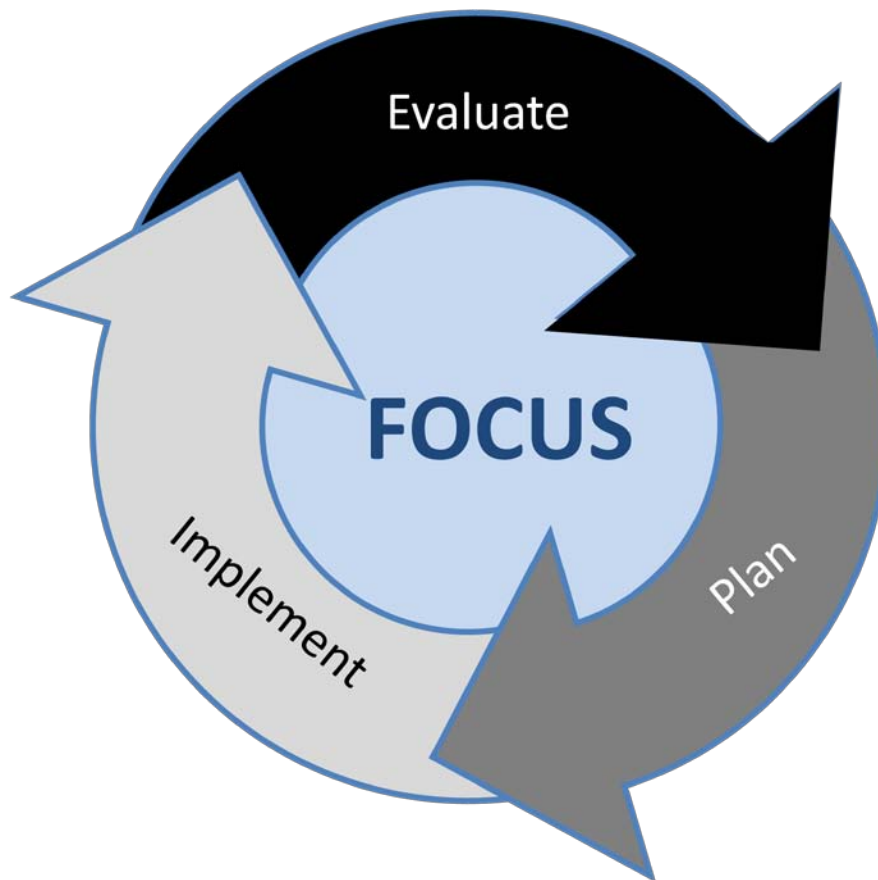




# Unified Improvement Planning Handbook

Guidance for Schools and Districts for Completing a Unified Improvement Plan



Version 2.0 April 2012

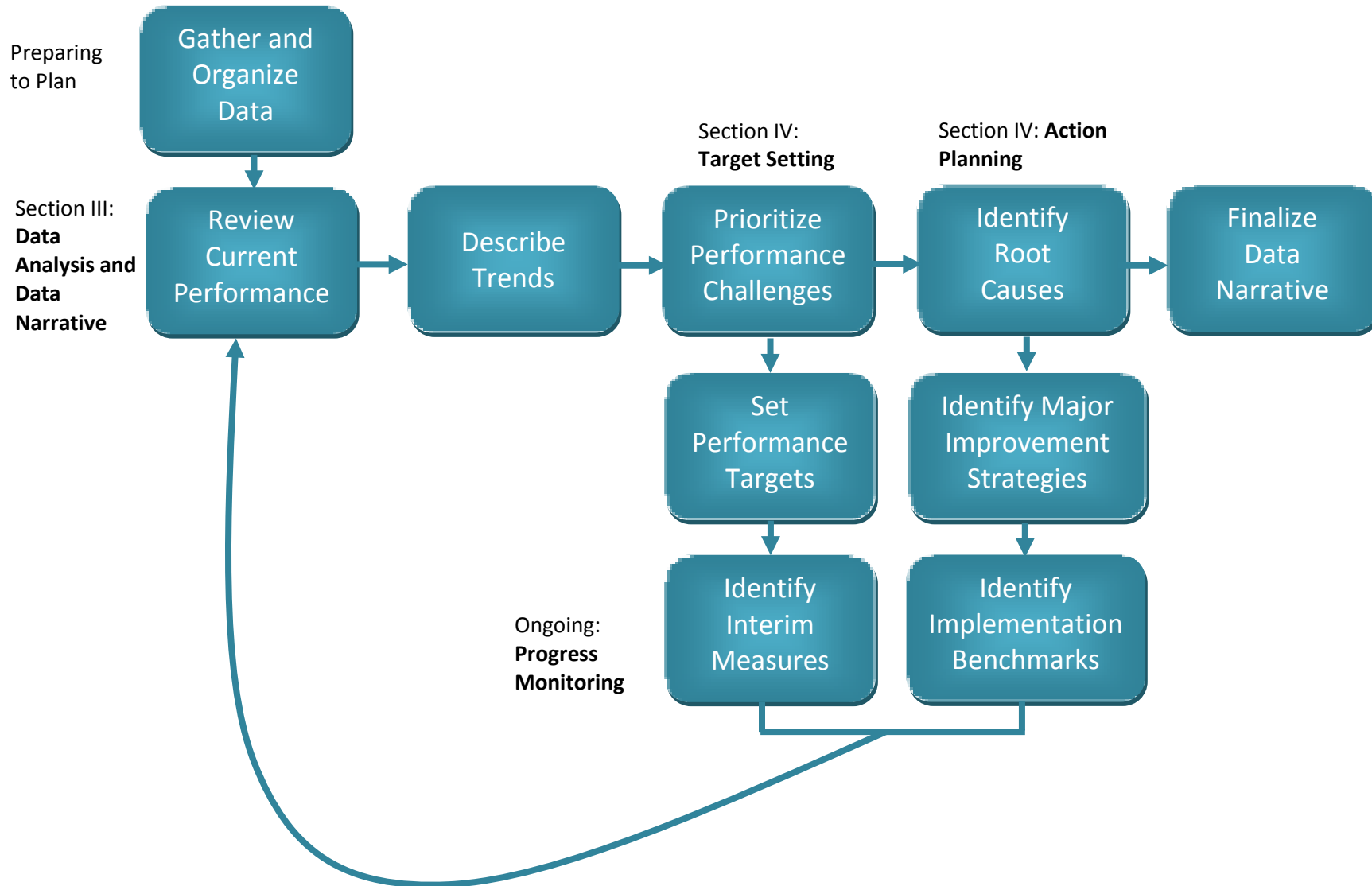
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This handbook was developed in partnership with the Center for Transforming Learning and Teaching in the School of Education and Human Development at the University of Colorado Denver.



