2021-2022 State Review Panel Recommendation Form

District/code:	Adams 14/0030
State Review Panelists:	Nick Bucy, Andy Franko, Tacy Killingsworth, Mathew Neal, Johan Van Nieuwenhuizen, Amy Weed
Recommendation Meeting Date:	February 17 and 25, 2022

Panel's Recommendation:

After analysis of compiled data and documentation, as well as a site visit conducted February 9-11, 2022, the State Review Panel recommends for Adams 14 School District: 1) closure of one or more schools; 2) district reorganization (that may include consolidation); or 3) a combination of components of either of these options.

Evidence and Rationale:

After conducting a thorough document review and a site visit, which included voices from across the district, its schools and community, as well as district and school performance, *the State Review Panel (SRP) does not recommend innovation status, management by a private or public entity other than the district, or conversion of one-or-more district schools to a charter for Adams County School District 14 (Adams 14).* Evidence for these decisions is described below.

Of the other two options - closure of-one-or-more schools and district reorganization/consolidation - the SRP believes it is most appropriate to consider a combination of these options when determining what is best for the district's students, because neither one of which in its purest form may be appropriate for Adams 14.

There is evidence of lack of leadership capacity and stability at the district's highest levels to lead turnaround work effectively to increase student achievement gains. Additionally, Adams City High School (ACHS) continues to perform at a low level and there is a lack of a prioritized plan for the school and its students, who likely have better options that are geographically close their homes.

The SRP gave significant consideration to closure of one-or-more of the district's schools but recognizes there are many challenges to closing one school, and potentially increased challenges to closing more-than-one-school. This risk becomes greater without a clear and intentional plan, and leadership to lead and navigate planning and process to ensure ongoing support to students.

As the SRP considered the overall document review, site visit evidence and the five critical questions of the rubric that guides the work of the SRP (see below, District Site Visit Feedback Form), these ratings, as well as ratings from the 2018 State Review Panel Visit addressing the five critical questions, are evidence of the need for drastic change in Adams 14. Although some stakeholders reported they would like to see current leadership have an opportunity to continue to lead in the future, many stakeholders also expressed significant concern regarding the district's current culture and the ability of its leadership to guide turnaround efforts or unite a community in those efforts. Among the gravest concerns are the reported culture of fear and retaliation, the lack of sound financial and human resource practices, and the overall limited improvement in student achievement and growth over many years. The declining enrollment and the number of current students choosing to not attend Adams 14 are key pieces of evidence the SRP has considered. With the consistent turnover in district-and-school-leadership and teachers over many years, it is challenging to get any traction toward improvement efforts. Although the SRP observed schools who are beginning to lead improvement efforts and desire stability, the lack of district support structures and resources, as well as the lack of trust and communication, make it challenging for school leaders to lead turnaround work well.

The SRP discussed at length the reality of closing one-or-more-schools and the imminent impacts for students and the community. Closure of multiple schools presents concerns. The closure of Adams City High School (ACHS) is likely the best option, allowing students to attend surrounding high schools (some of which are geographically close) that are performing at higher levels than ACHS and, if given an option, may be a preference for students. The closure of ACHS is

likely to allow ACHS students an opportunity to access a better education at another high school. At the same time, it would allow Adams 14 to place intentional focus on leading turnaround work at the elementary school and middle school levels.

In order for this recommendation to be effective, closure of the high school would require a specific transition plan with a timeline as to how and when this would happen and where the students would attend. The SRP is unclear of how closure of the high school would fully impact the district – whether it would cause more division or whether it would provide families with choices for better educational options. The SRP discussed consideration of the process and its importance – for any school, its students, and families. The following are recommended considerations:

1. What would the process be for closure of the high school?
2. Does the district have the capacity to create a plan and lead the process?
3. Will all students have a choice about where they would want to attend school?
4. How would families be engaged in this process?
5. What would be the impact for transporting students to another district?
6. Would other districts have the capacity to, and agree to, absorbing these students, including a possible influx of lower-performing out-of-district students?

The SRP also gave significant consideration to district reorganization and/or consolidation. The SRP strongly considered reorganization of district leadership while leaving school leadership intact. Although some stakeholders reported that they would like to see current leadership have an opportunity to lead, many stakeholders expressed significant concerns regarding the district's current culture and the ability of current leadership to lead turnaround efforts. The SRP observed evidence of schools leading data-driven work and would recommend/consider maintaining stability in schools. However, evidence from the document review and site visit clearly shows the need for drastic change in practices at the district level. Among the gravest concerns are the reported culture of fear and retaliation, the lack of sound financial and human resource practices, and the overall limited improvement in student achievement and growth over many years. A reorganization of district leadership would address these concerns more directly.

However, the SRP recognizes that there are State statutes that would need to be considered to facilitate reorganization, and that there would need to be a clear plan and timeline for this process. The SRP also recognizes that this reorganization would take time to establish a solid leadership team that could lead and function at high levels, which may take more time than the urgency required in the district. Further, there would need to be a plan for supporting schools during the transition. Creating a lack of stability at the school level could be more detrimental to students and families if not done well and without the appropriate expertise.

The creation of and/or appointment of a separate Board composed of local peers/experts to lead and oversee the district leadership and its roles and responsibilities and may provide the accountability required to show improvements. This would also allow for any major leadership changes and reorganization to occur on a smaller scale and to begin more swiftly and thoughtfully than a large district reorganization or consolidation. Finally, the SRP discussed the benefits to have some stability at the school level, limiting disruption and the extent to which the district and community could handle significant change all-at-one-time.

In order for consolidation to be an option, the SRP recognizes that there are neighboring districts that are performing at higher levels and may be viable options for students. However, this option would require the local Board of Education in neighboring districts to agree. Rather than absorbing all Adams 14 students into one-or-more-districts and engaging multiple stakeholders in a long process, an alternative could be working as support systems/partners with Adams 14 leadership to support turnaround work. While partners indicated they are willing to provide support to the district, it is not clear if there are local partners who are willing to be held accountable for the work occurring in Adams 14 or for space of all of the district's students in the case of consolidation.

As noted above, another possibility would be to consider closing Adams City High School and allowing students to attend a high school in a neighboring district. This would allow Adams 14 to focus on PreK-8th grade first and then if/when the district shows consistent increases in student achievement, a plan could be devised to reopen a high school. While the SRP recognizes this would not be ideal for families and students who want consistency in their students being educated in PreK-12 and/or who are tied to the current high school, it may present the most manageable option and create increased opportunities for student achievement and post-secondary success.

The SRP considered innovation status. However, the district does not have adequate leadership capacity or infrastructure to support innovation. While there is evidence that schools are beginning to lead data-driven work, district leadership has not created systems and structures to lead data-driven change, nor have they established a shared vision for success. Additionally, district culture is one that is divisive at best and, therefore, would not be conducive to leading innovation efforts. Change to innovation status would require consent from school leadership, and as evidenced by the site visit, school leaders believe they are leading focused work through the Professional Learning Community (PLC) model in which they are using data to drive decision making, of which the SRP saw evidence when visiting schools. In addition, innovation would require buy-in from a majority of district stakeholders and the community. During the site visit, it was clear that stakeholders are divided about what is best for the district.

Additionally, continued turnover in staff, from district and school leadership to teachers, would make it difficult to develop, implement, and maintain quality innovation status. The SRP recognizes that there may be innovation grants available and cash reserves that could be utilized to support innovation. The site visit team heard from stakeholders that Adams 14 has not taken advantage of these grants, nor do they have sound financial structures and practices to support innovation work. The SRP did consider the idea of "partial innovation," because Adams 14 district leaders and Board members indicated a lack of trust or belief in the State accountability system for their community. The team considered the idea of Adams 14 requesting a waiver and creating their own plan for local accountability. However, due to lack of consistent and high-functioning leadership structures, the team is concerned about the district's ability to develop, implement, and monitor a local accountability system.

