Offered Services: Foundations for Accelerated Improvement

Introduction

This grant is intended to support schools earlier on the State Accountability Clock (Years 2 and 3) in accelerating improvement and to avoid reaching the end of the clock through effective implementation of effective foundational systems. The [Four Domains for Rapid School Improvement](#) provides a comprehensive research-based framework for school improvement. The Four Domains include: Leadership for Rapid Improvement, Talent Management, Instructional Transformation, and Culture and Climate Shift. For each domain, practices are defined that describe the role of the state, district, and school, providing examples of their roles in successful school improvement efforts.

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Research has demonstrated that within the Four Domains for Rapid School Improvement, there are key systems and practices that are essential to accelerating initial improvement and serve as the "foundation" for building capacity to implement additional research-based school improvement processes. School improvement success also hinges on a school's ability to narrow and prioritize improvement efforts to 2-3 high impact areas of improvement. The purpose of the Foundations for Accelerated Improvement is to provide strategic support to schools in assessing their foundational systems aligned to the Four Domains for Rapid School Improvement, identifying 2-3 key, high impact priorities, create a strong improvement plan aligned to these priorities, and build the capacity to strengthen these foundational systems to accelerate improvement and avoid reaching the "end of the clock". The key elements of the support are outlined below:

Part 1: Assessing school foundational systems aligned to the Four Domains for Rapid School Improvement

Description of Activities	Desired Outcomes	Timing
Approved applicants will complete Four Domains Foundational Systems self-assessment as part of the CDE-facilitated Foundational Systems Diagnostic Review process	Build initial awareness of four domains and support CDE understanding of school context, strengths, and challenges.	Feb-March 2026

Description of Activities	Desired Outcomes	Timing
CDE team will conduct a short Four Domains Foundational Systems JumpStart Diagnostic Review	Prioritize 2-3 Major Improvement Strategies	Feb-March 2026

Part 2: Improvement Planning (short-cycle and UIP) aligned with the Foundational Systems of the Four Domains for Rapid School Improvement assessment

Description of Activities	Desired Outcomes	Timing
CDE team will facilitate a rapid planning process as part of the Foundational Systems Diagnostic Review process	Identifying the following: • 2-3 MIS aligned with the prioritized Foundational Systems indicators • A short-cycle action plan to launch implementation for Year 2 Key elements to inform UIP development for Year 2 (MIS, benchmarks, key action steps, etc.) to promote coherence	March-May 2026

Part 3: Building school capacity to implement best practices in the prioritized Four Domains Foundational Systems

Description of Activities	Desired Outcomes	Timing
Provide grant funding for implementation based on budget	Build grant budget and supports aligned to the Foundational Systems Four Domains Assessment Findings and associated improvement plan	May 2026 and ongoing
Provide aligned CDE supports from the Tiered Supports menu	Support district/school capacity to implement foundational systems	Year 2 & Year 3 ongoing
Short cycle plan implementation and support	Support district/school capacity to execute strong short cycle routines to advance school improvement efforts	Year 2 & Year 3 ongoing

Eligibility & Prioritization

Eligibility. Schools that meet the following criteria are eligible to apply to receive funding to support:

• Schools with a state identification School Performance Framework plan type of Priority Improvement, Turnaround in Year 2 or Year 3

Prioritization. If not all EASI proposals can be funded, proposals that meet grant expectations will be funded in the order of the EASI school-level prioritization list. Schools with the highest number of prioritization points will be funded first. Details on how prioritization points are calculated and the points for each EASI eligible school are available on the EASI Resources and Technical Assistance webpage.

Service Capacity Limitations. Foundations for Accelerated Improvement as a service has a limited capacity. CDE projects to be able to support approximately 3 to 5 schools. The number of schools awarded will be based on available funding, level of need at each site, and the number of schools in each geographic region with available staff. If not all EASI proposals for Foundations for Accelerated Improvement can be supported, prioritization points and service capacity in a single district or region may be considered.

Program Considerations & Fit

Program Considerations and Fit

- **Leadership transitions** – this grant is not a good fit for schools experiencing principal transition during the application to implementation year (year 1-2)
- **School type** – this grant is appropriate for traditional district schools at all levels (K-12) and charter schools. Note: High Schools are strongly encouraged to work with an approved external provider who specializes in high school implementation to help support the unique design and systems needs of high schools. This grant is not a good fit for online schools or AECs due to their unique design and needs.

Sequence of Program Support

The sequence of the work is as follows:

- Year 1:
    - Self-Assessment and CDE JumpStart Diagnostic Review based on the Foundational Practices within the Four Domains for Rapid School Improvement
    - Introduction to Short-Cycle Planning
    - Initial funding to support launch of identified improvement strategies
- Year 2:
    - Short-Cycle Plan Implementation
    - CDE provides a menu of supports for implementation (e.g. PD, learning cohorts, bright spots, etc)
    - Implementation funding
- Year 3:
    - Short-Cycle Plan Implementation
    - CDE provides a menu of supports for implementation (e.g. PD, learning cohorts, bright spots, etc)
    - Implementation funding

Available Funds & Duration

Available Funds. Applicants may request up to the maximum award amount for a school. Award may be:

- Up to $60,000 per school in Year 1 (2025-26)
- Up to $60,000 per school in Year 2 (2026-27)
- Up to $60,000 per school in Year 3 (2027-28)

Duration. Program support is designed to support schools or LEAs for a period of 2.5 years (2025-26 to 2027-28).

