



# Race to the Top - District

## Technical Review Form

Application #0239CO-1 for District 14

### A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
<b>(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>
<p><b>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The Adams 14 proposal provides a coherent vision for reform. A reform process has been initiated (2011) and the district has experienced academic growth as a result. District administrators have identified “growth” opportunities and taken steps to operationalize its vision.</p> <p>Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The district has invested in hiring site instructional coaches to assist every site with PD and best-practices training as determined by site-based decision making processes.</li> <li>• Staff re-assignments have been undertaken to improve achievement and to provide equity, in line with the reform vision.</li> <li>• The district has invested in a data management system that provides interim assessments to track student progress toward mastery of CCSS. STAR assessments are also being used to provide frequent progress monitoring.</li> <li>• The district is actively recruiting racially and linguistically diverse teaching staff. Teachers are being held to rigorous assessments.</li> <li>• The description of the classroom experience clearly articulates the roles of instructional leader and teacher in the Data Driven model.</li> </ul> <p>Weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Values are not provided to determine the amount of growth realized in 2013. It is not possible to substantiate claims of improved achievement and to determine growth for any particular grades or course-levels.</li> <li>• The proposal does not explicitly cite which strategies and programs have been identified by administrators as further promoting core assurance areas.</li> <li>• It is not clear what is meant by “aggressively implementing rigorous assessment for teachers to target and inform individual student learning progressions...”</li> <li>• The proposal claims work on secondary graduation and post-workforce readiness is showing results, but specific data is not provided.</li> <li>• While the roles of instructional leader and teacher are adequately defined, the classroom experience is not defined from the perspective of the student.</li> </ul> <p>This section is scored a [ 5]. The vision is comprehensive in scope and addresses each of the core assurance areas. The vision is grounded in the Data Driven model that relies on extensive data analysis to inform the instructional process. Processes are referenced for administration and teachers as they relate to institutional changes, but there is no frame for what the student will experience, given that instruction will be transformed based on best practice strategies gained from PD, coaching, and instructional leadership received – what will the classroom experience look like that makes it different from before reform models implemented. The proposal however, does not fully develop a K-12 vision; rather, it provides a strong focus for preK-2, with minimal structures and information provided for secondary (grades 9-12).</p> <p>The UIP contains the genesis of a high-quality plan, with clearly named activities and projects, timelines, key personnel, and projected outcomes. Used in conjunction with the Adams 14 proposal, the application would have been strengthened had more been taken from the UIP to formulate its Race to the Top application. More explicit descriptions regarding the high school model is needed.</p>		
<b>(A)(2) Applicant’s approach to implementation (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>

**(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

All schools in the Adams 14 district have historically underperformed on state assessments and all are eligible under the competition's requirements.

Strengths:

- The list of participating schools includes feeder pre-schools as part of the educational pipeline preparing students for high school graduation.

Weaknesses:

- In the table titled School Demographics, the number of high-need students exceeds the number of participating students for three elementary sites (Dupont, Hanson, Kemp).
- It is not clear if all schools in the district are actually included in the proposal. Community Leadership Academy middle school is referenced (B)(1)(a) and Intergenerational Learning Community is referenced in the Appendix (p.73), but are not included in the list of participating schools, yet narrative indicates inclusion of all Adams 14 schools.

This section is scored a [5]. While all district schools will participate, no rationale is provided for this decision. The application would be strengthened by a discussion of why each site was included and the areas for growth at each, in order to validate the implementation of Kids U and Initiatives Grades 3-12. The district qualifies for participation in the competition. While qualification for Free & Reduced Lunch exceed minimal Race to the Top-District requirements, with identification of significant EL population, it is not clear which groups/grades of students fall into the SpeEd subgroup and why this subgroup is not included as a data point, given the focus of the proposal is to reduce these numbers.

<b>(A)(3) LEA-wide reform &amp; change (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>
--	-----------	----------

**(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:**

The two programs proposed by Adams 14 operationalize its theory of change: invest in early childhood education through extending the school year, focusing on STEM, with remediation through acceleration practices; and, continue this investment by articulating learning progressions from 3<sup>rd</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grades with a focus on graduation-on-time and professional development.

Strengths:

- PreK is identified and included as part of the regular instructional continuum.
- The proposal is bold in its restructuring to include pre-K in its reform model. Beginning in pre-K, students will be required to attend year-round programs focusing on STEM subjects, high leverage functional language development, content language development, and STEM-related field trips.
- SmartLabs (individual laboratories) will make available advanced tech studies and the SmartLab Facilitation Zone.
- Kids U and Initiatives Grades 3-12 projects provide specifically for principal training and leadership building.

Weaknesses:

- It is not clear how sustainability of the Kids U program, tied to building the achievement of students while reducing funding to and for interventions and SpeEd, will in fact sustain the project beyond the scope of the grant.
- cursory reference in Kids U proposal to a staggering of both installations of mobile classrooms and implementations of STEM education. Intermediary action steps/activities for each project are not included in the plan, leaving the stated activities vague and overly generalized.
- Kids U: Because the projects' sustainability gauge includes reducing funding to and for SpeEd, no data provided that would answer inferences about current levels of service, or where these levels are disproportionate. It is unclear if SpeEd is included as a target for reductions in size of program simply as a budgetary issue or if there are curricular/educational issues at play.
- No specificity provided in description of continuous improvement and evaluation of program. No descriptions of the mentoring or coaching models that will be used, although mention made the models will be evaluated and assessed.
- It is not clear if all students will have access to SmartLabs. The Initiatives Grades 3-12 makes vague reference to them, with no clarity as to which grades will receive them, or when.
- It is not clear how the district will enforce as a requirement for graduation that all students meet state and district content standards.
- It is not clear what training has already been completed, as there is reference that this training(s?) will be used to

establish a foundation for future professional development.

This section is scored a [5]. The concept of scalability as defined by Race to the Top-District is insufficiently captured by the Adams 14 proposal. The proposal does have a plan, but it does not address scalability as defined: the plan does not indicate how the instructional model will be reworked to accommodate expansion of its use to the upper elementary grades, nor does it present an explanation as to how SmartLabs will be used to affect instructional models in the secondary schools (middle and high). The plan does not provide a clear timeline for implementation. It is not clear the district has clearly planned for infrastructure needs, nor has it provided a reasonable timeline by which to develop the capacity needed to train nearly 500 educators and then build instructional leadership from the ranks.

**(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)**

**10**

**4**

**(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

The goals and expectations set by the Adams 14 proposal are ambitious. The stated performance goals show the Hispanic subgroup as meeting and/or exceeding the performance levels of White students as well as overall for all grade levels provided. In many instances, the performance goals project increases of 32 to 57 percentage points.

**Weaknesses:**

- Only Grades 3, 5, 8 and 10 are included in this section. Per narrative, the state TCAP assessments are given to all students grades 3-10. Grades 4, 6,7, and 9 are not included in the Goal Areas under section (A)(4)(a). [See FAQ E-4]
- The proposal tracks a single subgroup (Hispanic). No mention of performance measures for any other subgroup.
- It is unclear how CDE Action Plan targets were used or not. These targets were created with assistance by turnaround partner, the University of Virginia School Turnaround Specialist (Appendix, pp. 57-60).

This section is scored a [ 4 ]. The goals set forth for Grades 3,5,8, and 10 meet and/or exceed state targets for proficiency levels. These targets are ambitious, but probably not attainable for the upper grades, given the predominate focus of resources focused on the Kids U model. The proposal would be strengthened by showing the same data points by site, rather than presented solely in the aggregate. While the district is to be commended for holding these high expectations of students and educators, the proposal does not address all grades as required by the competition. It is also not clear why the Adams 14 proposal does not include other subgroups in its scope, especially with regard to closing achievement gaps for all students.

**B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)**

	Available	Score
<b>(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>3</b>

**(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

While “measured success in some areas”, notably modest gains at its middle schools (2007), these gains were recorded outside of the 4-year limit placed by the competition notice.

