



School/District Pathway Proposal Template: Accountability Clock Hearing

Pueblo Central High School

Pueblo, Colorado

Overview

Pueblo Central High School is one of Pueblo, Colorado's original high schools. Located in the heart of the city, the school serves approximately 800 students in grades 9-12. During the last three years, the school has made small gains in terms of academic growth and post secondary readiness, yet its overall academic achievement has remained low. The school has made gains in the number of SPF points earned during the last four years rising from 34.2 points earned in 2016 to 41.5 points in 2019. Pueblo Central remains with a priority improvement plan assignment type and is now in its fifth year on the accountability pathway.

In May of 2019, Pueblo Central participated in a two day State Review Panel (SRP) process. The recommendation of the SRP indicated that the school would benefit from engagement with an external management partner. The panel did not recommend innovation status, charter conversion, or closure of the school. After careful consideration of the report recommendations, consultation with building leadership, and feedback from a variety of stakeholders including staff, parents, and community members, the district is proposing that Pueblo Central engage with external partners to support the leadership development and academic systems at the school. Additionally, the district is also proposing to broaden an existing partnership in order to support Central and to expand the capacity of the district to support schools that are on the accountability clock. Strengthening our systems will allow for a proactive and preventative approach. The selection of current partners ensures that the district focus remains on supporting school improvement and not on the management of an ever growing array of partnerships.

Our pathway proposal, aligned to the State Review Panel recommendations, is a two-pronged approach and is centered on utilizing external partners to support management of the school. First, we would expand our upcoming engagement with the University of Virginia's Partnership for Leaders in Education (UVA/PLE) to include Central High School (the district is already engaging with UVA/PLE as part of the turnaround work and directed action at Risley International). UVA/PLE will support the development, implementation, and review of these systems as part of their program. Both district and school leadership, as well as key members of the school staff will be involved in this program, ensuring that there is a consistent system-wide continuum of support for the school.

Second, the school will continue their ongoing work with the Relay Graduate School of Education (Relay GSE) and the existing Regional Support Partnership that began in 2018. The Regional Support Partnership offered by Relay GSE provides an intensive and detailed level of support for school leaders as they implement best practice school improvement initiatives. The



Relay Coach will continue to provide support, progress monitoring and oversight of the instructional program at Pueblo Central via virtual and on site visits this Spring and throughout the coming year. District leaders, including the assistant superintendent and the supervising district administrator will also continue to engage in coaching support with Relay. A continuation of this partnership will be helpful in maintaining the school's upward trajectory. As noted in the State Review Panel report: *"The State Review Panel recommends the addition of further management support and /or the continuation and expansion of the school's partnership with RELAY; this partnership has the potential for sustaining leadership support and improving the quality of instruction over time."* (p.1)

As a district, we feel a strong sense of urgency to this work and we are already involved in discussions with these organizations in order to begin laying the groundwork of this plan. Both groups have expressed an interest in engaging with our district to support Central High School and the district as a whole. Additionally, these two organizations have a history of collaboration and the support they provide is complementary to each other.

Background

Pueblo Central High School, home of the Wildcats, is one of the oldest institutions in the city of Pueblo and opened its doors over 130 years ago in 1883. The school boasts generations of Pueblo alumni and includes numerous professional athletes, a congressional medal of honor winner, and a former Colorado Governor. The school is a participant in the annual "Bell Game," with Centennial High School, which is the longest running football rivalry west of the Mississippi with the first game being played in 1892.

In 2016, The school received its AdvancED STEM/Renewable Energy certification and has a strong and engaging STEM program. There are currently four STEM based Career and Technical Education Pathways at the school. These include: Biomedical, Computer Science Engineering, and Energy and Engineering. Enrollment in these courses has increased each year while 65% of Central students have enrolled in at least one STEM or Renewable Energy course in the 2019-2020 school year. The school has many other opportunities for students, including a strong culinary arts program.

The school currently serves 800 students from throughout the city (many families have multi-generational graduates of the school). The student body is predominantly hispanic (70%) and approximately 60% of students qualify for free/ reduced lunch. Nearly 15% of the students at Pueblo Central have an Individualized Education Plan and approximately 3% of the students are English Language Learners. The school faces a number of challenges including a high percentage of students with chronic absenteeism (on average 50% of the students are absent more than 10% of the time).

