

# Priority Improvement and Turnaround Districts and Schools:

A Supplement to the  
CDE District Accountability Handbook

Updated September 2014



**COLORADO**  
Department of Education

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## Background

State law requires that the Colorado State Board of Education and the Colorado Department of Education hold all districts and schools accountable for student performance. The state annually evaluates student performance in districts and schools through a set of consistent, objective measures, and then uses this information to inform rewards, sanctions, and supports. In addition, the state holds districts and schools accountable through various program accountability requirements, including those under the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). The [District Accountability Handbook](#) describes these state and federal accountability requirements for all districts and schools, detailing stakeholder roles; accountability measures; plan development, submission, and review; and other accountability and reporting requirements for all districts and schools.

For the state's lowest performing districts and schools (those on Priority Improvement or Turnaround plans), there are unique requirements, sanctions, and supports, in addition to those for all districts and schools. As a result, CDE recognizes the need for an additional resource for districts and schools on Priority Improvement and Turnaround plans. The Department has developed this supplement to the Accountability Handbook to detail the critical information for a Priority Improvement or Turnaround district or school. This includes listing state statutory and regulatory consequences, timelines for actions on each year of Priority Improvement or Turnaround, implications for improvement planning and federal programs, and available supports. The supplement is organized around:

- Background information;
- Overall timeline;
- Annual requirements;
- Considerations and actions as schools and districts near the end of the Accountability Clock; and
- Supports.

This document is intended to build upon the information included in the Accountability Handbook.

### **How are schools and districts identified for Priority Improvement and Turnaround plans?**

It is important for districts, schools and local school boards to be aware of how the identification as Priority Improvement or Turnaround is made. Districts and schools assigned to a Priority Improvement or Turnaround plan have the lowest performing student outcomes of all districts and schools in Colorado, according to the state's primary accountability tool: the District and School Performance Framework (DPF/SPF) reports. The DPF and SPF reports are based on four key Performance Indicators that the state has determined to be most indicative of how prepared students are for college and career: achievement, growth, growth gaps, and postsecondary and workforce readiness. Districts and schools on Priority Improvement or Turnaround plans tend to be falling short of state expectations for students in each of these areas. Priority Improvement and Turnaround plans make up approximately the lowest 9-10 percent of districts and schools (separately) in the state, based on their overall academic performance outcomes. An interactive on-line tutorial around the School and District Performance Frameworks can be accessed [here](#).

If a district disagrees with the Department's initial accreditation category for the district or disagrees with any of its school plan types, the district may submit additional information to the Department as part of the Request to Reconsider process by October 15<sup>th</sup>, annually. More information and guidance can be found [here](#).

## The Accountability Clock

### Entering the Accountability Clock

Pursuant to the Education Act of 2009, Article 11 of Title 22, C.R.S., a district or the Charter School Institute (Institute) may not remain Accredited with Priority Improvement Plan or Accredited with Turnaround Plan for longer than five consecutive years before the State Board removes the district's/Institute's accreditation. In State Board of Education rules, 1 CCR 301-1, section 5.07, the calculation of the five consecutive years begins July 1 of the summer immediately following the fall in which the district/Institute is notified that it is Accredited with Priority Improvement Plan or Accredited with Turnaround Plan. The rules also specify that, for those districts that were placed by CDE in "Accreditation Notice with Support" or "Probation" status during the 2009-10 academic school year, the State Board will not allow the district to remain in Accredited with Priority Improvement Plan or Accredited with Turnaround Plan for a total of four consecutive school years before accreditation is removed.

The Education Act of 2009, Article 11 of Title 22, C.R.S., outlines similar consequences for schools. Schools may not implement a Priority Improvement or Turnaround Plan for longer than five consecutive years before the district or Institute is required to restructure or close the school. According to State Board of Education rules, 1 CCR 301-1, section 10.05, the calculation of the five consecutive years begins July 1 of the summer immediately following the fall in which the school is notified that it must implement a Priority Improvement or Turnaround Plan.

These statutory timelines are referred to as the "accountability clock." The processes associated with each year of the clock, from the notification/planning Year 0 to the final Year 6, including actions directed by the State Board of Education at the end of the Accountability Clock, are detailed in the [timelines](#) below.

### Exiting the Accountability Clock

The Accountability Clock is in effect for a district or school as long as it is assigned a Priority Improvement or Turnaround Plan. The Accountability Clock stops for a district or school once the State Board adopts an SPF/DPF with a Performance or Improvement Plan. At that point the district or school would be considered to have exited Priority Improvement or Turnaround status. If a district or school is on Turnaround and moves to Priority Improvement the Accountability Clock continues and is not reset.

If a district or school were to improve to a Performance or Improvement Plan assignment one year, then drop back down to a Priority Improvement or Turnaround Plan the next, the clock would restart at Year 1 on the following July 1. The Accountability Clock and associated year-by-year actions and consequences would begin again.

### The Accountability Clock and the 2015 Assessment Transition

House Bill 14-1182 was passed in 2014 to address the transition to the Colorado Measures of Academic Success (CMAS) assessments, which include the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessments, on school and district accountability. Preliminary school plan types and district accreditation ratings will be assigned in the fall of 2015, in place of the traditional School and District Performance Frameworks, based on the following criteria:

- 2014 school plan type assignments and district accreditation ratings
- 2015 assessment participation rates

- Accreditation assurances (for districts)
- Optional: 2014-15 student performance data (aligned with the Colorado Academic Standards) or postsecondary workforce data that districts may optionally submit through the request to reconsider process

After a more in-depth Request to Reconsider process during the fall and winter, school plan types and district accreditation ratings will be finalized and publicized in the late winter of 2016.

The assessment transition will affect schools and districts identified for Priority Improvement and Turnaround in different ways, based on the year they are entering on the clock.

- Schools and districts entering Year 5 of the state Accountability Clock on July 1, 2015 (based on 2014 SPF and DPF ratings) will be subject to action by the State Board of Education on or before June 30, 2016. While this timeline will have been set prior to the 2015 ratings, the board will be able to consider the results of the 2015 transitional ratings prior to making a determination of recommended actions.
- Schools and districts entering Year 4 of the state Accountability Clock on July 1, 2015 may enter Year 5 based on the 2015 district accreditation ratings and school plan types. Thus, it is imperative that a careful review of 2015 student performance results be completed to determine if the 2014 rating is the most appropriate to use.

For the 2015-16 school year, and for school ratings given in the 2015-16 school year, HB 14-1182 allows the State Board of Education some flexibility for schools that reach the end of the accountability clock. Specifically, the law allows the State Board of Education to direct to the local board of education, an action having a “comparable significance and effect” but not necessarily specified in [statute](#).

More information about accountability and the assessment transition can be found [here](#).

## The Process: Year 0 through Year 6 - Districts

For districts accredited with a Priority Improvement or Turnaround plan, the table that follows describes the year-by-year actions within the Accountability Clock process. **NOTE: This timeline does not reflect the timeline for the 2015 Assessment Transition. That preliminary timeline can be found in [Appendix A](#).**

**Yellow rows** = Activities for districts to complete

Timeline	Event	Description	When will these events happen?					
			Planning Year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
July 1	<a href="#">Accountability Clock</a>	Accreditation contracts are signed. The calculation of the five consecutive years begins July 1 of the summer immediately following the fall in which the district/Institute is notified that it is Accredited with Priority Improvement Plan or Accredited with Turnaround Plan.	X	X	X	X	X	X
August 15 <sup>1</sup>	<a href="#">Release of preliminary DPF report</a>	CDE releases preliminary District Performance Framework (DPF) report to districts.	X	X	X	X	X	X
September	Notification sent to districts	Notification of ratings sent to the districts. Ratings will be final, unless the district submits a Request to Reconsider. Communication will be sent to the Superintendent and Board President to confirm the accreditation rating and to outline the implications of a Priority Improvement or Turnaround plan.	X	X	X	X	X	X

<sup>1</sup> Due to the timing of receipt of state assessment results, CDE will have the preliminary School and District Performance Framework reports to districts by August 18<sup>th</sup>, 2014.

Timeline	Event	Description	When will these events happen?					
			Planning Year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
September 1 (two weeks after release of DPF)	<a href="#">Release of preliminary UIP pre-populated report</a>  <a href="#">CDE Turnaround Support Manager assignment</a>	<p>CDE releases preliminary UIP pre-populated reports that specify any accountability requirements that must be met in the district's UIP (e.g., districts with a Turnaround plan type must specify a required turnaround strategy).</p> <p>Each district with a Priority Improvement or Turnaround plan type is assigned a CDE Turnaround Support Manager. The Turnaround Support Manager becomes a point of contact and broker of technical assistance opportunities for the district.</p>	X	X	X	X	X	X
September 15	<a href="#">Intent to submit a Request to Reconsider</a>	Districts intending to submit a Request to Reconsider are asked to notify CDE ( <a href="mailto:accountability@cde.state.co.us">accountability@cde.state.co.us</a> ) by September 15 <sup>th</sup> so that technical assistance can be provided.	X	X	X	X	X	X
September-October	<a href="#">Accountability Clock options</a>	Follow-up visit from Turnaround Support Manager to plan for final CDE recommendation to the State Board if at the end of the Accountability Clock. District should be ready to suggest an action, as well. If there is a Request to Reconsider, this will happen in the spring.						X
October 15	<a href="#">Deadline for Requests to Reconsider</a>  <a href="#">Submission of data narrative for review (optional)</a> <a href="#">Submission of plan for reposting on SchoolView (optional)</a>	<p>District submits Request to Reconsider to CDE if it wishes to appeal its DPF accreditation rating or the SPF plan type for any of its schools.</p> <p>District may submit its revised data narrative to CDE for early review. This is optional and intended as a support.</p> <p>Available to all districts, the revised UIP may be submitted to CDE to post online. This is optional.</p>	X	X	X	X	X	X

Timeline	Event	Description	When will these events happen?					
			Planning Year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
October - November*	<a href="#">Finalization of Accountability Clock options</a>	The superintendent and local board president will be notified of the Accountability Clock actions CDE and the State Review Panel will recommend to the State Board at the November meeting. CDE will make its recommendation to the State Board regarding which of the Accountability Clock actions to direct.						X
November – December	<a href="#">Release of final DPF report</a> and <a href="#">final UIP pre-populated report</a>	CDE finalizes the DPF accreditation ratings for districts based on Request to Reconsider decisions. The final UIP pre-populated report is released within two weeks after the final DPF release.	X	X	X	X	X	X
December*	<a href="#">State Board directs district to take turnaround action</a>  Communication from CDE	State Board directs the district to implement one of the Accountability Clock turnaround actions to be in effect by June 30, based on recommendations from the State Review Panel and the Commissioner.  The Commissioner will send a letter to the district, notifying the Superintendent and Board President of the Accountability Clock actions that have been directed by the State Board of Education.						X
January 15	<a href="#">Submit Unified Improvement Plan (UIP)</a>	District submits current version of the Unified Improvement Plan (UIP) and required addenda to CDE by January 15. The UIP includes the Accountability Clock turnaround action the district will take as an improvement strategy. CDE reviews UIP and provides feedback to the district on its plan. The State Review Panel reviews a selection of the Turnaround plans and may also review Priority Improvement plans.	X	X	X	X	X	X

\* Will change in 2015-16 due to assessment transition.



