



**COLORADO**  
Department of Education

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# Choosing External Providers

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# Part I: EASI & External Provider Fit



- **This section of the presentation is designed to introduce you to the different types of partners on CDE's approved provider lists, and which routes might be a fit for which types of providers.**
- Districts may leverage external providers as partners within several of the EASI support routes.
  - For the EASI grant, districts can write the cost of working with an external provider into the grant budget.
- CDE maintains three lists of approved providers.
  - [School & District Support Advisory List of Providers](#) - districts may choose from this list for various EASI activities, but may also select a provider not on this list
  - [School Turnaround Leadership Development \(STLD\) providers](#) - districts must choose from this list when applying for the STLD route within EASI.
  - [Diagnostic Review Providers](#) - districts must choose from this list when applying for the Exploration > Holistic Review route within EASI.

# Orientation to Provider Types: Diagnostic Review



- Connection to EASI route:

## Exploration Supports Route

Exploration Activities (i.e., external diagnostic review, community engagement, improvement planning)

- Will visit a school and perform a review or needs assessment
- Ideally, will be aligned to the [Four Domains for Rapid School Improvement](#)
- Can be used to drive improvement and action planning, in addition to diagnosing strengths and potential gaps

Read more about these providers: [List of Diagnostic Review Providers](#)

# Orientation to Provider Types: Stakeholder Engagement



- Connection to EASI route:

## Exploration Supports Route

Exploration Activities (i.e., external diagnostic review, community engagement, improvement planning)

- Can help with bringing parents and community members to the table, and soliciting their authentic input
- Can be about one-time input about a big initiative, or ongoing about building systems

Read more about these providers: [School & District Support Advisory List of Providers](#)



# Orientation to Provider Types: Turnaround Leadership Development



- Connection to EASI route:

Offered Services Route
<b>Accountability Pathways Planning and Implementation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Year 3-5 on clock for planning; Beyond Year 5 (State Board of Education has directed action) for implementation</li></ul>
<b>Colorado Multi-Tiered System of Supports (CO-MTSS)</b>
<b>Connect for Success</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• No current Turnaround Network or Tiered Intervention Grant (TIG)</li></ul>
<b>School Turnaround Leadership Development</b>
<b>School Turnaround Network</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• No current Connect for Success or TIG</li></ul>



- Typically serve an individual who is a sitting or aspiring school leader
- Training may lead to an individual earning a degree or certificate
- Requires the identification of the individuals / teams who will participate, and in which programs

Read more about these providers: [List of Turnaround Leadership Development Providers](#)



# Orientation to Provider Types: **School Improvement Support**



- Connection to EASI route:

District Designed and Led Improvement Strategies Route

District Designed and Led

- Can provide a wide range of supports aligned to the Four Domains:
  - Instructional Transformation, Culture Shift, Talent Development, Leadership Training
- May also be a fit for a *partial Management* role for schools at the end of the accountability clock

Read more about these providers: [School & District Support Advisory List of Providers](#)





- Connection to EASI route:

Offered Services Route
<b>Accountability Pathways Planning and Implementation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Year 3-5 on clock for planning; Beyond Year 5 (State Board of Education has directed action) for implementation</li></ul>

- Typically partners who are willing and able to take over the full Management of a school once it reaches the end of the accountability clock
- Often can also provide school improvement services, and may also be a fit for partial Management of a school

Read more about these providers: [School & District Support Advisory List of Providers](#)

# Get to know the providers!



For 2021, there are a few ways to get to know CDE's approved providers:

## 1) Visit the CDE website!

View our ["Get to Know Us" Provider Video Gallery](#)

Browse the provider lists

- [School & District Support Advisory List of Providers](#)
- [School Turnaround Leadership Development \(STLD\) providers](#)
- [Diagnostic Review Providers](#)



## Part II: Best Practices for Working with External Providers



- **This section of the presentation is designed to introduce you some best practices to utilize when selecting an external partner for school improvement work.**
- Your CDE Support Coordinator can also help you navigate this process!

# Partnership: The dream....



When we're working with a partner,  
this is what we want it to be like!