Current district leadership has not shown the capacity to write a strategic plan or gain community support, which is further evidence that developing and implementing an innovation plan would be challenging. Additionally, having been on the clock for multiple years and in looking at trend data over time for Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) and Colorado Measures of Academic Success (CMAS), the district has shown limited improvement in achievement and growth, which further indicates a lack of ability to lead turnaround work.

The SRP gave consideration to management by a private or public entity other than the district; however, there is clear evidence that current district leadership does not want to be managed and is unable to work effectively with a management partner. Although district leadership has shown lack of interest and ability to work with a partner, during the site visit, multiple stakeholders – including teachers, school leaders, and some district leaders – stated that Adams 14 made progress under MGT as the managing partner. Instructional areas specifically noted were the establishment of PLCs in which teachers and school leaders were analyzing data and discussing instructional practices and the collaborative process of developing the academic infrastructure that includes pacing guides and assessments in core content areas. Multiple stakeholders stated that MGT brought many valuable resources to the table to include instructional coaches and partnerships with other organizations such as 2Partner and the University of Virginia (UVA), and these stakeholders are concerned about the loss of resources, as well as the current district leadership's ability to lead turnaround efforts. However, there was evidence provided that some district leadership and the local Board of Education are opposed to being managed by an outside entity; this creates a barrier for any management partner who may come in.

In 2018, the SRP recommended management by a private or public entity that would provide the following:

- Understand and support the continuation of the partnership with Beyond Textbooks (BT) and help develop a strong academic program infrastructure;
- Identify and document concerns and areas of focus and be clear with the district around expectations for implementation of turnaround strategies;
- Establish and develop a district leadership team that can implement and monitor effectiveness of the turnaround strategies;
- Develop organizational structures and a clear leadership model at the district and school levels;
- Be attentive to the culture and climate and establish strong community engagement;
- Establish processes and procedures to hire and retain quality staff;
- Establish clear communication structures that will enhance a shared vision toward common goals; and
- Focus on developing the capacity of the staff and not just bringing in programs.

Based on evidence from the site visit and document review, MGT was working toward some of these expectations, such as identifying areas of concern and focus and developing the capacity of staff through monthly professional learning. However, there is limited evidence that a district leadership team has been established that can implement and monitor effectiveness of the turnaround strategies, that culture and climate have been areas of focus, that processes and procedures for recruiting and retaining quality staff are in place, and that there is a shared vision toward common goals.

The SRP recognizes that the district does not want to be managed and has not demonstrated the ability to work well with a management partner, but also recognizes that district leadership does not have the capacity to lead turnaround efforts without support. The SRP considered the idea of requiring the district to "partner" with one-or-more outside entities to lead turnaround efforts and that through this model the following would need to be established:

- Create a shared vision of success for Adams 14;
- Select partners to focus on specific areas of the turnaround work;
- Establish a clear action plan to work with multiple partners;
- Establish district vs. partner roles and responsibilities;
- Establish a specific progress-monitoring system to monitor effectiveness of the work; and
- Establish clear communication structures that will outline communication expectations and channels between the district, the partners, the schools, and the community.

However, the SRP is concerned that district leadership lacks the ability to work with a managing partner which, in turn, could create undue conflict and hardship on school leaders and partners trying to lead turnaround work. While the SRP recognizes that although external management by a private or public entity other than the district is not a viable option, it is also evident that Adams 14 has not demonstrated the ability to implement effective leadership, instructional, financial, or human resource practices and, thus, should not have local control without close oversight and guidance.

The SRP does not recommend that one-or-more of the district's schools be converted to a charter school. The district does not have the leadership capacity to support the conversion process of one-or-more-schools to a charter school. Due to the lack of effective district leadership at this time, conversion of one-or-more-schools to a charter would require an outside entity, and it is unclear if there would be an authorizing body who would have the capacity to take it on. Additionally, in reviewing overall school performance across the district, the conversion of only some schools to a charter school would not address the ongoing under-performance of many schools in the district. Although the district has shown some interest in a charter school by approving a new preschool/elementary charter school that will gradually expand to fifth grade, some district stakeholders reported a belief there is a lack of planning for how the school will be established, a facilities plan, or other information for how the new charter school would be rolled out and incorporated into the community to best meet students' need. Additionally, during the site visit, many stakeholders made it clear that they are not interested in transitioning schools to charter schools, and because of the lack of interest and support

from the district and community, the ability for a charter school to thrive in the district would be limited. Conversion to a charter school would also mean the likely removal of school leaders and the SRP saw clear evidence during the site visit that some schools are beginning to establish effective instructional infrastructure, and it would be in the schools' best interest to continue on this path, rather than having another interruption to their work. Finally, the SRP heard significant misunderstandings from stakeholders – such as parents, teachers, and administrators – about the role of charter schools. For example, some stakeholders suggested that charter schools may not offer special education services to students, indicating lack of clarity on a charter school as a public school. Evidence from focus groups and interviews indicate the community, as a whole, would resist the conversion to charter schools; therefore, chartering may become the next issue that distracts the district from focusing on the improvement of student learning.

State Review Panel District Site Visit Feedback Form 2021-22

Purpose: The State Review Panel (SRP, or the Panel) was created by the Accountability Act of 2009 to provide a critical evaluation of the State's lowest-performing schools' and districts' plans for dramatic action and provide recommendations to the Commissioner and the State Board of Education. The Panel's work is informed by a review of documents (e.g., Unified Improvement Plan) and, in some cases, by a site visit. The site visit component was added in 2013 to strengthen panelists' understanding of the conditions in the schools and districts that are further along on the accountability clock. The expectation is that the site visit will inform their recommendations to the Commissioner and the State Board of Education about potential actions at the end of the accountability clock.

Prior to arriving on site, panelists conducted a document review aligned to the six key areas in the Accountability Act. During the site visit, Panelists used evidence collected through focus groups, interviews, and additional document review to come to consensus on capacity levels in relation to the six key areas. This report presents the district's capacity levels in relation to the six key areas and a summary of evidence for each.

Reviewer Name(s): Nick Bucy, Andy Franko, Tacy Killingsworth, Mathew Neal, Johan Van Nieuwenhuizen, Amy Weed   *Date:* February 9-11, 2022

District Name/Code: Adams 14/0030

SRP Site Visit Summary	Capacity Level:
1. The leadership is adequate to implement change to improve results.	Not Effective
2. The infrastructure is adequate to support district improvement.	Not Effective
3. There is readiness and apparent capacity of personnel to plan effectively and lead the implementation of appropriate action to improve student academic performance.	Not Effective
4. There is readiness and apparent capacity to engage productively with, and benefit from, the assistance provided by an external partner.	Not Effective
5. There is likelihood of positive returns on State investments of assistance and support to improve the performance within the current management structure and staffing.	Not Effective
6. There is necessity that the district remains in operation to serve students.	Yes

State Review Panel District Site Visit Feedback Form 2021-22

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SRP Evaluation based on Site Visit

