

What if Camelot’s intense security combines with its intense care to provide an experience that is customized to maximize success among a needy population? Camelot’s two categories of enrollment provide a kind of naturally-occurring test of the Company’s ability to provide effective schooling for special populations. Both the *Accelerated* and *Transitional* enrollments present with deficits in conventional schooling – low grades, deficient credit accumulation, attendance problems, etc. The *Transitional* students compound those difficulties with behavioral problems that have led to suspension or expulsion.

The two groups do differ. Half the *Transitional* group report ‘fighting between students is a problem at this school:’ 43% of the *Accelerated* group do. While 85% of the *Accelerated* students “like being at this school,” only 75% of the *Transitional* students share that enthusiasm (although three-quarters is still a vote of unusual confidence). Would they ‘report a crime at this school?’ – 81% of the *Accelerated* group said ‘Yes;’ 70% of the *Transitional* students would.

But if we consider that the expulsion and suspension histories of the *Transitional* group members signal (sustained) negative attitudes and likely violent behavior<sup>16</sup>, plus low academic achievement, it is reasonable to predict that the *Transitional* students will have different and more negative perceptions of the Camelot experience than their *Accelerated* colleagues.

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<sup>16</sup> Recall the Company’s description of the profile of the students it serves: “Students have one and often more than one of the following: behavioral difficulties, trauma-based reactions, psychiatric diagnoses, developmental disorders, substance abuse problems, learning issues, sensory issues, communications limitations, anger management and impulse control issues.”

That is not the case. Rather, *Transitional* and *Accelerated* students have similar and positive responses to the following items – all are in the 90+% ‘agree’ range from both groups:

- I feel that adults at this school care about me
- I feel that the adults at this school understand me
- Adults at this school treat me with respect
- Adults at this school encourage me
- I get support from adults at this school when I have a problem
- The teachers – and the behavior specialists – make me feel safe
- I feel physically safe around the adults at this school
- I feel emotionally safe around the adults at this school
- I feel physically safe around the other students at this school.

Camelot’s ability to connect to previously ‘hard-to-reach’ students is remarkably consistent across two challenging groups of learners. It is also interesting that the Camelot model gets acquired by *Transitional* students even though their experience of Camelot is (intentionally) much briefer than the *Accelerated* group. Even with an abbreviated window of intervention, Camelot works.

*★I would have died or been in jail because that’s where my life was going but these people here have changed my life to something better and for me to understand that I have got to keep fighting because I can be someone and not a no one.*

Camelot Education aspires to provide safe and productive schooling. Camelot students validate both the academic and the security parts of that promise.

*★Coming to this school changed my life around physically and mentally and I love being here and coming here every day.*

*★This school might not have the best reputation but it gives us more help than any other school has.*

*★Camelot has given me a second chance.*

*★Y’all keep up the amazing work at teaching the students to be better in life and make wiser decisions.*

*★Camelot saved my life.*



## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1: Methods

This survey was deployed to all Camelot students who were in attendance during the two-week survey interval. Responses were anonymous and accessible only to Interactive, Inc. In most instances, teachers accompanied classes to a computer lab. When the students had completed the survey, the teacher verified that they had reached the last “Thank you” screen but otherwise had no involvement in the students’ participation.

As of the last week in June, Camelot enrolled 3,551 students in 26 schools in five states. This analysis is of 2,636 responses (74%) of the enrollment. The 2,636 students provided useable responses. That is, their web-surveys could be linked to the Camelot SIS for descriptive characteristics and they treated the data collection seriously. Our useable response excluded:

- students who failed the validation tests (two items were inserted with directions for specific entries: if the respondent did not enter the directed responses, it was evidence of response-set, that is, an un-attentive, uncooperative respondent.
- Students who did not complete the survey in a single sitting and re-entered a subsequent, duplicate survey.
- Students with partial responses. Most of these are duplicate ID’s and probably result from computer/connectivity interruptions.
- Students who had just enrolled in Camelot.

Compared to other schools, enrollment in Camelot schools is unusually volatile and a direct result of the population served. Enrollment in *Transition* schools is determined by the sending jurisdiction and those students are expected to return to the sending school. Paid employment, child care, criminal justice obligations, travel-associated dangers all compete with attending school as does geographic mobility.

Interactive, Inc. compared the descriptive characteristics of the enrollment to those of the respondents. This non-response bias check indicates that the two groups were sufficiently similar as a whole and in type of school (*Accelerated* or *Transitional*), gender, language of origin, etc. to conclude that the response group is representative of Camelot’s enrollment.

## Appendix 2: Student Web-Survey

Please Note: The items used Likert-scale response formats. Most of the analysis combined responses of “Strongly agree” and “Agree” and “Strongly disagree” with “Disagree” and excluded “Don’t know” responses. Exceptions are noted in the text.