## UNIFIED IMPROVEMENT PLANNING PROCESS MAP

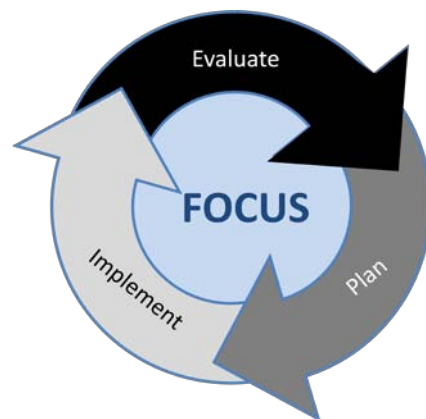


## THE PURPOSE OF UNIFIED IMPROVEMENT PLANNING

In 2008, Colorado introduced the Unified Improvement Plan (UIP) to streamline the improvement planning components of state and federal accountability requirements. The common Unified Improvement Planning template and planning processes used represent a shift from planning as an “event” to planning as a critical component of “continuous improvement.” This process reduces the total number of separate plans schools and districts are required to complete with the intent of creating a single plan that has true meaning for its stakeholders. Because schools and districts are required to publicly post their improvement plans through the state department of education web site ([www.schoolview.org](http://www.schoolview.org)), Unified Improvement Planning also provides a mechanism for external stakeholders to learn about schools’ and districts’ improvement efforts.

Based on the *Colorado Achievement Plan for Kids* (SB212-08), the primary purpose of improvement planning is to align efforts to: ***Ensure all students exit the K-12 education system ready for postsecondary education, and/or to be successful in the workforce, earning a living wage immediately upon graduation.*** In addition, the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) requires that improvement planning be focused on ensuring that all students in the state reach proficiency in English language arts/reading and mathematics.

The diagram depicted here illustrates the theory of action behind Colorado’s approach to improvement planning. By engaging in a continuous improvement cycle to manage performance, districts and schools will improve their effectiveness and the outcomes for students. That cycle includes: **Focus** attention on the right things (performance indicators); **Evaluate** performance by gathering, analyzing, and interpreting data about performance; **Plan** improvement strategies based on performance data and root cause analysis; and **Implement** planned improvement strategies. Then, enter the cycle again multiple times throughout the school year: **Evaluate** (or monitor) performance (based on interim measures) and implementation of major improvement strategies (based on implementation benchmarks) at least quarterly. Make adjustments to **planned** improvement strategies, and **implement** revised strategies, as needed.



The UIP template and associated processes are designed to increase coherence across the different steps in the continuous improvement cycle. The performance indicators, which incorporate both state and federal accountability requirements, are important signals that can help schools and districts focus their planning efforts on issues that can result in meaningful change. The template and addenda ensure that schools and districts meet both state and federal accountability requirements.

Through the Colorado state accountability system, districts and schools are assigned to one of four “plan types.” They are: Performance, Improvement, Priority Improvement, and Turnaround. These plan types identify which schools and districts will receive greater attention from the state – in terms of both increased state scrutiny of their plans and additional state support. Regardless of state plan type assignment, as of 2011-12, all districts must use the same district UIP template and all schools must use the same school UIP template. Each year, schools and districts should submit a two-year unified improvement plan that gets revised and updated to reflect the current and next school year on at least an annual basis, with data reviewed at least quarterly.