State Review Panel Criteria	Claims & Evidence
1. The leadership is adequate to implement change to improve results.	Capacity Level: [ ] Highly Effective [ ] Effective [ ] Developing **[X] Not Effective**
1.1: Leadership acts as a change agent to drive dramatic achievement gains.	- Leadership communicates a relentless commitment to the district turnaround. - Leadership makes data-driven changes to the academic program and organization to promote dramatic achievement gains. - Leadership conveys clear expectations for performance for all stakeholders, including district staff, school leadership, teachers, district accountability committee, parents, and community members.	**District leadership has not acted as a change agent to drive dramatic achievement gains.** All stakeholders interviewed at the district-and-school-level indicated that the district currently lacks a strategic plan. Some attributed responsibility for the district's lack of a plan to the previous external manager (MGT Consulting), while others indicated that, given the external manager's planned departure, they felt district leadership should have a plan in place. Executive leadership, for example, indicated that they expected the departure of the external manager in April, and that the earlier departure in February was unanticipated, leaving them unprepared.
1.2: Leadership establishes clear, targeted, and measurable goals designed to promote student performance.	- Leadership communicates clear and focused goals that are understood by all district-and-school-personnel. - District-and-school-staff understand their responsibilities for achieving goals. - Leadership maintains district-wide focus on achieving established goals. - Leadership allocates resources in alignment with goals and critical needs. - Leadership has established systems to measure and report interim results toward goals.	- Additionally, some district administrators indicated that the district is currently drafting a strategic blueprint. However, others highlighted that the district has known of the anticipated Spring transition for many months and expressed frustration with a lack of direction and proactive communication from the district, highlighting that the district's direction was clearer under MGT than current leadership. - Documents provided to the site visit team included a 2020-2023 strategic plan, but no stakeholders at the district-or-school-level referenced this plan at any point during the site visit. - Many stakeholders at the school-and-district-level also expressed frustration with a lack of effective communication from the district, stating that communication from the district, internally and with schools and the community, is frequently conflicting, not timely, lacks transparency and is, in some cases, inaccurate or misleading.
1.3: Leadership analyzes data to identify and address high priority challenges, and to adjust implementation of the action plan.	- Leadership communicates data trends and issues, ensures timely access to data, and models and facilitates data use. - Leadership openly shares results and holds staff accountable for results and effective use of data. - Leadership first concentrates on a limited number of priorities to achieve early, visible wins. - There is regular progress monitoring of performance and implementation data and, as appropriate, results lead to elimination of tactics that do not work. - Benchmarks are used to assess progress toward goals; goals are adjusted as progress is made. - Data on progress toward goals drives organizational and instructional decision making	In focus groups, some stakeholders attributed shortcomings in communication to the challenges of coordinating between the district and the external manager, while others indicated that shortcomings in communication are due to a lack of intentional and proactive planning on the part of district staff. Staff shared examples, such as a lack of broad

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| 1.4: Leadership establishes high expectations for student learning and behavior. | • The school/district holds high expectations for academic learning.
• Leadership first concentrates on a limited number of priorities to achieve early, visible wins.
• Educators set high expectations for learning and clearly convey these to students.
• Educators convey that students are responsible for raising their performance and encourage their participation in learning.
• The school/district provides a safe environment to support students' learning and, in the case of a virtual school, ensures that students' interactions between and among themselves and school staff are respectful and supportive.
• Leadership ensures that the school's physical environment is clean, orderly, and safe. | district stakeholder engagement in improvement planning, as well as a lack of enlisting the necessary individuals and departments to take part in making decisions.

● Many district staff also reported a lack of clear expectations from district leadership. Some highlighted a lack of clearly-defined responsibilities within roles and departments, noting that the individuals or departments responsible for initiatives changed frequently and sometimes without clear rationale. Others reported that it is often challenging to determine whom they should contact regarding their team or department's needs. Some attributed the lack of clear roles and expectations to the district's high staff turnover while, conversely, others reported that the high turnover is due, in part, to the lack of clear roles and expectations.

● District-and-school-staff also indicated that financial and operational goals are not widely understood. Staff at district-and-school-levels reported lacking resources ranging from staff positions to material for students, while others highlighted that the district has a cash reserve of approximately 40 million dollars.

● Others indicated that, despite declining enrollment and disrepair of some district facilities, the district lacks a facilities master plan, and indicated that the organization's operations priorities are unclear. Finance, operations, and facilities documents include thorough descriptions of year-to-date progress and updates, but do not outline priorities or an overarching district strategy in these areas.

District leadership has not established clear, targeted, and measurable goals.

● A small number of district staff and Board members were able to present the district's goals, but the vast majority of district-and-school-staff were not able. Many reported that goals were discussed in professional development (PD) during the summer of 2021, but that the district's goals have not been a focus since that time. Others stated that the district's primary focus this academic year has been the removal of its management partner, and that this has sidelined other work.

● Instead of goals, district-and-school-staff referred to high-level district priorities, but the priorities that they identified differed. Board members referred to: 1) preparing students for the future; 2) creating a safe environment; 3) promoting equitable opportunities; and 4) creating strong |

MGT	partnerships. These priorities mirror the goals in the district's 2020-2023 strategic plan document. Others highlighted aspects of the MGT's instructional plan or the district's new academic infrastructure document, such as the implementation of curriculum, unit planning, or professional learning communities (PLCs). ● Many reported that in lieu of clear district goals and priorities, they have, instead, focused on their perceived individual, school, or department's goals. Others reported that district leadership has not inquired about their department's goals this year. Few stakeholders were able to describe their roles in the larger district's improvement efforts. ● District-and-school-staff were also not consistently able to describe the district's progress toward meeting goals. A small number of district staff were able to describe progress toward the district's academic goals, most frequently referring to Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) assessment results. ● The district's Progress Monitoring Tool document includes tracking of STAR math and literacy progress, including analysis of beginning- to middle-of-year data, and these results are consistent with those described by district leaders. The academic leadership team's agendas link to middle-of-year reflections, which are thorough and complete for some schools but vague or incomplete for others. ● Other district-and-school-staff members indicated that district leadership does not consistently monitor school progress on an ongoing basis, noting that district leadership requested updated academic data from schools in preparation for the State Review Panel site visit. ● At the school level, school leaders were able to present their school's specific goals regarding academics (e.g., STAR or Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills [DIBELS] assessment results), engagement (e.g., attendance), and other areas (e.g., implementation of curriculum or PLCs). Some provided data reports highlighting students' academic progress, and others were able to readily recall progress regarding goals for attendance or discipline.

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		District leadership analyzes some data, while schools more consistently analyze and use data to inform next steps and adjust courses.
		● Some district staff provided examples of using data in their roles. Agendas from the academic leadership team's meeting, for example, include thorough analysis of STAR data following mid-year assessments, but include few other examples of data analysis. Staff in other district departments referenced using data (i.e., STAR, READ Act, Individual Education Program [IEP], attendance, and Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State [ACCESS] data) to broadly inform their team's work, such as to help determine the staffing needs for special education or support staff. Other district-and-school-staff members also reported that the district has improved schools' access to data through STAR testing and providing data platforms, such as Illuminate.
		● However, the site visit team did not find a robust culture of data use at the district level. With the exception of the examples above, staff interviews and documents provided few examples of how the use of data informs individuals' and teams' next steps.
		● Few district staff referred to data unprompted, and staff did not consistently indicate a focus on the performance of student subgroups.
		● Similarly, the District Unified Improvement Plan (DUIP) includes minimal, summary-level attendance, READ Act, enrollment, graduation, and STAR data, in some cases referencing trends without presenting data.
		● While some school-and-district-staff noted improved availability of academic data through platforms such as Illuminate, others indicated that a lack of available data in their departments, especially non-academic data, sometimes presents an obstacle to their work.
		● At the school level, school leaders frequently cited data when asked about school goals, provided examples of adjusting their priorities in response, and some provided data reports highlighting their academic gains. The site visit team also observed artifacts of data use (i.e., tracking systems, posted goals) in various schools and classrooms.
		Some school leaders are beginning to establish expectations for student learning and behavior but there is a lack of expectations and urgency at the district level.

- School leadership and staff shared various examples of attempts to increase academic and behavior expectations, citing efforts such as regular celebrations of learning and the implementation of Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS). Teachers also consistently described increasing the rigor of their instruction through implementation of standards-aligned curricula, exit tickets, common formative assessments, and end-of-course and unit exams. Also, teachers stated they strive to adhere to pacing guides to be able to collaborate with their grade level and content counterparts at other schools. During school visits, the site visit team observed artifacts of PBIS and the use of adopted curriculum such as Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (HMH) in math and Wonders in literacy.

