COLORADO
Department of Education

Newly Identified Sites Webinar

September 16, 2026
9:00-10:00 am

Shannon Allen, Office of Continuous Support

Sammi Swennes, Federal Programs Support Unit



Introductions



Sammi Swennes
School Improvement Coordinator
Federal Programs & Supports Unit



Shannon Allen
Accountability & Planning Specialist
Office of Continuous Improvement

What about you?
Please share your name, role, district/school, and your favorite fall activity.

Virtual meeting practices

- This meeting will be recorded.
- Use the chat feature to ask clarifying questions throughout the presentation.
- Please mute your sound if you are not speaking.
- Take note of questions. There will be time for non-recorded Q&A at the end of this presentation.
- Slides and the recording will be posted to the UIP General Resources webpage.



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Our plan

Agenda

- Colorado's Accountability System
- State Accountability Overview, Process & Planning Requirements
- Federal Accountability Overview & Requirements
- Unified Improvement Planning
- CDE support options and resources
- Questions & Answers

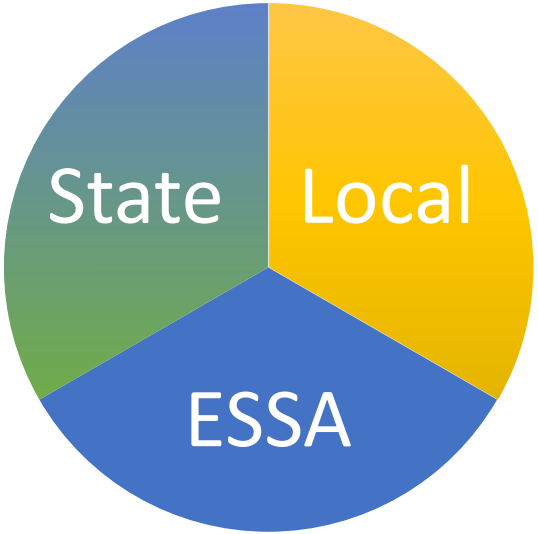
Objectives

- Understand Colorado's accountability system and process and planning requirements for state- and federally-identified districts and schools
- Access relevant CDE support and resources



Colorado's Accountability System

Colorado's Accountability System



Federal Accountability

- Every Student Succeeds Act
- Schools on improvement (Comprehensive Support, Targeted Support, Additional-Targeted Support)

State Accountability

- Colorado Educational Accountability Act
- Performance frameworks, Improvement planning, Accountability clock

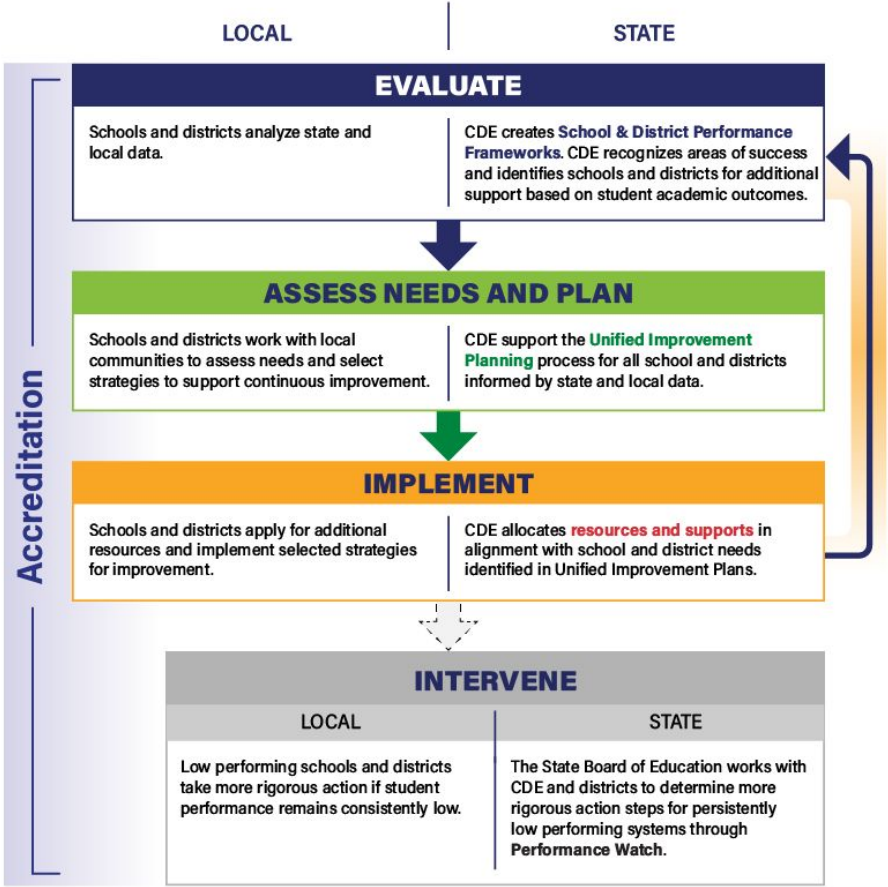
Local Accountability

- Locally elected boards oversee district/school leader and district/charter policies (ex. strategic plan)

State Accountability | CDE's Theory of Action

- **Evaluate** performance.
- Use data to **drive improvement**.
- Provide **support** and, if necessary, **intervention** to schools and districts.
- **Engage stakeholders** throughout.

