

Colorado's Unified Improvement Plan for Schools for 2015-16 – Online UIP Report

Organization Code: 0190
Official 2014 SPF: -Year

District Name: BYERS 32J

School Code: 2356 School Name: ELEVATE ACADEMY

Executive Summary

How are students performing? Where will school staff be focusing attention?

Priority Performance Challenges: *Specific statements about the school's performance challenges (not budgeting, staffing, curriculum, instruction, etc.), with at least one priority identified for each performance indicator (achievement, growth, growth gaps, PWR) where the school did not meet federal, state and/or local expectations.*

- **Low math achievement levels:**
- **Low reading achievement levels:**

Why is the school continuing to have these problems?

Root Causes: *Statements describing the deepest underlying cause, or causes, of the performance challenges, that, if dissolved, would result in elimination, or substantial reduction of the performance challenges.*

- **The school lacks a reliable, comprehensive organizational structure.:** The school and its affiliated programs lack a reliable, comprehensive organizational structure including a sufficient data collection and reporting system.
- **The school lacks a comprehensive, data driven professional development system:** The school needs to develop and implement a professional development system based on a data rooted in best practices for effective instructional leadership in a virtual school environment.
- **The school lacks a sufficient curricular and instructional program:** Prior to coming to Elevate, the Learning Centers (1000+ students) had been using a curricular and instructional program that was insufficient, not aligned nor tailored to meeting the needs of students.

What action is the school taking to eliminate these challenges?

Major Improvement Strategies: *An overall approach that describes a series of related actions intended to result in improvements in performance.*

- **Establish and implement a consistent organizational structure:** The school will develop and implement an organizational structure based on best practices and regulatory requirements for a highly effective online public school.
- **Implement an aligned curricular and instructional program:** Implement an aligned c&i program using a blended learning model.
- **Develop and implement a Professional Development program:** Elevate Academy will develop and implement a comprehensive professional development system that is based on the needs of students/staff and is aligned with student achievement goals.

Access School Performance Frameworks here: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/schoolview/performance>

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Section II: Improvement Plan Information

Improvement Plan Information

The school is submitting this improvement plan to satisfy requirements for (check all that apply):

- State Accreditation Improvement Support Grant
 Title I Focus School
 Other:
 Tiered Intervention Grant (TIG)
 Colorado Graduation Pathways Program
 School

School Contact Information

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Additional Information about the School

Comprehensive Review and Selected Grant History

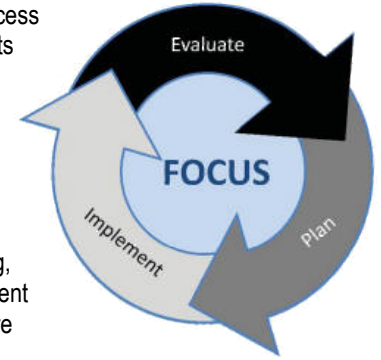
Related Grant Awards	Has the school received a grant that supports the school's improvement efforts? When was the grant awarded?	No
Diagnostic Review, School Support Team or Expedited Review	Has (or will) the school participated in a Diagnostic Review, SST or Expedited Review? If so, when?	No
External Evaluator	Has the school partnered with an external evaluator to provide comprehensive evaluation? Indicate the year and the name of the provider/tool used.	No

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Section III: Narrative on Data Analysis and Root Cause Identification

This section corresponds with the “Evaluate” portion of the continuous improvement cycle. The main outcome is to construct a narrative that describes the process and results of the analysis of the data for your school. The analysis should justify the performance targets and actions proposed in Section IV. Two worksheets have been provided to help organize your data analysis for your narrative. This analysis section includes: identifying where the school did not at least meet minimum state and federal accountability expectations; describing progress toward targets for the prior school year; describing what performance data were used in the analysis of trends; identifying trends and priority performance challenges (negative trends); describing how performance challenges were prioritized; identifying the root causes of performance challenges; describing how the root causes were identified and verified and what data were used; and describing stakeholder involvement in the analysis.



Implications of Colorado Measures of Academic Success (CMAS) on Data Analysis: During the 2014-15 school year, Colorado transitioned from reading, writing and math TCAP assessments to CMAS PARCC English language arts and math assessments. These assessments measure related, but different content standards and are expected to have different proficiency levels. As a result, updating the data analysis this year (particularly the trend statements) may be more challenging. While the school’s data analysis is still expected to be updated, some modifications in typical practice may be needed.

