Empowering Action for School Improvement (EASI) Cohort 10 Provider Webinar

October 15, 2026

COLORADO
Department of Education



Agenda

Goal: External providers understand the basic structure of the EASI grant and the role of providers to better support eligible Colorado schools and districts in the grant process.

- Overview of the EASI grant
  - EASI Routes & Services
  - RFI Service Areas & EASI requirements
- Preliminary Eligibility & Prioritization
- Provider Support in the EASI Application Process
- Q & A



Overview of the EASI Grant

Available Funding

ESSA

Approximately $10 million in available funding

School Transformation Grant

Approximately $6.5 million in available funding

Funding Dependent

The amount of funding an LEA may apply for is dependent on the chosen service and identification type.

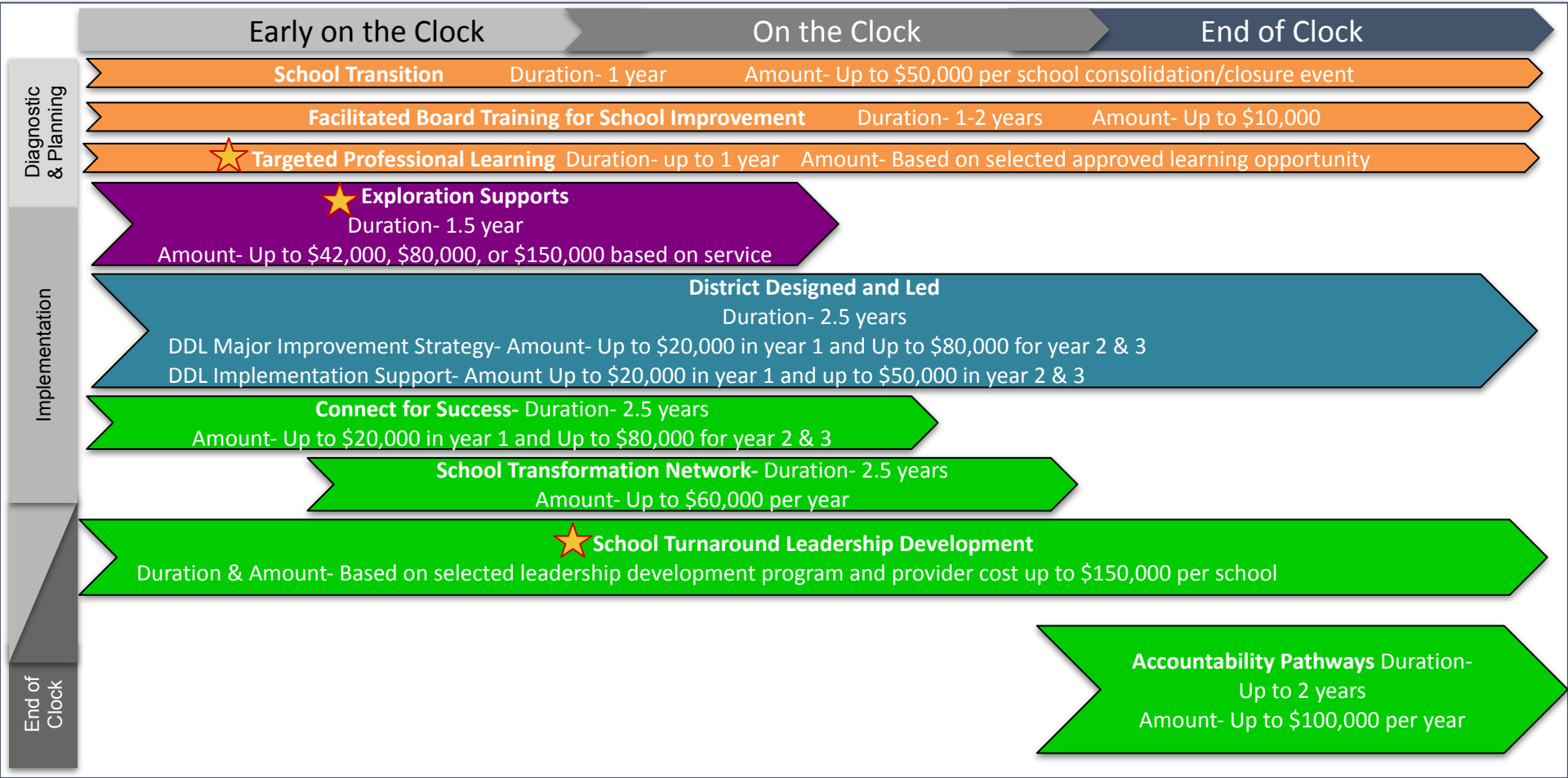
- Funding for schools identified for improvement only
- Similar funding levels as prior EASI cohorts

