



NATIONAL  
CHARTER SCHOOL  
RESOURCE CENTER

# Don't Stop Improving: A Strategic Approach to School Improvement Using the Four Domains

[Even in a Pandemic]

*A Webinar for State Education Agencies and Independent Chartering Boards*

May 13, 2020 • 1 p.m. ET/10 a.m. PT | Virtual Presentation

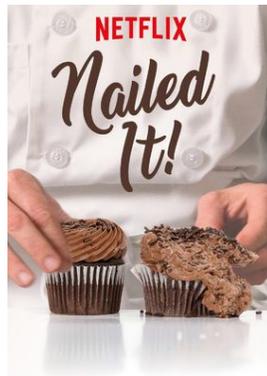
[charterschoolcenter.ed.gov](https://charterschoolcenter.ed.gov)

# In the chat....

*Name, Organization, State, and...*

*Which TV show best characterizes how you are feeling about School Improvement right now?*

**NAKED AND AFRAID**



**bravo project RUNWAY**



**FIXER★UPPER**



Join us in recognizing...



# **NATIONAL CHARTER SCHOOLS WEEK 2020**



## Norms for Today's Call

- Update your name to your full name and organization.
- Mute yourself when not speaking.
- Show your video to enhance dialogue and interaction.
- Be open to other opinions and courteous to your peers.



## About the NCSRC

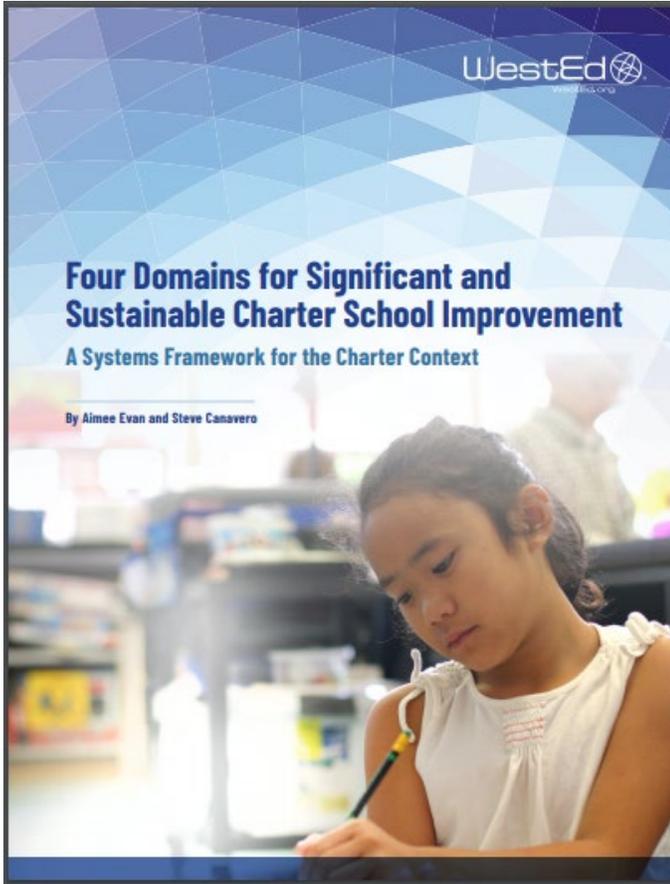
The National Charter School Resource Center (NCSRC) provides technical assistance to federal grantees and resources supporting charter sector stakeholders. NCSRC is funded by the U.S. Department of Education (ED) and managed by Manhattan Strategy Group in partnership with WestEd.



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# Building Upon Prior Work...