The staff at Pueblo Central High School are committed to the success of their students and seek to create a positive and engaging climate as noted in both their mission and vision:



VISION STATEMENT

All Cats who graduate from Central High School STEM Magnet will have the necessary 21st Century skills to be prepared for the future of post-secondary and workforce readiness.

MISSION STATEMENT

At Central High School STEM Magnet, we are committed to embracing a culture rich in tradition, responsibility, respect, and high academia. We do this through providing a safe and nurturing environment focused on life-long learning and 21st Century skills with the support of a STEM curriculum that is relatable, realistic, problem and community based.

Analysis of student performance

During the last four years*, the school has received a “Priority Improvement” plan type assignment on their annual School Performance Framework (SPF). This past year, the school scored 41.5 points on the SPF. Despite these gains, student achievement and growth in both Reading & Writing, as well as in Mathematics, remains below district and state expectations.

The school’s academic performance on state measured assessments indicate that the school struggles with academic achievement. Their most recent SPF report demonstrates that the school “did not meet expectations” for achievement in Reading & Writing, Mathematics, or Science. This was consistent across the school and within individual subgroups including students that qualify for free/ reduced lunch, minority students, and students with a disability.

Central fares slightly better in terms of their academic growth. According to their most recent SPF, the school was “approaching expectations” for Reading & Writing, as well as for Mathematics. An “approaching expectations” rating was consistent for all subgroups in academic growth with one notable exception. Students with disabilities did not meet expectations in the assessed area of Reading & Writing.

When looking at the performance criteria for Postsecondary and Workforce readiness, the school saw similar trends in their academic performance with scores on the SAT not meeting expectations. However, the school was approaching expectations for their dropout and matriculation rates, and met expectations for their 5 year graduation rate. The graduation rate for Pueblo Central High School is 86.9% which is above the state average (81.7%).

The school cites a number of “root causes” that have contributed to the trend of low academic performance at the school. Key causes that have been identified in their school improvement plan include:

- 1) The lack of a system for utilizing research-based best practices within the classroom: *An emphasis on instructional strategies and staff development in best practice teaching has been limited.*



- 2) Limited intervention for struggling students: *Students who enter the school behind, have limited options to receive support in regaining the knowledge/ skills needed for academic success.*
- 3) Insufficient progress monitoring to measure student progress toward grade level expectations: *The school has lacked a consistent, and comprehensive system for monitoring student progress.*

*There was a pause in the accountability clock timeline in 2015. In 2014, the school was rated at "Priority Improvement."

Improvement Efforts

The district and school have taken steps to create positive change and improvement at the school during the last several years. In 2017, the Assistant Principal was promoted to the principalship and was tasked with improving the overall culture and climate at the school which had deteriorated in part due to a constant turnover of the principalship. She has worked diligently with her leadership and staff to create a positive environment that is friendly and supportive of students. The State Review Panel reports that a variety of stakeholders feel positive about the climate of the school under the leadership of the principal. Now that a strong school culture has been re-established, the leadership is poised to focus on the instructional practices needed in order for the school to make gains.

In 2018, the school joined the Colorado Turnaround Network and has participated in this cohort of schools for the last two years. Through the network, they have received ongoing leadership development and support as well as an annual budget that can be used to implement key aspects of their improvement planning. For example, last year, the school utilized a reading support program to serve as an intervention resource for students. The school has also utilized Turnaround Network funds to support additional training for department chairs at the school. In 2019, the school sent their department chair team to participate in the Instructional Leaders Professional Development (ILPD) program through the Relay Graduate School of Education (Relay GSE).

There has also been an investment in the administrative leadership team during the last few years. The principal has participated in the Relay GSE National Principals Academy Fellowship training during her first year leading the school. Currently, both assistant principals are in the program in order to build a common and consistent understanding that allows the team to more effectively collaborate in the implementation of school improvement strategies.

The leadership has utilized their learning from participation in these programs to strengthen their staff's ability to analyze and utilize instructional data for decision-making. They have begun to implement departmental weekly data meetings that allow colleagues to review student data and make decisions regarding instructional next steps on a regular basis. They have also engaged staff with a review of their annual state assessment data so that all stakeholders are aware of the challenges and trends facing the school.

The district also has a fully committed Executive Director of Secondary Education this year (previous incumbents had resigned midyear leaving a gap in available support) that supervises the school and works with the leadership team on their instructional program. This leader has many years of experience as a high school administrator and can provide both perspective and practical advice to the leadership team at Central.