- The site visit team also observed that schools and classrooms were typically characterized by a safe and positive culture. Students generally reported feeling physically and emotionally safe at school, indicated that their teachers care about them, reported having adults they trust on campus, and reported finding value in their schools' social emotional learning (SEL) programming. Parents interviewed by the Panel also generally reported that students feel safe at school.

- However, despite these efforts and successes in establishing expectations at the school level, the site visit team did not find similar successes at the district level. District leadership frequently expressed frustration that the districts' students are held to the same performance expectations as students from other districts, stating that the State accountability system is not appropriate for the community of students that Adams 14 serves.

- District staff also frequently noted the lack of a strategic plan, while some reported a lack of clear performance expectations in their roles and for their teams (see above). In addition, some staff reported misalignment between teacher evaluations and teachers' academic outcomes, suggesting that teacher evaluations are inflated. A number of staff also expressed frustration with what they described as a lack of urgency for district-and-school-improvement at the district level.

SRP Evaluation based on Site Visit

State Review Panel Criteria		Claims & Evidence
2. The infrastructure is adequate to support district improvement.		Capacity Level: [ ] Highly Effective [ ] Effective [ ] Developing **[X] Not Effective**
2.1: The district leads intentional, strategic efforts to ensure the effectiveness of the academic program and the sustainability of the organization.	• Leadership ensures ongoing development for emerging and current school leaders with a focus on building leadership capacity to lead turnaround efforts and sustain improvement. • Leadership provides adequate oversight in schools' work to deliver the curriculum, monitors instruction on a regular basis, and provides adequate support and feedback to principals to improve instruction. • The district provides adequate systems by which to capture and store data, report it to schools, and make it accessible for instructional staff to utilize.	**District leadership is beginning to lead some efforts to ensure the effectiveness of the academic program, but the sustainability of these efforts is unclear.** • District-and-school-leaders reported that opportunities for principal development and instructional oversight have included monthly principal PLCs, regular meetings with district principal managers, and regular meetings with the previous external manager's principal coaches. They reported that PLCs and weekly or bi-weekly meetings with both district and external manager principal coaches include a focus on instructional oversight through classroom walkthroughs and provide instructional feedback. Principals expressed varying levels of trust and collaboration with both district principal managers and the external manager's principal coaches, but generally reported that these meetings have been useful in improving their practice.

2.2: District leadership has a strong focus on recruiting and retaining talent; creates and implements systems to select, develop, and retain effective leaders, teachers, and staff who can drive dramatic student gains; evaluates all staff; and dismisses those who do not meet professional standards and expectations.	• Leadership has created and/or implemented an organizational and staffing structure that will drive dramatic student gains.
	• Leadership recruits and hires leaders, teachers, and staff members with commitment to, and competence in, the district's philosophy, design, and instructional framework (e.g., trained and experienced with curriculum, certified/licensed to teach, qualified to teach subject area).
	• Leadership ensures the evaluation of all staff and dismisses those who do not meet professional standards and expectations.
	• Leadership provides leaders, teachers, and staff members with active, intense, and sustained professional development (PD), including guidance on data analysis and instructional practice, aligned to school improvement efforts.
	  ○ PD is informed by ongoing analysis of student performance, instructional data, and educators' learning needs.
	  ○ PD requires leaders, teachers, and staff members to demonstrate their learned competency in a tangible and assessable way.
	  ○ PD engages leaders, teachers, and staff members in active learning (e.g., leading instruction, discussing with colleagues, observing others, developing assessments), and
		• Many principals also reported having received regular executive coaching from experienced and successful local educators through the MGT. Some described these as their most valuable leadership development opportunities, and principals expressed disappointment for the end of this support.
		• School-and-district-leaders also identified the University of Virginia Partnership for Leaders in Education (UVA) program as a source of leadership development. School, district, and UVA staff reported that roughly two-thirds of the district's principals took part in the UVA program in the last two years. Principals consistently reported that this has been valuable, and many highlighted that their 90 Day Plans are the ongoing, guiding documents for their school improvement efforts.
		• School-and-district-leaders reported that 2Partner Mathematics also provided valuable leadership development for principals in math instruction, in addition to providing a high level of support directly to teachers. Unanimously, principals and teachers spoke enthusiastically for their work with 2Partner, expressed disappointment for the end of this support, and district staff reported attempting to re-engage their

	- provides follow-up sessions/ongoing support for teachers' continued learning. ○ The quality of professional development delivery is regularly monitored, evaluated, and improved.	partnership following the departure of the external manager, who brokered and funded this partnership. ● Many principals expressed both disappointment and concern with the loss of support from the external management partner, including the loss of principal managers, executive coaches, and their subcontractor, 2Partner Mathematics. Many also highlighted the external manager's central role in supporting the district to develop its new academic infrastructure, including the creation of a district math department, the adoption and implementation of curriculum and unit planning, the PLC structure and data use, and the classroom walkthrough structure. Others expressed concern for the sustainability of the academic infrastructure without their guidance and highlighted the challenge of maintaining these systems with the district's high level of staff turnover in both the central office and schools. ● UVA's November 2021 district report highlighted the need for the district to develop more intentional and applicable PD for principals.
2.3: District leadership ensures that the district has sound financial and operational systems and processes.	- District leadership ensures that the organizational structure supports essential district-and-school functions, and that roles and responsibilities of all individuals at the school are clear. - District leadership has established effective means of communicating with district-and-school-staff. - District leadership ensures that all compliance requirements and deadlines set by the State are met, including the submission of school improvement plans, financial statements, school audit, calendar, and student attendance. - District leadership effectively manages the budget and cash flow, and there is a plan for long-term financial sustainability. - District leadership effectively manages operations (e.g., food services, transportation, school facilities).	**The district has some structures for developing staff; however, it lacks fully effective processes for recruiting, hiring, retaining, and dismissing staff.** ● District-and-school-staff identified the district's monthly PD days and weekly PLCs as the primary opportunities for teacher development. Some schools also reported having implemented weekly grade-level or department meetings. Teachers reported that PD days have focused on the implementation of curriculum and unit planning, and review of PD agendas confirmed that PD days have focused on planning, instructional strategies, and assessment data.
2.4: Leaders provide effective instructional leadership.	- District leaders ensure that schools implement a coherent, comprehensive, and aligned curriculum. ○ District leaders ensure that schools' curriculum, instruction, and assessments are aligned with State standards, with each other, and coordinated both within & across grade levels. ○ District leaders ensure that instructional materials are selected and/or developed in accordance with a district-wide instructional framework and aligned with established curriculum standards. ○ District leaders ensure the curriculum is periodically reviewed and revisions are made accordingly. - The district ensures that school leaders provide meaningful feedback on teachers' instructional planning and practice. ○ The district ensures that leaders regularly provide meaningful feedback on instructional planning. ○ The district ensures that leaders regularly observe instruction and provide meaningful, timely feedback that helps teachers improve their practice.	● Staff reported that a new grade-level-lead structure allows teachers to lead portions of PD for their grade level colleagues across schools and expressed enthusiasm for this shared leadership. Teachers generally reported that PD days are valuable. Various staff also reported that the district's induction program has recently been improved and updated. ● District staff reported that the district is also supportive of district staff attending external PD and is typically quick to approve and fund these opportunities. ● One of the most frequent concerns reported by staff at all levels of the organization was the district's high level of staff turnover. The DUIP identifies improving talent management as one of the district's two Major

- District leaders provide conditions that support school-wide data cultures.
  - Staff, school leaders, and teachers have easy access to varied, current, and accurate student and instructional data.
  - Staff, school leaders, and teachers are provided time to collect, enter, query, analyze, and represent student data and use tools that help them act on results.
  - District leaders ensure that all staff, school leaders, and teachers receive professional development in data use (e.g., how to access, read, and interpret a range of data reports; frame questions for inquiry; analyze data, assessment literacy; use data tools and resources).

