



COLORADO
Department of Education

**Priority Improvement and Turnaround
Districts and Schools:
A Supplement to the CDE District
Accountability Handbook**

Updated August 2018

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 awards, sanctions, and supports. The state also holds districts and schools accountable through various program accountability requirements, including those under the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) which was reauthorized as the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in 2015. The District Accountability Handbook (www.cde.state.co.us/accountability/district_accountability_handbook_2018_19) 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 and supports, in addition to those for all districts and schools. As a result, CDE 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 requirements, 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;
- Supports;
- Timeline and process overview;
- Annual requirements; and
- Considerations and actions as schools and districts near the end of the Accountability Clock.

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 Priority Improvement and Turnaround schools are identified. Districts and schools assigned to a Priority Improvement or Turnaround plan have the lowest 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 the key Performance Indicators: academic achievement, growth, and post-secondary 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.

Guidance on the 2018 School and District Performance Frameworks can be accessed at:

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/accountability/performanceframeworksresources>.

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 mid-October of each year. More information and guidance can be found at: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/accountability/requesttoreconsider>.

The Accountability Clock: 2018-19 School Year

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 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. With the passage of [House Bill 18-1355](#), this timeline will be adjusted for the 2019-20 school year and beyond.

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. With the passage of House Bill 18-1355, this timeline will be adjusted for the 2019-20 school year and beyond.

These statutory timelines are referred to as the "Accountability Clock." The processes associated with each year of the clock, including the process required at end of the Accountability Clock, are detailed in the timeline that begins on page 7.

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. Previously and through the 2018 performance frameworks, the Accountability Clock stops for a district or school once the State Board adopts an SPF/DPF with a rating of Improvement or higher. 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 is not reset.

Currently, if a district or school improves to a Performance or Improvement Plan assignment one year, then drops back down to a Priority Improvement or Turnaround Plan the next year, the clock would restart at Year 1. The Accountability Clock and associated year-by-year actions and consequences would begin again. With the passage of House Bill 18-1355, however, the exit criteria will change beginning in the 2019-20 school year.

Performance Watch: Beginning 2019-20 School Year

House Bill 18-1355 made several modifications to Colorado's accountability law, in particular to the Accountability Clock. For a full summary of changes, please see the House Bill 18-1355 Fact Sheet at www.cde.state.co.us/accountability/housebill1355-factsheet.

The following changes pertaining to the re-naming and re-defining of the accountability clock will go into effect with the 2019 performance frameworks.

- **Performance Watch:** “Performance watch” replaces what was previously referred to as the “accountability clock.” A school, district or the Institute in Priority Improvement or Turnaround (PI/T) is on performance watch. After receiving two consecutive PI/T ratings, a school, district or Institute must receive an Improvement rating or higher for two consecutive years to exit performance watch. If a school, for example, is on Year 2 of performance watch and then receives an Improvement rating, the school will be on a “hold year” and will still be considered to be on performance watch in Year 2. If the school receives another Improvement rating or higher the following year, the school will be off of performance watch. If the school, however, receives another PI/T rating then the count of years continues where it left off and the school advances to Year 3 of performance watch. After five years of consecutive or nonconsecutive PI/T ratings while on performance watch, the State Board must direct the school, district or Institute to take one of the actions, or pathways, outlined in statute.
- **Timing:** Beginning with the 2019 performance frameworks, school and district ratings will go into effect immediately upon State Board approval of the final ratings. This means that the state board will direct an action in the fifth year of a PI/T rating for schools and districts on performance watch. This will shorten the current process (under which schools and districts receive six years of PI/T ratings before the state board directs an action) by a year.
- **Early Action:** Schools, districts or the Institute can request that the state board direct an action prior to the completion of the five years on performance watch, after consulting with the district accountability committee.
- **Beyond 5 Years:** One of the critical changes HB 18-1355 makes is to specify that if student academic performance continues to put a school or district in Priority Improvement or Turnaround beyond Year 5 of performance watch, then the state board may in any year—and must every two years—require the district to continue the previously directed action or undertake additional or different actions. The state board will consider the State Review Panel’s recommendation and the length of time a district has had to implement the previously directed action, whether that was enough time and whether the action was implemented with fidelity. Beginning with the 2019 frameworks, schools and districts beyond Year 5 of performance watch are also still required to earn two consecutive years of Improvement ratings or higher before being considered off of performance watch. This provision applies to all schools or districts who have already had a state board directed action and remain in Priority Improvement or Turnaround on the 2018 performance frameworks.

Support for Dramatic Change

CDE offers a differentiated approach to support and intervention based on performance and need. This is being carried out in two main ways: (1) Empowering Action for School Improvement (EASI) grant application and (2) Support Coordinators.

EASI Grant Application. The various supports and school improvement grant opportunities offered through CDE are now streamlined into a single application. The Department is focusing on a “needs-based approach” to award services and funding. This new approach has been designed to: maximize impact on student learning; incentivize innovative ideas; create fair and transparent processes; increase efficacy and efficiency; provide fairness and predictability to school districts; and prioritize school districts with high numbers or high percentages of low-performing schools. Ultimately, the intent is to implement a robust process of matching schools’ needs with rigorous, evidence-based strategies and adequate resources.

The grant application window is from mid-September to early November. In the fall, support fairs are being held to enable schools and districts to learn about the various resources and supports available. Visit the CDE website for more details on the grants and supports available for school improvement: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/fedprograms/easiapplication>.

Support Coordinator. Each district with a school on the accountability clock (i.e., priority improvement, turnaround) is assigned a support coordinator to act as a single point of contact and broker to other services. The support coordinator is available to assist with the EASI application, connect districts with other resources and support the accountability clock process. Support coordinator assignments will be shared with districts in September.

Accountability Clock Annual Timeline – Districts

For districts accredited with a Priority Improvement or Turnaround plan, the table that follows describes the yearly actions within the Accountability Clock process.

Yellow rows = Activities for all PI/T districts to complete

Green rows = Additional activities for Year 5 districts to complete (districts that entered Year 5 on July 1, 2018 and will enter Year 6 on July 1, 2019)

Timeline	Event	Description
August	Release of preliminary DPF report	CDE releases preliminary District Performance Framework (DPF) report to districts. This is the initial notification a Superintendent will receive if the district has been Accredited with a Priority Improvement or Turnaround Plan. The district may submit a Request to Reconsider by mid-October; otherwise the preliminary results will be considered final.
September	Release of preliminary UIP pre-populated report CDE Support Coordinator assignment	CDE releases preliminary unified improvement plan (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) through the online UIP system. Communication will be sent to the Superintendent and Board President to summarize if district or schools are on the accountability clock or identified for improvement under ESSA. The notice will outline implications and available supports. Each district with a Priority Improvement or Turnaround plan type is assigned a CDE Support Coordinator. The Support Coordinator will reach out to the district and will be a point of contact and broker of technical assistance opportunities for the district.
September 15	Deadline for Requests to Reconsider Drafts Submission of data narrative for review (optional) Submission of plan for reposting on SchoolView (optional)	District submits draft Request to Reconsider to CDE if it wishes to appeal its DPF accreditation rating or the SPF plan type for any of its schools. CDE will provide technical assistance on the draft submission. District may submit its revised UIP data narrative to CDE for early review. This is optional and intended as a support. Available to all districts, the revised UIP may be submitted to CDE to post online. This is optional.
September-November	Empowering Action through School Improvement (EASI) Grant Process	Eligible districts and schools (i.e., PI/T; Comprehensive or Targeted Support under ESSA), can apply for a variety of school improvement services that meet their unique needs supported through state and federal funds.

Timeline	Event	Description
October 15	Final Deadline for Requests to Reconsider	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.
October – April	<p>On-site district visit</p> <p>Optional district-developed pathway proposal</p> <p>Release of Commissioner Recommendation for Accountability Clock actions</p> <p>(Year 5 Districts only)</p>	<p>The Commissioner and staff will visit districts that are in Year 5 of Priority Improvement/Turnaround.</p> <p>Districts are encouraged to develop a pathway proposal which addresses the root causes of performance challenges leading to the district’s identification and meets one of the statutory requirements for end of clock actions, to be presented to the State Board of Education. CDE staff will support district staff with this plan and process, if desired.</p> <p>The Commissioner will notify the superintendent, local board president and State Board of Education of the Accountability Clock pathway the Commissioner recommends be pursued for the school district to improve student outcomes.</p>
November	Release of final DPF report and final UIP pre-populated report	<p>CDE finalizes the DPF accreditation ratings for districts based on Request to Reconsider decisions. Within 10 days of notification, the district may choose to appeal the accreditation decision to the state board of education.</p> <p>After plan types are confirmed, communication is sent to district to confirm the final rating if district applied for request to reconsider. UIP pre-populated reports are updated to reflect final DPF ratings in the online UIP system.</p>
January 15*	Submit Unified Improvement Plan (UIP)	For districts on the accountability clock, current version of the Unified Improvement Plan (UIP) is submitted to CDE by January 15. The UIP includes the Accountability Clock 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 may also review Priority Improvement and Turnaround plans.
<p>January – April</p> <p>March – May</p>	<p>CDE review of UIPs</p> <p>State Review Panel visit</p>	<p>CDE reviews UIPs for districts on the clock and shares feedback.</p> <p>The State Review Panel visits districts nearing the end of the accountability clock before making final recommendations to the Commissioner and State Board of Education. Districts earlier on the clock also have the opportunity to participate in an early visit to get a preliminary report from the Panel.</p>
February – May	State Board of Education accountability hearings held	<p>CDE and State Review Panel will send their recommendations regarding end-of-the-clock pathways to the State Board.</p> <p>At the accountability hearing, the state board will consider the State Review Panel and Commissioner</p>

Timeline	Event	Description
	State board directs district to take Accountability Clock action (Year 5 Districts only)	recommendations, as well as the district's own proposal (optional), and will direct the local board to implement one of the Accountability Clock pathways.
March 30	Submit revised UIP	District submits UIP with revisions based on feedback from CDE review.
April 15*	Submit final UIP	District submits final UIP for publication on SchoolView.org . CDE publishes the UIPs by June.
Ongoing	Schedule CDE visits and technical assistance	Support Coordinators schedule visits with districts to identify additional CDE assistance opportunities and strategize about improvement efforts.

*If the 15th falls on a weekend or holiday, the deadline advances to the first business day of the week.

YEAR 6+		
Timeline	Event	Description
Ongoing	Monitoring of Pathway Implementation	<p>CDE staff engage with the district periodically throughout the school year to ensure the State Board's directed action is being implemented with fidelity. CDE will present a progress monitoring update on the implementation of the pathway on an annual basis to the State Board of Education until the district has earned its way off of the Accountability Clock. If the district does not implement the pathway(s) as directed, accreditation could be removed if it was not already.</p> <p>The district will come back before the State Board of Education if it does not receive an Improvement rating or higher within 1-2 years, depending on the final written determination. Beginning with the 2019 Performance Frameworks, the state board may in any year—and must every two years—require the district to continue the previously directed action or undertake additional or different actions if improvement is not seen. The state board will consider the State Review Panel's recommendation and the length of time a district has had to implement the previously directed action, whether that was enough time and whether the action was implemented with fidelity.</p> <p>If district accreditation was removed, then the State Board of Education will reinstate the district's accreditation at the rating determined to be most appropriate once the district has implemented the required turnaround action.</p>

Accountability Clock Annual Timeline – 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 yearly actions within the Accountability Clock process.

Yellow rows = Activities for all PI/T districts/schools to complete

Green rows = Additional activities for Year 5 districts/schools to complete (schools that entered Year 5 on July 1, 2018 and will enter Year 6 on July 1, 2019).

Timeline	Event	Description
August	Release of preliminary School Performance Framework (SPF) report	CDE releases preliminary School Performance Framework (SPF) reports to districts. This is the initial notification a district will receive if one of its schools has been assigned a Priority Improvement or Turnaround plan type. The district may submit a Request to Reconsider by mid-October on behalf of any of its schools; otherwise the preliminary results will be considered final.
September (two weeks after release of SPF)	Release of preliminary UIP pre-populated report	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).
September 15	Deadline for Requests to Reconsider Drafts (optional) Submission of plan for reposting on SchoolView	District may submit a <i>draft</i> of their Request to Reconsider to CDE if it wishes to appeal the SPF plan type(s) for any of its schools. CDE will provide technical assistance on the draft submission. The revised UIP may be submitted to CDE to post online. This is optional.
October – November (no more than 30 calendar days after the release of the SPFs)	Parent Notification	For each school that is on the accountability clock, the district will notify the families in the school of the school's plan type, the reason for identification and ways to provide input into the school's plans (e.g., SAC meeting). District must hold a public hearing prior to the local board adopting the school's plan. Districts are expected to send a copy of the notification letter to CDE via email or attached to the school's UIP.
September – November	Empowering Action through School Improvement (EASI) Grant Process	Eligible districts and schools (i.e., PI/T; Comprehensive or Targeted Support under ESSA), can apply for a variety of school improvement services that meet their unique needs supported through state and federal funds.
October – April	On-site district visit Optional district-developed recommendation for the school	If a Year 5 school receives a preliminary rating of Priority Improvement or Turnaround, the Commissioner and Support Coordinator will visit the district to plan for the State Board hearing. Districts are encouraged to develop a pathway proposal which addresses the root causes of performance

	(Year 5 Schools Only)	<p>challenges leading to the school's identification and meets one of the statutory requirements for end of clock actions, to be presented to the State Board of Education. CDE staff will support district staff with this plan and process, if desired.</p> <p>If the district is submitting a Request to Reconsider on behalf of a school on Year 5 of the Accountability Clock, that process will happen concurrently.</p>
October	Information session for Priority Improvement/ Turnaround schools and districts	CDE hosts an informational meeting for Priority Improvement and Turnaround schools. CDE will provide information on the Accountability Clock process, the Performance Frameworks, the UIP, and available supports. If district/school leaders cannot attend in person, training can be provided via webinar or through a CDE staff visit to the district.
October – December (at least 30 calendar days after parent notification)	Public hearing	The local school board must hold a public hearing prior to adoption of the school's UIP.
October 15	Final deadline for Requests to Reconsider	District submits Request to Reconsider to CDE if it wishes to appeal the SPF plan type(s) for any of its schools.
December	Release of final SPF report and final UIP pre-populated report	CDE finalizes its recommendation for SPF plan types to the State Board. The State Board adopts the plan type assignments.
January 15*	Submit Unified Improvement Plan (UIP)	Districts with any schools on the accountability clock, current version of the school UIP are submitted 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.
January – April	<p>CDE review of UIPs</p> <p>State Review Panel visits</p>	<p>CDE reviews UIPs for schools on the clock and shares feedback.</p> <p>The State Review Panel visits schools nearing the end of the accountability clock before making final recommendations to the Commissioner and State Board of Education. Schools earlier on the clock also have the opportunity to participate in an early visit to get a preliminary report from the Panel.</p>
February – May	<p>State Board of Education accountability hearings held</p> <p>State Board directs district to take Accountability Clock action on behalf of school</p>	<p>The State Review Panel will send their recommendation regarding end-of-the-clock actions to the state board.</p> <p>At the accountability hearing, the state board will consider the State Review Panel recommendation, factual information from the Department, and the district's own</p>

	(Year 5 schools only)	proposal (optional), and will direct the local board to implement one of the Accountability Clock pathways.
April 15*	Submit final UIP	District submits final UIP for publication on SchoolView.org . CDE publishes the UIPs by June.

*If the 15th falls on a weekend or holiday, the deadline advances to the first business day of the week.

YEAR 6+		
Timeline	Event	Description
Ongoing	Monitoring of Pathway Implementation	<p>CDE staff engage with the district and school periodically throughout the school year to ensure the State Board’s directed action is being implemented with fidelity. CDE will present an update on the implementation of the school pathway on an annual basis to the State Board of Education until the school has earned its way off of the Accountability Clock.</p> <p>The district will come back on behalf of the school to the State Board of Education if the school does not receive an Improvement rating or higher within 1-2 years, depending on the final written determination. Beginning with the 2019 Performance Frameworks, the state board may in any year—and must every two years—require the school to continue the previously directed action or undertake additional or different actions if improvement is not seen. The state board will consider the State Review Panel’s recommendation and the length of time a school has had to implement the previously directed action, whether that was enough time and whether the action was implemented with fidelity.</p> <p>If the district does not implement the school pathway(s) as directed by the State Board, the district’s accreditation rating may be lowered.</p>

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. Beginning in the 2019-20 school year, additional requirements will be in place per HB 18-1355. For more information on those coming changes please see the HB 18 -1355 Fact Sheet at www.cde.state.co.us/accountability/housebill1355-factsheet.

Parent Notification Requirements

For a school that is required to implement a Priority Improvement or Turnaround plan, there are some specific expectations and timelines laid out in state statute about family engagement in the process. In summary, the parents must be notified about the plan type and have the opportunity to provide input into the planning process. Furthermore, schools on the accountability clock must have family involvement strategies listed in their action plans.

The district must notify parents of the students enrolled in the school within 30 calendar days of receiving the initial plan type assignment. This notification must include:

- Type of plan that is required
- Performance results that led to that plan assignment
- Timeline for developing and adopting the required plan
- Date, time and location of the public meeting of the School Accountability Committee (SAC) to draft the plan
- Date, time and location of the public hearing held by the local board of education to review the plan prior to adoption.

If the district requests a reconsideration of the rating, then the notification process can wait until after the State Board's final determination. Contact CDE to discuss the notification timeline, however, if the request is not approved.

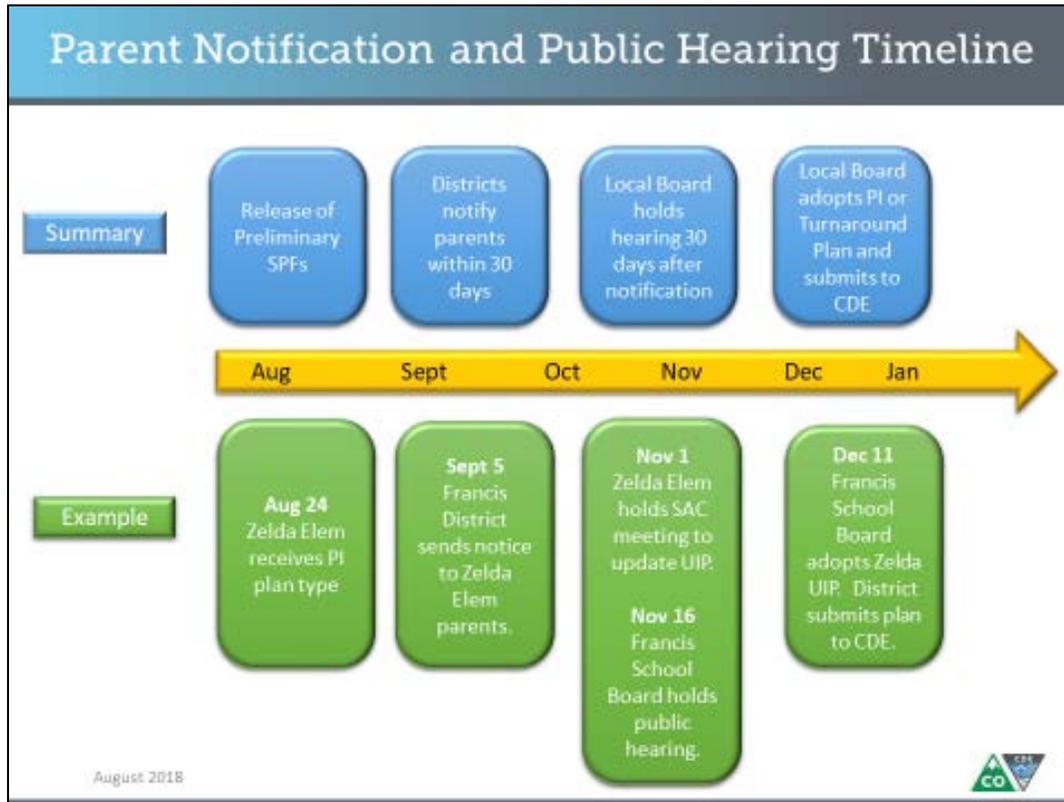
While all SACs are expected to review a school's UIP and provide input, SACs for schools on the accountability clock need to take special care to reflect on whether the action plan addresses the magnitude of the school's performance challenges. The school principal shall review the school's progress in implementing its plan for the preceding year and in improving its performance. Finally, family involvement strategies must be included in the action plan. For information about promising practices, go to: www.cde.state.co.us/uip/promising.

The date for the public hearing must be at least 30 days after the date on which the district provides the written notice. This will give families ample time to get the meeting on their calendars. During these public hearings, the local board of education should review the school's progress in implementing its plan during the preceding year and in improving its performance. A member of the School Accountability Committee is encouraged to attend the public hearing. Time needs to be built in before

final adoption by the local school board, so that any feedback provided at the hearing can be incorporated.

The plan must be adopted by the local school board by January 15, which is the state’s due date for UIP submission for Priority Improvement and Turnaround plans.

Sample timeline of Parent Notification and Public Hearing process



For a sample of a parent notification letter, please see Appendix A.

Beginning in the 2018-19 school year, districts should submit their school’s notification letter(s) to CDE by email or by attaching the notification to the schools’ UIPs on or before January 15. The purpose of this collection is to ensure families are receiving this information and to provide technical support.

Improvement Planning

As schools and districts with Priority Improvement or Turnaround plan types create a Unified Improvement Plan, it is expected that the plan demonstrates an understanding of the magnitude of the issues facing them. The data analysis should consider and respond to the overall Performance Indicators (i.e., academic achievement, growth, post-secondary workforce readiness) and indicators by disaggregated groups 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 Performance Indicators and look for an analysis that works across the system; rather than focusing on just one area. Furthermore, the

action plan should be appropriate in scope and intensity. This is an acknowledgement that for schools and districts to exit Priority Improvement or Turnaround status, dramatic change is necessary.

Schools and districts on the accountability clock have additional planning requirements. Customized directions for each school and district are available in the pre-populated reports. In addition to the typical planning requirements (e.g., trend analysis, priority performance challenges, root causes, major improvement strategies, action plans, progress monitoring plans), the following must also be included:

- For elementary schools on the clock and their districts: Early Childhood Needs Assessment is required. For more details, see: http://www.cde.state.co.us/uip/implementing_sb17_103
- For all schools on the clock: Specific parent engagement strategies. For information about promising practices, see: www.cde.state.co.us/uip/promising
- For schools and districts with a Turnaround plan type: At least one of the state-required turnaround strategies must be identified, described in the UIP and implemented: The state-required strategies are as follows:
 - 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 or 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.
 - Investing in research-based strategies focused on early learning and development to address any deficiencies identified in the early childhood learning needs assessment. This may be done in combination with at least one other research-based strategy named in this list.
 - 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). Prior to adopting the UIP, Priority Improvement and Turnaround schools must hold a public meeting to solicit community input, concerning the contents of the plan. Further, local school boards must adopt a plan no later than mid-January of the school year in which it is identified for Priority Improvement or Turnaround.

Schools and districts must use the online UIP system to address the requirements for a Priority Improvement or Turnaround plan, along with any other applicable program planning requirements (e.g., ESSA requirements, Gifted Education, state and federal grants).

After the local school board has adopted a Priority Improvement or Turnaround Plan, the board must submit the plan to the Department for review, which must be no later than January 15. The Department will evaluate the plan to ensure that it meets expectations for state and federal requirements. After the review, the Department will provide written feedback through the UIP Online system. Feedback includes any areas that must be revised to meet requirements, as well as recommendations for enhancing the plan.

Annual Submission of UIP for Public Posting

All districts must submit final Priority Improvement and Turnaround district and/or school plans no later than mid-April to the Department for publication on SchoolView. (Some flexibility has been provided for districts and schools with a Performance plan type. See the UIP webpage for additional details: www.cde.state.co.us/uiip/uiip_general_resources.) Some programs will also conduct 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, please see Appendix B (schools) and Appendix C (districts). For additional resources and support on Improvement Planning, visit: www.cde.state.co.us/uiip.

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:

http://www.cde.state.co.us/accountability/district_accountability_handbook_2018_19

Reaching the End of the Accountability Clock

Colorado law, per Colorado’s Education Accountability Act, requires that the State Board of Education recommend 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. In considering appropriate actions, the State Board will refer to recommendations from the State Review Panel. School districts may also provide a proposal for their preferred pathway to the State Board.

With the passage of House Bill 18-1355, beginning with the 2019 Performance Frameworks, “Performance Watch” replaces the Accountability Clock. A school, district or the Institute in Priority Improvement or Turnaround (PI/T) is on Performance Watch. After receiving two consecutive PI/T ratings, a school, district or Institute must receive an Improvement rating or higher for two consecutive years to exit Performance Watch. After five years of consecutive or nonconsecutive PI/T ratings while on Performance Watch, the State Board must direct the school, district or Institute to take one of the actions, or pathways, outlined in statute. For more information about the changes, please see the House Bill 18-1355 Fact Sheet at: www.cde.state.co.us/accountability/housebill1355-factsheet.

This section outlines the steps that will take place as a school, district or Institute reaches the end of the Accountability Clock (or, in 2019, Performance Watch). Through this process, CDE staff members will work with the district or Institute to select an action, also referred to as a “pathway,” that is best suited to create dramatic change targeting the root causes of the performance challenges. 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 Commissioner and State Board as to which pathway it believes will produce that change. The pathways include school closure, converting schools to a charter school, working with an external management partner, seeking innovation status for a school or group of schools, or district reorganization. Descriptions of these pathways are provided in the next two sections.

State Review Panel

Created through the Education Accountability Act, the State Review Panel is a body of educational experts that provides recommendations to the Commissioner of Education and State Board of Education for schools and districts on the Accountability Clock. Panelists have expertise in school and district leadership, curriculum, assessment, instructional data management, program evaluation, teacher leadership, and school and district governance. In addition, 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.
 - Providing recommendations to the Commissioner and State Board of Education on potential actions when a school or district remains on the Accountability Clock for five consecutive years, or earlier upon request.
-

The State Review Panel's evaluation occurs through document reviews (including an evaluation of the UIP) and site visits (including interviews with district and school leadership, local board members, staff, families and local community members). Panelists 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 to consider as they determine the required action(s) at the end of the Accountability Clock or early action. Table 1, on the following page, describes the possible pathways for districts, the Institute and schools, per state statute, which the State Review Panel must select from in their recommendations.

Additional details on the State Review Panel are available on the CDE website at:

www.cde.state.co.us/uip/statereviewpanel.

Accountability Pathways Resources

As a school or district reaches the end of the accountability clock, CDE staff work with the district and school to select a pathway that is best suited to create dramatic change targeting the root causes of the performance challenges. CDE has developed resources to support this process, which are available at: www.cde.state.co.us/accountability/accountability_clock.

Guidance documents for each pathway provide an overview of what implementation entails, what the implications are for governance and funding, and what conditions are necessary for success.

Pathway Guidance Documents

- [Conversion to a Charter School](#)
- [Innovation School or Innovation Zone](#)
- [Management by a Public or Private Entity](#)
- [School Closure](#)
- [District Reorganization](#)

CDE has also developed rubrics for school districts submitting innovation or management plans on behalf of a school, set of schools, or the district. The rubrics are intended to guide planning for Priority Improvement and Turnaround schools and districts pursuing the innovation or management pathways as a turnaround strategy. Department staff also use the rubrics to inform the Commissioner's report and

assess whether the plan, if implemented, will have significant, rapid and positive impact on student learning.

Pathway Rubrics

- [Innovation School or Innovation Zone Plan Rubric](#)
- [Management Plan Rubric](#)

State Board of Education Accountability Hearings

If, after school and district ratings are made final, a school or district will be entering the sixth consecutive year of Priority Improvement or Turnaround, the Department will provide written notice to the District or Institute that the State Board will be considering a course of action for the district or Institute and/or for one or more of its schools at an accountability hearing. The State Board Office will notify the district or Institute in writing of the date on which the State Board of Education will hear the recommendations of the Commissioner (for districts) and the State Review Panel (for schools and districts). The district or Institute is also provided the opportunity to submit to the State Board a written report detailing the district or Institute's preferred course of action at least thirty days prior to the scheduled State Board of Education hearing. At the hearing, the district or Institute and the Department shall each have a maximum of thirty minutes to present. The district is encouraged to present an overview of the district's improvement strategies, a review of trends in student achievement data, and an explanation of what actions the district and/or school is taking or plans to take to improve student outcomes and attain improvement status or higher within the next two years. Following the presentation of the district or institute, the State Board will ask questions. The accountability hearing is an opportunity to present recommendations and engage in discussion with the State Board. No votes will be taken at the initial hearing. The State Board will consider and adopt a written final determination of the actions the district will need to take at a subsequent State Board meeting.

Table 1. Accountability Clock Pathways

Pathway	Statutory Language		What does this mean?
	Districts on the clock (C.R.S. 22-11-209)	Schools on the clock (C.R.S. 22-11-210)	
Change in Management	That a private or public entity, with the agreement of the school district, serve as a lead partner in the management of the school district or partially or wholly manage one or more of the district public schools. The local school board and the department shall ensure that the private or public entity uses research-based strategies and has a proven record of success working with school districts and schools under similar circumstances	<p>With regard to a district public school that is not a charter school, that the district public school should be partially or wholly managed by a private or public entity other than the school district. The local school board and the department shall ensure that the private or public entity uses research-based strategies and has a proven record of success working with school districts and schools under similar circumstances.</p> <p>With regard to a district or institute charter school, that the public or private entity operating the charter school or the governing board of the charter school should be replaced by a different public or private entity or governing board.</p>	An external organization would be brought into the district or school to manage the entire school/district or to manage targeted operations (e.g., fiscal management, HR operations, or instructional approach). If partnering with an external organization only for targeted operations, the external partner must have contractual authority and accountability.
Charter School Conversion	That one or more of the district public schools be converted to a charter school.	That the district public school be converted to a charter school if it is not already authorized as a charter school.	A school(s) would be converted to a public charter school. This means that the school would have its own governing board. A management organization could be brought in to operate the school. There are automatic waivers available to charter schools.
Innovation Status	That one or more of the district public schools be granted status as an innovation school pursuant to section 22-32.5-104 or that the local school board recognize a group of district public schools as an innovation school zone.	That the district public school be granted status as an innovation school pursuant to section 22-32.5-104.	Innovation Status provides a way for a school, a group of schools or the district to develop innovative practices to better meet the needs of students. It allows more autonomy to make decisions at the school-level and includes getting approval on waivers from local and state policies that may be barriers to that innovative vision.
School Closure	That one or more of the district public schools be closed.	That the public school be closed or, with regard to a district charter school or an institute charter school, that the public school's charter be revoked.	School closure can be done in different ways, including full closure (permanent closure), partial closure (school no longer serves a grade span, such as the high school at a K-12 school) or a phase out (school is slowly closed over time as students naturally exit the system).
District Reorganization	That the school district be reorganized pursuant to article 30 of this title, which may include consolidation.	N/A	A committee would develop a plan to consolidate the district with a neighboring district(s) and/or alter its boundaries. This would involve comprehensive negotiation and require that voters in all involved districts support the plan.
Removal of Accreditation	That the school district's accreditation be removed;	N/A	Following removal of accreditation, the district reorganization process begins.

Appendix A: Sample Notification Letter to Parents

[*District Address*]

[*Date – At least 30 calendar days before public meeting*]

Dear Parent,

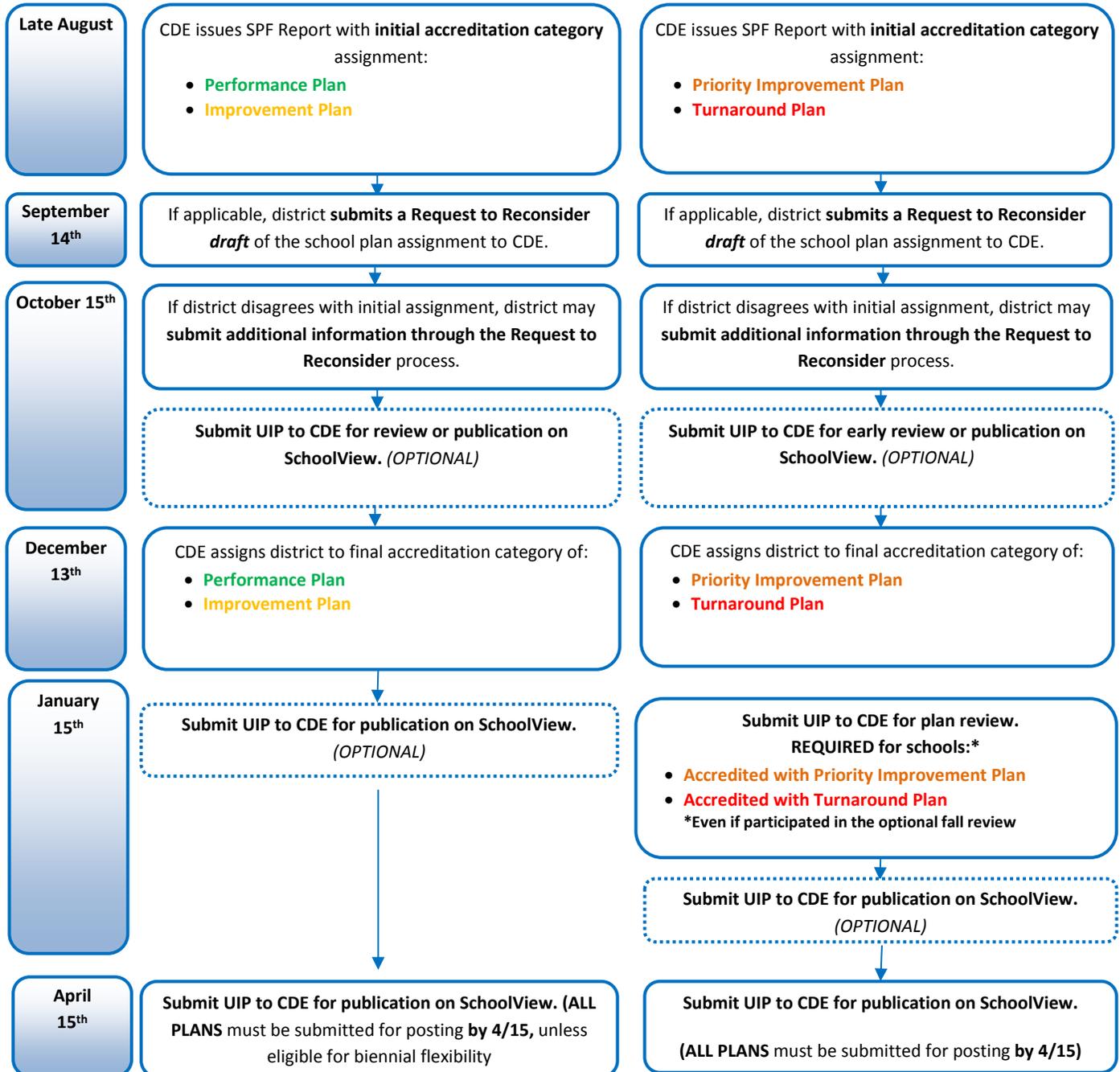
Pursuant to the Education Accountability Act of 2009, all public schools in Colorado are required to develop unified improvement plans (UIPs) that outline targets for performance outcomes and strategies that the school will implement to achieve academic improvement. Depending on performance, schools are expected to implement a performance plan, improvement plan, priority improvement plan, turnaround plan. Based on results from the Colorado School Performance Framework in 2018, [*school name*] will be updating its [*plan assignment*] plan during the 2018-19 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 the 2018 school performance framework report that describes how the school has been evaluated.

The district must submit [*school name*]'s UIP to the Colorado Department of Education on or before *January 15, 2019* for review. 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 and finalizing the 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 calendar days after this notice is issued*], at [*time*], in [*location*] to review the plan. For more information, please contact [*name*] at [*contact information*].

Appendix B: School Plan Assignments and Submission Timeline



Appendix C: District Plan Assignments and Submission Timeline