Although the school has not yet come off of the accountability clock, the efforts to date have helped the school to make modest academic gains and allowed it to draw very near an “improvement” rating for the first time in a number of years. The school continues to need additional support and guidance moving forward in order to fully realize a successful academic program.

Path

In accordance with the recommendation of the State Review Panel, along with input from staff and stakeholders, the district is proposing that Central High School utilizes the “External Management” pathway to help leadership effectively manage the school and implement the necessary next steps towards improvement. The state review panel report ranked the school as “effective” in terms of *“readiness and apparent capacity to engage productively with, and benefit from, the assistance provided by an external partner”* (p. 3). We believe that the school is making progress and a continued focus on the existing partnerships and efforts will lead to the school moving off of the accountability clock within the next two years.

There were a number of factors that were considered in relation to the pathway selection at Central based on the available options. At this time, innovation status is not considered the most effective pathway in that the changes needed at the school do not definitively require the implementation of specific waivers. The implementation of improvement strategies can occur within the existing policies of the school and district, current negotiated agreements, and state statutes. The development of an innovation plan for the school would be time intensive and pull the focus away from the work currently underway. Furthermore, unlike other innovation schools in the district, Central would be the only High School, and the opportunities for collaboration with other innovation schools would be limited.

Conversion of Central High School to a charter is also not an option that is considered. As noted in the State Review Panel Report, “. . .*the need to improve school structures and supports such as business management, operations, or human resources that are typically managed by a charter school were not identified as needs by any stakeholder groups.*” (p.2)

Closure is also an option that is not supported by the district or the Pueblo Community. Central is a “legacy institution” within the city and has broad support for remaining open. This was also indicated during recent facility master plan discussions held by the district during the past 18 months. Although Central is older, its overall physical condition is much better than many other

secondary schools, and will remain an “anchor” facility as the district moves forward with new construction and repairs across the city. The location of the school is also key in that it is accessible to a number of neighborhoods in the city.

The selection of an external management pathway has included the opportunity for a variety of stakeholders to share perspectives and offer feedback on the proposed options. Last October, upon receipt of the State Review Panel report, school and district leadership held a meeting with staff to review the report findings, including strengths and challenges, and to share the panel’s recommendation of external management. Staff had the opportunity to give input with regard to the strengths and needs of the school, as well as to identify areas where they felt additional support would be helpful. As we engage further with partners, we will be sharing their recommendations and suggestions. A similar stakeholder review and discussion took place as part of a community stakeholder meeting to discuss the school’s performance framework and unified improvement plan.

The engagement of UVA/ PLE as a partner will support Pueblo Central’s leadership in establishing and maintaining a strong system of accountability and will provide the school with a sustainable approach to school improvement work. The engagement with UVA/ PLE as a partner is timely in that the district is already working with the program as part of the accountability pathway for Risley International Academy of Innovation.

By broadening this partnership to include Central High School, Pueblo District 60 leadership is hoping to deepen their understandings of how to best support our most struggling secondary schools. UVA/PLE’s work with district level leadership will ensure that clear and effective district systems are put into place and that these systems are aligned to appropriately support the schools. With UVA’s focus and specialization in systems analysis and development, they will work collaboratively with district staff to build capacity around monitoring the implementation of initiatives and to hold school leaders accountable for implementing instructional plans. Both Central High School, Risley, and District 60 administration are committed to examining current practices and making the necessary adjustments and adaptation to increase efficacy for school improvement.

In addition to the partnership with UVA/ PLE, the continued partnership with Relay GSE will allow the school leadership and school’s supervisor to have frequent interactions with a coach that can guide leaders in the day to day steps necessary to implement instructional improvements and turnaround strategies. They will continue to serve as a critical partner to address potential challenges with implementation and serve as an additional layer of accountability for the school. The school has already seen the benefit of this partnership.



School/District Design Plan - See Rubrics for More Details

University of Virginia's Partnership for Leaders in Education:

The proposed external management pathway will allow Central High School to develop a systemic approach to improvement and leverage the efforts already underway at the school. The University of Virginia program is already scheduled to conduct their District Readiness Assessment in December as part of their work for Risley International and so it was logical to incorporate Central as a component of this work. Having an additional partner school in this work will allow the UVA/PLE engagement to have a broader impact for the district as a whole.

