

Office of Community Schools Improvement Plan Frequently Asked Questions

1. Which community schools are required to complete Improvement Plans?

The following schools must submit Improvement Plans to their sponsors for submission to the Office of Community Schools:

- Schools identified as priority schools;
- Schools receiving ratings of “needs intervention” from the Office for Exceptional Children;
- Schools required to develop and submit Reading Achievement Plans (RAP);
- Schools identified as a focus schools that are applying for School Quality Improvement Grants/1003 or Direct Student Services (DSS) grants;
- Schools identified as “at-risk” for closure” under Ohio Revised Code 3314.35 or 3314.351;
- If you are unsure whether your school should complete a plan, please contact your sponsor or the Office of Community Schools at CSimprovement@education.ohio.gov for more information.

2. Can a school submit a plan even if it is not required to do so?

Yes.

3. If I submit the Improvement Plan for my school, will we still have to submit a special education corrective action plan or a Reading Achievement Plan?

Yes. Submitting Improvement Plans through the Office of Community Schools does not relieve community schools from completing and submitting either the special education corrective action plan or Reading Achievement Plan. The Office of Community Schools worked with both the Office for Exceptional Children and the Office of Literacy Programs to align plan requirements. Schools should be able to utilize the content of the plan submitted to Office of Community Schools to complete other requirements.

4. When is the Improvement Plan due?

The sponsor must upload the Improvement Plan into Epicenter by 11:59 p.m. on Dec. 21, 2018.

5. How many goals are required?

The needs assessment conducted by the team will determine the areas of need for the school.

The areas of focus for the Improvement Plan should fall into one or more of the following categories:

- Equity;
- Literacy;
- Special Needs;
- Climate & Culture;
- Graduation Pathways.

6. Are there any required goals?

If the school is required to submit a Reading Achievement Plan, the Office of Community Schools would expect to see at least one goal related to early literacy.

If the school received a rating of “needs intervention” for special education, the Office of Community Schools would expect to see at least one goal for improving outcomes for students with disabilities.

7. Who should be part of the Improvement Plan team?

The school improvement team should include school administration, teachers, school support staff, parents, community members, one or more members of the school's governing authority and a representative of the sponsor. Schools that contract with an operator should include one or more representatives of the operator/management company.

8. Can the operator/management company write the plan for the school?

While a school's operator might play a key role in developing any improvement plan, an operator should not develop the improvement plan alone.

9. Does the governing authority have to sign off on the Improvement Plan?

Yes. The governing authority of the community school should review and approve the final plan. Sponsors should be provided a copy of meeting minutes and a resolution approving the plan as evidence of the governing authority's approval. *(Note: We understand not all school governing authorities meet every month. School governing authorities have until Jan. 31, 2019, to approve Improvement Plans and submit documentation to the school's sponsor.)*

10. What is the school sponsor's role regarding Improvement Plans?

Sponsors are responsible for the following: 1) ensuring plans are submitted prior to the deadline; 2) reviewing plans to ensure they are complete; and 3) monitoring implementation of Improvement Plans. Sponsors are requested to complete and upload the "Improvement Plan Monitoring Tool" into Epicenter.

11. Will there be additional technical assistance from the Ohio Department of Education?

Each school identified as a priority school and/or as "needs intervention" for special education is assigned to a member of the state support team (SST) in its region. State Support Team staff will be on-site three times this school year to provide technical assistance and monitor schools' progress with implementing their Improvement Plans. State support team staff also will be in contact via telephone or Skype.

12. What if my school isn't a priority or "needs intervention" school?

State support team staff in each region offer a wide variety of professional development activities available to all schools and districts in their regions. If you're looking for information or assistance related to a specific issue, you also may contact the Office of Community Schools for assistance by email to CSimprovement@education.ohio.gov.

13. Is this a one-year process?

No. While schools likely will include both long- and short-term goals as part of their plans, these Improvement Plans are designed to be implemented over a three-year period.

14. Does the plan need to be approved?

Ohio Department of Education staff will review all school plans and provide feedback and recommendations for improvement. Plans that are insufficient or incomplete will be returned for revision and resubmission.

15. Can the school make changes to the plan?

Yes. The plan is a living document that is guiding the process being implemented by the school to increase progress in the areas of need. The school may find the need for revisions as it begins to implement the strategies or as it successfully meets its goals. If revisions are made, the sponsor should upload the revised plan into Epicenter.

If you have additional questions or require assistance, please contact the Office of Community Schools at CSimprovement@education.ohio.gov.