Improvement Strategies and identifies the Root Causes as the lack of a hiring strategy, the lack of a retention strategy, and a lack of support for talent development. Despite the widely-understood need for improvement in this area, district-and-school-staff and external partners indicated a lack of focus and intentionality, as well as little strategic action from the district in improving talent management. Additionally, numerous staff members shared their intentions of resigning in the near future. Some principals reported expecting that up to 40% of their teachers may not return next school year.

- District-and-school-staff also shared concerns regarding hiring practices that some individuals described as "unethical." For example, they reported instances of candidates being hired who bypassed the formal interview process, while other existing candidates were still engaged in the interview processes. Staff also provided examples of colleagues being promoted to positions for which they had limited experience, were not qualified according to the job description and/or did not have the necessary credentials. Others described scenarios in which they believe the district's pay scales are sometimes disregarded to increase the salaries of favored individuals. They also reported instances of the district not completing reference checks and hiring individuals who have been dismissed with cause from similar positions in other organizations and reported that district staff are sometimes coerced into resignation. Numerous district staff stated that advancing in the district is a factor of "who you know, not what you know."

- District-and-school-staff also expressed concern with the district's grievance process. Some reported that the district does not take grievances seriously and does not protect those who share concerns. Staff reported numerous instances of what they perceive to be retaliation against staff who share concerns. Some cited the Board's recent passing of a policy that they do not have to follow a formal grievance policy to discipline staff. Others noted Board documents from the week of the State Review Panel visit, in which the Board publicly named individuals in conflict with the district and passed a resolution Board approval prior to the investigation of grievances.

- District-and-school-staff stated that attracting staff to the district is extremely challenging given district culture, the public nature of the

district's conflicts regarding accountability and external management, and the uncertainty that follows from this conflict.

- School staff expressed extreme frustration that the disarray of talent management processes at the district level impacts their staffing at schools. Some reported not being able to get timely approval to hire for much needed support staff, security, or special education positions, for example. Others reported frustration with frequent changes to the district's organization charts, and some described frustrations with critical school staff being hired into the central office mid-year.

The district does not have clear processes to ensure sound financial and operational systems.

- District-and-school-staff consistently shared concerns regarding the district's ability to effectively manage finances at a basic level. For example, some district leadership expressed concerns with the organization's ability to create and approve its next annual budget, given divisions in the central office. Others highlighted that the district may not have completed the previous November's annual audit. When asked, district stakeholders attributed these challenges to factors such as the lack of proactive and strategic planning and communication between the district's finance and operations departments.

- In focus groups, some staff reported that the district currently holds cash reserves reflecting approximately 35% of its general fund and, as a result, there is a belief that these funds are not being used to effectively bolster the district's priorities and needs. While most district staff and school leaders reported having most of the materials they needed (i.e., curriculum, technology, English Language Development [ELD] materials, early literacy programming, leveled libraries), others expressed frustration with little financial autonomy and receiving relatively small discretionary budgets (i.e., $50,000 for an elementary school).

- Additionally, various district-and-school-staff members highlighted the disrepair of some facilities. Some pointed to specific resource shortages and many reiterated issues with not being able to hire needed support staff. Students highlighted the lack of specific resources at some schools, such as online programming subscriptions and calculators. Others expressed frustration with a recent Board policy change requiring central office

approval of purchases over $1,000, indicating that this is a burdensome requirement.

- District-and-school-staff also expressed concerns with the organization's sustainability in terms of facilities and enrollment. They indicated that of the approximately 10,000 students who live within the district's boundaries, approximately 4,000 currently opt to attend school in neighboring districts or other school options provided to students. Recent CDE data indicates that more than 3,000 students currently choice out. District-and-school-staff stated that, despite declining enrollment, they do not believe district leadership has been willing to engage in difficult conversations about school consolidations, given the politically charged nature of discussion of possible school consolidation.

- Further, some staff reported that the district has invested significant funds for a third-party consultant to support facilities planning, but that the district still lacks a public master facilities plan. Others indicated that the district lacks a plan for facilities for the recently-approved incoming charter school.

- District staff also reported that the district lacks other important plans, such as a strategic plan to address Office of Civil Rights (OCR) complaints, and effective planning for grant funding. District staff reported a lack of strategic priorities in terms of which grants to pursue and indicated that the district does not yet have processes to consistently provide oversight of grant funds and hold recipients accountable for grant outcomes. Stakeholders reported that this sometimes results in school-level grant funds that cannot be spent.

- Internal and external stakeholders also reported that the district lacks priorities for how to use Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funding for learning recovery, and thus has distributed these funds slowly. CDE documents indicate that the district is allocated $15 million for the third round of ESSER funding, but district staff reported that the district has missed the deadline for applying for the latest round of ESSER funds. Staff also indicated that the district lacks systems to train principals on how to effectively use grant funding, such as helping them select potentially high-impact interventions.

Some district-and-school-leaders are beginning to provide instructional leadership, but the effectiveness is not yet evident, and the sustainability of these efforts is unclear.

- Unanimously, district-and-school-leadership and teachers reported that the implementation of curriculum has been among the most valuable instructional initiatives and improvements in the district. They reported that this has involved the adoption of rigorous and Common Core aligned curricula in math, English language arts (ELA), and science, and has included the creation of pacing guides and additional resources. They also reported the implementation of the curriculum is supported by the PLC structure, which includes regular reflection on curricular progress and collaborative data analysis between schools at the elementary and middle school levels, as well as a PD focused on unit planning.

- The site visit team observed the use of curricular materials throughout schools. Staff reported that the district has employed a transparent process for the selection of science curricula, that the district's recently-adopted ELD curriculum is valuable, and that the district has also broadened pathway options for students at the high school.

- District-and-school-leaders described the classroom walkthrough structure embedded in regular meetings between principals and their managers as a primary avenue for teacher feedback. District-and-school-leaders also reported that during these meetings, principals and principal managers walk through up-to-a-half dozen classrooms, then debrief observations with the goal of identifying a small number of targeted, specific, concrete next steps for teachers. They reported drawing from the Relay instructional coaching model in this approach, incorporating low-inference notes, and that they seek to provide in-person feedback, rather than by email, when possible. Review of school UIPs indicates that classroom observations and feedback is a priority for most schools this year.

- All stakeholders also reported that the district has made improvements in both data infrastructure and data use. They explained the district's assessments include STAR, Acadience/DIBELS/IDEL, and ACCESS, among others, and that efforts to increase schools' data use have involved the development and/or implementation of common formative assessments, exit tickets, unit tests, and end-of-course exams, and these data are reviewed in PLCs. Most staff indicated that the supporting data infrastructure includes Illuminate, Tableau, and AimsWeb, among other platforms. School leaders and teachers were frequently able to speak to their use of data, referencing the assessments above and also the use of writing rubrics, examining student work, attendance, and course

		completion rates. Some district-and-school-staff expressed enthusiasm that after many stalled attempts, they feel that schools are now making significant progress in data use for the first time.
	●	Despite the aforementioned examples of emerging instructional leadership, district staff reported that, as of now, there is limited evidence of the outcomes of these efforts (discussed in greater detail in section 5.3). In addition, staff reported that these systems were largely initiated and supported by the previous external manager and expressed concern for the sustainability of these systems without the external manager's guidance and given the district's high level of staff turnover in both the central office and schools.