UVA/PLE's work is broken down into four phases:

Engagement: UVA works with district level leadership to identify strongest needs and to leverage opportunities. This includes an on site readiness assessment and multiple engagements to develop the vision and scope of the work (December, 2019-March, 2020).

Design: UVA/PLE works to create short and long term strategies from the readiness assessment. This phase includes a "boot camp" for district leadership, an on site visit, and multiple engagements to work on change leadership formulation. Collaboration between the district and UVA/PLE at this phase is ongoing with on-site and virtual interactions (March, 2020-May, 2020).

Activate: This phase takes place during year one (June 2020-June, 2021) of implementation and includes a week long summer intensive training at UVA/PLE prior to the start of the school year. As leaders at the school and district level begin to implement the improvement strategies, UVA is on site four times throughout the year to monitor and support implementation. There are also leadership summits that allow the team to make adjustments based on the results of the implementation plan. Collaboration through on site and off site interactions remains continuous during this phase of the partnership.

Adapt: This is the fourth phase of the partnership and takes place during the second year (July 2021-June 2022) of the partnership. This phase is informed by the successes and challenges of the first year and provides an opportunity for leaders to "synthesize" the outcomes of the prior year and to develop additional strategies moving forward.

UVA/PLE also offers districts and schools the opportunity to extend to additional years at the request of the district.

Relay Graduate School of Education:

The continued partnership with Relay GSE ensures that the Pueblo Central High School sustains their ongoing improvement efforts with guidance and support from an outside entity. Relay GSE provides frequent touchpoints for school leaders as they implement a "playbook" of action steps that are crafted to address the instructional program at the school. Through this partnership, school leaders engage in virtual coaching sessions to discuss ongoing initiatives that serve to develop the knowledge and skill of the principal in a variety of areas such as utilization of curricular resources, observation and feedback, classroom observation, progress monitoring, data driven instruction via weekly team data meetings, and staff development



activities. Currently, the Relay GSE coach also conducts 4 site visits at the school throughout the year to directly observe the instructional strategies being implemented. On the basis of these visits, the playbook may be adjusted based on the level of implementation taking place. As part of the pathway proposal, the district is exploring the possibility of increasing the number of site visits at Central based on the capacity and availability of the Relay GSE coach.

The work moving forward will include the following timeline. This timeline is flexible based on the collaborative efforts of our partnerships and the finalization of our contracts and agreements with each team.

Month	Activity	Participant
December 2019	UVA - District Readiness Assessment	District team
January 2020	Relay – Regional Support visit to Central (3rd visit in 2019-2020)	School team, with district team as participants
March 2020	UVA - District Boot Camp (off site)	District team
April 2020	UVA – Kick-off visit to Central, School Partnership Readiness Assessment	School team, with district team as participants
May 2020	Relay – Regional Support visit to Central HS	School team, with district team as participants
June 2020	UVA – Attend week-long professional learning	School & district team
June 2020	Relay – Supervisor to attend NPSA	School Supervisor
Sept 2020	UVA & Relay – On-site visit to Central HS	School & district team
November 2020	Relay – Regional Support visit to Central HS	School team, with district team as participants
January 2020	UVA – Attend 5 day professional learning on data-driven instruction	School & district team

Collaboration and Decision-making

Pueblo District 60 is committed to implementing the recommendations of these partners to ensure that the necessary steps are taken to see improvements at Central High School. As discussions with these partners have evolved, they have identified several prerequisite



non-negotiables for moving our partnership forward. For example, during Relay’s November 5th visit to Central, they recommended that Central adopt a new curriculum in ELA and Math better aligned to the SAT and core content standards. The school, with full district support, immediately took action to make this happen. New curriculum implementation in both subjects will begin on January 6th. The UVA framework is based on research, best practices, and proven success. As a result of the UVA Pueblo District 60 Readiness Assessment in mid-December, we anticipate and look forward to UVA’s recommended next steps.