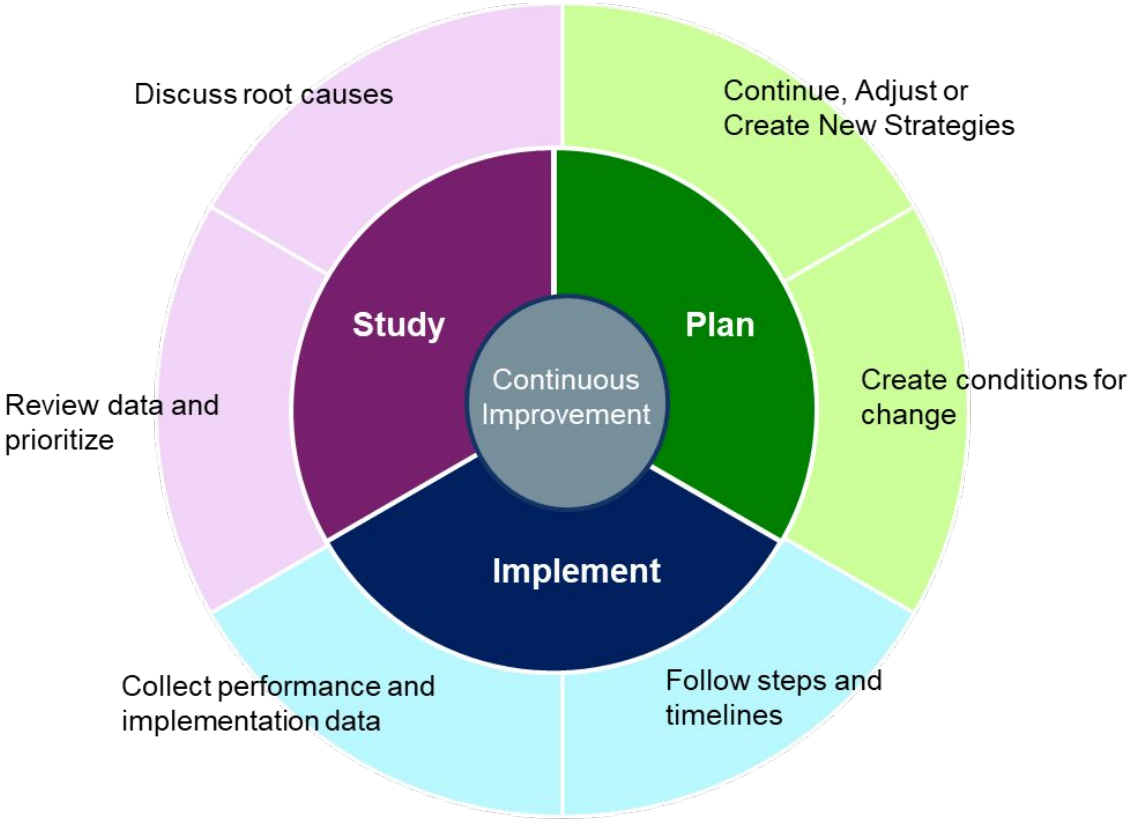
These elements contribute to **district accreditation**.



CDE’s Accountability Elements



District-level Continuous Improvement: Theory of Action

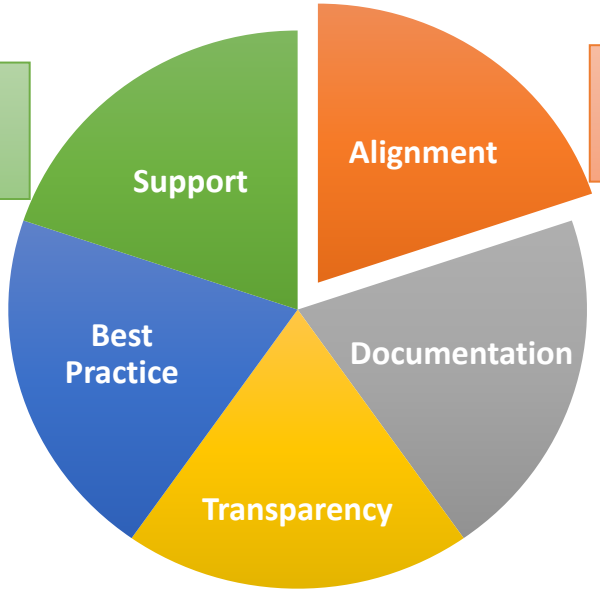


Unified Improvement Plan (UIP) | Multiple Purposes

CDE has developed both a **process** and **template** to support schools and districts in their continuous improvement efforts.

A mechanism for triggering additional supports through CDE (especially for schools on the accountability clock).

A statewide strategy to promote improvement planning based on best practice, including use of state and local data and engagement in a continuous improvement cycle.



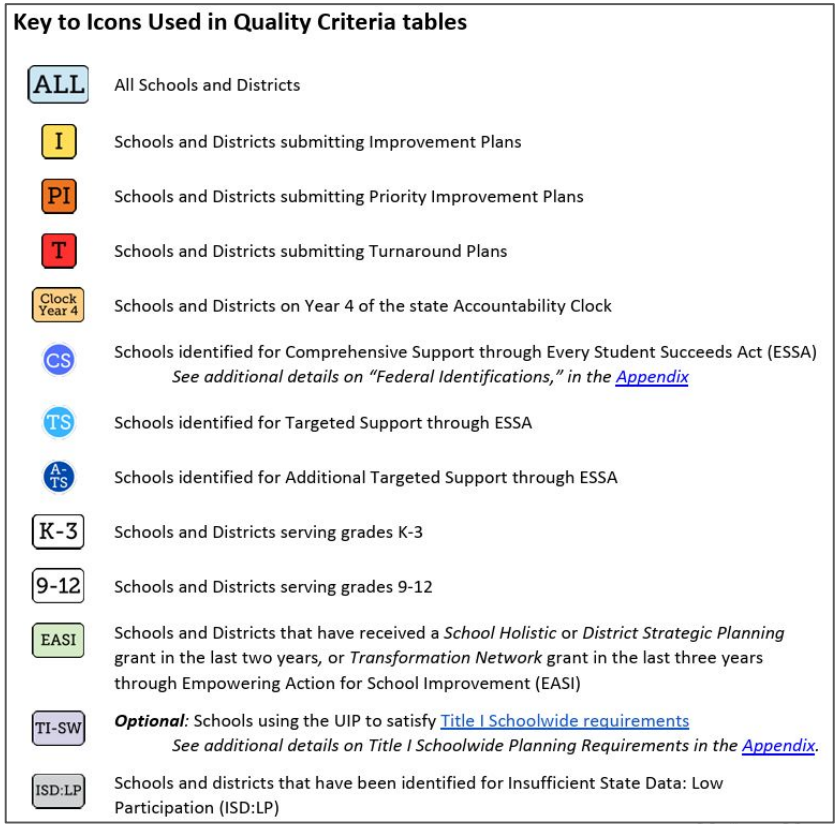
A system to **align improvement planning requirements for state and federal accountability** into a single plan.

A common format for schools and districts to document improvement planning efforts. Schools/districts on the accountability clock must demonstrate a coherent plan for dramatic change and adjustments over time. Reviews conducted by CDE and State Review Panel.

