

Parent Notification and Public Hearing Requirements

2020 -21 (Adjustments for Accountability Pause)

Overview

For a school that is required to implement a Priority Improvement or Turnaround plan (does not include schools On Watch), there are specific expectations and timelines laid out in state accountability law about family engagement. In summary, 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 parent involvement strategies listed in their action plans. Districts and schools in year 3 of the accountability clock must host a community meeting with stakeholders (e.g., local board, parents, school staff, community members) in collaboration with the department.

2020-21 Accountability Pause

Due to COVID-19, statewide assessments and accountability has been [paused](#). District and school plan types will continue to implement their 2019 ratings for the 2020-2021 school year. Notification to families about the plan type and the opportunity for stakeholder input in the planning process is still required for all schools continuing to implement a Priority Improvement or Turnaround plan type. However, some adjustments are being made within the timeline and monitoring expectations. For the Year 3 community meeting, if this meeting took place during the 2019-20 school year, the district does not need to host an additional meeting. If the meeting was disrupted by COVID-19 public health orders and has yet to take place, districts should look to hold the meeting in collaboration with the department during the 2020-21 school year, as feasible.

Parent Notification

The district must notify parents of the students enrolled in the school within 30 calendar days of receiving initial plan type assignment. As 2020 school plan types are already known because of the accountability pause, it is recommended that the parent notification is sent by September 30 (30 days after August 31st). This notification must include:

- Type of identified plan (i.e., Priority Improvement, Turnaround)
- Performance results that led to that plan assignment
- Timeline for developing and adopting the required improvement plan
- Date, time and location of the public meeting of the School Accountability Committee (SAC) to provide input on the plan
- Date, time and location of the public hearing held by the local board of education to review the plan prior to adoption.

Districts are encouraged to provide additional context in meeting the above requirements (e.g., new accountability frameworks not provided in 2020 due to COVID-19). A sample notification for 2020-21 has been included on p. 2 of this document. The parent notification, SAC meeting, and local board hearing must occur prior to submission of the UIP to the state for review. Because of some of the flexibility on timelines offered over the past year, it may be difficult to sequence events as expected. If so, contact the CDE-Improvement Planning office to discuss the timeline.

School Accountability Committee Meeting

During the 2020-21 rating pause and in the absence of state data, stakeholder observations, perceptions and feedback on planning initiatives can be a valuable source of information to support improvement efforts. The SAC is expected to meet to provide input on the improvement plan prior to the public hearing. 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 and whether past actions had the intended impact. Requirements, such as inclusion of family involvement strategies in the action plan and the quarterly review on the implementation of the plan, take on even greater significance.

Public Hearing and Final Adoption

The date for the public hearing must be at least 30 calendar days after the date on which the district provides the written notice (e.g., not before October 30, if notice is sent out on September 30). 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(s) of the School Accountability Committee is encouraged to attend the public hearing. The hearing should be scheduled far enough in advance, so that any feedback provided at the hearing can be incorporated in the plan. 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. If the UIP is due in October due to COVID-19 submission flexibility, additional consideration may need to be given to the notification timeline to ensure enough time is available to notify stakeholders of the public hearing, and for the board to adopt the plan.

State Monitoring of Parent Notification Requirement

For the 2020-21 school year, the Improvement Planning Office will not be monitoring this requirement.

Sample Notification to Parents

[Date – By September and at least 30 days before the public hearing]]

Dear parent,

Each school in Colorado is assigned an overall school performance rating every year based on student performance and growth on state assessments. Graduation rates and college matriculation are also considered for high schools. Following the assignment of performance ratings, each school is required to develop a Unified Improvement Plan (UIP) that outlines targets for performance outcomes and strategies that the school will implement to improve academic outcomes for students.

Due to the COVID 19 pause in state assessments, our school will continue to implement a [plan assignment] that is based on our school’s performance and growth on the 2019 assessments. This rating was based on low-performance in the areas of [insert measures where the school did not meet expectations]. Attached is the complete 2019 School Performance Framework report that describes how our school has been evaluated. Our UIP will provide us with a focused improvement plan, including an analysis of student performance data and a detailed action plan. The plan must incorporate ideas and feedback from parents, be approved by the [District Name] Board of Education, and be submitted to the Colorado Department of Education on or before January 15, 2021 for review. To meet that deadline, our UIP will be developed according to the following timeline: [insert dates of any benchmarks for conducting analysis and developing and finalizing the plan].

Our 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, our school board will hold a public hearing on [date—at least 30 days after this notice is issued], at [time], in [location] to review the plan. For more information, please contact [name] at [contact information]. [If year 3 on the clock: Because the school has progressed on the accountability clock, a community meeting will be offered to provide more information about potential next steps.]

You can learn more about Colorado’s school accountability system here: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/accountability/stateaccountability> or <http://www.cde.state.co.us/communications/factsheetaccountability2019>. If you have any questions about our overall school performance rating or how you can get involved in our improvement efforts, please contact me.

Sincerely,

[Name], [Title]

Where can I learn more?

For additional questions, contact the Improvement Planning team (uiphelp@cde.state.co.us) or Lisa Steffen (steffen_l@cde.state.co.us or 303-866-6676).