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THE LOST KIDS PROJECT: HOW URBAN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS THAT ARE OVER-AGED AND UNDER-CREDENTIALED AND HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUTS DESCRIBE THEIR NEEDS DEFICITS

A Doctoral Thesis Presented to the
Faculty of the College of Education
University of Houston

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education
in Professional Leadership

by

Joseph B. Carter III

November 2016

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ABSTRACT

Every day, 7,000 students drop out of America’s high schools. That adds up to about 1.3 million students who will not graduate with their peers (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2011, p. 1). With 1.2 million students dropping out of high school every year, the high school dropout rate is a significant problem with negative consequences for both the students and for society as a whole. While the U.S. Department of Education announced that the nation's high school graduation rate hit an all-time high of 82% in 2013-14 (“U.S. High School Graduation Rate Hits New Record High,” 2015, p. 1), most large urban school districts are struggling to get their graduation rates to 70%. In Philadelphia, the four-year graduation rate is 65% (Socolar, 2015). In Chicago, the graduation rate is 66%, as measured by the five-year graduation rate (Perez, 2015). One of the strategies that Philadelphia and Chicago are using to increase their graduation rates is opening accelerated high schools for students who are over-aged and under-credentialed to earn their high school diplomas. These accelerated high schools are not computer-based half-day programs; instead they rely on longer school days, remediation in literacy and numeracy, and a structured behavior environment to support their students in earning their high school diploma. The researcher will use archived student surveys of accelerated students enrolled in the Camelot Education’s accelerated high schools in Philadelphia and Chicago to uncover, identify and describe factors that impeded students from matriculating through high school and receiving their high school diploma. This study will identify a common profile and description of students in Camelot Education’s accelerated high schools. This study will use descriptive statistics to summarize, identify, describe and quantify what students report contribute to their becoming academically off track and making the decision to leave high school without earning their diploma. The profile and descriptions from this study will equip school leaders to explore innovative school and program designs that meet the needs of students that are over-aged and under-credentialed in large urban cities.

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CHAPTER I—INTRODUCTION

Every day, 7,000 students drop out of America’s high schools. That adds up to about 1.3 million students that will not graduate with their peers (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2011, p. 1). The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child states in Article 29, “that every child has the right to an education that is directed to develop their personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential” (Unicef & others, 1989, p. 9). Graduation is one of the milestones in a person’s life. It signals the entrance or genesis into adulthood. A high school diploma is supposed to certify and represent to the world that a young person has amassed the knowledge needed for a basic education and is ready to further his or her education in college, trade school or the military. Many minority students and students of low socioeconomic status will not graduate (Balfanz & Legters, 2004). “Lacking a high school diploma, these individuals will be far more likely than graduates to spend their lives periodically unemployed, on government assistance, or cycling in and out of the prison system” (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2011).

Just in the past month, an article in the Associated Press stated that “U.S. public high schools have reached a milestone, an 80 percent graduation rate” (Hefling, 2014). This means that as a nation, one student out of five leaves high school without a high school diploma and unprepared for the job market (Hefling, 2014). In contrast, “the average high school graduation rate in America's large urban school districts, which serve large numbers of children from very disadvantaged backgrounds, is only about 50%” (Guryan & Ludwig, n.d.).

Who Is Dropping Out?

"NCES reports that on average, 3.4 percent of students who were enrolled in public or private high schools in October 2008 left school before October 2009 without completing a high school program" (American Psychological Association, 2012, p. 1). When broken down by race, "42 percent of Hispanic students, 43 percent of African American, and 46 percent of American Indian students will not graduate on time with a regular diploma, compared to 17 percent of Asian students and 22 percent of white students" (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2011, p. 3).

The overriding common characteristic for these schools is location in poverty-stricken areas with high rates of unemployment, crime, and ill health (Balfanz & Legters, 2004). In addition, their student bodies are comprised disproportionately of children of color (Balfanz & Legters, 2004). More than 60% of black students attend schools where more than 50% of the school population is identified as living in poverty, compared to 18% of white students (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2011).

Research shows that there is a strong and well defined link between children growing up in poverty and high school dropout rates. "Students from low-income families dropped out of high school five times more than students from high-income families in 2009" (American Psychological Association, 2012, p. 1).

"Nearly half of the nation's African American and Latino students attend high schools in low-income areas with dropout rates that hover in the 40-50% range" (Balfanz & Legters, 2004; Children's Defense Fund, 2004). Schools that have a graduation rate of less than 60% have been labeled as "dropout factories." These "dropout factories" make up about 12% of the nation's schools but account for about 50% of our nation's dropouts and two-thirds of the ethnic minority dropouts (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2011, p. 3). High schools with the worst promoting power are concentrated in a sub-set of states.

> Nearly 80% of the nation's high schools that produce the highest number of dropouts can be found in just 15 states (Arizona, California, Georgia, Florida, Illinois, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, and Texas). (Balfanz & Legters, 2004, pp. V-VI)

"These 'dropout factories' are estimated to produce 81% of Native American, 73% of African American, 66% of Latino, and 34% of White dropouts respectively (Balfanz, 2007)" (American Psychological Association, 2012, p. 2).

In a report issued by the National Center for Education states,

> the event dropout rate for students with disabilities was not significantly different from dropout rate for students without disabilities. From 1996-1997 through 2005-2006, the percentage of students who exited special education and school (dropped out) decreased from 45.9 percent to 26.2 percent (U.S. Department of Education, 2011). (American Psychological Association, 2012, p. 6)

However, there are large discrepancies between disabilities of students. According to data collect by the U.S. Department of Education in 2005-06,

> students with disabilities who do not complete high school had emotional disturbance (44.9%); , speech or language impairments (22.7%), and specific learning disabilities (25.1%); intellectual disabilities (22.3%), and other health impairments (23.4%). On a positive note, during the same period 56.5% of

> students with disabilities graduated with a high school diploma. (American Psychological Association, 2012, p. 6)

Precise dropout rates for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender students (LGBT) are hard to find; in 1998 graduation rates were estimated to be more than triple the national rate (American Psychological Association, 2012). About 33% of LGBT students do not complete high school (American Psychological Association, 2012, p. 5). Kosciw et al. (2012) believe that the main cause of LGBT students not completing high school centers around a hostile school climate. According to the data they gathered, 64% of LGBT students reported feeling unsafe while in school because of their sexual orientation, 45% felt unsafe because of their gender expression, 82% of LGBT students reported being verbally harassed and 38% reported being physically harassed because of their sexual orientation. These researchers believe that most LGBT students do not report this harassment because they believe that teachers and administrators will do nothing to resolve the issue; 37% of LGBT students reported that they had reported incidents, and that teachers and administrators did not do anything to respond to the issue. Because of this, 32% of LGBT students reported missing an entire school day (Kosciw et al., 2012, pp. xiv-xv).

> A national survey found that LGBT students fared worse on many measures of academic achievement and school engagement than their peers (i.e., having a lower GPA, higher likelihood of failing a class, and less positive feelings towards teachers or school in general) (Pearson, Muller & Wilkinson, 2007). (American Psychological Association, 2012, p. 6)

Statement of the Problem

With 1.2 million students dropping out of high school every year, the high school dropout rate is a significant problem with negative consequences for the students, and society as a whole.

Dropouts Cost the U.S. Billions in Lost Tax Revenue

Starting with our nation’s finances, in a report by the *New York Post*, high school dropouts are costing some $1.8 billion in lost tax revenue every year. In a time when 24 states are reporting budgets smaller than the previous year, “if states were to increase their graduation rates, state and federal lawmakers could be plugging their budgets with workers’ taxes instead of furloughing teachers, closing drivers-license offices and cutting unemployment benefits” (“High school dropouts cost $1.8 billion every year,” 2013).

To illustrate this point further, Pennsylvania Department of Labor had Northeastern University conduct a study to understand the fiscal impact of one high school dropout on the state of Pennsylvania. The researchers at Northwestern documented that one high school dropout had a lifetime cost $305,000 in potential gain to the federal, state, and local governments compared to students who graduated (Fogg, Harrington, & Khatiwada, 2008, p. vii).

After examining the cost of high school dropouts, it would follow that closing the dropout rate gap would be a good investment. When the costs of investment to produce a new graduate are taken into account, there is a return of $1.45 to $3.55 for every dollar of investment, depending upon the educational intervention strategy (Levin & Rouse, 2012). If the U.S could graduate all the students that should graduate each year, the

> additional earnings from a single high school class would likely pour a total of $154 billion into the national economy. Unless high schools are able to graduate their students at higher rates, nearly 12 million students will likely drop out over the next decade, resulting in a loss to the nation of $1.5 trillion. (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2011, p. 5)

Dropouts Have Significantly Lower Wages

Dropouts make significantly less than high school graduates and college graduates. Dropouts are far more likely to experience reduced job and income opportunities, chronic unemployment, incarceration, or require government assistance than the rest of the population (American Psychological Association, 2012, p. 6). In 2009, the average annual income for a high school dropout was $19,540, as compared to the annual earnings of $27,380 for a high school graduate. College graduates were expected to earn $46,930. This is a difference of $7,840 and $27,390, respectively (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2011, p. 1).

> High school dropouts are bearing the brunt of the ongoing recession more than the rest of the population. While the national unemployment rate as of January 2012 is 8.3%, for individuals without a high school diploma it is 13.1%, compared to 8.4% for high school and 4.2% for college graduates (U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2012). (American Psychological Association, 2012, p. 7)

Dropouts Weaken Our Nation’s Competeveness

The high school dropout epidemic threatens U.S. competitiveness in the global marketplace. “Among developed countries, the United States ranks twenty-first in high school graduation rates and fifteenth in college attainment rates among twenty-five- to thirty-four-year-olds" (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2011, p. 3). The annual dropout rate represents an exponential loss of human capital in terms of human productivity and creativity. Dropouts represent a tremendous loss of human potential and productivity, and they significantly reduce the nation's ability to compete in an increasingly global economy. Each year the domestic work force increases its demand for workers and higher levels of education. If the dropout rate continues at the current rate, the U.S. is on track to realize a 3 million person shortfall for workers that have a post-secondary degree by 2018 (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2011, p. 3). This stifles business and increases pressure to import workers from other countries.

Dropouts Drive Up Criminal Justice Costs

Dropouts, specifically males, have a significantly higher risk of incarceration (jails, prison, juvenile detention centers). In 2007, male dropouts between the ages of 16 to 24 were 6.3 times more likely to be institutionalized than high school graduates and 63 times more likely to be institutionalized when compared to males with bachelor degrees (American Psychological Association, 2012, p. 7). Of the inmate population in state and local prison, 41% have less than a high school education. Americans could save 1.4 billion dollars a year just by increasing the high school completion rate of men ages 20-60 by one percent (Dianda, 2008, p. 4).

Dropouts Heavily Dependent on Welfare and Public Assistance

Given the lower wage earning potential and the higher jobless rates, many high school dropouts have inadequate income to live on their own or support a family (Sum, Khatiwada, & McLaughlin, 2009, p. 13). Due to the income inadequacies, high school dropouts are more likely to be on public assistance, food stamps or federal assistance for needy families. “If all single mothers obtained at least a high school education, the annual cost savings would be $3.8 billion” (Dianda, 2008, p. 4).

Dropouts Have Increased Health Costs

As compared to high school graduates, dropouts are at a higher risk to suffer and die prematurely from cardiovascular disease, cancer, infection, injury and diabetes. “Conservatively, each and every cohort of high school dropouts (based on 600,000 students) represents $23 billion in public health costs and $110 billion in forfeited health and longevity” (Dianda, 2008, p. 4).

Dropouts Represent a Loss on Investment

Americans invest heavily every year in our public schools through local, state, and federal taxes. The money is invested to bolster our economy; global security and our global competitiveness depend on a well-educated constituency. “Every student who falls short of the goal of earning a high school diploma represents a financial investment that did not pay off in a credential of value in the labor market” (Vargas, 2013, p. 1). Given current median levels for state spending on K-12, closing these gaps would reduce the cost of high school completion for low-income students by as much as $1,371 per high school diploma (Vargas, 2013, p. 2). “The savings add up quickly. For every 1,000 low-income high school graduates, the cost to completion would be lowered by $1,371,000 ($1,371 x 1,000)” (Vargas, 2013, p. 2).

U.S. Department of Education Moves Toward a Uniform State Graduation Rate

For years, each individual state has defined the method for how they calculate their graduation rate. States have also varied their standards and definitions of a regular or standard diploma. As a result, it has been impossible to compare graduation rates across states (Dianda, 2008, p. 5). The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) introduced reforms into the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) that challenged all school districts to educate all students to high standards (U.S. Department of Education, 2008, p. 1). Accountability and reforms were put in place for any campus or district not meeting the standards set for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). With the dropout rates increasing, graduation rates were listed as one of the measures of AYP. Accurate measurements of states' graduation rates were difficult to compare; the Department of Education had to create a "uniform and more accurate measure of calculating high school graduation rates, strengthen public school choice and supplemental educational services requirements; and increase accountability and transparency" (U.S. Department of Education, 2008, p. 1). The new "four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate" requires school officials to have written confirmation and documentation before removing a student from a cohort (U.S. Department of Education, 2008).

The final regulations define the "four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate" as the number of students who graduate in four years with a regular high school diploma divided by the number of students who entered high school four years earlier (adjusting for transfers in and out, émigrés and deceased students−see below).

- Students who graduate in four years include students who earn a regular high school diploma at the end of their fourth year; before the end of their fourth year; and, if a state chooses, during a summer session immediately following their fourth year.

- To remove a student from a cohort, a school or district must confirm in writing that a student has transferred out, immigrated to another country, or is deceased.
- For students who transfer out of a school, the written confirmation must be official and document that the student has enrolled in another school or in an educational program that culminates in a regular high school diploma (U.S. Department of Education, 2008, p. 1).

The U.S. Department of Education began requiring states to use a “four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate” in the 2011-12 school year to calculate graduation rates to determine Adequate Yearly Progress (Dianda, 2008, p. 5). Campuses and districts that do not make AYP several years in a row enter into a corrective action process that, if not successful, could end up taken over by the state or reconstituted.

The purpose of this study was to determine the reasons high school students disengage and become over-aged and under-credentialed in urban high schools. The researcher’s interest in the program design to support and get these students back on track to graduate. In order to glean insights into why students leave urban high schools, the researchers accessed both surveys given to students in a program designed to get urban high school students back on track and graduate. Surveys were used to gather data on perceptions, attitudes and beliefs concerning what the students see as their most needed supports.

Research Questions

The following questions guided my research:

1. What is a typical demographic profile of students in Camelot Education’s accelerated high schools in Chicago, IL and Philadelphia, PA?
2. How do students in accelerated high schools describe their family characteristics?
3. What are the disciplinary, legal, and security characteristics that students enrolled in accelerated high schools report concerning their neighborhoods and their previous schools?
4. How do students enrolled in accelerated high schools describe their schools’ connectivity in both their previous schools and current accelerated high schools?

Theoretical Framework

Every day, 7,000 students drop out of America’s high schools. That adds up to about 1.3 million students who will not graduate with their peers (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2011, p. 1). “The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child states in Article 29, that every child has the right to an education that is directed to develop their ‘personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential’” (Unicef & others, 1989, p. 9). In order to design and develop schools and programs for students that are over-aged and under-credentialed, campus and central office administrators must understand the profile of students who are not matriculating toward their high school diploma. Included in the profile of students who are over-aged and under-credentialed are nonacademic impediments that are socio-emotional and environmental in nature. Campus and central office administrators need to understand the role of the campus administrator, academic indicators of students that drop out, Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, social leaning theory, human agency, and school connectivity.

Researcher Assumptions

This study involves assessing archived surveys given to Camelot Education’s accelerated high school students in Chicago and Philadelphia. Students participated on a completely voluntary basis. To the researcher’s knowledge, no student was given any compensation or benefits in exchange for their participation. The procedures used to conduct the survey were designed to keep all of the survey responses anonymous, due to the nature of the questions and responses. Students were also assured that their responses were completely anonymous.

The researcher has significant experience working with students in accelerated high schools in Chicago and Philadelphia. The researcher was a principal in one of the Philadelphia accelerated high schools several years ago and is a member of the central office that oversees the schools. It is important to maintain objectivity throughout the research process. To this end, campus-level accelerated high school administrators conducted the surveys and the surveys were accessed by the researcher as archival data.

Significance of the Study

Ever since congress passed the No Child Left Behind Act (Public Law No. 107-110) in 2001, districts and schools have been intensely focused on graduation rates (Clark, 2012). In reviewing the literature on dropouts, approximately 28 states have created early warning signs to identify students who could potentially drop out of high school (Sparks, 2013). Most states have relied heavily on the work of Elaine Allensworth with The Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Research at the University of Chicago and Robert Balfanz, the co-director of the Everyone Graduates Center at John Hopkins (Sparks, 2013). The Chicago Consortium examined ninth grade students and defined being off-track toward graduation as not earning enough credits to be promoted to the tenth grade and failing one or more core courses. The Chicago Consortium also noted that attendance and students' school climate and culture played a significant role in students being off-track by the end of their ninth-grade year (Allensworth, 2004; Allensworth & Easton, 2007). Similarly, Robert Balfanz studied sixth graders in Philadelphia and discovered four warning flags and one accelerator. The four warning flags were less than 80% attendance, failing a math, failing a reading, or receiving an out-of-school suspension. The accelerant was receiving a poor behavioral grade from any of the student's teachers (Balfanz, Herzog, & Mac Iver, 2007). Both of these studies resulted in behavioral issues causing academic failure.

This study used student surveys from Camelot Education's accelerated high schools to identify the behavior and environmental underpinnings of students' academic failure that leads to dropping out of high school. All of the students enrolled at Camelot Education's accelerated high schools have either dropped out of school or are off-track towards graduation. Seeking to understand the profile of an accelerated high school student, along with their family structure, legal, discipline, security, and school connectedness issues, school leaders can better understand how to design programs and interventions to support students that are off-track toward graduation.

Definition of Terms

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)

Under the accountability provisions in the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, all public school campuses, school districts, and the state are evaluated for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Districts, campuses, and the state are required to meet AYP criteria on three measures: Reading/Language Arts, Mathematics, and either Graduation Rate (for high schools and districts) or Attendance Rate (for elementary and middle/junior high schools).

> If a campus, district, or state that is receiving Title I, Part A funds fails to meet AYP for two consecutive years, that campus, district, or state is subject to certain requirements such as offering supplemental education services, offering school choice, and/or taking corrective actions. (McCoy, 2013)

Over-Aged and Under-Credentialed

Students who are sixteen years of age or older and have failed the ninth grade at least once with zero to five credits toward graduation are considered over-aged and under-credentialed.

CHAPTER II—REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Since the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB Act) of 2001 (Public Law No. 107-110), the focus and scrutiny of student achievement has increased dramatically (Clark, 2012). The NCLB Act was a new answer to old problems that had been studied and documented for the previous twenty years. In the 1980s, the National Commission on the Excellence in Education released the report *A Nation at Risk*, which explained that U.S. schools were failing and that without intervention, the U.S. would no longer be competitive in the global marketplace. In the 1990s, Bill Clinton passed Goals 2000 and reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act as the Improving Schools Act. This act required states to create academic standards to assess core areas in academics (Standerfer, 2006). As the latest reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, NCLB set goals to improve student achievement in academic standards (specifically reading and mathematics, as measured by state standardized assessments), reduce achievement gaps, improve achievement in high poverty schools and create a single accountability system for all the states by 2013-14 (Forte, 2010; Singh & Al-Fadhli, 2011; Standerfer, 2006). The mechanism for identifying and improving low-performing schools works by measuring each school’s achievement addressed by the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) algorithm. NCLB requires every state to measure AYP in order to set goals and ensure that every student is proficient in reading and math by 2013-14 (Clark, 2012; Forte, 2010; Singh & Al-Fadhli, 2011). There are stiff consequences for schools that cannot demonstrate AYP for all of their students. If schools cannot demonstrate AYP for two consecutive years, the school will be identified as a “School in Need of Improvement.” Under this designation, the school must create a school improvement plan and offer a school choice option. The school choice option mandates the school to offer its students a choice of another public school and set aside 20% of its Title I funds to pay for the costs associated with the choice, such as transportation (Clark, 2012; Forte, 2010). For schools that continue to underperform and not demonstrate proficiency under AYP, the sanctions escalate. “Schools that fail to meet AYP for five consecutive years are restructured by replacing school staff; closing and reopening as a public charter school; or taken over by the state” (Clark, 2012, p. 1). Given the increased public accountability established through NCLB, the responsibilities, knowledge and skill required for administrators to successfully lead a school has drastically increased with little room for error. Principals must be knowledgeable concerning assessment and using data to inform and direct instruction (Singh & Al-Fadhli, 2011). “School leaders not only must possess a deep knowledge of issues such as facilities, personnel, and finance management but also should foster a rich learning environment, facilitate democratic dialogue, and build trust with parents and the community” (Singh & Al-Fadhli, 2011, p. 752).

Role of the Principal

School leadership, specifically principals, influence student achievement through the climate and culture of their schools (Urick & Bowers, 2014). Academic climate is a moldable force that is built and maintained by the principal and has a positive influence on student achievement and outcomes and has been shown to be a common characteristic on high-performing campuses (MacNeil, Prater, & Busch, 2009; Urick & Bowers, 2014). “Just as a teacher establishes the climate for the classroom, the principal plays a significant role in establishing the climate of the schools” (Freiberg, 1999, p. 171). The principal establishes the school climate by the way the teachers perceive and interpret his or her actions and leadership in the crafting of their classroom climates (Freiberg, 1999). School climate is the “heart and soul” of a school (Freiberg, 1999; MacNeil et al., 2009). “School climate—by definition—reflects students’, school personnel’s, and parents’ experiences of school life socially, emotionally, civically, and ethically as well as academically” (Thapa, Cohen, Guffey, & Higgins-D’Alessandro, 2013, p. 369).

> Overall, there seems to be an abundant literature on school climate from different parts of the world that documents a positive school climate: (a) having a powerful influence on the motivation to learn; (b) mitigating the negative impact of the socioeconomic context on academic success; (c) contributing to less aggression and violence, less harassment, and less sexual harassment; and (d) acting as a protective factor for the learning and positive development of young people. (Thapa, Cohen, Guffey, & Higgins-D’Alessandro, 2013, p. 360)

Academic Indicators

In order to identify students who have the potential to become dropouts, many states have developed early warning systems that identify students by tracking data and flagging certain predictors (Sparks, 2013). About 28 states have early warning systems as of July 2013. Most of these states’ systems rely heavily on the work The Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Research and Robert Balfanz, the co-director of the Everyone Graduates Center at John Hopkins University (Sparks, 2013).

The Consortium on Chicago School Research at the University of Chicago looked at the on-track indicators for high school graduation. The study titled *The On-Track Indicators as Predictor of High School Graduation* sought to report and update the

Consortium on Chicago School Research's indicator for high school graduation. In 1999, the Consortium on Chicago School Research developed an indicator system to monitor whether first year high school students were making adequate progress to be on-track toward graduation (Allensworth & Easton, 2005, p. 1). The Consortium on Chicago School Research defined being "on-track" as achieving enough credits to be promoted to the tenth grade and having no more than one failing semester grade in any of the core subject areas (Allensworth & Easton, 2005, p. 1). Students need to earn five credits in any credit-bearing courses by the end of their ninth grade year to be promoted according to Chicago Public School's policy (Allensworth & Easton, 2005, p. 3). It is important to note that either part of the indicator would have characterized a student as off-track toward graduation or conversely be a predictor of students that would ultimately not graduate. However, The Consortium on Chicago School Research found that it was important to combine both sufficient first year high school credit attainment and core course failure to create their off-track indicator (Committee on Increasing High School Students' Engagement and Motivation to Learn. Board on Children, Youth, Families, Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education, 2004, p. 42).