A process for including multiple voices, including staff, families and community representatives. **Plans are posted publicly.**

UIP Quality Criteria

- Summarizes all planning requirements; state- and federal-requirements listed together, indicated by icons.
- Identifies where they should be included.
- Webpage
  - Criteria in English and Spanish = how to meet state and federal requirements
  - Rubric = what CDE uses to review UIPs
  - ESSA Identification only = how to meet federal requirements





State Accountability Overview

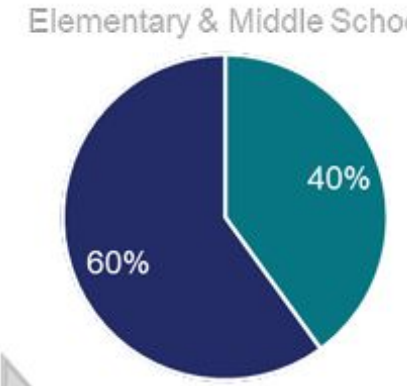
Draft 2026 State Accountability Timeline

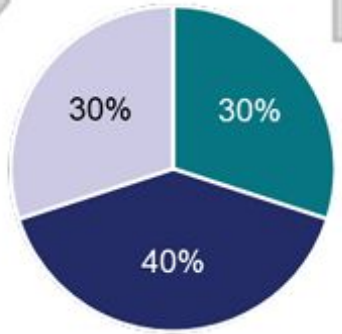
Anticipated Timeframe	Activities/Actions
Jul 1	Districts received ACCESS Growth Data
Aug 13	Districts received performance framework data files for Achievement, Growth, Postsecondary & Workforce Readiness indicators, and Participation Data; UIP and Secure Data Explorer (N of 1) Data Dashboards available
Aug 20	Public Release of Colorado Growth Data Results. Alternative Education Campus (AEC) Designations Finalized. Public Data Dashboards updated.
Aug 27 - Sept 3	Preliminary Performance Frameworks Released to Districts. Public Release 3 days later. Performance data updated in online UIP system for assurances and plan requirements.
Early-Mid Sept	AEC Performance Frameworks Released to Districts. Public Release 3 days later. Identification letter to districts with schools on the accountability clock (i.e., Priority Improvement, Turnaround, On Watch) and/or ESSA Identifications (i.e., CS, TS, A-TS).
Sept 25	**Accreditation Form Submissions Due - *ALL Districts*.**
Oct 15	**Unified Improvement Plan (UIP) Submissions Due.**
	Final Request to Reconsider (R2R) Materials Due - *Participating Districts*.
Nov 12-13 (SBE Meeting)	**District Accreditation Ratings & School Plan Types Finalized for Districts/Schools *not* participating in R2R.**
Dec 9-10 (SBE Meeting)	**District Accreditation Ratings & School Plan Types Finalized for Districts/Schools participating in R2R.**

*SBE = State Board of Education

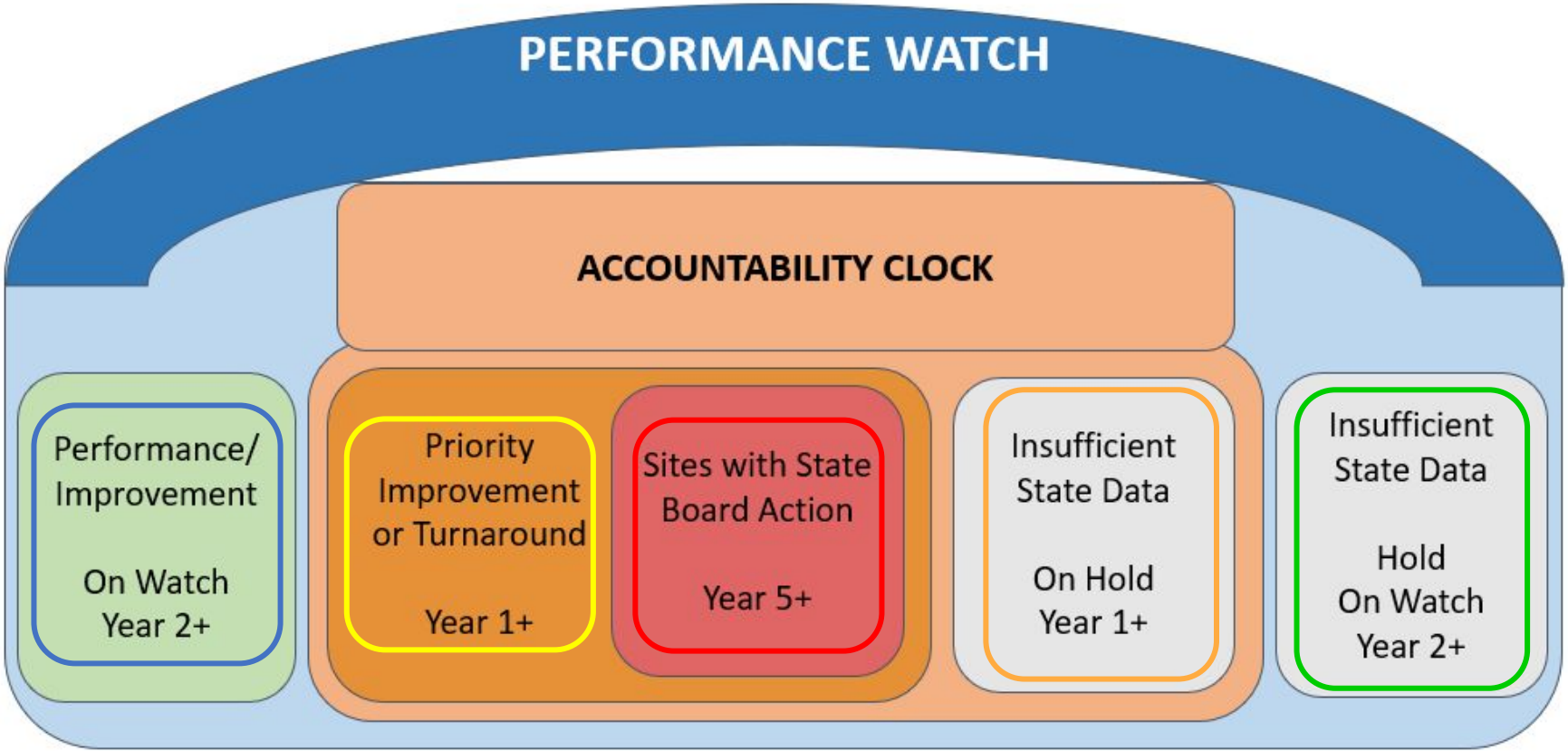
Performance Frameworks

Performance Indicator	Weight
Academic Achievement	40% Elementary & Middle Schools 30% High Schools & Districts
Academic Growth	60% Elementary & Middle Schools 40% High Schools & Districts
Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness	30% High Schools & Districts





