



Advocates for Public Education Policy strongly objects to the recommendations of the State Review Panel to deal with Adams 14's Turnaround status by closing Adams City High School (ACHS) and/or reorganizing the district (by consolidating it with one or more other districts).

The State Review Panel's report states: "Closure of ACHS is likely the best option, allowing students to attend surrounding schools (which are geographically close), that are performing at higher levels than ACHS." We at A4PEP think that closing ACHS is not the best Turnaround option, nor is it feasible or practical. The higher-performing high schools in neighboring districts which are considered to be geographically close to ACHS are the following:

- Mapleton High School 6.3 miles
- Thornton High School 7.2 miles
- Manual High School 8.9 miles (on Priority Improvement)
- East High School 9.3 miles
- Brighton High School 12.8 miles

None of these are within walking distance, and only one, East High School, is high-performing. Furthermore, most parents of ACHS students do not have the capacity to transport their children to any of these schools or the extra vehicles to allow their children to drive themselves to school. It is highly unlikely that any of these nearby schools would provide bus service. Public bus service would be the students' only option, but not necessarily a viable one.

Additionally, ACHS is the only comprehensive high school in Commerce City and is the pride of the community. Dating back to 1946, ACHS has historical meaning to the local residents. ACHS is now a modern facility on a large campus, built in 2009 with funds from the passage of a bond election. It is a gathering place for high school sports and special events. Closing it would destroy the core of the community.

The State Review Panel is also recommending a reorganization plan that might include consolidation with neighboring school districts. A4PEP also objects to this recommendation. Not only would this plan cause extreme disruption to the entire historical fabric of the Commerce City community and create additional challenges for the students, but also it is neither feasible nor practical. We doubt that the school districts of Mapleton, Brighton, Adams 12, or Denver would welcome or agree to consolidation. State law mandates a vote of all the districts involved – we do not believe that their voters would agree. Furthermore, the distribution of mill levies, bond funds, and grants would make this far too complicated.

Our recommendation is to work with the local board of education to compose a plan that allows the use of the "community schools model" throughout the district and provide the kind of supports and resources the entire Adams 14 school community needs to address the "whole child," including the following:

- Expansion of bilingual and English-language instruction and translation services for families.
- "Wraparound" services at all the schools
- Family literacy and adult education programs
- Partnerships with community organizations
- Free child care and before- and after-school programs

Adams 14 shouldn't be required to just move their challenges to other schools or districts to handle. What should be done, in our opinion, is for the State Board of Education to utilize positive actions instead of those that would destroy the historical and social fabric of the Commerce City community.