EASI Grant Route Overview

Exploration Supports	• Systems diagnostic, prioritization and planning (holistic and specialized)	• Stakeholder engagement • Early implementation funding • May be facilitated by CDE
District Designed & Led	• Funding for implementation of an improvement strategy guided by district	• Implementation Support for district initiative • CDE Major Improvement Strategy Guide
Offered Services	• Existing CDE program or structured support aimed at improvement district or school systems • CDE staff or external provider guided coaching and professional learning	• Connect for Success, School Transformation Network, School Turnaround Leadership Development, Accountability Pathways
Other Services	• Support for local school boards • Support for Targeted Professional Learning • Supports for student, staff, and families related to school closure and consolidation events	

Overview of EASI Routes and Services

★ Approved provider required for at least one component



RFI Service Area & EASI Grant Requirements

EASI Route & Service Requires Approved Provider	**CDE Advisory List of Providers RFI Service Area**
Exploration Supports - District Strategic Planning (review component only)	Form B - District Strategic Planning
Exploration Supports - School Holistic Review (diagnostic review component only)	Form C - School Holistic Review and Improvement Planning
Offered Services - School Turnaround Leadership Development	Form E - School Turnaround Leadership Development
Other Services - Targeted Professional Learning	Form F - Targeted Professional Learning

- Costs associated with external providers are allowable expenses **if aligned** to support and costs are **reasonable and necessary**
- Grantees are *strongly encouraged* to work with an approved provider, but several EASI services allow for providers regardless of approval status

Exploration Supports

Good fit for schools or districts that would benefit from:

- External Review
- Meaningful Stakeholder Engagement
- Thorough Improvement Planning
- Early Implementation Funds



Exploration - School Holistic Review

Highlights

- Approved CDE provider conducts a school-based diagnostic review
- Provides a written report that identifies priorities, action steps, and available resources
- Includes funding to cover costs associated with the diagnostic review, stakeholder engagement, improvement planning and early implementation
- Up to $80,000 total per school over 1.5 years

Good fit for:

- Schools that would benefit from an external eye taking a comprehensive look at the school system to identify areas for improvement
- Schools newly identified for improvement

Provider Connection
Grantee ***must*** use an **approved** external provider under School Holistic Review & Implementation Planning for diagnostic review Grantee ***may*** use a provider for other activities (as appropriate)

Exploration - District Strategic Planning

Highlights

- CDE external partner facilitates district strategic planning focused on building district infrastructure and capacity in one or more areas necessary to sustain school improvement (eg. instructional, talent development, etc)
- Includes additional funding for costs associated with external provider strategic planning, stakeholder engagement, improvement planning and early implementation
- Ranges from $80,000-$150,000 total per district over 1.5 years

Good fit for:

- Districts with one or more schools identified for improvement who need to analyze, prioritize, and create a plan to strengthen one or more district systems needed for sustainable school improvement

Provider Connection
Grantee ***must*** use an **approved** external provider under District Strategic Planning for strategic review component Grantee ***may*** use a provider for other activities (as appropriate)

Exploration - Language Learner Partnership (District or School Level)

Highlights

- CDE representative guides team using ELD Program Review Rubric
- Team includes district and school administration, ELL and General Education teacher leaders
- Identify priorities, action steps, and available resources
- Includes funding for stakeholder engagement, improvement planning and early implementation
- Up to $42,000 over 1.5 years (school level)
- Up to $55,000 over 1.5 years (district level)

Good fit for:

- Schools identified for TS or ATS: EL student group
- Districts whose DPF identifies the ML disaggregated group as missing academic or ELP growth/performance

Provider Connection
Grantee ***may*** use external provider for early implementation activities (if appropriate)

Exploration - Alternative Education Campus (AEC) and Online School Review

Highlights

- CDE team conducts a school-based diagnostic review, shares recommendations and major areas on which to build
- Includes a facilitated improvement planning process
- Opportunity to visit other AECs and Online Schools that are experiencing success
- Includes funding for stakeholder engagement, improvement planning and initial implementation
- Up to $42,000 per school over 1.5 years

Good fit for:

- AECs and Online schools identified for improvement

Provider Connection
Grantee ***may*** use external provider for early implementation activities (if appropriate)

