EASI Cohort 10 Kick-Off 2026-27

October 21, 2026

COLORADO
Department of Education



Agenda

Outcome - School and district staff members have the information and resources necessary to determine what EASI support(s) will best serve improvement efforts and the steps needed to submit an EASI grant application.

- EASI 101 - Overview of the EASI Grant & Supports
- Preliminary Eligibility & Prioritization
- What's new to EASI?
- EASI Routes & Services
- CDE Advisory List of Providers
- EASI Application Process





EASI 101- Overview of the EASI Grant

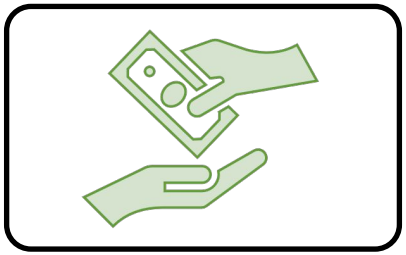
Intent of EASI



To better **leverage** state and federal improvement funds



Streamline school improvement opportunities and resources into a **single application,** process, and timeline



Use a "**needs-based approach**" to award services and funding



Prioritize LEAs with high numbers or high percentages of low-performing schools

4

Available Funding

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA/Federal)

- Approximately $10 million available to distribute over three year grant cycle

School Transformation Grant (State)

- Approximately $6.5 million available to distribute over three year grant cycle

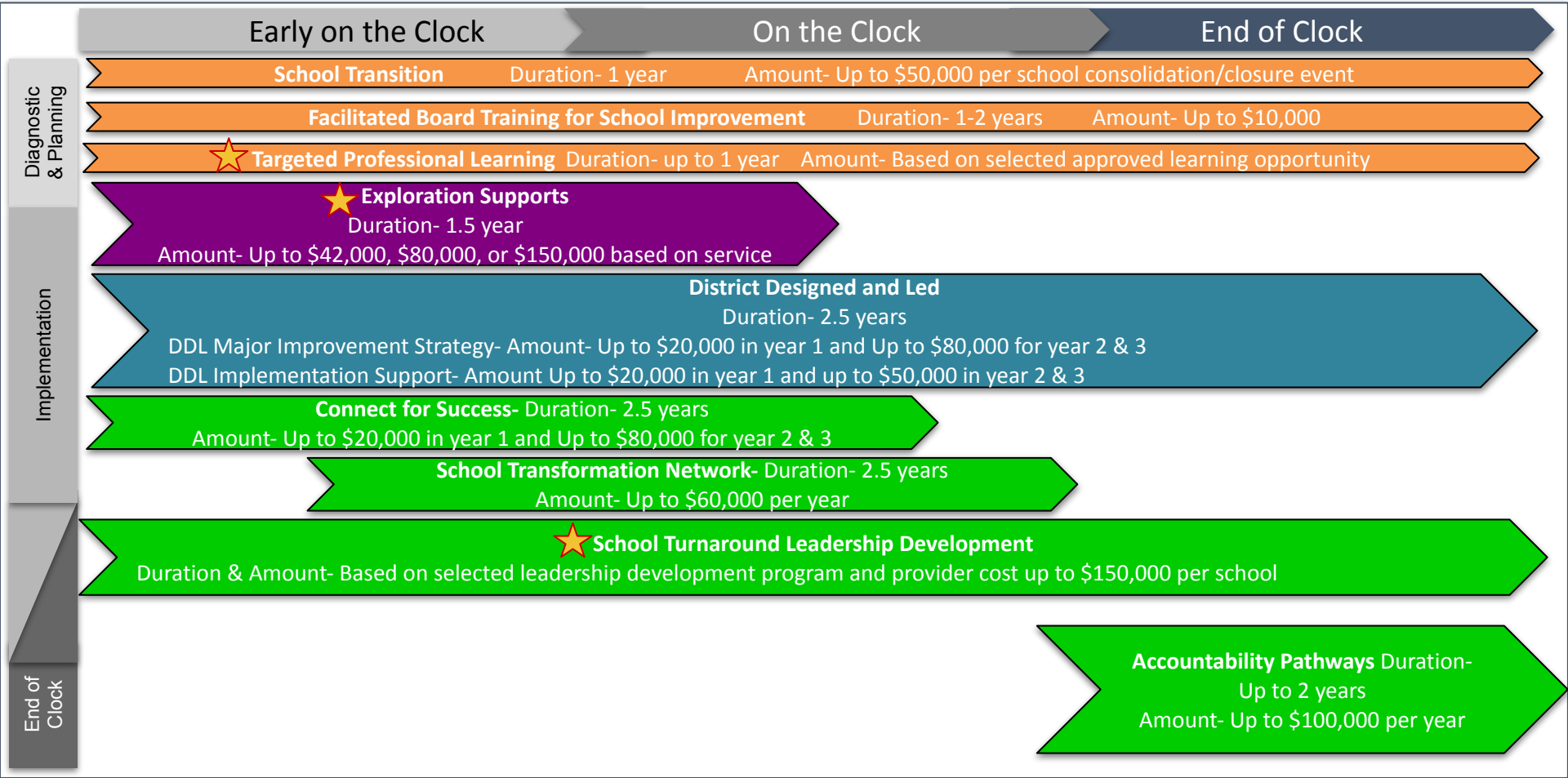
Approximately $16.5 million available for awards to EASI Cohort 10 (2026-27)