## WHO PLANS?

Planning at the school or district level should involve multiple stakeholders. Planning teams in schools and districts will look different based on their unique needs. In general, teams should consist of building leadership, teacher representatives and parent and/or community representatives. School and District Accountability Committees (SACs/DACs) have a specified role in the improvement planning process. For more details about accountability committees, refer to the Accountability Handbook.

## GATHERING AND ORGANIZING RELEVANT DATA

In preparation for unified improvement planning, planning teams must gather and organize relevant data from a variety of sources. Data is used to: identify trends and prioritize performance challenges (performance data), determine root causes (process and perception data), set targets (performance expectations), monitor progress towards performance targets (interim measures of student performance) and monitor implementation of major improvement strategies (process and perception data). The team will need to use data made available from the state as well as data from local sources.

**Required Data.** At a minimum, schools and districts are expected to reference key state data sources described in the following table:

Performance Indicator	Data Reports/Views	Available from
<b>Student Academic Achievement and Achievement Gaps</b>	Colorado Student Assessment Program (TCAP), CoAlt, Escritura, Lectura performance by proficiency level, grade level, content area, and disaggregated groups (over 3-5 years)	School and District Performance Framework Reports (these are not trend data)  <a href="http://www.schoolview.org">www.schoolview.org</a> Data Center and Data Lab  Student-level record data downloadable through CEDAR (password protected)

Performance Indicator	Data Reports/Views	Available from
<b>Student Academic Growth and Academic Growth Gaps</b>	Median growth percentiles by content area (reading, writing, math and English language proficiency), grade levels, and disaggregated groups	CDE Growth Summary Report  <a href="http://www.schoolview.org">www.schoolview.org</a> data center and data lab  <a href="http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeassess/document/s/cela/cela_summary.html">http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeassess/document/s/cela/cela_summary.html</a>  Student-level record data downloadable through CEDAR (password protected)
<b>Post-secondary and workforce readiness</b>	4,5,6,7-year Graduation Rates Disaggregated Graduation Rates Drop-out rates Colorado ACT Composite Scores	<a href="http://www.schoolview.org">www.schoolview.org</a> data center and data lab  Student-level record data downloadable through CEDAR (password protected)
<b>English Language Development and Attainment (Title III Grantees only)</b>	AMAO 1, 2 and 3 results (CDE is still in negotiations with USDE around AMAO calculations. This will be updated when decisions are final.	
<b>Teacher Quality (district only)</b>	Equitable distribution of teachers	<a href="http://www.schoolview.org">www.schoolview.org</a> data center (Teacher Equity Reports on the staff tab)

Note: Districts may also make these data sources available through district data access tools.

**Suggested Data.** It is likely that more detailed *local data* is available at the district and school levels. As a part of the planning process, it is expected that additional local data be gathered to provide context, deepen the analysis, and to explain the performance data. The following table describes suggested data sources that may be available at the district or school level. Local student learning data will be used in trend analysis and target-setting. Local demographic data, school process data and perception data will be used during root cause analysis and as part of identifying implementation benchmarks.

Student Learning	Demographic Data	Process Data	Perception Data
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local summative and interim assessment results</li> <li>• Student work samples</li> <li>• Classroom assessment results (type and frequency)</li> <li>• CBLA assessment data</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School locale and size of student population</li> <li>• Student characteristics, including poverty, language proficiency, IEP, migrant, race/ethnicity</li> <li>• Student mobility rates</li> <li>• Staff characteristics (e.g., experience, attendance, turnover)</li> <li>• List of schools and feeder patterns</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comprehensive evaluations of the school/district (e.g., SST, CADI)</li> <li>• Curriculum documents</li> <li>• Instructional materials</li> <li>• Observations of Instructional Practice</li> <li>• Academic interventions available to students</li> <li>• Student attendance</li> <li>• Discipline referrals and suspension rates</li> <li>• Schedules and class sizes</li> <li>• Family/community involvement policies/practices</li> <li>• Professional development (structure, participation, focus)</li> <li>• Services and/or programs (Title I, special ed, ESL)</li> <li>• Extended day or summer programs</li> <li>• RTI Fidelity of Implementation (based on RTI Rubrics)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teaching and learning conditions surveys (e.g., TELL Colorado)</li> <li>• Perception survey data (e.g., parents, students, teachers, community, school leaders)</li> <li>• Self-assessment tools</li> </ul>

As part of the data-gathering process, district and school teams should clarify the questions that each data source will help to answer, and when during the year each data source will be available.

## SECTION I: SUMMARY INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL OR DISTRICT

Section I of the UIP Template provides a brief summary of school or district performance based on both state and federal performance indicators. It is intended to highlight **why** the school or district received its accountability designations, and to summarize where the school or district meets or does not meet state and federal expectations. This section is pre-populated by the Colorado Department of Education (CDE). The tables reference data from the School or District Performance Framework Reports (SPF or DPF), Title III Accountability information and relevant program data.