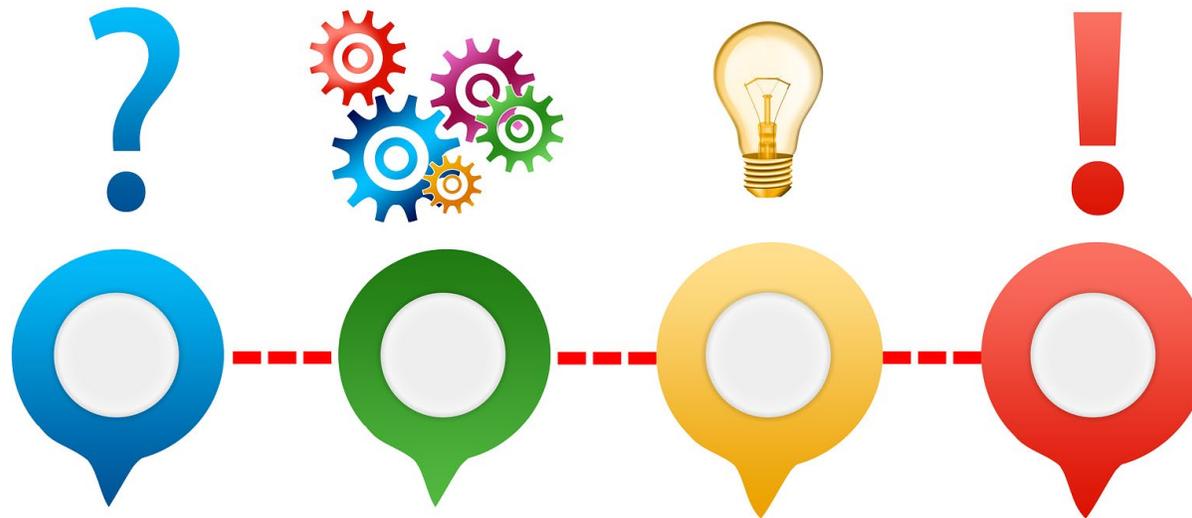
- Report released by WestEd early this year
- Workshop at the 2020 CSP Project Directors' Meeting
- Future work planned to bring content to various stakeholders across the charter sector

## On the Webinar Today

- Courtney Leigh Beisel, National Charter School Resource Center
- Steve Canavero, Ph.D., National Charter School Resource Center
- Aimee Evan, National Charter School Resource Center
- Rebecca Feiden, Executive Director, Nevada State Public Charter School Authority
- Kelly Wynveen, Colorado Department of Education, Charter Schools Senior Field Consultant

On today's webinar we'll delve into the question...

In what ways does the pandemic affect school improvement efforts that are already underway?



# Agenda

1. Provide session objectives
2. Explain what we know today and can anticipate for tomorrow
3. Discuss why a comprehensive framework for improvement is needed now
4. Learn about school improvement plans in practice
5. Reflect on what we have learned in breakout groups

## Session Objectives

You will leave this session with an understanding of how to use the Four Domains framework to help you:

- Strategically plan how to initiate or adjust school improvement actions in the:
  - **Immediate** (within next 3 months)
  - **Short-term** (prior to 20-21 SY)
  - **Long-term** (20-21 SY and beyond)
- Learn from your peers' school improvement plans prior to, and in response to, COVID-19