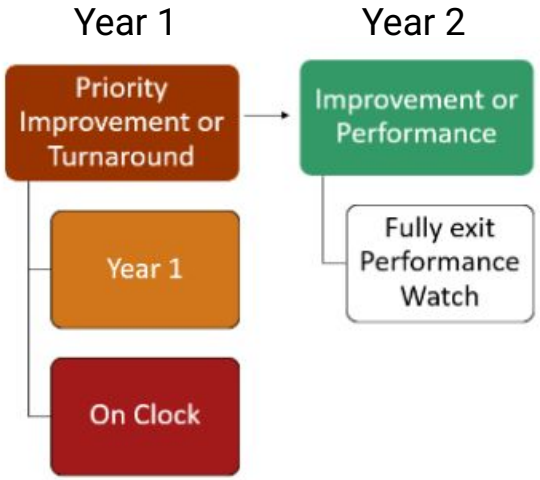




[Performance Watch Expectations](#) webpage

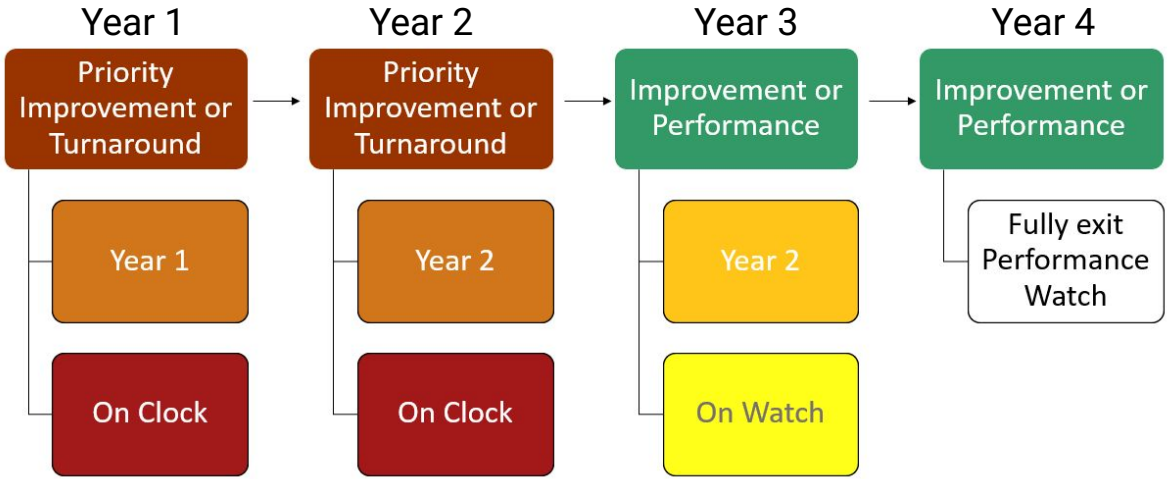
Example 1: Exit Performance Watch after One Year Identified

This is the most common progression since most schools tend to earn Improvement or Performance after Year 1 identified on the clock. **~ One Year On, One Year Off ~**



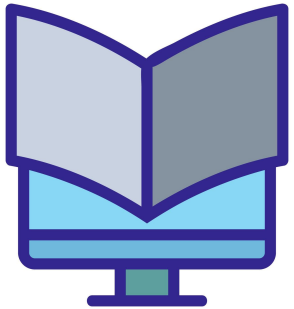
Example 2: Progression Fully Exiting Performance Watch

This example is most notable that after being on the clock for 2 years because of a PI/T rating for two consecutive years, the site then earned an Improvement/Performance rating for two consecutive years, allowing the site to fully exit in Year 4.



Performance Watch and Accountability Clock Resources

- Performance Watch (webpage), outlines expectations w/ resources
- District Accountability Handbook and Fact Sheet
- Identification Supplement
- Accountability Resources (webpage)





State Requirements for Identified Sites

Year 1+ | Annual Requirements, summary

Type	What	I	PI	T
Stakeholder Engagement	Parent Notification and Local Board Hearing & Adoption (Schools)		✔	✔
Planning Requirements	Improving Math Outcomes (Schools & Districts)	✔	✔	✔
	READ Act (**ALL** K-3 Serving, Schools & Districts)	✔	✔	✔
	Early Learning Needs Assessment (K-3 Serving, Schools & Districts*)		✔	✔
	Turnaround Strategies (Schools & Districts)			✔
	Parent/Family Engagement (Schools)		✔	✔

*The Early Learning Needs Assessment applies to Districts accredited PI/T and with schools operating under a Priority Improvement or Turnaround plan.

Stakeholder Engagement

Parent Notification	School Accountability Meeting	Public meeting with local School Board	UIP Board Adoption and submission
The district must notify parents of the students enrolled in the school within 30 calendar days of receiving initial plan type assignment.	The SAC is expected to meet to provide input on the improvement plan prior to the public meeting of the local board.	The date for the public meeting of the local board must be at least 30 calendar days after the date on which the district provides the written notice.	The plan must be adopted by the local school board and submitted by October 15. Demonstrate compliance by marking the assurance.

Schedule these meetings now!

Planning Requirements | **Improving Math Outcomes**

- ✓ Analyze local and state math performance data from at least the last two years. Disaggregate data in multiple ways to identify students who are below grade level or struggling in math.
- ✓ Provide a rationale describing performance patterns that led to prioritizing math *or* explanation if not.
- ✓ Set ambitious and attainable target(s) for reducing the number of students who are below grade level expectations or are struggling in math.
- ✓ Develop and Action Plan with evidence-based action steps that will likely have a meaningful impact for students identified as being below grade level or struggling in math.