The on-track indicator is made up of two components: number of credits earned and number of Fs in core subject areas. Chicago Public Schools require 24 credits to graduate. This requires students to take a minimum of six credits per year to graduate within four years of entering high school. Students who earn less than six credits will be behind and have to take more classes during their subsequent school years or attend summer school to catch up with their peers and graduate in four years. There was a 31 percentage point difference between the students who earned five credits as opposed to students who earned six credits. Forty percent of the students who earned only five credits toward graduation graduated compared to 71% percent of students earning six credits. Also, students who earned four credits had a 24% graduation rate (Allensworth & Easton, 2005, p. 10). It is important to note that any students who dropped out during their freshman year were not counted in this study. In this analysis, the more credits students can earn in their freshman year, the greater likelihood that they will graduate in four years. The second part of the on-track indicator calculates the number of F's or course failures in the core courses needed to graduate. When considering failing grades or F's in core courses for each semester, students who did not receive any Fs in core courses had an 83% graduation rate (Allensworth & Easton, 2005, p. 11). The graduation rate dropped 23 percentage points to 60% for students who received just one semester F in core courses. Students who received a second F in a semester dropped the graduation rate another 16 percentage points to 44%. There was a 39 percentage point difference in graduation rates between students who did not receive any semester failing grades (83%) and students that received two semester failing grades (44%). Fewer than one-third of students with three or more semester Fs ultimately graduated. It is worth noting that there was no impact on graduation rates and the core subject with a failing semester grade. This is to say that it did not matter if students failed math as opposed to English. All core subject areas had an equal correlation with the overall graduation rates (Allensworth & Easton, 2005, p. 11).

In the current era of accountability, test scores have become more important and have replaced course grades as the indicator to how students are progressing toward graduation. It stands to reason that students with higher test scores in eighth grade should transition better to high school and ultimately graduate at a higher percentage than students with lower eighth grade test scores. The Chicago Consortium looked at the eighth grade test scores and ruled them out as a reliable indicator of graduation (Allensworth & Easton, 2005, p. 7).

> In the 2003-04 freshman class, for example, of the students who entered with very high eighth-grade test scores (those in the top quarter of their class), almost one quarter were off track by the end of their freshmen year. On the other hand, of the students who entered with very low test scores (those in the bottom quarter of their class), more than 40 percent were on track by the end of their freshmen year. (Allensworth & Easton, 2005, p. 5)

Test scores are important, but they are only a snapshot of students' performances and tell only part of the story. Given the student performance with the varying test scores, it appears evident that students need more skills to graduate from high school than those that are assessed by the tests. Transitioning into high school requires students to navigate academics and their social peer group, and to monitor and adapt their behavior (Allensworth & Easton, 2005, p. 5).

In fact, large differences existed between the schools in the study and the rates of off-track students. The freshmen off-track rates varied from 30% to as much as 90%, depending on the schools the students were attending. The majority of the schools had a variance of 47% to 7% in their freshmen off-track rates. This underscores that the school's climate and culture plays a significant role in the freshmen off-track percentages. Although the study addressed the variations across the school, it did not explore the factors driving the variation (Allensworth & Easton, 2005, pp. 5-6).

The Consortium on Chicago School Research also considered the students' background and factors such as low parental educational achievement, poverty and poor elementary educational experiences. It stands to reason that if background factors were the main reason for failing courses, then there should be a strong association between the numbers of students off-track their freshmen year and the number of dropouts by their senior year. After considering the students' background factors, the study showed that the students' backgrounds were not a significant factor for students being off-track toward graduation (Allensworth & Easton, 2005, p. 9). "The relationship between being on-track and graduating remained very strong after accounting for differences between students such as elementary achievement, race/ethnicity, gender, economic status, and age at entering high school" (Allensworth & Easton, 2005, p. 9). For students with background factors typical of Chicago Public School students, 81% of students who were on-track in their freshman year graduated, compared to 26% of students who were off-track and did not ultimately graduate. This produced a difference of 55 percentage points between students who were on-track their freshman year compared to students who were off-track toward graduation their freshman year. After considering background factors of typical Chicago Public School students, the on-track indicator was a good predictor of graduation for all students, without regard to their background (Allensworth & Easton, 2005, p. 9). One limitation of this study is not considering the students' struggles and backgrounds of students that did not make it into their freshmen year. Is there a correlation between students' backgrounds and/or the climate and culture of their elementary schools that prevented a large majority of students from making it to their freshmen year? Also, the students who dropped out of high school in their freshmen year were not represented in the study. What were the issues and struggles that caused them not to complete their ninth grade year?

The Chicago Consortium on School Research's on-track indicator has two components to predict students who will graduate in four years, earning at least five credits toward graduation and no more than two failing grades in semester courses. The on-track indicator shows that students are three and a half times more likely to graduate if they are on-track by the end of their freshman year compared to students who are off-track by the end of their freshman year. The on-track indicator is a better indicator than using test scores to predict graduation (Allensworth & Easton, 2005). Understanding the on-track indicator provides students, parents, teacher, counselors and school administrators with a tool to monitor and evaluate students' performances in their freshman year to provide support for those students who are becoming off-track.

In a later study, the Consortium on Chicago School Research conducted a further study on predictors to high school graduation rates. In a 2007 study called What Matters for Staying On-Track and Graduating in Chicago Public High Schools: A Closer Look a Course Grades, Failures, and Attendance in the Freshman Year, the Consortium on Chicago School Research continued to study course failure but also considered grade point averages and student attendance. The original on-track indicators had a high predictability of ultimate graduation, but did not give specific information for educators to target students with personalized interventions. This study builds on the previous study and focuses on course failures in students' freshmen year. In Chicago Public Schools, students need 24 credits in the appropriate credit-bearing classes to graduate. Passing classes and acquiring credits necessary to graduate is the key to graduation. The freshman year of high school is crucial in setting the foundation for eventual graduation four years later (Allensworth & Easton, 2007).

Grade point average had a high prediction rate. It correctly predicted 85% of graduates and 73% of non-graduates with an overall correct prediction rate of 80% (Allensworth & Easton, 2007, p. 6). Grade point average is a calculation where every grade a student receives in a class is given a value and then averaged. An A is equal to a 4, a B is equal to a 3, a C is equal to a 2, a D is equal to a 1, and an F has a value of zero. In classes such as Advanced Placement, Honors, and International Baccalaureate, students receive extra points and create grade point averages that are termed as weighted. In this study, grade point averages were calculated without consideration for the weighted grade point averages because not all students have access to these classes. At the end of their freshman year, 3% of students had an A average, 23% had a B average, 31% had a C average, 27% had a D average and 15% had an F average (Allensworth & Easton, 2007, p. 5). Freshmen with a 3.0 or higher had a 93% or higher graduation rate. Freshmen with a 2.0 had a 21 percentage point drop to 72% in graduation rate as compared to freshmen with a GPA of 3.0. The biggest percentage point drop was seen in the students that had a 1.0 GPA. They dropped 44 percentage points compared to students with a 2.0 GPA (Allensworth & Easton, 2007, p. 7).

Student attendance is crucial in earning passing grades in classes. The process of dropping out has been explained “as a gradual disengagement, where students miss more and more school, making it increasingly more difficult to return” (Allensworth & Easton, 2007, p. 17). Remaining in school and attending school at a high rate enables students to be present to do the required work and be exposed to the content, knowledge and skills needed to achieve passing grades.

> There are two obvious and interrelated reasons why students may not do well in their courses—either they are not prepared for the academic work required by their high school courses or they are not coming to class and expending sufficient effort to do the requisite work. If the first is the main reason for course failures, it indicates that we need greater focus on preparing students in elementary schools for the academic demands of high school. If the second is the larger contributor to failure, then the problem results from students' behavior in high school and may be influenced by high school conditions. (Allensworth & Easton, 2007, p. 15)

Student attendance had a high prediction rate. Although it had a lower prediction rate than grade point average, the on-track indicator, and semester course failure, it still predicted over 89% of graduates and over 53% of non-graduates with a total overall correct prediction rate of over 74% (Allensworth & Easton, 2007, p. 6). Even when compared to eighth-grade test scores, attendance is eight times more predictive of failing a course than the eighth-grade test scores in the freshmen year (Allensworth & Easton, 2007, p. 16). Freshman attendance can predict and explain 63% of the course failure variations. Eighth-grade test scores can only explain and predict about eight percent of the variation in course failures. Missing one week can increase the likelihood of course failure no matter how the student scored on their eighth-grade test. Students who entered high school in the lowest quartile in their test scores and missed less than one week of school passed more courses or had less failures (0.7 failure rate) than students who scored in the top quartile but missed one more week of class (0.9 failure rate). The relationship between course failure and attendance is strong. It stands to reason that students need to be present in the classroom to benefit from teachers' instruction and practice of the knowledge and skills associated with the standards needed to succeed in the class. Also, students who are succeeding in the class may stop attending class to avoid the negative experience (Allensworth & Easton, 2007, pp. 16-17). Attendance is also interrelated to students' GPA. Attendance in a course can also be predictive of higher grades.

Students dropping out of high school is a very complex problem with some factors within the control of the school and some factors falling outside the scope of the academic day. "Research on dropping out has shown that a decision to persist in or leave school is affected by multiple contextual factors—family, school, neighborhood, peers—interacting in a cumulative way over the life course of a student" (Allensworth & Easton, 2007, p. 1). Allensworth and Easton (2007) acknowledge that the climate and culture of the various high schools caused some variations in the study as they relate to attendance, course failure, and student GPAs. Attendance had substantial variations across schools even when comparing students with the same background characteristics and eighth-grade test scores. Once the backgrounds and the prior test scores were removed, attendance between high schools varied by more than two and a half weeks, 13 days a year or 6.5 days per semester. When attendance was further narrowed to similar student schools, attendance varied 4.4 days a semester and 8.8 days a year. Also, there is evidence that attendance varies from fall semester to spring semester across the high schools. While many schools' attendance remains constant over the fall and spring semester, some of the high schools' freshmen miss almost one more week in the spring than they did in the fall semester. This variation in some of the schools seems to suggest that schools are driving attendance or absences (Allensworth & Easton, 2007, p. 26). Further illustrating the impact of climate and culture of a school on attendance,

> Two students with similar incoming achievement are likely to have very different absence rates based on the average incoming achievement of other students at the school. Students who attend schools with high average achievement tend to have better attendance rates than similar students attending schools with low average achievement. (Allensworth & Easton, 2007, p. 26)

Student surveys given by the Consortium on Chicago School Research showed that at schools in which students reported high levels of trust between teachers and students, students missed 2.3 fewer days a semester, or five fewer absences per year (Allensworth & Easton, 2007, p. 30). This would suggest that the cultural norms of the school dictate the attendance and ultimately the achievement of the students in the school.

Student failure rates and grades varied across the cohort of high schools in Chicago Public Schools. When comparing students with the same race, gender, school mobility, age, and eighth-grade test scores, failure rates varied by 1.4 Fs from school to school. In other words, after controlling for all of the student variables, student failure varied by 1.4 Fs due strictly to the school they attended (Allensworth & Easton, 2007, p. 28). Student surveys given by the Consortium on Chicago School Research showed that schools in which students reported high levels of trust between teachers and students had 0.8 fewer Fs than students in schools that reported low or little trust between teachers and students (Allensworth & Easton, 2007, p. 30).

Grade point averages of students varied across the high school cohort. After controlling for students' backgrounds and eighth-grade achievement scores across the high school cohort, students' GPAs varied by 0.3%. This doesn't sound like much; however, "to achieve an increase of 0.3 points in GPA would require a student with straight Cs to receive Bs in 5 out of 14 semester classes" (Allensworth & Easton, 2007, p. 28). Student surveys given by the Consortium on Chicago School Research showed that schools in which students reported a high level of trust between teachers and students, students' GPAs were 0.2 points higher than schools in which students reported low or little trust between teachers and students (Allensworth & Easton, 2007, p. 30).

In another study conducted in the School District of Philadelphia, Robert Balfanz (Balfanz et al., 2007, p. 223) observed a data set of middle grade students in high poverty urban settings, made up of a majority of minority students underperforming their counterparts in more advantaged neighborhoods and schools. The goal of the study was to identify early warning flags to use as predictors of dropouts. In order to be identified as a warning flag, the flag had to show that the majority of the students flagged with this flag, alone or in combination with other predictors' flags, would eventually drop out of school. Finally, before the flags could qualify as a warning flag, the flag had to pass a two-pronged test. First, the flag had to have predictive power that identified 75% of the students that did not graduate within one year of their expected graduation date. Second, the flag had to have a high yield, predicting ten percent or more of the future non-graduates (Balfanz et al., 2007, p. 227).

Balfanz et al. (2007) studied 12,972 students enrolled in the School District of Philadelphia in the sixth grade; the sample was made up mainly of minority students, 64% African American, 12% Hispanic, 19% Whites and 5% Asian (p. 226). Ninety-seven percent of these students went to a majority-poverty school and 67% attended a concentrated-poverty school (Balfanz et al., 2007, p. 227). The study followed these students for eight years. The cohort was expected to graduate in seven years, so the study followed them one year past their expected high school graduation date. (Balfanz et al., 2007) The study found four early warning flags: attending school less than 80% of the time, failing math, failing English, or receiving an out-of-school suspension. A fifth flag was identified but did not pass the two-pronged test. It had a predictive power of 71%, but had an incredible yield of identifying 50% of the cohort's dropouts (Balfanz et al., 2007, p. 227).

Attendance proved to be a high-yield indicator for students not completing high school within one year of their expected graduation date. Fifteen percent of the sixth graders attended school less than 80% of the time; however, three years later, 40% of these students did not make it into the ninth grade. Five years later, 85% of the students were off-track and had not made it to the eleventh grade. In fact, only 13% of the original sixth graders with less than 80% attendance graduated on time. Another 4% of these sixth graders graduated from the district a year after their original graduation date (Balfanz et al., 2007, p. 227). The attendance predictor accurately identified 1,605 out of the 6,888 students that did not graduate from the school district, producing a 23% yield (Balfanz et al., 2007, p. 227).

The next two warning flags concern sixth grade course failures. In the study, Belfanz et al. (2007) found that failing a math or English course while in the sixth grade was a better predictor of graduation than even fifth or sixth grade test scores (pp. 227-

228). In fact, only 18% of the students that failed an English course in the sixth grade graduated on time or within one year of their on-time graduation. Failing an English course had a 17% yield. Also, only 19% of the students that failed a math course ultimately graduated within one year of their on-time graduation date (Balfanz et al., 2007, p. 228).

Suspensions were the fourth warning flag that produced a high yield and predictive rate in the Philadelphia study. Of the 12,972 students enrolled in the School District of Philadelphia, 6% were suspended from school. Only 20% of the students who were suspended in their sixth grade year graduated within one year of their on-time graduation date. Being suspended from school was calculated to have a 10% yield. If students were suspended more than once during their sixth grade year, the odds of them graduating within one year of their on-time graduation date was further reduced (Balfanz et al., 2007, p. 228).

Finally, students receiving a final unsatisfactory behavioral grade in any subject was a warning flag that identified 50% of the sixth grade cohort. This warning flag yielded the largest group of students compared to any of the other warning flags that were identified, with there being more students that had at least one final unsatisfactory behavioral grade than students that were suspended from school, failed English, or failed Math combined (Balfanz et al., 2007, p. 228). This warning flag did not meet Balfanz et al.'s (2007) two-pronged test because of this 50% yield (p. 227); however, 38% or 4,893 students received at least one final behavior grade that was unsatisfactory. Twenty-nine percent of these students graduated on time (24%) or within one year of their graduation date (5%) (Balfanz et al., 2007, p. 228). Balfanz et al. (2007) also concluded that poor behavior grades was significant beyond being a warning flag, it was actually a "magnifier" of the impact of the other warning flags (p. 228).

> Of the sixth graders who failed math and had poor behavior, 87% failed to graduate. Of those who combined a course failure in English with poor behavior in any course, 89% failed to graduate. Unfortunately, 77% of the students failing math and 80% of the students failing English also had unsatisfactory behavior. (Balfanz et al., 2007, p. 228)

Also, more students with unsatisfactory behavioral grades did not graduate when compared to students that were suspended. Thirty-eight percent of students with a final unsatisfactory behavioral grade did not graduate on time or within one year of their on-time graduation date as compared to 36% of students that were suspended (Balfanz et al., 2007, p. 228).

Many educators and school districts have used this study to build templates to access students in the likelihood of their eventual graduation and to identify students that fall off-track toward graduation. Attending school and acquiring credits or passing classes is the academic system to matriculate from one grade to the next and eventually graduate from high school. However, in Balfanz et al.'s (2007) study of the students in Philadelphia, three of the five warning flags—attending school less than 80%, receiving an out of school suspension or receiving a final failing behavioral grade—are not based on acquiring the knowledge based in the course curriculum, but rather dependent on the students' unfulfilled physical and socio-emotional needs and the normative structure of their family, neighborhoods and schools (p. 228). To better understand how poor attendance and poor behavioral performance lead to failing grades, it would be better to examine Theory X and Y, Maslow's hierarchy of needs, normative culture, school connectivity theory, and social learning theory, human agency, and school connectedness.

Theory X and Y

In order to understand and orient teacher's and administrator's posture toward students who are struggling in high school, we must examine Douglas McGregor's Theory X and Y from his book, *The Human Side of Enterprise*. Theory X and Y begins with the idea that a managers' assumptions concerning their employees determines the managers' behaviors and posture toward their subordinates (McGregor, 1960). Theory X is the idea that managers assume subordinates dislike work and need to be directed and coerced into performing their tasks (Gürbüz, Şahin, & Köksal, 2014; Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2000). In contrast, Theory Y states that managers assume that their subordinates like to work, are creative, and will seek responsibility (Gürbüz et al., 2014; Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2000). After examining McGregor's Theory of X and Y, teachers and administrators must ask themselves which posture they possess and which posture is the most conducive to supporting their struggling students. Operating under Theory Y is embracing the posture and idea that students do not come to school to fail. Understanding that students do not come to school to fail, our attention and focus turns to other impediments students are experiencing that are causing them to struggle behaviorally and that eventually cause them to fall off-track academically.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow's hierarchy of needs is a theory in psychology that was first proposed in 1943 by Abraham Maslow in a published paper called "A Theory of Human Motivation." This theory has extended to other professions, such as sociology, criminology and education. The theory describes and allows these professions to understand what motivates people to choose their actions (Jones, 2004, p. 18). Maslow stated that “man is a perpetually wanting animal” (Maslow, 1943, p. 395). There are five basic sets of goals or needs that people are motivated to satisfy: physiology, safety, love, esteem, and self-actualization (Maslow, 1943, p. 394). These five needs are arranged in a hierarchy that places physiological needs at the lowest or primary level, followed in order of prominence by safety, love, and esteem, with self-actualization being at the pinnacle. According to the hierarchy of needs theory, a person needs to have each of the needs met in this order, with the lowest level’s needs taking precedent over higher levels’ needs (Maslow, 1943, p. 394). In this way, “gratification becomes as important as deprivation” (Maslow, 1970, p. 17). When a lower-level need is not satisfied, the person becomes dominated by satisfying or the gratification of the need. When a need is satisfied, the person is free from this feeling of domination to satisfy the need and a new need can emerge (Maslow, 1970, pp. 17-18). Maslow, however, did not believe that each need had to be fully satisfied for another to emerge. Maslow (1943) believed in a decreasing percentage of satisfaction as we go up the needs hierarchy (p. 388). To illustrate the decreasing percentage of satisfaction Maslow (1943) wrote:

> if prepotent need A is satisfied only 10 percent then B may not be visible at all. However, as this need A becomes satisfied 25 percent, need B may emerge 5 percent, as need A becomes satisfied 75 percent need B may emerge 90 percent, and so on. (p. 389)

As Maslow’s theory relates to education, students that have unmet needs for food, shelter, safety, health care, family and peer social groups cannot be expected to function at high academic levels. “There’s an old saying that goes, ‘When you’re up to your neck in alligators, it’s hard to remember that your initial objective was to drain the swamp’” (Jensen, 2009, p. 70). Understanding that some of our students are “up to their necks in alligators,” educators have to design schools that can meet students’ unmet needs or mitigate the impact of the unmet needs that are out of the school’s sphere of influence.

Physiological Needs/Physical Needs

Maslow considered physiological needs as the starting point, later known as the base of the hierarchical pyramid. The idea of satisfying the physiological needs rests on the idea of homeostasis. Homeostasis defines the organism or person’s effort to maintain a normal state of their bloodstream. A normal state of the bloodstream would require proper temperature, hormone level, calcium, water content, salt content, sugar content, oxygen content, protein content and acid base balance (Maslow, 1943, p. 372, 1970, p. 15). Maslow started with the lowest blood as the lowest common need because if a person or organism needs some type of vitamin, mineral, protein or any other chemical, it will develop a hunger or thirst in an effort to satisfy the need in deficit (Maslow, 1943, pp. 372-373, 1970, p. 16).

Food and water are not the only physiological human need. Maslow did not take the time nor did he feel he could make a list of every single physiological need that human beings might have. Instead, he listed some examples, such as food, water, sleep, and sex. Maslow offered the following as a framework for understanding basic physiological needs, “that in the human being who is missing everything in life in an extreme fashion, it is most likely that the major motivation would be the physiological needs rather than any others” (Maslow, 1943, p. 373, 1970, p. 16). In a situation where a person was missing or deprived of every other need—food, safety, love, esteem—the person would have the strongest drive to satisfy the hunger for food (Maslow, 1943, p. 373, 1970, p. 16).

> If all the needs are unsatisfied, and the organism is then dominated by the physiological needs, all other needs may become simply non-existent or be pushed into the background. It is then fair to characterize the whole organism by saying simply that it is hungry, for the consciousness is almost completely preempted by hunger. (Maslow, 1943, p. 373, 1970, p. 16)

This is to say that for a human who has been completely deprived of food, the whole body and behavior of the person is harnessed to satisfy and gratify their hunger. The person perseverates only on food. Love, safety, and esteem do not exist and are cast aside in the quest for food. Even dreams of the future and future events are set aside until the physiological need is met (Maslow, 1943, pp. 373-374, 1970, pp. 16-17).

Safety Needs

After a person has satisfied their physiological needs, at least partially, the next need in the hierarchy will emerge. The need for safety is the next most important need in the hierarchy. Safety is the idea of “security; stability; dependency; protection; freedom from fear, anxiety, and chaos; need for structure, order, law, and limits; strength in the protector; and so on” (Maslow, 1970, p. 18). If a person is living in a state lacking of perceived safety, the person will use all of their resources available to them to achieve a state of perceived safety.

In Maslow’s discussion of safety, he used examples of children and infants to illustrate a person’s reaction to unsafe environments. He used children and infants because of their tendency not to inhibit their reactions to a threat or danger, while adults may inhibit their reactions to threats or danger. Maslow used several examples of instances that seemed to pose a threat to children, such as loud noises, sudden disturbances, sudden sensory stimulation, rough handling, and illnesses. These examples are physiological in nature. What is the most interesting as it relates to schoolchildren are examples that he used such as disruption in routine or rhythm, conflict with or between parents, divorce, death, speaking to them in a harsh language, harsh physical treatment, harsh punishment and new or unfamiliar environments (Maslow, 1943, pp. 377-378). In general, children and people like to have a structured and predictable environment to feel safe.

