

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Jacob Neal and I am a graduate from Columbia College Chicago with a Master of Arts in Teaching. My education, student teaching assignments and experience working as a teaching artist at a Southside Chicago high school have taught me the importance of meeting the vast educational needs, learning styles and multiple intelligences of students. I believe that Excel Academy's innovation plan highlights these convictions, among many others, and I am happy to say that I am in full support of this high schools ideology. Moreover, I am extremely excited to be part of and embody Excel's innovation plan on the front lines as the high schools visual arts teacher.

Sincerely,

Jacob Neal

To Whom It May Concern:

I am part of the Excel Academy Advisory Group and am writing this letter on our behalf. I am part of the teaching staff at Excel and we met several times with members from the community, a parent, a student, members of the teaching staff, and members of the Camelot staff, as well as the principal, Ms. Navarro to discuss and review the Innovation Plan for Excel Academy. After reviewing the entire plan and discussing parts that were confusing or needed further explanation, the entire group decided that the innovation plan is worthy of approval by our entire group. It was unanimous. We are very comfortable with the school calendar, the school day, the option for state testing schedule and the quarters system. Overall, we are pleased with the design of the school and are looking forward to student success.

Sincerely,

Lynn Gershman, M. Ed.

Excel Academy Social Studies

To Whom It May Concern,

I have been in DPS for 3 years and have a background in ELL. I have worked at Lincoln High School and have served some of the clientele that Excel Academy would be serving. With this in mind I fully support Excel Academy's innovation plan. I believe this is a needed avenue for these students and in many cases may be their only avenue for a high school degree. Again I not only support this plan but am excited to be on the ground floor of its implementation.

Thank you

Alyson Loitz

To Whom It May Concern,

I have worked in treatment facilities for 7 years. During this time I have worked with many children who have struggled in the traditional classroom setting. Many students are in day treatment because they have been unsuccessful in school. The issue is that unfortunately the education they are receiving is below par. Excel Academy's innovation plan is just one way that we can reach the students who have been unsuccessful and keep them in school where they can earn their high school diploma. I believe that we as educators must be creative and innovative in order to meet the changing needs of a diverse population of students. I am honored and excited to be a part of this vision.

Thank you

Mary Jane Timmens

To Whom It May Concern:

I am very much in support of EXCEL Academy's application for Innovation Status. Based on the unique nature of the accelerated mission being implemented at EXCEL Academy, I believe the school will benefit highly from an innovation plan which allows flexibility in areas such as calendar testing and hiring practices. The intensity of a program geared towards at-risk students who have either dropped out of school or are at risk of dropping out can present many challenges which will require flexibility in order to be effective.

EXCEL Academy is offering me exactly the type of opportunity I was looking for and I feel privileged to be a part of this team. I look forward to working at a school with an innovation plan for success!

Sincerely,

Jay A. Reyes, Jr.

June 13<sup>th</sup>, 2013

To whom it may concern,

I have been employed in Denver Public Schools for the last five years as a special education teacher at Abraham Lincoln High School. For the last two years I have served as the Department Chair for special education. I am coming on board at Excel Academy through Camelot for Kids and will be the Director of Special Populations. I am very excited to be working with the students that Excel Academy will be serving. Based on the population that Excel will serve and my personal background I fully support Excel Academy's innovation plan.

I believe that this program is important, and will create an opportunity for a successful educational experience for students who need challenge, rigor, and structure. Once again, I not only fully support this innovation plan but am excited to be part of a team that is creating a solid foundation for the students of Excel Academy.

Sincerely,

Virgilio San Andres  
Director of Special Populations/Excel Academy



June 13<sup>th</sup>, 2013

To whom it may concern,

I am writing this letter to show my support for the Excel Academy innovation plan. As the Executive Director for Excel Academy, I am very excited to start this process and watch our students succeed. We are all aware of the need for high quality schools with a focus on student engagement. Students have been pushed through and forgotten for far too long and we feel that this model can reengage these students. Excel Academy and its employees are committed and dedicated to these students and strive to see every one of them be successful in school and out in the “real world”.

Innovation status will allow us to have an extended school day, which helps us provide the core hours these students need to graduate on an accelerated time frame. We will also be able to choose the personnel that best fit our model and can provide the highest level of education possible. Through a group meeting and rating system based on attendance, behavior, and credits; our students will be able to take ownership for their current behavior and future success. Innovation status allows us to put these measures in place and are in the best interest of the student.