1. Description of School Setting and Process for Data Analysis

Provide a very brief description of the school to set the context for readers (e.g., demographics). Include the general process for developing the UIP and participants (e.g., SAC).

Description: Description of School Setting:

There are over 16,000 students throughout the state of Colorado who have chosen online learning as their education of choice. A majority of online schools have performed in the bottom quartile of all Colorado schools for the past three years. Students in online schools are graduating at a significantly lower rate and dropping out at a significantly higher rate than students enrolled in brick-and-mortar schools. Most of Colorado online schools (excluding AECs) are under management by for-profit Education Management Providers. The leaders of Elevate Academy believe in the transformational power of online education and contend that there is a need for a better online school in Colorado. Further, we believe there is a need for expanding ‘blended learning’ options for students in the state.

We fully accept the reality that there is, and will likely always be, skeptics and critics of online education. Similarly, we accept the fact that there are, and always will be, skeptics and critics of public education in general. Regardless, we are forging a new chapter in Colorado’s online education environment because we know that thoughtful innovation can unleash enormous potential. We are committed to learning from the past in order to more effectively leverage technology to deliver high quality education options to students. We value collegial, candid and constructive relationships with our colleagues across the K-12 education sector. We also value entrepreneurialism, creativity and progress. Together, we believe we have the ingredients for meeting the needs of many Colorado students.

Elevate Academy’s vision is to provide an innovative education option that leverages technology for individualized student success. Our mission is to provide student opportunities and options through an adaptive, encouraging, and innovative high-quality online learning environment. We believe that all students have potential to learn and achieve, and education is a partnership with our students, parents, teachers, and other school staff. We all have responsibilities for each student’s success. We are committed to collaborating with parents to fulfill the mission and vision of our school.

2014/15 School Year: Elevate Academy was established as an independent online charter school for grades K-12, chartered through the Byers School District, using a different format. Elevate Academy chose FLVS curriculum in a block format that has proven to be a successful option for our students and families. Additionally, Elevate is committed to

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establishing and building systems and programs within the school to ensure that we have the most effective programs and systems possible. Elevate Academy served ~40 students in the first year.

2015/16 School Year: Elevate Academy expanded its program exponentially. In addition to continuing the block system option, the school added the following:

*Wings Aerospace Academy: In partnership with military leaders, executives of Wings Over The Rockies Museum and educational leaders Elevate Academy established a partnership to open a blended learning option to students aspiring to the aerospace industry. The middle school program offers students curriculum and instruction in core content areas in addition to specific training in aerospace and aviation. This program serves ~40 students.

*Learning Centers: Elevate Academy established partnerships Learning Centers that were previously under HOPE Online. These learning centers serve roughly 1000 students in 7 campus's from Pueblo to Thornton. The initial curricular and instructional program is a blended model in which students engage online content in core content areas under the leadership of both onsite and online educational staff/teachers. The school is evaluating the implementation of the model and making changes as appropriate.

Therefore, the school expanded from ~40 students in 2014/15 to nearly 1100 students for the 2015/16 school year. Well over 90% of the 2015/16 students are new to Elevate this year.

As a public charter school, Elevate Academy is open to any eligible student residing in Colorado. Our target student profile is not limited to any specific demographic or specific grade range. Instead, the organization aims to serve students and families who have chosen (and need) an alternative educational setting.

While we believe that every student can achieve success, not every education model is conducive to unleashing every student's potential. That is, some students thrive in neighborhood schools, others in private parochial schools and yet others in alternative environments. We do not hold that our school or learning centers are the only, best option. In fact, we argue that no such option exists. Instead, we uniquely weave the attributes of technology into a standards based curricular and instructional program to deliver a highly individualized academic experience. Some may disagree, but we hold that not every student "fits" the college mold. In fact, some may have entrepreneurial designs, vocational goals, desire to raise a family rather than work, or wish to serve in the military as their career choice. We provide educational options and opportunities for students to achieve their full potential based on who the student is, rather than whom we think they should be. We believe that our model honors a wide diversity of students, their dreams and their justifiably unique definitions of the American dream.

We believe that by leveraging our experience in delivering fully online education and working collaboratively with innovative educational leaders, we can effectively offer a blended model that meets the needs of heavily impacted communities in Colorado.

