

STATE OF COLORADO BOARD OF EDUCATION 201 E. Colfax Avenue #506 Denver, CO 80203 BOARD USE
In Re: Accountability Recommendations Concerning Adams 14 School District and Adams City High School	CASE NUMBER: 17-AR-10
PROPOSED FINAL WRITTEN DETERMINATION OF STATE BOARD	

On Thursday, May 11, 2017, a hearing was held on this matter before the Colorado State Board of Education pursuant to sections 22-11-209(3) and 22-11-210(5)(b), C.R.S., and the Colorado State Board of Education 2016 Procedures for State Board Accountability Actions.

Pursuant to sections 22-11-209(3) and 22-11-210(5)(b), C.R.S., the State Board has reviewed and fully considered the accountability recommendations of the Commissioner, the State Review Panel, and the report submitted by Adams 14 School District (hereinafter the “District”), and has heard and considered the presentations of the Department and the District in this matter.

Based upon the recommendations of the Department, the Commissioner, the State Review Panel, and the report of the District, the State Board makes the following Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law, and Order.

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. The District serves approximately 7,500 students in the Denver Metro area, and operates eleven schools, eight of which are currently on either Priority Improvement or Turnaround status.

2. The District's accreditation history is as follows:

- a. 2010 Turnaround
- b. 2011 Turnaround
- c. 2012 Turnaround
- d. 2013 Priority Improvement
- e. 2014 Priority Improvement
- f. 2016 Turnaround

Adams City High School's accreditation history is as follows:

- a. 2010 Turnaround
- b. 2011 Priority Improvement
- c. 2012 Priority Improvement
- d. 2013 Priority Improvement
- e. 2014 Priority Improvement
- f. 2016 Priority Improvement

Given the accreditation history of the District and of Adams City High School, the State Board finds that on July 1, 2017, the District will enter its 6th year of being Accredited with Priority Improvement Plan or lower, and Adams City High School will enter its 6th year with a Priority Improvement Plan or lower. Consequently, the State Board is required by state law to direct action to the District's school board prior to June 30, 2017 pursuant to sections 22-11-209(3) and 22-11-210(5)(b), C.R.S.

3. The Commissioner's Recommendation stated that through a review of the state data, the State Review Panel Report, and the District's Unified Improvement Plan, the Commissioner found that that the District's most significant challenges involve academic systems and District systems of support. As such, the District's pathway plan must address academic systems and District systems of support in order for the District and for Adams City High School to improve student outcomes.

4. The State Review Panel Report for the District was released in the spring of 2015, and the Report for Adams City High School was released in the

spring of 2016. At the time, both reports recommended innovation status. However, circumstances in the District have subsequently undergone significant change. The recommendation of innovation status for the District was based upon the effectiveness and capacity of the District's leadership team in 2015; yet since that time the District leadership and direction has changed. Likewise, the recommendation of innovation status for Adams City High School focused on the strength of the new leadership team, and in the interim the School has lost its principal and a key assistant principal, while the new Superintendent is implementing a complete leadership restructuring. Thus, taking into account the new leadership context for both the District and the School, the recommendations of both the Department and the District differ from that of the State Review Panel.

5. In the summer of 2016, the District board hired a new superintendent, Dr. Javier Abrego, who is an experienced superintendent with previous turnaround experience working in struggling education systems. Much of the District leadership team, as well as leadership at Adams City High School, has turned over as well. The District is in the process of restructuring the leadership model at the School and has recently hired a new principal, assistant principals and other support staff.

6. The District has submitted a Pathways Proposal for external management partnership. Based on the new superintendent's previous experience, the District has proposed a plan that contracts for the services of Beyond Textbooks, a comprehensive program of curriculum development, instructional improvement, student assessment, and multi-level interventions. Through the program, staff would receive a highly-structured curricular framework focused on standards, extensive professional development, observations and coaching, and access to a wide array of sample lessons and classroom-based assessments.

7. The plan calls for an initial focus on three schools, including Adams City High School, to work with Beyond Textbooks in order to focus on the District's most struggling schools. By starting small, the District plans to study and then adjust its implementation practices as necessary. If there is evidence of success in the schools working with Beyond Textbooks, the District has proposed expanding its contract with Beyond Textbooks to other schools as well.

8. The Department has also recommended an external management partner as the best pathway for the District to meet key conditions for success. However, a review of the District's proposed management plan under the Department's rubric found that the plan partially met expectations. Although the plan as originally submitted provides helpful details about how the partnership would support needed academic improvements in three of the District's schools, including Adams City High School, questions remained as to how the initial plan would address the need for the District to develop its systems of support for other low-performing schools and implement processes for robust internal accountability. The Department's rubric found that the plan, as originally submitted, did not adequately address the strategies or actions the District needed to stabilize and perform at a higher level, and did not provide adequate detail regarding the specific changes that would occur at Adams City High School, particularly for grades 11 and 12.