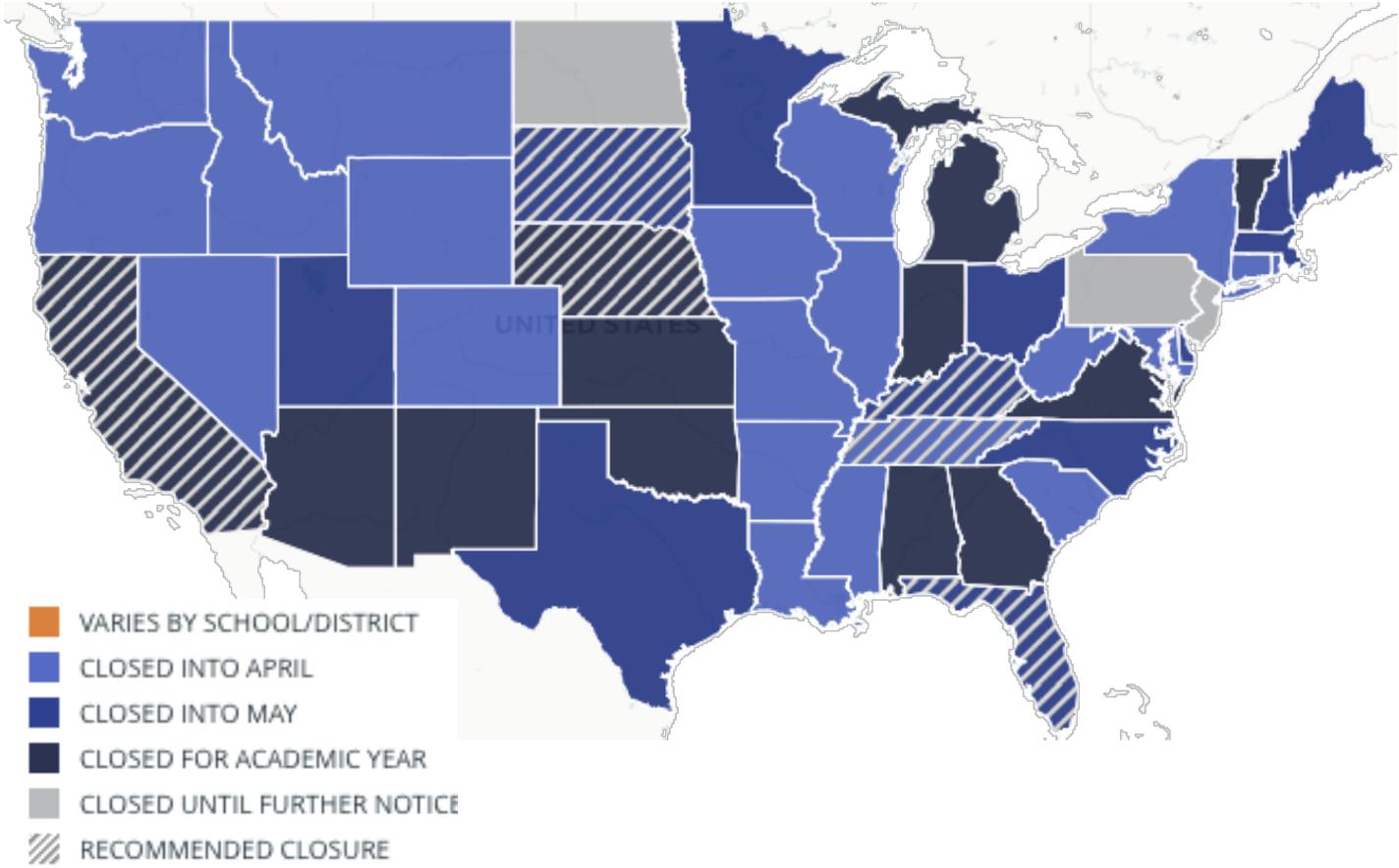
# What we know today, and what can we anticipate for tomorrow?

*Planning is bringing the future into the present so that you can do something about it now.*