**Strengths:**

- With the 2011 state designation, Accredited with Turnaround Plan, the district has taken steps toward reform by hiring a new superintendent and deputy superintendent.
- Students and parents are involved with the creation of the Individual Career and Academic Plan, as it sets out the pathways for college and career readiness, while identifying for student and parent, any interventions needed to realize the plan.
- Students and parents have access to data (grades, attendance, and schedule) via Infinite Campus. [This reviewer is familiar with IC – it is a web-based, SIS system. The application does not provide explanation on IC.]

Weaknesses:

- While “measured success in some areas”, notably modest gains at its middle schools (2007), these gains were recorded outside of the 4-year limit placed by the competition notice.
- No descriptions of the “proven track records” of the newly hired district leadership.
- The example of Adams City MS does not validate a view that the district has been successful in its efforts to improve student achievement. Reading scores saw a drop of 7.21% points over 3 years, with math showing a 3.96% point decline. It is not clear how the MYP certification for the IB middle years has supported the district's reform models. There is question as to the viability of this status given the academic record of the 2 middle schools. It is unclear how ACHS was given MYP certification. [This reviewer is familiar with IB, having written HS-level certification proposals.]

This section is scored a [3], as the Adams 14 proposal does not provide evidence that the district has the capacity to implement the levels of reform stated and/or implied within its application, specifically in increasing graduation rates and college enrollment. While several sites realized improvements over six years ago, the same results do not appear to have been repeated or improved upon across the district. In fact, the results provided for their model site show a drop in reading and math scores over the past three years.

**(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)**

5

3

**(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

The Adams 14 school district follows state requirements for reporting under the Public School Financial Transparency Act, satisfying minimal requirements for this section.

Strengths:

- There is a transparency in district processes in making public personnel salaries, and non-personnel expenditures.
- Posting on the district website makes the district-level expenditures (as defined by this notice) available for public review and comment.

Weaknesses:

- While commendable, it is not clear why information regarding Adams 14 hosting of national speakers, or the regular columns provided for the local news outlets (print) is included in this section.
- While the district posts salary schedules and benefits information on the district website, it is not clear if postings include actual personnel salaries at the school-level for either instructional staff, support staff, or for teachers.

This section is scored a [3] as the proposal does not provide evidence that the district has a high level of transparency for making public salary and/or benefit expenditures on a site-level basis as required by the Race to the Top-District competition.

**(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)**

10

7

**(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:**

The state of Colorado is a recipient of a Race to the Top grant, and has provided \$8.9 million to each state LEA, including Adams 14. The funds support building capacity to implement state reforms, Colorado Academic Standards, an educator evaluation system, and advancing STEM education. The Adams 14 proposal outlines implementation of an educator evaluation system.

Strengths:

- The Adams 14 proposal provides for the development and use of individual professional development plans for teachers. The plans will be targeted by student growth and proficiency levels.
- An extensive Model Educator Evaluation System is currently in effect state-wide as a result of Colorado's Race to the Top initiative, providing the district with clear direction regarding teacher and principal appraisal requirements.

Weaknesses:

- It is not evident that Adams 14 has established a plan that will implement personalized learning environments for all students at the high school levels.
- While highlights from the TCAP report (2012-2013) are provided, only 1 of 7 highlights provides specific data to substantiate the claims.

This section is scored a [7]. While a personalized learning environment is not explicitly outlined for high school students, a well-defined plan exists for teachers with regard to professional development and coaching of teachers. The proposal does not identify whether or not there are any curricular flexibilities, grade-level waivers, or policy revisions needed, and therefore impossible to determine if the district has sufficient autonomy or successful conditions to implement the reform model proposed.

<b>(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>7</b>
--	-----------	----------

**(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

The Adams 14 proposal provides minimal evidence of stakeholder involvement during the development process.

Strengths:

- Succinct information document created for the 9.9.13 DAAC information meeting. Evidence suggests attendees wrote questions directly on the document.
- Comments received from the CDE were used for revision, specifically regarding strengthening the STEM concept to show it's implementation through all grades, connection to Common Core State Standards, and language acquisition.

Weaknesses:

- No documentation provided to verify direct support from teachers. A letter of support from the Association president is the only documentation provided.
- Evidence from 9.9.13 DAAC meeting shows 7 responses only, from which the included narrative questions were pulled.
- The distribution method used to elicit stakeholder input beyond the single DAAC meeting is not revealed: it is not possible to determine how, when, or where it was used, or whether it might have been disbursed elsewhere.
- Feedback responses do not reflect review or revision to the proposal, or that stakeholder input was used in any way.

This section is scored a [7], as the proposal does not present compelling evidence that stakeholder input was actively sought during the development process. Letters of support were received from one public advocacy organization, and from the city's Director of Communications and Government Relations. An email exchange is also included between the CDE and the district's grant writer. All letters show support for the plan. The proposal also includes a single letter from the president of the local teacher association, but no indication that grant information was shared with unit members, or that a survey was given. Seven responses from parents and/or community members does not provide sufficient cause to believe enough was done to promote feedback. Student voice is completely missing from this section – there is no indication that students were surveyed for their input into the plan.

**C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)**

	Available	Score
<b>(C)(1) Learning (20 points)</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>8</b>

**(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

The Adams 14 proposal provides a framework for creating middle- and high-school college and career readiness pathways. Students will regularly assess their college/career portfolio to determine next steps.

Strengths:

- (a)
  - The ICAP will be/is (see note under weaknesses) a digital tool that will assist students and parents as well as school counselors in aligning coursework, applying to college, seeking financial aid, and even seeking jobs.
  - Adams 14 provides a adequate graduation expectations, with the minimum credits to graduate slightly below CCHE requirements.

- o No direct evidence provided that students will be exposed to diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives beyond the existing demographic.
- (b)
- o Students and parents have access to Naviance, a digital tool that helps students chart pathways to college- or career-readiness.
  - o Adams 14 connection with the U of C BUENO Center has provided the district with timely and needed assistance in identifying areas to eliminate student achievement gaps.
  - o Teachers are engaged in weekly one-on-one coaching sessions.

Weaknesses:

- (a)
  - o There are conflicting statements in the narrative regarding whether or not the ICAP has been designed. No template(s) or design elements are provided that will be used to actualize the ICAP.
  - o This section focuses on the middle- and high-school level student and does not address how these same, or developmentally appropriate, understandings apply to elementary-level students.
  - o The narrative focuses exclusively on how Common Core State Standards will assist parents and teachers in being prepared to help students succeed with Common Core State Standards and college- and career-readiness. No mention of the structures or strategies to be employed to help students understand the Common Core State Standards and what it means to compete in a global society. Implication that the Common Core State Standards in and of themselves will help students understand the academic requirements and goals linked to CCRS and graduation requirements. Implication that the Common Core State Standards in and of themselves will help students understand the academic requirements and goals linked to college- and career-readiness standards and grad requirements.
  - o While the Naviance tool is valuable, the proposal does not explicitly show how its use by students will be articulated with the ICAP. It is not clear how Naviance planning will be incorporated into the instructional program, if at all.
  - o Mention made of adopting use of the Workshop Model, but no description of its instructional framework, or how it is being rolled out in the district, or how it is being monitored.
  - o No details provided regarding the weekly coaching of teachers. It is not clear what type of coaching model is being used or how site administration is involved, if at all.

This section is scored **an [ 8 ]**. The plan proposed by Adams 14 is adequate, but overall, it does not possess the characteristics of a high-quality plan as defined by Race to the Top, as it does not address all grade levels included in the proposal. This section addresses the high school learning environment, with mention only of middle school to create the ICAP. It is not clear how teachers figure into the equation with ICAP and how they might use the data to refine instruction to meet the needs of students. As such, the proposal does not show how an individualized learning plan for all students is supported across all aspects of a personalized learning environment, especially for students with special needs. While emphasis in the use of the ICAP falls predominately on the student and parents, the narrative does not provide clear indication that the ICAP is connected in any way and/or guiding the functions of the schools. The proposal would be strengthened with a discussion on how the ICAP will be used to determine school-wide trends regarding course offerings, how teachers will review ICAP indicators/markers to better understand student goals, and , how the ICAP will be used to ensure all students have access to high-quality instructional approaches and environment.

