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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exploration Supports Route</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exploration Activities (i.e., external diagnostic review, community engagement, improvement planning)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

• 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:

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- 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Offered Services Route</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Accountability Pathways Planning and Implementation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Year 3-5 on clock for planning; Beyond Year 5 (State Board of Education has directed action) for implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Colorado Multi-Tiered System of Supports (CO-MTSS)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Connect for Success</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• No current Turnaround Network or Tiered Intervention Grant (TIG)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>School Turnaround Leadership Development</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>School Turnaround Network</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• No current Connect for Success or TIG</td>
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</table>

- 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District Designed and Led Improvement Strategies Route</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>District Designed and Led</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• 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
Orientation to Provider Types: Management

• Connection to EASI route:

  ![Offered Services Route](image)

  Accountability Pathways Planning and Implementation
  • Year 3-5 on clock for planning; Beyond Year 5 (State Board of Education has directed action) for implementation

• 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?
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
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.”)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data tells us the gap is...</th>
<th>To close it, we need...</th>
<th>A partner could help us by....</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School is identified for improvement</td>
<td><em>We’re not sure.... (that’s okay!)</em></td>
<td>Diagnostic Review or School Improvement partner - conducting an analysis or needs assessment to inform improvement planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School is entering year 5 on clock</td>
<td>End-of-clock pathway selection &amp; plan</td>
<td>Management or School Improvement partner - developing a plan for full or partial management of the school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School is “does not meet” on all achievement indicators</td>
<td>Rigorous, standards-based instructional practices</td>
<td>School Improvement-Instructional transformation partner - assessing current instructional practices, helping develop strategies to increase rigor and standards alignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TLCC data indicates poor perception of leader</td>
<td>An effective school leader</td>
<td>Turnaround Leadership Development Provider - building the skills of the current leader, and/or developing a leadership pipeline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40% of teachers left this year; 3 unfilled positions</td>
<td>Lower teacher turnover</td>
<td>School Improvement-Talent Development partner - assessing reasons for turnover, helping develop retention strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent survey data indicates poor perception of the school</td>
<td>Increased parent engagement</td>
<td>Stakeholder Engagement partner - assessing reasons for poor perception, developing engagement strategies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Section 1: Getting Started

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.
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
Carol Mehesy, mehesy_c@cde.state.co.us
Or
Your Support Coordinator