

USING THE GUIDE

OVERVIEW OF GUIDE

The School Improvement Plan can serve as a record of compliance with school board policy, Title I Schoolwide Planning, and other state and federal rules and statutes. In addition, successful organizations operate from a single plan. Under Colorado's Accreditation system, all districts must accredit their schools. Many districts require their schools to develop a yearly school improvement plan to meet this requirement. Thus, this guide provides a structure and procedures through a single plan for meeting the requirements of a School Improvement Plan (SIP) for all schools and the additional requirements for Title I, Part A schools that operate a Title I Schoolwide program. While the components of a SIP are set by each district, Title I schools that operate Title I Schoolwide Programs must include all the components identified in Section 1114 of the No Child Left Behind Act (also found in Addendum A of this guide).

Schools want all their students to succeed. In order to accomplish this, schools need to focus on specific goals and strategies for change. School improvement planning is the process through which schools set goals for improvement and make decisions about how and when these goals will be achieved.

School improvement is, thus, the single most important business of the school, in that it is the process schools use to ensure that all students are achieving at high levels. The ultimate objective of the process is to improve student achievement levels by enhancing the ways curriculum is delivered, by creating a positive learning environment and by increasing the degree to which parents are involved in their children's learning at school and in the home.

The School Improvement Plan (SIP) will drive measurable improvement in achievement for all students, by focusing on improvement in: teaching and learning; attendance and enrollment; school climate and culture; and parent and community engagement. The School Improvement Plan will be used as a regular resource, or "blueprint," for parents, community, faculty, school staff, students and district administration. The SIP will:

- set clear, school wide expectations;
- establish specific instructional priorities;
- hold faculty to the highest standards in all their activities, including when setting their annual performance objectives;
- inform budget and staffing decisions;
- identify specific strategies to effectively engage parents for the purpose of increasing student achievement.

USING THIS GUIDE

The SIP/SW guide is organized into several basic sections:

- Planning and writing the SI/SW plan
 - SI/SW Templates
 - Additional Schoolwide Plan requirements
1. The first section of the guide includes an overview of school improvement, timelines for using a 3-year improvement plan cycle, and guidelines for developing a plan.
 2. The second section provides a template and information for writing and/or updating a SI/SW plan.
 3. The third section applies to schools that operate a Title I Schoolwide program. The forms and directives must be completed in order to operate as a Title I Schoolwide program, but can be an addendum to the SIP. Thus, all schools in a district can operate from a single plan format, with Title I Schoolwide programs including the additional requirements in the addendum.

The SI/SW Planning Guidance provides options for schools that operate Title I Schoolwide programs. However, any school operating a Schoolwide program must ensure that all 10 elements and related requirements are in the plan. This is the responsibility of the district to ensure that all Title I Schoolwide plans meet the requirements of NCLB, section 1114. These requirements can be found in the Title I Schoolwide Program Checklist in the Addendum.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANNING

The following key principles form the basis for the school improvement planning process.

- School Improvement Plans must be aligned to State and local standards.
- The principal must be at the helm of this process—without support and leadership of the principal, the planning process lacks the leverage that is needed for change to occur in a school environment.
- It should involve all stakeholders in the process. Students and parents have an important perspective on how schools can improve. Their meaningful participation in the process should be considered from the onset. In addition, all members of a school staff should participate and/or be aware of the planning process. The more stakeholders that are “in the loop,” the better the chances the school will achieve 100 percent buy-in by staff for change efforts. A representative group of stakeholders can do the bulk of the work, if results and updates are reported back on a regular basis to the full faculty and other stakeholders.
- Decisions about school improvement goals and solutions must be based on careful consideration of multiple sources of data and research.
- School improvement planning is a journey of continuous improvement that demands ongoing monitoring and adjustment of programs and processes at the school.
- The written plan document is only as good as the quality of thought, effort, and the degree of “buy-in” by all stakeholders.

STAGES OF SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANNING PROCESS

In developing the School Improvement Plan, schools should¹ go through the following critical steps:

1. Needs Assessment:

A comprehensive needs assessment looks at data on student performance and on the school's practice that generate that performance.

2. Prioritizing Needs:

Schools should prioritize the needs identified in the above step and identify just a few as the greatest concerns.

3. Cause Analysis:

Identify the factors causing the needs of the greatest concerns to occur.

¹ Required of schools that operate as Title I schoolwide programs

4. Setting Goals:

Setting realistic and measurable goals is central to an effective planning process.