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 • Targeted Professional Learning	• Support for transitions as the results of a school closure or consolidation

Overview of EASI Routes and Services

★ Approved provider required for at least one component





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

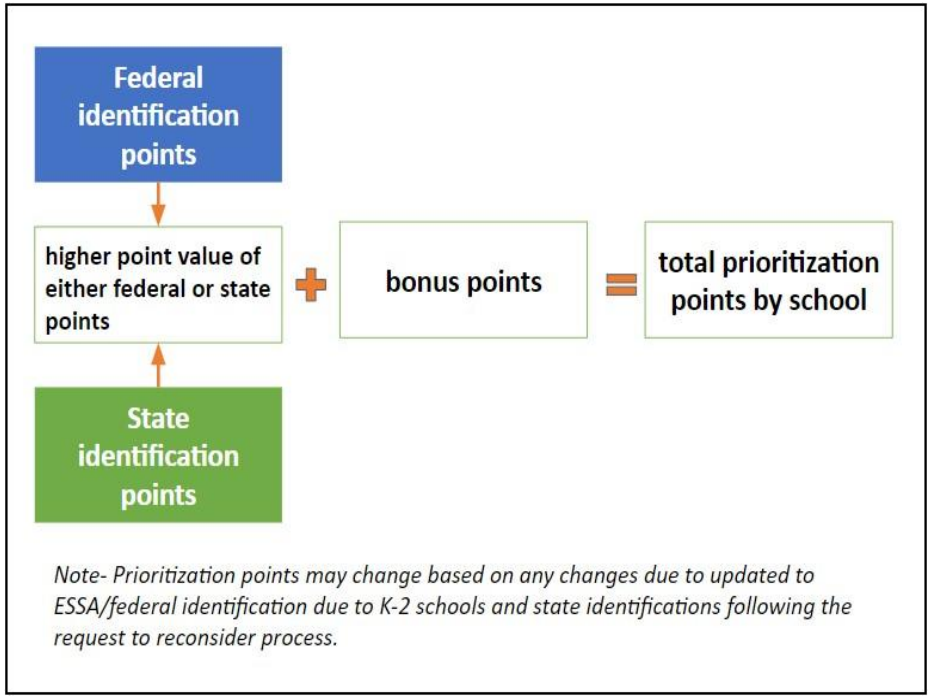
Prioritization - Schools

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

Eligibility & Prioritization Considerations

Eligibility and prioritization 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)