Timeline	Event	Description	When will these events happen?					
			Planning Year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
January – March	CDE visits	If there is a new superintendent or a district has been Accredited with a Priority Improvement or Turnaround plan for the first time, the Commissioner and/or CDE executive leadership will contact the district to provide information and discuss technical assistance options and how to leverage current resources.	X	X	X	X	X	X
	CDE and <a href="#">State Review Panel</a> review of UIPs	CDE and the State Review Panel review the UIPs for schools and districts on the clock, although with different criteria. Feedback from the CDE review is shared with districts. Districts must make a request to receive the Panel’s review.						
March-May*	<a href="#">Finalization of Accountability Clock turnaround actions</a>	For Priority Improvement or Turnaround districts ending Year 5: The Executive Director of School & District Performance and/or members of the CDE Executive Team will schedule a visit with the superintendent and local board of education to discuss implementation of the directed Accountability Clock turnaround action, based on a CDE recommendation and a report from the State Review Panel. The Commissioner will report the status to the State Board, including a discussion about the implementation plan for the directed accountability clock action.						X
March 30	<a href="#">Submit revised UIP</a>	District submits UIP with revisions based on feedback from CDE review.	X	X	X	X	X	X
April 15	<a href="#">Submit final UIP</a>	District submits final UIP for publication on <a href="#">SchoolView.org</a> . CDE publishes the UIPs by June.	X	X	X	X	X	X

\* Will change in 2015-16 due to assessment transition.

When will these events happen?								
Timeline	Event	Description	Planning Year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Ongoing	<a href="#">Schedule CDE visits and technical assistance</a>	Turnaround Support Manager and districts schedule routine meetings and identify additional CDE assistance opportunities.	X	X	X	X	X	X
	<a href="#">State Review Panel visit</a>	As funds are available, Panelists will visit each school and district at the end of the clock before making final recommendations to the Commissioner and State Board of Education.					X	X
June 30	<a href="#">Accountability Clock</a>	District takes the directed action or loses accreditation.						X

YEAR 6		
Timeline	Event	Description
TBD	District Accreditation	State Board of Education re-instates the district's accreditation rating, at the plan type determined to be most appropriate, once the district has implemented the required turnaround action.

## The Process: Year 0 through Year 6 - Schools

For schools assigned to a Priority Improvement or Turnaround Plan (including AEC: Priority Improvement Plans and AEC: Turnaround Plans), the table that follows describes the year-by-year actions within the Accountability Clock process. **NOTE: This timeline does not reflect the timeline for the 2015 Assessment Transition. That preliminary timeline can be found in [Appendix A](#).**

**Yellow rows** = Activities for districts to complete

Timeline	Event	Description	When will these events happen?					
			Planning Year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
July 1	<a href="#">Accountability Clock</a>	The calculation of the five consecutive years begins July 1 of the summer immediately following the fall in which the school is notified that it must implement a Priority Improvement or Turnaround Plan.		X	X	X	X	X
August 15 <sup>2</sup>	<a href="#">Release of preliminary School Performance Framework (SPF) report</a>	CDE releases preliminary School Performance Framework (SPF) reports to districts. This is the initial notification to the district that the school has been assigned a Priority Improvement or Turnaround plan type. It will be followed up with a communication to the Superintendent and local board to notify the district of the school's preliminary plan type and to outline the implications of a Priority Improvement or Turnaround plan.	X	X	X	X	X	X
September 1 (two weeks after release of SPF)	<a href="#">Release of preliminary UIP pre-populated report</a>	CDE releases preliminary UIP pre-populated reports that specify any accountability requirements that must be met in the school's UIP (e.g., schools on a Turnaround Plan type must select a required turnaround strategy).	X	X	X	X	X	X

<sup>2</sup> Due to the timing of receipt of state assessment results, CDE will have the preliminary School and District Performance Framework reports to districts by August 18<sup>th</sup>, 2014.

Timeline	Event	Description	When will these events happen?					
			Planning Year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Mid-September (no more than 30 days after the release of the SPFs)	<a href="#">Parent Notification</a>	The district must send notification to parents in any schools on the clock with information about the school's plan type, UIP process and about the upcoming public hearing.	X	X	X	X	X	X
September-December	<a href="#">Accountability Clock options</a>	Follow-up visit from Turnaround Support Manager and/or field services representative to make a final recommendation to the State Board, regarding the appropriate Accountability Clock action. District should be ready to suggest if there is a Request to Reconsider, this will happen between January – February.						X
September 15	<a href="#">Intent to submit a Request to Reconsider</a>	Districts intending to submit a Request to Reconsider on behalf of a school are asked to notify CDE ( <a href="mailto:accountability@cde.state.co.us">accountability@cde.state.co.us</a> ) by September 15 <sup>th</sup> so that technical assistance can be provided.	X	X	X	X	X	X
September- October	Information session for Priority Improvement/ Turnaround schools	CDE hosts an annual informational meeting for Priority Improvement and Turnaround schools, and strongly recommends that school leadership attends at least once. These half-day sessions will be offered regionally, with information provided on: SB-163 statute and rule, consequences of the Accountability Clock, the SPF, the UIP, and available supports.	X	X	X	X	X	X
October 15	<a href="#">Deadline for Requests to Reconsider</a>  <a href="#">Submission of plan for reposting on SchoolView</a>	District submits Request to Reconsider to CDE if it wishes to appeal the SPF plan type(s) for any of its schools.  The revised UIP may be submitted to CDE to post online. This is optional.	X	X	X	X	X	X

Timeline	Event	Description	When will these events happen?					
			Planning Year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Mid-October through Mid-December (at least 30 days after parent notification)	Public hearing	The local school board must hold a public hearing prior to adoption of the school's UIP.	X	X	X	X	X	X
November*	<a href="#">Finalization of Accountability Clock options</a>	The superintendent and local board president will be notified of the accountability clock actions CDE will recommend to the State Board at the November meeting. CDE and State Review Panel will make their recommendations to the State Board regarding which of the actions to direct.						X
November – December	<a href="#">Release of final SPF report</a> and <a href="#">final UIP pre-populated report</a>	CDE finalizes its recommendation for SPF plan types to the State Board. The State Board adopts the plan type assignments.	X	X	X	X	X	X
December*	<a href="#">State Board directs district to take Accountability Clock action</a> Communication from CDE	State Board directs the district to implement one of the Accountability Clock actions to be in effect by June 30, based on State Review Panel and Commissioner recommendations. The Commissioner will send a letter to the district notifying the superintendent and board president of the Accountability Clock turnaround actions that have been directed by the SBE.						X

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\* Will change in 2015-16 due to assessment transition.

			When will these events happen?					
Timeline	Event	Description	Planning Year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
January 15	<a href="#">Submit Unified Improvement Plan (UIP)</a>	District submits current version of the school UIP and required addenda to CDE by January 15. The UIP includes the turnaround action the district will take with the school as an improvement strategy. CDE reviews UIP and provides feedback to the district on its plan. The State Review Panel reviews a selection of Turnaround plans and may also review Priority Improvement plans.	X	X	X	X	X	X
January through March	CDE and <a href="#">State Review Panel</a> review of UIPs	CDE and the State Review Panel review the UIPs for schools and districts on the clock, although with different criteria. Feedback from the CDE review is shared with districts. Districts must make a request to receive the Panel's review.	X	X	X	X	X	X
April 15	<a href="#">Submit final UIP</a>	District submits final UIP for publication on <a href="#">SchoolView.org</a> . CDE publishes the UIPs by June.	X	X	X	X	X	X
June 30	<a href="#">Accountability Clock</a>	District takes the directed action for the school.						X
Ongoing	<a href="#">State Review Panel</a> visit	As funds are available, Panelists will visit each school and district at the end of the clock before making final recommendations to the Commissioner and State Board of Education.					X	X

### YEAR 6

Timeline	Event	Description
July 1	<a href="#">Accountability Clock</a>	District implements directed Accountability Clock turnaround action for school or district's accreditation rating may be lowered.

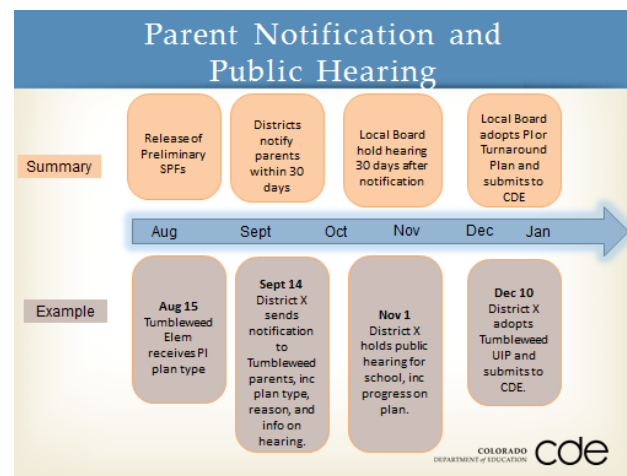
## ANNUAL REQUIREMENTS

The following sections outline the annual requirements specific to Priority Improvement and Turnaround districts and schools. This includes annual improvement planning, parent notification requirements, accreditation contracts and implication for federal programs.