Allowable Use of Funds

Funds are intended to support implementation of Foundational Practices aligned to the Four Domains as identified by the JumpStart Assessment and resulting short-cycle plan. Allowable use of funds includes costs associated with:

- Contracting with an CDE-approved external partner to provide implementation support to the school in implementing the identified Four Domains Foundational Systems MIS*
- Stakeholder engagement associated with Year 3 community meeting and engaging stakeholders in identifying and implementing Foundational Systems MIS*
- Implementation support for the school to implement the identified Four Domains Foundational Systems MIS which could include, but is not limited to:
  - Professional learning aligned to Four Domains Foundational Domains/Indicators based on needs assessment and associated priorities. Grantees are encouraged to attend CDE sponsored training and/or utilize professional learning providers from CDE's approved list.
  - Staff stipends to support staff with accessing PD or taking on additional temporary duties associated with implementation of Four Domains Foundational Indicator Priorities
  - Travel to bright spots associated with implementation of Four Domains Foundational Indicator Priorities
  - High quality instructional materials and associated resourcing (professional learning, teacher plan time, coaching)*
- Schools may use funds for FTE, however, the school will need to provide rationale for how the role is building capacity, aligned to implementing their Foundational Practices identified in the JumpStart Assessment and Diagnostic Review and how the position will be funded once EASI grant funds are spent.

Note- *Indicates a recommended activity associated with this grant

Budget Recommendations. A budget and plan will be jointly developed with CDE following the spring JumpStart school diagnostic review. For the application submission, enter a draft budget with the following budget lines as shown below.
- Year 1 (2025-26)- Placeholder for activities informed by the spring diagnostic review determined in partnership with CDE for $60,000
- Year 2 (2026-27)- Placeholder for activities determined in partnership with CDE for $60,000
- Year 3 (2027-28)- Placeholder for activities determined in partnership with CDE for $60,000

Indirect Costs. Indirect costs should not be entered into the budget for Foundations for Accelerated Improvement. If eligible and funded, grantees will receive state-funded awards. State grants are not eligible for indirect costs.

Fund Considerations.

- Funds from this opportunity must be used to **supplement and not supplant** any federal, state, and local funds currently being used to provide activities.
- Post-award revisions must be submitted and approved in the online system prior to incurring expenses. Any expenses incurred prior to approval are the responsibility of the LEA. All post-award revisions must be approved by 06/30.
- For federal awards, funds must be obligated by 09/30 and requested by 11/1 of each respective fiscal year.

- For state awards, funds must be obligated by 06/30 of the final year of the grant cycle.
- A school or district may carry funds forward in alignment with funding source restrictions and with CDE approval. At the end of the grant performance period, any non-requested federal funds are reverted and any unspent state funds must be returned to the state.
- CDE may terminate a grant award upon thirty days' notice if it is deemed by CDE that the applicant is not fulfilling the requirements of the funded program as specified in the approved project application, or if the program is generating less than satisfactory results.
- Multi-year or future award year amounts are contingent on allocations of state and federal funds to CDE in each respective fiscal year.

Important Program Dates

Program Dates	Activity
September-December	Meet with CDE School Transformation Manager to discuss interest in applying for support and outline a proposed budget
December	Application due
January	Award notifications
February-April	Awardees complete JumpStart Self-Assessment and participate in CDE JumpStart diagnostic review and planning session
May-June	Confirm and submit detailed budget based on results of diagnostic review and associated improvement plan priorities

Evaluation and Reporting

Each grantee of the program must, at a minimum, agree to the following evaluation, reporting, and/or progress monitoring components:

- Each grantee of the program must, at a minimum, agree to the following evaluation, reporting, and/or progress monitoring components:
- Utilize an online Performance Management (PM) tool, which will require entering, managing, and sharing schools' Unified Improvement Plan (UIP) action steps and interim data. Key school improvement data to be collected in the PM tool includes:
  - School improvement plan implementation;
  - Student daily attendance rates;
  - Student chronic absenteeism rates;
  - Student suspension data; and
  - Student achievement and growth on local, interim assessments.
- Each school will be asked to frequently track key school improvement indicators and will be asked to submit major improvement strategies, implementation benchmarks and quarter 1 action steps for the 2026-27 school year by June 30, 2026.
- Final Expenditure Report (FER) in GAINS each fiscal year by 09/30.

Note: All data collected will protect personally identifiable information (PII) protected and is only reported on an aggregate level for purposes of evaluating the EASI support and/or supporting future program improvements.

Program Assurances

LEA Commitments:

- Any additional expenses beyond what are approved in the application will be the responsibility of the LEA.

- Ensure funds are only used for approved budgeted programs, participants, and eligible schools included in the original application.
- Ensure the LEA and staff will not discriminate against anyone regarding race, gender, national origin, color, disability, or age.
- LEA will be required to submit Final Expenditure Reports (FER) the end of each fiscal year.
- LEA understands that unobligated funds state funds will be returned to CDE and unobligated federal funds will be rescinded at the conclusion of the grant cycle.
- Funds will be used to supplement and not supplant any federal, state, and local moneys currently being used to provide services and grant dollars will be administered by the appropriate fiscal agent.
- Funded projects will maintain appropriate fiscal and program records and fiscal audits of this program will be conducted by the grantees as a part of their regular audits.
- If any findings of misuse of these funds are discovered, project funds will be returned to CDE.

Related Resources & Information

CDE: Accountability Pathways: www.cde.state.co.us/accountability/accountability_clock