



NATIONAL
DROPOUT
PREVENTION
CENTER

Program Assessment and Review
of
Camelot Education

Executive Summary

For full report, email contactus@cameloteducation.org

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National Dropout Prevention Center

713 E. Greenville Street, Suite D #108, Anderson, South Carolina 29621

864-642-6372; Email: ndpc@dropoutprevention.org

www.dropoutprevention.org

Review Team: Dr. Sandy Bales and Dr. Lateshia Woodley

Executive Summary

In 2019, the NDPC conducted a program assessment and review of Camelot Education's alternative, social and emotional learning-based education programs. The NDPC assessed two Camelot schools in Pennsylvania—one in Philadelphia and one in Lancaster—examining each through the lens of dropout prevention. These two programs are part of Camelot's scalable, proven-effective model, and are indicative of the organization's nationwide programs and initiatives, reflecting the environment and culture of comparable facilities within the Camelot family.

After conducting onsite visits and in-person interviews with a mix of current students, district partners, alumni, parents, and staff members, the NDPC found that Camelot's programs provide a safe and supportive environment for students at risk of disengaging from school. Camelot's curriculum and culture directly align with NDPC's Trauma-Skilled Schools Model, which is designed to support students who have experienced trauma and struggle to engage successfully in school or have already disengaged from the educational process. In particular, findings showed that the programs build student resilience by cultivating relationships, establishing a sense of security and offering diverse opportunities for achievement.

While the programs focus on enabling a student's academic progress, they also uniquely position the work within a structure that values the whole student. As one parent said, "The staff is involved with the students more than just academically. They are also connected with the kids psychologically and emotionally. It makes my daughter see that somebody is watching out for her and wants her to be successful. Since coming here, she handles things better. Before, if there was a difficult situation, she would lash out, but now she can sit down and have a conversation and work things through. She's also more interested in her work and reaching her goals."

Consistency, communication and clearly conveyed expectations are hallmarks of all of Camelot's programming. NDPC found that Camelot builds a safe, caring and orderly climate and culture that promotes collegial relationships among students, parents/guardians and staff. There are reasonable and defined implications for departing from established norms, and teachers emphasize the need for continuous growth while modeling acceptance. In addition, NDPC found students felt cared for and supported through ongoing opportunities to

build strong relationships with adults who will support and assist them. This fosters a strong sense of caring and community between students and with faculty.

Fundamentally, the individualized attention and small school environment Camelot offers help reduce distractions and create a cohesive structure in which non-traditional students can thrive. As one public school district official pointed out, “Our goal is not just to get a student back on track to prevent them from dropping out, our goal—and something that Camelot has been a wonderful partner in—is actually getting a student set up for what society would refer to as the markers of success. Having a program like this is essential to provide students with tools and soft skills to build character and confidence and ultimately become academically successful. A lot of times negative behavior is a manifestation of something else, a lack of academic confidence or self-esteem. By focusing on building students up, we can set them on a trajectory for a lifetime of success.”

Overall, the NDPC found that Camelot programs truly support and promote the growth of students in alternate environments, both behaviorally and academically. Moving forward, Camelot is committed to continuously soliciting feedback from students, parents, districts, and staff to identify areas for improvement. As part of this commitment, and the annual Quality Management review process, the organization will identify ways to improve its programming, keep abreast of evolving best practices and adapt to changing student needs to best interface with the host school systems and the communities it serves. In addition, Camelot will continue to explore ways to increase community sponsorships and interactions to help students build stronger connections through real-life service-learning opportunities and professional development programs. If you are interested in the full report of the NDPC’s findings and recommendations on Camelot’s scalable, proven-effective model, please email us at contactus@cameloteducation.org.