Additional Considerations in Funding Decisions

- Current or projected funding for 2026-27 or 2027-28
- Availability of funding and short duration supports
- Factors considered within a prioritization point level
  - School identified as AEC (HB 25-1167)
  - School previously declined in EASI Cohort 9 for a CDE directed service due to CDE service capacity
  - Previous EASI grants and reverted or remaining balances
  - Fulfillment of prior EASI grant or service requirements

Likelihood of Funding



High	Moderate	Low
• Federal schools seeking short duration supports (Exploration, Targeted Professional Learning) • Schools without current funding prioritized 6 or higher	• Schools with prioritized 4-5 with higher likelihood of funding for federal identified schools • State schools seeking short duration supports (Exploration, Targeted Professional Learning)	• Schools with prioritization under 3pts seeking 3 year supports (DDL, Connect for Success, Transformation Network)



What’s new to EASI?



Key Changes

- **Accountability Pathways** **increased** from up to $80,000 to $100,000 per year for schools
- **Foundations for Accelerated Improvement** is **discontinued** for new applicants in the 2026-27 grant cycle
- **District Designed & Led** - LEA funding cap **increased** to $1.2M total in EASI Cohort 10 for districts with 20 or more EASI-eligible schools
- **Targeted Professional Learning** - New list focused on 3.1 Vision for Instruction and 3.3 Assessment Systems & Data Culture





EASI Routes & Services

Exploration Supports

The Exploration Route provides a bundle of supports aimed at helping districts or schools to “explore” their own solutions to the needs of their students.

- A **Diagnostic Review** (either holistic or specialized) provides an external perspective to help the district/school to identify and prioritize those needs.
- **Improvement Planning** support helps the district/school to create strong plans around evidence-based interventions that will address identified needs.
- **Stakeholder Engagement** activities inform both the diagnostic review and the improvement planning process.
- Once the school has identified and prioritized needs and created a plan to address them, **Early Implementation Funds** help them to start putting plans into action.

Exploration Supports

Good fit for schools or districts that would benefit from:

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



Exploration - Holistic Review (School Level)

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 trained 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 planning 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)

Offered Services

Good fit for LEAs/schools interested in applying for an existing program or support aimed at improving school systems.

- Accountability Pathways
- Connect for Success
- School Turnaround Leadership Development Program
- School Transformation Network

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
- Pathways funding of $100,000 per year at the school level and $100,000 for identified districts

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 an approved 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 and have vision and infrastructure to support bold change or for 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.
- Up to $10,000 total per local board

Good fit for:

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

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

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 three 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

Example School Profile & EASI Application Options

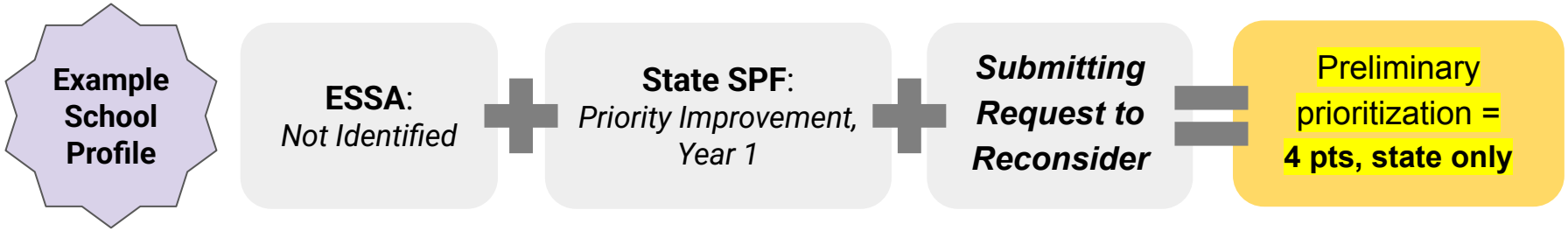
Example School Profile

New to EASI + **ESSA**: *Targeted Support & Improvement* + **State SPF**: *Improvement* = Preliminary prioritization = **3 pts, federal only**

Consider...