*Performance indicators* define the general dimensions of quality that help to focus school and district improvement planning on an annual basis. Both state and federal statutes define performance indicators that should be included in school and district improvement plans. For each performance indicator, Section I of the UIP template lays out measures/metrics (how the indicator will be measured), state and federal expectations (a minimum that indicates adequate

performance), the school or district's performance on the indicator and whether the school or district met the expectation. Together, performance indicators, measures, metrics, and expectations provide a sharp focus for school and district improvement planning.

- a. **Performance Indicators.** The *Education Accountability Act of 2009* (SB 09-163) identified four performance indicator areas for state accountability: Academic Achievement, Academic Growth, Academic Growth Gaps, and Postsecondary/Workforce Readiness. For Alternative Education Campuses (AEC), the performance indicator areas for state accountability also include Academic Achievement, Academic Growth, and Postsecondary/Workforce Readiness, but Student Engagement replaces Academic Growth Gaps.
- b. **Measures and Metrics.** For each performance indicator required by the *Education Accountability Act of 2009*, the state has also defined required measures and metrics. The Colorado ESEA waiver also specifies measures and metrics for some performance indicator areas. The measures and metrics for each performance indicator are identified in the table below.
- c. **Federal and State Expectations.** Both the *Education Accountability Act of 2009* and ESEA require schools and districts to meet expectations annually in each performance indicator area. The state has established *minimum expectations* for each performance indicator; districts and schools set their own targets depending on their current performance in relationship to minimum expectations.

*Table 1. Performance Indicators, Measures, Metrics, and Expectations*

Indicator	Measures	Metrics	Expectations
<b>Student Academic Achievement</b>	TCAP, CoAlt, Lectura, Escritura in Math, Reading, Writing, and Science	Percent of students scoring proficient or advanced in mathematics, reading, writing, and science.	At or above the 50 <sup>th</sup> percentile for all schools/districts using 2010 (1-year SPF/DPF) or 2008-10 (3-year SPF/DPF) baseline values.
<b>Student Academic Growth</b>	The Colorado Growth Model (Growth in CSAP/TCAP for Math, Reading and Writing and growth in CELApro for English Language Proficiency)	Median student growth percentile for the school/district  Median adequate growth percentile for the school/district (for students scoring unsatisfactory or partially proficient on CSAP/TCAP, adequate growth is <i>catch-up</i> )	If the median student growth percentile for the school or district is greater than or equal to the adequate median growth percentile, at or above 45 <sup>th</sup> percentile growth.  If the median student growth percentile for the school or district is less than the adequate median growth percentile, at or above 55 <sup>th</sup>



Indicator	Measures	Metrics	Expectations
		<i>growth</i> ; for students scoring proficient or advanced that is <i>keep-up growth</i> )	percentile growth.
<b>Growth Gaps</b>	The Colorado Growth Model (Growth in CSAP/TCAP for Math, Reading and Writing)	<p>Median student growth percentile (for disaggregated student groups)</p> <p>Median adequate growth percentile (for disaggregated student groups)</p>	<p>If the median student growth percentile for the disaggregated group is greater than or equal to the adequate median growth percentile, at or above 45<sup>th</sup> percentile growth.</p> <p>If the median student growth percentile for the disaggregated group is less than the adequate median growth percentile, at or above 55<sup>th</sup> percentile growth.</p>
<b>Postsecondary Workforce Readiness</b>	<p>Graduation rate</p> <p>Disaggregated graduation rate</p> <p>Drop-out rate</p> <p>ACT</p>	<p>Percentage of students graduating within 4, 5, 6, and 7 years.</p> <p>Percent of students within disaggregated groups graduating within 4, 5, 6, and 7 years.</p> <p>Percentage of students dropping out</p> <p>Average ACT Composite score</p>	<p>The highest value among the 4, 5, 6, 7-year graduation rate is above 80%.</p> <p>The highest value among the 4, 5, 6, 7-year disaggregated graduation rate is above 80%.</p> <p>At or below the state average using 2009 (1-year SPF/DPF) or 2007-09 baseline values (3-year SPF/DPF).</p> <p>At or above the state average using 2010 (1-year SPF/DPF) or 2008-10 baseline values (3-year SPF/DPF).</p>
<b>English Language Development and Attainment (district only)</b>	CELAppro and CSAP/ TCAP	Note: Colorado is currently pursuing another waiver for ESEA Title III which could impact this indicator. This section will be updated once we have received a final decision from USDE.	

Note: The minimum expectations indicated in this table would earn a school or district a “meets” rating on each indicator or sub-indicator in the SPF/DPF. The level of performance that results in state ratings of “does not meet”, “approaching”, “meets” or “exceeds” are provided in the school and district performance framework report rubrics.

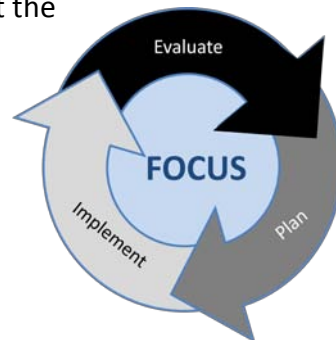
## **SECTION II: IMPROVEMENT PLAN INFORMATION**

This section of the UIP template requests additional information about the school or district related to federal program participation, grants received and external reviews provided. In this section, schools/districts should enter the various improvement plan requirements the plan will meet, as well as the lead contact for the plan. Information from this section will help to determine which Quality Criteria apply to the school or district (See Appendix B and C).

