



Rico Munn, Superintendent
Adams-Arapahoe 28J (Aurora Public Schools)
15701 East 1st Ave, Suite 206
Aurora, CO 80011

December 23, 2015

Dear Superintendent Munn,

During the month of November 2015, a team from the Federal Programs Unit at the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) conducted an onsite monitoring visit of Aurora Central High School and its implementation of the Tiered Intervention Grant (TIG). The purpose of the onsite monitoring visit was to determine whether the district had implemented its TIG program in accordance with all federal requirements associated with the receipt of these grant funds.

In its review of Aurora Central High School, the team examined evidence of the district's implementation of the TIG, the alignment between the school plans and TIG-funded activities, and compliance with fiscal and administrative oversight requirements. I am pleased to report that there were no findings of noncompliance as a result of the review. However, the team did compile a set of recommendations that are listed below.

2015 Tiered Intervention Grant Monitoring Summary - Aurora Public Schools

Aurora Central High School (ACHS)

Recommendations:

- **Build off of current planning work to align the TIG and Innovation plans, as well as other school improvement efforts and priorities.** Despite challenges during the first two years of the grant, ACHS's TIG was renewed for a third year to support activities associated with Innovation planning. There appears to be a disconnect between the various stakeholders (district, school administration, staff, students, and community) regarding priorities and a lack of ownership of the school's mission. We encourage the district to persist in rigorous planning during this school year.
- **Ensure that all teachers are adequately supported and that successful teachers are recognized and rewarded for their work.** A system of incentives and rewards is an expectation of the TIG Transformation Model. Teachers indicated that observations and feedback tied to professional development was inconsistent. They also said that there was a lack of recognition and rewards from the administration for teachers who demonstrated excellent performance. Finally, teachers expressed frustration with professional development, saying it is not differentiated.



- **Seek ways to more effectively use time and extend learning time.** The school leadership team, staff, and students reported few changes to the schedule during implementation of the TIG and little extra learning time beyond after-school tutoring. Teachers reported inconsistent effectiveness of Professional Learning Communities and availability of time to collaborate, plan, and progress monitor with other teachers.
- **Prioritize partnerships with the community.** School staff felt that large groups of parents, such as those in the refugee community, are not engaged in the improvement efforts of the school and do not share the same values as the school and its administration. Both staff and parents indicated a willingness to engage in stronger partnerships, but did not feel that the school had done enough to include families in the school's operations or development of school culture.

CDE staff will work with Aurora Central High School and district staff to address these recommendations throughout the remainder of the grant. If the district has any questions related to the monitoring review or the CDE recommendations, please contact the monitoring team lead, Jeff Klein, Klein_J@cde.state.co.us.

The CDE team would like to thank you and your staff for the hard work and assistance provided prior to and during the review. We look forward to working further with your staff to provide any follow-up support that is needed.

Sincerely,



Patrick Chapman
Executive Director, Federal Programs Unit

cc: Dr. Lisa Escárcega, Chief Accountability and Research Officer
Jocelyn Stephens, Learning Community Director
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