-Alan Lakein

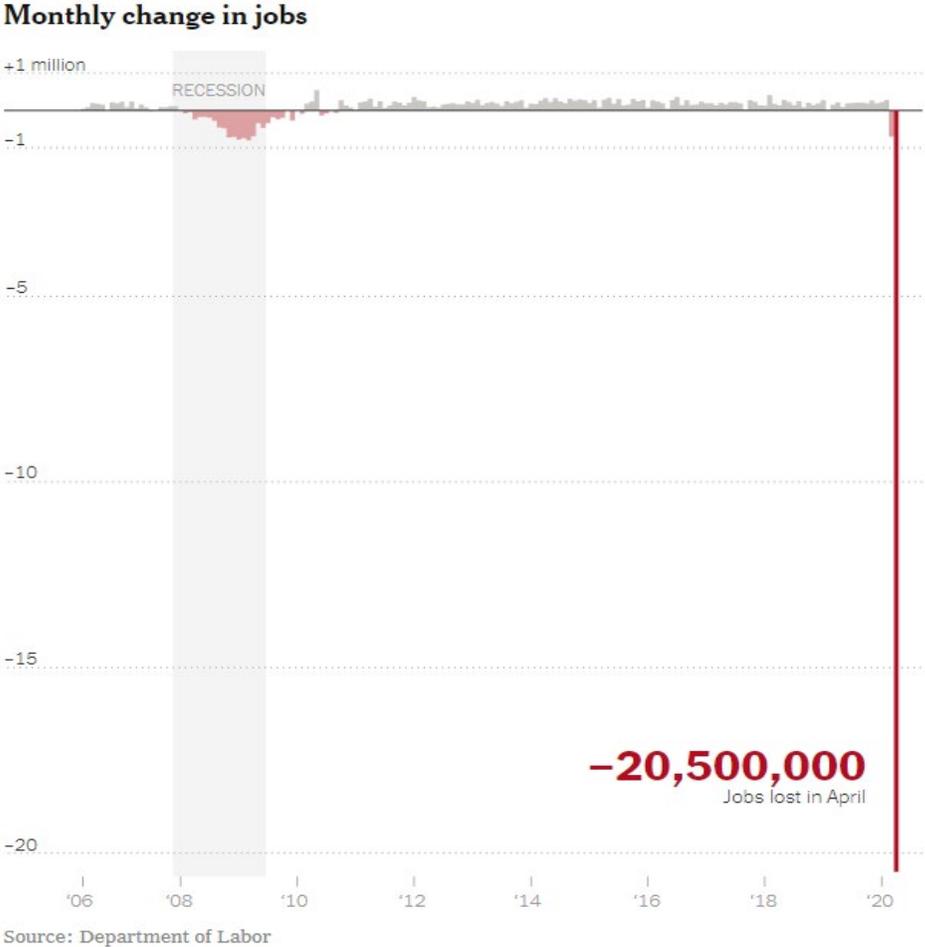


# We Are In a New Era: Impact of COVID-19, So Far: April 8

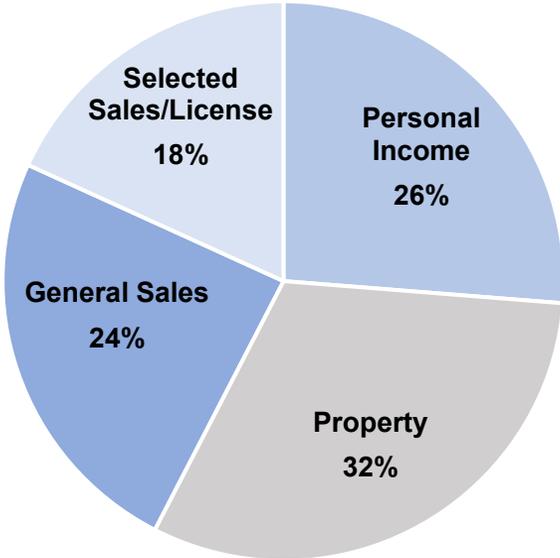




# Rapid Movement Toward an Economic Recession



## Funding Sources for School Districts in the United States (Avg. by Revenue Type)



Source: U.S. Department of Education. National Center for Education Statistics. Common Core of Data. Custom Build Tables. Accessed on March 24, 2020. Washington, DC.  
 Source: Belz, S. and Sheiner, L. March 23, 2020. *How will the coronavirus affect state and local government budgets?* Brookings Institution. Washington, DC. [https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2020/03/23/how-will-the-coronavirus-affect-state-and-local-government-budgets/?utm\\_campaign=Economic%20Studies&utm\\_source=hs\\_email&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_content=85201185](https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2020/03/23/how-will-the-coronavirus-affect-state-and-local-government-budgets/?utm_campaign=Economic%20Studies&utm_source=hs_email&utm_medium=email&utm_content=85201185)

## What Can We *Anticipate*: Learning Loss

- National meta-analysis studies from summer loss show:
  - Approximately 25% (45 days) out of school
  - Students lose approximately 1 month on a grade equivalent scale
  - Math losses are greater
  - Economically disadvantaged students lose more ground
- Hurricane Katrina and Harvey delayed the opening of schools and displaced students:
  - Missed 8% (15-25 days) out of school
  - Lower math growth; reading results were mixed
  - Increased behavioral issues and dropouts

## What Can We *Anticipate*: Financial

- Lessons from the Great Recession & American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)

Help	Hurt
States built reserves over subsequent decade to protect against a future recession	Sharp declines in state revenue for high-need districts <b><i>exacerbated funding inequities</i></b>
Accelerated common reform agenda focused on standards, data, teacher effectiveness, and low-performing schools <b><i>showing some impact</i></b>	<b><i>Did not... spur cross-agency collaboration</i></b> for child-serving agencies (e.g., K-12 and early childhood)

- *Increased competition* for state revenue as a result of increased spending on unemployment insurance (0.5-1%) as well as health and human services (1-4%)
- *State reserve* build-up will provide some cushion to this revenue decline for a limited amount of time (6-12 months)