> Young children seem to thrive better under a system which has at least a skeletal outline of rigidity, in which there is a schedule of a kind, some sort of routine, something that can be counted upon, not only for the present but also far into the future. Perhaps one could express this more accurately by saying that the child needs an organized world rather than an unorganized or unstructured one. (Maslow, 1943, p. 377)

Any interruption or lack of a schedule or routine could cause a child or adult to feel unsafe and cause them to seek stability to feel safe rather than seeking higher needs, such as love and self-actualization. Also, arguing, separation, divorce and death present threats to safety in the family for adults and children. Obviously, in a physical sense, speaking harshly, harsh punishment or physical assault out of anger will definitely cause children to feel unsafe (Maslow, 1943, pp. 377-378, 1970, pp. 18-19). Similar issues at school could cause students to feel unsafe and focus on satisfying their safety needs and abandon their self-actualization journey.

Love Needs

After a person no longer feels unsafe, the next need will emerge, which is the belongingness and love need. This need is characterized by giving and receiving affection and occupied place in a group or family unit (Maslow, 1943, pp. 380-381, 1970, p. 20). A person who is deprived of love and a place in a family group will feel lonely, left out, rejected and friendless, and will perseverate on the attainment of love and a place in a group.

> Now that the person will feel keenly, as never before, the absence of friends, or a sweetheart, or wife, or children. He will hunger for affectionate relations with people in general, namely, for a place in his group, and he will strive with great intensity to achieve this goal. He will want to attain such a place more than anything else in the world and may even forget that once, when he was hungry, he sneered at love. (Maslow, 1943, p. 381)

Books are filled with poems, plays, and autobiographies that detail life without and perseveration on love and affection (Maslow, 1970, p. 20). Many students list their gang involvement as the act of seeking a family that will accept them, care for them, and provide protection. The feeling of love and belonging goes to the root of the closeness, bonding and the positive feelings students feel with their parents and family. This close bond and supportiveness and is directly related to school success and social competence (Noltemeyer, Bush, Patton, & Bergen, 2012, p. 1863).

School Connectedness Theory

In John Blum's study, *School Connectedness: Improving Students' Lives*, Blum looks at research concerning school connectedness and its impact on school success. School is the second most important stabilizing force in a young person's life, with the family being the most important (Blum, 2005). Students' success is dependent on the degree to which their schools create and maintain welcoming, caring, predictable and stable climate and culture (Blum, 2005). In short, students need to feel like they belong in order to succeed in school. "School Connection is the belief by students that adults in the school care about their learning and about them as individuals" (Blum, 2005, p. 1). In order for students to feel connected to their school, it is critical for a school to have "high academic rigor and expectations coupled with support for learning, positive adult-student relationships and physical and emotional safety" (Blum, 2005, p. 1).

There are seven qualities that impact students' connectedness to their school. First, students need to feel like they have a part or role in their school. Second, they have to like going to their school. Third, they need to feel that their teachers care and support them. Fourth, they need to have friends in the school. Fifth, they need be engaged and take ownership of their education. Sixth, they need to feel that the discipline is effective and applied fairly. Finally, students need to participate and be a part of afterschool and extracurricular activities. "Strong scientific evidence demonstrates that increased student connection to school decreases absenteeism, fighting, bullying, and vandalism while promoting educational motivation, classroom engagement, academic performance, school attendance, and completion rates" (Blum, 2005, p. 1). Research further shows that students who have strong connections with their school are more successful in their academics, and are also less likely to engage in risky behaviors such as cigarette smoking, drug use and abuse, violent behavior, sex at an early age, and suicidal attempts and thoughts (Blum, 2005, p. 1).

Blum (2005) found three “dynamic concepts and relationships” that influence school connectedness. The three dynamic relationships and concepts are Individuals, Environment and Culture. The concept of Individuals refers to the relationships that students establish with the teachers and staff members in their school (Blum, 2005, p. 4). “The process of teaching and learning is fundamentally relational” (Thapa et al., 2013, p. 363). Unfortunately, research tells us that by the time rural, suburban and urban students are in high school, 40 to 60% are disengaged from school (Blum, 2005). This is a more disturbing number when it is taken into account that students who have already dropped out are not calculated in this number. It is critical to understand that “people connect with people before they connect with institutions” (Blum, 2005, p. 4). Students must feel that all of the school staff, including the custodian, office assistance, counselors, lunchroom staff, maintenance staff, guidance counselors, nurses, teachers and administrators, care about them and are working to create a school learning environment that has high expectations and standards, with discipline that is clear, fair and defined. Allensworth and Easton (2007) found that when students had strong relationships to their teachers and they perceived their schoolwork as relevant to their future, students attended class more frequently (Allensworth & Easton, 2007, p. 39). According to teachers, students who have a connection with their school are more attentive, focused, do more than is required and have higher test scores and grades. In environments where students build strong relationships with teachers, administrators and other students, they will work to repair and restore any relationships that are damaged and work to keep them healthy (Smith, Fisher, & Frey, 2015). Connected students, in all racial, ethnic and income groups, are less likely to be disruptive or show violent behavior, carry a weapon, use drugs, smoke cigarettes, engage in sexual behavior at an early age, be distressed emotionally, have suicidal attempts or thoughts or abuse alcohol (Blum, 2005, p. 4).

The next dynamic concept and relationship that has influence over the success of school children is Environment. Schools by their very nature have a responsibility to create and maintain an environment that is safe and allows students to develop relationships with their peers and staff to grow and develop emotionally, behaviorally and academically.

> Research has shown that in schools where students perceive a better structured school, fair discipline practices, and more positive students to teacher relationships, the 'probability and frequency of subsequent behavioral problems' is lower (Gregory & Cornell, 2009; Power et al.. 1989; M.C. Wang, Selma, Dishion, and Stormshack, 2010). (Thapa et al., 2013, p. 363)

Climate and connectedness are intertwined. The interactions between students and teacher will directly affect students' behavior and classroom engagement (Thapa et al., 2013). "Students will actively avoid schools that have an unpleasant climate or schools where they feel out of place" (Blum, 2005, p. 7). "Students who feel disrespected or socially isolated are not likely to function effectively at school, and they simply leave or seek more psychologically comfortable environments (Committee on Increasing High School Students' Engagement and Motivation to Learn. Board on Children, Youth, Families, Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education, 2004, p. 42).

Schools with negative climates also have negative cultures that put students at risk of serious violent behavior from their peers.

> School connectedness is akin to social bonding. When students feel connected to school, they are able to develop positive relationships with adults, increase involvement in positive behaviors, avoid behaviors that harm their health, and buffer the effects of risky environments such as violence and drugs at home. (Blum, 2005, p. 7)

Four strategies were identified for engaging schools: creating high academic standards, a relationship with a caring adult, relevant curriculum and flexibility in instruction(Blum, 2005, p. 7; Committee on Increasing High School Students' Engagement and Motivation to Learn. Board on Children, Youth, Families, Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education, 2004, p. 118). Allensworth and Easton (2007) found that "difference in failure rates by gender are smaller in schools where more students report strong student-teacher trust, personal support from teachers, school wide press to prepare for the future, and peer support for academic achievement" (Allensworth & Easton, 2007, p. 22). An effective and engaging school communicates high expectations for its staff and students in a climate and culture of caring and trust between students, parents, teachers, and administrators (Blum, 2005, p. 8; Committee on Increasing High School Students' Engagement and Motivation to Learn. Board on Children, Youth, Families, Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education, 2004, p. 118). An engaging school allows for every student to have a relationship with at least one caring adult. Engaging schools have relevant curricula and instruction that take into account the students' lives and their experiences. Creating an engaging school that is flexible is the idea of “developing a curriculum that challenges students to understand concepts deeply, adjusting modes of teaching to individual students’ skills and learning styles, and providing extra supports for students who need them to succeed” (Committee on Increasing High School Students’ Engagement and Motivation to Learn. Board on Children, Youth, Families, Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education, 2004, p. 117).

The final dynamic relationship and concept is Culture. School climate and culture are the “values and norms, beliefs and sentiments associated with routines and practices and social interactions in schools” (Committee on Increasing High School Students’ Engagement and Motivation to Learn. Board on Children, Youth, Families, Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education, 2004, p. 97). A school’s culture must strike a balance between social needs and learning (Blum, 2005, p. 13). A lot of teachers and administrators like to put more focus on teaching and learning and not pay particular attention to social emotional needs and learning experiences. Teachers and administrators need to pay attention to the different cliques, such as jocks, preppies, freaks, Goths, losers, and druggies. These groups have status and power inside youth culture and will set norms. Most kids do not fall into these extremes. Having many cliques inside your school diminishes the ability of one group to impose their normative structure on the rest of the students. Teachers and administrators must provide positive social and emotional learning opportunities and reinforce the positive norms of the school (Blum, 2005, p. 13).

Esteem Needs

All people have a need to have self-respect and respect for others. There are two different subsets that make up the esteem need. First is the need to achieve success, mastery or a feeling of competence. The second is for the group to appreciate, recognize, or hold the person in a place of prestige. The first need is an intrinsic need of self-worth, while the second is the need for the group to value the person (Maslow, 1943, pp. 381-382, 1970, pp. 21-22).

> Satisfaction of the self-esteem need leads to feelings of self-confidence, worth, strength, capability and adequacy of being useful and necessary in the world. But thwarting of these needs produces feelings of inferiority, of weakness, and helplessness. These feeling in turn give rise to either basic discouragement or else compensatory or neurotic trends. (Maslow, 1943, p. 382, 1970, p. 21)

Before students can self-actualize and consume the educational curriculum that a school provides, students must meet their need to belong and have status or esteem in their social group. Teachers, administrators, counselors and other school staff who are frequently confronting student behaviors that are irresponsible and disruptive commonly learn to see the peer culture as a negative support system that reinforces the irresponsible and disruptive behavior while impeding the teaching and learning process (Vorath & Brendtro, 1985, p. 140). In the school setting, students have three relational forces that drive behaviors in school: reliable relationships, peer socialization and social status. Students want to belong to a group. Belonging to a group first requires reliable relationships. Students crave reliable and secure relationships with positive peers, parents and teachers. If students cannot find positive friends, they will satisfy their need for reliable relationships (belonging) by choosing semi-positive or even negative peers as friends (Harris, 2006). Students tend to reflect the values of the group and will behave as the groups expects them to (Gruenenert & Whitaker, 2015, p. 41). Students also are driven to strengthen their peer socialization. “Socialization is the drive for acceptance that encourages students to imitate their peers and join groups, from clubs to gangs” (Jensen, 2009, p. 20). Again, students want to belong to a group. A positive peer group is preferable, but students will join negative peer groups if they are unsuccessful or a positive peer group is not available or achievable. The evidence shows that peers are the most influential in students’ choices in their peer groups (Harris, 1998). Students also want to have social status in a group. Social status in a group is the constant quest to feel special or rank higher in the social pecking order. “Students compete for attention and social elevation by choosing roles that will distinguish them (e.g. athlete, comedian, storyteller, gang leader, scholar, or style maverick)” (Jensen, 2009, p. 20). Students care about how other kids perceive them and whether they like them and where they are on the social status pecking order. This social side of students drives their behavior, their feelings and their brains, and in turn, these three drive cognition. There is a complex interdependency between emotions and cognition. For students who feel connected and accepted by their peer group, teachers and administrators are better able to consume their education and perform better academically. Teachers and administrators who ignore the social emotional aspects of students and focus on the academic side of students will see test score flatten until they address students’ social emotional/relational success (Jensen, 2009).

“In every school, it is important to identify the subcultures that seem to wield the power the most” (Gruenenert & Whitaker, 2015, p. 45). Understanding the social peer pressure that exists and motivates students’ behavior and relational success in belonging and gaining status in their peer groups is a hidden hierarchical structure that Howard Polsky discovered while studying boys in a residential treatment facility. Polsky was an Assistant Professor at the New York School of Social Work at Columbia University. While observing the boys in Cottage Six, the cottage for the most aggressive boys in the facility, Polsky discovered the social hierarchy and the power that belonging and gaining status in a group wielded over a peer group (Polsky, 1962). After observing Cottage Six for eight months, Polsky was able to graphically represent the groups in a diamond-shaped social system. The diamond is cut in half, with the top triangle containing the leader of the group, the lieutenant to the leader and the con artist. In the lower half of the diamond are found isolates, dyads, bushboys, and scapegoats. The top portion of the diamond is where the power resides. The leader is a student who when he/she talks, the rest of the group listens. The leader models and creates the norms of the group (Grissom & Dubnov, 1989; Mullen, 1999; Polsky, 1962). “Norms are unstated expectations of the group” (Barr, 2013, p. 20). The group norms determine the students’ behavior in the group to gain acceptance and status (Barr, 2013; Grissom & Dubnov, 1989; Hess, 2006, 2014; Mullen, 1999; Polsky, 1962). “Individuals gain status when they conform to group norms and lose status when they transgress them” (Grissom & Dubnov, 1989, p. 14). The lieutenant in the group is the leader’s right hand man. This individual helps the leader enforce the norms and is supportive of the leader. The con artist is usually an individual that is always making deals to survive and have status in the group. Because this student is in the top half of the diamond, they are protected by the power and status of the leader. The lower half of the diamond incorporates students who are seen as the weaker students who have lower status. Isolates are students in the group who are loners and keep to themselves as a defense against students in the power portion of the diamond. Dyads are isolates who will subgroup to support each other. A bushboy is a student who will give up material things or favors for the leadership of the group. Finally, the scapegoat is the weakest student with the lowest status in the group. This is a student that the group will pick on and blame any shortcomings on (Grissom & Dubnov, 1989; Hess, 2006; Mullen, 1999; Polsky, 1962).

Although originally developed to describe the delinquent behavior of boys in a residential treatment center, Polsky's diamond can be generalized to apply to any social group for the purpose of understanding group dynamics. It describes the hierarchy of the leader, lieutenant and con artists, and how they exert power on the weaker members of the group called isolates, dyads, gophers and scapegoats (Grissom & Dubnov, 1989, pp. 66-67; Mullen, 1999; Polsky, 1962, p. 87). Using Polsky's diamond, teachers, counselors and administrators can start to understand the group's normative culture and the power the normative culture places on students that want to belong and gain status with the group. Teachers, counselors and administrators have to understand the hidden normative culture of the students in their school if they are going to be able to create an environment and a culture inside the school that allows students to have their social emotional needs met in a positive peer culture. In every school and educational organization, there are two different cultures operating simultaneously. The formal system outlines what is supposed to happen with rules and policies and procedures. This formal culture is created by the formal leadership and reinforced by the formal leadership. The second culture that is operating does so in a hidden and informal normative culture and defines what really happens (Barr, 2013; Grissom & Dubnov, 1989; Hess, 2006, 2014; Mullen, 1999; Polsky, 1962). This informal hidden culture is created by the group and reinforced by the group using the group norms.

> For many youths, their major source of learning is from informal groups with whom they associate at one another's houses, at local malls, at schools, or on the streets. What they learn from these groups however, is dependent on the norms of the group. (Laursen, 2005, p. 469)

Norms can be positive or negative. Leaders inside the group set the norms either positively or negatively. Understanding who holds the power in the peer culture and where the positive and negative power resides, the teachers, counselors and administrators can support and encourage the positive student leaders while limiting and extinguishing the negative power from negative leaders. The goal is to crush the diamond and equalize the power in the group. Negative norms and group members need to be confronted and taught the appropriate positive replacement norms, and positive norms and group members must be reinforced (Grissom & Dubnov, 1989; Hess, 2006; Polsky, 1962).

Students are always learning norms, whether it is from their peer group, family, religious organization, school or society as a whole. Students are learning norms through operant conditioning, social learning theory and social cognitive theory. Social learning theory states that patterns of behavior are created through either experiences that are directly reinforced or punished, and by observing the rewards and punishments of others.

Both inside the educational environment and in their neighborhoods, students must constantly interact and deal with all types of situations. Students will try different exploratory methods or responses to resolve these situations. Some of the methods will be successful and others will not. The responses or methods that prove to be successful based on their ideas of success or survival are reinforced while the unsuccessful methods are punished. Through a process called differential reinforcement, the successful methods will be kept and repeated and the unsuccessful methods will be discarded. Through the students' cognitive skills, the reinforcement of the methods serves an informational and incentive function. Based on this feedback and information, students are able to create hypotheses about different types of behaviors and the likelihood of their success. Once students are able to create these hypotheses or symbolically represent situations and their likelihood of success, these future successes or rewards can in turn be used to motivate future behavior. This allows students to be both insightful and have foresight in their behavior (Bandura, 1971).

"Most of the behaviors that people display are learned either deliberately or inadvertently through the influence of example" (Bandura, 1971, p. 5). Modeling has four distinct processes that have to be present in order for a model to result in learning: attention, retention, motoric reproduction, and reinforcement and motivation. The attention process is the idea that a person cannot learn by observation if recognizing the essential features of the modeling behavior. Humans will naturally pick and choose components of the modeled behavior that are seen as the most relevant or the components that they happen to notice. A student's peer group provides an area for repeated observational learning complete with successful and unsuccessful attempts at learning the modeled behaviors. This peer group arena will also limit and concentrate the types of modeled behavior that a student is repeatedly exposed to. Opportunities to learn aggressive behaviors are markedly different between religious organizations and delinquent gangs (Bandura, 1971).

The retention process requires a student to remember the modeled behavior. A student cannot learn from a modeled behavior if they cannot remember the behavior when the situation presents itself for replication. In order for a student to remember and replicate the modeled behavior, two systems are required, imaginable and verbal. In the imaginable system, the student must be able to retrieve images of the sequence of events in the modeled behavior. In the verbal system, a student must be able to verbally code the sequence of events. This verbal coding accounts for the relative speed by which a student is able to learn and the long-term retention of the observed model of behavior (Bandura, 1971). “Most of the cognitive processes that regulate behavior are primarily verbal rather than visual” (Bandura, 1971, p. 7).

The third component of the social learning process is motoric reproduction. Once a student is able to retain images and verbally code the sequence of a modeled behavior, the student must be able to put together a cadre of responses according to the observed modeled behavior. There are limitations in this process because the student must have the required component skills to perform the responses. These limitations can either be cognitive or physical. If the behavior requires a complex set of sub-skills that are lacking or have not been acquired yet, then the sub-skills must be learned or acquired before the modeled behavior can be reproduced. Bandura (1971) uses a child and the behavior of driving as an illustration of physical limitations; the child may be able to visualize, verbally code and put together a series of components to drive a car, but will not be successful in reproducing the behavior if they are too short to reach the gas and brake pedal or to see over the steering wheel.

The final process needed to reproduce a modeled behavior is the reinforcement and motivation process. In this process, the student may have all the components of the first three processes, but learning will only occur if the response behaviors are rewarded, are successful or are perceived as favorable. When students perceive the modeled behavior to be non-advantageous, the learning of the modeled behavior will not be activated. The reinforcement of the modeled behavior can not only increase and regulate the students' matching behaviors, but can also control what behaviors students focus on and rehearse. By rewarding and punishing response behaviors, a student's peer group can not only regulate the norms or matching behavioral responses, but can also regulate and focus the student's attention on the behaviors and norms that have their attention and that they rehearse (Bandura, 1971, 1989, 2001).

Social cognitive theory also describes a function of how students operate inside their peer group as well as the social norms that exercise control over their life and experiences. Social cognitive theory relies on human agency to illustrate the control students exert on their lives and environments (Bandura, 1989, 2001). Social cognitive theory also relies on social learning theory to explain how people choose the behaviors to meet their needs. Taken together, human agency, social cognitive theory and social learning theory resolve that people make decisions and advocate for themselves based on fulfilling a need deficit in the context of the norms of their peer groups as they have perceived behaviors rewarded or punished (Bandura, 1971, 1989, 2001). These social norms are often subtle and are described as hidden cultures.

These hidden cultures can have hidden norms that are based on socioeconomic class norms that are dramatically different than the formal middle-class norms that most school cultures are based on. Researchers and psychologists have cited "social class as one of those factors that intersect with race, ethnicity, gender, sexual identity, and other variables to influence people's identity, personality and behavior" (Nelson, Englar-Carlson, Tierney, & Hau, 2006, p. 1). Hidden rules or norms are commonly recognized in relation to racial and ethnic groups but seldom recognized in economic classes. America has three distinct economic classes: impoverished, middle-class, and wealthy. "People appropriate family and community social structures as they form internalized economic identities, and individuals learn to conform to their behavioral, attitudinal, and value-base expectations of their internalized class" (Nelson et al., 2006, p. 2). Each economic class creates and maintains a body of norms that are not formally taught to its constituency but are learned by the group through its social interactions. These hidden rules or norms are expectations, habits, rituals, and cues; perceptions and ways of thinking extend to the socioeconomic status and govern how students perceive education and their capabilities. Lack of understanding of the distinct economic classes' norms can keep students from self-actualizing, obtaining a high school diploma, postsecondary education or training and ultimately finding and moving up in a career (Payne, 2003, 2005). Given that schools, businesses and general society are based on the middle-class norms and expectations, students growing up in a different socioeconomic class must learn the middle-class norms and values or risk not "fitting in," belonging, or finding academic success. Middle-class norms in our schools need to be formally taught in order to mitigate student struggles and increase student success.

With respect to teachers and administrators, if schools are based on middle-class values with middle-class expectations, conflict arises out of a lack of translation between the two economic classes' expectations. Teachers can make assumptions about intelligence and work ethic. In the school's culture, behavioral expectations are the most common cause of frustration for students, parents, teachers and administrators (Payne, 2003, 2005). Students who come to school with limited understanding and internalization of the middle-class norms have a limited repertoire of emotional responses and will react in situations with less than appropriate responses. These behaviors frustrate educators and steal time away from academics. "It's impossible to over emphasize this: every emotional response other than the six hardwired emotions of joy, anger, surprise, disgust, sadness, and fear must be taught" (Jensen, 2009, p. 19). In a school climate that is based on middle-class norms and values, "cooperation, patience, embarrassment, empathy, gratitude, and forgiveness are crucial to a smoothly running complex social environment" (Jensen, 2009, p. 19). Proper replacement behaviors and norms must be formally taught when students fail to display or respond with the appropriate norms or behavior.

In a study to investigate experiences in moving from lower- or lower-middle-class backgrounds through college and eventually to academic positions, Nelson et al. (2006) interviewed counseling psychology and counselor education academics. Besides the need for economic support, common to all of the participants' experiences was the need for social capital to jump from a lower class to a higher class. Attaining education is essential to enable an individual to progress to a higher economic class, or to have upward mobility. Social capital is the "characteristics of a social structure that support individuals so that they may profit in some manner" (Nelson et al., 2006, p. 1). Social capital is the knowledge of how to work within and advance in the social system or economic class generally learned from their families, peers and peers' families. Therefore, social class becomes the socializing agent that can either give or limit the power. As children grow up in a lower economic class, they acquire the knowledge and skills to navigate and advance in their economic class and do not acquire skills to navigate a higher economic class unless formally taught. Most of the participants described developing the ability to navigate two or more different cultures—their new academic culture and their lower socioeconomic culture. The researchers labeled this "code switching," the ability to speak the expected academic language with their colleagues and switch to their ethnic or economic class language with their families. Along with "code switching," participants also talked about the social class pressures that each one of their social classes exerted on them, both their economic class of origin and their current economic class (Nelson et al., 2006).