# Partnership: The reality...?



Unfortunately, sometimes it feels like this instead.... How do we avoid this?

# Best Practices for Working with External Providers



Recommended resource: [AIR Guide to Working with External Providers](#)

**Section 1: Getting Started**

**Section 2: Creating a Framework for Selection**

**Section 3: Vetting and Selecting a Provider**

**Section 4: Negotiating a Contract**

**Section 5: Working in Partnership**

**Section 6: Planning for the Future**

These are our  
focus today

DISTRICT & SCHOOL  
IMPROVEMENT Center  
at American Institutes for Research

## Guide to Working With External Providers

Fourth Edition





## Step 1: Know your School or District Needs

“A needs assessment is generally defined as a systematic examination of the gap that exists between the current state and the desired state of an organization **and the factors to which that gap can be attributed.**”

### Key Questions:

What does the data tell us the gap is? (“The issue is <blank>.”)

What would close the gap? (“If we had <blank>, we could close the gap.”)\*\* This is the key, and by far the hardest part. \*\*

How could a partner help? (“If a partner could help us <blank>, we would have what we need.”)

# Section 1: Step 1 - Examples



<b>Data tells us the gap is...</b>	<b>To close it, we need...</b>	<b>A partner could help us by...</b>
School is identified for improvement	<i>We're not sure.... (that's okay!)</i>	Diagnostic Review or School Improvement partner - conducting an analysis or needs assessment to inform improvement planning
School is entering year 5 on clock	End-of-clock pathway selection & plan	Management or School Improvement partner - developing a plan for full or partial management of the school
School is "does not meet" on all achievement indicators	Rigorous, standards-based instructional practices	School Improvement-Instructional transformation partner - assessing current instructional practices, helping develop strategies to increase rigor and standards alignment
TLCC data indicates poor perception of leader	An effective school leader	Turnaround Leadership Development Provider - building the skills of the current leader, and/or developing a leadership pipeline
40% of teachers left this year; 3 unfilled positions	Lower teacher turnover	School Improvement-Talent Development partner - assessing reasons for turnover, helping develop retention strategies
Parent survey data indicates poor perception of the school	Increased parent engagement	Stakeholder Engagement partner - assessing reasons for poor perception, developing engagement strategies





## Step 2: Plan Your Budget

How much might we have available to invest in a partnership with an external provider?

Tool: [EASI Grant Menu of Supports](#) - sets the allowable amount that may be requested through the grant for each route

## Step 3: View the Landscape of External Partners

Which provider(s) should we get to know better? Which provider(s) seem like the best fit for our needs?

Tool: [School & District Support Advisory List of Providers](#)

Tool: [List of Diagnostic Review Providers](#)

Tool: [List of Turnaround Leadership Development Providers](#)

# Section 2: Creating a Framework for the Selection Process



## Step 1: Create a Selection Team

This team will select the provider. Goldilocks principle: Not too big, not too small. Recommend 4-5 members.

## Step 2: Write a Request for Proposal

Especially if you are going to be making a large or long investment, it's worth using an RFP process.

Tool: [RFP Template](#)

Tool: [CDE Resource Guide for Engaging External Service Providers](#)

## Step 3: Find Potential Providers

Follow your procurement policies. If allowable, send the RFP to providers who seem like a good fit.



# Section 3: Vetting and Selecting a Provider



*Once you have received responses to your RFP and narrowed the field....*

## **Step 1: Conduct Initial Conversations**

Key Considerations: Is there personal rapport with the provider? Can they hit the ground running? Who are the specific individuals who will deliver the services?

## **Step 2: Check References**

Don't skip this step!

## **Step 3: Reach an Agreement**

Before you delve into negotiating a contract, make sure you have broad agreement about what it will include.





Reference the [AIR tool](#) for information on:

**Section 4: Negotiating a Contract**

**Section 5: Working in Partnership**

**Section 6: Planning for the Future**



[AIR tool](#) has great tips to address common issues, i.e.:

- Gaining staff support
- Scheduling PD
- Conflicting efforts and shifting priorities
- Leadership turnover
- Training new teachers

***Good luck with your provider search!***

Please reach out with any questions.

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Or

Your Support Coordinator