## **SECTION III: NARRATIVE ON DATA ANALYSIS AND ROOT CAUSE IDENTIFICATION**

The inquiry process captured in section III of the UIP template corresponds with the “evaluate” portion of the continuous improvement cycle. In this section of the UIP template, schools and districts provide a narrative that details the data story of the school or district which explains the school or district’s performance trends, priority challenges and root causes of the priority performance challenges. The data narrative creates a foundation upon which major improvement strategies and action steps are built. The UIP template includes a text box for planning teams to capture their data narrative. The data narrative should include the following elements:

1. A brief description of the school or district (a few sentences about the school, such as demographics, location or educational approach).
2. The general process for developing the UIP including which stakeholders were involved in the data analysis (e.g., principal, teachers, SAC) and what their roles were.
3. The school/district accountability status, plan type assignment, where performance did not meet state/federal expectations (for which indicators), and the magnitude of overall school/district performance challenges.
4. How current performance compares to the targets established in the prior year’s plan, and the degree to which current performance supports continuing current major improvement strategies or action steps.
5. Notable performance trends (positive and negative) in each indicator area, what data was considered (including local data sources metrics and measures), how the team determined which trends were notable, and the degree to which current trends represent a continuation from those identified in the prior year’s plan.
6. Priority performance challenges that reflect the magnitude of the overall school/district performance challenge, the process that was used to prioritize the performance challenges,



and what makes the priorities more important to address immediately than other notable negative trends.

7. Root cause(s) associated with each priority performance challenge, how root causes were identified, and the additional data that was reviewed to validate the root causes.

To help local teams construct this narrative, two additional worksheets have been included in the template: 1) a worksheet titled *Progress Monitoring of Prior Year's Performance Targets* is provided to support review of progress made towards annual performance targets set for the prior year, and 2) a *Data Analysis Worksheet* is provided to support school/district teams as they identify trends, prioritize performance challenges and determine root causes.

The process of analyzing data to construct the data narrative has been broken down into four steps: (1) Review current performance as described by the school/district performance framework report and including annual performance targets set in the UIP from the previous year; (2) Identify notable performance trends; (3) Prioritize performance challenges; and (4) Determine the root causes of those performance challenges. Each data analysis step and what planning teams should capture in their data narrative as part of each step are described below.

### **Step One: Review Current Performance**

This step involves collaboratively analyzing and interpreting current student learning data to determine the current performance of the school or district. First, the planning team should review current performance as described in the school or district performance framework report and summarized in Section I of the UIP template. The school performance frameworks provide information about performance in relation to state/federal expectations on the four key performance indicators: Academic Achievement, Academic Growth, Academic Growth Gaps, and Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness (high schools only). Answering the following questions will help focus team efforts as they prepare to move into the second step of identifying performance trends.

- What was my school/district's overall performance framework rating?
- In which indicator areas did the school/district not at least meet state/federal expectations (receive an "approaching" or "does not meet" rating on the district/school performance framework)?
- In which sub-indicators did the school/district not at least meet state/federal expectations?
- In which indicators and sub-indicators did the school/district not at least meet local expectations?

The performance indicator area(s) in which the school/district did not at least meet state expectations must be explicitly identified in the data narrative. Planning teams may also note areas where performance did not meet local expectations.

At this point, planning teams also should consider the magnitude of the school or district performance challenge overall. This involves looking at performance on the SPF/DPF across indicators (achievement, growth, growth gaps, and postsecondary/workforce readiness) to answer the following questions:

- Are the performance challenges of the school/district something that impacts 85% or more of the students in the school? Do they impact less than 15% of the students in the school?
- Are significant performance challenges evident across all content areas? Does performance (achievement and growth) differ across content areas? Is there one content area in which performance is weaker? Stronger? Which content area?
- Are significant performance challenges evident across all disaggregated groups? Is there one or more disaggregated student group in which performance is weaker? Which group(s)?

Planning teams should describe the magnitude of the school/district performance challenge in the data narrative.

Finally, planning teams should consider the performance targets set for the prior academic year and whether or not the targets were met. Teams can use the *Progress Monitoring of Prior Year's Targets Worksheet* to capture this analysis which prompts teams to capture the following: 1) the targets from the prior year; 2) whether the target was met, and/or how close the school/district was to meeting the target; and 3) to what degree does current performance support continuing with current major improvement strategies and action steps. Note, teams should avoid the temptation to use this analysis as the sole factor in decision making about subsequent targets, priority performance challenges and major improvement strategies. In the data narrative, teams should indicate whether or not the target was met. If the target was met, the team should describe if this is this worth celebration, and whether the target was rigorous enough. If the target was not met, the team should consider how far the school/district was from meeting the target, and use this information in prioritizing performance challenges for the current and next year (see below). The team should also consider the information captured in this worksheet in setting additional annual targets and in determining if the prior year's major improvement strategies and action steps are having the desired effects on student learning and/or if major improvement strategies and action steps have been implemented with fidelity (see below). Teams should capture this reflection on the effectiveness of prior year's major improvement strategies and action steps in the data narrative.