Positive Peer Culture

The last leadership theory is normative culture theory. This theory focuses on the group's social interaction and causes the leader to understand that there are formal rules, policies, procedures and job descriptions. Then there are the company or school norms that dictate what really happens inside a company or school. Whether a leader understands it or not, every group has "norms" (Hess, 2014). Norms are different than rules because norms are the "expected behavior of the group" and rules are set by authority figures (Grissom & Dubnov, 1989, p.14). Also, leaders need to understand that rules are enforced by the authority figures and norms are enforced by the group. Harnessing the collective energy, intelligence and creativity of a group and having them take responsibility for their decisions and enforce their own positive norms is far better than having leaders closely monitoring and supervising their followers' every move. This system empowers the followers, and accountability to the group for their actions is valued. Positive culture is built by understanding and manipulating the group culture (peer pressure). A positive culture is built where negative norms are confronted and positive behaviors are enforced (Hess, 2014, p. 42). In order for the leader to manipulate the group norms, the leader must have a framework to understand the social system or status of individuals in the group. "A positive peer group offers acceptance, emotional avenues for catharsis, and a place for testing new values and judgments" (Laursen, 2005, p. 138). This status structure describes the flow of power within the group (Grissom & Dubnov, 1989, p. 66).

Polsky's Diamond

Although originally developed to describe the delinquent behavior of boys in a residential treatment center, Howard Polsky's diamond can be generalized to any social group for purposes of understanding group dynamics. It describes the hierarchy of the leader, lieutenant and con artists and how they exert power on the weaker members of the group called isolates, dyads, gophers and scapegoats (Grissom & Dubnov, 1989, p. 66-67; Polsky, 1962, p. 87). Using Polsky's diamond, the supervisor can graphically represent the status of the group that they are responsible for and understand the status of each individual and who holds the power of the group. Norms can be positive or negative. Leaders inside the group set the norms either positively or negatively. Understanding this, the leader can steal the negative power away from negative leaders at the top of the diamond and empower the positive members of the group. The goal is to crush the diamond and equalize the power in the group. Negative norms and group members need to be confronted, and positive norms and group members must be reinforced.

Self-Actualization

If all of the lower needs are satisfied at least on a minimal basis, then the need for self-actualization might be addressed. Self-actualization is becoming all that a person can become. “This tendency might be phrased as the desire to become more and more what one is, to become everything that one is capable of becoming” (Maslow, 1943, p. 382, 1970, p. 23). This need will look different for everyone. A person might want to be an astronaut, teacher, pro-bowl football player, Olympic gold medalist, or the ideal parent. The only similarities will be that the lower needs in the hierarchy—physiology, safety, love and esteem—must be satisfied.

Understanding that the basic needs of an individual must be met before students can self-actualize and consume the curriculum and the experience of the public education system, and that the sociological needs of individuals are to belong to a group and to have status in a group, students learn advantageous and detrimental behaviors through their own experiences and the experiences of others. These two theories alone cannot account for why students make all of the choices that they make. Some students make choices advantageous to matriculating through school, earning the proper number of credits and ultimately receive their high school diploma. Other students make choices that are detrimental to acquiring their high school education, falling behind in acquiring credits, which leads to being over-aged in grade and eventually dropping out of the education system. Social learning theory offers an explanation for how students learn and choose different patterns of behavior in a social learning setting.

Social Learning Theory

Social learning theory is simply the idea that students learn and develop new patterns of behavior through their direct experiences in life or by watching the behaviors of others. Most all of the behaviors that people present are either directly or inadvertently learned through example or experience (Bandura, 1971, p. 5). Albert Bandura (1971), in an effort to build the foundation to explain the concept of social learning theory, reasoned, “[a]n internal motivator cannot possibly account for the marked variation in the incidence and strength of a given behavior in different situations, toward different persons, at different times, and in different social roles” (p. 1). Students are constantly challenged with situations where they must choose the proper response or behavior. The behaviors are either successful and rewarded, or unsuccessful and punished. Through this process of choosing the appropriate behaviors to match the situations, students are faced with and being rewarded or punished based on the anticipated outcome. Advantageous behaviors are kept and stored away for later use in other situations while behaviors that were ineffective are discarded. This process is effective both in direct experiences and observing the experiences of others. Whether a behavior is rewarded or punished, the outcome serves to inform the student and give feedback as to which behaviors are the most effective. As this process has run its course, man has the cognitive ability to hypothesize and anticipate which behaviors will produce the desired result.

> Through the capacity to represent actual outcomes symbolically, future consequences can be converted into current motivators that influence behavior in much the same way as actual consequences. Man's cognitive skills thus provide him with the capacity for both insightful and foresightful behavior. (Bandura, 1971, p. 3)

Social learning theory presupposes that observed and modeled behaviors provide informational feedback that creates a symbolic representation of the observed and modeled behaviors instead of stimulus-response associations (Bandura, 1971, p. 6). Later, Bandura (1989 & 2001) explored the concept of human agency in social cognitive theory. Human agency is the idea that humans act intentionally to make things happen. (Bandura, 1989, 2001). Human agency can be examined in through three very different approaches: autonomous agency, mechanical agency, and emergent agency. Autonomous agency is the concept that humans act completely independent unto themselves without any outside influences. Mechanical agency describes humans as having internal mechanisms that operate and react to outside stimuli without any cognitive functions. Finally, Bandura (1989) subscribed to the emergent interactive agency, in which people

> are neither autonomous agents nor simply mechanical conveyers of animating environmental influence. Rather, they make causal contributions to their own motivation and action within a system of triatic reciprocal causation, action,

> cognitive, affective and other personal factors, and environmental events all operate as interactive determinates. (p. 1175)

One of the central ideas of the emergent agency is self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is one's belief in one's capability and competency in effecting the events that shape his or her life. Being an agent is the ability to make things happen intentionally (Bandura, 1989, 2001). Self-efficacy is also a cognitive process that involves behaviors that encompass forethought, generalized beliefs founded on experience, and observations added to personal goals coupled with a self-appraisal of one's abilities and capabilities. Beliefs concerning self-efficacy can lead to behaviors and thought patterns that can either be self-hindering or self-aiding. People set and stay committed to goals according to how they perceive their self-efficacy in situations or tasks (Bandura, 1989, p. 1175). Self-efficacy also determines the level of motivation and the level of effort that will be exerted on situations or tasks as well as the length of time and the level of perseverance. It requires a high level of self-efficacy to remain committed to goals or aspirations in the face of judgmental failure and unexpected problems. Students who have failed or who have observed their friends and family fail at receiving their high school diploma are at risk of perceiving their abilities of navigating high school and receiving their high school diploma as inadequate. This low level of self-efficacy will influence and limit perseverance in their goal of obtaining their high school diploma and ultimately their self-actualization (Bandura, 1971, 1989, 2001).

When setting goals and regulating their behavior, people choose courses of action that will lead to positive outcomes and generally avoid courses of action that will lead to negative outcomes. In a social context, people tend to avoid environments that are judged to be above their abilities to cope. They instead select environments that they feel they have adequate coping skills to maneuver. This selection process is evidenced by the social groups and the people with which a person chooses to surround themselves. This selection limits the experiences, behaviors, goals, successes and failures that a person can observe and derive meaning from. In an academic and career context, the better a person's self-efficacy, the more open-minded the person is to career options and the better they prepare themselves educationally for their post high school pursuits (Bandura, 1971, 1989, 2001).

CHAPTER III—METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to identify and describe the environmental and behavioral underpinnings and needs deficits related to students' academics struggles that lead to leaving high school without a high school diploma. This study identified common profiles and descriptions of students in the Camelot Schools who are over-aged and under-credentialed. The goal of the study was to explore what school leaders can do to identify and understand the profile of a student who is over-aged and under-credentialed in order to design schools or programs that meet the needs of students that are over-aged and under-credentialed. The findings of this study lay the foundation for school leaders to target solutions and strategies to increase both student achievement and overall graduation for the urban students who are over-aged and under-credentialed.

The following questions guided my research:

1. What is a typical demographic profile of students in Camelot Education's accelerated high schools in Chicago, IL and Philadelphia, PA?
2. How do students in accelerated high schools describe their family characteristics?
3. What are the disciplinary, legal, and security characteristics that students enrolled in accelerated high schools report concerning their neighborhoods and their previous schools?
4. How do students enrolled in accelerated high schools describe their schools' connectivity in both their previous schools and current accelerated high schools?

Rationale

This study utilized an archived survey given by Camelot Education to its students in their accelerated high schools in Chicago, IL and Philadelphia, PA. This study used descriptive statistics to summarize, identify, describe and quantify what students report contributes to them becoming academically off-track and making the decision to leave high school without completing their high school diploma. The researcher analyzed and summarized the data using descriptive statistics. Each of the survey questions was tallied to determine the frequency of each student's response. Questions that did not include any responses choices and asked students to respond by typing in their answers were coded and frequency was determined and documented (Gay & Airasian, 2003).

Research Design

The purpose of this study was to describe the socio-emotional and environmental reasons why high school students fall off track in high school and do not complete their high school education. The researcher's interest was in program and school design to support children experiencing difficulty in completing their high school education and to increase the number and percentage of students graduating from high school.

The researcher used descriptive quantitative research design in order to uncover, identify, describe and quantify factors that students report contribute to them becoming academically off-track and making the decision to leave high school without completing their high school diploma. The researcher used student surveys to obtain and analyze information to uncover, identify and describe factors that impeded students from matriculating through high school and receiving their high school diploma. The researcher accessed archived student surveys given to students in two major urban cities in two different states in schools designed for students who are 16 years and older who have failed the ninth grade at least once or who have left school without their high school diploma.

Research Questions

The following questions guided my research:

1. What is a typical demographic profile of students in Camelot Education's accelerated high schools in Chicago, IL and Philadelphia, PA?
2. How do students in accelerated high schools describe their family characteristics?
3. What are the disciplinary, legal, and security characteristics that students enrolled in accelerated high schools report concerning their neighborhoods and their previous schools?
4. How do students enrolled in accelerated high schools describe their schools' connectivity in both their previous schools and current accelerated high schools?

Setting

The surveys were given to students in Camelot Education's accelerated high schools in Chicago, IL and Philadelphia, PA. These two major urban cities are located in two different states and represent two distinctly different geographical regions of our country. These two cities, although located in separate geographical regions, share some common themes. All of these cities contain school districts that are in the top 100 largest urban districts. These cities also have very diverse populations with high rates of poverty and high dropout rates in parts of their districts. The communities that the schools are located in and that the students live in are regarded as violent and have a higher crime rate than the other areas of the city.

These two districts have created accelerated high schools to serve students who are over-aged and under-credentialed. Students enrolled in these high schools were at least 16 years and older that have failed the ninth grade at least once or have left school without their high school diploma. These accelerated high schools allowed students to receive a structured program that requires students to go to school for a longer school day and graduate in two and a half years for students who enroll with zero credits toward graduation. These accelerated high schools were very structured with a climate and culture that was based on positive peer normative culture that allows students to learn different norms and values and take charge of their education, and ultimately their post-secondary education. The researcher accessed archived surveys given to students who were enrolled in the accelerated high schools, which are district schools designed for students that are 16 years old or older that are over-aged and under-credentialed or have left school without a high school diploma.

Subjects and Participants

The participants in this study were students enrolled in accelerated high schools in Philadelphia and Chicago who were at least are 16 years or older who have failed the ninth grade at least once or left school without their high school diploma. Students ranged in age from 16 years old to 22 years old and were enrolled in grades nine through twelve.

The researcher accessed archived anonymous surveys given to students in the accelerated high schools in Philadelphia and Chicago. The researcher accessed the archived surveys given to students at Excel Academy North, Excel Academy South, Excel Academy of Roseland, Excel Academy of Englewood, Excel Academy of South Shore, and Excel Academy of South West. All of the participants in the study volunteered and their responses to the survey questions were anonymous.

Procedures

The researcher used a quantitative research design in order to describe, synthesize, analyze and interpret the quantitative data. The researcher first analyzed and summarized the data using descriptive statistics. Each of the survey questions was tallied to determine the frequency of each student's response. Questions that did not include any response choices and asked students to respond by typing in their answers were coded, and frequency was determined and documented (Gay & Airasian, 2003).

The researcher accessed 238 surveys that Camelot Education conducted during the 2015-16 school year. The survey was administered by computer to all students who volunteered for the survey. Camelot Education designed the survey for students who were 16 years or older that have failed the ninth grade at least once or have left school without their high school diploma in Chicago, IL and Philadelphia, PA. The students were assured that the survey was anonymous and that there would not be any link between them and their answers. The researcher used an archived survey given to students who volunteered as the vehicle to obtain and analyze information to uncover, identify and describe factors that impeded students from matriculating through high school and receiving their high school diploma.

Instrument

The researcher used an archived survey instrument developed and administered by Camelot Education to their six schools in Chicago and Philadelphia to uncover, identify, describe and quantify factors that cause students to become academically off-track and make the decision to leave high school without completing their high school diploma. The researcher first accessed the accelerated high school survey database. The survey instrument was created by Camelot Education as a way to describe and create profiles of the students attending their accelerated schools. The instrument consisted of 61 questions that asked students to choose factors that they felt caused them to fall off-track. The survey instrument asked students to choose factors, if any, that hindered their education in their community, family, and previous schools. Questions also gave the students the ability to write in another response if the responses do not represent their views. The survey database consisted of 238 surveys from Camelot Education's six schools located in Chicago, IL and Philadelphia, PA.

IRB/Human Subject Clearance

This study is in compliance with the requirements established by the university's Institutional Review Board committee. All procedures outlined in the IRB application were followed in accessing the archived surveys from Camelot Education. An approval form is located in Appendix D.

Limitations of the Study

The limitations of this study are defined as conditions or elements of this study that the researcher had no control over, but could have affected the outcome. The primary limitation of this study is the degree to which the participants were honest when completing their surveys. Another limitation is the degree to which the participants remember the sequence of events, feelings, and timelines of the events to which they are responding.

CHAPTER IV—FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to describe the environmental and behavioral underpinnings and needs deficits related to academics struggles that play a role in students leaving high school without a high school diploma. Two hundred and thirty-eight students enrolled in Camelot's six accelerated high schools participated in this study who were over-aged and under-credentialed. Over-aged and under-credentialed students are defined as students that are at least are 16 years or older that have failed the ninth grade at least once or have left school without their high school diploma. Students ranged in age from 16 years old to 22 years old and were invited to complete the survey anonymously at their school location.

The survey instrument was created by Camelot Education as a way to describe and create profiles of the students attending their accelerated schools. The instrument had 61 questions that asked students to choose factors that they felt caused them to fall off-track towards graduation. The survey instrument asked students to choose factors, if any, that hindered their education in their community, family, and previous schools. Questions also gave the students the ability to write in another response if the responses did not represent their views.

In total, 238 students completed the survey out of 841 students enrolled. Camelot invited all of the students who were enrolled in its accelerated programs in Philadelphia, PA and Chicago, IL to complete the survey to better understand their students and their needs. Six Camelot accelerated school campuses took part in the survey. Excel Academy North and Excel Academy South participated in Philadelphia, while Excel Academy of

Roseland, Excel Academy in Englewood, Excel Academy of South Shore and Excel Academy of Southwest participated in Chicago.

One of the goals of this study was to identify a common profile and description of students' family characteristics, disciplinary, legal, and security issues and school connectivity in both their previous schools and their current school within Camelot Education. As a result of this study, a profile of students who are over-aged and under-credentialed can be built to inform school leaders and teachers in their efforts to design schools and programs to support students in earning their high school diploma and continuing on to post-secondary learning. This study also identified and uncovered students' needs that exist outside the schools' academic environments that may ultimately impede academic success and contribute to students leaving high school without a high school diploma. This study offers an insight to build a framework of understanding to train campus administrators and teachers in needs that students have outside academic areas, and creates a knowledge base for campus administrators and teachers to design and implement interventions and programs to support all students in their journey towards earning their high school diploma and enrolling in a post-secondary learning environment.

The following questions guided my research:

1. What is a typical demographic profile of students in Camelot Education's accelerated high schools in Chicago, IL and Philadelphia, PA?
2. How do students in accelerated high schools describe their family characteristics?

3. What are the disciplinary, legal, and security characteristics that students enrolled in accelerated high schools report concerning their neighborhoods and their previous schools?
4. How do students enrolled in accelerated high schools describe their schools' connectivity in both their previous schools and current accelerated high schools?

4.2 Personal (Biographical) Data

The questions related to this section of the survey instrument covered respondents' gender, age, current grade (as it relates to number of credits needed to graduate), and age at expected graduation. Responses to this section of the survey build a profile of the students that are enrolled in Camelot's accelerated high schools in Philadelphia and Chicago. Questions reflected in this section correspond to questions 1-4.

4.2.1 Students' Gender

The students were asked to identify their gender. Of the 227 students that responded to the survey, 102 (45%) responded as female and 125 (55%) responded as male.

4.2.2 Students' Age

Students were asked how old they were. Two hundred and twenty-eight (228) students answered this question. The students' ages ranged from 15 years old to 21 years old. Five (2%) were 15 years old, 41 (17.9%) were 16 years old, 55 (24.1%) were 17 years old, 60 (26.3%) were 18 years old, 49 (21.5%) were 19 years old, 11 (4.8%) were 20 years old, and finally 7 (3.1%) were 21 years old. The majority of the students, 164

(72%), were pretty equally dispersed between the ages of 17 years old to 19 years old. Two hundred and five (205) or 95% were between the ages of 16 years old and 19 years old.

Table 4.1

Students' Age

Age	Frequency	Percentage
15	5	2.19
16	41	17.98
17	55	24.12
18	60	26.32
19	49	21.49
20	11	4.82
21	7	3.07
Total	225	100.00

4.2.3 Students' Grade Level

Students were asked what grade they were in according to the number of high school credits that they had accumulated toward graduation. Of the 225 students that responded to this question, 8 (4%) responded as ninth grade, 40 (18%) as tenth grade, 67 (30%) as eleventh grade, and 110 as twelfth grade. The majority of students were eleventh and twelfth graders (177 or 78%).

Table 4.2

Students' Grade Level

Grade	Frequency	Percentage
9th	8	3.56
10th	40	17.78
11th	67	29.78
12th	110	48.89
Total	227	100.00

4.2.4 Age at Anticipated Graduation

Students were asked what age they would be when they graduated. Two hundred and twenty-seven (227) students responded to this question. The majority of the students responded that they would be either 18 or 19 years old at the time of their graduation. This is significant because these students will not only graduate, but will graduate within their four- or five-year cohorts. Table 4.3 represents the age at which students anticipate graduating high school.

Table 4.3

Age at Anticipated Graduation

Age	Frequency	Percentage
17	31	13.66
18	104	45.81
19	65	28.63
20	18	7.93
21	7	3.08
22	2	.88
Total	227	100.00

4.3 Family Characteristics

The questions related to this section of the survey instrument documented how students describe their family characteristics. Students were asked about their mother and fathers' educational levels, employment status, number of kids and with whom they currently live. This section of the survey had seven questions corresponding to questions 5-11.

4.3.1 Mothers' Education Achievement Level

Students were asked what the highest educational achievement level of their mother was. Two hundred twenty-seven (227) students responded to this question. The survey revealed higher than expected educational attainment for mothers of students in accelerated high schools. One hundred twelve (112 or 49%) of students responded that their mother have at least a high school diploma. Post-secondary participation was also higher than expected by their mothers. Students responded that 18 (8%) of their mothers have a college degree. Eight percent (3%) have graduate degrees. 14 (6%) of the students responded that their mothers went to a trade/technical school. Table 4.4 reflects the students' responses when asked about the highest level of their mothers' educational achievement.

Table 4.4

Mothers' Educational Achievement Level

Educational Achievement	Frequency	Percentage
Middle school	14	6.17
High school	112	49.34
Technical/trade school	14	6.17
1 year of college	27	11.89
2 years of college	15	6.61
3 years of college	2	.88
4 years of college	18	7.93
Graduate studies	7	3.08
Masters	17	7.49
Doctorate	1	.44
Total	227	100

4.3.2 Fathers' Educational Achievement Level

Students were asked what the highest educational achievement level of their father was. Two hundred and nineteen (219) students responded to this question. The survey revealed higher than expected educational attainment for fathers of students in accelerated high schools. One hundred twenty-five (125 or 57%) responded that their fathers have at least a high school diploma. Post-secondary participation was also higher than expected by their fathers. Students responded that 13 (6%) of their fathers have a college degree. Eight (2%) have graduate degrees. 10 (5%) of the students responded that their fathers went to trade/technical schools. Table 4.5 reflects the students' responses when asked about the highest level of their fathers' educational achievement.

Table 4.5

Fathers' Educational Achievement Level

Educational Achievement	Frequency	Percentage
Middle school	17	7.76
High school	125	57.08
Technical/trade school	10	4.57
1 year of college	19	8.68
2 years of college	14	6.39
3 years of college	5	2.28
4 years of college	13	5.94
Graduate studies	5	2.28
Masters	9	4.11
Doctorate	2	.91
Total	219	100.00

4.3.3 Mothers’ Employment Status

Students were asked if their mothers were currently employed. Two hundred and six (206) students responded to the question, with 148 (72%) responding that his or her mother was currently employed and 58 (28%) responding that his or her mother was not currently employed.

4.3.4 Fathers’ Employment Status

Students were asked if their fathers were currently employed. Two hundred and seven (207) students responded to the question, with 124 (60%) responding that his or her father was currently employed and 83 (40%) responding that his or her father was not currently employed.

4.3.5 Students with Children

Students were asked to respond as to whether or not they currently had children. Two hundred and twenty-nine (229) students responded to this question. Of the 229, 190 (83%) responded that they currently did not have children, while 39 (17%) responded that they did have children.

4.3.6 Number of Children

Students were asked a follow-up question about the number of children that they currently have. Thirty-four (34) students responded that they had at least one to as many as four kids. Of the 34 students, 25 (74%) had one child, 5 (15%) had two children, 3 (9%) had three children and 1 (3%) had four children.

Table 4.6

Number of Children

Number of Children	Frequency	Percentage
1	25	73.53
2	5	14.71
3	3	8.82
4	1	2.94
Total	34	100

4.3.7 Age at First Child

To further understand students starting their own family, students were asked about their age when they had their first child as an open response to the question as a follow-up to how many children they had. Of the 34 students that responded that they had children, 32 students responded to the question concerning the age at having their first child. Most (69%) students had their first child between the ages of 17-19 years old. Twenty-five percent (25%) of students had their first child between the ages of 14-16 years old.

Table 4.7

Age at First Child

Age at First Child	Frequency	Percentage
14	2	6.25
15	2	6.25
16	4	12.50
17	10	31.25
18	7	21.88
19	5	15.63
21	1	3.13
25	1	3.13
Total	32	100.00

4.3.8 Living Structure

Students were asked with whom they currently live. This question had a large response, with 233 students answering this question. Of the 233 students, 111 (48%) live with their mothers, 40 (17%) live with grandparents, 37 (16%) live with both parents, 31 (13%) live with someone other than their parents or grandparents, and only 14 (6%) live with their father.

Table 4.8

Living Structure

Live With	Frequency	Percentage
Both parents	37	15.88
Mother	111	47.64
Father	14	6.00
Grandmother	35	15.02
Grandfather	5	2.14
Other	31	13.30
Total	233	100.00

4.3.9 Mothers' Incarceration

This question asked students to answer if their mothers were ever incarcerated. Two hundred and six (206) students responded to this question with 179 (87%) answering that their mothers have not been incarcerated and 27 (13%) answering that their mother had been incarcerated.

4.3.10 Fathers' Incarceration

This question asked students to answer if their fathers were ever incarcerated. One hundred ninety-six (196) students responded to this question with 137 (70%) answering that their fathers have not been incarcerated and 59 (30%) answering that their father had been incarcerated.

4.3.11 Meals Consumed Per Day

In an effort to understand students' eating habits and availability of food, students were asked about the number of meals that they consume every day. Specifically, students were asked "how many meals a day do you eat a day?" Students were given multiple-choice options ranging from 0-5. Two hundred and three (203) students responded to this question with most (81%) of the students surveyed reporting eating at least three meals a day.