Targeted Professional Learning	Exploration Supports
• Funding for school staff to participate in one approved professional learning • Short duration (less than 1 year) • **High** likelihood of funding for a complete application as a federal ID school	• Funding to receive a school diagnostic review, conduct stakeholder engagement, planning, and early implementation activities • **High** likelihood of funding for a complete application as a federal ID school

Example School Profile & EASI Application Options



Consider...

To Apply or Not To Apply?	Exploration Supports
• If Request to Reconsider is approved, school is no longer eligible for EASI. • School could consider submitting an application for support in the event the Request to Reconsider is not approved.	• Funding to receive a school diagnostic review, conduct stakeholder engagement, planning, and early implementation activities • **Moderate** likelihood of funding for a complete application as state-only identified school



CDE Advisory List of Providers

CDE Advisory List of Providers & EASI



CDE Advisory List of Providers

Diagnose & Plan Partners

- School Holistic Reviews
- District Strategic Planning

Implementation Partners

- Improvement Implementation Support
  - School Turnaround Leadership Development
- Accountability Pathways Partners
- Targeted Professional Learning

Field-Validated Expertise Areas

Field-Validated Expertise Area List

- Community Schools
- ELA Instruction (rigor, engagement)
- ELL/MLL Models
- Family, School, Community Partnerships
- High school design and EBI for high schools
- Math instruction (conceptual understanding, rigor, engagement)
- Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness
- Rural school improvement
- SEL/school culture/behavioral supports
- Special education models and effective service design
- Strategies for closing opportunity gaps
- Strategies for improving quality and rigor of instruction
- Student engagement

Why Work with an External Provider?

External providers can serve as capacity builders to help accelerate improvement

- Content and systems expertise
- Support in diagnosing, prioritizing, scoping, and sequencing improvement efforts
- On-site coaching to support implementation and accelerate impact
- Progress monitoring and evaluation support
- Exemplar tools and strategies to help establish excellence in implementation
- Connections to models of successful turnaround in other settings (statewide and nationally)
- Facilitating networking and connections with other schools and districts

Get to Know Approved Providers

Visit the CDE Advisory List of Providers website

- Review authentic work products from provider work with other districts and narrative descriptions of provider's services.
- Explore the field-validated expertise areas.
- Browse the provider lists:
  - CDE Advisory List of Providers
  - School Turnaround Leadership Development (STLD) providers
- EASI- Working with External Providers

Selecting External Provider(s)

- Begin by clearly defining the need for the external provider (i.e. the services and level of support needed).
- Create a selection team and review local policies.
  - Work with a small team to review providers.
  - Understand what, if any, district policies may influence the process.
- If necessary in district procurement policies or if engaging in a longer partnership, use an RFP process.

Selecting External Provider(s)

- Consider conducting initial conversations with potential providers
  - Providers are willing and able to meet with interested districts – **reach out!**
  - Is there a rapport with the provider? Can they fulfill the needs of the school or district?
- Ask for references
  - Providers on the CDE Advisory List of Providers have all had references checked, but it may be helpful to reach out to a prior client to ensure alignment for the local context.
- Reach an agreement on what services or support are needed
  - Request a draft scope of work or quote

Draft Scope of Work

- Any EASI grant application request that includes an external provider or purchased services must be supported by a draft scope of work or quote
- Scopes of Work must include:
  - Cost breakdowns for services (detailed line items, costs per person/school as appropriate, costs by deliverable or service element, etc.)
  - Details related to the schools or program served
  - Timeline for services with clear deliverables or outcomes by fiscal year (07/01-06/30)
- EASI Cohort 10 2026-27 Provider Scope of Work Guide