SchoolWorks
Assessing Quality, Building Capacity

SRP Evaluation based on Site Visit

State Review Panel Criteria		Claims & Evidence
• **There is readiness and apparent capacity of personnel to plan effectively and lead the implementation of appropriate action to improve student academic performance.**		Capacity Level: [ ] Highly Effective [ ] Effective [ ] Developing **[X] Not Effective**
3.1: Educators' mindsets and beliefs reflect shared commitments to students' learning.	• District personnel convey shared vision and values about teaching and learning and reference these to guide their instructional decision making. • District personnel convey a shared commitment to the learning of all students in the district. • District personnel convey that students' learning is a collective responsibility, regardless of their personal/home situations. • District personnel convey that it is important not to give up on any students, even if it appears that they do not want to learn. • District personnel convey commitment to, and hold each other accountable for, improvement goals and tasks.	**School staff frequently expressed a shared commitment to students' learning, but these mindsets were not consistently evident at the district level.** • At the school level, staff consistently expressed a commitment to students and their learning. Many administrators and teachers reported having strong relationships with students and families and spoke of learning about the unique challenges that students and families face through the relationships they have developed. • Further, parents and students consistently stated that school leaders and teachers deeply care for students. Staff often highlighted the challenges and uncertainty of working in the district at this time, but consistently reported choosing to stay in their positions out of a sense of commitment to students and the community.
3.2: The district has established conditions that support educators' learning culture.	• Communications among all stakeholder groups are constructive, supportive, and respectful. • Communications between leadership and district/school staff are fluid, frequent, and open. • District leaders model and convey well-defined beliefs about teaching and learning, and convey value for innovation, learning from mistakes, and risk taking. • District leaders participate in formal and informal professional learning, including their own leadership development about how to improve curriculum and instruction in a leadership context (i.e., high- or low-poverty; urban or rural district).	• During school visits and focus groups, school leaders and teachers noted the conflict between the district and external manager and reported attempting to ignore this conflict and stay focused on students as much as possible. District leaders frequently stated that school staff have done an excellent job of staying focused on students in the current environment. • At the district level, many staff referenced the importance of serving students, but indicated that work at the district level is often consumed with managing and working around adult conflict at the detriment to a focus on schools and students. Some district staff also stated that due to the various challenges facing the community (e.g., poverty, transience, language barriers) it is unreasonable to expect the district to perform on the State's accountability measures but did not present local or internal data in support of the challenges facing the district's students. Others indicated they feel that executive district leadership and the Board's decision to engage in conflict with the external manager and State Board are detrimental to students, families, and the district's improvement efforts, noting a recent
3.3: District personnel collaborate regularly to learn about effective instruction and students' progress.	• District personnel meet frequently during regularly scheduled uninterrupted times to collaborate, establish improvement goals, and make data-informed instructional decisions. • District personnel's collaborative meetings have a clear and persistent focus on improving student learning and achievement. • District personnel describe sharing knowledge and expertise among colleagues as an essential collaborative activity for success. • District staff and school leaders are willing to talk about their own practice, to actively pursue and accept feedback from colleagues, and to try new leadership strategies.	

	• The district has created a performance-driven culture in which district staff, school leaders, and teachers effectively use data to make decisions about daily instruction/organization of students.	Board resolution to absolve the district from the State Board of Education's accountability measures and mandates.
3.4: The district engages the community and families in support of students' learning school improvement efforts.	• The district includes parents/guardians in cultivating a culture of high expectations for students' learning and their consistent support of students' efforts. • The district invites family participation in district activities (e.g., volunteering in on committees; attendance at organizational meetings) and regularly solicits their input. • The district offers workshops and other opportunities for parents/guardians to learn about home practices that support student learning. • District personnel communicate with parents/guardians about instructional programs and overall student progress within the district	**While schools have generally established conditions to support educators, district culture is divisive, focused on adult concerns and presents obstacles to improvement.** • At the school level, the majority of staff expressed that they feel supported by their colleagues. They reported that communication between school leadership and staff is generally effective in ensuring that they have the information they need. Staff at some schools stated that there are divisions based on staff members' opinions regarding the conflict between district and former external manager staff, but most staff indicated that they are able to set this aside and focus on students. • However, at the district level, staff consistently described the culture as negative, divided, and lacking trust. Many reported not feeling comfortable sharing their thoughts, and used terms such as toxic, passive aggressive, and distrustful to describe organizational culture. Others reported feeling anxious to come to work in the current district office environment and expressed frustration with the extent to which conflict between adults draws attention away from students and the district's more important work. Others shared with the State Review Panel that they did not always feel comfortable expressing their concerns in front of their colleagues. Other administrators/staff indicated that decisions are not communicated transparently or in a timely manner, both within the district and between the district and schools; they also reported this often presents obstacles to their teams' work. • Finally, some staff reported a fear of retaliation and indicated that many staff complaints are dismissed without recognition or investigation. They described as evidence the recently approved Board policy that complaints cannot be investigated without prior Board approval. **Schools have structures for collaboration, but collaboration between schools and the district is inconsistent, and collaboration at the district level is inconsistent and disjointed.**

- At the school level, staff consistently reported that collaboration takes place in the school and in leadership teams, PLCs, and grade-level and content meetings. School leaders, for example, reported working together as school leadership teams to observe and provide feedback on instruction and provide coverage during staff absences. Teachers interviewed most frequently highlighted their collaboration in PLCs and indicated that they strive to keep up with the district pacing guide to be able to maximize the value of collaboration across schools, and principals reported adjusting schedules to facilitate collaboration across schools. Further, grade-level lead teachers also described working across schools in supporting teachers with curriculum implementation and unit planning on PD days.

- Site visit team members observed evidence of collaboration in planning in schools through observations of common lessons in different classrooms. The majority of teaching/school staff expressed feeling a high level of support from their grade-level or content teams; some identified this as their most consistent source of support. Many school leaders and teachers also generally reported that school staff is open to feedback, highlighting the adoption of many new instructional practices such as the curriculum, PLCs, and unit planning PD. School leaders also expressed a desire to learn from each other, citing discussions regarding best practices in the use of data protocols.

- Schools reported varying levels of collaboration with the district. Some reported feeling a sense of collaboration and a high level of support from some departments, frequently citing the efforts of teams that have frequent contact with schools, such as the Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Education development and technology departments. On the other hand, school staff expressed less collaboration and support from some other departments, giving examples of less district staff presence on campus, challenges with receiving the staffing they need, and burdensome approval processes for resources.

- A lack of consistent communication was another challenge frequently identified by school teams during focus groups. They reported, for example, that decisions in various departments and from the district as a whole are not always communicated to schools in a timely or transparent manner. School staff frequently attributed these communication challenges to frequent district staff turnover and reorganization of organization charts.

- At the district level, some staff also highlighted strong collaboration and feeling supported by their team members or departments. Others, however, described the district as siloed and reported a lack of communication across departments, including those whose work intersects schools and various district departments (e.g., budget, business, operations). Some reported that it is sometimes difficult to obtain the necessary information or approval from colleagues in different departments, and that this is an impediment to their work. Others reported that some individuals are excluded from meetings, or that others do not attend meetings at which they are required.

- UVA's November 2021 debriefs to district leadership highlighted "the need for structures to further the development and collaboration of executive directors…".

The district makes efforts to engage the community and families in support of student learning with varying results.

- Across the organization – teachers, school leaders, district leaders, Board members, and community members – expressed enthusiasm for serving the students and families of the district, and school-and-district-staff described various efforts to engage parents with varying results.

- At the district level, staff identified the District Accountability Committee (DAC) and district leadership's monthly town hall events as avenues for community engagement and indicated that the DAC has suggested additional parent engagement strategies such as standards guides for families. District staff also reported informal monthly coffee events for parents to engage with the Board and superintendent and highlighted that communication with parents takes place through the district's weekly community newsletter, published in both English and Spanish, automated telephone calls, and the use of the *Flyer* app. District leadership also reported funding family liaisons in each school.

- Further, the site visit team also observed other ways of engaging parents in students' learning, such as the STOMP program, which trains parents to serve as classroom literacy volunteers and paraprofessionals, or the district's parent academy for English Language Learners (ELLs), which supported more than 40 parents last year in skills such as navigating the district's offerings for their students.