**(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)**

**20**

**8**

**(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

The Adams 14 proposal provides a basic framework for improving learning and teaching.

Strengths:

- DataDirector is being used as the data management system in the district. Teachers will be trained in how to monitor student progress to meeting learning targets.
- Coaches will meet weekly with teachers to provide observation and feedback, as well as data analysis to help teachers identify areas of instructional need.
- Teachers are using the Workshop Model as a strategy to promote engagement.
- The state's Model Evaluation System will provide information and data to assist the district in identifying effective teachers and leaders. By nature of state-level requirements, Adams 14 will be able to identify and develop effective

and highly effective teaches and principals.

**Weaknesses:**

- The plan does not explicitly address how teachers and administrators will use the workshop model or coaching to affect instruction for special needs students.
- The plan does not specify how training alone in DataDirector will lead to effective monitoring of student progress.
- While the district provides assistance (via school counselors) to 6<sup>th</sup> graders and their parents in creating and maintaining the ICAP, the proposal does not specify how teachers or principals use the ICAP to frequently monitor student progress.

This section is scored an [8]. The Adams 14 proposal is not a high quality plan as it fails to show evidence that its action steps will increase the number of students learning from highly effective instructors. It is not clear that the project's coaching process will in fact connect to levels of accountability that will aid in identifying effective and highly effective teachers. Coaches receive the bulk of trainings listed under section (C)(2)(b), not teachers. The proposal contains several reasonable action steps (use of the data management system, coaching, and Workshop Model strategy). However, with regard to providing processes and tools to help teachers match student needs with specific resources, the proposal falls short by not providing a description of how the tools (DataDirector and Compass) will provide continuous feedback about the effectiveness of the systems and activities deployed. While DataDirector is a powerful tool, it is not reasonable to expect the levels of data analysis and instructional monitoring expected without high levels of professional development for teachers.

**D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)**

	Available	Score
<b>(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b>		
<p>The Adams 14 district was identified by the state of Colorado in 2011 as Accredited with Turnaround Plan, a designation applied to the lowest-performing districts statewide. The district is now classified as Accredited with Priority Improvement Plan. Under these plans, the district has taken steps to restructure and reorganize.</p> <p><b>Strengths:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Restructuring was done by replacing the superintendent and deputy superintendent, and by hiring an executive director of school turnaround, a director of elementary curriculum &amp; instruction, and an ELD coordinator.</li> <li>• Sites have the ability to reassign staff to specific school needs.</li> <li>• Fully adaptable and fully accessible learning resources will be made available to all students.</li> </ul> <p><b>Weaknesses:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is not clear if scheduling is a responsibility left to the secondary sites or if this is controlled centrally.</li> <li>• The proposal does not address whether the district provides its students with opportunities to progress and earn credits based on demonstrated mastery.</li> <li>• The proposal does not delineate how the district provides its students with opportunities to demonstrate mastery of standards at multiple times and in multiple comparable ways.</li> <li>• It is not clear how the district intends to provide fully adaptable and accessible materials to students with high needs and ELLs. Timelines, deliverables, and person responsible are not provided.</li> </ul> <p>This section is scored a [6]. The plan proposed by Adams 14 is adequate, but overall, it does not possess the characteristics of a high-quality plan as defined by RTTT-D. The proposal does not provide details as to how the district will institute practices, policies, and rules to create personalized learning environments for all participating students. It does not provide discussion on comprehensive policies and infrastructure needed to ensure all students and educators have the resources they need to realize improved learning as a result of the Unified Improvement Plan (UIP). Little detail is provided beyond responding in the positive to each sub-criterion. The proposal does not provide details as to how the district will institute practices, policies, and rules to create personalized learning environments for all participating students.</p>		

<b>(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>4</b>
<p><b>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The Adams 14 proposal has instituted a data management system for teachers and administrators, while also providing several digital tools to students and parents to plan and track progress toward college- and career-readiness.</p> <p>Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Naviance portal allows students and parents to create CCR plans.</li> <li>• Mention made of improved communications district-wide, although no details provided.</li> <li>• Parents will be invited to register to gain access to the parent portal in Infinite Campus.</li> <li>• A Systems Administrator and a Systems Analyst provide access and/or data reports to site administrators and central office staff.</li> </ul> <p>Weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is not clear how the Adams 14 proposal will help students access electronic learning tools outside of the schools, or how it will ensure all students have access in school.</li> <li>• No discussion regarding scheduling for greater flexibility, such as online coursework for credit recovery and acceleration, afterschool classes, or possible intersession offerings.</li> <li>• It is unclear if the Infinite Campus or Naviance portals will include views in Spanish for Spanish-speaking parents.</li> <li>• It is not clear from the narrative if both high schools will have computer-lab availability for parent use.</li> </ul> <p>This section is scored a [ 4 ]. The plan proposed by Adams 14 is minimal in coverage of LEA and school infrastructure, and overall, it does not possess the characteristics of a high-quality plan as defined by Race to the Top-District. While students and parents will have access to Infinite Campus and Naviance (information technology systems) to export information, there is no mention of technical support as an activity to assist students or parents, nor are there details for disseminating information and training in the uses of the various digital tools mentioned.</p>		

**E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)**

	Available	Score
<b>(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>7</b>
<p><b>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The state’s Unified Improvement Planning template provides an articulated plan for implementing a rigorous continuous improvement process.</p> <p>Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The referenced UIP contains 4 major improvement strategies around which the district and/or site must create an action plan to address the identified need areas. The plan contains timelines and key personnel, resources and implementation benchmarks.</li> <li>• The district will use existing communications channels to share RTTT-D information.</li> </ul> <p>Weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is not entirely clear if the UIP is a single plan covering all sites within a district, or if sites must submit separate UIPs for approval.</li> </ul> <p>This section is scored a [7]. While the district’s UIP provides a very detailed set of action plans of district-determined improvement strategies and accompanying action steps for major strategies that support changes in learning and teaching to improve student achievement, the Adams 14 plan does not provide a clear delineation of action steps to support its goals, and so cannot be categorized as a high-quality plan. The Adams 14 plan runs in tandem with the UIP, and unlike the UIPs clearly defined timelines The Adams 14 plan does not provide clear delineation of how processes for timely and regular feedback will be accomplished.</p>		
<b>(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>
<p><b>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b></p>		

The Adams 14 proposal includes using existing channels for timely and regular communication with families and the community. The district webpage, email, public meetings and forum are all used and will continue to provide avenues for sharing information regarding progress toward grant goals.

This section is scored a [ 3]. The Adams 14 proposal includes a description of types of communication avenues, but does not clearly outline all components of a high-quality plan. While the proposal provides adequate details in how communications can be pushed out to the community, the proposal does not address how the community will be engaged in providing communication back to the district. The proposal does not indicate how the district intends to actively recruit for the various representative committees that will be formed to address the Adams 14 initiatives and other UIP-determined areas of interest.

**(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)**

**5**

**2**

**(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:**

The Adams 14 proposal puts forth a bold and ambitious set of goals showing increases between 32 to 57 percentage points, with all students (and subgroups) working toward reaching equivalent achievement levels by the end of the grant period. While bold, meeting the goals is improvable given the focus of the district.

Weakness:

- Grades 4-8 do not include at least one grade-appropriate health or social-emotional leading indicator
- Grades 9-12 do not include at least one grade-appropriate health or social-emotional leading indicator.

This section is scored a [ 2]. While the performance measures listed outline commendable goals that reflect an elimination of achievement gaps between Hispanic and White subgroups, performance measures required to address a health or social-emotional leading indicator are not included for grades 4-8 or 9-12. It is not clear why the Hispanic subgroups were not included, specifically the Special Ed subgroup given early comments regarding reduction to Special Ed services. It is also not clear if information gained from the ACCESS assessment will address age-appropriate non-cognitive indicator of growth for grades 1 and 3.