# Finding Opportunity in a Crisis

- Existing underperforming schools
  - In or almost in intervention
- COVID-19 closures
  - Dis-continuity of learning
  - Fiscal pressures
- In best of times – daunting challenge to improve schools
- Questions > Answers

- Paused accountability systems
- Focus placed on conditions, immediate student needs
- Unprecedented policy/funding flexibility

# Comprehensive Approach to School Improvement

*Four Domains for Significant and Sustainable Charter School Improvement*



# Four Domains for Significant and Sustainable Charter School Improvement

IF....

the overarching goal is to create a unified, comprehensive approach to school improvement across my charter sector,

THEN...

we all will need to... .



## The Framework Includes:

Strategic improvement components to lay the groundwork needed to ensure successful improvement

The *aligned* roles of the state, authorizer, school board, and charter school – each entity is pivotal to school improvement

The critical practices – identified by research and practice – of successful school improvement in each of the Four Domains

Examples (not a recipe) of how practices can be put into action

# Strategic Improvement Components

- **Improvement Planning:** Start with a **needs assessment** to gauge strengths and challenges in each domain
- **Focus on Student's Performance:** Determine what is needed for students, individually and collectively
- **Alignment of Operations:** Coordinate fiscal and human resources based on student need
- **Fiscal Sustainability:** Project potential budget implications and plan accordingly

# POLL

*What strategic improvement component do you anticipate schools needing:*

*Most support?  
Least support?*



# Colorado's Approach to Significant and Sustainable Charter School Improvement

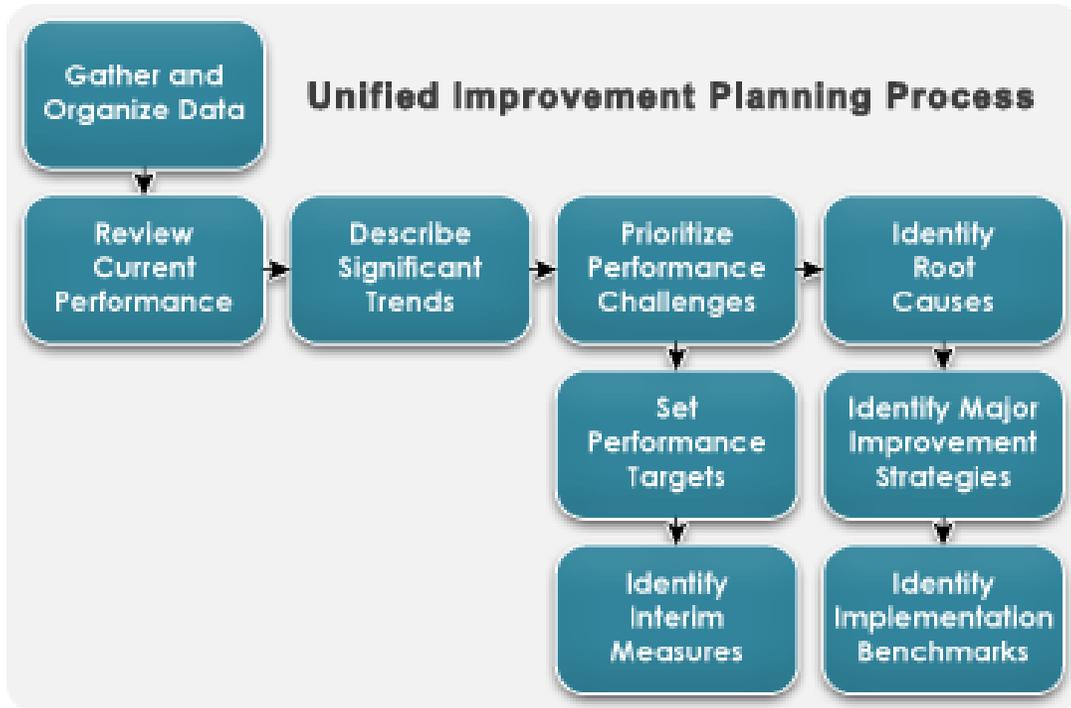


# Colorado's Turnaround Support Network

- Turnaround Support Network: Charter Pilot
  - EASI Grant
    - Diagnostic Review Grounded in 4 Domains
    - Convenings with targeted PD
    - District Partnership
    - Partnerships and Network – charters, AECs, traditional public schools