UIP Template tabs:

- ❑ Assurances & Requirements
- ❑ Priorities & Targets
- ❑ Action Plan & Progress Monitoring

CDE Resource: Mathematics

Planning Requirements | **READ Act**

K-3

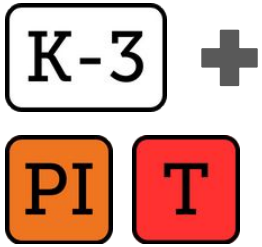
- ✓ Analyze K-3 READ Act assessment performance data from at least the last two school years. Disaggregate data by grade level, by the percentage of students who have significant reading deficiencies, and by the percentage of students who achieved grade level expectations in reading.
- ✓ Provide a rationale describing performance patterns that led to prioritizing early literacy *or* explanation if not.
- ✓ Set target(s) to a) ensure that each student achieves grade level expectations by the end of grade 3 and for b) reducing the number of students who have significant reading deficiencies.
- ✓ Include scientifically and evidence based Action Steps that can reasonably be expected to have a meaningful impact for K-3 students identified as having significant reading deficiencies.

UIP Template tabs:

- ❑ Assurances & Requirements
- ❑ Priorities & Targets
- ❑ Action Plan & Progress Monitoring

CDE Resource: CO READ Act

Planning Requirements | **Early Learning Needs Assessment**



✓ Summarize findings from an Early Learning Needs Assessment (ELNA) that meets the minimum requirements and commits to next steps based on those findings.

UIP Template tabs:

❑ Root Causes & Strategies

CDE Resource: Improvement Planning and Early Learning

Planning Requirements | **Turnaround Strategies**

✓ Identify a state-required turnaround strategy and articulate an action plan that is aligned to the needs identified in the data analysis. Select one strategy from dropdown in the UIP Online System:

Employing a lead turnaround partner.	Reorganizing the oversight and management structure in the district.	Converting to an innovation school or school zone.	Converting to a charter school.	Renegotiating or restructuring a charter contract.	Research-based strategies focused on early learning and development.	Other actions of comparable or greater significance or effect.

UIP Template tabs:

❑ Root Causes & Strategies *(Turnaround Strategy box)*

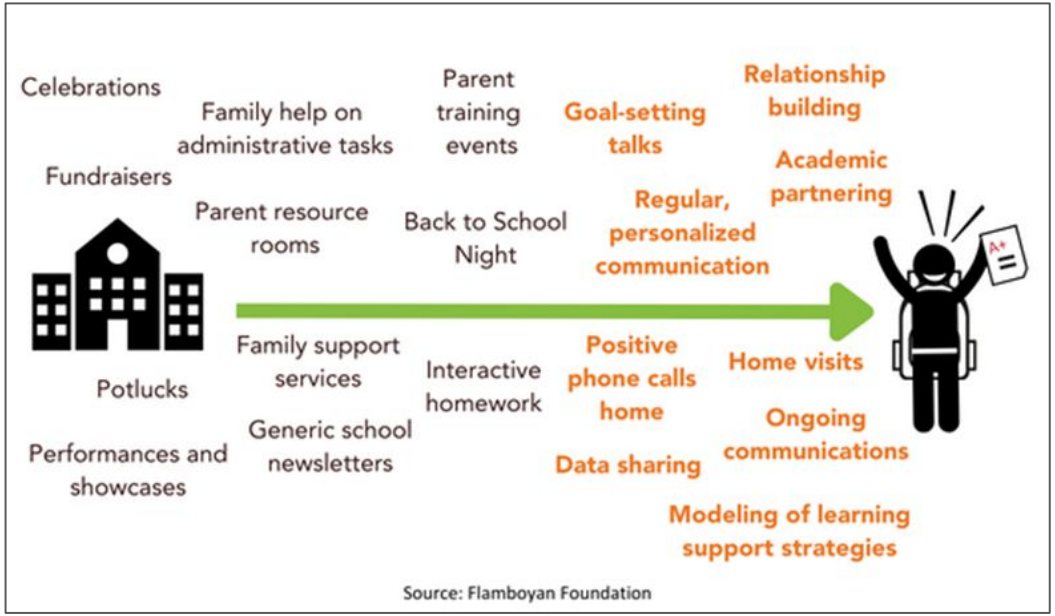
Planning Requirements | **Actions Promoting Family Engagement**

- ✓ Include several high leverage Action Steps, aligned with Family, School and Community Partnering (FSCP) standards, to increase family engagement at the school.

UIP Template tabs:

- ❑ Action Plan & Progress Monitoring

FSCP Continuum of High Impact Strategies



CDE Resource: [Family, School, and Community Partnerships]



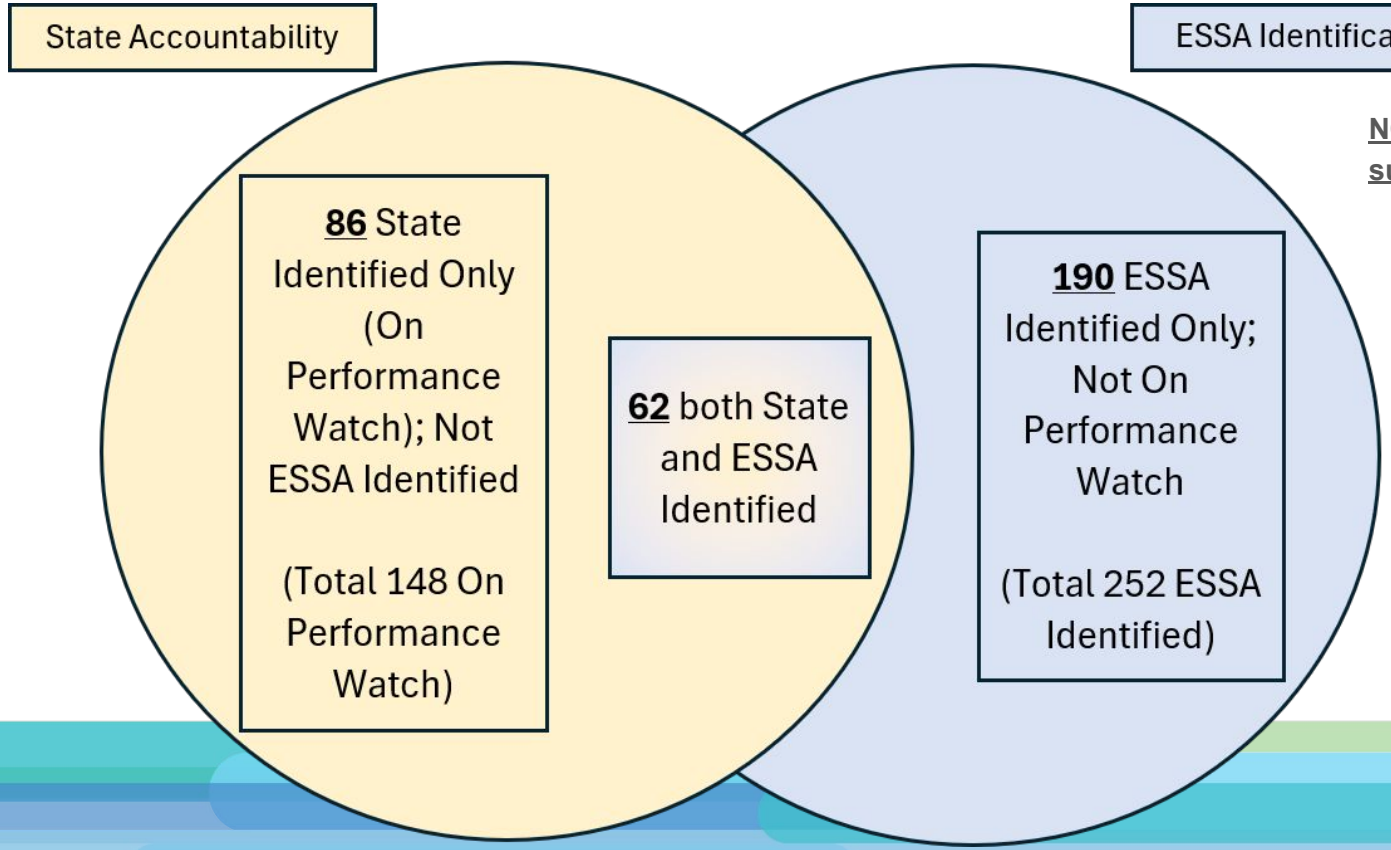
Federal Accountability: Overview & Requirements

