



THE
COLORADO
EDUCATION
INITIATIVE

The Accelerator Project
Learning Networks: Request for Interest (RFI)

for
School Districts

Responses due no later than
4:00pm, February 2, 2015
via www.bit.ly/cei-accelerator-project-rfi

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The Accelerator Project Learning Networks: Request for Interest

Overview

The Colorado Education Initiative (CEI) invites Colorado school districts and Colorado Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) to complete the following RFI by **4:00 p.m. February 2, 2015** to indicate their interest and readiness in participating in up to three new statewide learning networks. Applicants can express interest in joining one, two, or all three networks.

As a result of lessons learned during the recent Integration Project, CEI is testing a theory of support that is a lighter touch with a goal of more rapid system spread of the field's most promising practices in the following three areas:

- (i) Instructional Design: Shifting instructional practice to implement the Colorado Academic Standards (CAS)
- (ii) Information Design: Using system data to inform system change
- (iii) Professional Development Design: Redesigning systems of professional development and practice to align to student and teacher needs

While there are no direct cash awards associated with this request for interest (RFI), districts/BOCES will receive in-kind resources, consulting, technical assistance, and reimbursements for portions of dedicated teacher time (e.g., stipends, release time, substitution coverage). The anticipated implementation timeline is spring 2015 through December 31, 2015, with some networks continuing into spring 2016.

The Colorado Education Initiative (CEI)

Who we are

We are an independent nonprofit that collaborates with the Colorado Department of Education (CDE), schools, and districts across the state to accelerate achievement for all Colorado students. We believe every student can reach his or her full potential with the right set of supports.

Our Vision

Every student in Colorado is prepared and unafraid to thrive in school, work, and life, and ready to take on the challenges of today, tomorrow, and beyond.

Our Mission

CEI's mission is to unlock the unique potential of every student in Colorado by incubating innovation, shining a spotlight on success, and investing in sustainable change that improves outcomes for all students.

We believe that students should be supported in their academic growth and potential, and also in additional competencies they need to be self-sufficient and successful 21st Century adults. These competencies include:

ACADEMIC	PROFESSIONAL	ENTREPRENEURIAL	PERSONAL	CIVIC
Develop math, literacy, and critical thinking skills	Able to manage time, collaborate with others, and independently learn new things	Able to manage professional risk, make interesting connections, and learn from failure	Use knowledge of self to make good decisions that play on one's strengths	Drive to contribute as a member of the community and workforce

The Opportunity

CEI is launching three independent and related statewide learning networks: (i) Instructional Design, (ii) Information Design, and (iii) Professional Development Design. The networks will provide partnering districts, BOCES, CEI staff, CDE and other partners to an opportunity to co-create processes and resources that support the implementation of work already occurring in many districts across Colorado. Specifically, learning networks will provide a forum for training, peer-led learning, and cross-district/BOCES sharing, among other activities that will take place both in-person and virtually. The learning networks aim to:

- Support Colorado school districts and Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) in their next phase of implementing the Colorado Academic Standards (CAS)
- Create vibrant learning experiences for educators, district/BOCES professionals, and CEI team-members to engage, learn, and explore on these important learning topics
- Build and test new models, approaches and ways of designing the work that are responsive to teacher and student needs and that positively influence student achievement
- Pilot, study, and share these new models with others interested in advancing this work

Supports from CEI to participants in the learning networks could include:

- Stipends and release time for participants
- Convening and travel cost coverage
- Network and learning events
- Change management tools and supports for district leaders
- In-kind technical assistance from CEI and other partners
- Funding of third-party consultants and experts

The information CEI gathers through this RFI process will help to inform the design, structure, and invested supports for the learning networks. **CEI may work with participating districts/BOCES in either one, two, or all three network(s) they identify as most relevant to accelerating their work.** For a list of frequently asked questions (FAQs) and answers related to this RFI, click [here](#).