### **Step Two: Identify Notable Trends**

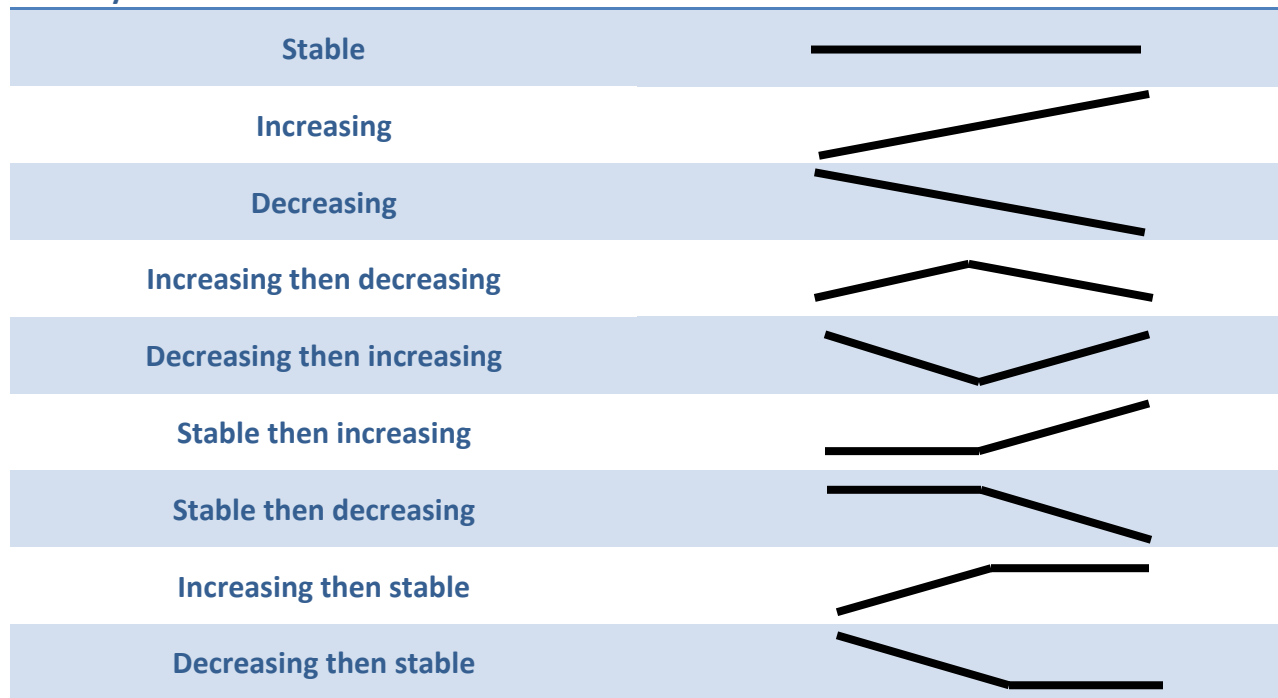
Identifying performance trends involves collaboratively analyzing and interpreting at least three years of performance data to describe the performance of the school/district. Data analysis should consider each of the performance indicator areas: Academic Achievement (status), Academic Growth, Academic Growth Gaps, and Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness (high schools only). To do this, planning teams must consider all state required reports listed in the gathering and organizing section of this handbook, and any available local performance data for each of the performance indicator areas, especially in grade levels and subject areas not included in state

testing. Local planning teams should *use at least three years of performance data*. Trends include both positive and negative performance patterns.

**Trend Statements.** Trend statements include the following elements: the measure and metric about which the trend is being described, the content area(s), which students are included in the trend (grade-levels, disaggregated groups), the direction of the trend, the amount of change in the metric, the time period over which the trend was observed, and what makes the trend notable.

The direction of trends could include the following . . .

#### Three year trends could be. . .



**What makes a trend notable.** Planning teams need some basis for determining if a trend is notable. This involves comparing the performance of the school/district to an external reference point. These comparisons can be criteria-based or normative, in that they can answer one of two questions: How did we compare to a specific expectation? How did we compare to others? The first criteria-based reference point is the appropriate minimum state expectation. To determine if a trend is notable, planning teams should compare the performance represented in the trend to the appropriate minimum state expectation. For growth metrics, trends in median growth percentiles can be compared to median adequate growth percentiles, or the level of growth needed for the typical student to reach or maintain proficiency. Alternatively, planning teams can make a normative comparison to determine if a trend is notable by comparing the school performance trends to the district and/or state trends in the same area over the same time period, or by comparing the district trends to the state trends in the same area over the same time period. If the trend is for a disaggregated group, the trend can be compared to the trend for the school overall for the same time period. If the trend is for

student performance by standard within a content area, it can be compared to performance by other standards within the same content area for the same students.