I personally have worked at three different schools for Camelot and have managed two start-ups to date. At the three schools with which I have been affiliated, we have seen our students graduate at a rate of 95% or higher per year and the percentage of students that have reengaged and changed their attendance patterns is higher than that. This model speaks for itself. With innovation status, DPS support, and the Camelot model in place, we all believe that Excel Academy will be successful and our students will all be able to succeed.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Curtis Reichart  
Executive Director/Excel Academy



June 3, 2013

Dear Denver Public Schools Board of Education,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit our innovation plan on behalf of Excel Academy. We have enclosed the plan with letters of support from teachers, support personnel and community members for your review.

The original vision for Excel Academy was submitted to the Board through the Call for New Quality Schools and was approved in June of 2012 to serve students in southwest Denver with a high-quality intensive pathways high school option. Since that time, the school has made great strides to prepare students for success from the first day of operations. As part of the planning and development process, and through community and stakeholder engagement, we developed an innovation plan that will further enable Excel Academy to serve our students at a high level and foster their college and career readiness.

The need for an intensive pathways high school in southwest Denver is significant, and the ability to deliver a high-quality program is a difficult undertaking. Fortunately, through collaboration with Camelot, an education provider with a track record of success running similar schools, we are confident that Excel Academy will be a program that will accelerate student achievement. In order to run this program with fidelity and to ensure student success, we have identified waivers that the school will need and have included them in the innovation plan.

As a school leader who has dedicated much of her professional life to improving the quality of education in southwest Denver, I am excited to be leading this new school to success in the years ahead. Thank you for your consideration of this innovation proposal. I look forward to questions and ideas as we move forward.

Sincerely,

Cynthia Navarro  
Principal  
Excel Academy



June 13, 2013

### **Camelot's Statement of Support**

My name is Matt Kass and I am the Assistant Vice President of Operations for Camelot. I will personally be overseeing Camelot's partnership with DPS for Excel Academy. On behalf of Todd Bock, Camelot's Chief Executive Officer, this statement is offered as support for our Company's commitment to Denver Public Schools (DPS) to provide an "Intensive Pathway Model" as one option to serve DPS' students that are most at-risk for school failure and dropping out.

The innovation plan submitted by Excel Academy has been shared with Camelot executives and consultants, and we recognize its alignment with our shared goal of providing DPS with a high quality and effective program designed to (1) reengage students at risk for school failure and dropping out; and (2) provide these students with a program of instruction that will lead to their graduation and post-secondary engagement. Camelot believes that this innovation plan will help create a model for addressing the needs of this student population and will provide DPS with a solid program model from which to build an infrastructure to significantly mitigate issues related to disaffected and academically-marginalized students that are high risk of dropping out of school.

Camelot's track record of success with similar programs speaks for itself. Camelot provides programs for similar student populations for some of the largest and most "in need" districts in the country, including Philadelphia, Chicago, and Houston, as well as many midsize districts with chronic dropout issues. Over the last 10 years, as a result of Camelot's programs, thousands of "at risk" students have graduated and gone on to success in post-

secondary programs – including four-year universities, community colleges, and certified trade programs. As a company, the DPS initiative for intensive pathway models falls squarely within what has historically been Camelot’s core competency; that is, providing a rigorous academic program to at risk students that will reengage students, and to provide them with a pathway to graduation and post-secondary success.

Camelot very much looks forward to our new partnership with DPS, and we are extremely optimistic about what we know the program can accomplish on behalf of the District.

Respectfully submitted,

Matt Kass

AVP – Operations

Camelot

[mkass@camelotforkids.org](mailto:mkass@camelotforkids.org)

June 12, 2013

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter in support of the innovation plan for Excel Academy. As the Principal of West Generations and Past Principal of West High School over the last few years we have had students who do not fit into the traditional School. We have referred students to the transitions team and local Engagement centers. However, I believe there is still a high need for students who need direct instruction and extra support services to be successful in school and Post – Secondary readiness.

These past few months Excel Academy has met and done intake with these students. The students and families have shown excitement for the opportunity to grow and be successful. As the Principal of a sending School, I have been reassured that they will receive a quality education and have a successful future ahead of them.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Domonic S. Martinez', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Domonic S. Martinez

West Generations Principal



To whom it may concern

Per phone conversation with Mrs. Guadalupe Dimas, here is the translated statement

She states that she is looking forward to sending her son Dimas to Excel Academy for the 2013-2014 school year. She is happy to know that her son will be getting the educational support from the teachers and staff to help him be successful and graduate. Mrs. Valenzuela also states that she is secure in knowing that she will be involved with her sons successes and will be kept informed of his behavior on a regular basis.

*Y. Monica Castillo*  
*Attendance Liason*  
*Abraham Lincoln High School*