### Parent Notification Requirements

For a school that is required to implement a Priority Improvement or Turnaround plan, the district must notify parents of the students enrolled in the school of the type of plan that is required and of the performance results that led to that plan assignment. This notice must be given within 30 days after the district has received the initial plan assignment or, if the district appeals the initial plan assignment, within 30 days after the district receives the State Board's final determination. The notice must include the timeline for developing and adopting the required plan and the date, time and location of a public hearing held by the local board of education, to review the plan prior to adoption. The date for the public hearing must be at least 30 days after the date on which the district provides the written notice. During these public hearings, the local board of education must also review the school's progress in implementing its plan during the preceding year and in improving its performance.

#### Sample timeline of Parent Notification and Public Hearing process



For a sample of a parent notification letter, please see [Appendix D](#).

### Improvement Planning

As schools and districts with Priority Improvement or Turnaround plan types create a Unified Improvement Plan, it is expected that the plan demonstrate an understanding of the magnitude of the issues facing them. The data analysis should consider and respond to the Performance Indicators (i.e., academic achievement, growth, growth gaps, post-secondary workforce readiness) not met or approaching on the School or District Performance Frameworks. In some cases, this may mean that the school or district must address all four Performance Indicators and address that there are concerns across the system; rather than focusing on just one area. Furthermore, the action plan should be appropriate in scope, intensity and type. This is an acknowledgement that in order for schools and districts to exit Priority Improvement or Turnaround status, dramatic change is necessary.

For schools and districts with a Turnaround plan type, at least one of the state-required strategies must be identified, described in the UIP and implemented. Schools and districts must also complete a Turnaround addendum with the UIP. State required strategies include:

- Employing a lead turnaround partner that uses research-based strategies and has a proven record of success working with districts under similar circumstances. The Turnaround partner will be immersed in all aspects of developing and collaboratively executing the plan and will serve as a liaison to other district partners.
- Reorganizing the oversight and management structure within the district to provide greater, more effective support for district schools.
- Recognizing individual district schools as innovation schools or clustering district schools with similar governance or management structures into one or more innovation school zones and seeking designation as a District of Innovation pursuant to Article 32.5 of Title 22.
- Hiring an entity that uses research-based strategies and has a proven record of success working with districts under similar circumstances to operate one more district schools pursuant to a contract with the local school board or the Charter School Institute.
- Converting one or more district schools to a charter school(s).
- Renegotiating and significantly restructuring a charter school's charter contract.
- Other actions of comparable or greater significance or effect.

#### **Timelines for submitting a UIP for schools and districts with a Priority Improvement or Turnaround plan type**

As improvement planning occurs on a continuous cycle, districts and schools should be reviewing and adjusting the existing improvement plan on an ongoing basis throughout the year. Typically, schools and districts begin revising the UIP in late spring or summer based upon local assessment data. As state level data is made available in the fall, schools and districts make another set of broader revisions. The plan must cover at least two years (the current school year and the next school year). However, before planning, Priority Improvement and Turnaround schools are required, by law, to hold a [public meeting](#) prior to the adoption of the UIP to solicit community input, concerning the contents of the plan.

Local school boards that are required to submit a Priority Improvement or Turnaround plan must adopt a plan no later than January 15<sup>th</sup> of the school year in which it enters the accountability clock. All schools and districts must use the Unified Improvement Plan template to address the requirements for a Priority Improvement or Turnaround plan and to address any other applicable program planning requirements (e.g., ESEA programs, Gifted Education, state and federal grants).

No later than five business days after the local school board has adopted a Priority Improvement or Turnaround Plan, the local school board must submit the plan to the Department for review. The Department will evaluate the plan to ensure that it meets expectations for state and federal requirements.

#### **Annual Submission of UIP for Public Posting**

All districts must submit final Priority Improvement and Turnaround district and/or school plans no later than April 15<sup>th</sup> to the Department for publication on SchoolView. (Some flexibility has been provided for small, rural districts and schools with a Performance plan type. See the [Accountability Handbook](#) or the [Improvement Planning website](#) for additional details.) Some programs will also conduct program reviews of these UIPs. To accommodate schools and districts that would like to update the publicly



posted plans sooner than April, CDE offers additional submission windows in the fall and winter. These windows are optional.

For a visual summary of the UIP timeline for Priority Improvement and Turnaround plans, refer to [Appendix E \(schools\)](#) and [F \(districts\)](#).

**Additional Resources to Support Improvement Planning**

Schools and districts looking for additional resources can visit the Improvement Planning unit's training [page](#).

## District Accreditation Contracts

The Department must annually accredit all **districts** and does so through an accreditation contract between the state and the district. A district that is “Accredited with Improvement Plan,” “Accredited with Priority Improvement Plan” or “Accredited with Turnaround Plan” will have its contract annually reviewed and agreed upon. (For districts “Accredited with Distinction” or “Accredited,” accreditation contracts have a term of one year and are renewed automatically each July so long as the district remains in one of these accreditation categories.) The Department will send districts individualized accreditation contract templates annually, if the contract needs to be renewed. Signed contracts – by the superintendent and local board president – are due back to CDE at the beginning of June, in order to be signed by the commissioner and State Board president prior to July 1. The parties to the contract may renegotiate the contract at any time during the term of the contract, based upon appropriate and reasonable changes in circumstances.

In some cases, a district may be assigned a Priority Improvement or Turnaround Plan for factors other than academic performance outcomes. Districts must provide assurances that they are in substantial good-faith compliance with (1) the budgeting, accounting, and reporting requirements set forth in Articles 44 and 45 of Title 22, (2) the provisions of section 22-32-109.1, C.R.S., concerning school safety, and the Gun Free School Act, 20 U.S.C. 7151, and (3) all other statutory and regulatory requirements that apply to the district. For purposes of monitoring a district’s compliance with its accreditation contract, the Department may require information or conduct site visits as needed.

If the Department has reason to believe that a district is not in substantial compliance with one or more of the statutory or regulatory requirements applicable to districts, it will notify the local school board and the board will have 90 days after the date of the notice to come into compliance. If, at the end of the 90 day period, the Department finds that the district is not substantially in compliance with the application requirements, meaning that the district has not yet taken the necessary measures to ensure that it will meet all legal requirements as soon as practicable, the district may be subject to loss of accreditation and to the interventions specified in section 22-11-209, C.R.S.

Refer to the [District Accountability Handbook](#) for more information.

## Federal ESEA Program Accountability

To the extent possible, Colorado uses the state’s accountability system to meet federal ESEA accountability requirements. Consequently, the results of Colorado’s School and District Performance Frameworks have significant implications from a federal programs perspective. The Federal Programs Unit administers funds under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as well as a variety of other federal and state competitive grants and awards. ESEA is the primary federal law affecting K-12 education. The approval of Colorado’s ESEA flexibility waiver enabled the state to align the identification process for federal accountability with the state accountability system. Colorado no longer uses Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) data to identify districts for federal Title I accountability. In some instances, the state performance frameworks are the basis of federal accountability (e.g., identifying schools for public school choice), while in other instances additional criteria are applied to focus on targeted subgroups (e.g., identifying Title I Focus Schools). The following sections outline the implications for federal programs.

## ESEA, Title I, Part A

Title I, Part A is the largest federal program supporting both elementary and secondary education. The program's resources are allocated based upon the poverty rates of students enrolled in schools and districts and are designed to help ensure that all children meet challenging state academic standards.

### Requirements for Districts

- For any Title IA district with a Priority Improvement or Turnaround plan, 10% of the Title IA allocation may be set aside in the following school year for professional development activities to address the identified Priority Performance Challenges (PPC). These funds may be directed for district-wide professional learning or for the professional learning of specific schools that are contributing to the district's overall performance.
  - These districts must complete the ESEA addendum in the UIP that will outline how the funds set aside will be used for professional learning activities to address the identified Priority Performance Challenges. UIPs will be reviewed by CDE during the January UIP submission window.
- In the Consolidated Application, the LEA must describe the additional Title I, Part A support that is being provided to the schools with a Priority Improvement and/or Turnaround plan type. This description must identify the specific needs that will be addressed by this support and provide the Title I expenses associated with the aforementioned support.

### Requirements for Schools

LEAs must offer Supplemental Educational Services (SES) for eligible students and Title I Public School Choice for all students attending a Title I school with Priority Improvement or Turnaround plan-type assignments. Students in these schools may be eligible for SES, if they performed unsatisfactory or partially proficient on the state reading, writing, or math assessment, below grade level on the READ Act assessments, or are identified as Non-English Proficient (NEP) or Limited English Proficient (LEP) based on the state English language proficiency assessment. All students attending a Title I school with a Priority Improvement or Turnaround plan type assignment are eligible for Title I public school choice in the subsequent school year.

Newly identified Title I schools would not have to offer SES and Choice in the first year of identification but must make SES/Choice available to eligible students in the subsequent school year. For example, if a Title I school was first identified as Priority Improvement in August of 2014, then SES and Choice would not be required until the 2015-16 school year. At the district's discretion, SES may be offered to parents of eligible students in a Title I school during the initial identification year. Choice is provided as an option for families in districts with multiple schools per grade span. After the district identifies a minimum of two higher performing schools (that have not been assigned a Priority Improvement or Turnaround plan type), parents can choose to send their child to one of these higher performing school, with district-funded transportation. If parents decide to have their child remain in the home school, the child, if eligible, may receive SES services. It must be made clear to parents in notification letters that choosing to choice out means that their student, who may be eligible for SES in the home school, will not have access to this service in the new school.

In the year following identification, LEAs must send a letter to parents informing them of SES and Choice options at least 14 days before the first day of school. A good faith effort must be made to meet the requests of all parents in each grade span (as it relates to SES). A school must continue offering SES and

Choice to its eligible students for one year after the school no longer has a status of Priority Improvement or Turnaround.

For more information regarding SES and Choice, see the CDE guidance [here](#).