2. Prior Year Targets

Consider the previous year's progress toward the school's targets. Identify the overall magnitude of the school's performance challenges.

Academic Achievement Reflection

Given the fact that over 90% of the schools students are new to the school this school year, we are engaging in the following activities during the 2015/16 school year:

- Gather as much historical student achievement data as possible.
- Administer local assessments, including curriculum based measures, to establish a baseline of data.
- Analyse historical data to identify trends, strengths and areas of concern.
- Identify growth gaps and postsecondary workforce ready trends and gaps.
- Establish achievement, growth, gap and postsecondary workforce readiness goals that align with state expectations.

Academic Growth Reflection

Given the fact that over 90% of the schools students are new to the school this school year, we are engaging in the following activities during the 2015/16 school year:

- Gather as much historical student achievement data as possible.
- Administer local assessments, including curriculum based measures, to establish a baseline of data.
- Analyse historical data to identify trends, strengths and areas of concern.
- Identify growth gaps and postsecondary workforce ready trends and gaps.
- Establish achievement, growth, gap and postsecondary workforce readiness goals that align with state expectations.

Academic Growth Gaps Reflection

Given the fact that over 90% of the schools students are new to the school this school year, we are engaging in the following activities during the 2015/16 school year:

- Gather as much historical student achievement data as possible.
- Administer local assessments, including curriculum based measures, to establish a baseline of data.
- Analyse historical data to identify trends, strengths and areas of concern.
- Identify growth gaps and postsecondary workforce ready trends and gaps.
- Establish achievement, growth, gap and postsecondary workforce readiness goals that align with state expectations.

Postsecondary Workforce Readiness Reflection

Given the fact that over 90% of the schools students are new to the school this school year, we are engaging in the following activities during the 2015/16 school year:

- Gather as much historical student achievement data as possible.
- Administer local assessments, including curriculum based measures, to establish a baseline of data.
- Analyse historical data to identify trends, strengths and areas of concern.
- Identify growth gaps and postsecondary workforce ready trends and gaps.
- Establish achievement, growth, gap and postsecondary workforce readiness goals that align with state expectations.

Student Engagement

Based on our initial assesment and observations of student engagement in the learning centers, this is an area of concern. Therefore, we are working with each center to identifyspecific needs and subsequently set targets.

3. Current Performance

Review the SPF and local data. Document any areas where the school did not at least meet state/ federal expectations.

Reflection

Administration is leading a comprehensive analysis of current performance in each of the schools programs. Based on initial analysis of qualitative and quantitative data, the school has significant needs in operational infrastructure as well as instructional programming.

4. Trend Analysis

Provide a description of the trend analysis that includes at least three years of data (state and local data). Trend statements should be provided in the four performance indicator areas and by disaggregated groups. Trend statements should include the direction of the trend and a comparison (e.g., state expectations, state average) to indicate why the trend is notable.

Priority Performance Challenges and Root Cause Analysis

Priority Performance Challenges: Identify notable trends (or a combination of trends) that are the highest priority to address (priority performance challenges). No more than 3-5 are recommended. Provide a rationale for why these challenges have been selected and address the magnitude of the school's overall performance challenges.

Root Cause: Identify at least one root cause for every priority performance challenge. Root causes should address adult actions, be under the control of the school, and address the priority performance challenge(s). Provide evidence that the root cause was verified through the use of additional data. A description of the selection process for the corresponding major improvement strategies is encouraged.

Priority Performance Challenge



Root Cause

Low math achievement levels:



The school lacks a reliable, comprehensive organizational structure.: The school and its affiliated programs lack a reliable, comprehensive organizational structure including a sufficient data collection and reporting system.

The school lacks a comprehensive, data driven professional development system: The

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school needs to develop and implement a professional development system based on a data rooted in best practices for effective instructional leadership in a virtual school environment.

The school lacks a sufficient curricular and instructional program: Prior to coming to Elevate, the Learning Centers (1000+ students) had been using a curricular and instructional program that was insufficient, not aligned nor tailored to meeting the needs of students.

Low reading achievement levels:



The school lacks a reliable, comprehensive organizational structure.: The school and its affiliated programs lack a reliable, comprehensive organizational structure including a sufficient data collection and reporting system.

The school lacks a comprehensive, data driven professional development system: The school needs to develop and implement a professional development system based on a data rooted in best practices for effective instructional leadership in a virtual school environment.