Accountability Pathways

Highlights

- Explore state end-of-clock pathways and develop initial pathways plan
- Implement plan and monitor progress after State Board of Education has directed action
- Work with CDE throughout process
- Up to $100,000 per year for each eligible school or district

Good fit for:

- Districts and schools preparing for end of accountability clock or implementing action directed by State Board of Education (Year 4+) who do not currently have Accountability Pathways funding

Provider Connection
Grantees ***may*** use an **approved** external provider under Form G- Accountability Pathways Partners (if aligned) Any provider included in a pathways, if not previously approved under Form G, may be asked to provide additional information

Connect for Success

Highlights

- Based upon High Achieving Schools (HAS) study
- Includes a diagnostic review, networking with other schools, visit to a HAS site and an implementation coach
- Not a good fit for schools in Transformation Network, late on the clock, online schools, schools with unique models, or those with a recent diagnostic review
- Up to $180,000 total per school over three years

Good fit for:

- Schools (elementary, middle, high school and AECs) that show readiness and willingness to rethink current strategies

Provider Connection
Grantee ***may*** use an external provider to support implementation of identified improvement strategies

School Turnaround Leadership Development (STLD) Program

Highlights

- Must select and work with a CDE-approved leadership development program
- Award amount based on cost of approved provider STLD program up to $150,000

Good fit for:

- Districts/schools with leaders ready to participate in leadership development programs tailored to serving students in low-performing schools.
- Districts/schools with stable leadership teams

Provider Connection
Grantee ***must*** use an **approved** provider and program under STLD Work of provider must be focused on leadership development and not general implementation support.

School Transformation Network

Highlights

- Organized around the Four Domains: Culture Shift, Instructional Transformation, Talent Development and Leadership
- Includes a diagnostic review, specialized professional development, “bright spot” school visits, networking with other schools and on-site performance management sessions with CDE
- Up to $180,000 total per school over three years
- Not a good fit for schools with a new leader, Connect for Success, online schools

Good fit for:

- Strong district support and buy-in, and school leadership demonstrates a mindset of learning and growth.
- Schools seeking a *partnership with CDE* for transformational school improvement

Provider Connection
Grantee ***may*** use an external provider to support implementation of identified improvement strategies

District Designed and Led - Implementation Support

Highlights

- Implementation support based on previous external review or completion of an EASI support with a review component, meaningful stakeholder engagement, and solid planning
- Engage in implementation milestone and performance target setting and monitoring with DDL Program Lead
- Up to $120,000 total per school over three years with a DDL total district maximum

Good fit for:

- Districts and schools ready for implementation that have vision and infrastructure to support bold change OR sites that recently completed Exploration Supports and want to continue implementation of an identified strategy

Provider Connection
Grantee ***may*** use an external provider to support implementation of identified improvement strategy

District Designed and Led - Major Improvement Strategy

Highlights

- Based on an identified and demonstrated need aligned to one of CDE's Major Improvement Strategy Guides 2.1
  - Attendance
  - Community Schools – **NEW!**
  - Coaching
  - Data Driven Instruction
  - Family, School, Community Partnership (FSCP)
  - High Dosage Tutoring
  - Colorado Multi-tiered System of Supports
  - Ninth Grade Success
  - Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)
  - Trauma-Informed Education
- Up to $180,000 per school over three years with a total DDL district maximum
- Engage in implementation target setting and progress monitoring with DDL Program Lead

Good fit for:

- Districts and schools who have a demonstrated need for and desire to implement one of the available CDE Major Improvement Strategy Guides 2.1

Provider Connection
Grantee ***may*** use an external provider to support implementation of identified improvement strategy

Other Services - Facilitated Board Training for School Improvement

Highlights

- The facilitated board training for school improvement program was created through a partnership between the Colorado Association of School Boards (CASB), the Colorado Association of School Executives (CASE), and the Colorado Department of Education (CDE).
- Program combines effective governance practices along with best practices associated with school turnaround work.
- Limited to districts with at least one state identified school
- Up to $10,000 total per local board

Provider Connection
Grantee ***may*** use an external provider to support goal setting or professional learning with the local board

Good fit for:

- Local boards and superintendents that are interested in strengthening governing practices for stronger school improvement and accountability

Other Services - School Transitions

Highlights

- Supports schools with transition of student, staff, and/or families as the result of a school closure or consolidation through the implementation of one core component of the Family, School, Community Partnerships (FSCP) Strategy Guide 2.1 focused on end of the school year, summer, and beginning of the school year activities
- Up to $50,000 total per school closure or consolidation event with all funds obligated by 09/30/2027

Good fit for:

- Situations of school closure or consolidation where the closing/consolidated school is eligible for EASI.