At present, the district has committed to the following prerequisites as identified by UVA/PLE and Relay GSE:

Currently Identified commitments and partnership prerequisites 12.5.19

Description	Pueblo District 60	UVA-PLE	Relay GSE
A district team will participate throughout the length of the program including all professional development trainings, on-site visits, and other components of the UVA-PLE partnership.	X	X	
The district will provide prioritized support and accountability needed to Central for urgent and sustainable success.	X	X	
The district agrees to utilize a competency-based selection process to identify and/or retain principals to lead transformation in schools.	X	X	
District leadership and staff will participate in a District Readiness Assessment to evaluate the capacity and willingness of the district to engage with UVA-PLE.	X	X	
The superintendent and his/ her designee(s) will communicate the urgency for needed change and the importance of making dramatic gains in student achievement and opportunities; compel action; and be available to strategically support the transformation effort and the UVA-PLE partnership.	X	X	
The district will provide an aligned curriculum for ELA and Math with strategic support from district leadership including multiple days of curriculum professional development in each subject to ensure implementation	X		X
The district will engage in monthly touch points with district leaders to align strategy with other service providers (UVA, etc)	X	X	X
The district will ensure that UVA and Relay GSE coaches will have the ability to freely observe teachers and principals and provide feedback	X	X	X



The district will ensure that partners have timely access to data with support from local director of data	X	X	X
The district commits to ensuring that all participants in the partnership are accountable for all Relay Deliverables including calendars, professional development plans, video submissions for feedback to leaders culture plans & rubrics utilized at the school level. The district will hold participants accountable to all Relay deliverables including calendars, professional development plans, video submissions, culture plans/ rubrics.	X	X	X
The district will ensure the use of common interim assessments for ELA and Math.	X		X
The district will ensure that school and district leaders participate in off-site professional development activities as identified by UVA-PLE and Relay GSE	X	X	X
The district will support partnership recommendations in the area of Master scheduling, intervention programming, and special population programming including exceptional student services	X	X	X
Support school in effective turnaround criteria and framework for recruitment and retention of teachers	X	X	X
The district and school commit to engage in leadership coaching for district and school personnel.	X	X	X

Identifying the specific roles of each partner in conjunction with district and school leadership will be a component of the engage/ design phase with UVA. The district recognizes the value of the recommendations of the external partners and is committed to implementing their recommendations that are with our logistical and financial capability.

Goals & Progress Monitoring Plan

The district will work with UVA/PLE during the engage/ design phase of the partnership to ensure that appropriate indicators are identified for progress monitoring, and both UVA/PLE and Relay will minimally engage in quarterly progress monitoring reviews of the school. The ultimate goal of this partnership is to ensure that Central High School moves off of the accountability clock to an improvement or performance level, and that this level is sustained. We anticipate that the following performance targets will be identified as outcomes for the school as noted in the most recent draft of their 2019 Unified Improvement Plan (UIP):

Academic Achievement:

- 2019-2020: The mean scale score for SAT in Math will be 439.9. The mean scale score for PSAT in Math will be 415.5.



- 2020-2021: The mean scale score for SAT in Math will be 488.0. The mean scale score for PSAT in Math will be 448.4.
- 2019-2020: The mean scale score for SAT in ELA will be 458.0. The mean scale score for PSAT in ELA will be 427.5.
- 2020-2021: The mean scale score for SAT in ELA will be 501.3 The mean scale score for PSAT in ELA will be 505.

Academic Growth:

- 2019-2020: The median growth percentile in math for all students will be 60.
- 2020-2021: The median growth percentile in math for all students will be 60 or higher.
- 2019-2020: The median growth percentile in ELA for all students will be 60
- 2020-2021: The median growth percentile in ELA for all students will be 60 or higher.

Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness:

- 2019-2020: Students with disabilities graduation rate will be 75% (4,5,6, or 7 year).
- 2020-2021: Students with disabilities graduation rate will be 75 or higher% (4,5,6, or 7 year).
- 2019-2020: Pueblo Central's graduation rate will be 88.9% (best of 4,5,6, or 7 year).
- 2020-2021: Pueblo Central's rate will be 88.9% or higher (best of 4,5,6, or 7 year).
- 2019-2020: The Dropout Rate for all students will be 3.0%.
- 2020-2021: The Dropout Rate for all students will be 2%.
- 2019-2020: The matriculation rate for all students will be 55%.
- 2020-2021: The matriculation rate for all students will be 61.1%.

Appendices

- [2019 School Performance Framework](#)
- [2019 Unified Improvement Plan \(Draft\)](#)
- [UVA/ PLE Program brochure](#)
- [October 2019 State Review Panel Report and Recommendations](#)