Table 4.9

Meals Consumed Per Day

Number of Meals	Frequency	Percentage
0	1	0.49
1	8	4.43
2	31	15.27
3	58	28.57
4	46	22.66
5	59	29.06
Total	203	100.00

4.3.12 Hours Slept Per Night

To further understand students' family life, students were asked about the hours of sleep that that the get per night. Specifically, students were asked, "How many hours of sleep do you get at night?" Two hundred and one (201) students responded to this question. Fifty percent (50%) of students answered that they were getting five to seven hours of sleep per night, with 15% of students receiving four or less hours of sleep and 37% of students receiving eight to ten hours of sleep. Table 4.10 represents the hours of sleep students documented receiving every night.

Table 4.10

Hours Slept Per Night

Hours of Sleep	Frequency	Percentage
0	2	1.00
1	1	.50
2	4	1.99
3	11	5.47
4	9	4.48
5	20	9.95
6	49	24.38
7	32	15.92
8	48	23.88
9	14	6.97
10	11	5.47
Total	201	100.00

4.3.13 Homelessness

Students were asked whether they had ever experienced homelessness. Two hundred and two (202) students responded to this question. Of the respondents, 15 (77%)

answered that had not been homeless and 47 (23%) responded that they had endured homelessness currently or previously.

4.3.14 Foster Care Involvement

Students were asked in this question whether or not they were currently or had ever been involved with the foster care system. Two hundred and two (202) students answered this question. Of the 202 students, 188 (93%) responded that they had never been involved with the foster care system.

4.3.15 Mothers' Gang Affiliation

This question asked students to answer as to whether or not their mother had been involved in a gang. Specifically, students were asked, "Has your mother been involved in a gang?" One hundred and ninety (190) students answered this question, with 181 (95%) responding that no, they have not been a member of a gang, and 9 (5%) responding that yes, their mother has been a member of a gang.

4.3.16 Fathers' Gang Affiliation

This question asked students to answer as to whether or not their father had been involved in a gang. Specifically, students were asked, "Has your father been involved in a gang?" One hundred and eighty-nine students answered this question, with 152 (80%) responding that no, they have not been a member of a gang, and 37 (20%) responding that yes, their father has been a member of a gang.

4.3.17 The Person Students Look up To the Most

Students were asked who they look up to the most. Students were not given choices for this question and asked to type in their responses. This is an important question because it can give valuable insight as to who in their lives has the most influence and who in their lives embodies values and traits that they would like to emulate. Most students (32%) chose their mother as the person who they look up to the most, followed by 18% of the students stating “other family member.” Thirteen percent (13%) of students typed a response that they looked up to “no one.” Seven percent (7%) look up to “teachers and administrators,” while only 5% of students look up to their fathers and 2% of students responded that they look up to God the most.

Table 4.11

Whom Do You Look Up to the Most and Why?

Look Up to Most	Frequency	Percentage
Both parents	4	2.00
Father	7	4.90
God	3	2.10
Professional/entertainer	7	4.90
Grandparents	7	4.90
Mother	45	31.46
No one	19	13.28
Other	15	10.48
Other family member	26	18.18
Teacher/administrator	10	6.99
Total	143	100.00

4.4 Discipline, Legal, and Security Characteristics

This section of the survey covered the disciplinary, legal, and security characteristics that students enrolled in accelerated high schools report concerning their neighborhoods and their previous schools. Students were asked about the incarceration of their mothers, fathers and themselves, as well as about security at their previous school and in their neighborhoods. Students were asked about the number of violent incidents that they observed in their previous schools and in their neighborhood as well as the gang affiliations of their mothers, fathers, and themselves.

4.4.1 Previously Arrested

In this section, students were asked if they had ever been arrested for a crime. Two hundred and nine (209) students responded to this question. Of the 209, 145 (69%) responded that they had not been previously arrested, and 64 (31%) responded that they had been previously arrested.

4.4.2 Age of Arrest

In this question, students were asked about the youngest age of their arrests. Thirty-six (36) students responded with the age of their first arrest. The students' responses had a four-year range from age 15 to 19 years old. Of the respondents, two (6%) answered 11, two (6%) were 12 years old, one (3%) was 13, three (8%) were 14, twelve (33%) were 15, six (17%) were 16, seven (19%) were 17, one (3%) was 18, and two (6%) were 19.

Table 4.12

Age at First Arrest

Age	Frequency	Percentage
11	2	5.56
12	2	5.56
13	1	2.78
14	3	8.33
15	12	33.33
16	6	16.67
17	7	19.44
18	1	2.78
19	2	5.56
Total	36	100.00

4.4.3 Student Incarceration

In an effort to understand students' legal concerns, students were asked about their previous incarcerations. Specifically, students were asked, "Have you ever been incarcerated?" The answer selection consisted of a reply of "yes" or "no." Two hundred and nine (209) students answered this question, with 178 (85%) students responding "no" they have not been previously incarcerated, and 31 (15%) students responding "yes" they have been previously incarcerated.

4.4.4 Frequency of Violent Incidents at Previous Schools

Students were asked about the number of violent incidents that they saw per week at their previous schools. Students were given a range of choices: 0, 1-5, 6-10, 11-15, and 16+ acts of violence per week. Two hundred one students answered this question, with 85 (42%) responding that they witnessed 0 acts of violence per week, 78 (39%) 1-5, 25 (12%) 6-10, 11 (5%) 11-15, and 2 (1%) 16+ acts of violence per week. The majority (51%) of the students taking this survey witnessed between one and ten acts of violence per week at their previous school. Almost one in five (19%) witnessed more than six acts of violence a week.

Table 4.13

Violence Incidents at Previous Schools

Incidents at Previous School	Frequency	Percentage
0 acts of violence	85	42.29
1-5 acts of violence	78	38.81
6-10 acts of violence	25	12.44
11-15 acts of violence	11	5.47
16+ acts of violence	2	1.00
Total	201	100.00

4.4.5 Students' Safety at Previous Schools

After asking students about the number of violent incidents that they witnessed at their previous schools, students were asked about their feelings of safety. Specifically, students were asked "How would you rank your safety at your previous school?"

Students were given five multiple-choice answers consisting of “very safe,” “somewhat safe,” “neutral,” “unsafe sometimes,” and “unsafe most of the time.” Two hundred and seventeen (217) students answered the question. The majority, or 63%, of students responded that they felt “very safe” or “somewhat safe,” and 37% of students responded that they felt “neutral” to “unsafe most of the time.” Table 4.14 represents the students’ responses to their feelings of safety at their previous schools.

Table 4.14

Students’ Safety at Previous Schools

Safety Feeling	Frequency	Percentage
Very safe	81	37.32
Somewhat safe	56	25.80
Neutral	50	23.04
Somewhat unsafe	17	7.83
Unsafe most of the time	13	5.99
Total	217	100.0

4.4.6 Neighborhood Violence

Students were asked about the number of violent incidents that they saw per week in their neighborhoods. Students were given a range of choices: 0, 1-5, 6-10, 11-15, and 16+ acts of violence per week. One hundred and ninety-five (195) students answered this question, with 56 (29%) responding that they witnessed 0 acts of violence per week, 66 (34%) 1-5, 44 (23%) 6-10, 12 (6%) 11-15, and 17 (9%) 16+ acts of violence per week. The majority (57%) of the students taking this survey witnessed between one and ten acts of violence per week in their neighborhoods. More than a third (38%) of the students witnessed more than six acts of violence per week.

Table 4.15

Neighborhood Violence

Incidents in Neighborhood	Frequency	Percentage
0 acts of violence	56	28.72
1-5 acts of violence	66	33.85
6-10 acts of violence	44	22.56
11-15 acts of violence	12	6.15
16+ acts of violence	17	8.72
Total	195	100.00

4.4.7 Students' Safety in their Neighborhoods

After asking students about the number of violent incidents that they witnessed in their neighborhoods, students were asked about their feelings of safety. Specifically, students were asked, "How safe do you feel in your neighborhood?" Students were given five multiple-choice answers consisting of "very safe," "somewhat safe," "neutral," "unsafe sometimes," and "unsafe most of the time." Two hundred and eleven (211) students answered the question. The majority, or 63%, of students responded that they felt "very safe" or "somewhat safe," and 37% of students responded that they felt "neutral to unsafe most of the time." Table 4.16 represents the students' responses to their feelings as to how safe they felt in their neighborhoods.

Table 4.16

Students' Safety in Their Neighborhoods

Safety Feeling	Frequency	Percentage
Very safe	69	32.70
Somewhat safe	63	29.86
Neutral	42	19.90
Somewhat unsafe	25	11.84
Unsafe most of the time	12	5.68
Total	211	100.00

4.4.8 Bullying at Previous Schools

In order to understand the social pressures students have to navigate in their previous schools, students were asked about the bullying in their previous schools. Specifically, students were asked, “Was bullying an issue at your previous school?” Students were given three multiple-choice answers of “no bullying,” “some bullying,” and “high rates of bullying.” One hundred and ninety-seven (197) students responded to this question. One hundred and thirty-three (133) (68%) answered that there was “no bullying,” and 64 (32%) students answered that there was “some bullying” or “high rates of bullying.” Table 4.17 reflects the students' responses to bullying at their previous schools.

Table 4.17

Bullying at Previous Schools

Rate of Bullying	Frequency	Percentage
No bullying	133	67.51
Some bullying	50	25.38
High rates of bullying	14	7.11
Total	197	100.00

4.4.9 Violence in Previous Schools Interfering with Academics

After asking students about the rates of violence in their previous schools, students were asked to respond as to whether the violence in their previous schools prohibited them from concentrating on their academics. Specifically, students were asked, "At my previous school, violence prohibited me from concentrating on my academics." Students were given multiple-choice options that included "did not prohibit," "somewhat prohibited," "prohibited half the time," and "prohibited most of the time." One hundred and ninety-two (192) students responded to this question. One hundred and seven (107) students (56%) answered that the violence "did not prohibit" them from concentrating on their academics. However, 85 (44%) students responded that the violence "somewhat prohibited" to "completely prohibited" them from concentrating on their academics.

Table 4.18

Violence in Previous Schools Interfering with Academics

Violence Prohibiting Academics	Frequency	Percentage
Did not prohibit	107	55.73
Somewhat prohibited	48	25.00
Prohibited half the time	18	9.38
Prohibited most of the time	11	5.73
Completely prohibited	8	4.17
Total	192	100.00

4.4.10 Gang Affiliation

This question asked students to answer as to whether or not they were currently or previously involved in a gang. Specifically, students were asked, “Are you currently or have you ever been involved in a criminal gang or street clique?” One hundred and ninety-five students answered this question, with 163 (84%) responding that no, they have not been members of a gang, and 32 (16%) responding that yes, they have been members of a gang.

4.4.11 Absent from School Due to Alcohol

In order to understand how alcohol may have affected school participation, students were asked if they have missed school due to alcohol. Specifically, students were asked, “Have you missed school due to alcohol?” An overwhelming majority of students, 95%, stated that they have not missed school due to alcohol. Five percent (5%) responded that they have missed school due to alcohol.

4.4.12 Absent from School Due to Drugs

In order to understand how drugs may have affected school participation, students were asked if they have missed school due to drugs. Specifically, students were asked, “Have you missed school due to drugs?” A large majority of students, 89%, stated that they have not missed school due to drugs. However, 11% responded that they have missed school due to drugs. This is double the amount of students that responded they had missed due to alcohol.

4.4.13 School Suspensions

In an effort to understand students’ legal issues, students were asked about previous suspensions from school. Specifically, students were asked, “Have you ever been suspended from school?” Students were only given the choices of “yes” or “no.” One hundred and ninety-six (196) students responded to this question, with 160 (82%) responding that “yes” they have been suspended, and 36 (18%) responding that “no” they have not been suspended from school.

4.4.14 Age of Earliest Suspension

After asking students if they have ever been suspended from school, students were asked about the age of their first suspension. Students were allowed to type in the earliest age that they were suspended. By the seventh grade, at eleven to twelve years old, the majority, 79 (62%), of students reported that they have been suspended from school. Table 4.19 reflects the answers students gave to the question concerning the earliest age they were suspended.

Table 4.19

Age of Earliest Suspension

Age	Frequency	Percentage
Under 5	2	1.57
5/6	10	7.87
7/8	14	11.02
9/10	27	21.26
11/12	26	20.47
13/14	19	14.96
15/16	22	17.32
17/18	7	5.51
Total	127	100.00

4.4.15 Suspended/Expelled for Alcohol

In an attempt to understand in what way alcohol may be contributing to discipline problems in school, students were asked whether they had been suspended or expelled from school due to possession or use of alcohol. Specifically, students were asked, “Have you ever been suspended/expelled for alcohol possession or use?” The large majority of students, 86%, stated that they have not been suspended or expelled for possession or use of alcohol. However, 14% of students reported that they have been suspended or expelled for possession or use of alcohol. This is almost three times as many students that reported missing school due to alcohol.

4.4.16 Alcohol Use

After asking questions about the discipline issues concerning possession or use of alcohol and whether students were missing school because of alcohol, students were asked about their use of alcohol. Specifically, students were asked, “Do you use alcohol?” Fifteen percent (15%) of students admitted to using alcohol even though the majority of students are under the legal age to drink alcohol. While 86% of students reported not using alcohol, the 15% that reported using it was about 1% more that students that had been suspended or expelled for possession or use of alcohol.

4.4.17 Age First Consumed Alcohol

In an effort to understand when students begin using alcohol, students were asked about the age that they first used alcohol. Specifically, if they answered yes that they used alcohol, they were asked, “How old were you the first time you drank alcohol?” The age that the most students (22%) began drinking alcohol was 14 years old. By the age of 14, 59% of students had consumed their first alcoholic drink. Almost three quarters (74%) of students had their first drink between the ages of 13 and 16 years old.

Table 4.20

Age First Consumed Alcohol

Age First Used Alcohol	Frequency	Percentage
At birth	1	3.70
8	1	3.70
9	1	3.70
10	0	0.00
11	2	7.40
12	1	3.70
13	4	14.81
14	6	22.22
15	5	18.51
16	5	18.51
17	0	0.00
18	1	3.70
Total	27	100.00

4.4.18 Alcohol Use Per Week

After students were asked at what age they first consumed alcohol, students were asked about how often they use alcohol. Specifically, students were asked, “If you currently use alcohol, how often do you drink per week?” Most of the students, 73%, responded that the question was “not applicable.” Of the students that responded concerning the frequency that they use alcohol, 16% stated that they use 0-1 days a week.

Table 4.21

Alcohol Use Per Week

Current Alcohol Use	Frequency	Percentage
Not Applicable	118	73.29
0-1 days per week	26	16.15
1-2 days per week	11	6.83
2-3 days per week	4	2.48
3-4 days per week	2	1.24
4-5 days per week	0	0
6-7 days per week	0	0
Total	161	100.00

4.4.19 Suspended/Expelled for Drugs

In an effort to understand drug use and its role in school discipline of students in Camelot's accelerated high schools, students were asked, "Have you ever been suspended/expelled for drug possession or use?" This question was a simple "yes" or "no" question. Most of the students, 88%, stated that they have not been suspended or expelled for possession or use of drugs. However, 12% of students responded that they have been suspended/expelled for possession or use of drugs.

4.4.20 Drug Use

Students were asked about their current drug use. Students were asked, "Do you currently use drugs?" Most of the students, 75%, reported that they currently did not use drugs. Interestingly, 25% of students responded that they currently use drugs. More students reported currently using drugs than using alcohol.

4.4.21 Age First Experimented with Drugs

After establishing how many students reported using drugs, students were asked about the age that they first experimented with drugs. Students were asked, "If yes, what was the earliest age you began using or experimenting?" A large number of students, 24%, began experimenting at the age of 14. In fact, 73% of students experimented with alcohol by the age of 14. Like alcohol, the large majority of students (63%) began experimenting at the age of 13 and 16 years of age. This documents that more students used drugs than alcohol.

Table 4.22

Age First Experimented With Drugs

Age First Used Drugs	Frequency	Percentage
At birth	1	2.43
8	1	2.43
9	1	2.43
10	3	7.31
11	4	9.75
12	3	7.31
13	7	17.07
14	10	24.39
15	4	9.75
16	5	12.19
17	1	2.43
18	1	2.43
Total	41	100.00

4.22 Drug Use Per Week

Finally, students were asked about the frequency that they use drugs per week. Students were asked, “If yes, how many times per week do you use drugs?” Most of the students, 28%, reported that the question was “not applicable.” The next largest answer was 6-7 days a week, chosen by 27% of students.

When you look at only students that report using drugs, the percentages increase and become clearer. When looking at only students that reported using drugs, most students, 38%, used drugs 6-7 days a week. Twenty-one percent (21%) of students said they used drugs 0-1 days a week. Sixty percent (60%) of student reported using drugs 3-7 days a week.

Table 4.23

Drug Use Per Week

Current Drug Use	Frequency	Percentage
Not applicable	19	28.36
0-1 days per week	10	14.93
1-2 days per week	2	2.99
2-3 days per week	4	5.97
3-4 days per week	5	7.46
4-5 days per week	2	2.99
6-7 days per week	18	26.87
Total	67	100.00

Table 4.24

Drug Use Per Week (Only Students That Reported Using Drugs)

Current Drug Use	Frequency	Percentage
0-1 days per week	10	20.83
1-2 days per week	2	4.16
2-3 days per week	4	8.33
3-4 days per week	5	18.51
4-5 days per week	2	4.16
6-7 days per week	18	37.50
Total	48	100.00

4.5 School Connectedness

The questions included in this section of the survey were designed to get insight into students' school connectedness. Students were asked about previous school experiences with teachers and administrators and current experiences in Camelot Education. There are seven questions included in this section of the survey.

4.5.1 Afterschool Activity Participation

In this question, students were asked if they were involved in afterschool activities at their previous schools. Specifically, students were asked, "Did you participate in any afterschool activities?" Two hundred and twenty-seven students responded to this question, with 70% of the students responding that they were involved in afterschool activities in their previous schools.

Table 4.25

Prior Participation in Afterschool Activities

School Activity	Frequency	Percentage
Sports	103	45.38
Band	7	3.08
Clubs	26	11.45
Other	24	10.57
I did not participate	67	29.51
Total	227	100.00

4.5.2 Teachers' Care Previous to Enrollment in Camelot Education

Students were asked about how they perceived whether their teachers at the previous school cared about them. Specifically, students were asked, "Prior to enrolling at Camelot, did you feel like teachers cared about you?" One hundred and ninety-five (195) students responded to the question. Of the 195, 140 (72%) answered yes and 55 (28%) responded no.

4.5.3 Administrators' Care Previous to Enrollment in Camelot Education

This question focused students on their relationships and experiences with their administrators at their previous schools. Specifically, students were asked, "Prior to enrolling at Camelot, did you feel like administrators cared about you?" One hundred and ninety-six (196) students answered the question, with 142 (72%) responding that they felt like administrators cared and 54 (28%) responding that they didn't feel like administrators cared about them.

4.5.4 Attendance Expectations

Students were asked to answer this question to give insight into the teachers' and school staff's student attendance expectations. Specifically, student were asked, "At your previous school, did you feel that teachers and school staff members cared if you came to school?" One hundred and ninety-one (191) students responded to the question. Of the 191 students, 114 (60%) responded "yes" and 77 (40%) responded "no."

4.5.5 School Connectedness and Camelot Education

In order to measure how connected students attending Camelot feel, students were asked to compare the connectedness of their previous schools with how they feel at Camelot. Specifically, students were asked, "Do you feel more connected to Camelot than your previous school?" One hundred fifty-three (153) students (81%) of the 189 students that answered the question answered that they felt more connected to Camelot than their previous schools. Thirty-six students (19%) responded that they didn't feel more connected to Camelot than their previous schools.

4.5.6 Why Students Chose Camelot

To uncover the motivation for students to enroll in Camelot, students were asked, "Why did you choose to enroll at Camelot?" This question was an open-ended question and the answers were categorized. The largest number of students (28%) responded that they enrolled in Camelot "to graduate." Also, 27% of students reported that they enrolled because "My friends graduated from Camelot." Taken together, 55% of students enrolled with graduation as their priority. The third largest group (11%) responded that they enrolled because they "liked the school and staff."

Table 4.26

Why Students Chose Camelot

Why Camelot	Frequency	Percentage
Better myself	15	9.26
Closer than my previous school	4	2.47
Family/Friends encourage me	4	2.47
Kicked out of previous schools	15	9.26
Liked school and staff	18	11.11
My friends graduated from Camelot	44	27.16
Needed more help	1	.62
Other	16	9.58
To graduate	45	27.78
Total	162	100.00

4.5.7 Parents Graduation Expectations

Students were asked about their parents' or guardians' graduation expectations. Specifically, students were asked, "Did your parents/guardians expect you to graduate before coming to Camelot?" Only 65% reported that their parents expected them to graduate from high school. Thirty-four percent (34%) of parents did not expect their students to graduate from high school.

4.5.8 Connectedness at Camelot

In order to examine how students how connected students feel at Camelot as opposed to their prior schools, students were asked if they feel more connected at

Camelot than their previous schools. Specifically, students were asked, “Do you feel more connected to Camelot than your previous school?” Eighty-one percent (81%) of students reported that they feel more connected to Camelot than their previous schools.

4.5.9 Camelot Education Teachers Care

Students were asked if they felt that Camelot teachers cared for and respected them. Specifically, students were asked, “Do you feel that your teachers at Camelot care for and respect you?” Students were given only two possible responses, “yes” or “no.” One hundred and eighty-nine (189), or 94%, of students answered this question. One hundred and seventy-seven (177) students answered that “yes” they thought that their teachers at Camelot cared for and respected them. Only 12 (6%) students in the survey answered that “no” they did not feel that Camelot teachers cared or respected them.

4.5.10 Care and Respect for Camelot Teachers

After students were asked whether or not teachers cared for and respected them, students were asked a version of that question in reverse. Specifically, students were asked, “Do you feel that you care for and respect your teachers at Camelot?” Just as in the previous question, students were only able to answer “yes” or “no.” One hundred and ninety-two (192) students responded to the question, with 175 (91%) students responding that they care for and respect their teachers at Camelot, and 17 students responding that “no” they do not care for or respect their teachers at Camelot.

4.5.11 Students’ Graduation Expectations

Parents communicate a lot in the expectations that they have for their children. To find out about what students perceive as the expectations for graduation from their parents, students were asked, “Did your parents/guardians expect you to graduate before coming to Camelot?" Only 66% of students said that their parents expected them to graduate, leaving 34% of students stating that their parents did not think that they were going to graduate.

4.5.12 Attendance Prior to Camelot

In order for students to be connected to a school, students must attend school at a high rate. Students were asked about their prior attendance. Specifically, students were asked, "How often did you attend school before you enrolled in the program?" Only 38% reported that they attended school five days a week. Twenty-two percent (22%) attended school four days a week. That's only 59% of the students surveyed that attended school an average of 80% of the time or more. More than a third, 41%, attended school three or fewer days per week. Students who attended three or fewer days a week reported that they missed 40% of their instructional time per year.

Table 4.27

Attendance Prior to Camelot

Attendance prior to Camelot	Frequency	Percentage
None	15	7.81
1 day per week	4	2.08
2 days per week	24	12.50
3 days per week	35	18.23
4 days per week	42	21.88
5 days per week	72	37.50
Total	192	100.00

4.5.13 Reasons for Non-Attendance Prior to Attending Camelot

After asking students the frequency with which they attended school, the next question was centered around the reasons students were not attending school. Students were asked, “Why did you not attend school?” Students were given seven choices. The largest category students chose was that they didn’t attend school because they were “bored” (20%), followed by the category that they “didn’t see the purpose” (19%). The third largest category was the “other” category (19%). Thirty-nine percent (39%) were completely unengaged because they “didn’t see the purpose” or they were “bored.” That is roughly the same percentage of students that attended school three days or fewer.