9. In accordance with the determination of the State Board at the May 11, 2017 hearing on this matter, the Department, the District, and Beyond Textbooks have worked together to define the role and responsibilities of Beyond Textbooks, and the district has revised its Pathways Proposal (dated June 6, 2017) so that it adequately addresses the concerns identified in the Department's rubric, including a commitment by the District to implement all the recommendations of Beyond Textbooks as set forth in the revised Pathways Proposal, such commitment being contained on page 38 of the Pathways Proposal.

10. The State Board finds that the revised proposal, if implemented, will have a significant positive impact on student learning and is in the best interests of students and families.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

11. Pursuant to section 22-11-207(4)(a), C.R.S., the State Board "shall not allow a school district or the institute to remain at accredited with priority improvement plan or below for longer than a total of five consecutive school years before removing the school district's or the institute's accreditation as provided in section 22-11-209." Pursuant to section 22-11-210(1)(d)(I), C.R.S., the State Board "shall not allow a public school to continue implementing a

priority improvement plan or turnaround plan for longer than a combined total of five consecutive school years before requiring the school district or the institute to restructure or close the public school.”

12. Section 22-11-209, C.R.S. authorizes the State Board to take any one of a number of actions regarding a school district that has been in the accredited with priority improvement plan category or lower for five consecutive school years, including:

- a. That the district be reorganized pursuant to article 30 of title 22, C.R.S.;
- b. That a public or private entity, with the agreement of the school district, take over management of the district or one or more of its schools;
- c. That one or more of the district’s schools be converted to a charter school;
- d. That one or more of the district’s schools be granted status as an innovation school or that a group of schools be recognized as an innovation zone; or
- e. That one or more of the district schools be closed.

The State Board concludes that the revised management proposal of the District, which meets the Department’s rubric and is consistent with the recommendation of the Commissioner, is a statutorily-authorized accountability pathway pursuant to §22-11-209(2)(a), C.R.S.

13. Section 22-11-210, C.R.S. authorizes the State Board to take any one of a number of actions regarding a non-charter public school that has been accredited with priority improvement plan or lower for five consecutive school years, including:

- a. With regard to a district public school that is not a charter school, that the district public school should be managed by a private or public entity other than the school district;
- b. That the district’s school be converted to a charter school if it is not already authorized as a charter school;
- c. That the district public school be granted status as an

- innovation school pursuant to section 22-32.5-104; or
- d. That the district school be closed.

The State Board concludes that the revised management proposal of the District, which meets the Department's rubric and is consistent with the recommendation of the Commissioner, is a statutorily-authorized accountability pathway for a non-charter public school pursuant to §22-11-210(5)(a), C.R.S.

14. Pursuant to section 22-11-209(3) and 22-11-210(5)(b), C.R.S., the State Board has considered the recommendations of the Department and the Commissioner, and the State Review Panel. The State Board has also considered the District's proposed pathway in this matter.

15. The State Board finds that such removal of the District's accreditation as is mandated by section 22-11-207(4)(a), C.R.S., should be suspended to allow the District to take the actions described in its revised management pathways proposal.

ORDER

WHEREFORE, the State Board hereby removes the accreditation of Adams 14 School District. Such removal shall be suspended and stayed pending the District's implementation of the below-listed actions.

- A. Adams 14 School District is ordered to implement the Revised Pathways Proposal dated June 6, 2017 as filed with the State Board, including implementation of all recommendations of Beyond Textbooks as committed to by the District on page 38 of the Revised Pathways Proposal;
- B. The District and the Department will develop a progress monitoring plan to track the implementation of its improvement strategies and monitor student achievement. The district must submit a copy of the progress monitoring plan to the Department no later than August 15, 2017. Throughout the 2017-18 school year, the district must submit local data on a regular basis, at least quarterly, that allows the Department to assess if the implementation is on track

according to the submitted progress monitoring plan;

- C. The terms and conditions of this Determination and Order shall be incorporated by reference in the accreditation contract issued to Adams 14 School District for the 2017-18 school year;
- D. If Adams 14 School District improves its accreditation rating to Accredited with Improvement Plan or higher, this Order will automatically terminate as to the School District;
- E. If Adams City High School receives a plan type of Improvement or higher, this Order will automatically terminate as to Adams City High School;
- F. In the event Adams 14 School District fails to implement its Management Plan or if, according to the 2018 performance frameworks, the District remains rated as Accredited with Priority Improvement or Turnaround, the State Board may take further action as permitted by law; and
- G. If Adams City High School receives a Priority Improvement or Turnaround rating on the 2018 School Performance Frameworks or subsequent years and fails to make adequate progress, the Commissioner may assign the State Review Panel to critically evaluate the School's performance, revisit its recommendations, and report back to the State Board consistent with C.R.S. § 22-11-210(5)(a).

Adams 14 School District remains accredited with Priority Improvement Plan during the implementation of these actions.

Dated this 16th day of June, 2017.



Dr. Angelika Schroeder, Chair
Colorado State Board of Education

CERTIFICATION OF MAILING

I hereby certify that I have provided a true and correct copy of the foregoing **FINAL DETERMINATION** this 16th day of June via e-mail addressed to the following parties:

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