The school lacks a sufficient curricular and instructional program: Prior to coming to Elevate, the Learning Centers (1000+ students) had been using a curricular and instructional program that was insufficient, not aligned nor tailored to meeting the needs of students.

Reflection on Priority Performance Challenges

Based on initial observations and analysis of historical data, the school has lower than expected achievement levels in math and reading.

Reflection on Root Cause

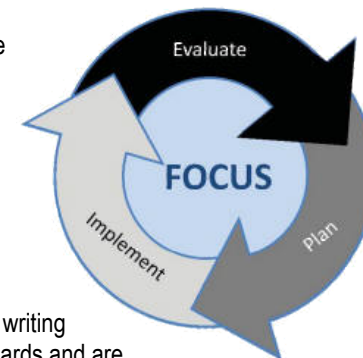
Since acquiring the new Learning Centers, leadership has engaged in an ongoing process of evaluating past/current performance of each learning center. Leadership has used a number of tools including those aligned with the SST process. As leaders analyze data and engaged in a "5 Whys" process, the following root causes have emerged. Leadership plans to continue the process of gathering and analyzing data in order to validate initial observations and make adjustments as warranted.

1. Summary/Conclusion

Section IV: Action Plan(s)

This section addresses the “Plan” portion of the continuous improvement cycle. First, identify annual performance targets and the interim measures. This will be documented in the required *School Target Setting Form* on the next page. Then move into action planning, which should be captured in the *Action Planning Form*.

Schools are expected to set their own annual targets for the performance indicators (i.e. academic achievement, academic growth, academic growth gaps, and postsecondary and workforce readiness). At a minimum, schools should set targets for each of the performance indicators where state expectations were not met; targets should also be connected to prioritized performance challenges identified in the data narrative (section III). For each annual performance target, identify interim measures that will be used to monitor progress toward the annual targets at least quarterly during the school year.



Implications of Colorado Measures of Academic Success (CMAS) on Target Setting: During the 2014-15 school year, Colorado transitioned from reading, writing and math TCAP assessments to CMAS PARCC English language arts and math assessments. These assessments measure related, but different content standards and are expected to have different proficiency levels. As a result, setting targets based on the percent of students scoring proficient and advanced on TCAP is not appropriate. Furthermore, CDE does not yet know if student growth percentiles and median student growth percentiles will be available for accountability, planning or reporting use. It is known that adequate growth percentiles will not be available this school year for 2014-15 results. Target setting is still expected to occur in the UIP process during this transition period. However, some modifications in typical practice may be needed.

School Target Setting Form

Academic Achievement (Status)

Subject		R
Priority Performance Challenge		Low reading achievement levels
Annual Performance Targets	2015-2016	By the end of 2015/16 SY the percentage of students scoring P+ in reading will be at least 70%.
	2016-2017	By the end of 2016/17 SY the percentage of students scoring P+ in reading will be at least 75%.
Interim Measures		

Subject		M
Priority Performance Challenge		Low math achievement levels
Annual Performance Targets	2015-2016	By the end of 2015/16 SY the percentage of students scoring P+ in math will be at least 62%.
	2016-2017	By the end of 2016/17 SY the percentage of students scoring P+ in math will be at least 70%
Interim Measures		

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Action Planning Form for 2015-16 and 2016-17

Identify the major improvement strategy(s) for 2015-16 and 2016-17 that will address the root cause(s) determined in Section III. For each major improvement strategy, identify the root cause(s) that the major improvement strategy will help to dissolve. Then, indicate which accountability provision or grant opportunity it will address. Details should include the action steps that will be taken to implement the major improvement strategy, a general timeline, resources that will be used to implement the actions, and implementation benchmarks.

Major Improvement Strategy: Establish and implement a consistent organizational structure

The school will develop and implement an organizational structure based on best practices and regulatory requirements for a highly effective online public school.

Root Cause(s) Addressed:

The school lacks a reliable, comprehensive organizational structure.