Table 4.28

Reasons for Non-Attendance Prior to Attending Camelot

Reasons for not Attending	Frequency	Percentage
Care for siblings	28	13.72
Work	17	8.33
Bored	40	19.60
Wasn’t safe	16	7.84
Had no transportation	26	12.74
Did not see the purpose	39	19.11
Other	38	18.62
Total	204	100.00

4.6 Summary of Findings

The purpose of this study was to identify a common profile of students enrolled in Camelot Education's accelerated programs, designed to support students who are over-aged and under-credentialed, and to create descriptions of students' family characteristics as well as their disciplinary, legal, and security issues and school connectivity in both their previous schools and their current schools within Camelot Education. By surveying students in Camelot Education's accelerated schools in Philadelphia and Chicago, student responses were used to describe needs deficits not related to school academics that play a role in students' school struggles that lead to leaving high school without a high school diploma. Building a profile and identifying needs deficits of students enrolled in Camelot Education's accelerated schools offer insights into building a framework of understanding to train campus administrators and teachers, as well as offering a knowledge base for campus administrators and teachers to design and implement interventions and programs to support all students in their quest towards completing their high school diploma and enrolling in a post-secondary learning environment.

The following questions guided my research:

1. What is a typical demographic profile of students in Camelot Education's accelerated high schools in Chicago, IL and Philadelphia, PA?
2. How do students in accelerated high schools describe their family characteristics?
3. What are the disciplinary, legal, and security characteristics that students enrolled in accelerated high schools report concerning their neighborhoods and their previous schools?

4. How do students enrolled in accelerated high schools describe their schools' connectivity in both their previous schools and current accelerated high schools?

The first section of the survey consisted of demographic questions that described the population in the study. This section included questions concerning gender, age, grade and year of graduation. After compiling the responses from the demographic section of the student survey, a typical demographic profile of students in Camelot Education's accelerated high schools in Chicago, IL and Philadelphia, PA began to take shape. According to the results of the survey, more female students (55%) than male students (45%) took the survey. The overwhelming majority (72%) are 17-19 years old. Most are seniors (48%), with the rest of the respondents divided between juniors (30%) and sophomores (18%). In keeping with the mission of the Camelot accelerated schools, 46% will graduate at 18 years old, with 11% graduating at 19 years old or older. Not only are they anticipating graduating, but 45% will graduate with their cohort, and approximately 27% will graduate in the five-year cohort.

In the next section, questions were categorized to understand how students in accelerated high schools describe their family characteristics. Students that responded to the survey described their family characteristics by answering questions concerning their parents' highest education levels, parents' employment status, whether or not they have children, their current living situations, their parents' incarceration, their parents' gang involvement, their parents' graduation expectations and who they look up to the most. Students responded that 49% of their mothers' highest education level was high school, with 45% of their mothers at least enrolling in a college or trade school. In contrast, students responded that 57% of their fathers had attended high school, while only 35% enrolled in a college or trade school. Seventy-two percent (72%) of mothers are employed and only 60% of fathers are employed. Most students did not have children (83%). Of the students that had children, most (74%) had one child and 15% had two children, with the majority (53%) having their first child at the age of 17 or 18 years old. Most of the students (48%) live only with their mothers while 6% live with only their fathers. When you add the students that reported that they live with both parents (16%), you see that 64% of students live with their mother in the household as opposed to 22% living with fathers in the household. Thirteen percent (13%) of mothers have been incarcerated and 30% of fathers have been incarcerated. Five percent (5%) of mothers and 20% of fathers were involved in a gang. On a positive note, 80% of students reported eating three or more meals a day. The majority of students need more sleep. Sixty-four percent (64%) of students responded that they get less than eight hours of sleep a night. Twenty-three percent (23%) of students said that they have been homeless and 7% have been involved with foster care system. Only 65% of parents expected their students to graduate. Thirty-two percent (32%) responded that they most look up to their mothers.

In reviewing the results of this section of the survey, it is clear that many students are dealing with family situations that leave some basic needs unmet, such as physiological and safety needs. When such needs are not met, students will not seek to meet needs at higher levels. These lower-level needs deficits will curtail students in their academic success, since education falls in the self-actualization category in Maslow’s hierarchy of needs. Students that arrive at school with physiological and safety needs deficits will seek to meet those needs in the place of engaging in the academic lessons that are planned by the teacher. Many of the behaviors that students present in an effort to meet their needs deficits will either not be appropriate at the time in the classroom or will be antisocial behavior that has been learned as a result of their peer group.

The lowest and most primary of Maslow's needs are the physiological needs. As represented in the study, examples of these needs are food and sleep. The majority of students (80%) reported that they eat at least three meals a day. Whether the meals are supplied by their family or through the school, it seems that the need for food for most students is met. Sleep, however, is a different story. When analyzing how much sleep students reported getting, there is a clear deficit for the majority of the students in Camelot Education's accelerated schools. Students reported that 64% of them are getting fewer than the required eight hours of sleep to prepare them for their school day. This is a significant reason why students are missing school, and for the ones that are attending, a reason why they do not present the focus and alertness required for their academic studies.

Safety was also a need that was revealed in the questions in this section of the survey. Safety is the next highest need to be met in Maslow's hierarchy. Safety is the idea of "security; stability; dependency; protection; freedom from fear, anxiety, and chaos; need for structure, order, law, and limits; strength in the protector; and so on" (Maslow, 1970, p. 18). Questions in this section of the survey provide evidence of the safety needs that are not being met by the students' family structure and history. Examining the responses to questions that deal with family structure, students reported that only 16% live with both parents and 17% are parents themselves. Within their family, there are high rates of unemployment and incarceration, as well as deteriorating financial security and stability. Forty percent (40%) of fathers and 28% of mothers are currently unemployed, rendering them unable to provide an income for the family. Students further reported that 13% of their mothers and 30% of their fathers have been incarcerated, spending long spans of time absent from the home, neither being able to protect or provide an income for the family. In addition, the process and timing of parents being arrested and incarcerated is very abrupt and doesn't allow students to trust and rely on the consistency and stability of the family unit. Parents' gang affiliations further disrupt the family structure and interject anxiety and chaos into the family. Among the students in the study, 20% of fathers and 5% of mothers have been involved in gangs. Parents' gang affiliations create anxiety for the physical well-being of the person involved in the gang as well as the rest of the family members that may be affected by the violence or fear that their parents will be harmed by the violence. Students also have anxiety and are fearful about their fathers or mothers suffering from the violence in jail. The state of the family's physical safety in the neighborhood and the family's financial well-being also create anxiety and fear.

The final need that the questions in this section of the survey uncovered relates to self-esteem. The esteem need has two different subsets. First is the need to achieve success, mastery or a feeling of competence. The second is for the group to appreciate, recognize, or hold the person in a place of prestige. The first need is an intrinsic need of self-worth, while the second is the need for the group to value the person (Maslow, 1943, pp. 381-382, 1970, pp. 21-22). In question number 40, students were asked, "Did your parents/guardians expect you to graduate before coming to Camelot?" Sadly, 34% of students reported that their parents did not expect them to graduate before they came to Camelot. It is not clear from the survey question whether this is because the parents did not graduate themselves, or because they did not believe their students had the intelligence or resolve to graduate. What is clear is that when students believe that their parents don’t believe that they will graduate from high school, it is a vote of “no confidence” and affects students’ self-esteem and resolve to complete high school. The fact that your parents don’t believe in you and your abilities to meet a milestone in your life can be crushing to students’ self-esteem and confidence.

4.7 Students’ Disciplinary, Legal and Security Characteristics

Understanding students’ disciplinary, legal and security characteristics is important to understand the experiences that have shaped their norms and needs that are currently unmet. In this section, students were asked questions concerning their arrests, suspensions, incarcerations, gang involvement, and safety issues at their previous schools and in their neighborhoods. Students were also asked about their drug and alcohol use.

In the first part of this section, students were asked about their arrests and incarcerations. Thirty percent (30%) of students reported being arrested and 15% were incarcerated. A majority, 55%, of students that were arrested were by the age of 15 years old. Students were also asked, “Have you been suspended from school?” Eighty-two percent (82%) of students have been suspended from school. The majority (62%) of them were suspended by the age of 11 and 12. These questions reflected safety, love/belonging and esteem needs. Students who are suspended at an early age experience a disruption in their school lives. These students are not allowed to attend school for a predetermined period of time. This caused students to stay at home and miss out on instruction, which causes anxiety, especially in neighborhoods that have a lot of violent incidents. Students' academic esteem is affected by missing a period instruction. Students who are suspended experience a disconnect between them and their school community, students, teachers, administrators. Students who are suspended feel like the school is signaling to them that they are not welcome and don't belong. Students that feel this way will continue to disengage from school.

Next, students were asked about incidents at their previous schools and in their neighborhoods. Specifically, students were asked, "At your previous school, how many violent incidents did you see per week?" The majority of students (51%) saw between one and ten acts of violence per week. Forty-two percent (42%) didn't see any acts of violence. Students were also asked, "How often do you witness violence in your neighborhood?" Again, the majority, 56%, saw between one and ten acts of violence per week, with only 29% of students reporting zero acts of violence per week. Evaluating these two questions, it is apparent that school is slightly more of a safer place for students than their neighborhoods. It is disturbing that the majority of students witnessed between two and 20 acts of violence in their school and community. These questions reveal a realistic concern for student and family safety. Schools where the majority of students witness between one and ten acts of violence per week cannot be considered to have a positive, safe climate and culture. Students concerned about their safety cannot focus on academics. To this point, students were asked, "At my previous school, violence prohibited me from concentrating on my academics?" Forty-four percent (44%) of the students responded that violence "somewhat prohibited" to "completely prohibited" them from concentrating on their academics. Students have a need to feel safe in order to engage in the instruction in the classroom and self-actualize.

In an interesting point of contrast, when students were asked about how they would rank their safety in their previous schools and neighborhoods, 63% of students felt “very safe” to “somewhat safe” in their previous schools. Thirty-seven percent (37%) felt “neutral” to “unsafe most of the time.” Similarly, 63% of students felt “very safe” to “somewhat safe” in their neighborhoods. This seems puzzling, given the high rates of violent acts that the students witness per week. This question may not be a good question because ego or conditioning could be altering the results. Students, particularly males, may interpret this question as a test of their “manhood” or status on the street. Another issue that could account for the discrepancy could be that students that grow up in Philadelphia and Chicago with high rates of violent acts have simply become accustomed to seeing them and have normalized their presence. If they have not grown up in a school or community without so many violent acts, then they have nothing to compare their current neighborhood or school. Students were also asked about their gang involvement. Sixteen percent (16%) reported that they were currently or previously involved in criminal gangs or cliques. This is probably understated. Adding the word “criminal” to describe gangs could alter students’ responses. Some students either do not want to admit that their gang is criminal, or philosophically don’t perceive their gang as criminal. Gang involvement is a safety concern to not only the physical safety of the student involved but also the students that are in that educational community. As we have seen, it is not just gang members who are hurt in gang altercations, but also innocent people who are around gang members when incidents occur.

In the final questions of this section, students were asked about their alcohol and drug use. These questions are important because they also reveal the safety needs of students. Students were asked, “Do you use alcohol?” Fifteen percent (15%) of students responded that they use alcohol. When asked how old they were when they first drank alcohol, 74% of students responded that they first drank alcohol at the ages of 13-16 years old. Only 5% of students have missed school due to alcohol, however, while 14% have been suspended or expelled for alcohol possession or use. Students were also asked about their current drug use. Twenty-five percent (25%) of students admitted to currently using drugs. Of the students that admitted to using drugs, 63% began experimenting at the ages of 13 and 16 years old. By the age of 14, 73% of students that responded that they use drugs had begun experimenting with drugs. More disturbing, 60% of students responding that they use drugs reported that they do so 3-7 times a week. Thirty-eight percent (38%) answered that they use drugs 6-7 times per week. Twelve percent (12%) of students responded that they have been suspended or expelled for drug possession or use. Students’ use of alcohol and drugs creates not only anxiety over harm to them physically, but also the fear of the violence that comes with students obtaining and possessing of drugs. There is also substantial fear and anxiety concerning being caught and having to face the penalties. It is very disturbing that students report using drugs 3-7 times a week. Three to seven days a week students are using drugs and placing themselves in an intoxicated state where they have limited control over their actions and are thus placing themselves in harm’s way. Both the safety and security needs, in addition to the quest to obtain and posses the drugs and alcohol to feed their habit, place students in danger and inject chaos into their lives, crowding out their academic success in school.

4.8 School Connectedness

"School Connection is the belief by students that adults in the school care about their learning and about them as individuals" (Blum, 2005, p. 1). In order to feel connected to their school, it is critical for a school to have "high academic rigor and expectations coupled with support for learning, positive adult-student relationships and physical and emotional safety" (Blum, 2005, p. 1). In this section, students were asked about their previous participation in afterschool activities, their previous school attendance, their school experiences with teachers and administrators, and their current experiences in Camelot Education in order to understand the way students engage with their schools and how they feel about teachers and administrators.

In order to understand the context, experiences, and norms that students come to Camelot accelerated high schools with, several questions were asked about their previous schools and previous school attendance. Students were asked, "Did you participate in any afterschool activities?" Seventy percent (70%) of students participated in afterschool activities. Forty-five percent (45%) of students participated in sports. In contrast, 30% of students did not engage in afterschool activities. Students were also asked about their attendance at their previous schools. Attendance is important because students will not be able to engage in the school community and build relationships with other students, teachers and administrators if they are not present. Only 38% of students attended five days a week. Forty-one percent (41%) of students attended less than four days a week, or 80% of the time. When asked, "Why did you not attend school?," 8% cited transportation, 8% said that it “wasn’t safe,” 14% cited “care for siblings,” and only 8% cited work. As it relates to school connectedness, 19% “did not see the purpose” and another 20% stated that they were “bored.” A large percentage of students (39%) were just completely disengaged because they were “bored” or “did not see the purpose.” In an effort to gain insight into the relationships between teachers, administrators and students, students were asked a series of questions about how they perceive teachers and administrators. Students were asked, “Prior to enrolling at Camelot, did you feel like teachers cared about you?” Seventy-two percent (72%) of students felt like teachers cared about them. Students were also asked if they felt like administrators cared about them. Again, 73% said that they felt like administrators cared about them. For insight into how students perceive whether teachers care about their school attendance, students were asked, “At your previous school, did you feel that teachers and school staff members cared if you came to school?” Most of the students (60%) responded that “yes” teachers and staff members cared if they came to school. That is a lower percentage than whether teachers and administrators cared about them. Forty percent (40%) of the students did not believe that teachers and staff cared whether they came to school.

In another section, students were asked a series of questions to uncover their feelings on school connectedness at Camelot accelerated schools. Students were asked, “Do you feel teachers at Camelot care for and respect you?” Ninety-four percent (94%) of students responded that they felt that teachers at Camelot cared for them. Students were also asked a version of the inverse of the previous question. Students were asked, “Do you feel that you care for and respect your teachers at Camelot?” Ninety-one percent (91%) of students responded that they cared for the teachers at Camelot. Further, students were asked, “Do you feel more connected to Camelot than your previous school?” This question asked students to evaluate their connectedness at their previous schools and compare it to their connectedness in the Camelot accelerated program. Eighty-one percent (81%) of students thought that they were more connected to Camelot than their previous schools. Finally, students were asked, “Why did you choose to enroll at Camelot?” The largest answer category was “to graduate,” with 28%, followed closely by “my friends graduated from Camelot” at 27%. If we look at the answers in terms of perception of Camelot, “my friends graduated from Camelot” and “liked the staff” and individual goals of “to graduate” or “bettering myself,” 75% of students that responded to this question answered in these categories. Thirty-nine percent (39%) answered that “they liked the staff” (11%) and “my friends graduated from Camelot,” and 37% of students responded “to graduate” (28%) and “bettering myself” (9%). Clearly, 75% of students chose Camelot “to graduate” or because they “liked the staff.” Thirty-eight percent (38%) chose the school based on school connectedness from friends or relationships with staff when they showed up for orientation at Camelot.

As educators have focused on graduation rates and students who are not matriculating toward their high school diploma, researchers have focused on early warning indicators that can alert educators to students that are in need of further interventions to ensure that they graduate high school. Balfanz et al. (2007) found that two of the four early warning signs were nonacademic in nature: attending less than 80% of the time and receiving out of school suspension. The survey given to the students at Camelot Education’s accelerated high schools develops a profile of students that can begin to give campus administrators and teachers an understanding of students that attend their accelerated schools. Understanding family structure, disciplinary, legal and security characteristics, and how well students are connected with their current and previous schools begins to document needs students have that the school can help resolve in an effort to create a healthy climate and culture that supports student achievement.

CHAPTER V—DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

Summary

Every day, 7,000 students drop out of America's high schools. That adds up to about 1.3 million students who will not graduate with their peers each year (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2011, p. 1). With 1.2 million students dropping out of high school every year, the high school dropout rate is a significant problem with negative consequences for the students and society as a whole. The U.S. Department of Education announced that the nation's high school graduation rate hit an all-time high of 82% in 2013-14 ("U.S. High School Graduation Rate Hits New Record High," 2015, p. 1). In contrast, "the average high school graduation rate in America's large urban school districts, which serve large numbers of children from very disadvantaged backgrounds, is only about 50%" (Guryan & Ludwig, n.d.).

The overriding common characteristic for these schools in large urban school districts is location in poverty-stricken areas with high rates of unemployment, crime, and ill health. In addition, their student bodies are comprised disproportionately of children of color (Balfanz & Legters, 2004). More than 60% of black students attend schools where more than 50% of the school population is identified as living in poverty, compared to 18% of white students (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2011).

Research has documented a strong and well-defined link between children growing up in poverty and high school dropout rates. "Students from low-income families dropped out of high school five times more than students from high-income families in 2009" (American Psychological Association, 2012, p. 1). Sadly, "nearly half of the nation's African American and Latino students attend high schools in low-income areas with dropout rates that hover in the 40-50% range" (Balfanz & Legters, 2004; Children's Defense Fund, 2004).

Previous research into students' graduation rates in both Chicago and Philadelphia uncovered several warning signs that indicated when students were not going to graduate on time or at all. As a result, 28 states have created early warning systems to identify students that are off-track for graduation. The majority of these states have relied heavily on the research and work of The Consortium on Chicago School Research at the University of Chicago and on that of Robert Balfanz, the co-director of the Everyone Graduates Center at John Hopkins University (Sparks, 2013).

In Chicago, The Consortium on Chicago School Research examined students in ninth grade and discovered two indicators for students that would later drop out. The two indicators were achieving enough credits to graduate and not failing a core subject (Allensworth & Easton, 2005). In a later study, attendance and school climate and culture were found to contribute to students not being able to achieve the credit needed to be promoted to the tenth grade and failing at least one core class. In essence, behavior and attendance underscores the academic indicator failure.

In Philadelphia, Balfanz et al. (2007) studied over 12,000 students in Philadelphia's sixth grade cohort. The study found four early warning flags that predicted the students that would graduate on time. The warning flags were attending school less than 80% of the time, failing a math core, failing an English course, or receiving an out-of-school suspension. Balfanz et al. (2007) also identified a "magnifier" that increased the likelihood of a student not graduating when combined with any of the other warning flags. The "magnifier" was being given a failing behavior grade by a teacher (Balfanz et al., 2007). Again, student behavior represented two of the four warning flags and was a “magnifier” for all of the warning signs.

Understanding that students’ behavior plays a major role in students’ success, administrators need to have a renewed focus on student behavior and the climate and culture of their schools. Research shows that school leadership, specifically that of principals, influences student achievement through building and managing a strong positive climate and culture in their schools (Urick & Bowers, 2014). Furthermore, climate and culture is a moldable force that is built and maintained by principals along with teachers that has a positive influence on student achievement and outcomes and has been identified as a common characteristic on high-performing campuses (MacNeil et al., 2009; Urick & Bowers, 2014). In contrast, a negative climate and culture will destroy the overall academic success of the campus. “School climate—by definition—reflects students’, school personnel’s, and parents’ experiences of school life socially, emotionally, civically, and ethically as well as academically” (Thapa et al., 2013, p. 369).

In order to build a positive climate and culture, administrators must understand students’ needs and what motivates their behavior. Administrators, especially in urban environments, must create a climate and culture that will intervene and support students that show poor attendance and poor behavioral performance, which lead to failing grades. If studied, Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, Bloom’s Taxonomy Affective Domain, normative culture theory, social learning theory, human agency and school connectedness can give administrators both psychological, sociological and educational reference points into individual student behavior and behavior of student groups. Taken together, these theories can help administrators create and train their staff to build and maintain a climate and culture that will support student success.

Maslow’s hierarchy of needs explains the motivations for the antisocial behavior students display in school. Maslow’s hierarchy of needs is a theory that identifies five basic sets of goals or needs that people are motivated to satisfy. The five basic needs are physiology, safety, love, esteem, and self-actualization (Maslow, 1943, p. 394). The five needs are arranged in a pyramid that graphically represents the hierarchy of the needs. Physiological needs are at the lowest or primary level, followed in ascending order by safety, love, esteem, and finally self-actualization at the top. According to Maslow, a person must meet each of the needs in order, with the lowest level needs taking precedent over higher needs (Maslow, 1943, p. 394). In this way, “gratification becomes as important as deprivation” (Maslow, 1970, p. 17). When a need is not met, the person becomes completely focused on the gratification of that need (Maslow, 1970). The importance of understanding Maslow’s hierarchy is the understanding that students’ off-task or anti-social behavior may be a vehicle to meet a need or the reaction to a needs deficit. Students that have basic needs that are left unmet in the areas of physiological, safety, love/belonging and esteem cannot focus on their academic studies or self-actualize.

Once we understand Maslow’s hierarchy and the motivation behind students’ anti-social or off-task behavior, it is important to understand three other psychological and sociological theories: human agency, social learning, and normative culture. Human agency is the idea that humans act intentionally to make things happen. Humans are able to advocate for themselves (Bandura, 1989, 2001). The value in this theory, when connected to Maslow’s hierarchy, is when humans have an unmet need and satisfying that need dominates the person’s thinking, humans have the power to advocate for themselves and take actions to satisfy the need. How do people decide on what action to take? This is where social learning theory comes into play.

Social learning theory states that students learn and develop new patterns of behavior by their direct experiences in life or by watching the behaviors of others. Most all of the behaviors that people present are either directly or inadvertently learned through example or experience (Bandura, 1971, p. 5). Each behavior is either successful and rewarded, or unsuccessful and punished. Through this process of choosing the behaviors to meet unmet needs, students are either being rewarded or punished for the behaviors they present based on the anticipated outcome. Successful behaviors, or behaviors that meet students’ needs, are kept and internalized for later use in other situations, while behaviors that were ineffective or punished are discarded. This process occurs with students’ direct experiences and while observing the experiences of others. Whether a behavior is rewarded or punished, the outcome serves to inform the student and give feedback as to which behaviors are the most effective (Bandura, 1971, 1989, 2001).