5. Developing an Action Plan:

Identify the steps that the school will take to achieve the goals, who will oversee each step and the resources required.

6. Evaluation: Identify ways of measuring the effectiveness of the plan.

PROCEDURES

Duration:

The School Improvement Plan may cover a single year or multiple years. The plan is evaluated annually. When making revisions, the principal will work with school faculty, parents, community and supervisors to evaluate progress toward the goals and to adjust objectives and strategies based on that evaluation.

The SIP should be updated when necessary to align with any awarded grants.

If district personnel or a principal deems it necessary, the School Improvement Plan cycle can be reset, goals can be rewritten and the entire plan can be reworked from top to bottom.

Planning Team:

The principal ***is responsible for the development of*** the School Improvement Plan with the school's leadership team. The principal must solicit input from the school's committees, leadership teams, or other collaborative initiatives at the school site.

Approval Process:

1. All SIPs will be reviewed by several of the principal's peers for constructive feedback.
2. SIPs are submitted to a district-designated administrator for approval.
3. State law requires the District School Improvement and Accountability Council **review** all SIPs and provide feedback to the Board of Education about the overall quality of the plans and the School Improvement Planning Process.

Suggested Timeline:

March 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Overview of SIP Process conducted by district administration with principals• Generate academic trend reports for SIP process, which includes aggregated and disaggregated trends on student performance in reading, writing, math, attendance and enrollment
March 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Check progress toward annual 2006-2007 SIP objectives with building leadership team
May 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Schools complete the 2007-2010 SIP in preparation for upcoming school year
August 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review preliminary CSAP data and track progress toward goals and annual objectives with building and district leadership and make appropriate adjustments to the SIP• Review SIP with faculty and community (including parents)
November 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review final CSAP data and benchmark assessment data; track progress toward goals, annual objectives and adjust instructional strategies
January 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complete semi-annual update to 2007-2010 SIP in time for the school staffing process and school budget cycle• Check progress toward 2007-2008 annual objectives with building leadership team
March 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review benchmark assessment data; track progress toward goals, annual objectives and adjust instructional strategies
May 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Schools complete semi-annual update 2007-2010 SIP in preparation for upcoming school year
August 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review preliminary CSAP data and track progress toward goals and annual objectives with building and district leadership and make appropriate adjustments to the SIP• Review SIP with faculty and community (including parents)
November 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review final CSAP data and benchmark assessment data; track progress toward goals, annual objectives and adjust instructional strategies
January 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complete semi-annual update to 2007-2010 SIP in time for the school staffing process and school budget cycle• Check progress toward 2008-2009 annual objectives with building leadership team
March 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review benchmark assessment data; track progress toward goals, annual objectives and adjust instructional strategies
May 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Schools complete semi-annual update 2007-2010 SIP in preparation for upcoming school year
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November 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review final CSAP data and benchmark assessment data; track progress toward goals, annual objectives and adjust instructional strategies
January 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complete semi-annual update to 2007-2010 SIP in time for the school staffing process and school budget cycle• Check progress toward 2009-2010 annual objectives with building leadership team.

COMPONENTS OF THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN AND INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE PLAN

1. **Cover Page:**

General Information about the school and the School Improvement Planning Team

2. **Mission Statement:**

A mission statement is a consistent statement that is repeated by the public, the staff, the principal and the administration to describe the school's unique academic focus. The mission statement captures what the school has to offer in service to students and parents, its primary audience. It is one or two sentences long.

Questions answered when developing this component: What is your school's unique academic focus all about?

Examples:

UP Academy offers the highest quality standard's based instruction in both English and Spanish. Graduates of UP Academy, whether their native language is English or Spanish, will possess academy fluency in both languages.

Neighborhood School

John Elementary School offers a strong academic program committed to each child's scholastic improvement, as well as a Montessori program for grades K – 5. Every John student is provided with the tools to achieve high academic standards and is supported by an involved community and dedicated staff.

Washington High School

Washington High School's instructional program promotes progress in the area of academic achievement by establishing high expectations for all students with a strong AP program and an international curriculum through the IB program. The focus at WHS is to prepare students to succeed in rigorous collegiate activity.

3. School Profile:

A school profile is the consistent description of school community characteristics and the school's unique academic characteristics and accomplishments.

4. Needs Assessment:

This section should include a collection of data collected from a variety of sources to determine strengths and needs of the school community.