**(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)**

**5**

**2**

**(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

This section is scored a [2]. The proposal does not include a high quality plan in relation to evaluating the effectiveness of the investments. While this section of the proposal makes mention of conducting internal and independent evaluation of grant activities, the plan itself lacks credibility as it provides no clear indication that the plan will address evaluation of the effectiveness of the proposal's activities such as professional development or uses of technology.

**F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)**

	Available	Score
<b>(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>

**(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

The budget narrative for the Adams 14 proposal adequately tracks fund allocations to each initiative.

Strengths:

- Funds from other sources are explained and are sufficient to cover the item(s) for which they are intended.
- Approximately 4.7% of funding will be used to upgrade technology in 30 classrooms.
- Approximately 14.6% will be used to cover technology purchases (Equipment & Supplies). This translates to on average, about \$274 per student.

Weaknesses:

- Approximately 58.1% of grant funds will be used to cover personnel and benefits costs, 12.8% of which are positions specific to the functions of the grant, with no indication these FTEs will be maintained post-grant.
- Technology to be purchased includes iPads and SMART Boards. Given the investment in iPads, training of teachers

may be extensive if the district currently using a predominantly PC platform. No indication of a plan to help teachers and students to accommodate the new technologies. Furthermore, considerations not evident regarding new CCSS assessments and the types of tools that can access the secure portal (i.e., connections to secure portal, external keyboards required for online assessment)

- Outside provider and training not identified for the Kids U professional development. No evidence of a high-quality plan for an articulated menu of PD for the 10 days budgeted, or how the work with the outside provider will articulate with the in-house training to be provided under the Initiatives Grades 3-12 project.
- Earlier narrative did not reference the 14 Early Learning Paraprofessionals to be hired. It is not clear if they are included in professional development plans under the Kids U initiative.

This section is scored a [ 5 ]. The plan proposed by Adams 14 is adequate, but does not provide evidence that the activities outlined in the plan will be sustainable in realizing personal learning environments for all students, especially for high school. With over 91% of its budget dedicated to the Kids U project, it seems highly unlikely that the goals and activities in the remaining project can or will be realized. The Adams 14 proposal identifies 0.3% of its budget to fund an outside provider for professional development under the Kids U project, and another 0.15% identified for the Initiatives Grades 3-12 project to cover contractual PD for SmartLab implementation. No evidence of an articulated menu of PD for the 10 days budgeted, or how the work with the outside provider will articulate with the in-house training to be provided under the Initiatives Grades 3-12 project. As such, it is not evident that the Adams 14 proposal meets the core assurance area for developing effective teachers and principals, and subsequently, turning around low-performing schools.

<b>(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>4</b>
---	-----------	----------

**(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

The Adams 14 proposal does not contain a high-quality plan demonstrating sustainability of project goals after the term of the grant. This section is scored a [4]. There is no explicit information as to how the work under both the School Improvement Grant and Tiered Intervention Grant will be articulated with, combined, and/or enhanced by the work either Kids U or Initiatives Grades 3-12. The Colorado Department of Education expresses its concerns regarding project sustainability in an email from the Executive Director of School and District Performance. District response indicates the goal is to redirect Special Education funding to sustain the Race to the Top-District projects, given the expected decreases to Special Education placements as a result of grant work. It is not clear if other sustainability options will be possible, should the reallocation from Special Education not materialize. Evaluation mechanisms to determine project productivity and outcomes to inform post-grant budgeting have not yet been delineated, as the district has not initiated work with an external evaluator to begin outlining preliminary plans. There is no indication that an estimated budget for the 3 years after the term of the grant has been developed.

**Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)**

	Available	Score
<b>Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>

**Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:**

No Competitive Preference Priority provided.

**Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments**

	Available	Score
<b>Absolute Priority 1</b>		<b>Not Met</b>

**Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:**

The Adams 14 proposal does not meet Absolutely Priority 1. The proposal does not explicitly demonstrate its initiatives create personalized learning environments for all students. The district is embracing the new CCSS standards and college- and career-readiness expectations and is bold in its expectations that the Hispanic subgroup will match performance levels of its White subgroup; however, the plan does not provide substantial emphasis on developing and using data and data systems to measure student growth for other subgroups, specifically ELL, SpeEd (IEP), or Econ Dis (FRL), subgroups that are reported in the district's UIP. The proposal does provide some levels of personalization of PD

for teachers in the form of weekly coaching sessions; however, an articulated plan is not in place that allows for flexibility in developing PD trainings personalized to the individual needs of its teachers.

<b>Total</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>88</b>
--------------	------------	-----------



## Race to the Top - District

### Technical Review Form

Application #0239CO-2 for District 14

#### A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
<b>(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>
<p><b>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The applicant received a medium score based on the lack of credibility of the proposed project to personalize the educational process or program based on the two key projects outlined in the proposal. The following provides specific information from each sub-criterion:</p> <p>(a) The applicant identifies work connected to their vision that aligns with the four core educational assurance areas to include (1) curriculum mapping aligned with new college readiness standards; (2) implementation of a <i>Driven by Data</i> model including a data system that measures student growth and success (STAR, ACT, etc); (3) the use of the Compass tool to guide teacher effectiveness efforts; and (4) the district was identified as "Accredited with a Turnaround Plan" by the state - thus all efforts involved in this project align with reform efforts connected to turning around the district - which has been identified as one of the lowest performing districts in the state.</p> <p>(b) The applicant identifies three key areas within this section to include <i>Driven by data, job embedded PD, and parent and family engagement</i>, and references the district's strategic plan. The strategic plan provides information specific to what the district intends to do and linked to activities and strategies to support a clear approach to accelerating student achievement. However, the integration of this proposal's projects (Kids University and 3<sup>rd</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade initiatives) with the included strategic plan do not constitute a credible approach as the applicant does not provide specific information on how these two projects will be integrated into the overall plan and how all of the component parts will support the personalization of the education at the student level. Including a more detailed description of the strategic plan and how the two component projects of this proposal will work of each other and the other elements of the plan would have made this section stronger.</p> <p>(c) The applicant provides a very limited view of what the classroom experience will look like for teachers and does not articulate what the classroom experience will look like for students. As stated in (b), the strategic plan identifies a number of component parts to the comprehensive vision that could have been used to articulate how a student's classroom experience will be transformed through the implementation of the strategic plan. Including a description of the classroom experience at the student level would have strengthened this particular section.</p>		
<b>(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>

**(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant received a high score based on the quality of evidence as it relates to the selection of schools, including a list of participating schools, and providing the demographic breakdown participating students within the project.

(a) The applicant has included all of the schools within the LEA as all schools within the district have underperformed historically. It appears that all schools will participate in this project as the district as a whole has been deemed a "turn-

around" district by the state and the reform vision articulated encompasses the entire K-12 continuum. This section would have been stronger if a rationale for selection of all schools, to include a description of how the schools *traditionally underperformed*, would have been included.

(b) The applicant provides a comprehensive list of participating schools including preschool programs and schools linked by feeder patterns.

(c) The applicant provides the total number of students participating and the percentage of students from low-income families. The applicant did not specify students who are at-risk as specified by the notice, nor the number of participating educators in this particular section. This data is provided in other sections.

**(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)**

**10**

**6**

**(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant received a medium score as the applicant provided component parts of a high quality plan for scaling across the district. However, the applicant did not provide a clear logic model or theory of action specific to improving student outcomes.

The applicant provided components of a high quality plan and considering all schools in the district will be participating, the need to support district-wide change beyond the participating schools is not necessary.

In terms of this section, the applicant does not provide a clear logic model or theory of change specific to improving student learning outcomes. Either a logic model or a theory of action would have helped provide support for specific actions included in the proposal as well as helping identify the links between different aspects of the proposal including how the projects fit within the district's strategic plan. As such, the plan lacked overall credibility, resulting in a medium score.

**(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)**

**10**

**4**

**(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant received a medium/low score based on setting goals that are ambitious, yet may not be achievable, and based on the lack of subgroup data provided specific to students with special needs and English Learners.