Human agency and social learning do not occur in a vacuum. Educators must understand the sociological environment in which students make their choices and choose what behavioral strategy to pursue to meet their unmet needs. Social cognitive theory, normative culture theory and Polsky’s diamond explain the context for which students decide what behaviors are beneficial in meeting their needs. Social cognitive theory describes a function of how students operate inside the social norms of their peer group to exercise control over their life and experiences (Bandura, 1989, 2001). Normative culture theory focuses on the group’s social interaction. Normative culture is the idea that every group has and operates on “norms” (Hess 2014). Norms are the expected behavior of the group. The group expects certain behavior from its members. If a group member does not choose behaviors that the group expects, then the group enforces their norms by confronting the behavior that is not accepted by the group. Norms are different than rules because norms are the “expected behavior of the group” and rules are set by authority figures (Grissom & Dubnov, 1989). Within the school’s climate and culture, there are norms that the group expects. When a student chooses a behavior to meet a need, the group either rewards or punishes that behavior in accordance to the established norms. In this way, students’ behavior is shaped to the expectations of the group. One final pressure that is exerted in the normative culture is the status of the individuals in the group.

In every group there is a hierarchy or status assigned to every person. Howard Polsky created a graphic representation of group hierarchy in the form of a diamond. Polsky’s diamond was created to show the power and influence that each person has on the group. At the top of the diamond are the stronger members of the group, labeled leaders and lieutenants. At the bottom of the diamond are the weaker members, known as the isolates, dyads, gophers and scapegoats (Barr, 2013; Grissom & Dubnov, 1989; Hess, 2006, 2014). This is important in the climate and culture because leaders, whether they are positive or negative, create the norms for the group. When students are motivated to meet a need, they choose a learned behavior that complies with the norms of the group based on the status that they hold within the group. When creating a school’s climate and culture, an administrator and teachers must know who the groups are, what power they have, and who belongs to what group. This will help maintain a positive climate and culture and give a better understanding of students' individual behaviors.

Individual student behavior and overall campus climate and culture play a significant role in the academic success of students. Understanding that unmet needs motivate anti-social and off-task behavior, the study surveyed students to identify unmet needs in Camelot Education's accelerated high schools in Philadelphia and Chicago. In Philadelphia, the four-year graduation rate is 65% (Socolar, 2015). In Chicago, the graduation rate is 66%, as measured by the five-year graduation rate (Perez, 2015). One intervention that Philadelphia and Chicago are using to help students that are off-track toward graduation and to increase their district graduation rates is implementing accelerated high schools. These accelerated high schools are not computer-based half-day programs; instead they rely on longer school days, remediation in literacy and numeracy, and a structured behavioral environment to support their students in earning their high school diploma. All of the schools utilize a positive normative culture as the foundation for their schools' climate and culture. The study used archived student surveys of accelerated students enrolled in the Camelot Education's accelerated high schools in Philadelphia and Chicago. The student surveys uncovered, identified and described factors that impeded students from matriculating through high school and receiving their high school diploma. The study utilized descriptive statistics to summarize, identify, describe and quantify what students report contribute to them becoming academically off-track and making the decision to leave high school without earning their high school diploma. The profile and descriptions from this study will equip school leaders to explore innovative school and program designs that meet the needs of students that are over-aged and under-credentialed in large urban cities.

The student surveys were given in an effort for Camelot Education to understand who their students are that enroll in their accelerated schools. In order to understand their students, Camelot Education gave students the opportunity to give the administration and staff feedback through the vehicle of a survey. This study is centered on four research questions.

1. What is a typical demographic profile of students in Camelot Education's accelerated high schools in Chicago, IL and Philadelphia, PA?
2. How do students in accelerated high schools describe their family characteristics?
3. What are the disciplinary, legal, and security characteristics that students enrolled in accelerated high schools report concerning their neighborhoods and their previous schools?
4. How do students enrolled in accelerated high schools describe their schools' connectivity in both their previous schools and current accelerated high schools?

Study Demographics

The first step in understanding the students who enroll in Camelot Education's accelerated schools is to determine the basic demographic of the students that completed the survey. The majority of the students that completed the study were females (55%). Students were 17 to 19 years old and were currently juniors and seniors in high schools and expected to graduate at 18 or 19 years old. Students are only eligible to enroll in

Camelot's accelerated programs if they are 16 years old or older, have zero to five credits to graduation, or have dropped out of high school, or are not matriculating toward graduation. These criteria are the definition of being off-track to graduate, or not graduating with their four-year cohort. The students in this study not only were anticipating graduating, but 45% will graduate with their cohort, and approximately 27% will graduate in the five-year cohort.

Family Characteristics

In order to understand the context of the family dynamics and social norms and to identify unfulfilled needs that students have been taught and exposed to, it is important to understand how students describe their family and history. Students' family characteristics exposed unfulfilled needs such as they relate to physiological and safety needs. Specifically, students were asked questions regarding their parents' highest level of educational achievement, their parents' employment status, how many have children and at what age they had their first child, who they currently live with, their parents' gang involvement, their parents' expectations for graduation, the number of meals they eat per day and the number of hours that they sleep per night. In the study, students reported that 94% of mothers and 92% of fathers had completed high school, with 44% of mothers and 35% of father enrolling in postsecondary schools. This was surprising, given that Philadelphia and Chicago have a low overall four-year graduation rate of 65% (Socolar, 2015) and five-year graduation rate of 66% (Perez, 2015), respectively.

High rates of unemployment were reported by students responding to the survey. Students reported that 28% of mothers and 40% of fathers were currently unemployed. Almost two in ten (17%) of the students have children and had them at the age of 17 or

18 years old. The majority of students (74%) reported having a child, however, 26% have two to four children. Most of the students (48%) live only with their mothers while 6% live with only their fathers. Thirteen percent (13%) of mothers and 30% of fathers have been incarcerated. Five percent of mothers and 20% of fathers were involved in a gang. Only 65% of parents expected their student to graduate. Most of the students (32%) responded that they most look up to their mothers. This is to be expected, given that students reported that 48% lived with only their mother.

After evaluating all of the questions in the survey that pertain to students' family characteristics, it is clear that many student are dealing with family situations that leave some basic needs unmet, such as physiological and safety needs. In the lowest and most primary foundation of Maslow's hierarchy of needs are the physiological needs. Examples of these needs are food and sleep. In the study, the majority of students (80%) reported that they eat at least three meals a day. It seems that, whether the meals are supplied by their family or through the school, the need for food for most students is met. However, when you analyze how much sleep students are getting, the majority of students are not getting enough sleep every night in preparation for their next impending school day. Students reported that 64% of them are not getting the required eight hours of sleep. This plays a significant role in school attendance and alertness required for their academic studies.

Next on Maslow's hierarchy is safety needs. Safety is the idea of "security; stability; dependency; protection; freedom from fear, anxiety, and chaos; need for structure, order, law, and limits; strength in the protector; and so on" (Maslow, 1970, p. 18). A number of questions in this section of the survey uncovered the safety needs that are not being met by the family structure and history. Starting with family structure, students reported that only 16% live with both parents, while 17% are parents themselves. Within their family there are high rates of unemployment and incarceration. Forty percent (40%) of fathers and 28% of mothers are currently unemployed and unable to provide and income for the family. Thirteen percent (13%) of mothers and 30% of fathers have been incarcerated, spending long times absent from the home neither able to protect or provide an income for the family. To further disrupt the family structure and interject anxiety and chaos is the family's introduction of gang affiliation. Twenty percent (20%) of fathers and 5% of mothers have been involved in gangs. Gang affiliation creates anxiety for the physical wellbeing of both the person involved in the gang and the rest of the family members that may be affected by the violence. Families also have anxiety about their father's or mother's safety being jeopardized while in jail, as well as about the family's physical safety in the neighborhood and the family's financial wellbeing.

Finally, one of the questions in this section relates to the need of self-esteem. There are two different subsets that make up the esteem need. First is the need to achieve success, mastery or a feeling of competence. The second is for the group to appreciate, recognize, or hold the person in a place of prestige. The first need is an intrinsic need of self-worth, while the second is the need for the group to value the person (Maslow, 1943, pp. 381-382, 1970, pp. 21-22). In question number 40, students were asked, "Did your parents/guardians expect you to graduate before coming to Camelot?" Thirty-four percent (34%) of students reported that their parents did not expect them to graduate before they came to Camelot. Whether the parents did not graduate themselves or did not believe their students had the intelligence or resolve to graduate, this vote of no confidence from their parents has to affect their self-esteem. The fact that their parents don’t believe in in their students’ abilities to meet a milestone in their life is crushing for them.

Students’ Discipline, Legal and Security Characteristics

Understanding students’ disciplinary, legal and security characteristics is important to understanding the experiences that have shaped their norms as well as their needs that are currently unmet. In this section, students were asked questions concerning their arrests, suspensions, incarcerations, gang involvement, and safety issues at their previous school and in their neighborhoods. Students were also asked about their drug and alcohol use.

In the first part of this section, students were asked about their arrests and incarcerations. Thirty percent (30%) of students reported being arrested and 15% were incarcerated. A majority (55%) of students that were arrested were by the age of 15 years old. Students were also asked, “Have you ever been suspended from school?” Eighty-two percent (82%) of students have been suspended from school. The majority (62%) of them were suspended by the age of 11 and 12. These questions reflect safety, love/belonging and esteem needs. Students who are suspended at an early age experience a disruption in their school lives. These students are not allowed to attend school for a predetermined period of time. This causes students to stay at home and miss out on instruction and causes anxiety, especially in neighborhoods that have a lot of violent incidents. Students’ academic esteem is affected by missing a period of instruction. Students who are suspended experience a disconnect between them and their school community, including other students, teachers and administrators. Students who are suspended feel like the school is signaling to them that they are not welcome and don't belong. Students who feel this way continue to disengage from school.

Next, students were asked about incidents at their previous schools and in their neighborhoods. Specifically, students were asked, "At your previous school, how many violent incidents did you see per week?" The majority (51%) of students saw between one and ten acts of violence per week. Forty-two percent (42%) didn't see any acts of violence. Students were also asked, "How often do you witness violence in your neighborhood?" Again, the majority, 56%, saw between one and ten acts of violence per week with only 29% of students reporting zero acts of violence per week. In evaluating these two questions, it is apparent that school is a slightly safer place for students than their neighborhoods. It is disturbing that the majority of students witness between two and twenty acts of violence in their school and community. These questions reveal a realistic concern for student and family safety. Schools where the majority of students witness between one and ten acts of violence per week cannot be considered to have a positive safe climate and culture. Students concerned about their safety cannot focus on academics. To this point, students were asked, "At my previous school, violence prohibited me from concentrating on my academics?" Forty-four percent (44%) of the students responded that violence "somewhat prohibited" to "completely prohibited" them from concentrating on their academics. Students have a need to feel safe in order to engage in the instruction in the classroom and self-actualize.

In an interesting contrast, when students were asked about how they would you rank their safety in their previous schools and neighborhood, 63% of students felt "very safe" to "somewhat safe" in their previous schools. Thirty-seven percent (37%) felt "neutral" to "unsafe most of the time." Similarly, 63% of students felt "very safe" to "somewhat safe" in their neighborhood. This seems puzzling, given the high rates of violent acts that the students witness per week. This question may not be a good question because ego or conditioning could be altering the results. Students, particularly males, may interpret this question as a test of their "manhood" or status on the street. Another issue that could account for the discrepancy is that students that grow up in Philadelphia and Chicago with high rates of violent acts might have simply become accustomed to seeing them and normalized their presence. If they have not grown up in a school or community without so many violent acts, then they have nothing to compare their current neighborhood or school to. Students were also asked about their gang involvement. Students reported that 16% were currently or previously involved in a criminal gang or clique. This is probably understated. Adding the word "criminal" to describe gangs in the question could alter students' responses. Some students either don't want to admit that their gang is criminal, or philosophically don't perceive their gang as criminal. Gang involvement is a safety concern not only to the physical safety of that student, but also to the students that are in that educational community. It's not just gang members who are hurt in gang altercations, but also innocent people who are around gang members when incidents arise.

In the final questions of this section, students were asked about their alcohol and drug use. These questions are important because they also expose the safety needs of students. Students were asked, "Do you use alcohol?" Fifteen percent (15%) of students responded that they use alcohol. When asked how old they were when they first drank alcohol, 74% of students responded that they first drank alcohol at the ages of 13 to 16 years old. Only 5% of students have missed school due to alcohol; however, 14% have been suspended or expelled for alcohol possession or use. Students were also asked about their current drug use. Twenty-five (25%) of students admitted to currently using drugs. Of the students that admitted to using drugs, 63% began experimenting at the ages of 13 to 16 years of age. By the age of 14, 73% of students that responded that they use drugs had begun experimenting with drugs. More disturbing, 60% of students responding that they use drugs say they do so three to seven times a week. Thirty-eight percent (38%) answered that they use drugs six to seven times per week. Twelve percent (12%) of students responded that they were suspended or expelled for drug possession or use. Students' use of alcohol and drugs creates not only anxiety over physical harm or health, but also the fear of the violence that comes with students obtaining and possessing drugs. There is also substantial fear and anxiety concerning being caught and having to face the penalties. It is very disturbing that students report using drugs three to seven times a week. Three to seven days a week, students are using drugs and placing themselves in an intoxicated state where they have limited control over their actions, placing themselves in harm's way. Both the safety and security need, in addition to the quest to obtain and possess the drugs and alcohol to feed their habit, place students in danger and inject chaos into their lives, crowding out their academic success in school.

School Connectedness

"School Connectedness is the belief by students that adults in the school care about their learning and about them as individuals" (Blum, 2005, p. 1). In order to feel connected to their school, it is critical for a school to have "high academic rigor and expectations coupled with support for learning, positive adult-student relationships and physical and emotional safety" (Blum, 2005, p. 1). In this section, students were asked about their previous participation in afterschool activities, previous school attendance, school experiences with teachers and administrators and current experiences in Camelot Education, in order to understand the way that students engage with their school and how they feel about teachers and administrators.

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In another section, students were asked a series of questions to uncover their feelings on school connectedness at Camelot accelerated schools. Students were asked, “Do you feel teachers at Camelot care for and respect you?” Ninety-four percent (94%) of students responded that they felt that teachers at Camelot cared for them. Students were also asked the inverse of the previous question. Students were asked, “Do you feel that you care for and respect your teachers at Camelot?” Ninety-one percent (91%) of students responded that they cared for the teachers at Camelot. Further, students were asked, “Do you feel that you are more connected to Camelot than your previous school?” This question asked students to evaluate their previous connectedness at their previous schools and compare it to their connectedness in the Camelot accelerated program. Eighty-one percent (81%) of students thought that they were more connected to Camelot than their previous schools. Finally, students were asked, “Why did you choose to enroll at Camelot?” At 28%, the largest answer category was “to graduate,” followed closely by "my friends graduated from Camelot" at 27%. If we look at the answers in terms of perception of Camelot, 75% of students that responded to this question answered in the categories "my friends graduated from Camelot" and "liked the staff" and having individual goals of "to graduate" or "bettering myself." Thirty-eight percent (38%) answered that "they liked the staff" (11%) and "my friends graduated from Camelot" (27%) and 37% of students responded that their goals were "to graduate" (28%) and "bettering myself" (9%). Clearly, 75% of students chose Camelot "to graduate" or because they "liked the staff." Thirty-eight percent (38%) chose the school based on school connectedness from friends or relationships with staff when they showed up to for orientation to Camelot.

Implications

The purpose of this study was to understand the demographic profile of the students that are enrolled in Camelot Education's accelerated high schools and to understand how students described their family characteristics as well as their disciplinary, legal and security characteristics, and school connectedness both at their previous schools and while enrolled in Camelot Education's accelerated school. The answers to the questions, beyond providing a profile of the typical accelerated students, would also be used to uncover and identify unmet needs related to Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Research shows that behavior plays a major role in student success and ultimately in students graduating from high school.

All of the students enrolled in Camelot Education's accelerated high schools have previously been unsuccessful and have fallen off-track toward graduation. A large majority of the students in the survey had significant behavioral difficulties in their previous schools. Given that all of the students have fallen off-track academically and that a significant majority of them have behavioral issues, this is a population of students who defines the early warning flags and off-track indicators documented in the research conducted in Philadelphia and Chicago. By surveying Camelot Education's accelerated high schools, the information gathered from the survey could be used by school administrators to implement support programs to keep more students engaged and on-track toward graduation.

The typical profiles of students who are enrolled in Camelot Education's accelerated high schools and that completed the survey are 17- to 19-year-old seniors who are mostly female. Almost half of them have caught up and are back on track to graduate with their cohort.

The family structure described by students included who they lived with, whether or not they had kids, the number of hours they slept, the number of meals they ate, their foster-care involvement and their experiences with homelessness. Students were also asked about their parents' education level, parents' employment status, parents' previous incarcerations, parents' gang affiliations and parents' graduation expectations. The questions in this section define the family structure and paint a picture of an unstable family structure. Most of the students (84%) do not live with both parents. The families are dealing with high rates of unemployment. Twenty-eight percent (28%) of mothers and 40% of fathers are unemployed. Parental incarceration and gang involvement further add to family instability. Twenty-three percent (23%) of students reported having been homeless. The responses to these questions illustrate concerns in meeting students' safety needs.

Concerning students' physiological needs, students reported getting enough to eat; however, 64% report not getting eight hours of sleep. Also, a significant amount, 35%, reported that their parents did not think they would graduate. This illustrates a deficit in the esteem need. In this section, the responses to the questions indicate that students are dealing with significant physiological, safety, and esteem needs. All these needs, while having nothing to do with the climate and culture of the school, need to be supported. These needs need to be met before students can be successful academically.

Students' responses to their discipline, legal and security characteristics further illustrate deficits in students' need for safety and esteem. A significant majority, 82% of students, were previously suspended or expelled from school, most of them by the time they were 11 and 12 years old. Almost one in three have been arrested, and 15% have been incarcerated. Not only does this illustrate a safety need, it also shows a disruption in students' education. Further illustrating unmet safety needs and their impact on students' education, 44% of the students said that violence in school "somewhat prohibited" to "completely prohibited" them from concentrating in school. The majority of students reported seeing between one and ten acts of violence both in their neighborhoods and in their previous schools. Added together, the majority of students saw between two and 20 acts of violence a week. One in four students admits to using drugs, with 60% stating that they use drugs between three to seven times a week. Again, the questions in this section paint a picture of an unstable family life in which safety is definitely a major need.

Finally, students were asked a series of questions to about their school connectivity and attendance in both their previous schools and in Camelot Education's accelerated high schools. Seventy percent (70%) of students were involved in an afterschool activity at their previous school. Attendance was a problem at their previous schools, with 41% of students attending less than four days a week, or 80% of the time. In their previous schools, 72% felt that teachers cared for them and 73% felt that administrators cared about them. While it seems that over 70% of students show some level of the school connectivity and afterschool involvement, all of the students left their previous schools off-track toward graduation. In contrast, in Camelot Education accelerated schools, which run a positive peer culture as the basis for its climate and culture, 81% of students reported feeling more connected than at their previous schools. Also, students felt that 94% of teachers and 91% of administrators cared about them.

Building on prior research of early warning flags and graduation indicators conducted in Philadelphia and Chicago, this study should be used as a guide to administrators in dealing with the socio-emotional issues that underscore the students that are off-track toward graduation. Administrators can use the survey responses in this study to begin to understand the needs that students may have and to begin a conversation with their staff to critically access the student needs on their campus. Administrators can use the survey template as a starting point to create surveys for their campuses. Once administrators are able to begin understanding their students' needs in a psychological and sociological context, they can plan interventions and programs that will support all students and increase the students' success and graduation rates on their campuses regardless of their geographical location.

Recommendations

The recommendation from this study is to open up the education practice and conversation to include a renewed focus on the socio-emotional needs of our students. For the first time in the last 50 years, 51% of U.S. public school students come from low-income families (Layton, 2015). That is to say, 51% of U.S. public school students face challenges such as a lack of physiological needs like food and sleep, and safety needs that stem from high crime rates in their neighborhoods and schools. Gangs shape family neighborhoods as well as school norms and contribute to safety and discipline needs. Schools and neighborhoods are divided up into groups, gangs, and tribes. In order to meet their safety, belonging, and esteem needs, more students are presenting behaviors backed by norms that they have learned in their neighborhoods and in their struggling families. These behaviors that more students are presenting are resulting in conflicts with the climate and cultures inside of the school walls. These dueling normative structures create conflicts in the school by not conforming to the middle-class norms that most of our schools use as the foundation of the rules that govern the climate and culture.

Education accountability is defined by No Child Left Behind by measuring and holding schools and districts accountable for attendance, graduation, test scores, test participation and school incidents. Graduation and state assessment scores measure the ultimate outcome of our education system. The health, strength, and competitiveness of our nation depends on an educated citizenry. We need students graduating from high school with a prescribed body of knowledge, as well as the skills to research and think logically. The problem is that schools cannot achieve these outcomes for all students without concentrating on their climate and culture and norms, both informal and formal, that exist in their schools.

Research shows that school leadership, specifically principals, influence student achievement through the climate and culture of their schools (Urick & Bowers, 2014). On high-performing campuses, the academic climate has been proven to be a moldable force and structure that is built and maintained by the principal and that ultimately has a positive influence on student achievement and outcomes (MacNeil et al., 2009; Urick & Bowers, 2014). In order for school leaders to tackle their climate and culture issues, school leaders must first have a clear understanding of the mission and vision for their school, complete with indicators and milestones to measure the campus's achievements and progress. This vision should seek to set high standards for all students and to create and provide interventions and support to students who show needs. After setting the mission and vision for the campus and setting high standards for staff and students, administrators need to understand the structure and organization of the campus. This structure and organization will require the implementation of norms and processes that will govern the campus and support all students to achieve the goals and standards included in the federal and state guidelines and goals of the campus. These norms are going to define the culture, and the processes will be the tools that the administration, teachers, staff, and students will use to create, shape and maintain the culture.

Next, school administrators must adopt a posture illustrated from the Theory of X and Y. They must see students as children that inherently want to be successful, and resist the temptation to blame students and parents that have grown up or exist in environments that have different norms and needs deprivation. This is not to say that students and parents should not be held accountable to the high standards of the school with regard to behavioral and academic standards. Behaviors presented by students should first be seen as either learned behavior that is used to satisfy a need that the student has, or a learned response to an environmental stimulus governed by the norms of their family or peer group.

Administrators and teachers need to seek to understand the students in their schools and within their districts. Districts and schools have students moving in and out of their districts every year. Not all of those students share the norms of the district or school campus they attend. Seeking to understand the culture, norms and needs of all students that attend their schools will give administrators and teachers an understanding of where the conflicts in the norms are and what unmet needs students have. Understanding where the normative conflict and unmet needs are should lead administrators and teachers to build campuses that support all students.

Normative cultures are operating in every school and district whether the district and campus leaders acknowledge them or not. Campus leaders should directly teach the norms of the campus to their teachers first, then have their teachers directly teach the norms. Everyone on campus should participate in enforcing and maintaining the norms. This is why they are norms, because they are enforced by the group in contrast to rules that are enforced by campus authority.

Building a team of administrators, teachers, school staff, and students who all actively participate in the climate and culture allows everyone to take ownership of the school. Students seem to take ownership in the sense that they will see the school as “my school.” Students will help other students who attend their school that have unmet needs, or that come from an environment with a different normative structure learn the behavior that is consistent with the school's normative structure to meet their needs. Also, with students participating alongside administrators and teachers to build the school's climate and culture, students feel more connected to school.