Provider Connection
Grantee ***may*** use an external provider to develop or implement school transition plan.

Other Services - Targeted Professional Learning

Highlights

- School-level professional learning opportunity focused on one of two Four Domains indicators aligned to CDE Strategic Priorities:
  - *Instructional Transformation: 3.1 Vision for Instruction*
  - *Instructional Transformation: 3.3 Assessment Systems & Data Culture*
- Up to the costs for school staff (and supporting district partners) to attend one approved professional learning offering

Good fit for:

- Schools seeking a short duration EASI support with lower priority points
- Schools where there is alignment to MIS

Provider Connection
Grantee ***must*** select from the **approved** Targeted Professional Learning (PL) offerings Grant cannot support follow up implementation or coaching support beyond approved PL



EASI Preliminary Eligibility & Prioritization

Eligibility Overview

What schools/districts are eligible?

- Any school identified for school improvement:
  - **ESSA identified**- Comprehensive Support, Targeted Support, Additional Targeted Support
  - **State identified**- Priority Improvement, Turnaround, or On Watch
- Any district/LEA with at least **one** identified school or the district/LEA is state identified as Priority Improvement, Turnaround, or On Watch

EASI 2026-27 Eligibility (Preliminary)

338 - Eligible Schools

68 - Both federal- and state-identified

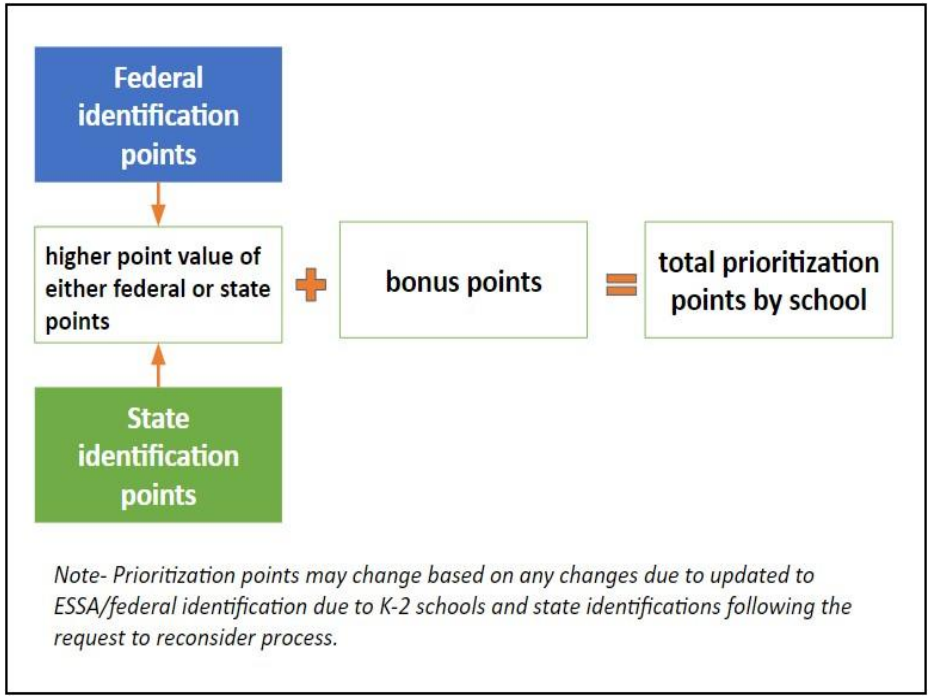
Prioritization - Schools

Purpose of Prioritization

- Ensure a needs-based approach
- Align with statutory requirements for each funding source
- Provide consistent method for guiding funding decisions

EASI Cohort 10 Eligibility & Prioritization Resources

- EASI Cohort 10 2026-27 Prioritization Overview
- EASI Cohort 10 2026-27 Preliminary Eligibility & Prioritization List