# Colorado's Unified Improvement Plan Process



- All schools in Colorado participate in process
- All Colorado schools “on the clock” have plans reviewed by cross-departmental team
- Revisions – required vs. recommended



# Colorado's CSSI Review Process

- CSSI Review Process
  - Part of CSP Program for all sub-grantees
  - External review team
  - Report out
  - Feedback from schools



# Nevada's Approach to Significant and Sustainable Charter School Improvement



# Key Considerations

- What school improvement tools do we have?
- What resources (including financial) can we invest/access?
- When and how do we engage with underperforming schools?
- How do we plug into existing structures/systems?
- How can our actions enable the conditions for successful turnaround?

# Implications of the COVID-19 pandemic

- Assessing academic impacts and making a plan
- Determining financial constraints and maximizing and focusing resources



# Breakout Discussion



## Group Share Out from Breakouts

- 3 minutes per group
- Each group shares a big idea for each question (i.e., salient point, key take away)



# Strategy Development



# Questions to Guide Strategic Development

Improvement Components	Guiding Question
<b>Improvement Planning</b>	How will we equip our boards and schools to successfully drive improvement to meet marginalized student groups?
<b>Performance/Equity Focus</b>	How will we support schools to address student learning gaps? What can we plan to do now to be ready for schools to identify students, skills, and content that need additional support?
<b>Aligned Operations</b>	How will we build a coalition of support for systemic change: (state, authorizer, CMO/EMO, CSO, boards, and schools) to align resources to need?
<b>Fiscal Sustainability</b>	How will we prepare schools for funding shortfalls?

# Strategy Approach via the Four Domains

Improvement Components	Immediate (0-3 months)	Short Term (2-8 months)	Long Term (6-12 months)
<b>Improvement Planning</b>	<p>Ensure communication and information re: accountability</p> <p>Provide/coordinate sharing of needs assessment, survey, strategic improvement planning templates</p>	<p>Provide/coordinate capacity building opportunities for authorizers, school boards, and leaders</p>	<p>Support school leaders to plan for and execute resource investments in activities that would support learning recovery lost over the spring/summer 2020</p>
<b>Performance/Equity Focus</b>	<p>Ensure student needs are still being met in lieu of “formal accountability”</p> <p>Identify temporary ways to ensure connectivity for students (e.g., equip Wi-Fi for buses, etc.)</p>	<p>Establish data collection mechanisms to understand emergent patterns of need in your communities</p> <p>Implement/coordinate summer instruction for at-risk, EL, and special education students</p>	<p>Assess and determine “hardest hit” communities; use traditional measures of equity (e.g., at-risk, WiFi access), and other measures of equity (e.g., essential service workers, single parent homes).</p>

# Strategy Approach via the Four Domains (continued)

Improvement Components	Immediate (0-3 months)	Short Term (2-8 months)	Long Term (6-12 months)
<b>Aligned Operations</b>	Support leaders to resolve equity gaps exacerbated by distance learning through increased time allocation of classroom/intervention staff, mental health supports, and helping families navigate public services available	<p>Strategize anticipated increase in need for compensatory supports in special education including innovative approaches for using those resources effectively</p> <p>Leverage cross-agency collaboration to increase availability of supports to charter schools</p>	Coordinate sharing/develop example options for resource allocation based on needs of students and their families for the short-, mid-, and longer-term
<b>Fiscal Sustainability</b>	<p>Provide Notice of Federal Funding opportunities, flexibility, and funding reserve requirements</p> <p>Ensure information re: CARES Act, SBA, and interagency coordination is provided to charters</p> <p>Support charter school leaders in identifying and applying for additional funding if needed (i.e., provide paperwork, support facilitated conversations)</p>	<p>Anticipate a likely revision to the state budget in the fall and support charter schools and CMOs to prepare</p> <p>Share information about alternative financial options and resources available</p> <p>Support charter leaders in making one-time vs. ongoing expense/funding decisions, understanding blending/braiding, and flexibility decisions</p>	<p>Establish a prioritization list, anticipating FY22 budget reductions</p> <p>Anticipate competition among other public services for fewer resources in the FY22 budget cycle; work with other divisions within the agency to ensure charters are included</p>

# Strategy Triage Tool



Priority

What are you trying to achieve?



