

EXPLORATION SUPPORTS

Diagnostic Review and Planning for AECs and Online Schools



COLORADO
Department of Education

EASI Route: Exploration Supports – AEC and Online Schools

Introduction

The Diagnostic Review and Planning for Alternative Education Campuses (AECs) and online schools is ideal for schools that are working to prioritize improvement efforts. The support is meant to provide feedback to support the school's improvement efforts, to help the school prioritize efforts, and to provide opportunities to understand strategy implementation in their context. The service is designed based on the unique needs and focus of AECs and online schools and has multiple options to connect review and analysis to planning and implementation.

1. Self- Assessment: Using a CDE tool (described below) designed specifically for AECs and online schools, school leadership teams conduct a self-assessment to guide their work.
2. On-Site Diagnostic Review: A team of 2-3 CDE staff and in most cases a current school leader will partner with school and district leadership to conduct a diagnostic review examining the design, ongoing operations, and practices of the school through review of materials, interviews of staff, students, families, and observations.
3. Formal Report, Prioritization, and Implementation planning: CDE will provide a formal report, support prioritization, and assist with development of an implementation and improvement plan including short cycle plans and the UIP.
4. Connection to other Alternative Education Campuses or online schools, which may include:
 - Webinars and phone calls to share practices
 - Structured site visits to observe and explore strategies

[Framework for Effective Practices](#)

CDE staff have developed a framework for effective practices of AEC and online schools. This framework and its components use the Four Domains Framework that CDE is using for their Quality Schools School Improvement initiatives. These components were adapted based on research from the National Alternative Education Associations ([NAEA 15 Exemplary Practices](#)), national research on effective high school practices, rubrics from iNACOL on blended learning, and observation of Colorado schools and structures for alternative education and online learning.

Eligible Applicant and Prioritization

Eligibility. Applicants must be:

- Designated Alternative Education Campuses (AECs) or online school for the 2021-22 school year. All types of AECs are eligible (e.g., online, blended, charter, district run).
- Identified for Comprehensive Support (CS), Targeted Support (TS), or Additional Targeted (Additional TS) through ESSA or received a rating of Priority Improvement or Turnaround in the most recent rating. Schools on watch will also be eligible.

For More Information, Contact:

Johann Liljengren

Turnaround Program Manager
School and District Transformation
(303) 986-0201

Liljengren_J@cde.state.co.us

Renee Martinez

Principal Consultant
Online and Blended Learning
(303) 866-6864

Martinez_R@cde.state.co.us



Prioritization. In the event that 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.

Allowable Use of Funds

The duration of the services within the Exploration route is January 2022 – June 30, 2023. Each participating district will receive up to \$10,000 per school to be used towards their exploration efforts. Note: An LEA may request funds in addition to the \$10,000 for the review in the Exploration route for costs associated with improvement planning (e.g., collaboration time, retreats, stipends, substitutes, hosting a community meeting) as well as \$20,000 for early implementation activities (e.g., staff to coordinate improvement efforts, job-embedded learning opportunities). See the Exploration information sheet for details and funding amounts. An LEA/school may use the information obtained through the review and improvement planning process to develop an application for additional funds in the District Design and Led route in a subsequent EASI application.

Funding for this opportunity may be used for:

- Costs associated with the review visit (e.g., substitutes, stipends) and all staff debrief of the findings (e.g., stipends, copying)
- Costs associated with travel to other sites

While this is an exploration grant, a small amount of funds may be set aside for initial implementation after the review with approval from CDE. Funds from this opportunity must be used to **supplement and not supplant** any federal, state, and local funds currently being used to provide activities. There will be no carryover of funds. Unobligated funds at the end of the fiscal year will be returned to the CDE to be redistributed.

Important Program Dates

January	Award Notifications
January	Diagnostic kickoff and webinar
January - May	Diagnostic visit from CDE staff, completion of site visits
June	Submit revisions to the original budget for early implementation funds/carryover (if applicable)
October	UIP due for LEAs/schools for public posting and CDE review of plan for documentation of grant requirements
June 30, 2023	Funds must be expended.
Ongoing	Submit any revisions to the original budget for approval.

Evaluation and Reporting

Districts receiving funds under this grant opportunity are required to:

- Incorporate findings into their Unified Improvement Planning Process
- Provide feedback to CDE on the tool and process that are used as part of this service
- Submit the Annual Financial Report (AFR) to CDE

Program Assurances

Districts receiving funds under this grant opportunity are required to the following in addition to assurances in the EASI application:

- Use the findings of the Diagnostic Review to inform the comprehensive needs assessment of the school's improvement plan and include selected strategy(s) in the Unified Improvement Plan.