	Question
Q01	I feel safe in my neighborhood.
Q02	I am fearful of getting hurt in my neighborhood.
Q03	I feel safe in my home.
Q04	I felt safe in my old school.
Q05	I got along with people from other cultural or ethnic backgrounds at my old school.
Q06	I was fearful of getting hurt in my old school.
Q07	I have bullied other students at this school.
Q08	I have been bullied by other students at this school.
Q09	I feel safe at this school.
Q10	I like being at this school.
Q11	I get along with people from other cultural or ethnic backgrounds at this school.
Q12	I support my peers to help keep this school positive and safe.
Q13	I know my weekly rating and what it means.
Q14	Enter "Agree" for this item.
Q15	I understand what I have to do to earn my status.
Q16	I received an explanation and was given a copy of the levels of intervention when I enrolled at this school.
Q17	I see the teachers and behavior specialists at this school use the levels of intervention with students at this school.
Q18	The levels of intervention help make this school safe.
Q19	Going through metal detectors and physical checks/searches makes this school safer.
Q20	I feel safe in the hallways, gyms, and during lunch in this school.
Q21	I feel safe in the restrooms and in out of the way spaces in this school.
Q22	The adults at this school keep me safe while I am here.
Q23	This school makes sure that visitors sign in and get an ID before walking through the building.
Q24	I feel physically safe around other students at this school.
Q25	I feel emotionally safe around other students at this school.
Q26	I am accepted at this school.
Q27	Enter "Strongly disagree" for this item.
Q28	Fighting between students is a problem at this school.
Q29	Physical bullying is a problem at this school.
Q30	Verbal bullying is a problem at this school.
Q31	If I have a problem about safety with another student, Camelot staff will listen to me.
Q32	If I have a problem about safety with a Camelot employee, a Camelot staff member will listen to me.
Q33	I get support from adults at this school when I have a problem.
Q34	I feel that the adults at this school understand me.
Q35	I feel that the adults at this school care about me.
Q36	I feel that I could talk to an adult at this school if I had a problem with an employee at this school.
Q37	I feel physically safe around the adults at this school.
Q38	I feel emotionally safe around adults at this school.

	Question
Q39	Adults at this school accept me for who I am.
Q40	Adults at this school treat me with respect.
Q41	Adults at this school encourage me.
Q42	Adults at this school help students to de-escalate negative behaviors.
Q43	The teachers make me feel safe.
Q44	The behavior specialists make me feel safe.
Q45	The behavior specialists make my classrooms run better.
Q46	This school is preparing me to meet my graduation requirements.
Q47	I understand what I need to do to graduate.
Q48	Teachers push me to achieve more and make better grades.
Q49	My classwork is interesting.
Q50	My classrooms are inviting.
Q51	I am recognized when I do good work or make good grades.
Q52	We learn things about ourselves and life in addition to regular subjects at this school.
Q53	I know the five basic norms at this school.
Q54	I understand why this school has so many norms.
Q55	The five basic norms at this school help me make better decisions.
Q56	I understand what it takes to become a member of student government.
Q57	Having a student government makes this school better.
Q58	Opportunities for sports, clubs, and/or other campus activities makes this school better.
Q59	I would report a crime that happened to me at this school.
Q60	I understand what kinds of problems or incidents I should report at this school.
Q61	If I reported a problem of physical or sexual abuse, the school would investigate what I said.
Q62	The security measures that Camelot uses keep me safe.
Q63	Why did you enroll in Camelot?
Q64	English is the main language spoken in my home.
Q65	How do you identify yourself? (Optional)

The last item of the web-survey gave students the opportunity to comment (anonymously) on whatever topic they chose. We had 331 comments. Half were not substantive, for example, “I’m cool,” “Hello,” “No, thanks.” Of the 155 substantive comments, 85% (131) were positive – examples are cited in the text above (marked ★); 5% (8) were negative, e.g., “I hate this school”; and the balance dealt with food (26 respondents wanted better lunches); or a wish for more school-sponsored sports (12). [The comments were multiple response.]

### Appendix 3: About Interactive, Inc.



**Dale Mann, Ph.D.**, is Professor Emeritus at Columbia University (Teachers College and the School for International & Public Affairs) and Managing Director of Interactive, Inc. Since 1985, he has concentrated in developing and evaluating the gains from e-learning, a field in which Mr. Mann has been identified as one of America’s ten most influential leaders.

Interactive, Inc. is listed on the US Department of Education’s Institute of Education Science’s *Registry of Outcome Evaluators* and was one of the Department’s contractors for a longitudinal, statewide documentation of the effects of technology on student achievement and school improvement. The firm’s 200+ past and present R&E sites and clients include:

State Departments of Education:	Corporations:
Arizona	Camelot for Kids
Idaho	Celt Corporation
Indiana	Compass Learning
New York	Dell Computers
Ohio	Edison Learning
Pennsylvania	e-Sylvan
Virginia	Global Scholar
West Virginia	Homeroom.com
City & County School Districts:	Houghton-Mifflin
Asbury Park, NJ	K12, Inc.
Dallas, TX	LeapFrog
Freeport, NY	Lightspan
Harrison County School District Two, CO	Lightspeed
Henrico, VA	National Institute for Excellence in Teaching
Houston, TX	Plato Learning, Inc.
Lusk County, WY	Pearson
Miami-Dade, FL	Scholastic
Middletown, NY	International:
New York City, NY	CDIH – Republic of Korea
Niobrara County, WY	Kyoto Computer Gakuin – KCGI - Japan
San Francisco, CA	

Interactive, Inc. is a full-service firm that provides third-party independent analysis of learning improvement. The firm specializes in direct measures of program results and in writing reports that are grounded and compelling. Interactive regularly helps its partners raise third-party project funding.

Dr. Mann has been involved with school improvement since the 1960's when his Washington service included responsibility as Special Analyst for Education in the Executive Office of President Lyndon Johnson and work implementing the research titles of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act*. Dr. Mann is the author of books and articles on school reform including *Policy Decision Making in Education* and, *Making Change Happen?* He is the founding chair of the International Congress for School Effectiveness, an organization with members from 72 countries focused on improving schools for the most-needy children.