Timeframe

What is the timeframe for achieving goals?

What are the milestones?



Continue

What will you continue?

What needs modified to continue work?



Pause

What will you pause and restart at a later date?



Stop

What will you stop doing?



Emerging

What is a new or emerging priority that needs to be addressed through your work?



Unknown

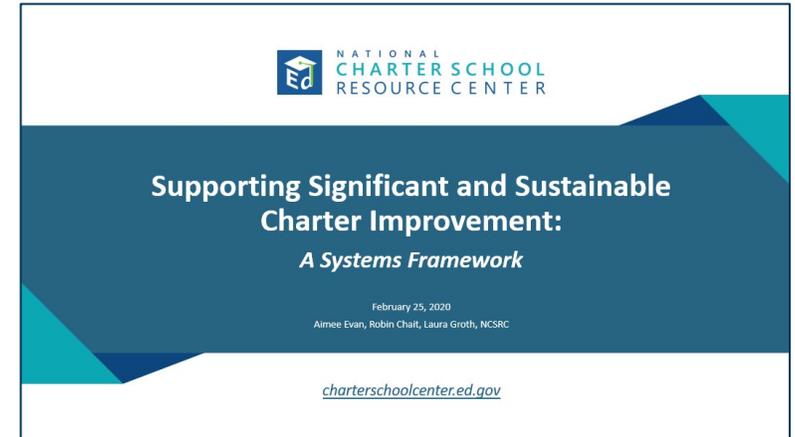
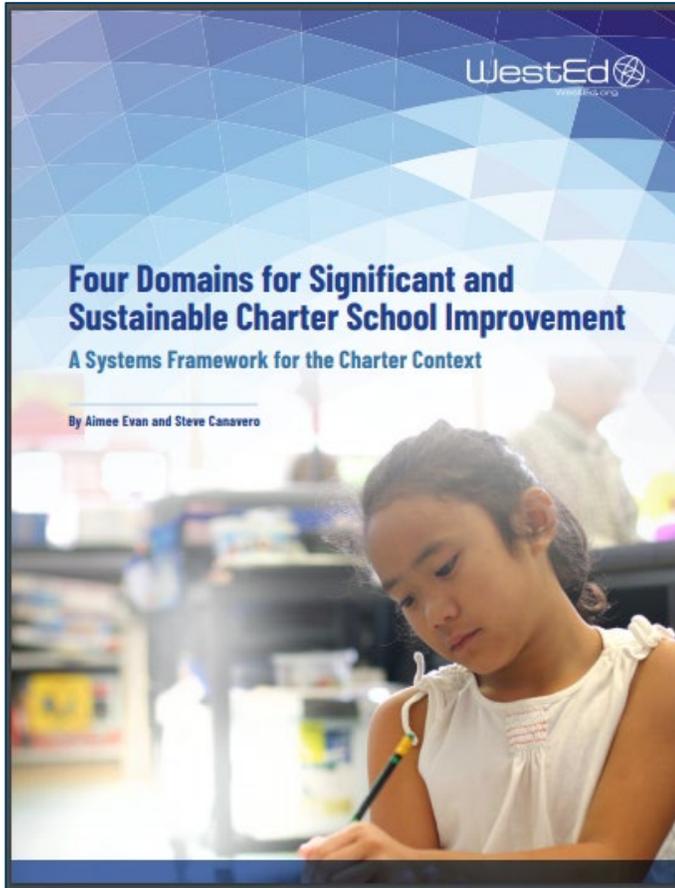
What is unknown? What is too much influx to make a decision about now?

Source: Author Adaptation of Strategy Lift 2020

# Q&A



# Additional Resources



## Upcoming NCRSC Virtual Events

- State Entity Activities to Improve Quality Authorizing – June 23, 2020
- School Improvement for CMOs/Developer Grantees – June 30, 2020



## How can you contact us?



[charterschoolcenter.ed.gov](http://charterschoolcenter.ed.gov)



[contact-us@charterschoolcenter.org](mailto:contact-us@charterschoolcenter.org)

## Response requested, please!

Please respond to the pop-up polling questions to let us know how we did on this event.