(a) The applicant provides goals for grades 3,5,8, and 10 on summative assessments that are ambitious, yet may not be achievable. An example of an ambitious, yet not attainable goal includes all of the goals set for secondary summative assessment measures. It is not realistic to move the overall percentage of students meeting from 28% to 70% in a four to five year period considering how low the overall subgroup is performing. It would be more realistic to consider moderate gains in the first several years with significant increases in later years as efforts to impact student learning is built upon over time (as students progress). While the ambitious nature of the goals are to be commended, the reality of realizing the goals within the time frame of the grant is unrealistic at the secondary level.

(b) The applicant did not provide information regarding achievement gaps specific to other sub-groups (i.e. SPED, English Language Learners) and focused only on Hispanic students. While the overall achievement of the district as compared to the state represents a significant gap and the achievement between white and Hispanic students represents a significant gap, the exclusion of other subgroup information and goals did not provide a complete picture of the applicant's intent to mitigate gaps between subgroups. The omission of other subgroup goals makes it impossible measure whether goals specific to gap reduction are ambitious or achievable.

(c) The goals presented for graduation rates are certainly ambitious (85% by 2017/18), yet the overall growth over the next four years may not be achievable (increasing from 53% to 85% over the next four years). Graduation rates are a reflection of the quality of high school programming and the quality of the educational system (K-12). The overall need for improvement across the system would suggest that students in high schools may have significant learning gaps that would need to be addressed to meet the ambitious goals set. The overall vision presented in this application will take time to impact graduation rates to the level reflected in the graduation goal area. The overall post-grant graduation rates may be achievable based on this vision - yet the timeline is unrealistic.

Furthermore, the applicant does not provide information on specific subgroups to include students with special needs and English Learners. While the overall achievement for the district is low and represents a gap between the district and the state, the section would have been stronger with the inclusion of these two subgroups in addition to the Hispanic subgroup.

(d) The applicant provides information specific to overall, Hispanic and white students based on the Naviance portal. As with the other parts of this section, inclusion of ELL and SPED sub-groups would have strengthened this particular section.

## B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
<b>(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>4</b>
<p><b>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The overall score for this section was low. The applicant provided a clear and compelling reason for change in relation to the district's overall achievement and success over the past four years. The LEA has provided substantial useful information regarding the need for actions though does not stops demonstrate a clear track record of success. The applicant has not provided evidence of a clear track record of success as reflected in the following:</p> <p>(a) The applicant did not provide information that would support the criteria of a clear record of success in the past four years and in fact the district's overall achievement has been declining over the past four years (as reflected in the historical data trends provided in the LEA's Strategic Plan).</p> <p>(b) The applicant provides evidence from one middle school within it's system though the evidence provided does not reflect achievement of ambitious and significant reform in a persistently low achieving school.</p> <p>(c) The applicant provides information specific to student performance data being accessible for students, parents, and educators and references an increase in frequency of monitoring and improved communication for parents. This section would have been stronger had the applicant provided greater detail in terms of how data is being used, how the district has increased the frequency of communication, etc.</p>		
<b>(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>
<p><b>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The applicant received a low score based on the lack of evidence specific to providing school level financial information specific to actual personnel salaries and non-personnel expenditures at the school level. The information cited in this section reflects the district is meeting state law (Article 44, Title 22 of the Colorado Revised Statutes) specific to public school financial transparency, yet the information required by Colorado state law does speak to the extent to which the applicant provides school-level expenditures to include (a) actual personnel salaries for all school-level instructional and support staff; (b) actual personnel salaries at the school level for instructional staff only; (c) actual personnel salaries at the school level for teachers only; and (d) actual non-personnel expenditures at the school level if available. The applicant does not make a statement specific to the level of which the minimum data required in this section is provided or will be provided. As such, this section received a low score.</p>		
<b>(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>
<p><b>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The applicant received a high score for this section based on the extensive detail to the district's status of <i>accredited with turnaround status</i> and the role state legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements play in support of the application. The applicant did not provide specific information regarding sufficient autonomy, though the inclusion of information specific to the State's successful Race to the Top application would suggest successful conditions exist within the state to support the personalized learning environments proposed in the application.</p>		
<b>(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>5</b>
<p><b>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The score for this section was low based on the lack of structured opportunities for the community, parents, students and staff. The applicant did not provide evidence of school level engagement activities with parent organizations, staff meetings, etc. that would have more strongly confirmed that the applicant had engaged the broader community in the development of this proposal.</p> <p>The applicant states that students, families, teachers and administrators representing all schools were given the opportunity</p>		

to participate in developing this proposal, though the description of engagement activities were limited to a board meeting on September 10, 2013 and a meeting of the District Advisory Accountability Committee on September 9th. These two meetings do not constitute meaningful stakeholder investment in the development of this proposal or support for this proposal. School level engagement activities with parent organizations, staff meetings, etc. would have provided evidence that the applicant had engaged the broader community in the development of this proposal. It is not clear as to the level of support for this project and it seems the level of engagement with key stakeholders was minimal at best based on the information provided.

The applicant did provide a letter of support from the teacher's association president, though did not provide evidence of direct engagement and support for the proposal from teachers in participating schools as described in (a) (i). Providing further evidence of staff engagement and support at the school level would have made this particular section stronger.

### C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
<b>(C)(1) Learning (20 points)</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>4</b>

**(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

The overall score for this section is low based on the lack of specific information and detail provided for each of the sub-criterion. The plan outlined in the table provided in this section does not provide nearly the level of detail necessary to support a high-quality plan needed to support successful implementation of a nearly \$20 million dollar proposal. Most of the component parts (goals, activities, timelines, and deliverables) are so vague they cannot be considered a viable plan. Furthermore, this particular section does not link to the Kids University project contained within this proposal - a project representing 91% of the requested resource. The following provides specific feedback for each sub-criterion:

(a) (i) The inclusion of an Individual Career and Academic Plan for secondary students is component of supporting students understanding that what they are learning is key to their success. This single approach is not sufficient as it does not support students understanding at the classroom level and thus being able to personalize their learning each and every day.

(ii) The implementation of Common Core State Standards does provide a pathway for students that links to college an career readiness, yet do not inherently provide students with an understanding of how to structure their learning to achieve their goals. The information provided is very limited and does not provide a clear and coherent plan for implementing the Common Core in such a way to support learning and development goals at the student level.

(iii) The STEM focus in this proposal lends itself to engaging student in deep learning experiences within STEM fields. As with other sections of this proposal, the applicant provides very limited information and does not expand on how this work will be implemented and supported through professional development and program or curricular integration with other groups (i.e.. through project-based learning).

(iv) The applicant makes general statements about student access and exposure to diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives. The applicant does not address how the grant will provide specific support for student's access and exposure to diverse cultures and contexts.

(v) The applicant identifies the use of the SmartLab environment to provide for both academic content and skill development as well as elements of problem-solving, collaboration, and communication. The applicant references teachers and students collaborating together to define goals and monitor progress, yet the applicant does not provide any information as to how this will happen at the school or classroom level.

(b) (i) The applicant articulates how the ICAP will be utilized to help support the development of a course plan. The applicant further articulates the graduation requirements and the requirements necessary for students to transition to post-secondary education. The applicant did not provide information specific to instructional content and skill development at the classroom level - within a school year.

(ii) The applicant discussed work with the Bueno Center yet did not provide specific information on instructional approaches or environments.

(iii) This sub-criteria is not addressed.

(iv) This sub-criteria is not addressed.

(v) This sub-criteria is not addressed.

(c) This sub-criteria is not addressed.

**(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)**

**20**

**4**

**(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant received a low score for this section based on the lack of specific information and detail provided in this section to support a high quality plan for implementation.

The plan outlined in the table provided in this section does not provide nearly the level of detail necessary to support a high-quality plan needed to support successful implementation of a nearly \$20 million dollar proposal. Most of the component parts (goals, activities, timelines, and deliverables) are so vague they cannot be considered a viable plan. The following provides specific feedback for each sub-criterion:

(a) (i) The applicant provides a description of embedded professional development structures within schools, though does not provide specific, explicit examples of the type of training individuals or teams will receive in conjunction with this proposed project.