Points	Federal	State
8	• Comprehensive Support (CS) Year 4+	• Year 4+ of Priority Improvement or Turnaround
7	• Comprehensive Support (CS) - Year 3	• Year 3 of Priority Improvement or Turnaround
6	• Comprehensive Support (CS) - Year 2	• Year 4+ on Watch (Performance/Improvement Year 4+)
5	• Comprehensive Support (CS) - on Watch Year 1 • Targeted Support & Improvement (TS) or Additional Targeted Support & Improvement (ATS) - Year 4+	• Year 2 of Priority Improvement or Turnaround
4	• Comprehensive Support (CS) – Year 1 • Comprehensive Support (CS) - On Watch Year 2	• Year 3 On Watch (Performance/Improvement, On Watch) • Year 1 of Priority Improvement or Turnaround
3	• Targeted Support & Improvement (TS) or Additional Targeted Support & Improvement (ATS) - Years 1 -3	• Year 2 On Watch (Performance/Improvement Year 2) • Year 1 of Turnaround- Due to Participation
2	• Targeted Support & Improvement or Additional Targeted Support & Improvement - Not Exited by District	• Insufficient state data on HOLD (Prior to ISD was Years 1+ on Performance Watch) • Year 1 of Priority Improvement - Due to Participation
1	• Any Federal identification – identified for Participation Only	

Prioritization - Districts

How is district prioritization calculated?

- District-level supports take the average of all included schools
  - All schools for district-level supports
  - Included schools for DDLs that serve multiple schools
- Bonus point available for district-level supports for districts with high concentrations of identified schools (top quartile within three bands based on number of schools in district)

EASI 2026-27 Preliminary Prioritization Breakdowns

88 - Eligible districts

36 - High concentration districts

Prioritization Considerations

Prioritization and eligibility may be impacted by upcoming changes to federal and state identifications

- Addition of ESSA identified K-2 schools (November)
- Shifts in state identifications due to an approved Request to Reconsider (early December)





Provider Support in the EASI Application Process

EASI Timeline

Activity	Date(s)
EASI Grant Application opens	September 24, 2025
EASI Provider Kick-Off	October 15. 2026
EASI Cohort 10 Kick-Off (schools & districts only)	October 21, 2026
EASI Grant Application Closes	**December 2, 2026 at 4:00 pm**
EASI Grant- Review period	December-January
Award notifications	January 29, 2027

How do eligible sites know to apply?

CDE Communications

- CDE staff communicates directly with a district's accountability contacts through listserv
- CDE staff supporting high-priority schools and districts meet individually with school and district leaders to determine EASI grant application needs
- CDE staff present the opportunity at various school and district convenings throughout the fall
- GAINS application set up

Communications Considerations

- Charter schools must work with their respective authorizer for grant application approvals, but may request an independent application
- Schools may not receive direct communications
- Larger school districts often develop a targeted outreach

Application Process for Applicants

1. Districts review eligibility, prioritization, and available supports
2. District LAM sets up access to GAINS to complete application
    a. *Pro tip!* - Use the EASI Planning Document to plan out responses prior to inputting into GAINS
    b. Reference the EASI Menu of Supports and individual EASI service information sheets for detailed information
    c. If a charter school is applying separately, charter should notify LEA and request GAINS application set up.
3. District completes EASI application and LEA approvals in GAINS by **December 2nd, 4pm**

Provider Role in Application Process

Providers may…	**Providers may not…**
• Notify an EASI eligible site of eligibility • Support grantees understand how a provider's services may align to grant supports • Inform (not write) narrative application responses • Provide draft scopes of work for the application	• Act on behalf of the district/school applying for grant • Develop or draft the grant budget • Pay for a grant writer to write a grant for a district that includes the provider in the budget • Submit the grant application on behalf of a district

Scope of Work- Required Components

Use of EASI Funds Considerations	Required Component
Aligned to the intent and purpose of the selected EASI service and the respective allowable uses	• Names of schools or programs served. • Cost breakdowns include details indicating the tailored needs of the school or district. • Cost breakdowns must include details per person, school, or district (as appropriate). ○ If services are for multiple schools within one district, then the expenses should be associated with each respective school. • Cost breakdowns must include details that explain what the services will include in terms of time, people, and/or deliverables. • For Exploration Support service areas (i.e., District Strategic Planning or School Holistic Review), outline costs by diagnostic review, stakeholder engagement, planning, and early implementation support.

Scope of Work- Required Components

Use of EASI Funds Considerations	Required Component
Reasonable and necessary	• Cost breakdowns must include details that support pricing to allow grant reviewers to determine if costs are consistent with the prevailing charges for a particular service. • Cost breakdowns must include detailed line items.
Expenses align with the grant performance period	• Costs must include a timeline for services with clear deliverables or outcomes. For multi-year partnerships or services, pricing must show costs broken down by fiscal year (July 1-June 30).



Q & A