5. Data Analysis:

For this section you must:

- employ multiple data sources
- include information on all students
- include demographic information on students and community. (For schoolwide programs, include data related to historically underserved students, and migrant or formally migrant students.)
- use disaggregated data (i.e. gender, ethnicity, grade, etc.)
- include climate variables (i.e. parent, faculty, and student perceptions, etc.)
- identify root causes and contributing factors
- prioritize actions

The data set will include information about student performance, change in student performance and student growth. It will also include information about student attendance and enrollment, and parent and student satisfaction. Data should be analyzed by the school leadership team and shared with the building accountability team prior to the development of objectives and strategies in the SIP.

Questions answered when developing this component:

- What do the data tell you about your students overall performance?
- Based on the data, where does your school need to focus their school improvement goals?
- What do the data tell you about your ELL students?
- What do the data tell you about your special education students?
- Are there test performance variations by racial/ ethnic groups or gender?
- What differences do you see in racial group performance?
- What disparities do you see in special needs students?
- Has your school made progress on closing the achievement gap in any groups?

- What are the root causes of an achievement gap?
- What are the barriers to all students achieving a year's growth, or more than a year's growth in a year's time?

6. Goals:

After conducting a needs assessment and data analysis, schools should identify areas of growth and develop goals to address them. The School Improvement Plan may set long term, three-year goals or annual goals that represent the definition of success at your school. The plan must include no less than two goals in Teaching and Learning and one goal in Parent and Community Engagement. Schools should develop additional goals in the areas listed below if they are identified as areas of growth:

- attendance and enrollment
- school safety, climate and culture

The goals must be derived from the prioritized needs of the school, must be specific, clear and measurable.

Questions answered when developing this component: What is the overall end result we wish to achieve to address this need?

7. Action Plan:

The action plan will list the objectives, strategies, activities, timeline, resources and benchmarks.

Objectives:

A statement of specific and measurable means to achieve the outcome(s) identified in the goal. The School Improvement Plan will set one year **objectives** aligned with those goals. Objectives are measurable and based on data that reflects how students at the school have performed. Objectives should target specific groups of students. *Academic objectives should be based on students achieving the proficiency or advanced levels of the Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP).*

Schoolwide plans may have additional or interim objectives to address the attainment of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) which is based on students achieving partially proficient or above on the CSAP.

Questions answered when developing this component: What will be accomplished? When will it be accomplished?

Strategies:

- A broad approach (*i.e.* a method, procedure, technique, or game plan) employed to accomplish an objective. The strategies should reflect appropriate interventions to increase the academic success of those all students.
- Schoolwide plans need to include scientific researched based reform strategies designed to improve instruction throughout the school so all children can meet the state's proficient and advanced levels and a timeline for this implementation. These strategies include strengthening core academic programs, increasing amount and quality of learning time, enriched and accelerated curriculum, and how to meet the needs of historically underserved populations and those at risk of not meeting academic performance standards.

Title I schools need to ensure that the strategies reflect the budgeted items in the Title I budget. Note: Please attach your school's Title I Budget (if applicable).

Questions answered when developing this component: How are we going to accomplish the objective?

Activities:

Activities are the specific steps, tasks, or actions in implementing a particular strategy. The activities should:

- be detailed and specific
- be directly related to the strategy
- be capable of resulting in progress toward the objective
- be sequential, with timeline
- identify activity leaders

Schoolwide plans should include activities to ensure that students who experience difficulty mastering any of the standards during the course of the school year will be provided with effective, timely additional assistance.

Questions answered when developing this component:

What will be done?
Who will do it?
How will it be done?
When will it be done?
What resources are needed?

Benchmarks:

Benchmarks are checkpoints that measure progress toward the stated objective. They help ensure that you are making interim progress toward meeting your annual objective. Benchmarks need to be measurable directly related to the objective, specific and clear, achievable and time specific.

Questions answered when developing this component:

What are the checkpoints along the way?
How are we doing?
Do we have to adjust the action plan in order to accomplish the objective?

8. School Improvement Plan Evaluation/Status Report:

This section will document progress on action plan strategies by showing evidence of progress, an explanation for strategies not meeting timeline, and necessary plan adjustments.

9. Professional Development Plan:

This section will include a comprehensive professional development plan that is aligned with identified needs, goals, and strategies.

10. Addendum to the School Improvement Plan:

This section includes forms and directives that must be completed in order to operate as a Schoolwide program.

A – Planning Documents for Schoolwide Programs

B - Title I School and Parent Involvement policy (which includes the compact)

C – Coordination of Programs

D – Title I Schoolwide Budget

E – Transition Plan

F -- Highly Qualified Teacher Plan