Trends can be recorded in the Data Analysis Worksheet. The table is expandable to record a number of trends. In the data narrative, the planning team must describe notable trends (both positive and negative), what data was considered as part of identifying notable trends (explicitly including local data sources), and how the team determined which trends were “notable”.

**How to identify notable trends.** The identification of notable trends involves analyzing at least three years of data for each performance indicator area, including grade level data and deeper disaggregation of student group data than what is included in the school/district performance framework report. A basic approach *could* include:

1. Identify performance indicator and sub-indicator areas where minimum expectations were not met (considering school framework reports). Looking across performance indicators, select one content area as an initial focus for reviewing performance data;
2. Reference appropriate data views (reports) that include at least three years of performance data in that content area (including both growth and achievement data);
3. Make predictions about performance over time;
4. Interact with the data reports or views;
5. Look for things that pop out, with a focus on patterns over time (at least 3 years);
6. Capture a list of fact statements or observations about the data (these can be positive or negative);
7. Write these observations as “trend” statements, including all of the relevant components (as identified above);
8. Determine which trends are notable (should be captured in the data narrative) and/or if understanding the trend requires further analysis (disaggregating the data further); and
9. Repeat this process for each content area.

**Examples of notable trends:**

- The percent of 4<sup>th</sup> grade students who scored proficient or advanced on math CSAP declined from 70% to 55% to 48% between 2009 and 2011 dropping well below the minimum state expectation of 71%.
- The median growth percentile of English Language learners in writing increased from 28 to 35 to 45 between 2009 and 2011, meeting the minimum expectation of 45 and exceeding the district trend over the same time period.
- The dropout rate has remained relatively stable (15, 14, 16) between 2009 and 2011 and much higher than the state average for the same time period.

### Step Three: Prioritize Performance Challenges

Prioritizing Performance Challenges may be the most critical step in the entire planning process as it sets the tone for each of the subsequent steps. It involves the improvement team identifying which of their notable trends represent strengths to build upon, and which represent challenges that need immediate attention for improvement. Priority performance challenges are drawn from trends that are a concern for the school/district and should be specific statements about *student* performance. They provide the strategic focus for improvement efforts. Performance challenges are *not* what caused the performance, action

steps that need to be taken, or concerns about budget, staffing, curriculum or instruction. Performance challenges do not describe adult behavior.

**Helpful Reminder:**

The priority performance challenge is focused on student-level data. At this stage in the improvement planning process, resist the temptation to jump straight into action planning that identifies adult actions. Prioritizing clear performance challenges now will help the improvement team to select more effective actions later.

While schools may identify as many priority performance challenges as they deem appropriate, it is recommended that the **three or four most important** are identified. **Priority performance challenges** should focus planning efforts on the performance indicator/sub-indicator areas in which the school failed to meet state or district expectations. In selecting priority performance challenges, planning teams should also consider areas where the targets set for the prior year were not met.

Priority performance challenges come from negative trend statements. However, it is important to note that a single priority performance challenge may combine more than one negative trend statement (e.g. both the growth and achievement of 4<sup>th</sup> grade English language learners in math may point to this as a priority performance challenge). Priority performance challenges should retain the specificity of the trend statements on which they are based.

**How to determine the appropriate level for a priority performance challenge.** Performance challenges may be identified at different levels of aggregation within and across each content area (e.g., overall, grade-level, standard/sub-content area level, disaggregated group level). The level of the priority performance challenge should reflect the magnitude of the school or district performance challenges overall. For example, priorities may be identified:

- At the level of overall school performance across multiple content areas (e.g., reading and writing).
- At the level of overall school performance for a single content area (e.g. math).
- At an individual grade level for a single content area (5<sup>th</sup> grade science) or across multiple content areas (The percent of 7<sup>th</sup> grade who were proficient in writing and reading has been stable over the past three years (~45%) but well below minimum state/federal expectations).
- At the standard or sub-content area (e.g., the percentage of fifth grade students proficient or above on number sense has declined from 50% to 43% to 30% over the last three years while student achievement in other math standard areas has remained stable).
- For a disaggregated group of students within a single content area and grade level, within a single content area across multiple grade levels, across multiple content areas within a single content area, or across multiple content areas and grade levels (e.g., English language learners across all grade levels have had stable growth in writing with median growth percentiles of 30, 32, 31, over the past three years at a level well below the minimum state/federal expectation of 55).

To determine the appropriate level of a priority performance challenge, the planning team must first consider the magnitude of the school or district performance challenge overall and describe it in the first step of analysis. Are most of the students in the school impacted by the school's performance challenges or is there a subset of the entire student body that is affected? Do the school's performance challenges focus primarily on one content area or do they cut across content areas? Once they have considered the magnitude of the challenge overall, the planning team should continue to disaggregate data (both by content and by student group) until little or no variation in performance is found.