State Review Panel District Site Visit Feedback Form 2021-22

		• Despite these efforts, parents consistently expressed frustration with a lack of communication from the district. Some reported that they receive more timely information from schools and school-based partner organizations, and that district communication is often lagging. Others expressed the desire for clearer information regarding the district's improvement efforts and accountability updates. Also, others expressed the desire for more engagement opportunities with regard to students' learning. District-and-school-staff reported that parent engagement is an ongoing area of growth for the district.

SRP Evaluation based on Site Visit

State Review Panel Criteria		Claims & Evidence
• **There is readiness and apparent capacity to engage productively with, and benefit from, the assistance provided by an external partner.**		Capacity Level: [ ] Highly Effective [ ] Effective [ ] Developing **[X] Not Effective**
4.1: The district collaborates effectively with existing external partners.	• The district seeks expertise from external partners, as appropriate (i.e., for professional development, direct support for students). • The district ensures that roles and responsibilities of existing partners are clear. • There are designated district personnel to coordinate and manage partnerships.	**While most schools had positive and productive collaborative relationships with external partners, district leadership was unwilling and unable to collaborate with the external manager.** • At the school level, nearly unanimously, leadership and teachers spoke positively about the support they have received from the district's primary partnerships, including MGT (the previous external manager), UVA, and 2Partner Mathematics. School leaders reported that weekly or bi-weekly meetings with the MGT's principal managers supported their instructional work and built instructional capacity, and that the executive coaching that they received through the external partner was extremely helpful.
4.2: The district leverages existing partnerships to support of student learning.	• The district maximizes existing partners' efforts in support of improvement efforts. • All externally provided professional development is aligned to improvement efforts.	• Additionally, staff who took part in the UVA program reported that this partnership enhanced their strategic improvement planning. Many indicated that the 90 Day Plans they developed as part of their UVA cohorts serve as their school's guiding improvement plan.
4.3: Leadership is responsive to feedback.	• District leadership seeks feedback on improvement plans. • District leadership seeks feedback from key stakeholders. • District leadership integrates feedback into future improvement efforts.	• All school leaders, teachers, and district staff interviewed also spoke favorably of the partnership with 2Partner Mathematics, reporting that their work consistently helped develop both school leaders' and teachers' capacity for math instruction. • However, various district-and-school-leaders and current and former partners indicated that the district has not been willing or able to effectively partner with outside organizations. Numerous district-and-school-staff members reported that while there were missteps in the relationship between the district and former external manager on the part of both parties, many believed the external manager brought various effective systems, structures, and expertise to the district. Others indicated that after a change in the district's leadership/administration in summer, the focus of many district leaders and staff became the removal of the external partner. • Staff from the district and current and former partners indicated that the ability of outside organizations to effectively partner with the district is limited by the district's lack of clear direction, strategic planning, and

- communication, staff turnover and, in some cases, behavior they believed to be unethical in working with outside parties.

- During focus groups, Board and district leadership expressed a willingness to engage in partnerships, but not a management relationship in which they do not maintain authority.

Schools engage in a variety of partnerships to support students' academic and non-academic needs.

- District-and-school-leaders highlighted a number of partnerships focused on both student learning and other needs. They reported that partners related to academic support include Aims Community College that provides concurrent enrollment classes at the high school. Students reported that these courses are rigorous and that they enjoy the small class sizes and accessibility of teachers.

- Other academic partnerships include the Adams 14 Education Foundation, which fulfilled approximately $25,000 in requests for classroom needs and provided approximately $280,000 in student scholarships this year. They also identified the STOMP program that is being piloted in an elementary school and trains parents to be classroom volunteers and literacy interventionists. The principal hosting the STOMP program reported hiring 8 of the school's 9 paraprofessionals through this program.

- District-and-school-leaders also reported a number of partnerships that provide non-academic support. These include: KidsFirst, which provides free medical care in all elementary schools; SunCor, which provides funding used for various district initiatives; and other organizations that provide bilingual and dual-language programming and dental services, to provide some examples.

Some district leaders are responsive to feedback.

- District-and-school-leaders stated that district leadership is responsive to some, but not all, feedback. District-and-school-leaders, for example, reported that district academic leaders request and have incorporated some feedback on the effectiveness of PD (e.g., requests for differentiated PD) after each PD day. Other academic leaders reported receiving and incorporating feedback from the previous external manager (e.g., simplifying data protocols).

		• Board members and executive leadership described formal structures for collecting feedback from community stakeholders, such as hosting town halls to collect feedback from parents and community members (e.g., curriculum selection) and quarterly DAC feedback to the Board (e.g., providing input into ESSER fund use). • The superintendent also reported receiving informal, ongoing guidance from multiple mentors (e.g., reflecting on alternative actions), including other superintendents, and reported using a listening tour to elicit feedback from the community (e.g., the importance of dual language programming) when beginning the role. • However, other school-and-district-staff reported that district leadership lacks openness to feedback. Some reported completing feedback forms and surveys but then observing a lack of follow-through. Others suggested that feedback is collected to suggest an openness to feedback but that it is not considered earnestly. Others highlighted missed opportunities for district staff input in the early, ongoing development of new strategic plans moving forward, suggesting that key staff are not being consulted as plans are beginning to be created. Others reported fear of retaliation for expressing unpopular views in surveys and reported opting out of survey opportunities as a result.

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SchoolWorks
Assessing Quality, Building Capacity

SRP Evaluation based on Site Visit

State Review Panel Criteria		Claims & Evidence
5. There is likelihood of positive returns on State investments of assistance and support to improve the performance within the current management structure and staffing.		Capacity Level: [ ] Highly Effective [ ] Effective [ ] Developing **[X] Not Effective**
5.1: Leadership monitors the return on investment of specific improvement initiatives and uses that data to inform decision-making.	• Leadership identifies turnaround strategies and implements programs/initiatives designed to improve student performance. • Leadership assesses the cost and impact (effect on student achievement and number of students served) of each program/initiative to determine its academic return on investment. • Leadership makes decisions regarding continuation or discontinuation of programs/initiatives based on this analysis. • Leadership establishes systems and structures to support regular and ongoing monitoring.	**Leadership does not consistently, monitor, utilize, or ensure return on investment of resources.** • District staff shared some examples of actions taken to maximize the use of resources. Some leadership, for example, reported creating an academic infrastructure document to codify the district's new academic systems. Review of this document reveals links to various curricular materials, unit plans, templates, and other resources, arranged in a scope-and-sequence. Others shared anecdotal reflections regarding the value of various initiatives and partnerships.
5.2: Leadership has demonstrated an ability to produce positive returns on state investment and uses resources effectively.	• Programs and initiatives are designed to support turnaround efforts and have demonstrated results. • Leadership seeks resources aligned to its improvement efforts and programs/initiatives with high academic return on investment. • Any additional resources received (i.e., specialized grant funding) are aligned, strategic, and showing evidence of results. • Leadership treats resources flexibly and implements focused improvement efforts with a focus on early wins.	• However, the site visit team did not find evidence of systems and structures that the district is using to consistently monitor the implementation or effectiveness of various initiatives. • In focus groups, various district staff indicated a lack of consistent systems for various aspects of grant management or indicated that such processes are under development. Various staff also indicated that they believed the district missed the initial deadline for applying for the latest round of ESSER funding.
5.3: Students demonstrate academic progress over time.	• Students demonstrate progress on internal measures linked with the district's promotion or exit standards. • The performance of student subgroups on State assessments demonstrates that the district is making progress toward eliminating achievement gaps. • Students meet proficiency and grade-level targets across subjects and grade levels on norm-referenced benchmark assessments and State assessments. • Matched cohorts of students who score proficient or advanced (or equivalent) on State assessments maintain or improve performance levels across continuous enrollment years. • The percentage of all students performing at proficient or advanced (or equivalent) on State assessments increases over time. • Students demonstrate academic growth as measured by value-added or State growth percentile measures.	• It was also reported by stakeholders that many of the district's grants are also unmonitored and/or there is a lack of processes to consistently assess the effectiveness of awarded grants. Also, they indicated that grant funds are not always used in a timely manner. For example, some school-and-district staff indicated that the Early Literacy Grant was awarded but not implemented until the following year, when it was implemented hastily and overlapped with other literacy initiates. Others reported that the district has been slow to spend ESSER funds, and that Empowering Action for School Improvement (EASI) and Relevant Information to Strengthen Education (RISE) grants have been awarded but not spent and indicated that some grant funds are not used in alignment with grant requirements.