Criteria

The amount of support a district or BOCES receives from CEI will be determined during the month of February 2015 and will be dependent upon the following criteria:

- Stated willingness to proceed with the work and fulfill the commitments of time from both teacher and district administrators
- Stated willingness and ability to combine district/BOCES resources (e.g., teacher time, release time, substitution costs) with CEI resources to advance learning, exploration, and execution of work in the stated networks
- Demonstration of readiness to engage in this work
- Level of strategic alignment with current and future directions of district/BOCES
- Potential contribution to the learning and growth across learning networks and to other educators
- Capacity of CEI and its partners to deliver on the agreed-upon scope of work

Expectations

Specific details of the working relationship between CEI and participating districts/BOCES will be outlined in a memorandum of understanding (MOU). Mutual expectations among districts/BOCES and CEI include:

- Timely communication and responsiveness
- Engaged partnership, including sharing of relevant data and progress
- Opportunities for learning and networking
- Opportunities to showcase and celebrate the work being done in districts/BOCES in service of improved learning outcomes for students

CEI will strive to engage all districts/BOCES that complete this RFI and align with the above-stated criteria in the emerging learning networks. Completing this RFI signals an initial interest to learn more from CEI about this opportunity. Any district/BOCES that completes this RFI is under no obligation to proceed with a working partnership with CEI. A series of regional informational sessions will be provided in January 2015 to help respondents learn more about the commitments and benefits of participating in one or more learning networks. Districts/BOCES can make final decisions about whether to participate at that time.

I. Learning Network One. Instructional Design: Shifting Instructional Practice

District leaders and educators will have access to high-quality resources to help them design challenging and highly engaging learning environments that help students meet the expectations of the [Colorado Academic Standards](#) (CAS). These resources—such as the [Literacy Design Collaborative](#) (LDC) and Math Design Collaborative (MDC), and potentially others—will support instructional decision-making (e.g., formative, data-driven) and assist educators in shifting practice and providing challenging and engaging tasks for students. Districts will use these resources and supports to empower teachers to further align the instructional core to CAS.

In support of this learning network, CEI will:

- Provide technical assistance to districts that demonstrate readiness to implement LDC and/or MDC as tools to align instructional practice to CAS
- Provide funding support for external consultants and experts to provide strategic planning, training, and train-the-trainer sessions in LDC and/or MDC
- Create regional and statewide learning experiences (e.g. site visits, convenings) for educators, administrators, and other education leaders
- Build a statewide cadre of experts to support the ongoing work of implementing CAS-aligned instruction using LDC and MDC tools

Please indicate below whether your district is interested in participating in this learning network.

Yes, our district IS interested in participating in this learning network. *(Provide responses to the statements that will display below.)*

No, our district IS NOT interested in participating in this learning network. *(Proceed to the next page.)*

A. Describe past activities aligned with this learning network and/or aspects of your system in place to support advancing related work.

Text box for response – 500 word limit

B. Describe activities that your district is currently engaged in related to this learning network.

Text box for response – 500 word limit

C. Explain why your district is ready to engage in this learning network.

Text box for response – 250 word limit

II. Learning Network Two. Information Design: Using Data to Inform System Change

District leaders and educators will use data to proactively inform decision-making and push the systems in which they work to be more responsive to the needs of educators and students. Districts will use data from [Measures of Student Learning](#) (MSLs), [Colorado’s Student Perception Survey](#) (SPS), [Teacher Perception Survey](#) (TPS), and other sources to target resources to areas of need and empower educator decisions at the most local level to positively influence student achievement. Participants will share practices to measure progress toward instructional shifts, design supports to improve educator practice, and devise progress monitoring solutions at the school and district level. CEI will grow and develop a vibrant cross-district community of practice focused on effective data practices to inform professional development design and districtwide decision-making. Partner districts that engage significantly in this network will be expected to identify a data lead/liaison who will serve as the primary beneficiary and conduit of CEI’s strategic supports. Supports for these data leads will include technical assistance, training, and coaching for district leadership and data support staff (e.g., data liaisons and practitioners).

In support of this learning network, CEI will:

- Create and support a peer-learning network and community of data liaisons across the state
- Provide funding support for certain hard costs to facilitate data collection, management, and use (e.g., software licenses)
- Provide funding support for districts interested in piloting Colorado’s Student or Teacher Perception Surveys

Please indicate below whether your district is interested in participating in this learning network.