(ii) The applicant provides a specific example of the workshop model with a focus on aligning STEM curriculum and common core standards. The applicant also identifies collaborative planning as a form of professional development. As with other sections, this description does not provide enough information of the changes in instruction and how the applicant will support staff with specific examples. Furthermore, it is hard to ascertain which teachers will be involved in the activities discussed - will all teachers be engaged in the STEM work or will it only be teachers who teach in STEM areas?

(iii) This particular sub-criterion is specific to monitoring student progress toward meeting college and career ready standards with the intent to use data to inform student progress, individual improvement and overall educator effectiveness. The applicant's response provided no evidence specific to the projects inclusion of student progress monitoring. The applicant did not address the intent of this particular sub-criterion.

(iv) The applicant provides a description of a typical evaluation model without providing specifics of how feedback will be used to support individual or collective effectiveness or connect to individual support and opportunities for growth or improvement. Providing specific examples of how evaluation interfaces with professional development for staff would have made this section stronger.

(b) (i) The applicant speaks to training coaches to interpret data and incorporate high level instructional strategies. This particular sub-criterion speaks to all participating educators having access to and know how to use tools, data and resources - not simply the instructional coach.

(ii) The applicant provides one example (Driven by Data model) of a high-quality learning resource and approach that will be used as part of the project. This particular sub-criterion expects multiple resources with explicit links to college and career ready graduation requirements. The response would have been stronger had the applicant included a variety of resources.

(iii) The applicant speaks to the training coaches will receive, but does not discuss additional training for all educators. This description does not meet this particular sub-criterion as it was not directed toward all educators and the information was not specific to improving feedback about the effectiveness of various resources in meeting student needs.

(c) (i) The applicant provides a detailed description of state policy that has led to the development of new teacher and administrator evaluation systems. The applicant did not provide a description about how the tool will be used to support individual and collective educator effectiveness nor how the tool would be incorporated within the scope of this proposed project.

(ii) The referenced plan in this section provides detailed examples of training, systems and practices being employed to improve student performance and ultimately close the gap. The level of specific examples provided in the referenced plan is an illustration of the specificity necessary, yet not provided, in other sections of this proposal.

(d) The applicant provided a plan that does not provide enough detail to ensure that the plan is high quality and will result in an increased number of students receiving instruction from highly effective teachers and principals.

**D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)**

	Available	Score
<b>(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>3</b>
<p><b>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The applicant received a low score for this section as the proposal does not provide evidence of a high quality plan to support the implementation of the project. The responses to each of the sub-criteria in this section are very minimal and do not support the sense that a high quality plan is in place to support the implementation of this project. The following provides specific feedback for each sub-criteria:</p> <p>(a) The applicant identifies recent hires (new Superintendent and Deputy Superintendent) as well as three other district level positions. An organizational chart identifying specific responsibilities in relation to this project would have been helpful in ascertaining the organizational structures being employed to support specific schools.</p> <p>(b) The applicant identifies the hiring of an instructional coach and makes a statement regarding each site having the level of flexibility and autonomy they will need to implement the project. These two sentences do not provide sufficient evidence for this sub-criterion. Providing specific examples of the flexibility and autonomy at the school level and how this may be a change from previous practice would have strengthened this particular section.</p> <p>(c) The applicant did not provide specific information on how they do or would provide students with the opportunity to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery.</p> <p>(d) The applicant did not provide specific information n how they do or would provide multiple comparable opportunities to demonstrate mastery. The reference to STEM activities does not suffice in terms of providing evidence that this criterion will be met through the project.</p> <p>(e) The applicant did not provide specific information on how they do or would provide students with learning resources and instructional practices that are adaptable and fully accessible to all students.</p>		

<b>(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>
<p><b>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The applicant received a low score as the proposal does not provide evidence of a high quality plan including key goals, activities, timelines, deliverables, and individual responsibilities. The response in this section does not support project implementation through policies and structures designed to support key stakeholders. As with the previous section, the answers to each of the sub-criterion in this section are minimal and do not provide specific examples of how each criteria is or will be met. The following provides specific feedback to each sub-criterion:</p> <p>(a) Stating the LEA provides several electronic tools and other resources does not provide enough information specific to how, when and what tools are available or will be made available through this project.</p> <p>(b) This particular criterion is specific to technical support and the only mention is assisting parents in logging into the parent portal at each high school. Furthermore The level of access described is not sufficient considering the size of the district. Providing a couple of computers at the high school level and a small computer lab that is available a couple hours of day for parents provides a minimal level of access.</p> <p>(c) The applicant identifies their student information system and the tool Naviance as two information technology systems being used by parents and students. The limited information provided does not provide evidence that data from other learning systems can be used in conjunction with the primary system.</p> <p>(d) The applicant provides sufficient evidence that the LEA and schools use interoperable data systems.</p>		

**E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)**

	Available	Score
<b>(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>5</b>
<p><b>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The applicant received a low score for this section based on the proposal providing only a basic overview of the continuous improvement process required by the state department of education and utilized by the district annually. The applicant did not provide near the detail necessary to constitute a high quality plan specific to this project to include how</p>		

they would address monitoring, measuring, and publicly sharing information linked directly to efforts associated with the proposed project. A detailed plan, to include timelines, individual responsibilities, etc. would have made this section stronger.

<b>(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>
---	----------	----------

**(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant received a low score based on the limited information provided specific to a high quality plan. The applicant provides a plan for communicating information specific to the project to various stakeholders. However, the applicant fails to identify how it will engage both internal and external stakeholders regularly as to the progress and direction of the project. Furthermore, the applicant did not identify a specific timeline with anticipated activities and clearly delineated responsibilities specific to engaging the community and various stakeholders. Providing a clear timeline for continuous improvement with explicit opportunities for stakeholder engagement and input would have made this section stronger.

<b>(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>
---	----------	----------

**(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant received a low score based on several factors including the lack of subgroups measured (SPED and ELs), the lack of specific, required non-cognitive measures at the middle school and high school levels, and the lack of response to required elements of specific sub-criterion.

The following provides specific feedback to each of the sub-criterion for this section. Overall, the inclusion of only Hispanic subgroups limits the ability for the applicant to monitor the impact of the project on students with special needs or English Language Learners. This section would have been stronger if other subgroups had been included.

(a) The selected measures seem to be appropriate and a rationale for the measures as a whole was provided. There were a couple of measures that did not include a description (i.e. 1st and 3rd grade "ACCESS" testing). This made it impossible to ascertain the appropriateness or rationale for this particular measure. Furthermore, it is not clear as to whether or not the applicant included one non-cognitive measure for PreK-3. At the 4th-8th grade level as well as the 9th-12th level, the applicant did not include a measure of health or social-emotional well being.

The proposed measures and the anticipated growth are certainly ambitious, yet are not all achievable in the limited time frame of the grant.

(b) The applicant does not provide a description of how each measure is linked to it's proposed plan and theory of action.

(c) The applicant did not articulate how it will review and improve the actual measures if they deem the measures insufficient to gauge implementation progress.

<b>(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>
--	----------	----------

**(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant received a low score for this section as the proposed plan presented in this particular section is to develop a plan if funded. This section asks the applicant to provide information specific to how they intend to evaluate the effectiveness of the project. Identifying the need to develop a plan does not constitute a high-quality plan as required by this section.

**F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)**

	<b>Available</b>	<b>Score</b>
<b>(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>3</b>

**(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant received a low score for this section as the overall budget does not align with the articulated goals and anticipated impact of the project. 91% of the budget is allocated to the Kids University project with the remaining 9% allocated toward the 3rd-12th initiatives. Specifically, the articulated goals of the overall project and the anticipated/projected impact in terms of student achievement at the secondary level does not correspond to the investment in the 3rd-12th grade initiatives.