The school lacks a comprehensive, data driven professional development system

The school lacks a sufficient curricular and instructional program

Accountability Provisions or Grant Opportunities Addressed by this Major Improvement Strategy (check all that apply):

- State Accreditation
 Title I Focus School
 Tiered Intervention Grant (TIG)
 Colorado Graduation Pathways Program
 Other:

Action Steps	
Aug. 2015 - Jan. 2016	<p>Audit current organizational systems in each Learning Center</p> <p>Description: Analyze current organizational systems in each Learning Center to identify strengths and areas of need.</p> <p>Implementation Benchmarks: Conduct numerous site visits and document reviews by December 2015</p> <p>Resources:</p> <p>Key Personnel:</p>

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	<p>Elevate leadership team</p> <p>Status: In Progress</p>
<p>Aug. 2016 - Oct. 2016</p>	<p>Operations Manual</p> <p>Description: Compose and implement a comprehensive operations manual that provides a policy foundation for daily operations.</p> <p>Implementation Benchmarks: Draft complete Aug 2015 Final draft Sept 2015 Distribution Oct 2015</p> <p>Resources: Board and legal approval</p> <p>Key Personnel: Administration, Legal Counsel, School Board</p> <p>Status: Complete</p>
<p>Aug. 2016 - May. 2016</p>	<p>Implement student data management system</p> <p>Description: Acquire and implement a comprehensive student data management system that includes adequate reporting features that will support data driven instruction.</p> <p>Implementation Benchmarks:</p>

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Analyze current systems Fall 2015
Acquire adequate system Spring 2016
Implement system across entire school Fall 2016

Resources:

Funds for system

Key Personnel:

Administration

Status:

In Progress

Major Improvement Strategy: Implement an aligned curricular and instructional program
Implement an aligned c&i program using a blended learning model.

Root Cause(s) Addressed:
The school lacks a sufficient curricular and instructional program

Accountability Provisions or Grant Opportunities Addressed by this Major Improvement Strategy (check all that apply):
 State Accreditation
 Title I Focus School
 Tiered Intervention Grant (TIG)
 Colorado Graduation Pathways Program
 Other:

Action Steps	
Aug. 2016 - Mar. 2016	<p>Analyze current curricular and instructional model/systems</p> <p>Description: Analyze the current model (and related practices) in each of the Learning Centers.</p> <p>Implementation Benchmarks: Site visits and classroom observations.</p> <p>Resources:</p> <p>Key Personnel: Elevate Administration</p> <p>Status: In Progress</p>
Aug. 2016 - May. 2017	<p>Implement blended learning model</p>

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Description:

Over the course of the 2015/16 and 2016/17 school years, we will design and implement a blended learning model that leverages online content in a classroom setting.

Implementation Benchmarks:

Analyze current systems Fall 2015 - Spring 2016

Design and implement blended models (rapid restarts when needed) Spring 2016 - Spring 2017

Resources:

Financial resources to acquire curriculum, technological infrastructure, hardware, instructors, para-professionals.

Key Personnel:

Administration

Status:

In Progress

Major Improvement Strategy: Develop and implement a Professional Development program

Elevate Academy will develop and implement a comprehensive professional development system that is based on the needs of students/staff and is aligned with student achievement goals.

Root Cause(s) Addressed:

The school lacks a comprehensive, data driven professional development system

Accountability Provisions or Grant Opportunities Addressed by this Major Improvement Strategy (check all that apply):

- State Accreditation
 Title I Focus School
 Tiered Intervention Grant (TIG)
 Colorado Graduation Pathways Program
 Other:

Action Steps	
Jan. 2016 - May. 2016	<p>Design and implement a system to gather PD data</p> <p>Description: Design and implement a system to gather needs assessment data and leverage that data to build a data driven PD program</p> <p>Implementation Benchmarks: Design needs assessment Spring 2016 Beta test assessment Spring 2016 Implement needs assessment Summer 2016</p> <p>Resources: Tech infrastructure</p> <p>Key Personnel: Administration</p>

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	<p>Status: In Progress</p>
<p>May. 2016 - Aug. 2016</p>	<p>2016 PD Plan</p> <p>Description: Implement a data driven PD program based on needs assessment data and student achievement data.</p> <p>Implementation Benchmarks: Administer PD Needs assessment to staff: Summer 2016 Construct PD plan Summer 2016 Implement PD plan Fall 2016</p> <p>Resources:</p> <p>Key Personnel: Teachers, Admin</p> <p>Status: Not Started</p>

Section V: Appendices

Some schools will need to provide additional forms to document accountability or grant requirements:

- Additional Requirements for Turnaround Status Under State Accountability (Required)
- Tiered Intervention Grantee (TIG) (Required)
- Title I Schools Operating a Schoolwide Program (Optional)