### **Title I Parental Notification Requirements**

If a Title I school has been assigned a Priority Improvement or Turnaround plan, the LEA must notify the parents of each child enrolled in the school regarding the school's status. This notification occurs in the year after identification and is included as part of the SES/Choice notification. The Choice notification must explain:

- Why the school was assigned with the specific plan type and how parents can get involved in addressing the academic issues that led to the identification.
- The parents' option to transfer their student to another school in the LEA that, in the current school year, has not been assigned with a Priority Improvement or Turnaround plan. District must provide at least 2 choices, where available.
- The efforts that the school and district are making to improve the academic success of its students
- The costs for Choice transportation will be paid by the district
- The option for possible SES services if the student remains at the home school

A sample notification letter, as well as additional information can be found [here](#).

The SES notification must include:

- The school's plan status
- Who is available to provide the free tutoring
- The content area that is available for free tutoring
- How to sign up for SES services
- The process for communicating back to parents about their student's progress in the SES tutoring program

A sample notification [letter](#), as well as additional information, can be found [here](#).

### **Title I School Definitions**

The ESEA Waiver required two additional types of school identifications: Title I Priority Schools and Title I Focus Schools.

**Title I Priority Schools:** CDE must identify the lowest performing 5% of Title I or Title I eligible schools as Priority. In Colorado, most Priority Schools are schools that are implementing a Tiered Intervention Grant (TIG). The TIG is a competitive grant (funded from 1003g of ESEA; see the TIG section later in this document) for Title I or Title I eligible schools identified as being among the lowest performing 5% based on achievement on the state assessment or have graduation rates below 60% and are also assigned a Priority Improvement or Turnaround plan type. TIG schools must implement one of the four reform models defined in the U.S. Department of Education: turnaround, transformation, re-start or closure model. Each year, new TIG-eligible schools are identified and, if awarded a grant, are added to the

state's list of Priority Schools. TIG grantees are awarded funds and supports for three years, as long as one of the TIG models is being implemented with fidelity.

A Title I or Title I eligible Priority School can exit Priority status by earning at least 47% of their total framework points [combined Academic Achievement, Academic Growth to Standard, Academic Growth Gaps, and Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness (if applicable)], for two consecutive years.

Earlier cohorts of Priority (TIG) Schools have exhausted the three year TIG grant. With the exception of a few schools, most have met the exit criteria. The former TIG grantees that have not yet met the exit criteria and are still among the lowest performing 5% continue to be considered Priority Schools and will be supported by CDE. These schools are identified as Priority, in addition to the current TIG recipients.

CDE will assist districts with Title I Priority Schools with UIP development, implementation monitoring and prioritize these schools for additional support.

Title I Focus Schools: CDE must identify the next lowest 10% of its Title I schools as Focus Schools. This is a three-year designation. A Focus School is Title I school with a low graduation rate (regardless of plan type) and/or a Turnaround or Priority Improvement plan type assignment with either:

- low-achieving disaggregated student groups (i.e., minority, ELL, IEP and FRL) and/or
- low disaggregated graduation rate.

Colorado's Title I Focus School list was established based on the 2011-12 assessment and accountability data. CDE maintains a list of 66 (10% of Title I schools) on the Focus School list. As schools exit the Focus status, new schools are identified and added to the list. Districts were notified in August 2012 of any Focus Schools identified within their district. An additional 13 schools were identified and districts were notified in November 2013, based on 2012-2013 assessment and accountability data.

A Title I school can exit Focus School status through use of the official rating and demonstrating:

- Two consecutive years of an Improvement or Performance school plan type on the School Performance Frameworks (either 1 or 3 year rating), or
- Two consecutive years of disaggregated student achievement data equivalent to a *meets* rating (either 1 or 3 year rating) for schools identified by gap, or
- For schools identified for low graduation rates, two consecutive years of the Graduation Rate indicator rating of *meets*, based on the School Performance Frameworks (either their 1 or 3 year rating).

CDE assists districts with Title I Focus Schools with UIP development, implementation monitoring and prioritization of these schools for additional support.

More information about Priority Schools and Focus Schools can be found [here](#).

## ESEA, Title II, Part A

Title II, Part A is intended to increase student academic achievement by improving teacher and principal quality. These funds can be used to prepare, train and recruit high-quality teachers and principals capable of ensuring that all children will achieve to high standards.

The approval of Colorado's ESEA Flexibility waiver enabled the state to align the identification process for Title IIA accountability (2141c in ESEA) with the state accountability system. Colorado does not use Highly Qualified and AYP data to identify districts. Since the release of the 2012 District Performance Frameworks, districts that (1) accept Title IIA funds and (2) have a Priority Improvement or Turnaround plan type are identified under Title IIA.

Identified districts must complete the ESEA addendum, which outlines how their Title IIA allocation will be aligned in the following school year to address Priority Performance Challenges and Root Causes discussed in the UIP. UIPs are reviewed by CDE during the January UIP submission window.

A district is no longer identified under Title IIA once the Priority Improvement or Turnaround designation has been removed. However, the district is still expected to implement the plan that was approved from the previous year. The Federal Programs Unit will verify implementation during the Consolidated Application process and onsite reviews. In addition, Title IIA funds must first be used to provide additional supports in schools assigned a Priority Improvement or Turnaround plan type, although a district's entire IIA allocation need not be budgeted in support of those schools. These supports must be above and beyond the supports provided to other schools in the district.

## ESEA, Title III

The goal of the Title III program is to improve the education of English Learner (EL) students by helping them learn English and meet challenging state academic content and student academic achievement standards. The program provides enhanced instructional opportunities for identified English Learners and immigrant students through supplemental Title III and Title III-Immigrant Set-Aside funding.

As a State recipient of Title III funding, the USDE requires states to develop State Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (AMAOs). AMAOs are performance targets that all Title III grantees are expected to meet annually. There are three AMAOs, which are based on two English language proficiency AMAOs (1 and 2) measured by student performance on the WIDA ACCESS for ELs, and an academic achievement AMAO (3) based on academic growth on state reading, writing and math assessments, and graduation and assessment participation rates. All three AMAO targets must be met in order for the grantee to be considered to have met AMAO targets.

A district/consortium that accepts Title III funds is identified for Title III Improvement if it does not make Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives for two consecutive years. A Title III grantee that fails to meet state defined AMAO targets for two consecutive years and is also accredited with a Priority Improvement or Turnaround plan must develop its UIP to specifically address the factors that prevented it from achieving these AMAOs, as well as a description of the scientifically research-based strategies that will be implemented to improve upon the district English Language Development program.

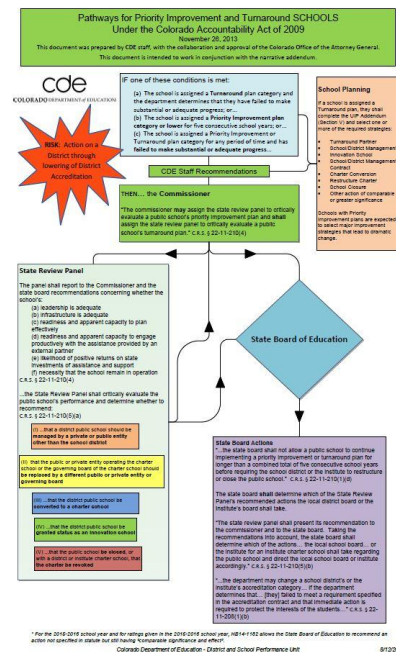
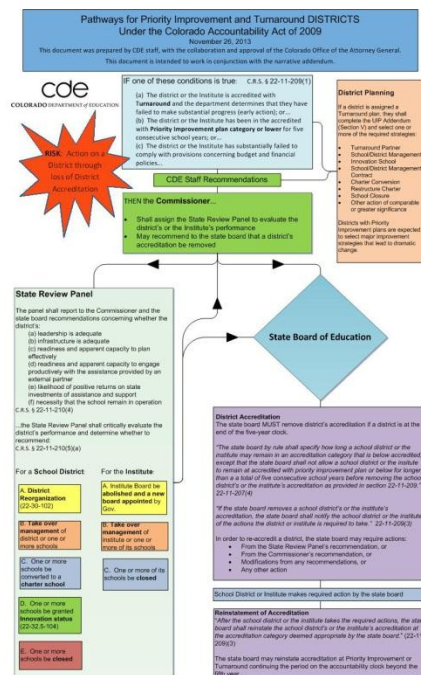
In addition, districts accredited with Priority Improvement or Turnaround plan, as well as identified for Title III improvement, must complete the ESEA addendum in the UIP to outline how the district proposes

to spend its Title III allocation. The addendum will be reviewed by CDE during the January UIP submission window.

## REACHING THE END OF THE ACCOUNTABILITY CLOCK

Colorado law requires that the State Board of Education recommends specific action for any school, district or Institute remaining on a Priority Improvement or Turnaround plan for five consecutive years. The State Board has discretion to take action prior to the end of the Accountability Clock for schools and districts with Turnaround plans.

This section outlines the steps that will take place as a school, district or Institute reaches the end of the Accountability Clock. Through this process, members of the CDE staff will be working with the district or Institute to select a pathway – or action – that is best suited to create dramatic change. Additionally, the State Review Panel will critically evaluate the school, district or Institute’s capacity to engage in dramatic change, and make a recommendation to the Commission and State Board as to which pathway it believes will produce that change. The graphic below shows the different pathways for Priority Improvement and Turnaround districts (blue) and those pathways for schools (green). Descriptions of these pathways are included in a [later section](#). Full-page versions of these flowcharts can be found in [Appendix B](#) and [Appendix C](#).



\* For the 2016-2018 school year and for settings plan in the 2016-2018 school year, HED 41102 allows the State Board of Education to recommend an action not specified in statute but still having Turnaround significance and effect.  
 Colorado Department of Education - District and School Performance Unit  
 8/12/2014



## State Review Panel

Created through the Education Accountability Act, the State Review Panel is a body of experts in the field that provide recommendations to the Commissioner of Education and State Board of Education on steps to take with schools and districts on the Accountability Clock. Panelists have expertise in school and district leadership, curriculum, assessment, instructional data management, program evaluation, teacher leadership, school and district governance. Furthermore, attention has been paid to ensuring panelists represent the state geographically and have specialized knowledge (e.g., online programs, charter schools, disaggregated groups of students).

The State Review Panel is tasked with:

- Providing a critical evaluation of the Unified Improvement Plan (UIP), including capacity of school/district to engage in dramatic change. The Panel shall review Turnaround plans and may review Priority Improvement plans.
- Providing recommendations to the Commissioner and State Board of Education on potential actions when a school or district remains on the Accountability Clock for more than five consecutive years or earlier upon request.