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APPENDIX A

Survey Questions

Camelot EOY Student Survey

1. What is your gender?
   Male Female

2. How old are you?
   14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 other

3. What grade are you in? (by credit)
   9 10 11 12

4. What age will you be when you graduate?
   17 18 19 20 21 22

5. What is the highest level of educational achievement of your Mother?
   Middle school

   High school

   Technical/Trade school

   1 year of college

   2 years of college

   3 years of college

   4 years of college

   Graduate studies

   Masters

   Doctorate

6. What is the highest level of educational achievement of your Father?
   Middle school

   High school

   Technical/Trade school

   1 year of college

   2 years of college

   3 years of college

   4 years of college

   Graduate studies

   Masters

   Doctorate

7. Is your mother currently employed?
   Yes

   No

8. Is your Father currently employed?
   Yes

   No

9. Do you have any children?
   Yes

   No

10. If yes, how many children do you have?
    1

    2

    3

    4

    5 or more

11. Who do you currently live with?
    Mother

    Father

    Both Parents

    Grandmother

    Grandfather

    Other

12. Have you ever been arrested for a crime?
    Yes

    No

13. If yes, what was the youngest age?

14. Have you ever been incarcerated?
    Yes No

15. If you answered yes, how many times?
    1

    2

    3

    4

    5

    6

    7

    8

    9

    10

16. Has your Mother been incarcerated?
    Yes No

17. How old was your mother when she was incarcerated?

18. Has your father been incarcerated?
    Yes No

19. How old was your father when he was incarcerated?

20. How many meals a day do you eat a day?
    0. 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.

21. How many hours of sleep do you get at a night?
    0. 1. 2. 3. 4 .5. 6 .7 .8 .9. 10+

22. Have you ever experienced homelessness? (Homelessness meaning that you have had to frequently stay with other people, such as family, friends, in shelters, in vehicles or on the street.)
    Yes no

23. Are you currently or have you ever been involved with foster care system?

    Yes no

24. At you previous schools, how many violent incidents did you see per week
    0

    1-5

    6-10

    11-15

    16+

25. Rank the following violent incidents according to how often you witnessed these events at your previous schools.
    Verbal Fights

    Physical fights

    Gun violence

    Sexual assaults

26. How would you rank your safety at your previous school? Yes no
    Very Safe

    Somewhat Safe

    Neutral

    Somewhat Unsafe

    Unsafe most of the time

27. How often do you witness violence in your neighborhood?
    0 acts of violence

    1-5 acts of violence

    6-10 acts of violence

    11-15 acts of violence

    16+ acts of violence

28. How safe do you feel in your neighborhood?
    Very Safe

    Somewhat Safe

    Neutral

    Unsafe Sometimes

    Unsafe most of the time

29. Was bulling an issue at your previous school?
    No Bullying

    Some Bulling

    High Rates of Bullying

30. At my previous school, violence prohibited me from concentrating on my academics.
    (on a scale of 1 to 5 with 5 completely prohibited)

    1- Did not prohibit
    2- Somewhat prohibited
    3- Prohibited half of the time
    4- Prohibited most of the time
    5- Completely prohibited

31. Are you currently or have you ever been involved in a criminal gang or street clique?
    Yes No

32. Has your mother been involved in a gang?
    Yes No

33. Has your father been involved in a gang?
    Yes No

34. Did you participate in any afterschool activities?
    Sports

    Band

    Clubs

    Other

    I did not participate

35. Prior to enrolling at Camelot, did you feel like teachers cared about you?
    Yes No

36. Prior to enrolling at Camelot, did you feel like administrators cared about you?
    Yes No

37. At your previous school, did you feel that teachers and school staff members cared if you came to school?

    Yes No

38. How many of your friends graduated on time?
    1- None of my friends…
    2- Some of my friends..
    3- Half of my friends…
    4- Most of my friends..
    5- All of my friends…

39. Why did you choose to enroll at Camelot?
    Better myself
    Closer than my previous school
    Family/Friends encourage me
    Kicked out of previous schools
    Liked school and staff
    My friends graduated from Camelot
    Needed more help
    Other
    To graduate

40. Did your parents/guardians expect you to graduate before coming to Camelot?
    Yes No

41. Do you feel that you are more connected to Camelot than your previous school?
    Yes No

42. Do you feel that your teachers at Camelot care for and respect you?
    Yes No

43. Do you feel that you care for and respect your teachers at Camelot?
    Yes No

44. Do you expect to graduate from High School?
    Yes No

45. What are your post-secondary plans? Where do you think you will be in five years?

46. Who do you look up to the most and why?
    Both parents
    Father
    God
    Professional/entertainer
    Grandparents
    Mother
    No one
    Other
    Other family member
    Teacher/administrator

47. How often did you attend school before enrolled in the program?
    None

    1 day per week

    2 days per week

    3 days per week

    4 days per week

    5 days per week

48. Why did you not attend school?
    Select all that apply:

    Had to take care of younger siblings

    Work

    Bored

    Wasn’t safe

    Had no transportation

Did not see the purpose

Other

49. Have you missed school due to Alcohol?
Yes No

50. Have you missed school due to drugs?
Yes No

51. Have you been suspended from school?
Yes No

52. If yes, what was the earliest age you were suspended?

53. If yes, how many times have you been suspended?

54. Have you ever been suspended/expelled for alcohol possession or use?
Yes No

55. Do you use Alcohol?
Yes No

56. If Yes, How old were you the first time you drank alcohol?

57. If you currently use alcohol, how often do you drink per week?
Not Applicable

0-1 days per week

1-2 days per week

2-3 days per week

3-4 days per week

4-5 days per week

6-7 days per week

58. Have you ever been suspended/expelled for drug possession or use?
Yes No

59. Do you currently use drugs?
Yes No

60. If yes, what was the earliest age you began using or experimenting?

61. If yes, how many times per week do you use drugs?
0-1 days per week

1-2 days per week

2-3 days per week

4-5 days per week

5-6 days per week

6-7 days per week

Not applicable

APPENDIX B

Survey Questions with Results

Camelot EOY Student Survey

What is a typical demographic profile of a student in Camelot Education's accelerated high schools in Chicago, IL and Philadelphia, PA?

1. What is your gender?
   Male Female

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	102	44.93
Female	125	55.07
Total	227	100.00

2. How old are you?
   14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 other

Age	Frequency	Percentage
15	5	2.19
16	41	17.98
17	55	24.12
18	60	26.32
19	49	21.49
20	11	4.82
21	7	3.07
Total	225	100.00

3. What grade are you in? (by credit)
9 10 11 12

Grade	Frequency	Percentage
9th	8	3.56
10th	40	17.78
11th	67	29.78
12th	110	48.89
Total	227	100.00

4. What age will you be when you graduate?
17 18 19 20 21 22

Age	Frequency	Percentage
17	31	13.66
18	104	45.81
19	65	28.63
20	18	7.93
21	7	3.08
22	2	.88
Total	227	100.00

How do students in accelerated high schools describe their family characteristics?

5. What is the highest level of educational achievement of your Mother?
   Middle school

   High school

   Technical/Trade school

   1 year of college

   2 years of college

   3 years of college

   4 years of college

   Graduate studies

   Masters

   Doctorate

Educational Achievement	Frequency	Percentage
Middle school	14	6.17
High school	112	49.34
Technical/Trade school	14	6.17
1 year of college	27	11.89
2 years of college	15	6.61
3 years of college	2	.88
4 years of college	18	7.93
Graduate studies	7	3.08
Masters	17	7.49
Doctorate	1	.44
Total	227	100

6. What is the highest level of educational achievement of your Father?

Middle school

High school

Technical/Trade school

1 year of college

2 years of college

3 years of college

4 years of college

Graduate studies

Masters

Doctorate

Educational Achievement	Frequency	Percentage
Middle school	17	7.76
High school	125	57.08
Technical/Trade school	10	4.57
1 year of college	19	8.68
2 years of college	14	6.39
3 years of college	5	2.28
4 years of college	13	5.94
Graduate studies	5	2.28
Masters	9	4.11
Doctorate	2	.91
Total	219	100.00

7. Is your mother currently employed?
   Yes

   No

Employment Status	Frequency	Percentage
No	58	28.16
Yes	148	71.84
Total	206	100.00

8. Is your Father currently employed?
   Yes

   No

Employment Status	Frequency	Percentage
No	83	40.10
Yes	124	59.90
Total	207	100.00

9. Do you have any children?
   Yes

   No

Students with Children	Frequency	Percentage
No	190	82.97
Yes	39	17.03
Total	229	100.00

10. If yes, how many children do you have?
    1

    2

    3

    4

    5 or more

Number of Children	Frequency	Percentage
1	25	73.53
2	5	14.71
3	3	8.82
4	1	2.94
Total	34	100

11. Who do you currently live with?
    Mother

    Father

    Both Parents

    Grandmother

    Grandfather

    Other

Age at First Child	Frequency	Percentage
14	2	6.25
15	2	6.25
16	4	12.50
17	10	31.25
18	7	21.88
19	5	15.63
21	1	3.13
25	1	3.13
Total	32	100.00

What are the discipline, legal, and security characteristics that students enrolled in accelerated high schools report concerning their neighborhoods and their previous schools?

12. Have you ever been arrested for a crime?
    Yes

    No

Previously Arrested	Frequency	Percentage
No	145	69.38
Yes	64	30.62
Total	209	100.00

13. If yes, what was the youngest age?

Age	Frequency	Percentage
11	2	5.56
12	2	5.56
13	1	2.78
14	3	8.33
15	12	33.33
16	6	16.67
17	7	19.44
18	1	2.78
19	2	5.56
Total	36	100.00

14. Have you ever been incarcerated?
Yes No

Previously Incarcerated	Frequency	Percentage
No	178	85.17
Yes	31	14.83
Total	209	100.00

15. If you answered yes, how many times?
    1

    2

    3

    4

    5

    6

    7

    8

    9

    10

16. Has your Mother been incarcerated?
    Yes No

Mother Incarcerated	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	27	13.11
No	179	86.89
Total	206	100.00

17. How old was your mother when she was incarcerated?

18. Has your father been incarcerated?
Yes No

Father Incarcerated	Frequency	Percentage
No	137	69.90
Yes	59	30.10
Total	196	100.00

19. How old was your father when he was incarcerated?

20. How many meals a day do you eat a day?
1. 2. 3. 4. 5.

Number of Meals	Frequency	Percentage
0	1	0.49
1	8	4.43
2	31	15.27
3	58	28.57
4	46	22.66
5	59	29.06
Total	203	100.00

21. How many hours of sleep do you get at a night?
    1. 2. 3. 4 .5. 6 .7 .8 .9. 10+

Hours of Sleep	Frequency	Percentage
0	2	1.00
1	1	.50
2	4	1.99
3	11	5.47
4	9	4.48
5	20	9.95
6	49	24.38
7	32	15.92
8	48	23.88
9	14	6.97
10	11	5.47
Total	201	100.00

22. Have you ever experienced homelessness? (Homelessness meaning that you have had to frequently stay with other people, such as family, friends, in shelters, in vehicles or on the street.)
    Yes no

Homelessness	Frequency	Percentage
No	155	76.73
Yes	47	23.27
Total	202	100.00

23. Are you currently or have you ever been involved with foster care system?

Yes no

Foster Care System	Frequency	Percentage
No	188	93.07
Yes	14	6.93
Total	202	100.00

24. At you previous schools, how many violent incidents did you see per week

0

1-5

6-10

11-15

16+

Incidents at Previous School	Frequency	Percentage
0 acts of violence	85	42.29
1-5 acts of violence	78	38.81
6-10 acts of violence	25	12.44
11-15 acts of violence	11	5.47
16+ acts of violence	2	1.00
Total	201	100.00

25. Rank the following violent incidents according to how often you witnessed these events at your previous schools.

    Verbal Fights

    Physical fights

    Gun violence

    Sexual assaults

26. How would you rank your safety at your previous school?

    Very Safe

    Somewhat Safe

    Neutral

    Somewhat Unsafe

    Unsafe most of the time

Safety Feeling	Frequency	Percentage
Very safe	81	37.32
Somewhat safe	56	25.80
Neutral	50	23.04
Somewhat unsafe	17	7.83
Unsafe most of the time	13	5.99
Total	217	100.0

27. How often do you witness violence in your neighborhood?
    0 acts of violence

    1-5 acts of violence

    6-10 acts of violence

    11-15 acts of violence

    16+ acts of violence

Incidents in Neighborhood	Frequency	Percentage
0 acts of violence	56	28.72
1-5 acts of violence	66	33.85
6-10 acts of violence	44	22.56
11-15 acts of violence	12	6.15
16+ acts of violence	17	8.72
Total	195	100.00

28. How safe do you feel in your neighborhood?
    Very Safe

    Somewhat Safe

    Neutral

    Unsafe Sometimes

    Unsafe most of the time

Safety Feeling	Frequency	Percentage
Very safe	69	32.70
Somewhat safe	63	29.86
Neutral	42	19.90
Somewhat unsafe	25	11.84
Unsafe most of the time	12	5.68
Total	211	100.00

29. Was bulling an issue at your previous school?
    No Bullying

    Some Bulling

    High Rates of Bullying

Rate of Bullying	Frequency	Percentage
No bullying	133	67.51
Some bullying	50	25.38
High rates of bullying	14	7.11
Total	197	100.00

30. At my previous school, violence prohibited me from concentrating on my academics.
(on a scale of 1 to 5 with 5 completely prohibited)

6- Did not prohibit
7- Somewhat prohibited
8- Prohibited half of the time
9- Prohibited most of the time
10- Completely prohibited

Violence Prohibiting Academics	Frequency	Percentage
Did not prohibit	107	55.73
Somewhat prohibited	48	25.00
Prohibited half the time	18	9.38
Prohibited most of the time	11	5.73
Completely prohibited	8	4.17
Total	192	100.00

31. Are you currently or have you ever been involved in a criminal gang or street clique?
Yes No

Students' Gang Involvement	Frequency	Percentage
No	163	83.59
Yes	32	16.41
Total	195	100.00

32. Has your mother been involved in a gang?
Yes No

Mother's Gang Involvement	Frequency	Percentage
No	181	95.26
Yes	9	4.74
Total	190	100.00

33. Has your father been involved in a gang?
Yes No

Father's Gang Involvement	Frequency	Percentage
No	152	80.42
Yes	37	19.58
Total	189	100.00

How do students enrolled in accelerated high schools describe their schools connectivity in their previous schools and current accelerated high schools?

34. Did you participate in any afterschool activities?
    Sports

    Band

    Clubs

    Other

    I did not participate

School Activity	Frequency	Percentage
Sports	103	45.38
Band	7	3.08
Clubs	26	11.45
Other	24	10.57
I did not participate	67	29.51
Total	227	100.00

35. Prior to enrolling at Camelot, did you feel like teachers cared about you?
    Yes No

Prior Teachers Cared	Frequency	Percentage
No	55	28.21
Yes	140	71.79
Total	196	100.00

36. Prior to enrolling at Camelot, did you feel like administrators cared about you?
    Yes No

Prior Administrators Cared	Frequency	Percentage
No	54	27.55
Yes	142	72.45
Total	196	100.00

37. At your previous school, did you feel that teachers and school staff members cared if you came to school?

    Yes No

Previous School Cared about Attendance	Frequency	Percentage
No	77	40.31
Yes	114	59.69
Total	191	100.00

38. How many of your friends graduated on time?
    6- None of my friends…
    7- Some of my friends..
    8- Half of my friends…
    9- Most of my friends..
    10- All of my friends…

39. Why did you choose to enroll at Camelot?
    Better myself
    Closer than my previous school
    Family/Friends encourage me
    Kicked out of previous schools
    Liked school and staff
    My friends graduated from Camelot
    Needed more help
    Other
    To graduate

Why Camelot	Frequency	Percentage
Better myself	15	9.26
Closer than my previous school	4	2.47
Family/Friends encourage me	4	2.47
Kicked out of previous schools	15	9.26
Liked school and staff	18	11.11
My friends graduated from Camelot	44	27.16
Needed more help	1	.62
Other	16	9.58
To graduate	45	27.78
Total	162	100.00

40. Did your parents/guardians expect you to graduate before coming to Camelot?
Yes No

Guardian Graduation Expectations	Frequency	Percentage
No	66	34.20
Yes	127	65.80
Total	193	100.00

41. Do you feel that you are more connected to Camelot than your previous school?
Yes No

More Connected at Camelot	Frequency	Percentage
No	36	19.05
Yes	153	80.95
Total	189	100.00

42. Do you feel that your teachers at Camelot care for and respect you?
Yes No

Camelot Teachers Care	Frequency	Percentage
No	12	6.35
Yes	177	93.65
Total	189	100.00

43. Do you feel that you care for and respect your teachers at Camelot?
    Yes No

Respect Camelot Teachers	Frequency	Percentage
No	17	8.85
Yes	175	91.15
Total	192	100.00

44. Do you expect to graduate from High School?
    Yes No

Students' Graduation Expectations	Frequency	Percentage
No	5	2.62
Yes	186	97.38
Total	191	100.00

45. What are your post-secondary plans? Where do you think you will be in five years?

46. Who do you look up to the most and why?
    Both parents
    Father
    God
    Professional/entertainer
    Grandparents
    Mother
    No one
    Other
    Other family member
    Teacher/administrator

Look Up to Most	Frequency	Percentage
Both parents	4	2.00
Father	7	4.90
God	3	2.10
Professional/entertainer	7	4.90
Grandparents	7	4.90
Mother	45	31.46
No one	19	13.28
Other	15	10.48
Other family member	26	18.18
Teacher/administrator	10	6.99
Total	143	100.00

47. How often did you attend school before enrolled in the program?
None

1 day per week

2 days per week

3 days per week

4 days per week

5 days per week

Attendance prior to Camelot	Frequency	Percentage
None	15	7.81
1 day per week	4	2.08
2 days per week	24	12.50
3 days per week	35	18.23
4 days per week	42	21.88
5 days per week	72	37.50
Total	192	100.00

48. Why did you not attend school?
Select all that apply:

Had to take care of younger siblings

Work

Bored

Wasn’t safe

Had no transportation

Did not see the purpose

Other

Reasons for not Attending	Frequency	Percentage
Care for siblings	28	13.72
Work	17	8.33
Bored	40	19.60
Wasn’t safe	16	7.84
Had no transportation	26	12.74
Did not see the purpose	39	19.11
Other	38	18.62
Total	204	100.00

49. Have you missed school due to Alcohol?
    Yes No

Missed School Due to Alcohol	Frequency	Percentage
No	186	95.38
Yes	9	4.62
Total	195	100.00

50. Have you missed school due to drugs?
    Yes No

Missed School Due to Drugs	Frequency	Percentage
No	175	89.29
Yes	21	10.71
Total	196	100.00

51. Have you been suspended from school?
    Yes No

Previous Suspensions	Frequency	Percentage
No	36	18.37
Yes	160	81.63
Total	196	100.00

52. If yes, what was the earliest age you were suspended?

Age	Frequency	Percentage
Under 5	2	1.57
5/6	10	7.87
7/8	14	11.02
9/10	27	21.26
11/12	26	20.47
13/14	19	14.96
15/16	22	17.32
17/18	7	5.51
Total	127	100.00

53. If yes, how many times have you been suspended?

54. Have you ever been suspended/expelled for alcohol possession or use?
Yes No

Suspended for Alcohol	Frequency	Percentage
No	167	85.64
Yes	28	14.36
Total	195	100.00

55. Do you use Alcohol?
Yes No

Alcohol Use	Frequency	Percentage
No	166	84.69
Yes	30	15.31
Total	196	100.00

56. If Yes, How old were you the first time you drank alcohol?

Age First Used Alcohol	Frequency	Percentage
At birth	1	3.70
8	1	3.70
9	1	3.70
10	0	0.00
11	2	7.40
12	1	3.70
13	4	14.81
14	6	22.22
15	5	18.51
16	5	18.51
17	0	0.00
18	1	3.70
Total	27	100.00

57. If you currently use alcohol, how often do you drink per week?
Not Applicable

0-2 days per week

1-2 days per week

2-3 days per week

3-4 days per week

4-5 days per week

6-7 days per week

Current Alcohol Use	Frequency	Percentage
Not Applicable	118	73.29
0-1 days per week	26	16.15
1-2 days per week	11	6.83
2-3 days per week	4	2.48
3-4 days per week	2	1.24
4-5 days per week	0	0
6-7 days per week	0	0
Total	161	100.00

58. Have you ever been suspended/expelled for drug possession or use?
Yes No

Suspended for Drugs	Frequency	Percentage
No	173	88.27
Yes	23	11.73
Total	196	100.00

59. Do you currently use drugs?
Yes No

Currently Use Drugs	Frequency	Percentage
No	146	74.87
Yes	49	25.13
Total	195	100.00

60. If yes, what was the earliest age you began using or experimenting?

Age First Used Drugs	Frequency	Percentage
At birth	1	2.43
8	1	2.43
9	1	2.43
10	3	7.31
11	4	9.75
12	3	7.31
13	7	17.07
14	10	24.39
15	4	9.75
16	5	12.19
17	1	2.43
18	1	2.43
Total	41	100.00

61. If yes, how many times per week do you use drugs?

Not applicable

0-1 days per week

1-2 days per week

2-3 days per week

4-5 days per week

5-6 days per week

6-7 days per week

Current Drug Use	Frequency	Percentage
Not applicable	19	28.36
0-1 days per week	10	14.93
1-2 days per week	2	2.99
2-3 days per week	4	5.97
3-4 days per week	5	7.46
4-5 days per week	2	2.99
6-7 days per week	18	26.87
Total	67	100.00

APPENDIX C

Camelot Study Approval Letter

CAMELOT
EDUCATION

Rialto Building 1 | 7500 Rialto Blvd. Suite 260 | Austin, Texas 78735 | o: (512) 858-9900 | f: (512) 858-9901 | www.cameloteducation.org

December 10, 2015

Joseph B. Carter III
190 Pompey Springs Court
Buda, TX 78610

RE: Request to Conduct Research on the Camelot Education Student Survey

Dear Mr. Carter,

Your request to conduct research described in your proposal submitted on December 1, 2015 on the Camelot Education Student Survey is approved. Participation by students and staff remains voluntary.

Upon completion of your study, please provide this office with a summary of your finding.

Sincerely,

Todd A. Bock

Todd Bock
Chief Executive Officer

Title of Research: THE LOST KIDS PROJECT: HOW URBAN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS THAT ARE
OVER-AGED AND UNDERCREDENTIALED AND HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUTS DESCRIBE THEIR NEEDS
DEFICITS

APPENDIX D

Institutional Review Board Approval Letter

UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON
DIVISION OF RESEARCH

April 29, 2016

Mr. Joe Carter

c/o Dr. Angus MacNeil
Dean, Education

Dear Mr. Joe Carter,

Based upon your request for exempt status, an administrative review of your research proposal entitled "The Lost Kids Project: How Urban High School Students that are Over-aged and Under Credentialed or High School Drop-outs Describe their Needs Deficits." was conducted on March 17, 2016.

At that time, your request for exemption under **Category 4** was approved pending modification of your proposed procedures/documents.

The changes you have made adequately respond to the identified contingencies. As long as you continue using procedures described in this project, you do not have to reapply for review. * Any modification of this approved protocol will require review and further approval. Please contact me to ascertain the appropriate mechanism.

If you have any questions, please contact Alicia Vargas at (713) 743-9215.

Sincerely yours,

Kirstin Rochford, MPH, CIP, CPIA
Director, Research Compliance

*Approvals for exempt protocols will be valid for 5 years beyond the approval date. Approval for this project will expire **April 28, 2021**. If the project is completed prior to this date, a final report should be filed to close the protocol. If the project will continue after this date, you will need to reapply for approval if you wish to avoid an interruption of your data collection.

Protocol Number: 16347-EX

316 E. Cullen Building Houston, TX 77204-2015 (713) 743-9204 Fax: (713) 743-9577

COMMITTEES FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS.