

Request to Reconsider External Review Protocol

2021-2022



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Part I: Introduction

In response to the disruptions created by COVID-19, a second year of the Accountability Pause (2021-2022) was authorized by the Colorado legislature. On March 16, 2021, the Governor signed HB 21-1161 into law pausing State accountability for the second year and establishing the following practices for the 2021-22 school year:

- Rollover of district and school plan types from 2020-2021 (which were rolled over from 2019).
- Districts and schools (including alternative education campuses) will not receive 2021 performance frameworks.
- A newly established **request-to-reconsider** process is available to schools and districts on the accountability clock (i.e., Priority Improvement, Turnaround).
- Schools and districts on Performance Watch (i.e., Priority Improvement, Turnaround, On Watch) retain their Performance Watch year without advancing (e.g., a school on Year 4 of the accountability clock in 2019-20 remained on Year 4 in 2020-21 and will continue in 2021-22). This holds true for those schools and districts that participate in the request-to-reconsider process.
- Progress monitoring continues for sites that have received directed action from the State Board of Education.

What is the 2021-2022 Request-to-Reconsider Process?

In a typical year, the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) calculates and publishes District Performance Framework Reports (DPFs), which determine accreditation ratings, and School Performance Framework Reports (SPFs), which determine school plan types. Districts have the opportunity to review the State-identified district or school rating from the DPF or SPF. If the district disagrees with the initial rating, additional performance data may be submitted to CDE through the request-to-reconsider process.

Upon the recommendation of various stakeholder groups, H.B. 21-1161 enabled the State to offer a special amended request-to-reconsider process to schools and districts on the accountability clock (i.e., Priority Improvement, Turnaround) for the 2021-22 school year only. The State Board of Education passed rules for this special process in August 2021:

Pursuant to H.B. 21-1161, the Department will not assign accreditation ratings and plan types for districts and the State Board will not assign plan types for schools for the 2021-22 school year. Instead, districts and schools will continue to implement the plan type assigned for the preceding school year. However, for districts and schools assigned to priority improvement or turnaround plans, a special request may be submitted to the Department for an improved accreditation rating and/or plan type that reflects the districts or school's level of attainment based on an alternative body of evidence. Any change in a districts or school's rating, based on this special process, will not change the requirements of the accountability clock for that district or school.¹

¹[https://go.boarddocs.com/co/cde/Board.nsf/files/C3LJRR4DAB6A/\\$file/Board%20Memo%20for%20Notice%20of%20Amendment%20to%20Accountability%20Rules_Special%20Process%20to%20Request%20Rating_June%202021%20\(002\).pdf](https://go.boarddocs.com/co/cde/Board.nsf/files/C3LJRR4DAB6A/$file/Board%20Memo%20for%20Notice%20of%20Amendment%20to%20Accountability%20Rules_Special%20Process%20to%20Request%20Rating_June%202021%20(002).pdf)

The 2021-22 request-to-reconsider process is only available to schools and districts on the accountability clock (i.e., Priority Improvement, Turnaround), which is different from previous years when the process was open to all districts regardless of plan type. While eligible schools and districts may request a new plan type, the accountability clock will not be adjusted. For example, a school with a Priority Improvement - Y3 plan type could move to Improvement - Y3. Two consecutive frameworks at Improvement or higher would still need to be earned to fully exit performance watch.

How does the 2021-2022 request-to-reconsider process work?

The department has worked with stakeholders (including the Accountability Working Group) to design an amended request-to-reconsider process. There are two avenues for participating in the process, which include:

- **Expedited:** This approach relies on State performance data across applicable performance framework indicators (i.e., achievement, growth, postsecondary workforce readiness). If data demonstrate adequate student participation (85% and above) and meet the 2019 performance expectations, the Department will notify districts of their eligibility for an expedited approval. Further evidence (e.g., body of evidence, site visit) would not be needed.
- **Expedited Plus:** For schools/districts that meet the 2019 frameworks expectations but have lower than typical growth (75-85%) that demonstrates representativeness, this additional pathway was added. These sites must meet the improvement planning expectations, in addition to meeting the framework expectations.
- **Body of Evidence:** This option relies on evaluation of multiple sources of information, including performance data on nationally-normed local assessments, a solid improvement plan (i.e., review of Unified Improvement Plan) and a site visit by an **External Review Team**. This option will rely heavily on school and district involvement.

What is an External Review Team site visit?

The site visit is a process that engages an independent external team review of the school/district to understand and explain the extent to which schools/districts have implemented strategies cited in the Unified Improvement Plan (UIP) and can demonstrate a likelihood of sustaining the improvements. This is one data source in a broader body of evidence that the department will consider in making a recommendation for an improvement plan type to the State Board of Education.

The External Review site visit process was designed in partnership with SchoolWorks – an education consulting organization with the mission to build the capacity of educators to advance all aspects of student achievement and well-being. The External Review Team site visit places a team of experienced educators from Colorado in a school/district for two days to collect and analyze data related to the school's/district's capacity on specific criteria and indicators. External Review Team members also serve as State Review Panelists, who are annually appointed by CDE's Commissioner, with the approval of the State Board of Education.

What is the purpose of an External Review site visit?

The purpose of the External Review site visit is to add to the body of evidence the school/district has already submitted through the request-to-reconsider process by engaging a team of external reviewers in a site visit. The External Review Team will gather on-site evidence to further understand and explain the extent to which schools/districts have implemented strategies cited in the Unified Improvement Plan (UIP)

and have shown sufficient growth and can demonstrate a likelihood of sustaining the improvements. The site visit builds on the document review process conducted by the External Review Team in preparation for a deeper analysis while on site. The site visit allows the visiting team to interact with the school or district to better understand how well strategies are being implemented, current strengths and areas for improvement, and to solicit school staff and district input.

What does the External Review Team site visit entail?

The External Review team utilizes multiple sources of evidence to understand how well a school/district is performing related to the criteria and indicators (see below) it is charged with examining. It extends beyond standardized measures of student performance and enables reviewers to observe and collect evidence about the effectiveness of the school/district's processes and implementation of improvement strategies cited in the school/district's UIP.

Prior to arriving on site, the External Review Team will conduct a document review that includes performance data (e.g., the request to reconsider local assessment tool, CDE's review of the site's UIP), and the UIP and other documents aligned to the protocol's criteria and indicators. While onsite, the review team uses evidence collected through focus groups, interviews, classroom visits, and additional document review to come to consensus in relation to each of the key questions, with a focus on implementation of the school/district's major improvement strategies.

The process will benefit most from open, frank, and professional dialog between the school and district stakeholder and the External Review Team. The professionalism of the school/district and the External Review team is essential; both have clear roles and responsibilities designed to promote good rapport and clear communication. All team members are governed by a code of conduct. Honesty, integrity, objectivity, and a focus on the best interests of students are essential.

What are the general steps in the External Review site visit process?

Pre-visit Planning and Analysis

CDE will approve the site's move to the site visit portion of the request-to-reconsider process. If the local data analysis meets thresholds and the UIP meets expectations, then CDE will contact the district to begin the pre-visit process and connect the district with SchoolWorks -- the organization coordinating site visits. Do not contact SchoolWorks beforehand.

SchoolWorks will provide all school/district leaders with an orientation on the External Review site visit process and will assist the school/district to organize a schedule for the site visit. In addition, SchoolWorks will work with the designated site contact (e.g., school leader, district contact) to begin collecting documents that the External Review team will review prior to arriving on site. These key documents may include school-and-teacher schedules; curricula and related teaching documents; and professional development calendars/schedules. The purpose of this review is to begin to gather information in relation to the protocol's criteria and indicators.

This pre-visit analysis provides the site visit team with initial information about the school/district's programs and the students it serves. Team members review documents and record their initial questions about the school/district's performance according to protocol standards.

Evidence Gathering On Site and Coming to Consensus

While on site, evidence collection continues through additional document reviews, classroom visits, and interviews with key district and school/district stakeholders. After collecting evidence, the site visit team meets to confirm, refute, and modify its hypotheses about school performance. The site visit team listens to the school/district's responses and makes every effort to follow up on evidence that the school/district indicates the team should collect.

In addition, the team meets with district and school leaders, and – in the case of charter schools – with its Governing Board, to solicit input on implementation practices, including support of the Unified Improvement Plan.

Site Visit Report

The site visit team's primary objective is to come to consensus on whether to recommend an improved plan type. To come to consensus, the site visit team works together to collate and discuss available evidence collected throughout the External Review process. At the end of the site visit, a written report is developed and provided to CDE to inform the recommendation as to whether the district or school should receive a plan type change.

As a secondary benefit, the site visit team will also include observations and evidence in the report for the district/school to help with future improvement activities. See the "Submission to CDE" section for more explanation of the written report.

Factual Corrections

Prior to submitting the report to the department, SchoolWorks provides three business days for the district to review the report for any errors of a factual nature. For example, factual corrections might include names, dates, historical references, program titles, or numbers of students and teachers. During the factual corrections process, the report can be reviewed internally and shared with the school/district's leadership, but it is not available for broad or public distribution. While the report may be edited and corrections are deemed factual in nature, the content of the report will not be edited.

Submission to the Colorado Department of Education

The site visit report is a recommendation to the department and provides an additional data point in the body of evidence pathway. The Department will make the final recommendation based on the overall body of evidence to the State Board of Education for final approval.

The Department will include an executive summary of the site visit report within its recommendation to the State Board of Education for final approval. The executive summary will be posted on BoardDocs and be available publicly. The Department will release the full report (more detailed version) to the district for broader distribution, as the district deems appropriate. The Department will not post the full report. However, it should be noted that the report will be considered public and will be made available to anyone upon request.

Part II: Process and Results

How does the site visit team go about its work?

The site visit team is guided in its work by a code of conduct. Adherence to the code of conduct improves the quality of the site visit because schools/district do not provide reliable evidence under unnecessary stress. Adherence to the code of conduct also creates a frank, professional tone in which the site visit team and the school/district may discuss key strengths and areas for improvement.

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR REVIEWERS*

1. Carry out work with integrity.

- a. Treat all those you meet with courtesy and sensitivity. Try to minimize stress.
- b. Allay anxiety through mutual respect and valuing opinions. Show an interest in what is said.
- c. Focus attention and questions on topics that will reveal how well students are learning.
- d. Assure confidentiality.

2. Act in the best interests of students and staff.

- a. Do not put students or staff in a position where they may have conflicting loyalties.
- b. Emphasize that students come first and are at the center of the review.
- c. Wherever possible, work to others' convenience.
- d. Be supportive and enabling. Evidence given under undue stress is unreliable.
- e. Under no circumstances, criticize the work of a teacher or others involved with the school.
- f. Classroom visits are confidential. Classroom visits are not evaluations. Individual teachers will not be provided feedback and information will not be shared with any school personnel.
- g. Teacher interviews and focus groups are confidential. Any information reported to the team will remain anonymous in both oral and written reports.
- h. Try to understand what teachers are doing and why. Be supportive.

3. Be objective; base findings on evidence, not opinion.

- a. An individual's perception can be evidence, especially if supported by others' observations.
- b. Findings must be fully supported by evidence, must be defensible and inform the key questions.
- c. Findings must be reliable in that others would make the same finding from the same evidence.
- d. Be prepared to ask questions to establish whether a view is based on opinion or evidence.
- e. Discussion with staff and team members is part of the process to create a fair and secure evidence based on which findings are determined.
- f. If a given piece of evidence is not affecting students' learning or experience, it is then irrelevant.

**Acknowledgement of Massachusetts Charter School Office Site Visit Protocol and the OFSTED code of conduct.*

How does the site visit team come to consensus on findings based on a collection of documents, interviews, and classroom visits?

The site visit process is built on four core components that drive the work of the team throughout the site visit.

- **The process is criterion-driven.** The site visit process is built on a set of criterion and indicators. Throughout the site visit, the site visit team collects evidence through document reviews, interviews, and classroom visits in relation to each of the criterion and indicators to come to consensus on findings that indicate how well school/district programs and practices are serving students. The site visit team uses the criterion and indicators during team meetings to identify trends that emerge from the evidence and to come to consensus on findings, including identification of strengths and areas for growth, if appropriate. A criterion-driven process ensures that the work of the site visit team is grounded in the standards. The protocol’s criteria also serve as a basis for professional dialogue and reporting.

Figure 1: Criterion-driven



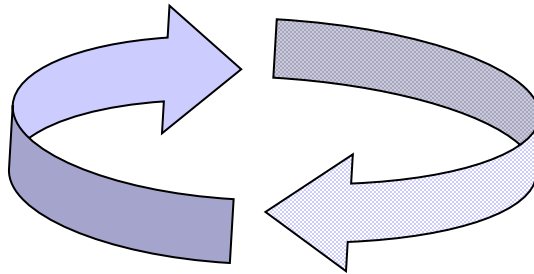
- **The process is an evidence-based system.** The findings – derived from document reviews, classroom visits, and interviews – are based on evidence collected during the process. The review team builds a base of evidence for each finding that would reasonably lead any set of individuals to come to similar conclusions about the school’s programs and practices. Moving from evidence to finding is a cyclical process that depends on an open exchange of information between the team and the school/district. While the team is required to address the protocol standards and base all findings on evidence, the process is not mechanical and requires some professional judgment by the review team.

- **The process is iterative, repeatedly checking on and testing the quality of the findings and the evidence that supports them.** Review team members use a three-step process to move from pieces of evidence to finding about the school/district. First, the team records *evidence* by reviewing documents, conducting interviews, and visiting classrooms. The team reviews evidence to identify initial *trends* in the evidence. For example, the team will note a trend if all teachers describe the curriculum in similar ways and if the description matched the documents reviewed by the site visit team. The team then uses the evidence to determine findings. This process is represented in Figure 2.

Figure 2: An iterative process

3. Findings: Determinations based on **evidence** and **trends** and grounded in the protocol criteria.

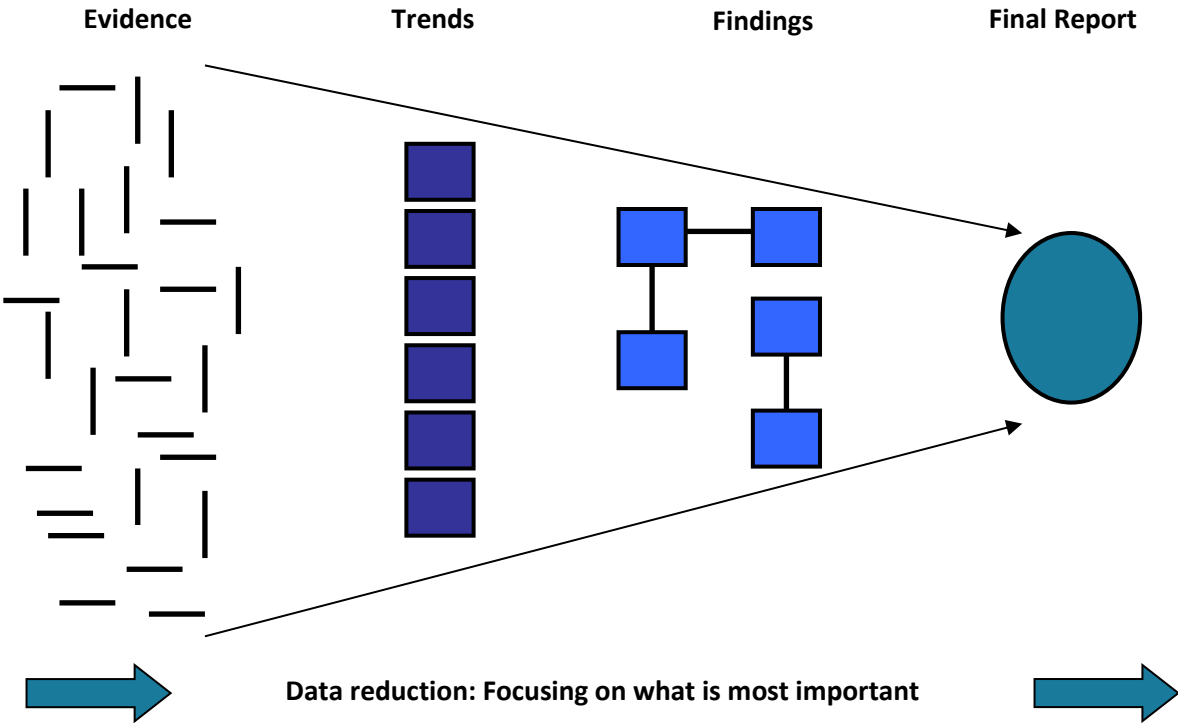
1. Evidence: Documents, classroom visits, and interviews



2. Trends: Developing themes, based on **evidence** that is collected. Trends are based on criteria and indicators in the protocol.

- **The team uses its professional judgment to come to consensus.** To be useful, the External Review team must produce a focused report. Focusing on key strengths and areas for improvement requires discerning only what is important and merits comment. This process is called “data reduction.” Within the protocol, team members use their professional judgment in a process called moderation to distill the key factors that deserve comment from the wealth of evidence available to them. This use of professional judgment is represented in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Moving from evidence to findings



DETAILED STEPS IN THE PROCESS

How does the site visit team and the school prepare for the site visit?

Below is an overview of the responsibilities of each party. A detailed explanation is available in the following section, Roles and Responsibilities.

1. CDE approves the site to move to the site visit portion of the process. CDE initiates an introduction between the identified site contacts and SchoolWorks.
2. SchoolWorks communicates with the identified site contact to determine site visit dates and introduces district and school leadership to the External Review site visit protocol.
3. SchoolWorks works with the identified site contact to begin establishing a specific schedule for the site visit. The project manager remains available to answer any questions and to work with the school/district to ensure that documents needed for the site visit are available in a timely manner.
4. SchoolWorks creates a draft schedule of interviews and classroom visits, finalizes the schedule with district/school input, and sends a copy of the schedule to the school and members of the team.
5. The school/district uses the Task Checklist (see Appendix A) to ensure that all preparation is complete prior to the site visit.
6. SchoolWorks sends a copy of the protocol, the schedule, classroom visit tool, interview questions, and documents for pre-visit analysis to the other team members.

What does the process look like when the team is on site?

Time on site moves from a fixed structure designed to ensure good coverage of the school/district to a more flexible schedule that allows the team to follow up on emerging trends and findings. Since it is not possible to predict what will emerge from the evidence collected, the review team requires flexibility to move about the school/district and observe any aspect of the school/district without notice. However, as a matter of courtesy and in the spirit of developing and maintaining a good working relationship, the team members work with the school/district to define as much of the schedule as possible without restricting its ability to pursue important evidence.

On-site review

1. The site visit team reviews documents and conducts interviews and classroom visits in accordance with the visit schedule. The team meets regularly during the visit to share information.
2. The site visit team keeps leadership informed of its progress throughout the visit. This ensures that the school/district has every opportunity to present information to address the team's questions.
3. The site visit team will formulate consensus-based findings that respond to the criteria and indicators in the protocol. This is based on evidence provided to the team during interviews, classroom visits, and document reviews while on site.

Sample Daily Site Visit Schedule

Below is a sample daily schedule. Schedules will vary, depending on the size of the school/district and the number of review team members. SchoolWorks will work to construct a schedule for the site visit, based on schedule documents and guidance provided by leadership.

| Sample Daily Site Visit Schedule - Day 1 | | |
|--|--|---|
| Time | Team Member #1 | Team Member #2 |
| 7:00–8:00 AM | Team arrives at school and morning meeting | |
| 8:00–9:00 AM | Interview with school leadership | Classroom visits & teacher focus groups |
| 9:00–11:30 AM | Classroom visits & document review | Interview District Leadership |
| 11:30–12:00 PM | Teacher focus groups | Classroom visits |
| 12:00–1:00 PM | Lunch; Mid-day meeting and site visit team debrief | |
| 1:00–2:30 PM | Classroom visits and teacher focus groups | |
| 2:30–3:00 PM | Interview school administrators | Interview School Board |
| 3:00– 5:45 PM | Team debrief and moderation; evidence sorting | |
| 5:30-5:40 PM | Check-out meeting with school leadership | |
| 5:45 PM | Team departs | |

| Sample Daily Site Visit Schedule - Day 2 | | |
|--|---|----------------|
| Time | Team Member #1 | Team Member #2 |
| 7:00–8:00 AM | Team arrives at school and morning meeting | |
| 8:00–9:00 AM | Follow-up with school leadership | |
| 9:00–11:00 AM | Classroom visits and teacher focus group | |
| 11:00 – 3:30 | Team debrief and moderation; evidence sorting | |

Written Report

1. The review team member responsible for completing the written report gathers all notes and other key evidence that have been collected by the team during the site visit to use in drafting the report.
2. The writer develops a draft report that documents the evidence for the recommendation and findings. This report provides a written record of the findings.
3. Before it is sent to CDE, all team members provide comments on the draft written report according to pre-established timelines.

Part III: Roles and Responsibilities

In order to develop an accurate portrait of a school, all participants have key roles in preparing for, and conducting, the External Review. This section explains the roles and responsibilities of the SchoolWorks project manager and/or team leader, team members, and the school. Participants should read this section carefully to learn how to prepare for the site visit.

SchoolWorks Project Manager

Roles and responsibilities for the project manager include:

1. *Modeling and enforcing the code of conduct*
 - Project managers should exhibit the highest professional standards and are responsible for ensuring that their team does so, as well.
2. *Coordination with the school/district*
 - Before the visit, the project manager contacts the school to ensure that documents are made available in a timely manner and there is a schedule for the site visit.
 - The school/district is likely to have questions about the process. The project manager should serve as the contact person to address these questions.
 - The project manager ensures that the school/district has secured meeting space for the team.
3. *Coordination of materials and assignment of team members*
 - Before the site visit, External Review Team members are selected and provided with materials (e.g., site visit protocol, school/district documents) to review.
 - Once the site visit schedule is established, the project manager assigns external review team members to conduct interviews and classroom visits.
4. *Reporting*
 - The project manager provides feedback on the draft of the site visit report in accordance with pre-established timelines, ensuring that the report contains sufficient evidence and reflects the consensus of the team.

External Review Team Members

Success of the visit relies heavily on the External Review Team Members':

1. *Adherence to the code of conduct*

- Classroom observations are not evaluations. Individual teachers will not be provided feedback and information will not be shared with any school personnel.
- Teacher interviews and focus groups are confidential. Any information reported to the external review team will remain anonymous. (*Note: school/district leaders should not be present during teacher/staff focus groups.*)

2. *Preparation for the site visit*

- Team members review the site visit protocol in its entirety. This is critical because the protocol guides all activities while on site.
- Team members review documents and formulate questions for the initial team meeting prior to arriving on site.
- Team members collaboratively complete a formal document review to be submitted to the project manager prior to arriving on site.

3. *Collection of evidence*

- Team members complete the site visit schedule according to the protocol.
- Team members secure their evidence in notes and provide all necessary data at each team meeting:
 - Notes and classroom visit forms are completed and organized for end-of-day meetings.
 - All notes are in order and completed in a timely manner for all meetings.

4. *Collaborating with others*

- Team members actively participate in team meetings and support others' efforts to reach unified findings based on evidence.

5. *Facilitation and management of logistics for the site visit days*

- Once on site, the team members are responsible for facilitating all team meetings.
- Team members ensure that all interviews and focus groups are attended and go smoothly.

5. *Communication with the school/district while on site*

- Team members are responsible for maintaining good channels of communication with the school at all times.

6. *Reporting*

- The team writer writes the review report, ensuring that the report contains sufficient evidence to support the consensus of the team.

Schools and Districts

To be an effective partner in the process, with the district, and its school(s):

1. *Act as essential partners in the site visit process*

- The school/district makes the purpose and process of the review team's visit clear to all faculty and staff.
- The school/district welcomes the visiting team and recognizes its efforts on behalf of the school/district and its students.
- The school/district works with the team to ensure that the visit runs smoothly and that appropriate and adequate access to all brick and mortar and online resources are provided.
- The school/district engages faculty and other stakeholders to reflect on the school/district's performance.

2. *Designate a meeting room*

- The review team will need a meeting space during the day. The space should allow for confidential meetings and should be available to team members for the full visit.
- To the extent possible, interviews should not be scheduled in this space but planned for elsewhere in the building.

3. *Communicate with the team*

- School/district leadership works collaboratively with the team prior to the site visit to ensure that documents are provided in a timely manner.(See Appendix A).
- School/district leadership works collaboratively with the team during the site visit to provide any additional documents requested.
- School/district leadership maintains good communication with the team throughout the process, honestly expressing concerns and feedback from staff.

Part IV: Key Questions for the External Review

The following key questions reflect a subset of the criteria outlined in components of review as outlined in the Education Accountability Act of 2009. These key questions guide the review team’s work in the district or school. While this list corresponds with those outlined in the Accountability Act, they have been reduced to better align with the purpose of the Request-to-Reconsider process and the onsite External Review. All evidence is collected in response to these key questions and their respective standards. The complete list of corresponding criteria and indicators for each key question can be found in the next section, Part V.

Key Questions

1. *Has the school/district adequately implemented changes for improved results?*
2. *Does the school/district have an adequate infrastructure to implement their improvement plan?*
3. *Do school/district personnel sufficiently and effectively implement planned and appropriate actions to improve student academic performance in a sustained manner?*
4. *(If working with an external partner) Has the school/district engaged productively with, and benefited from, the assistance provided by an external partner?*²

² Key Question 4 for will only be addressed for district / schools who are engaged with a management partner that is supporting a significant component of their educational program (i.e., leadership, academics, operations).

Part V: Request to Reconsider External Review Criteria and Indicators

This section contains the complete list of the Criteria and Indicators to be used for the External Review. These criteria and indicators are used to guide evidence collection, team deliberation, and development of findings during the site visit.

1. *Has the school/district adequately implemented changes for improved results?*

Criterion 1.1: Leadership acts as a change agent to drive dramatic achievement gains.

- Leadership communicates a relentless commitment to the school turnaround.
- Leadership makes data-driven changes to the academic program and organization to promote dramatic achievement gains.
- Leadership conveys clear expectations for performance for all stakeholders, including leadership, teachers, students, and partners.
- School leaders distribute leadership responsibilities to appropriate individuals or groups.

Criterion 1.2: The school staff agree on clear, targeted, and measurable major improvement strategies designed to promote student performance.

- Leadership communicates clear and focused major improvement strategies that are understood by all staff.
- Educators understand their responsibilities for achieving major improvement strategies.
- Leadership maintains schoolwide focus on achieving established major improvement strategies.
- Leadership allocates resources in alignment with major improvement strategies and critical needs.
- The school has established systems to measure and report interim results toward major improvement strategies.

Criterion 1.3: The school staff analyze data to identify and address priority performance challenges, and to adjust implementation of the action plan.

- The school uses a process to investigate data trends, ensures timely access to data, and models and facilitates data use.
- The school has a process to communicate results and leadership holds staff accountable for results and effective use of data.
- The school first concentrates on a limited number of priorities to achieve early, visible wins.
- There is regular progress monitoring of performance and implementation data and, as appropriate, results lead to elimination of tactics that do not work.
- Benchmarks are used to assess progress toward major improvement strategies; major improvement strategies are adjusted as progress is made.
- Data on progress toward major improvement strategies drives organizational and instructional decision making.

Criterion 1.4: Leadership establishes high expectations for student learning and behavior.

- The school holds high expectations for academic learning.
- Educators set high expectations for learning and clearly convey these to students.
- Educators convey that students are responsible for raising their performance and encourage their participation in learning.
- The school provides a safe environment to support students' learning and ensures that students' interactions between and among themselves and school staff are respectful and supportive.
- Leadership ensures that school's physical environment is clean, orderly, and safe.

Infrastructure

2. Does the school/district have an adequate infrastructure to implement their improvement plan?

Criterion 2.1: The district provides intentional, strategic efforts to the school to enable effective implementation of the improvement plan.

- The district/superintendent ensures ongoing leadership development for emerging and current school leaders with a focus on building leadership capacity to lead turnaround efforts, remove barriers implement major improvements strategies and sustain improvement.
- The district/superintendent provides adequate oversight in schools' work to deliver the curriculum, monitors instruction on a regular basis, and provides adequate support and feedback to principals to improve instruction.
- The district provides adequate systems by which to capture and store data, report it to schools, and make it accessible for instructional staff to utilize.

Criterion 2.2: Leadership has implemented systems to recruit and retain effective teachers necessary to implement their improvement plan.

- Leadership has created and/or implemented an organizational and staffing structure that will drive dramatic student gains.
- Leadership recruits and hires teachers with commitment to, and competence in, the school's philosophy, design, and instructional framework (e.g., trained and experienced with curriculum, certified/licensed to teach, qualified to teach subject area).
- Trained mentors provide beginning teachers with sustained, job-embedded induction.
- Leadership ensures the evaluation of all staff and dismisses those who do not meet professional standards and expectations.
- The school provides teachers with active, intense, and sustained professional development (PD), including guidance on data analysis and instructional practice, aligned to school improvement efforts.
 - PD is informed by ongoing analysis of student performance, instructional data, and educators' learning needs.
 - PD requires teachers to demonstrate their learned competency in a tangible and assessable way.
 - PD engages teachers in active learning (e.g., leading instruction, discussing with colleagues, observing other teachers, developing assessments) and provides follow-up sessions and ongoing support for teachers' continued learning.
 - The quality of PD delivery is regularly monitored, evaluated, and improved.

Criterion 2.3: Leadership ensures that the school/district has sound financial and operational systems and processes necessary to implement their improvement plan.

NOTE: This criterion is only addressed for review of charter schools.

- School leadership ensures that the organizational structure supports essential school functions, and that roles and responsibilities of all individuals at the school are clear.
- School leadership has established effective means of communicating with school staff.
- School leadership ensures that the school meets all compliance requirements and deadlines set by the State, including the submission of school improvement plans, financial statements, school audit, calendar, and student attendance.
- School leadership effectively manages the school budget and cash flow, and there is a plan for long-term financial sustainability.
- The school leadership effectively manages operations (e.g., food services, transportation, school facilities).

Criterion 2.4: The school/district has effective instructional leadership to implement their improvement plan.

- The school/district implements a coherent, comprehensive, and aligned curriculum.
 - Curriculum, instruction, and assessments are aligned with State standards, aligned with each other, and coordinated both within and across grade levels.
 - Instructional materials are selected and/or developed in accordance with a school-wide instructional framework and aligned with established curriculum standards.
 - The curriculum is periodically reviewed, and revisions are made accordingly.
- School leaders provide meaningful feedback on teachers' instructional planning and practice.
 - Leaders regularly provide meaningful feedback on instructional planning.
 - Leaders regularly observe instruction and provide meaningful, timely feedback that helps teachers improve their practice.
- The school/district supports a schoolwide data culture.
 - Teachers have easy access to varied, current, and accurate student and instructional data.
 - Teachers are provided time to collect, enter, query, analyze, and represent student data and use tools that help them act on results.
 - School leaders ensure that all teachers receive professional development in data use (e.g., how to access, read, and interpret a range of data reports; frame questions for inquiry; analyze data, assessment literacy; use data tools and resources).
- Classroom instruction is high quality.
 - Classroom interactions and organization ensure a classroom climate conducive to learning.
 - Classroom instruction is intentional, engaging, and challenging for all students.
 - The school identifies and supports special education students, English language learner students, and students who are struggling or at risk.

School/District Conditions for Success

3. *Do school/district personnel sufficiently and effectively implement planned and appropriate actions to improve student academic performance in a sustained manner?*

Criterion 3.1: Educators' mindsets and beliefs reflect shared commitments to students' learning.

- Educators convey shared vision and values about teaching and learning and reference these to guide their instructional decision making.
- Educators convey a shared commitment to the learning of all students in the school/district.
- Educators convey a belief that students' learning is their collective responsibility, regardless of students' personal or home situations.
- Educators convey that it is important not to give up on any students, even if it appears that they do not want to learn.
- Educators convey commitment to, and hold each other accountable for, collaboratively established improvement major improvement strategies and tasks.

Criterion 3.2: The school/district has established conditions that support educators' learning culture.

- Communications among all stakeholder groups are constructive, supportive, and respectful.
- Communications between leadership and staff are fluid, frequent, and open.
- Leaders model and convey well-defined beliefs about teaching and learning, and convey value for innovation, learning from mistakes, and risk-taking.
- Leaders ensure that staff and team meeting discussions are structured and facilitated to support the staff's reflective dialogue around data and instruction (e.g., attend to explicit group norms, use protocols).
- Leaders provide guidance to teacher teams (e.g., help to establish meeting routines; model and promote use of discussion protocols; ensure systematic monitoring of student progress; create focus on linking results to instruction) and ensures that teachers utilize tools and time well.
- Leaders participate in formal and informal professional learning, including their own leadership development about how to improve curriculum and instruction in a leadership context (i.e., elementary or secondary; high- or low-poverty; large or small schools).

Criterion 3.3: Educators collaborate regularly to learn about effective instruction and students' progress.

- Educators meet frequently, during regularly scheduled, uninterrupted times (e.g., staff, department, grade-level meeting times) to collaborate, establish improvement major improvement strategies, and make data-informed instructional decisions.
- Educators' collaborative meetings have a clear and persistent focus on improving student learning and achievement.
- Educators describe sharing knowledge and expertise among colleagues as essential collaborative activity for job success.
- Teachers are willing to talk about their own instructional practice, to actively pursue and accept feedback from colleagues, and to try new teaching strategies.

- The school has created a performance-driven classroom culture in which teachers effectively use data to make decisions about daily instruction and the organization of students.

Criterion 3.4: The school/district engages the community and families in support of students' learning and school improvement efforts.

- The school/district includes parents/guardians in cultivating a culture of high expectations for students' learning and their consistent support of students' efforts.
- The school/district invites family participation in school activities (e.g., volunteering in classrooms or on committees; attendance at performances, sports events, organizational meetings) and regularly solicits their input.
- The school/district offers workshops and other opportunities for parents/guardians to learn about home practices that support student learning.
- Educators communicate with parents/guardians about instructional programs and students' progress.

Critical Factor Partnerships

4. *(If working with an external partner) Has the school/district engaged productively with, and benefited from, the assistance provided by an external partner?*

NOTE: Key Question 4 for will only be addressed for district / schools who are engaged with a management partner that is supporting a significant component of their educational program (i.e., leadership, academics, operations).

Criterion 4.1: The school/district collaborates effectively with existing external partners.

- The school/district seeks expertise from external partners, as appropriate (i.e., for professional development, direct support for students).
- The school/district ensures that roles and responsibilities of existing partners are clear.
- There are designated school personnel to coordinate and manage partnerships.

Criterion 4.2: The school/district leverages existing partnerships to support of student learning.

- The school/district maximizes existing partners' efforts in support of improvement efforts.
- All externally provided professional development is aligned to improvement efforts.

Appendix A: Task Checklist

The Task Checklist can be used by the school/district to prepare for the External Review. It includes key tasks that leadership should complete prior to the site visit, including the list of materials the review team is requesting prior to the visit and upon arrival on site. The following task list is an example and may be modified and sent separately to a school/district in advance of the site visit.

| ITEMS AVAILABLE FROM CDE 2 WEEKS BEFORE THE SITE VISIT | |
|---|--|
| 1. Completed Local Data Tool or AEC Local Data Tool | |
| 2. Submitted 2021-22 or 2020-21 Unified Improvement Plan (UIP) | |
| 3. Request to Reconsider UIP Review Form provided by CDE | |
| 4. Access to data dashboard | |
| ITEMS TO BE SENT BY SCHOOL/DISTRICT TO THE PROJECT MANAGER 2 WEEKS BEFORE THE SITE VISIT | |
| 5. Roster of all staff, including grade levels and subject areas taught | |
| 6. Master schedule for all staff, including periods/times teaching and room numbers | |
| 7. A list of teacher preparation times or “free” periods (if not included in either the roster or master schedule) | |
| 8. School bell schedule | |
| 9. School/district mission statement and a summary of key programs, initiatives, and grants | |
| 10. Student enrollment and demographic information for three years | |
| ITEMS TO BE PREPARED BY THE SCHOOL/DISTRICT BEFORE THE SITE VISIT | |
| 11. Faculty and staff are aware of the visit and its purpose; focus groups are coordinated, and participation confirmed | |
| 12. Private meeting space for site visit team secured | |

Supplemental Documents for Review

As part of the site visit, the External Review team will also review supplemental documents provided by the school/district that are aligned protocol’s criteria and indicators. The school/district should work with the SchoolWorks Project Manager to determine the best way to submit documents.

| SUPPLEMENTAL DOCUMENTS TO BE AVAILABLE ON SITE FOR SITE VISIT (IN ADVANCE WHEN POSSIBLE) | | |
|---|--|--|
| KQ1 | 1. School/district -wide strategic plan, if applicable. | |
| | 2. Any other documents that the school/district believes would help the team better understand leadership’s role in setting expectations or driving change. | |
| KQ2 | 3. Professional development (PD) calendar for this academic year and the previous academic year, including district mandates and school-directed PD. | |
| | 4. Sample curricular documents that link standards to school/classroom instructional practices (e.g., scope and sequence, pacing guides, textbooks) from varied grade levels and subject areas. | |
| | 5. Student work samples from varied grade levels and subject areas. | |
| | 6. A copy of the district’s teacher evaluation policy, including template evaluation forms for teachers. | |
| | 7. Any other documents that the school/district believes would help the team better understand the district’s/school’s infrastructure, staff development, and instructional leadership. | |
| KQ3 | 8. Examples of leadership-level data monitoring systems or collaborative processes (e.g., meeting agendas, dashboards, action plans). | |
| | 9. Evidence of community outreach and family engagement (e.g., flyers, calendars, newsletters). | |
| | 10. Parent and Family survey information (school or district). | |
| | 11. Any other documents that the school/district believes would help the team better understand the capacity of personnel to plan effectively and involve community stakeholders. | |
| KQ4 | 12. Any documents that the school/district believes would help the team better understand the school/district’s engagement with external partners , including any specific school partnerships that are managed through the district. | |

Appendix B: Classroom Visit Guidance

What is the purpose of the classroom visits?

The purpose of classroom visits is threefold:

1. To enable the review team to easily identify practices and summarize their evidence base and, therefore, establish ratings that characterize classroom practices across the school;
2. To supply the review team with quantifiable ratings across classes observed that are supported by documented pieces of evidence; and,
3. To gather qualitative evidence about classroom practices that provides additional evidence to inform the review team's capacity levels.

The evidence collected from classroom visits provides the review team an additional source of information that can be used to better understand school practices and to support the team's decisions on capacity levels.

Frequently asked questions about classroom visits

1. *How does the review team select the classrooms that will be visited?*

Classroom visits will be selected by the project manager and/or review team on the basis of the school's master schedule and the size of the review team. Representative classes will be selected to reflect a range of teacher experience, a variety of subject areas, the range of grades served at the school, and special services or program classes as they reflect the school's mission. Classroom visits are anonymous; teachers will not know if and/or when the review team will visit their classroom.

2. *What is the length of a classroom visit?*

It is expected that classrooms will be visited for no less than 20 minutes to allow the team to derive an understanding of the lesson and the classroom climate.

3. *What do teachers need to do to prepare for the classroom visit?*

Teachers need not do anything to prepare for a classroom visit. Classes should reflect a typical experience for students and teachers. The review team includes education professionals who understand that behavior in the classroom may be unpredictable. The review team seeks to establish trends across the school, not to assess isolated incidents within a single classroom.

4. *Should teachers expect to interact with the classroom visitor?*

The intent of the classroom visit is to cause as minimal disruption to daily classroom practices as possible. Teaching staff do not need to address the classroom visitor or provide an explanation of the lesson. The classroom visitor may walk around the classroom to review student work and/or classroom postings, if appropriate.

5. *Do teachers receive feedback from the classroom visitor?*

The review team seeks to identify trends across the school, not to provide information on the effectiveness of specific classroom practices or individual teachers. Team members will NOT provide feedback to individual teachers. Classroom visits are NOT teacher evaluations. They will not be shared with individual teachers or any other school personnel. They are intended to provide information to the review team about the implementation of the academic program, the availability of resources,

and any additional evidence that demonstrates aspects of school practices and operations. The SRP seeks to establish trends across the school, not to assess individual teacher practices.

6. *Should the classroom visitor expect to see all of the indicators on the classroom visit tool in a single classroom?*

The classroom visit tool is aligned with the indicators that reflect a range of effective practices. It is not expected that the classroom visitor would see all of these indicators during a 20-minute observation. The tool serves as a resource for the review team to identify and explain practices that are characteristic of each individual school.

| | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| School: _____ | District: _____ | Observer: _____ |
| Date: _____ | Grade: _____ | Subject: _____ |
| Start Time: _____ | End Time: _____ | # Adults: _____ |
| | | # Students: _____ |

Instructions: Circle one rating for each indicator. Two of the Common Core indicators should be marked N/A. No other indicators should be marked N/A or left blank.

1=Ineffective ↔ 4=Effective

| | Indicators | Observer Notes | Score | | | |
|---|---|----------------|-------|---|---|---|
| Common Core Implementation | 1a. Common Core Literacy Implementation (for ELA classes only) Content standards implementation Instructional shifts implementation | N/A | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| | 1b. Common Core Math Implementation (for math classes only) Content standards implementation Instructional shifts implementation Standards for mathematical practice implementation | N/A | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| | 1c. Common Core Literacy Shift Implementation (for all classes other than ELA and math) Common Core literacy shift implementation | N/A | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Classroom Climate | 2. Behavioral Expectations Clear expectations Consistent rewards and/or consequences Anticipation and redirection of misbehavior | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| | 3. Structured Learning Environment Teacher preparation Learning time maximized | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| | 4. Supportive Environment Caring relationships Teacher responsiveness to students' non-academic needs | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Purposeful Teaching | 5. Focused Instruction Learning objective that drives all lesson activities Effective communication of academic content High expectations | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| | 6. Instructional Strategies Multisensory modalities and materials Instructional format Student choice | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| | 7. Participation and Engagement Active student participation Strategies to increase participation | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| | 8. Higher-Order Thinking Challenging tasks Application to new problems and situations Justify thinking or reasoning | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| In-Class Assessment & Feedback | 9. Assessment Strategies Use of formative assessments Alignment to academic content or lesson objective | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| | 10. Feedback Clear, specific, and actionable Clarifies misunderstanding or provides guidance | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

Additional Notes for Indicator #: _____

Additional Notes for Indicator #: _____

Additional Notes for Indicator #: _____

Additional Notes for Indicator #: _____

Additional Notes for Indicator #: _____

Appendix C: Interview Guidance and Worksheets

During the site visit, a series of interviews and/or focus groups will be conducted to gather information about the school. Interview data, similar to classroom visits, are intended to provide information about the implementation of the school’s program and operations. The project manager, with guidance from school leadership, will work to establish a schedule that is appropriate for the school. The following are examples only.

| SCHOOLWIDE INTERVIEWS | | |
|---|---|---|
| Interviews/ focus groups | Description | Approximate Time Needed |
| District Leadership | This interview is conducted with a representative group of the school’s oversight body including individual/s who supervise the school leader and others who have knowledge of school practices. | 45 minutes to 1 hour |
| School Leadership | School leadership includes the principal and other key leaders (e.g., assistant principals, curriculum director, lead teachers). In addition to an interview, school leadership may be asked to provide further guidance and insight throughout the visit. | 1-hour on day 1 and day 2 |
| Teachers | Groups of teachers, typically by grade level, make up focus groups. In some cases, the site visit team may request a focus group meeting with teaching assistants, aides, or other personnel to discuss their roles in the delivery of the academic program. The team makes an effort to speak to as many of the school’s teaching staff as possible. | 30-45 minutes (When possible, scheduled during common prep periods) |
| Specialist interviews | Interviews with specialists are conducted. School leaders are asked to identify personnel who play a significant role in school functioning (e.g., special education director, ELL coordinator, curriculum coordinators, guidance counselors, other relevant staff). | 30-45 minutes |
| School Board (charter schools only) | This interview is conducted with the school’s governing body (e.g., the School Board). | 45 minutes to 1 hour |
| Authorizing Board (charter schools only) | The interview is conducted with the school’s charter authorizing entity (e.g., the Authorizing Board). | 45 minutes to 1 hour |
| *Family focus group | A representative group of four-to-eight family members, whose children have a range of academic needs, have attended the school for various lengths of time and who have a range of participation experiences with the school. | 30 minutes |
| *External Partners (if applicable) | Interviews with external partners, when available, will take place. School leaders are asked to identify partners who play a significant role in school functioning and organize them into one focus group. | 30 minutes |

| | | |
|--|--|-------------------|
| *Student focus group | A selection of four-to-eight students representing a variety of grade levels and varying instructional needs. Students are selected by the school's leadership and/or staff. | 30 minutes |
| *Non-Instructional and Paraprofessional Staff | Group of non-instructional staff and paraprofessionals from multiple grade levels and subject areas. | 30 minutes |
| Check-out meeting with principal | Both days, team members will hold a brief check-out meeting with the principal to ask any lingering questions, ensure all relevant documents have been provided, and to answer any questions about next steps. | 10 minutes |

*Recommended but not required.

What is the purpose of the interview worksheet?

Interview worksheets are provided to:

1. Enable the interviewer to easily identify questions consistent with the criteria and indicators in this protocol, in order to gather appropriate evidence;
2. Ensure uniformity across interviews conducted; and,
3. Provide multiple sources of evidence to support the site visit team's decision on capacity levels.

The interview worksheet provides a template for the review team to use during interviews and focus groups. This ensures that questions are being asked in accordance with the protocol and that all team members are asking uniform questions. While on site, the team may develop additional, school-specific interview questions that are based on the team leader's judgment of what must be learned to come to consensus-based capacity levels on the protocol's key questions.

An interview worksheet exists for each type of focus group (e.g., school leadership, teachers) that the review team will interview while on site. Interview questions might be slightly different; interviews conducted with school leadership might include slightly different content than what the team would ask teachers. In addition, question delivery might vary slightly.

How do I use the interview worksheet?

The interview worksheets contain possible interview questions. The column on the left may be used to check the most relevant questions. The right column may be used to insert any additional questions that the review team, during team meetings, decides are important to ask in order to gather the required evidence. Interview notes are recorded by the site visit team for use during team deliberations and to provide the report writer with a record of interviews to ensure a sound and accurate evidence base.

School Leadership Focus Group Guide

| Leadership | | School-specific questions |
|----------------|--|---------------------------|
| 1.1 | <p>Please describe the school’s improvement efforts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Specific goals <input type="checkbox"/> Strategies to meet the goals and drive improvement <input type="checkbox"/> Organizational/programmatic changes to improve student achievement <input type="checkbox"/> Individual’s roles and responsibilities (i.e., distribution of leadership responsibilities) | |
| 1.2 | <p>How have the goals and major improvement strategies been communicated to stakeholders?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Teachers informed of improvement efforts (i.e., goals, strategies) <input type="checkbox"/> Alignment of resources <input type="checkbox"/> Measurement and reporting of interim results | |
| 1.3 | <p>How has data been used to identify priority performance challenges? How does the school monitor the implementation of strategies to determine effectiveness?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Discuss and analyze data to identify priorities/goals <input type="checkbox"/> Use data to understand the results <input type="checkbox"/> Measure/monitor/benchmark progress toward goals <input type="checkbox"/> Use information in decision making | |
| 1.4 | <p>How does the school establish high expectations for student academics and behavior?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Provide examples of high expectations for academics at the school. <input type="checkbox"/> Provide examples of high expectations for behavior. <input type="checkbox"/> How are the expectations consistently enforced? <input type="checkbox"/> How are these expectations communicated to students and staff? | |
| 1.4 | <p>Does the school provide a safe environment for students?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Physically and emotionally <input type="checkbox"/> Provide examples | |
| Infrastructure | | School-specific questions |
| 2.1 | <p>Describe the district’s role in supporting the school’s improvement efforts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Support for school leadership, including building school leadership capacity <input type="checkbox"/> Oversight of the academic program, including supporting and monitoring implementation of curricula, instruction, and assessments <input type="checkbox"/> Systems for data storage, reporting, and analysis | |

School Leadership Focus Group Guide

| | | |
|-----------------------|--|----------------------------------|
| 2.2 | <p>Describe strategic staffing decisions to support the school program.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Creation/design of organizational and staffing structure <input type="checkbox"/> Recruitment and hiring <input type="checkbox"/> Mentoring and induction programs <input type="checkbox"/> Evaluation of staff | |
| 2.2 | <p>Describe how professional development is designed to improve instruction and make progress toward goals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Use of data to determine professional development <input type="checkbox"/> Coaching supports <input type="checkbox"/> Evaluation of professional development to ensure effectiveness/make improvements | |
| 2.3 | <p>How do the school’s financial and operation systems support essential functions and improvement?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Operations (e.g., facilities, transportation, food services) <input type="checkbox"/> Compliance (e.g., State reporting, UIP completion and submission, student attendance) <input type="checkbox"/> Finances (e.g., school budget, cash flow, reporting, audits) | |
| 2.4 | <p>How do you support teachers in developing their instructional practices?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Curriculum, instruction, and assessments <input type="checkbox"/> Feedback to teachers on planning documents (e.g., lesson plans) <input type="checkbox"/> Feedback to teachers on instruction (e.g., formal, informal walkthroughs) <input type="checkbox"/> Use of data to improve teaching and learning | |
| 2.4 | <p>What is the school’s approach to instruction? Are there common practices we will observe across classrooms?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson structure, lesson planning, components of the school’s curriculum <input type="checkbox"/> Specific strategies to engage students <input type="checkbox"/> Supports for English language learner students, students with disabilities, and students who are struggling or at risk | |
| Staff Capacity | | School-specific questions |
| 3.1 | <p>How do staff at the school show a shared commitment to student learning?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Convey a belief that student learning is their collective responsibility. <input type="checkbox"/> Show it is important not to give up on students. <input type="checkbox"/> Hold each other accountable to major improvement strategies; Provide examples. | |

School Leadership Focus Group Guide

| | | |
|---|--|----------------------------------|
| 3.2 | <p>Describe the adult culture at the school.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Professional relationships between teachers and with administrators <input type="checkbox"/> Communication flow between administration and teachers/staff <input type="checkbox"/> Structures for staff and team meeting discussions <input type="checkbox"/> Opportunities for input into school decision making <input type="checkbox"/> School leadership professional development and growth | |
| 3.3 | <p>Describe how educators collaborate with each other at the school.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Structured time to support teaching and learning (i.e., when, frequency, with whom) <input type="checkbox"/> Focus of collaborative meetings <input type="checkbox"/> Sharing knowledge and expertise <input type="checkbox"/> School leader’s role in supporting planning | |
| 3.4 | <p>Describe ways in which the school engages the community and families in support of student learning and school improvement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Communications with parents/families (school and teacher) <input type="checkbox"/> School activities/workshops for families focused on academics and/or school improvement <input type="checkbox"/> Solicitation of parent input <input type="checkbox"/> Community involvement at the school | |
| Partnerships (If working with an external partner) | | School-specific questions |
| 4.1 | <p>Describe the school’s existing partnerships.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Support (and alignment to) school priorities <input type="checkbox"/> Roles and responsibilities of existing partners <input type="checkbox"/> Management of the relationship with partners | |
| 4.2 | <p>How have existing partnerships been used to support student learning and well-being and drive school improvement?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Monitoring the impact of partnerships <input type="checkbox"/> Alignment of external professional development to improvement tasks | |

Teacher Focus Group Guide/Specialist Focus Group Guide

| Leadership | | School-specific questions |
|----------------|--|---------------------------|
| 1.1 | Please describe the school’s improvement efforts. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Specific goals <input type="checkbox"/> Strategies to meet goals and drive improvement <input type="checkbox"/> Organizational/programmatic changes to improve student achievement <input type="checkbox"/> Individual’s roles and responsibilities (i.e., leadership, teachers, support staff) | |
| 1.2 | How were you informed of the goals and improvement strategies? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Staff meetings, newsletters <input type="checkbox"/> Resources available to support improvement efforts <input type="checkbox"/> Measurement and reporting of interim results | |
| 1.3 | What data have been provided to identify priority performance challenges? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Discuss and analyze data to identify priorities/goals <input type="checkbox"/> Use data to understand the results <input type="checkbox"/> Measure/monitor/benchmark progress toward goals <input type="checkbox"/> Use information in decision making | |
| 1.4 | How does the school establish high expectations for student academics and behavior? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Provide examples of high expectations for academics at the school. <input type="checkbox"/> Provide examples of high expectations for behavior. <input type="checkbox"/> How are the expectations consistently enforced? <input type="checkbox"/> How are these expectations communicated to students and staff? | |
| 1.4 | Does the school provide a safe environment for students? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Physically and emotionally <input type="checkbox"/> Provide examples. | |
| Infrastructure | | School-specific questions |
| 2.1 | Describe the district’s role in supporting improvement efforts. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Support for school leadership <input type="checkbox"/> Support for teachers and staff <input type="checkbox"/> Curriculum, assessments, data storage, analysis, and reports | |
| 2.2 | Describe professional development to improve instruction and make progress toward goals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> District-provided professional development versus school professional development | |

Teacher Focus Group Guide/Specialist Focus Group Guide

| | <input type="checkbox"/> How is it decided? <input type="checkbox"/> Is it useful/effective? Provide examples. | |
|----------------|--|---------------------------|
| 2.4 | In what ways do school leaders support you in improving instructional practices? <input type="checkbox"/> Feedback to teachers on planning documents (e.g., lesson plans) <input type="checkbox"/> Feedback to teachers on instruction (e.g., formal, informal walkthroughs) <input type="checkbox"/> Use of data to improve teaching and learning <input type="checkbox"/> Provide examples. | |
| 2.5 | What is the school’s approach to instruction? Are there common practices you are all expected to implement across classrooms? <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson structure, lesson planning, components of the school’s curriculum <input type="checkbox"/> Specific strategies to engage students <input type="checkbox"/> Supports for English language learner students, students with disabilities, and students who are struggling or at risk | |
| Staff Capacity | | School-specific questions |
| 3.1 | How do staff at the school show a shared commitment to student learning? <input type="checkbox"/> Convey a belief that student learning is their collective responsibility. <input type="checkbox"/> Show it is important not to give up on students. <input type="checkbox"/> Hold each other accountable to major improvement strategies; Provide examples. | |
| 3.2. | Describe the adult culture at the school. <input type="checkbox"/> Professional relationships between teachers and with administrators <input type="checkbox"/> Communication flow between administration and teachers/staff <input type="checkbox"/> Structures for staff and team meeting discussions <input type="checkbox"/> Opportunities for input into school decision making <input type="checkbox"/> School leadership professional development and growth | |
| 3.3 | Describe how you collaborate with staff at the school <input type="checkbox"/> Structured time to support teaching and learning (i.e., when, frequency, with whom) <input type="checkbox"/> Focus of collaborative meetings <input type="checkbox"/> Sharing knowledge and expertise <input type="checkbox"/> School leader’s role in supporting planning | |
| 3.4 | Describe ways in which the school engages the community and families in support of student learning. <input type="checkbox"/> Communications with parents/families (school and teacher) <input type="checkbox"/> School activities/workshops for families | |

Teacher Focus Group Guide/Specialist Focus Group Guide

| | | |
|---|--|----------------------------------|
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Solicitation of parent input <input type="checkbox"/> Community involvement at the school | |
| Partnerships (If working with an external partner) | | School-specific questions |
| 4.1 & 4.2 | Describe the school's existing partnerships. <input type="checkbox"/> Support (and alignment to) school priorities <input type="checkbox"/> Support student achievement/well-being | |

District/School Board/Authorizer Focus Group Guide

| Leadership | | School-specific questions |
|----------------|---|---------------------------|
| 1.1 | Please describe the school’s improvement efforts. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Specific goals <input type="checkbox"/> Strategies to meet the goals and drive improvement <input type="checkbox"/> Organizational/programmatic changes to improve student achievement <input type="checkbox"/> Individual’s roles and responsibilities (i.e., distribution of leadership responsibilities) | |
| 1.2 | How have the goals and improvement strategies been communicated to stakeholders? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Teachers and key stakeholders informed of improvement efforts (i.e., goals, strategies) <input type="checkbox"/> Alignment of resources <input type="checkbox"/> Measurement and reporting of interim results | |
| 1.3 | How has data been used to identify priority performance challenges? How does the school monitor the implementation of strategies to determine effectiveness? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Discuss and analyze data to identify priorities/goals <input type="checkbox"/> Use data to understand the results <input type="checkbox"/> Measure/monitor/benchmark progress toward goals <input type="checkbox"/> Use information in decision making | |
| 1.4 | How do you ensure the school has high expectations for student academics and behavior? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Provide examples of high expectations for academics at the school. <input type="checkbox"/> Provide examples of high expectations for behavior at the school. | |
| 1.4 | Does the school provide a safe environment for students? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Physically and emotionally <input type="checkbox"/> Provide examples | |
| Infrastructure | | School-specific questions |
| 2.1 | In what ways are you supporting the school in its improvement efforts? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Support for school leadership including building capacity <input type="checkbox"/> Hold school leadership accountable <input type="checkbox"/> Oversight of the academic program, including supporting and monitoring implementation of curricula, instruction, and assessments <input type="checkbox"/> Systems for data storage, reporting, and analysis | |

District/School Board/Authorizer Focus Group Guide

| | | |
|-----------------------|--|----------------------------------|
| 2.2 | <p>Describe strategic staffing decisions to support the school and its improvement efforts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Creation/design of organizational and staffing structure <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher/staff/leadership recruitment and hiring <input type="checkbox"/> Mentoring and induction programs <input type="checkbox"/> Evaluation of staff | |
| 2.2 | <p>Describe your involvement in professional development for the school.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Use of data to determine professional development <input type="checkbox"/> Coaching supports <input type="checkbox"/> Evaluation of professional development to ensure effectiveness/make improvements | |
| 2.3 | <p>How do you support the school financially and operationally?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Operations (e.g., facilities, transportation, food services) <input type="checkbox"/> Compliance (e.g., State reporting, UIP completion and submission, student attendance) <input type="checkbox"/> Finances (e.g., school budget, cash flow, reporting, audits) | |
| 2.4 | <p>How do you support school leadership in ensuring teachers are developing their instructional practices?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Curriculum, instruction, and assessments <input type="checkbox"/> Feedback on instructional plans and/or practices (e.g., formal, informal walkthroughs) <input type="checkbox"/> Use of data to improve teaching and learning | |
| Staff Capacity | | School-specific questions |
| 3.1 | <p>How do staff at the school show a shared commitment to student learning?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Convey a belief that student learning is their collective responsibility <input type="checkbox"/> Hold each other accountable to major improvement strategies <input type="checkbox"/> Provide examples. | |
| 3.2. | <p>Describe the adult culture at the school.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Professional relationships between teachers and with administrators <input type="checkbox"/> Communication flow between teachers and administrators <input type="checkbox"/> Communications between the district/Board/authorizing agency and the school | |
| 3.3 | <p>Describe how educators collaborate with each other at the school.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Structured time to support teaching and learning (i.e., when, frequency, with whom) <input type="checkbox"/> Focus of collaborative meetings | |

District/School Board/Authorizer Focus Group Guide

| | | |
|---|--|----------------------------------|
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Sharing knowledge and expertise <input type="checkbox"/> School leader’s role in supporting planning | |
| 3.4 | Describe ways in which the community and families are engaged in support of student learning and improvement. <input type="checkbox"/> Communications with parents and community stakeholders <input type="checkbox"/> School activities/workshops for families <input type="checkbox"/> Solicitation of parent input <input type="checkbox"/> Community involvement at the school | |
| Partnerships (If working with an external partner) | | School-specific questions |
| 4.1 | Describe the school’s existing partnerships. <input type="checkbox"/> Support (and alignment to) school priorities <input type="checkbox"/> Roles and responsibilities of existing partners <input type="checkbox"/> Management of the relationship with partners | |
| 4.2 | How are you monitoring existing partnerships to ensure support for student learning and well-being and to drive school improvement? <input type="checkbox"/> Return on investment (e.g., time, money) | |

Family/Partner Focus Group Guide

| Leadership | | School-specific questions |
|--|---|---------------------------|
| 1.1 | Describe the school’s goals. <input type="checkbox"/> Areas the school needs to improve <input type="checkbox"/> Strategies for improvement | |
| 1.2 | How have the goals/improvement strategies been communicated to you? <input type="checkbox"/> Do you receive updates on the school’s progress toward goals achievements/ continued challenges? | |
| 1.4 | How does the school hold high expectations for students? <input type="checkbox"/> Provide examples of high expectations for academics at the school. <input type="checkbox"/> Provide examples of high expectations for behavior at the school. | |
| 1.4 | Does the school provide a safe environment for students? <input type="checkbox"/> Physically and emotionally | |
| Infrastructure | | School-specific questions |
| 2.1 | Describe the district/Board’s role in supporting the school’s improvement efforts. <input type="checkbox"/> Communications to families and the community <input type="checkbox"/> Opportunities for input to the district/Board | |
| Staff Capacity | | School-specific questions |
| 3.1 | How do staff at the school show a shared commitment to student learning? <input type="checkbox"/> Show it is important not to give up on students. Provide examples. | |
| 3.2. | Describe communication and adult relationships at the school. <input type="checkbox"/> How does the school communicate with you? <input type="checkbox"/> What are relationships like between teachers? School leadership? | |
| 3.4 | Describe ways in which the school engages the community and families. <input type="checkbox"/> School activities/workshops for families to support student learning <input type="checkbox"/> Community involvement at the school to support student learning <input type="checkbox"/> Solicitation of parent input | |
| Partnerships (If working with an external partner) | | School-specific questions |
| 4.1 | Describe the school’s partnerships. <input type="checkbox"/> Support (and alignment to) school priorities <input type="checkbox"/> Support for student learning and well-being | |

Student Focus Group Guide

| Leadership | | School-specific questions |
|----------------|---|---------------------------|
| 1.1 | Describe the school’s goals. <input type="checkbox"/> How did you learn about these goals (communicated to you)? <input type="checkbox"/> What are you doing in the school or in your classroom to meet these goals? | |
| 1.2 | Do you have goals for your learning? <input type="checkbox"/> Please describe. <input type="checkbox"/> How do you know if your meeting these goals? | |
| 1.4 | How do teachers provide high academic expectations for you? <input type="checkbox"/> Provide an example of a challenging assignment. | |
| 1.4 | Describe expectations for behavior at the school. <input type="checkbox"/> Are rules consistently enforced? Provide examples. | |
| 1.4 | Does the school provide a safe environment for students? <input type="checkbox"/> Physically. Provide examples. <input type="checkbox"/> Emotionally (i.e., an adult you can go to, free of bullying). Provide examples. | |
| Staff Capacity | | School-specific questions |
| 3.1 | How do your teachers show it is important not to give up on you? <input type="checkbox"/> Provide examples. | |
| 3.4 | Describe ways in which the school engages with your family. <input type="checkbox"/> Communications between the school and home <input type="checkbox"/> Communications between your teachers and home <input type="checkbox"/> School activities/workshops for families to support student learning | |
| 3.4 | Describe ways in which the community or partners are involved at the school <input type="checkbox"/> Engaged to provide opportunities for student learning and well-being <input type="checkbox"/> During the school day <input type="checkbox"/> Extracurricular activities | |

Appendix D: Factual Corrections Request Form

Prior to submitting the report to the Colorado Department of Education, SchoolWorks provides three business days for the district / school to review the report for any errors of a factual nature. Factual corrections might include, for example: names, dates, historical references, program titles, or numbers of students, teachers, etc. The district should use this Factual Correction Request form to request factual corrections and provide evidence to support the requested changes.

Factual Correction Request Form

School Name:

Submitted by:

| Page Number and Text from Report (include report title) | Factual Correction Requested | Evidence to Support Factual Correction (required) |
|---|------------------------------|---|
| | | |
| | | |
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Appendix E: Schools of Choice and Virtual SRP Review

Alternative Education Campuses:

Alternative Education Campuses (AECs) are schools with specialized missions designed to serve high-risk student populations. The External Review Team will follow the same protocol and collect evidence related to the same criteria outlined in the protocol through document review, focus groups, and classroom observations. Additionally, the SchoolWorks project manager will work with the school to understand the program and its mission and create a schedule that meets the needs of the school and allows for the team to collect the evidence necessary to respond to the key questions.

Blended Learning and Online Schools:

Blended learning is a formal education program in which a student learns at least in part through online delivery of content and instructional strategies that utilize some element of student control over time, place, path, and/or pace and at least in part at a supervised brick-and-mortar location away from home. The External Review Team will follow the same protocol and will collect evidence related to the same criteria outlined in the protocol through document review, focus groups, and classroom observations (if possible). The SchoolWorks project manager will work with the school to understand their learning platform and create a schedule that meets the needs of the school and allows for the team to collect the evidence necessary to respond to the key questions.

Virtual SRP Reviews:

In the event the External Review Team cannot visit the school in person for the review, CDE may request a Virtual Review be conducted. The Virtual review will follow the same protocol and the team will collect evidence related to the criteria outlined in the protocol through document review, focus groups, and classroom observations (if possible). Classroom observations may be conducted virtually or during a later review. A Virtual Review begins with review of the key documents that describe the school and its students and may include collection of data via online surveys administered to various stakeholder groups (primarily to students and parents/families). During the Virtual Review, evidence collection will take place through document reviews and focus groups with key school stakeholders via Zoom online meeting rooms to collect the evidence necessary to respond to the key questions.