Federal Identification Categories

In addition to state identification, Colorado schools can also be identified for support and improvement under ESSA.

- Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CS)
  - CS - Lowest 5%
  - CS - Low Graduation Rate
  - CS - Former ATS
- Targeted Support and Improvement (TS)
  - TS
  - Additional Targeted Support (ATS)

Preliminary Fall 2026 State and Federal Identifications



NOTE: Numbers are subject to change

- Based on ***preliminary*** SPF ratings
- Does not include AEC frameworks
- Does not include K-2 ESSA identifications

Unified Improvement Plan: Multiple Purposes

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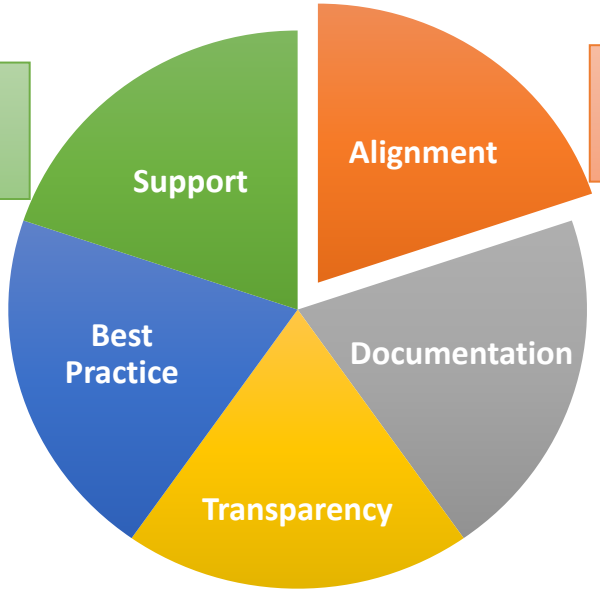

A system to align improvement planning requirements for state and federal accountability into a single plan.

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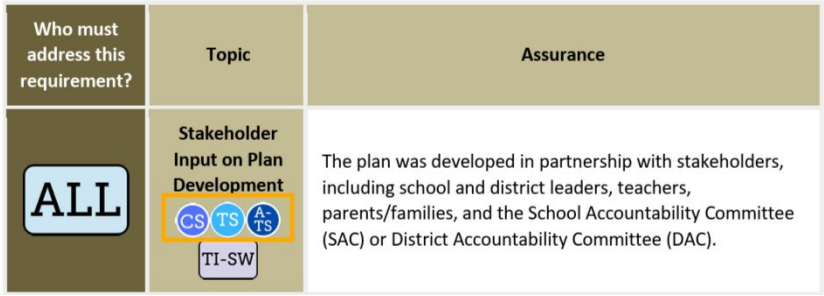
A process for including multiple voices, including staff, families and community representatives. Plans are posted publicly.

Planning Requirements for CS, TS, and ATS Schools

ESSA Planning Requirements	UIP Section	CS	TS	ATS
Plans must be developed with stakeholders (including school leaders, teachers, and parents).	Assurances	X	X	X
Stakeholders were made aware of reasons for ESSA identification to inform plan development.	Assurances	X	X	X
Plan is informed by student performance against state-determined long-term goals on each accountability indicator in ESSA.	Student Performance Priorities	X	X	X
Plan includes evidenced-based interventions.	Root Causes and Strategies→ Major Improvement Strategies	X	X	X
Plan includes a school-level needs assessment.	Assurances; Priorities and Targets → Student Performance Priority Evidence and Reasoning	X	Recommended but Not Required	Recommended but Not Required
Plan identifies resource inequities.	Root Causes and Strategies → Root Causes	X	Not Required	X
Plan addresses resource inequities.	Implementation and Actions → Action Steps	X	Not Required	X

Resources to Support Planning

- ESSA Planning Requirements
- Resource Inequities Planning Requirements
  - For CS and ATS Identified Schools
- Unified Improvement Planning: Quality Criteria
  - Look for the CS, TS, and ATS Icons!



Who must address this requirement?	Topic	Assurance
ALL	Stakeholder Input on Plan Development CS TS A-TS TI-SW	The plan was developed in partnership with stakeholders, including school and district leaders, teachers, parents/families, and the School Accountability Committee (SAC) or District Accountability Committee (DAC).

Please join the Federal Programs & Support Unit Office Hours on October 8th @ 2:00 PM to learn more.

Register in advance



UIP Submission due no later than **October 15**

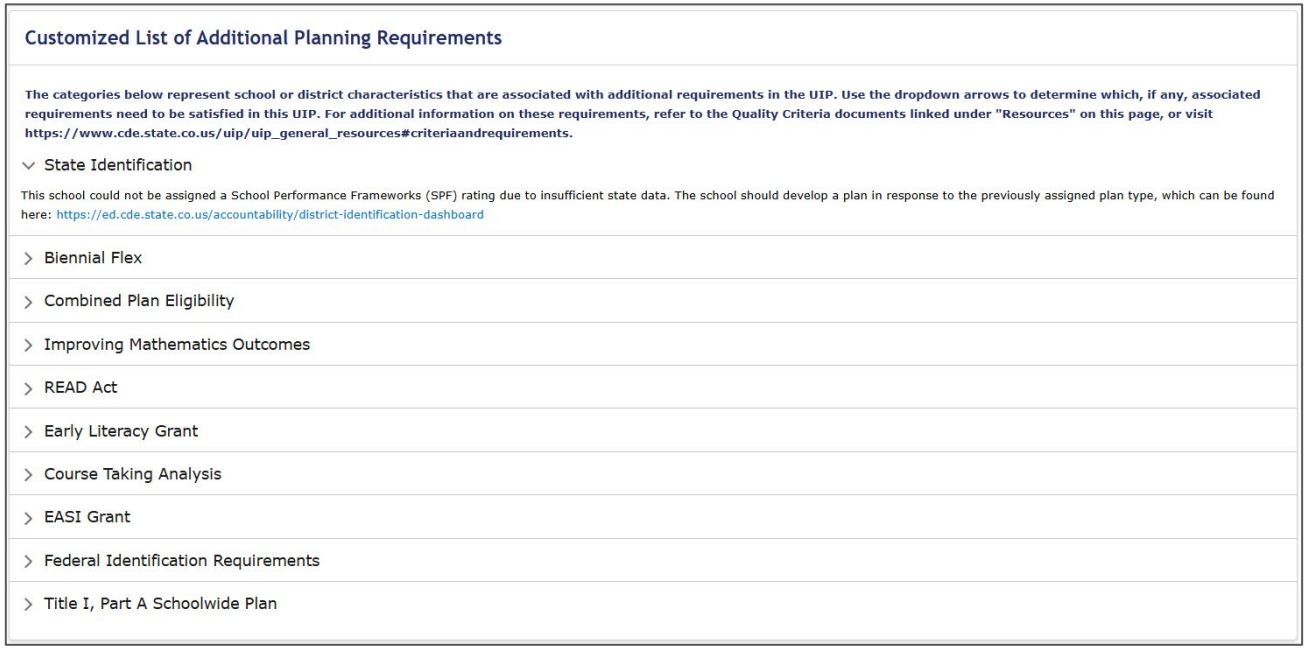
Unified Improvement Plan (UIP)

UIP Template | **Customized List of Additional Planning Requirements**



To view all requirements for your plan:

1. Login to UIP Online System, open the UIP and go to the Assurances & Requirements tab.
2. Scroll down.
3. Use carrots to access information about each additional planning requirement.

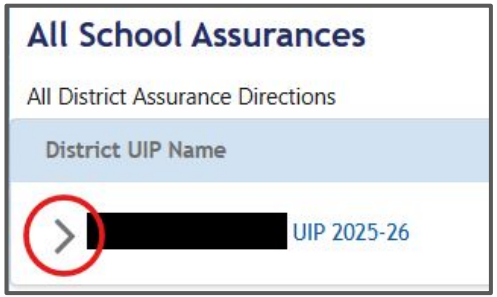


UIP Template | **Assurances Dashboard for District Users**

To view all assurances for the schools in your district (District users only):

1. Login to UIP Online System, open the district's current UIP 'Details' tab
2. From the 'Details' tab, select the dropdown menu right of the '"Submit for Public Posting" button.
3. Select "All Assurances" in order to view applicable assurances for your district.





4. Then, click the caret to the left of your district name in order to drop down a list of schools in your district and their applicable assurances.

UIP Flexibility | **Submission on January 15th for eligible plans**

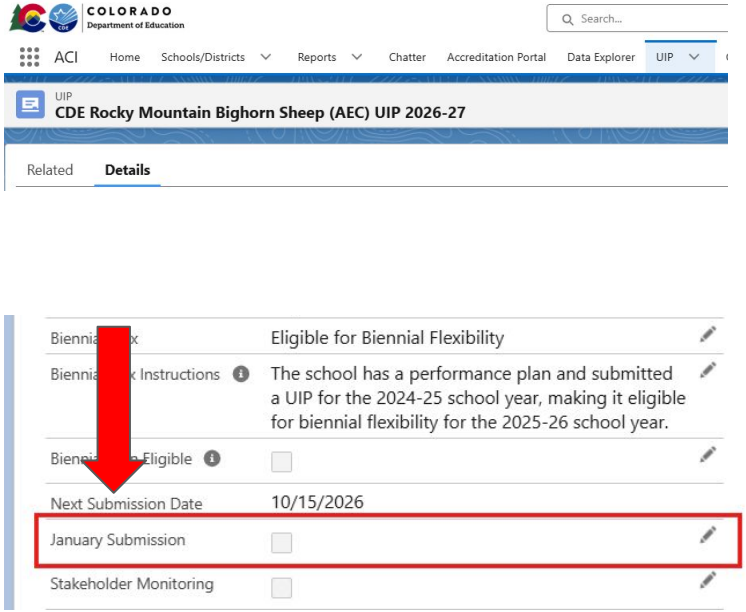
January 15th submission flexibility for:

- ❏ Newly identified (Year 1) as Priority Improvement or Turnaround based on the School/District Frameworks.
- ❏ Newly identified (Year 1) as Comprehensive Support based on federal ESSA identifications.
- ❏ Participating in the Request to Reconsider process.

Eligible schools must seek approval from their district to submit in Jan.

Flexibility is at the the district's discretion.

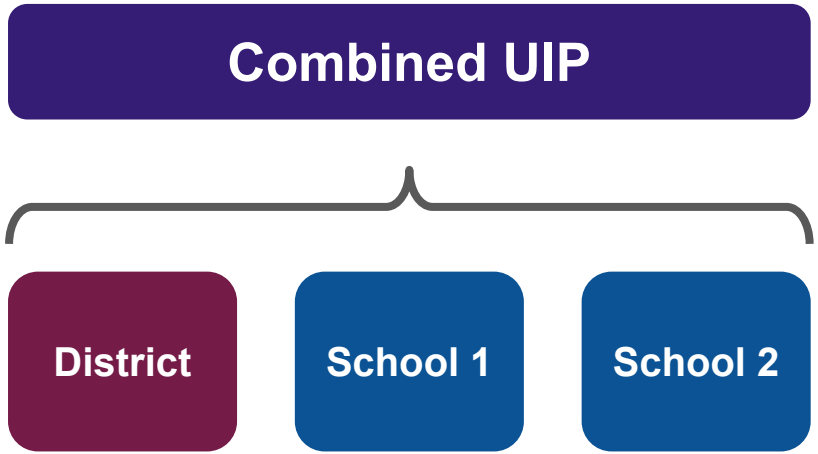
Only a accountability contact, district admin, or district user can see and select this option.



UIP Flexibility | **A Quick Note on Combined Plans**

Districts (or charter school networks in the same district) with fewer than 1,200 students are eligible to submit a single combined plan that covers both the district as a whole and the schools within that district (or a subset of those schools).

Combined plans must satisfy the requirements for each of the individual schools covered in that combined UIP.



CDE Review of UIPs

CDE reviews state- and federally CS-identified plans.

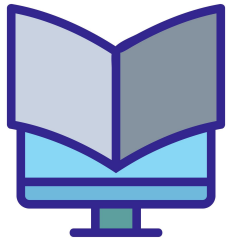
Two approaches, both use the Quality Criteria and provide written feedback:

1. Coaching & Conversations: meet with CDE staff to receive proactive feedback that informs this year's plan *before* submission.
2. Document Review of UIP to receive proactive feedback that informs next year's plan *after* submission.



UIP Resources

- UIP Quality Criteria & Requirements
- UIP General Resources
- UIP 101 Videos





CDE Supports for Identified Schools and Districts

Progression of CDE Monitoring and Support | By Clock Years

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6+
-CDE monitoring and engagement with UIP -Eligible for supports for dramatic change	-CDE monitoring and engagement with UIP -Eligible for supports for dramatic change	--CDE monitoring and engagement with UIP -Eligible for supports for dramatic change -Community Meeting 	-CDE monitoring and engagement with UIP -Eligible for supports for dramatic change -Pathway Planning 	-CDE monitoring and engagement with UIP -Eligible for supports for dramatic change -Select Pathway -State Review Panel and Accountability Hearing	-CDE monitoring and engagement with UIP -Eligible for supports for dramatic change -Monitoring and Accountability Hearings 

Four Domains for Rapid School & District Improvement



Resource: Colorado Four Domains for Rapid School Improvement Report

Resource: Four Domains Diagnostic Rubrics

- School Diagnostic Rubric
- District Diagnostic Rubric

Brings focus to get foundational elements in place in support of rapid school and district improvement.

Created and maintained by the Transformation Network, specifically for lower performing systems (e.g., state/federally identified).

Empowering Action for School Improvement (EASI) Grant

EASI

Eligibility: Schools or districts with a State identification of Priority Improvement, Turnaround, or On Watch rating, and/or schools identified for improvement under ESSA (i.e., Comprehensive, Targeted, Additional Targeted).

Multi-year Funding: Empowering Action for School Improvement (EASI) grant funded through state and federal funds

Routes: options aligned to level of need / years on the clock –
1) diagnosis and planning phase, 2) implementation phase, or 3) end-of-clock phase

Consultation: CDE offered services, approved external partners, selected program contractor (may also be district designed or led)

EASI | Overview of Routes and Services

EASI

Early on the Clock | On the Clock | End of Clock

Diagnostic & Planning

School Transition Duration- 1 year Amount- Up to $50,000 per school consolidation/closure event

Facilitated Board Training for School Improvement Duration- 1-2 years Amount- Up to $10,000

Targeted Professional Learning Duration- up to 1 year Amount- Based on selected approved learning opportunity

Implementation

Exploration Supports
Duration- 1.5 year
Amount- Up to $42,000, $80,000, or $150,000 based on service

District Designed and Led
Duration- 2.5 years
DDL Major Improvement Strategy- Amount- Up to $20,000 in year 1 and Up to $80,000 for year 2 & 3
DDL Implementation Support- Amount Up to $20,000 in year 1 and up to $50,000 in year 2 & 3

Connect for Success- Duration- 2.5 years
Amount- Up to $20,000 in year 1 and Up to $80,000 for year 2 & 3

School Transformation Network- Duration- 2.5 years
Amount- Up to $60,000 per year

School Turnaround Leadership Development
Duration & Amount- Based on selected leadership development program and provider cost up to $150,000 per school

Foundations for Accelerated Improvement
Duration- 2.5 years; Amount- Up to $60,000 per year

End of Clock

Accountability Pathways Duration- Up to 2 years
Amount- Up to $80,000 per year (school) &
$100,000 per year (district)

EASI | Application Resources, Process, and Timeline

EASI

Key Resources:

Empowering Action for School Improvement (EASI)

- Menu of Supports: **Word** | **PDF**
- Planning Document
- Applications submitted in GAINS.

Application Process:

1. Decide on the best fit of route or service
2. Preview application questions using the EASI Application Planning Document
3. LEAs apply on behalf of eligible schools via an online application portal by December

EASI Timeline	
EASI application opens	Late September 2025
EASI Provider Kick-Off	October 15, 11am -12 pm
EASI Office Hours for District Designed & Led	October 29, 11-12pm
EASI application closes	**December 2, 2026 at 4 pm**
Grant award notifications	January 29, 2027

Schedule

1. Aug 27/28: From Accountability to Action: Strengthening Improvement Planning
2. Oct 22/23: Driving Results Through Strategic Alignment and Progress Monitoring
3. Jan 21/22: Launching the 2027–2028 Improvement Planning Process
4. Mar 25/26: Turning Evidence-Based Strategies into Effective Action
5. May 6/7: Leveraging Data for Stronger Improvement Planning

Office of Continuous Improvement | Coaching & Conversations

What to expect?

- Set meeting timing, location, and focus with a CDE representative.
- CDE builds a facilitation plan based on expressed interests and needs, your draft UIP, and previous UIP feedback
- 60-90 minute in person or virtual meeting.
- Receive actional feedback within one week.

Participating sites will:

- Deepen understanding of improvement planning processes and elements and site-specific planning requirements.
- Sharpen improvement hypotheses and strengthen the quality of draft plans *before* submission and implementation.
- Engage and collaborate with a CDE thought partner.
- Strengthen internal systems for continuous improvement and effective planning.

Thank You & Evaluation

Thank you for sharing your time with us today!



Please provide us with feedback for this session.



Q & A