The following reflects specific feedback to each of the sub-criterion for this section:

(a) The applicant identifies only Race to the Top resources will be used for this project. Considering the scope of the project and the applicants linking it to the district's strategic plan, providing clear connections to other efforts and other revenue streams would have been appropriate.

(b) The allocation of over \$18 million dollars to the Kids University and only \$1.6 million to the 3rd-12th initiatives are not reasonable in relation to the anticipated growth at the secondary level - nor to the intent of personalizing education for all students. The projected growth at the secondary level that was set in previous sections are not warranted based on the proposed budget for 3rd-12th initiatives.

(c) The applicant provides a rationale for each investment as well as identifying the funds that will support the implementation of the proposal. The applicant also identified one- time resources (e.g. purchase of modular buildings for Kids University) though the proposed budget does not necessarily identify investments that are sustainable in relation to providing personalized learning environments. This will be addressed in the next section.

<b>(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>3</b>
---	-----------	----------

**(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant received a low score as the proposal identifies several external funding streams currently being utilized to transform the educational system as well as potential legislative acts within the state that may yield increased revenue. Furthermore, the applicant anticipates realizing savings from current expenditures in the area of special education as the early intervention strategies decrease the number of students being identified and served in special education. While each of these component parts may contribute to a high-quality sustainability plan, they do not produce the necessary resource to maintain the requested project budget. Specifically, they do not sustain the on-going costs of the Kids University proposal.

Furthermore, the applicant does not include an estimated budget for the three years after the term of the grant to include budget assumptions.

**Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)**

	Available	Score
<b>Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>

**Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant did not address the competitive priority criteria.

**Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments**

	Available	Score
<b>Absolute Priority 1</b>		<b>Met</b>

**Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant provides evidence that this proposal is part of the district's strategic plan to build on the four core educational assurance areas and to create environments designed to improve learning and teaching through personalization strategies. The overall proposal focuses primarily on accelerating achievement with an investment in early learning programs and provides limited information specific to strategies at the 3rd-12th grade levels. Concerns regarding the overall proposal are articulated in other sections of the application. Overall, the strategic plan for the district and the component parts supported by this project, meet the absolute priority requirement.

<b>Total</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>71</b>
--------------	------------	-----------



## Race to the Top - District

### Technical Review Form

Application #0239CO-3 for District 14

#### A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
<b>(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>
<p><b>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>Adams 14 scores medium in articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision. This is evident from their plan on the four core educational assurance areas. There is a clear and credible approach to the goals of accelerating student achievement by the strong use of data to drive instructional decisions and foster teacher accountability. These assessments are aligned to state tests and college readiness expectations.</p> <p>There is not clear evidence of deepening student learning and increasing equity through personalized student support resulting in a loss of points. There is not a clear plan to describe the classroom experience. There is mention of a Data Driven model and teachers creating action plans for re-teaching and accelerating students however there is not a clear example of what this will look like resulting in a loss of points.</p>		
<b>(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>3</b>
<p><b>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>Adams 14 scores low in approach to implementation. There is not a clear description of the process used to select schools that will participate in this project. There is a list of the participating schools and the number of students that will participate in this project. There is evidence of the total number of students participating in this projects but there is not identification of high-need students or the number of educators resulting in a loss of points.</p> <p>Adams 14 scores low in this category for not providing a breakdown of students by school site, not correctly identifying high-needs students or the number of educators involved in the project. There was also not a clear process used to determine which school would participate in the project which does not show evidence of a high quality plan.</p>		
<b>(A)(3) LEA-wide reform &amp; change (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>
<p><b>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>Adams 14 scores medium high in LEA-wide reform and change. There is a high quality plan in place to provide meaningful reform to support district wide change. This is evident in the two programs Kids University and Initiatives for Grades 3-12. Kids University will focus on preschool aged children to close achievement gaps early on and reinforce the importance of education. Initiatives for Grades 3-12 will focus on STEM.</p> <p>Adams 14 set very ambitious goals for this plan however the focus of the attention is to these two facilities and not the actual programs to improve student outcomes. Adams 14 doe snot provide an logic model of theory of change for this plan resulting in a loss of points.</p>		
<b>(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>
<p><b>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</b></p>		

Adams 14 scores medium in LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes. Adams 14 has an ambitious plan to close achievement gaps, increase graduation rates and college enrollment. As this is an ambitious plan, it does not seem achievable as the percentages are all equal. The percentages are the same for each population group. This plan in theory sounds great, however, does not seem achievable within the four years of the grant. Adams 14 provided the necessary information for this category however it does not seem achievable for subgroups to make such high gains in four years resulting in a loss of points.

## B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
<b>(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>6</b>
<p><b>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>Adams 14 scores in the low to medium category for demonstrating a clear track record of success. In the past four years, Adams 14 has not shown a clear track record of success in all of their schools. Certain schools such as Adams City Middle School has increased the percentage of students who are reading, writing and math proficient however there is not evidence that every school has made gains resulting in a loss of points. There is also not mention of if what Adams City Middle School is doing is being replicated in other schools to see the same gains. Student performance data is available using Infinite Campus. Infinite Campus has information regarding grades, attendance, and student schedules. This does not include ways to inform and improve participation, instruction and services resulting in a loss of points.</p> <p>Adams 14 does not demonstrate evidence of ambitious and significant reforms in low achieving schools. Again there is reference to Adams City Middle School making gains but not across the district resulting in a loss of points.</p>		
<b>(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>
<p><b>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>Adams 14 scores low for increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices and investments. There is a level of transparency as salary schedules are available publicly and on the district website. It is not clearly defined if this is for all school level instructional support staff, instructional staff and teachers resulting in a loss of points. There is also not evidence of non-personnel expenditures at the school level resulting in a loss of points. Because there is some level of transparency, Adams 14 shows commitment however their is not consistency in what is reported and what is not resulting in a loss of points.</p>		
<b>(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>3</b>
<p><b>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>Adams 14 scores low in state context for implementation. There is evidence that Adams 14 has been successful under State legal, statutory and regulatory requirements especially in the Priority Improvement and Turnaround Plan phase, however there is not evidence of the personalized learning environments in this plan. There is not enough evidence in this description to receive a high score.</p>		
<b>(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>6</b>
<p><b>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>Adams 14 scores medium in stakeholder engagement and support. Adams 14 held a meeting to address areas of concern and to communicate their plan for this project. Evidence is provided as to questions and concerns from stakeholders. Answers were provided to stakeholders to outline the project goals. There is not documentation of teachers support from participating schools resulting in a loss of points. There is one letter of support from a community stakeholder but not from parents, students or institutions of higher education resulting in a loss of points.</p> <p>There is some evidence of stakeholder engagement and support however it is minimal resulting in a medium score.</p>		