Yes, our district IS interested in participating in this learning network. *(Provide responses to the statements that will display below.)*

No, our district IS NOT interested in participating in this learning network. *(Proceed to the next page.)*

A. Describe past activities aligned with this learning network and/or aspects of your system in place to support advancing related work.

Text box for response – 500 word limit

B. Describe activities that your district is currently engaged in related to this learning network.

Text box for response – 500 word limit

C. Explain why your district is ready to engage in this learning network.

Text box for response – 250 word limit

III. Learning Network Three. Professional Development Design: Creating Teacher-Driven PD

District leaders, educators, and instructional leads will explore an array of new tools and approaches to finding time and resources to accelerate teachers’ growth and development. In this network, CEI aims to learn alongside districts about the key criteria for the design and delivery of PD and the way districts conceive of, position, and invest in PD. With others in the learning network, districts will explore the use of new structures to support existing district goals (e.g., implementation of the [Colorado Academic Standards \(CAS\)](#), supporting teacher observations and evaluation systems, or other named priorities). CEI will assist a small number of districts with deeper process alignment work. CEI is seeking districts that are willing to think outside the box and try new approaches to using teacher time and teacher roles to advance and redesign PD experiences. CEI will learn from first iterations and planning processes to inform future steps, including potential augmentation of resources for participating districts.

In support of this learning network, CEI will:

- Provide opportunities for districts to engage in an innovative PD readiness assessment
- Provide facilitation for a “pre-planning” PD design process for select districts based readiness assessment results
- For districts with the highest level of readiness and commitment, provide funding support for certain third party experts and technical assistance providers to support with analysis, scenario-building, and decision-making re: PD design
- Develop a statewide peer learning network among and between practitioners engaging in the PD design work

Please indicate below whether your district is interested in participating in this learning network.

Yes, our district IS interested in participating in this learning network. *(Provide responses to the statements that will display below.)*

No, our district IS NOT interested in participating in this learning network. *(Proceed to the next page.)*

A. Describe past activities aligned with this learning network and/or aspects of your system in place to support advancing related work.

Text box for response – 500 word limit

B. Describe activities that your district is currently engaged in related to this learning network.

Text box for response – 500 word limit

C. Explain why your district is ready to engage in this learning network.

Text box for response – 250 word limit

IV. General Questions

Please select the option that best reflects your response to the following statements.

A. In general, based on the information we have today, we believe our district will be willing and able to commit time and resources to participate in this learning network.

- Agree
- Disagree

Please note that specific details of the working relationship between CEI and participating districts will be outlined in a memorandum of understanding (MOU). This MOU will outline mutual commitments of time and resources dedicated by both CEI and the district to support this work. A district that completes this RFI is under no obligation to proceed with a working partnership with CEI.

B. The following stakeholders are supportive of our district pursuing partnership with CEI related to the learning network(s) selected on the previous pages. *(select all that apply)*

	Yes	No	N/A
Teachers			
Building Administrators			
District Administrators			
Teachers Association			

OPTIONAL: Use the space below to explain your responses to question B above.

Text box for response – (500 word limit)

Please provide a response to each of the statements below.

C. Describe your district’s willingness and ability to combine district resources (e.g., teacher time, release time, substitution costs) with CEI resources to advance work in the learning network(s) you selected on the previous pages.

Text box for response – 500 word limit

D. Describe how you envision your district contributing to the learning and growth across learning networks and to other educators as a result of participating in the learning network(s) you selected on the previous pages.

Text box for response – 250 word limit

E. Describe how participation in the learning network(s) you previously selected support your district's strategic plan (or other similar planning document).

Text box for response – 500 word limit

Please upload a copy of your district's strategic plan or other planning document here.
(*place to select and upload file provided.*)

F. **OPTIONAL:** What else would you like for CEI to know in consideration of developing a working partnership with your district in the learning network(s) you selected?

Text box for response – 500 word limit

You have reached the conclusion of the RFI questions.

Once you have completed the responses within the online version of the RFI, you will have an opportunity to review your responses prior to final submission. In addition, you will receive an automatic email confirmation that the completed RFI was sent to CEI, and that email will include your responses as well.

Thank you for your interest in participating in the Accelerator Project
through The Colorado Education Initiative!

For more information about this project, please contact:

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