The State Review Panel does its work through document reviews (including an evaluation of the UIP) and site visits (including interviews with district and school leadership, local board members, staff and local community members). They are expected to answer questions about the school's or district's leadership capacity to implement the needed change for rapid improvement, including:

- Whether the district's/school's leadership is adequate to implement change to improve results;
- Whether the district's/school's infrastructure is adequate to support school improvement;
- The readiness and apparent capacity of the district/school personnel to plan effectively and lead the implementation of appropriate actions to improve student academic performance;
- The readiness and apparent capacity of the district/school personnel to engage productively with and benefit from the assistance provided by an external partner;
- The likelihood of positive returns on state investments of assistance and support to improve the district's/school's performance within the current management structure and staffing; and
- The necessity that the district or school remain in operation to serve students.

Based upon their document review and site visit, the Panel provides recommendations to the Commissioner and State Board of Education as they determine the required action(s) at the end of the Accountability Clock or early action. The following section describes the possible pathways for districts, the Institute and schools, per state statute, that the State Review Panel has to choose from.

Pathways for districts/Institute	Pathways for schools
District reorganization	Managed by a private or public entity
Change district management structures	Replacement of operator of governing board (for charter schools)
Charter schools	Conversion to a charter school
Innovation status or Innovation zone	Innovation status
One or more schools be closed	School closure or revocation of charter
Institute Board be abolished and a new board appointed by the governor	

## Districts Pathways

The following sections describe the possible recommendations and actions that the State Board may consider and take regarding Priority Improvement and Turnaround **districts or the Institute**. For more information, see [Appendix B](#).

### LOSS OF DISTRICT ACCREDITATION

If a district is accredited with a Priority Improvement or Turnaround rating for more than five years, the State Board of Education **MUST** remove the district's accreditation. If a district is accredited with a Turnaround rating and fails to make progress under its Turnaround plan, the State Board **MAY** remove the district's accreditation earlier than five years. (1 CCR 301-1, rule 8.00)

The State Board annually accredits school districts and the Institute through establishing [accreditation contracts](#). Each contract has a term of one year and is renewed automatically so long as the accreditation category is Accreditation or higher.

#### Significance of loss of accreditation:

To date, the State Board has not removed a district's accreditation. However, this is a significant action by the State Board and might result in significant consequences and implications for a district, including:

- Impact on a district and its community, as a public indication that the district has not successfully improved the educational opportunities at one or more of its schools.
- Students who are enrolled in a district that is not accredited may have limited options regarding eligibility for athletics, scholarships, college entrance, or other significant opportunities.
- In the event of the loss of district accreditation, CDE has the authority to suspend or restrict federal and/or competitive state funds.
- Losing the ability to accredit schools within that district.

#### Reinstatement of accreditation:

In order to reinstate accreditation, the State Board will determine the actions the district must take and notify the district or Institute. Such actions may be informed by recommendations by CDE staff, the Commissioner, and/or the State Review Panel, from a list of options included in statute. However, they are not limited to these recommendations and may be broad or narrow, at the State Board's discretion.

When the State Board reinstates accreditation, they shall reinstate accreditation with an appropriate accreditation rating. Pursuant to statute, the State Board will continue to annually review the accreditation ratings for each district, which will include districts with a Priority Improvement or Turnaround rating, beyond the initial five years. The State Board may remove the accreditation of a district or the Institute for an indefinite period of time. Until a district takes the action required by the State Board and the State Board reinstates accreditation, the district will operate without accreditation.

### DISTRICT REORGANIZATION

If the department recommends removing a district's accreditation, the State Review Panel may recommend reorganization of a district. Under certain conditions, a school district reorganization planning process may be initiated, potentially leading to, but not limited to: a change in district boundaries, the formation of a new district, the election of a new LEA board, new governance and

operating authorities, and more. Such a process begins when any of the following conditions exist and following when the Commissioner notifies local boards of education and appropriate committees:

- a) A school district board requires the appointment of such a planning committee.
- b) A committee presents a petition – signed by fifteen percent of that school district’s eligible electors.
- c) The State Board declares a school district is no longer accredited and that it should be re-organized pursuant to C.R.S. § 22-11-209.

**Rationale for pursuing this path:**

District organization might be pursued in order to intervene in a district where persistent low-achievement may be caused by ineffective governance, or leadership by a district board of directors, or by district leadership. This path may also be pursued if a change in boundaries is desired.

**Conditions necessary for success in this path:**

- This pathway is intensive and would require one or more special elections to: approve the final plan; elect a new board of directors; and/or decide on financial issues C.R.S. § 22-30-114(1)(i). Significant community support would need to exist to reach voter approval for district reorganization.
- Cooperation across district boundaries may be required, if boundaries are to be changed with one or more adjoining districts.
- The community within and outside of the district would need to have a shared sense of urgency, belief, and desire to support dramatic improvement to address persistent low-achievement of its students through a reorganization.
- The organization planning process would require considerable time and energy from district and community members. It is likely that external partnerships would be needed to facilitate the process.
- Significant political support would need to exist within CDE and the State Board of Education to persist through this process.

## CHANGE DISTRICT MANAGEMENT STRUCTURES

CDE, the State Review Panel and Commissioner may recommend that a private or public entity, working with the school district, take over management of the school district or the management of one or more of its public schools. C.R.S. § 22-11-209(2)(a)(I)(B).

**Rationale for pursuing this path:**

This path might be effective if district leadership and operating systems prove to be ineffective over a period of time. A district board or superintendent might elect to transfer district management or management of one or more schools, to an external entity.

**Conditions necessary for success in this path:**

- A viable public or private entity would need to have capacity and willingness to take over management of the district or a number of schools.
- Willingness would be needed by a district board and/or leadership to engage in this path.
- Additional monetary resources.

## CHARTER SCHOOLS

The State Review Panel and Commissioner may recommend conversion of one or more district schools to charter schools. The charter school may be authorized through the district or through the Institute.

### 1. Conversion of district school to charter school, 22-11-209(2)(i)(c)

#### Rationale for pursuing this path:

A district might convert a school to a charter school to provide more autonomy and flexibility to a school from statutory and regulatory requirements. These requirements may have created obstacles in the past. Successful recruitment of a new or existing charter school operator with proven success can ensure successful practices and positive achievement results. Furthermore, this option may provide a “fresh start” for a community.

#### Conditions necessary for success in this path:

- District support would be critical to ensure collaborative efforts and support within the district and community.
- Consideration should be given to how the district school would close or phase-out and how the charter school would open or phase-in. Funding equations must provide equivalent or greater funding for charter schools to operate effectively.
- The district would have to agree to authorize the charter application OR to release the district’s exclusive chartering authority (if in effect).
- The charter school might benefit from using a district facility or the facility of the phase-out school.

### 2. Creation of an independent charter school, 22-30.5-301

The State Board may recommend conversion of a public school to an independent charter school. If an independent charter school is to be organized, the State Board shall issue a request for proposals for the operation of an independent charter school which might be within a building that currently houses a public school of a school district.

The process to initiate an independent charter school in statute requires: the formation of a review committee, criteria for review, committee membership, proposal evaluation and selection. The State Board shall select an applicant to recommend to the local board of education. The Commissioner or the Commissioner’s designee shall assist the selected applicant in negotiating an independent charter with the local board of education pursuant to section C.R.S. § 22-30.5-305.

#### Rationale for pursuing this path:

The State Board might pursue this path when the local district is hesitant or lacks capacity to consider authorizing or allowing a promising charter school within the district and when such a charter school might have significant likelihood of providing an improved educational environment in that the existing school.

#### Conditions necessary for success in this path:

- District support and cooperation would be important.

- An environment where there is one or more proven charter applicants and/or charter management organizations would be critical.
- Within this pathway, the independent charter school may have access to use an existing district facility at a low cost.

### **3. Creation of a new charter school:**

A district may encourage the development and opening of a new charter school. Districts may create requests for proposals for new schools, recruit existing charter organizations, or develop charter school plans themselves. If a district has exclusive chartering authority (ECA) they have sole discretion about authorizing a new charter school. Districts may release ECA and/or may partner with CSI to authorize one or more schools through CSI or other authorizers. Districts' boards may also approve charter authorizations without removing their ECA. C.R.S. § 22-30.5-504.

#### **Rationale for pursuing this path:**

Opening new schools may provide opportunities to: create high expectations for students; hire new staff; and refresh communities. A number of charter schools and charter management organizations (CMOs) have proven records of success. Such charters may serve districts by providing model programs that can inform practices in other schools or programs.

#### **Conditions necessary for success in this path:**

- In order for new charter schools to be successful, certain conditions should be created to provide enough autonomy for site-based decision making. Such conditions might include:
  - Use of existing facility
  - Choice systems that allow families to opt in or out of different schools, with transportation
  - Equivalent or sufficient funding as district schools
  - Support by the local board
  - Authority to authorize internally or through the Institute

## **INNOVATION STATUS OR INNOVATION ZONE**

The Innovation Schools Act of 2008 (Article 32.5) establishes a process and route by which district public schools can waive local and state statutory and regulatory rules to gain autonomies – typically pursued for rules regarding people, time, money, and program. This allows for more flexible and effective practices to meet the needs of students within a school. Schools and districts may initiate the Innovation process which includes: innovation planning; a demonstration of at least 50% approval of administrators, staff and the School Accountability Committee (SAC); and ultimately district board and State Board approval. In addition, an affirmative vote of at least sixty percent of the affected teachers is required for waivers of local bargaining agreements. C.R.S. § 22-32.5-109

The State Board can require a Priority Improvement or Turnaround district to grant Innovation status to one or more of its schools. The district may have to honor collective bargaining agreements for any displaced teachers depending on the details of the local agreements.

#### **Rationale for pursuing this path:**

Greater autonomy for schools from statutory and regulatory rules may provide the needed flexibility for certain schools to make more flexible decisions. Examples exist where Innovation status enabled some schools to see dramatic growth and improved student achievement. Typically, Innovation plans call for more school-based autonomies in four areas: people, time, money, and program.

**Conditions necessary for success in this path:**

- Districts would have to be open to negotiating autonomies for their school.
- School communities, including administration, staff and SACs, would need to buy into the plan and a majority of these groups must be willing to provide the necessary consent for the plans.
- School leadership would need to have a clear method for identifying statutory and regulatory barriers that have created challenges for the school in the past, and would need to develop innovative strategies for changes to people, time, money, etc.
- Innovation status flexibility would need to address the root causes of the performance challenges in the school.

In the event that the requirements for Innovation status are too burdensome or not viable, a district board may request individual waivers from statute or rule, per C.R.S. § 22-2-117. A school principal may initiate such waivers but they must go through the district's board.

## SCHOOL CLOSURE

If a district is persistently low-performing on the district performance framework, it may become necessary to close one or more of its lowest-performing schools. Districts may make closure decisions at any time about their schools. Schools may be closed completely, or phased out over multiple years. Part of the closure process includes working with families to create a plan for successful future school enrollment options for all current students.

**Rationale for pursuing this path:**

School closure or phasing out of a school may be the best option when a school persistently fails to show adequate academic achievement for multiple years. In some cases, closing a school and opening a new school, with a new culture, program, and staff can re-invigorate a community. In other cases, students may be better served by attending other existing schools that have a proven track record.

**Conditions necessary for success in this path:**

- If a district chooses to close a school or is required to close a school, it will need to determine whether the school closes at once, or if it closes via a phase-out model.
- If a school is to be closed, careful consideration should be given to ensuring that better educational opportunities exist or are created for all affected students. Districts should take care to work with families to make a plan for future school enrollment for each student. A report entitled "Student and Family Support around School Closures: Lessons Learned and Future Recommendations" can be found [here](#).
- Phase-out and simultaneous phase-in plans may be a good option for ensuring future enrollment for students.

## School Pathways

The State Board **is required** to take actions on schools from the State Review Panel’s recommendations. The State Review Panel reviews schools with a distinct lens C.R.S. § 22-11-210(4) and makes recommendations per those articulated in C.R.S. § 22-11-210(5). Taking the recommendations into account, the State Board shall determine which actions the local board “shall take regarding the public school and direct the local school board or institute accordingly.” C.R.S. § 22-11-210(5)(b). This is a distinct difference from the State Board’s options for reinstating district accreditation.

As stated above, for the 2015-2016 school year, and for ratings given in the 2015-16 school year, HB 14-1182 allows the State Board to recommend an action **not** specified in statute but still having a “comparable significance and effect.”

The following section describes the possible recommendations and actions that the State Board may consider, one of which they must take regarding Priority Improvement and Turnaround schools. For more information, see [Appendix C](#).

The State Board does not accredit schools, districts accredit schools. The State Board may not direct a district to remove a school’s accreditation; however the State Board may direct the district to take another action, such as converting one or more of its schools to a charter school, seeking innovation status for one or more of its schools, or closing a school. If a local board does not act upon or to the satisfaction of the State Board’s recommendations, the State Board may lower the district’s accreditation rating.

### PRIVATE OR PUBLIC MANAGEMENT (for District Schools)

The State Board can require that a school district identify and utilize a private or public entity to manage one or more of the district’s schools. “With regard to a district public school that is not a charter school, that the district public school should be managed by a private or public entity other than the school district;” C.R.S. § 22-11-210(5)(a)(I) This action goes beyond simply hiring new leadership, but rather it compels a district to utilize an outside manager and operator for a particular school or cluster of schools.

#### Rationale for pursuing this path:

This path might be effective if a school’s leadership and practices prove to be ineffective over a period of time. A district board or superintendent might elect to transfer management for one or more schools to an external entity that has a track record of success. An outside management entity might bring in different and successful practices, such as human resource management; instruction and assessment; student culture and climate; finances; schedules and time; parent engagement; and more.

#### Conditions necessary for success in this path:

- A viable public or private entity would need to have capacity and willingness to take over management of the one or more schools.
- Willingness would be needed by a district board and/or leadership to engage in this path.
- The district would need to have capacity to evaluate and hold accountable a management entity.
- Support of school community.

## REPLACEMENT OF OPERATOR OR GOVERNING BOARD (for Charter Schools)

The State Board can require that the operator or governing board of a district or Institute charter school be replaced. C.R.S. § 22-11-210(5)(a)(II)

### Rationale for pursuing this path:

If an operator or governing board of a charter school proves to be ineffective, the district or State Board should make decisive and timely changes. Charter schools, by contract, must fulfill their promises to serve students. It is incumbent on a local authorizer or the Institute to either hold operators and their governing boards accountable or to replace them.

### Conditions necessary for success in this path:

- If a charter operator or governing board were to be replaced – rather than closed – a suitable replacement operator or governing board would need to exist in order to improve the conditions for the school’s students.
- Capacity of district to determine quality operator/governing board and hold them accountable

## CONVERSION TO CHARTER SCHOOL

The State Board can require that a district convert one or more of its schools to a charter school. C.R.S. § 22-11-210(5)(a)(III)

### Rationale for pursuing this path:

A district might convert a district school to a charter school in order to provide more autonomy and flexibility to a school from statutory and regulatory requirements, which may have created obstacles in the past. Successful recruitment of a new or existing charter school operator with proven success can ensure successful practices and positive achievement results into a community. A conversion to a charter school might provide a “fresh start” to a community. The charter school might benefit from using a district facility or the facility of the phase-out school.

### Conditions necessary for success in this path:

- District support would be critical in order to ensure collaborative efforts and support within the district and community.
- Consideration should be given to how the district school would close or phase-out and how the charter school would open or phase-in. Equations must provide enough funding for charter schools to operate effectively (at least equal effective funding as for district schools).
- The district would have to agree to authorize the charter application OR to release the district’s exclusive chartering authority (if in effect).
- Capacity of district to identify quality operator/governing board and hold them accountable for student performance



## INNOVATION STATUS

The State Board can require a school be granted Innovation status. 22-11-210(5)(a)(IV)

Such a requirement by the State Board would still require approval of an innovation plan by the school's administrators, staff and by the district's board.

### **Rationale for pursuing this path:**

Greater autonomy for schools from statutory and regulatory rules may provide the needed flexibility for certain schools to make more flexible decisions. Examples exist where Innovation status enabled some schools to see dramatic growth and improved student achievement. Typically, Innovation plans call for more school-based autonomies in four areas: people, time, money, and program.

### **Conditions necessary for success in this path:**

- Districts would have to be open to negotiating autonomies for their school.
- School communities, including administration, staff and SACs, would need to buy into the plan and a majority of these groups must be willing to provide the necessary consent for the plans.
- School leadership would need to have a clear method for identifying statutory and regulatory barriers that have created challenges for the school in the past. They would also need to develop innovative strategies for changes to staffing, time, resources, etc.
- Innovation status flexibility would need to address the root causes of the performance challenges in the school.

## SCHOOL CLOSURE OR REVOKED CHARTER

The State Board can direct a district or the Institute that a school be closed. C.R.S. § 22-11-210(5)(a)(V). If a school closes through a phase-out process, the school performance framework (SPF) will continue to be generated with available data as the phase-out occurs. If a new school phases in, an SPF is generated once student assessment data is available. However, the district is required to accredit the new school once it is opened. If students from a phased-out or closed school do not successfully enroll in another school, they may be counted in the drop-out formula.

### **Rationale for pursuing this path:**

School closure or phasing out of a school may be the best option when a school persistently fails to show adequate academic achievement for multiple years. In some cases, closing a school and opening a new school, with a new culture, program, and staff can re-invigorate a community. In other cases, students may be served better by being dispersed to other schools.

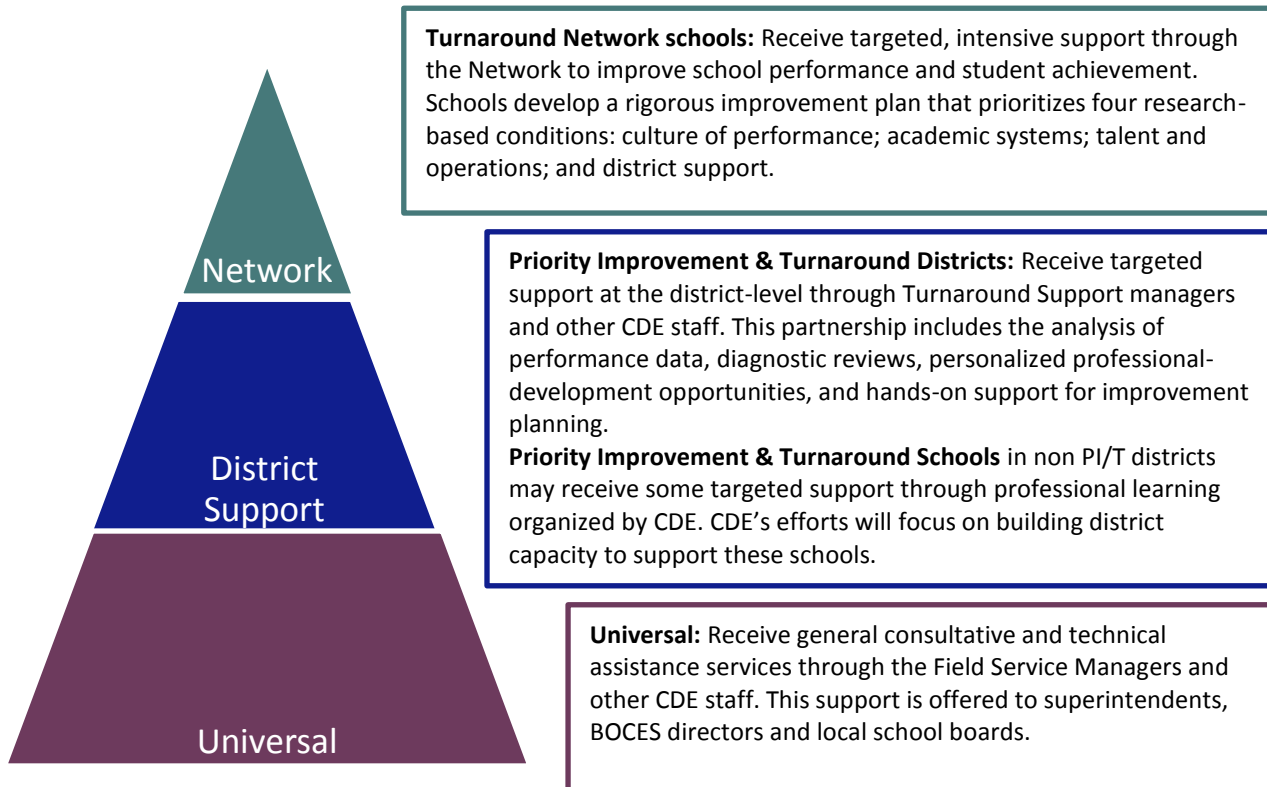
### **Conditions necessary for success in this path:**

- If a school is to be closed, careful consideration should be given to ensuring that better educational opportunities exist or are created for all affected students
- If a district agrees or is required to close a school, it will need to determine whether the school closes at once, or if it closes via a phase-out model.
- Careful consideration must be given to the enrollment of all students from the closed school. CDE has supported in transitioning students in some school closure instances.

## SUPPORT FOR DRAMATIC CHANGE

CDE offers a differentiated approach to state intervention based on performance and need. This tiered approach focuses the most intensive support to the lowest-performing schools and districts and allows for greater autonomy for the highest-performing schools and districts. CDE believes this strategy and structure is necessary to provide high-quality support and maximize resources across the state.

The following graphic illustrates the levels of support offered by CDE.



## Turnaround Network

CDE's School and District Performance Unit launched the Turnaround Network for schools, welcoming its first pilot cohort of schools in summer 2014. The Network is a commitment between CDE and local school districts to accelerate student achievement of some of the state's lowest performing schools through targeted diagnostic reviews and planning support; personalized professional learning opportunities; performance management; and supplemental grant funding. The goal of the Network is to show evidence of strategies that yield rapid turnaround results and from which other schools/districts can learn.

The Turnaround Network uses a framework to support schools in developing a rigorous improvement plan that pushes on four-research based conditions: culture of performance; academic systems; talent and operations; and district support. Network schools will make targeted investments in these four areas to improve school performance and student achievement.

More information about the Turnaround Network can be found [here](#).

## District Support

CDE will continue to support districts with Priority Improvement or Turnaround accreditation ratings through the work of Turnaround Support Managers. These districts will receive targeted support and personalized professional development opportunities. This support may include the analysis of performance data, coordination of diagnostic review support, design and/or updating of Unified Improvement Plans, and the brokering of resources and services. Performance management will happen at the district level, rather than directly with schools. CDE will consider differentiated approaches based on the number of Priority Improvement and Turnaround schools within a district and districts that are on Priority Improvement and Turnaround plans. Districts will be assigned and notified of its Turnaround Support Manager after the release of the preliminary performance frameworks.

## Universal Support

Field Service Managers and other CDE staff will provide and/or broker general consultative and technical services to superintendents, BOCES directors and local school boards, as well as serve as liaisons between the Department and the field. Technical assistance may include: the analysis of performance data, the design and/or updating of Unified Improvement Plans, academic performance diagnostic reviews and training – to districts with academic performance challenges in their schools, as well as to higher performing districts. This is to ensure successful implementation of performance objectives toward improving academic growth, achievement, closing of achievement gaps and enhancing postsecondary/workforce readiness. Field Service Managers are assigned to districts based on regional representation. A list of Field Service Managers and regions can be found [here](#).

## Turnaround Leadership Development

Senate Bill 14-124, passed in 2014, establishes the School Turnaround Leaders Development Program. This program will offer grants to turnaround leadership development providers and to districts and charter organizations to fund participants in such programs. The program creates an opportunity to increase the options for school leaders, aspiring leaders, and district teams to become trained in serving in low-performing schools in order to see dramatic and accelerated gains in student learning. It is expected that RFPs for this grant program will be available in the fall of 2014 and winter of 2015.

## School and District Improvement Grant Eligibility

For districts and schools identified as Priority Improvement or Turnaround, there are specific grant opportunities to assist them in building capacity to increase student achievement. The grants have been created to lead schools and districts through an intensive, supported process of continuous improvement. They have been developed to address the most common challenges of low performing schools and in consideration of the practices of effective high-needs schools. Funds are awarded on a competitive basis. The following provides a description of some of the grant opportunities/intensive supports available to the lowest performing schools and districts.

### **Diagnostic Review and Planning Grant**

Through a competitive process, CDE awards funds for appraisal and planning services to eligible Title I schools. These grant funds are used to support a Diagnostic Review and assistance with incorporating the recommendations from the review into the UIP. This grant is made available to Title IA Focus Schools and Title I schools with a Priority Improvement or Turnaround plan type.

More information about the diagnostic reviews can be found [here](#).

### **School Improvement Support Grant**

This grant is made available to Title IA Focus Schools and Title I schools with a Priority Improvement or Turnaround plan type, in order to address the needs identified by a diagnostic review. This review must be conducted within the two years preceding the grant and support a focused approach to improvement, related to the CDE Standards for Continuous Improvement. Additional information can be found [here](#).

More information about the School Improvement Support Grant can be found [here](#).

### **Tiered Intervention Grants**

This grant program utilizes Title I 1003(g) funds to support districts that have Title I or Title I eligible schools that perform in the lowest 5% on achievement based on state assessments or have graduation rates less than 60% and are also assigned a Priority Improvement or Turnaround plan type. Since this is the lowest tier of schools, the intent of this grant is to provide funding for districts to:

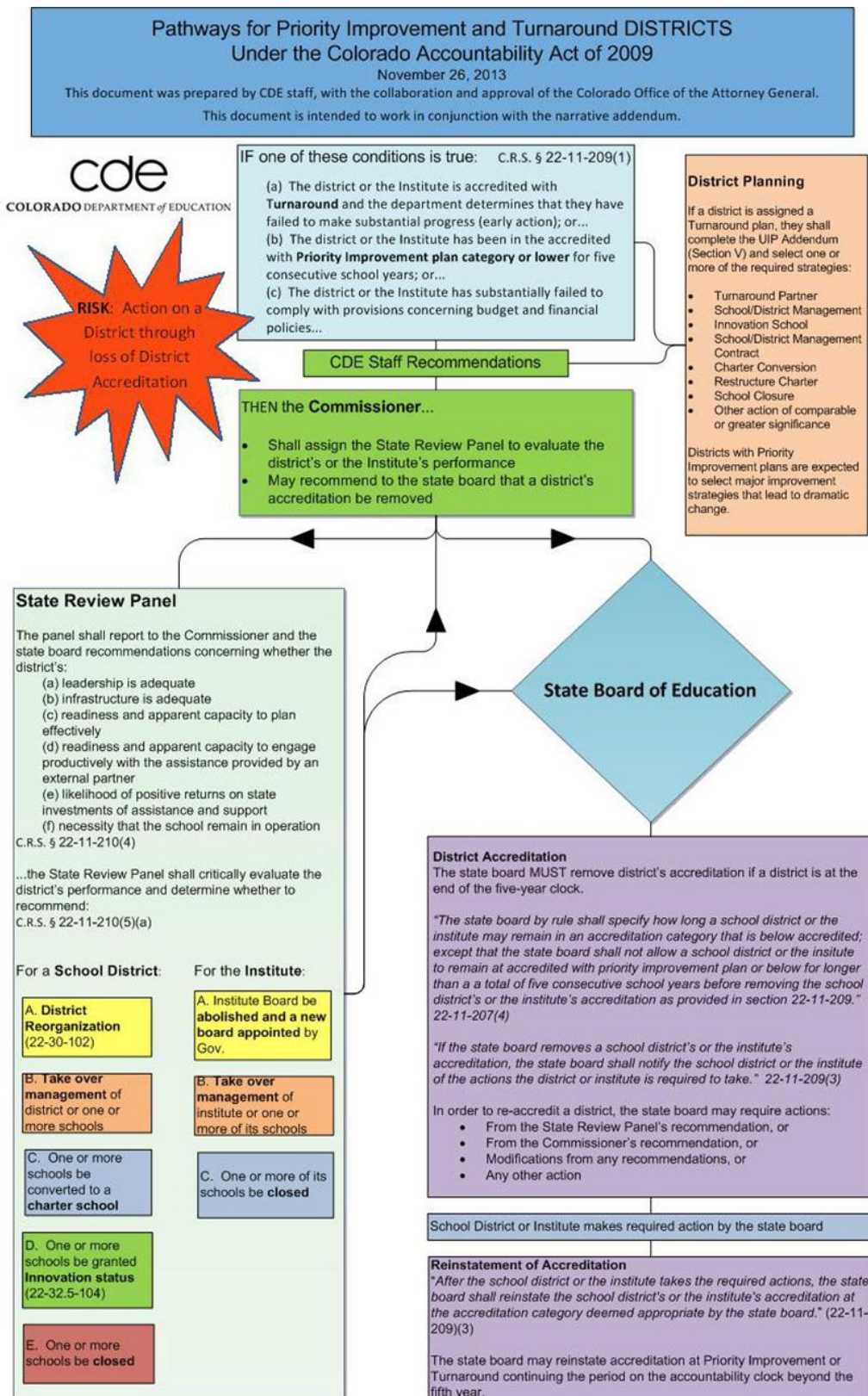
- Partner with CDE in the implementation of one of the four intervention models provided in the guidance for the use of Federal Title I 1003(g) funds;
- Increase the academic achievement of all students attending chronically low performing schools through the development of a coherent continuum of evidence based, system-wide practices to support a rapid response to academic and behavioral needs; and
- Utilize the support and services from external providers in their efforts to accomplish the above.
- Periodic progress monitoring of schools occurs by CDE both onsite, by phone and by other electronic means.

## Appendix A: Assessment Transition Accountability Timeline 2014-2016

**Yellow rows** = Activities for districts to complete

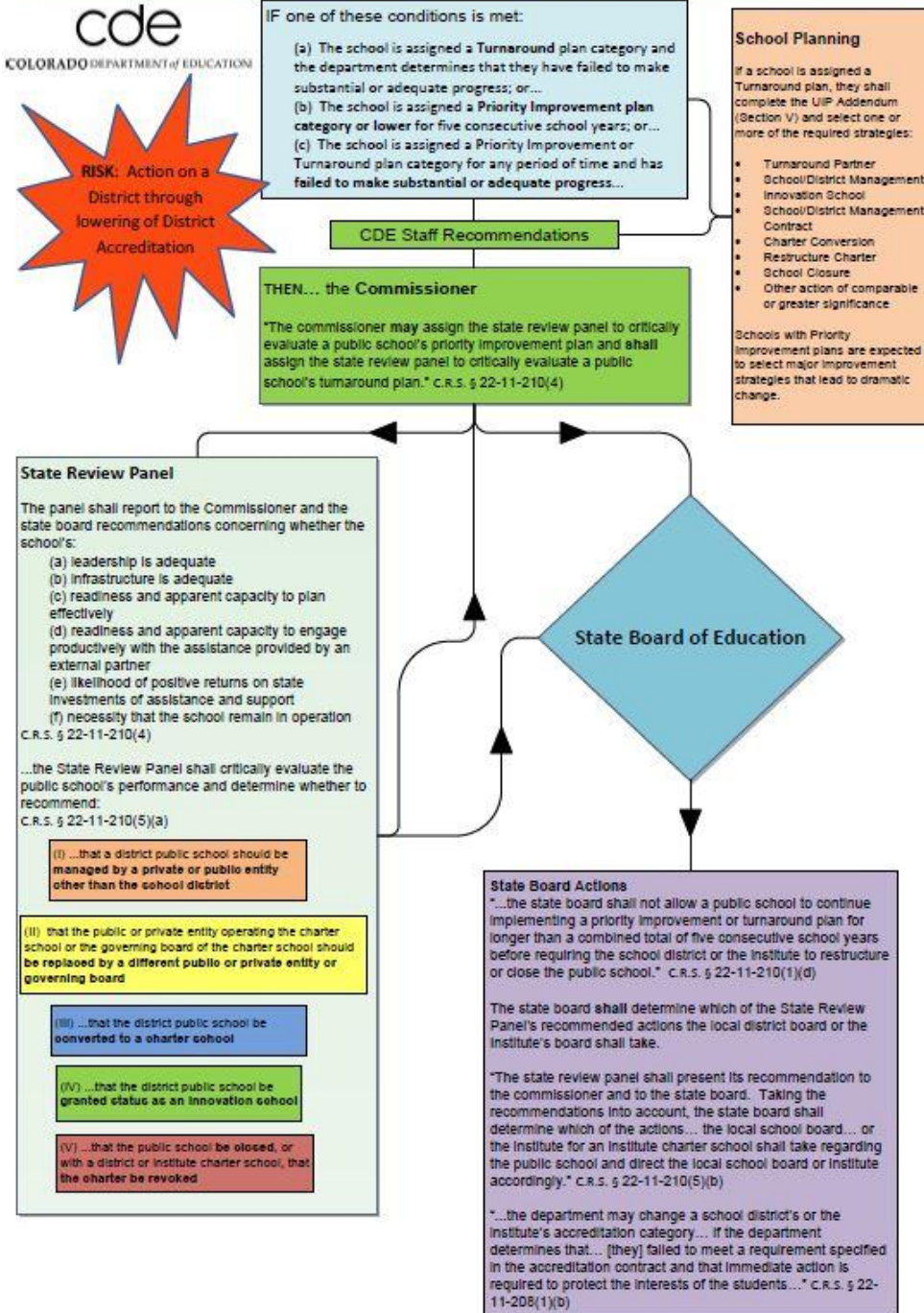
Timeline	Description
August 2014	Preliminary 2014 SPF/DPF reports shared with districts
September – November 2014	Districts submit Requests to Reconsider for 2014 plan types
December 2014	Final 2014 SPF/DPF reports public
Spring 2015	New Colorado Measures of Academic Success (CMAS) that include the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessments administered
Summer/Fall 2015	PARCC standard setting process
Fall 2015	Preliminary 2015 school and district plan types released to districts (based on 2014 ratings, participation and assurances)
October 2015	PARCC achievement results released to districts and public
October – December 2015	Requests to reconsider for 2015 plan types
February/March 2016	Final 2015 plan types and accreditation ratings made public
Spring 2016	Informational SPF/DPF reports shared with districts and schools, using CMAS results and enhanced frameworks
September 2016	Preliminary 2016 SPF/DPF 2.0 framework reports released to districts

## Appendix B: Pathways for Priority Improvement & Turnaround districts



## Appendix C: Pathways for Priority Improvement & Turnaround schools

**Pathways for Priority Improvement and Turnaround SCHOOLS**  
 Under the Colorado Accountability Act of 2009  
 November 26, 2013  
 This document was prepared by CDE staff, with the collaboration and approval of the Colorado Office of the Attorney General.  
 This document is intended to work in conjunction with the narrative addendum.



\* For the 2015-2016 school year and for ratings given in the 2016-2016 school year, HB14-1162 allows the State Board of Education to recommend an action not specified in statute but still having "comparable significance and effect".

## Appendix D: Sample Notification Letter to Parents

[*District Address*]

[*Date—at least 30 days before public meeting*]

Dear Parents,

Pursuant to the Education Accountability Act of 2009, all public schools in Colorado are required to develop unified improvement plans that outline targets for performance outcomes and strategies that the school will implement to achieve academic improvement. Schools may be required to implement a performance plan, improvement plan, priority improvement plan, or turnaround plan. Based on results from the Colorado School Performance Framework, [*school name*] will be required to develop a [*plan assignment*] plan during the 2014-15 school year.

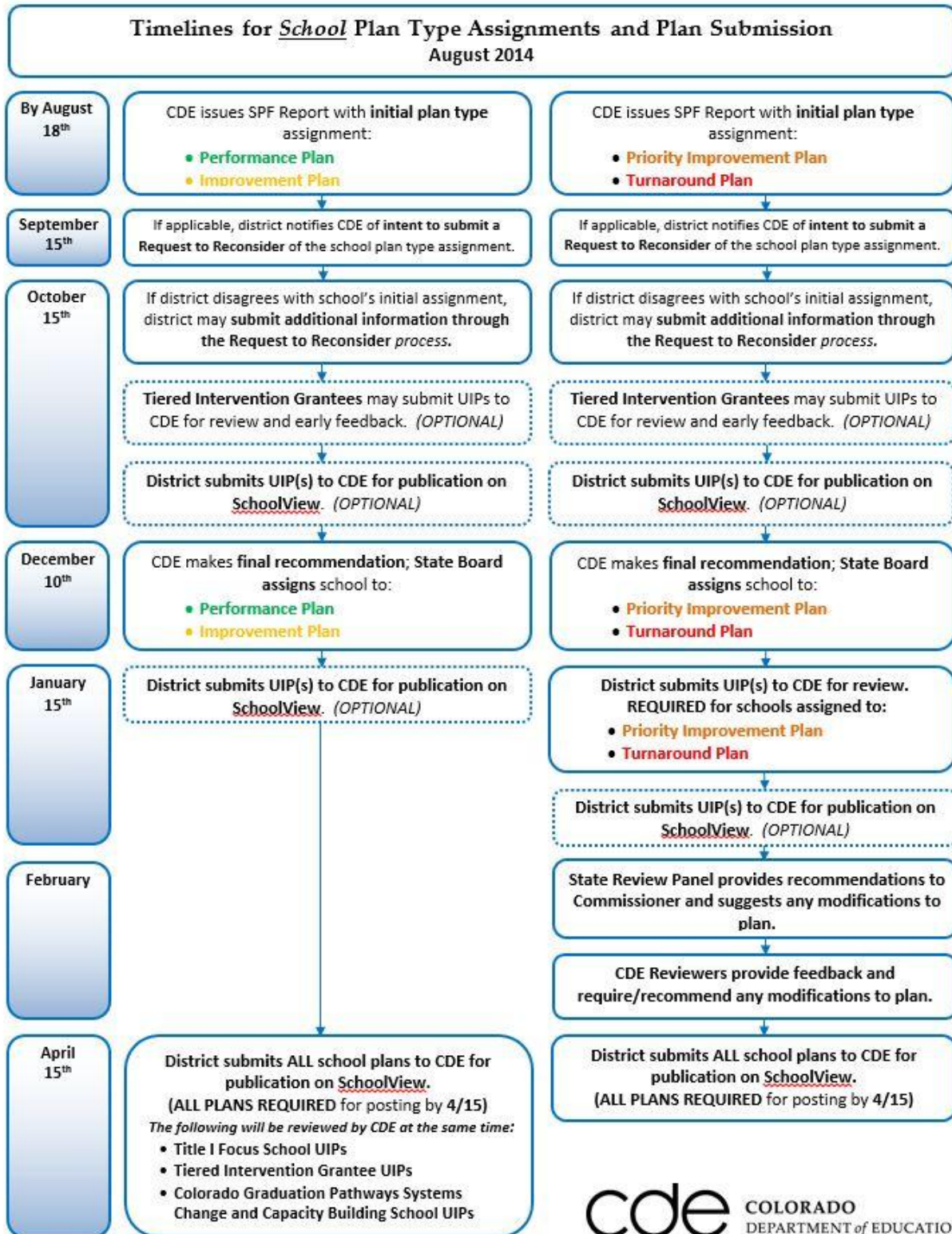
The school was assigned to this plan type based on low-performance in the areas of [*insert measures where the school did not meet expectations*]. Attached is a school performance framework report that describes how the school has been evaluated.

The district is required to submit [*school name*]'s Unified Improvement Plan (UIP) to the Colorado Department of Education on or before [*January 15, 2015*]. The UIP provides the school a focused improvement plan, including a data analysis on student performance and a detailed action plan. To meet that deadline, the UIP will be developed according to the following timeline: [*insert dates of any benchmarks for conducting analysis and developing plans, participation in CDE and/or district trainings and final adoption of plan*].

The School Accountability Committee will hold a public meeting to gather input from parents concerning the development of the plan on [*date*], at [*time*], in [*location*]. Prior to adopting a plan, the local school board will hold a public hearing on [*date—at least 30 days after this notice is issued*], at [*time*], in [*location*] to review the plan. For more information, please contact [*name*] at [*contact information*].



## Appendix E: School Plan Assignments and Submission Timeline



## Appendix F: District Plan Assignments and Submission Timelines