## C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
--	-----------	-------

<b>(C)(1) Learning (20 points)</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>5</b>
<p><b>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>Adams 14 scores in the low category for learning. Adams 14 will use the Individual Career and Academic Plan (ICAP) to decrease dropout rates and increase graduation rates. This program allows students and families to explore a postsecondary career and educational opportunities which will align curriculum to meet their personal needs. The standards for this curriculum are rigorous and relevant to ensure students can complete globally as well as gain the knowledge to be college and career ready thus qualifying as a high quality plan. Students will also have the opportunity to be involved in deep learning experiences from their own academic interests. These programs will include the Smart lab curriculum and project based learning. Students will gain the following skills form the Smart Lab experience; problem solving, self direction, analysis and synthesis, creativity, project management collaboration and communication. These are all relevant 21st century skills however, it is not explained how these skills will be gained resulting in a loss of points. There is also a lack of evidence of of being exposed to multiple cultures. There is mention of exposure but how and when is left unanswered resulting in a loss of points.</p> <p>Adams 14 students will participate in a personal education plan that will be evaluated and amended each semester prior to a new class schedule. This plan will be reviewed by a teacher, counselor, dean, administrator of other professional school staff member. This qualifies the plan as high quality. There is not evidence of high quality instructional approaches and environments. There is also no evidence of ongoing and regular feedback other than visiting the ICAP plan once a semester. There is no mention of accommodations and high quality strategies for high need students of mechanisms in place to provide training and support to students that will ensure that they understand how to use tools and resources to manage their learning all resulting in a loss of points.</p>		
<b>(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>5</b>
<p><b>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>Adams 14 scores high in teaching and leading. Adams 14 has a high quality plan to support the effective implementation of personalized learning environments and strategies. An example of this is weekly teacher observations. The teachers will then meet with the instructional coach who will provide immediate feedback and recommendations for best practices. Teachers will learn to adapt curriculum to meet student needs. This approach will be more hands on rather than teacher lecture. There is not evidence of frequently measure student progress resulting in a loss of points. There is clear evidence of Improving teachers' and principals' practice and effectiveness by using feedback. This feedback will be used to provide recommendations, supports and interventions in the classroom. There is also evidence of a turnaround calendar as a tool to effectively monitor each school's progress which shows dedication to a high quality plan.</p> <p>Adams 14 is currently instructing coaches how to interpret data and recognize and incorporate high level instructional strategies. Adams 14 uses Data Director to effectively monitor student progress toward learning targets. There is not mention if this is aligned with college and career readiness resulting in a loss of points. Instructional coaches will receive weekly training from multiple data sources which will provide teachers with strategies to capture students' learning potential. There are not examples of these strategies resulting in a loss of points.</p> <p>Adams 14 has a plan for training, policies, tools data and resources. The teacher evaluation system is present as well as a plan to improve teacher effectiveness. There is not evidence of practices to continuously improve school progress toward the goals of increasing student performance but rather just mention of interventions to improve teacher effectiveness resulting in a loss of points.</p> <p>Adams 14 does not demonstrate a high quality plan for increasing the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals. The plan they provide is simple with no specific activities to improve teacher effectiveness resulting in a loss of points.</p>		

**D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)**

	Available	Score
<b>(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>4</b>
<p><b>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>Adams 14 scores low in LEA practices, policies and rules. Adams 14 has taken measures to organize a central office with a staff made up of a superintendent, Deputy Superintendent, executive director of school turnaround, director of elementary curriculum and instruction and a district level English Language Development coordinator. All of the above mentioned</p>		

positions will support and provide services to Adams 14 schools. There is evidence that school leadership teams have flexibility to establish school budgets and assessment routines. There is not mention of staffing models and roles and responsibilities for educators and non educators resulting in a loss of points. There is not enough evidence of students progressing to earn credits based on demonstrated mastery. There is just a statement stating this will happen resulting in a loss of points. There is not an explanation or example of how students will demonstrate mastery at multiple times in multiple ways resulting in a loss of points. The STEM activities will allow students to follow college and career readiness paths however this does not demonstrate the opportunity to demonstrate mastery multiple times in multiple ways. There is not clear evidence of how Adams 14 will provide learning resources and instructional practices that are fully adaptable to all students including students with disabilities and English learners resulting in a loss of points.

**(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)**

**10**

**3**

**(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

Adams 14 scores low in LEA and school infrastructure. Adams 14 states they provide several electronic tools and resources to parents, students and stakeholders to communicate information however they do not define what these tools are or how the information is communicated. Adams 14 does have a computer lab for parents to access this information however this is inconvenient for families who might not have transportation to get to the school resulting in a loss of points. There is not clear evidence of how parents and students will export information to another electronic learning system. There is mention that students and parents can access grades and attendance and then create a college and career readiness plan using the Naviance portal, however it is unclear if these two programs communicate with each other resulting in a loss of points. There is evidence that Adams 14 uses inter operable data systems for student achievement and human resources.

Adams 14 does not provide a high quality plan in LEA and school infrastructure. There is lack of evidence to support key activities, rational for activities, timeline and deliverables to qualify as a high quality plan.

**E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)**

	Available	Score
<b>(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b>		
<p>Adams 14 scores low in continuous improvement process. Adams 14 does not demonstrate a high quality plan for implementing rigorous continuous improvement. There is a plan for a unified improvement template and process to support schools however there is not mention of how this will be monitored, measured and publicly share information. Adams 14 has a plan to post their plans through the department of education website however this does not qualify as a high quality plan resulting in a loss of points.</p>		
<b>(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b>		
<p>Adams 14 scores medium for ongoing communication and engagement. Adams 14 has a plan to include information about Race to the Top grants and projects to its district website. Updates will also be made through print and electronic newsletters, emails, public meetings and forums. There is not clear evidence of how often this will take place and what the public meetings and forums will look like resulting in a loss of points.</p> <p>Adams 14 idea for ongoing communication and engagement does not qualify as a high quality plan due to lack of evidence of a timeline of communication with stakeholders. Communication is a key component and this plan does not demonstrate a clear commitment to communication.</p>		
<b>(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</b>		
<p>Adams 14 scores low in performance measures. Adams 14 provided a rationale for each performance measure but did not provide how the measure will provide rigorous, timely, and formative leading information tailored to its proposed plan and theory of action regarding the applicant's implementation success or areas of concern resulting in a loss of points. There is a plan to collect, analyze and interpret data in a timely manner to ensure informed decisions regarding implementation are</p>		

made. There is not clear evidence of each performance measure subgroup. For example there is not information about the number of students on free or reduced lunch. Because of this lack of evidence, Adams 14 scores low in this category.

Adams 14 does not provide the necessary information by subgroup for this category. Because of this lack of evidence, it does not seem like an ambitious or achievable plan.

<b>(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>
--	----------	----------

**(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

Adams 14 scores medium in evaluating effectiveness of investments. Adams 14 explains a plan if they are awarded the grant to hire an independent contractor to conduct the evaluation and collaborate with the district's internal evaluator. Both positions will ensure that data collection and program design are consistent, aggressive and attainable. There is not a timeline or outline of what this will look like resulting in a loss of points however this does qualify as a high quality plan because there is a rationale, goals and activities explained if they are awarded the grant.

**F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)**

	Available	Score
<b>(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>

**(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

Adams 14 scores high for budget project. There is a clear budget proposal with narrative and tables. Adams 14 identifies all funds as either a one time cost or an ongoing cost. Adams 14 identifies that all funds will be supported from the Race to the Top Grant award. This budget is reasonable however not sufficient to meet the needs of the 3-12th grade programs to meet college and career readiness goals. Although this budget plan is clear, there is not mention of a focus on strategies that will ensure the long-term sustainability of the personalized learning environments resulting in a loss of points. This budget proposal has a strong emphasis on the pre-K program which does not align with the goal to lower achievement gaps and raise graduation rates.

<b>(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>4</b>
---	-----------	----------

**(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

Adams 14 scores low in sustainability of project goals. Adams 14 has explained a plan to continue the use of grant funding. Examples include the School Improvement Grant and the Tiered Intervention Grant. If approved, Colorado's School Finance Act, Amendment 66 will add an additional 14 million dollars annually to Adams 14 state and local funding. This will allow the project to sustain after the award of the grant however, there is not a clear plan of how this money will be allocated or which projects will need to be sustained. There is not evidence of a budget for the next three years of the grant with budget assumptions, potential sources and uses of funds. Because this is vague plan, Adams 14 scores low in this category.

**Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)**

	Available	Score
<b>Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>

**Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:**

Adams 14 does not address competitive preference priority resulting in no points in this category.

**Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments**

	Available	Score
<b>Absolute Priority 1</b>		<b>Met</b>

**Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:**

Adams 14 does meet Absolute Priority 1 by addressing the core educational assurances to create learning environments that are designed to specifically improve student learning. By providing additional space at the two centers, students have the greater opportunity to succeed in school. Students also have a digital format and project based curriculum to best prepare for college and career readiness. There is a clear plan to accelerate student achievement through these two formats as well as through the STEM program. Effectiveness of educators will be increased through professional development resulting in students being exposed to effective and highly effective teachers. This will also result in decreased achievement gaps and increased graduation rates which will better prepare students for college and career readiness.

Total	210	77
-------	-----	----