- Students demonstrate progress toward attaining expected knowledge and skills as measured by interim assessments.

- Further, some district leaders also indicated a lack of clarity regarding the return on investment regarding the approximately $7M spent on the contract with the previous external manager.

Students continue to demonstrate limited and inadequate academic progress over time.

- District leadership indicated that STAR results are among the district's focus for academic measures and summarized the district's STAR goals as moving 15% of students up in performance bands. They reported that summary data indicates that the district has met goals for moving students out of the lowest bands but have not met goals for increasing the percentage of students in the top bands.

- Review of the district's STAR progress monitoring tool confirms a slight improvement in literacy. From the beginning-to-middle of the 2021-2022 school year, the percentage of students performing at the lowest band 1 ("does not meet") decreased by 7%, the percentage of students in band 2 ("partially meets") increased by 1%, the percentage of students in band 3 ("approaching") increased by 4%, and the percentage of students in bands 4 and 5 ("meets and exceeds") increased by 3%.

- This year's STAR math data reveals a similar trend. The percentage of students performing at band 1 decreased by 6%, the percentage of students in band 2 increased by 1%, the percentage of students in band 3 increased by 2%, and the percentage of students in bands 4 and 5 ("meets and exceeds") increased by 2%.

- A review of documents revealed that mid-year STAR reading and math trend data from 2018-2021 showed all grade levels 3-to-9 were below expectations for median growth percentile, falling in the "Approaching" or "Does Not Meet Expectations," while grades 10-11 fell in "Meets Expectations" during the 2019-2020 and 2021 school years. District leadership reported that mid-year data for 2021-2022 looked similar.

- District leaders also reported that they have reduced the percentage of students with READ Plans but have fallen short of the goal of 25%. 2021-22 and 2022-23 SPF data confirmed that the percentage of students on READ Plans decreased by 5%, from 43.4% to 38.4% over the last year. School leaders also highlighted growth, such as improved graduation rates at the

high school, and increases in students receiving WorkKeys certifications at the alternative high school.

- Despite these slight improvements in some areas, the district continues to significantly underperform. The 2019 District Performance Framework (DPF) indicates that the district is on Year 9 of Priority Improvement or Turnaround and is rated Accredited with Priority Improvement, with only 37.2% points earned, and rated "does not meet" in Academic Achievement and Postsecondary & Workforce Readiness (PSWR). The Adams 14 Final Order from the State Board of Education reports that the Adams 14 school district has been among the lowest-performing school districts in Colorado for as long as reliable data has been collected.

- 2021 CMAS data indicates that the district still performs far below State expectations in both achievement and growth in both math and literacy. The district's CMAS ELA mean scale score is 714, significantly lower than the State expectation of 741, and the district's CMAS math score is 698, also significantly lower than the State expectation of 728.

- Similarly, the District Dashboard document indicates the district's 2021 CMAS growth data in ELA is at the 31st percentile, below the State median growth percentile of 43, and district CMAS math growth data is at the 18th percentile, significantly lower than the State median growth percentile of 35.

- Despite improvement in some areas, district leaders acknowledged that academic results are not yet meeting their desired levels. They highlighted the disrupted learning over the last two years due to the pandemic and transitions with external management and indicated that the district needs more time to show improvement.

SRP Evaluation based on Site Visit

State Review Panel Criteria		Claims & Evidence
6. There is a necessity that the district remain in operation to serve students.		[X] Yes [ ] No
6.1: The district is mission-driven, and its mission and vision meet a unique need.	• All stakeholders share an understanding of, and commitment to, the mission and vision. • District programs reflect the mission and vision. • The mission and vision guide decisions about teaching and learning. • The mission and vision meet the needs of an identified student population.	**The district lacks a clear vision to guide improvement, inspire staff and students, and drive achievement.** • Many stakeholders expressed a commitment to the district, with some highlighting the district's focus on serving English Language Learners and noted priorities such as dual language offerings. • However, without prompting, stakeholders rarely referenced the district's mission or vision. When asked about the district's mission and vision, they more frequently noted the district's lack of direction. District-and-school-staff frequently noted the lack of a widely-understood strategic plan and highlighted that the district has been largely consumed with infighting and that this conflict has drawn attention from students and learning. Others expressed a high level of commitment to students despite, rather than because of, the district. • Students in focus groups typically spoke positively of their schools but expressed disappointment with the district and reported feeling unvalued, uninspired, and disempowered.
6.2 There are no other viable options for enrolled students that will likely lead to better outcomes.	• The district serves an isolated and/or remote community. • Closure or consolidation of district would have a significant negative impact on the community. • Comparison districts do not promote better student outcomes.	**There are other viable options for enrolled students that will likely lead to better outcomes.** • The DUIP reports that the district includes two preschools, seven elementary schools, two middle schools, one comprehensive high school, and one alternative high school. On the 2019 SPF, two schools are rated at a *performance* level (both elementaries), three schools are rated *improvement*, and six schools are rated *priority improvement* on the accountability clock. Central Elementary is on Year 7 of the accountability clock, and Adams City High School is on Year 9. District-and-school-staff noted that the district's performance is the lowest in the State. • District operations reports indicate that enrollment in the district has been steadily declining from a 10-year high of approximately 7,600 students in 2015-2016 to approximately 6,100 students in 2021-2022. District staff noted that this reflects an opt-out rate of nearly 40% of the 10,000 students living in the district's boundaries.

- A review of CDE's SchoolView and Google Maps show there are three other nearby, higher-performing districts that may provide other viable options for students. Mapleton 1 school district is 4.3 miles away, serves 8,700 students, and is rated *Accredited with Improvement*. Adams 12 Five Star school district is 12 miles away, serves 36,000 students, and is rated *Accredited*. Brighton 27J school district is 17 miles away, serves 19,000 students, and is rated *Accredited with Improvement*.

- Data from CDE indicates that, currently, approximately 600 students from Adams 14 choose to attend Mapleton, 400 choose to attend Adams 12, and 200 students choose to attend Brighton 27J. The State Review Panel cannot confirm or disconfirm whether these districts' programming, enrollment capacity, and/or transportation resources could meet the needs to serve Adams 14's students. In a focus group, leaders representing neighboring districts expressed initial hesitancy to absorb students from Adams 14 and that they might be more interested in partnership, providing support to the district, or a Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES)-type approach.

- District-and-school-staff, current-and-former-partners, and parents stated varying opinions regarding the best next steps for the district. A few expressed confidences in current district and Board leadership and the district's potential for improvement, stating that the district should be given additional time and opportunities to improve .

- Similarly, some highlighted the importance of schools in the community, noted that multiple generations of some families have attended the district, and expressed concern with the possibility of dissolving the district. Other stakeholders were outspokenly opposed to the possibility of charter school conversion of the district's schools.

- On the other hand, other stakeholders expressed concerns for the district's continued low performance, noting that the district has been under-serving the community for many years, and suggested that the district may be beyond repair and that the best course of action may be to dissolve the district. Others expressed a lack of confidence in current district and Board leadership, reporting that the organization's staff turnover, negative culture, low expectations, and lack of willingness to relinquish authority are insurmountable obstacles to district improvement. Others highlighted the

		rigor of nearby charter schools and suggested that selectively chartering some district schools may be a viable solution.