EASI Application Process

EASI Cohort 10 2026-27 Timeline

EASI Timeline		
Grant Application Opens	September 24th	☐
EASI Cohort 10 Kick-Off	October 21st	☐
EASI Office Hours- District Designed & Led (register)	October 29th 11-12pm	☐
EASI Application Due *(application and approvals)*	**December 2nd by 4pm**	☐
EASI Review Period	December-January	☐
Award notifications	No later than January 29th	☐
Post-award revisions	February 12th	☐

Basics of the Application Process

1. Districts review eligibility, prioritization, and available supports.
2. District sets up access to GAINS to complete application:
   a. Use the EASI Planning Document (lists application questions) 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.
3. District completes EASI application and LEA approvals in GAINS by **December 2nd, 4pm.**
   a. *Pro tip! - Those completing the application should communicate with the LEA staff that have the designation of "LEA Authorized Representative" and "LEA Fiscal Representative" to make them aware of the plan to submit and when the draft application is completed.*

What to Know about GAINS

- District's Local Access Manager (LAM) sets up access in GAINS (directions here).
  - Includes who can complete the application and approve it
- Charter schools can request access to complete the application (charter school access form), but charter authorizer completes approvals for final submission.
  - Charters must communicate with authorizers:
    - Review any local processes, procedures, or timelines related to grants
    - Express intent to apply
- Application completion:
  - Can be completed over time and saved
  - LEA approvals (LEA fiscal and LEA authorized rep) must occur for submission

Key Resources

EASI website is a “one-stop” location for all things EASI, including:

- EASI Cohort 10 - What’s New to EASI 2026?
- EASI Cohort 10 Budget Guidance - Guide to support the creation of budgets for EASI applications
- EASI Planning Document - guide to the application process and specific application questions for each support
- EASI Menu of Supports - overview guide to requirements, support specifics, and funding amounts
- EASI Routes & Services information sheets - In-depth guides that outline each of the available supports.
- CDE Advisory List of Providers
- Book a 1:1 EASI consultation



Questions?

User Roles in GAINS

LEA Empowering Action for School Improvement (EASI) Application Director

- Authorized to create and complete named grant. The specific person managing the grant if this is not a centralized role for your organization.

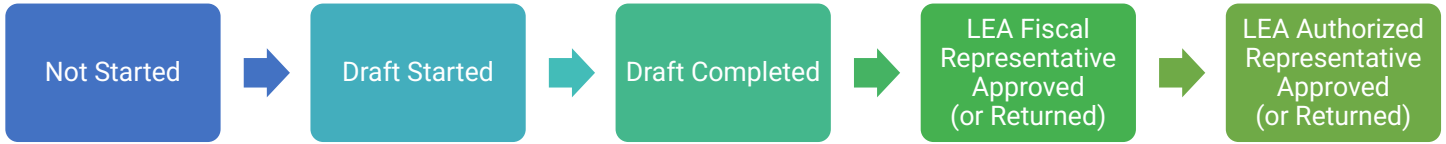
LEA Fiscal Representative

- The Fiscal Representative is authorized to approve grants, complete and submit requests for funds, and will receive fiscal related communication regarding the application. Usually the Fiscal Manager, but other personnel can also have this role in your budgeting office.

LEA Authorized Representative

- The Authorized Representative is the individual authorized to provide final LEA approval and submit the application to CDE on behalf of the LEA. This individual will receive the Grant Award Letter (GAL).

Application Submission Workflow in GAINS



Draft Started

- LEA EASI Application Director
- LEA Fiscal Representative
- LEA Authorized Representative

Draft Completed

- LEA EASI Application Director
- LEA Fiscal Representative
- LEA Authorized Representative

LEA Fiscal Representative Approved (or Returned)

- LEA Fiscal Representative
- LEA Authorized Representative

LEA Authorized Representative Approved (or Returned)

- LEA Authorized Representative