Consider the following example. A school-based team determines that their overall performance challenge seems to be within individual grade levels rather than cutting across grade levels and within a single subject area, math. A school-based team identifies a challenge related to performance in math for the 5<sup>th</sup> grade (i.e., the median growth percentile for 5<sup>th</sup> graders in mathematics has declined from 40 to 35 to 28 over the last three years and remains below the minimum state expectation of 55). Next, they decide to examine 5<sup>th</sup> grade math performance at the standard- and sub-content level. However, they see no variation by standard (i.e., percent of students scoring proficient and above in each of the standard areas is consistent, ranging from 30% to 35%). Next, the team looks at the 5<sup>th</sup> grade math data by disaggregated groups (i.e., growth of English language learners, minority students, students qualifying for free/reduced lunch) and observes that all groups are similar to the overall 5<sup>th</sup> grade growth. In this example, the team prioritizes the overall decline in 5<sup>th</sup> grade math; the performance challenge is not aimed at the standard-level performance or at a particular disaggregated group, but is 5<sup>th</sup> grade students overall in math.

Priority Performance Challenge Examples	Non-Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For the past three years, English language learners (making up 60% of the student population) have had median growth percentiles below 30 in all content areas, substantially below the minimum state expectation of 55 .</li> <li>The percent of fifth grade students scoring proficient or better in mathematics has declined from 45% three years ago, to 38% two years ago, to 33% in the most recent school year (below the minimum state expectation of 71% and the overall school-level performance of 65%), and median growth percentiles in 5<sup>th</sup> grade math have remained stable between 30 and 22 during the same time period.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No differentiation in mathematics instruction when student learning needs are varied.</li> <li>Decline in writing achievement over the last three years.</li> <li>Hispanic male performance in math at the elementary level (when district performance for math overall is substantially below minimum state expectations and Hispanic boys only make up 10% of the student population).</li> </ul>



**How to prioritize performance challenges.** The process used and an explanation of why certain performance challenges were identified as the priority must be documented in the Data Narrative. One approach to prioritizing performance challenges includes the following steps.

- Step 1: Review the performance indicator areas where a priority performance challenge must be identified (any of the four performance indicators that the school or district did not meet at least minimum federal, state, or local expectations) and the magnitude of the overall school or district performance challenge.
- Step 2: Within the focus performance indicator areas, consider all negative trends.
- Step 3: Focus the list; determine which negative trends should be combined because they are similar or reflect different ways to measure the same performance challenge. In some cases trends will need to be combined across different performance indicator areas.
- Step 4: Begin to identify notable trends that pop out or rise to the top as being most urgent to act on (represent some of the largest challenges faced by the school/district).
- Step 5: Do a reality check (a preliminary and non-binding check with the team) to see which trends might rise to the level of a priority performance challenge with each person indicating current preferences (one option is to use dot voting with team members “spending” all of his/her dots).
- Step 6: Evaluate the degree to which the proposed priority performance challenges reflect the magnitude of the overall school/district performance challenge.
- Step 7: Achieve consensus on the top three to five priorities by applying the REAL criteria and then engaging in additional conversation as needed (e.g., through cycles of proposal(s) made by someone in the group, discussion/modification of the proposal).

Priority performance challenges can be documented (in bullet form) in the Data Analysis Worksheet. In the data narrative, planning teams must describe the priority performance challenges that were selected the process that was used to prioritize performance challenges, and what makes the priority performance challenges that were selected more important to address immediately.

#### REAL Criteria

##### Readiness

- Is this problem keeping us from moving to desired next steps? Would solving this problem build on existing momentum in our school?
- Are necessary resources available or obtainable?
- Do we have staff buy-in?

##### Endurance

- Do we believe that success will lead to significant and systemic change?
- Are we confident that this problem is not personality- or individual-driven?

##### Accountability

- Would solving this problem support our vision? Mission?
- Can we clearly describe how we believe this problem is negatively impacting performance?

##### Leverage

- If the problem is solved, what is the anticipated impact on the system?
- Is the performance challenge supported by data?
- Might solving this problem create a positive “ripple effect” in the school?

#### Step Four: Determine Root Causes

This step involves identifying the underlying causes behind the priority performance challenges identified in the prior analysis step. Root causes are statements that describe the deepest underlying cause, or causes, of performance challenges. They are the causes that, if dissolved, would result in elimination, or substantial reduction, of the performance challenge(s). Root

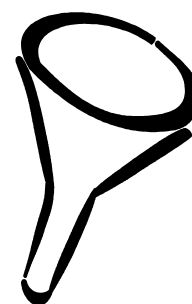
causes describe why the performance challenges exist. They are the things that most need to change and can change. Root causes are not student attributes (such as poverty level or student motivation), but rather relate to adult behavior. Furthermore, the root cause should be something within the school or district's control.

Root causes become the focus of major improvement strategies. This is why it is critical for root causes to reflect the magnitude of the performance challenge faced by the school or district. For example, if the school or district performance challenges impact 85% of the students in the school, the absence of appropriate intervention strategies for 4<sup>th</sup> grade girls in writing is not likely to be an appropriate root cause.

A cause is a “root” cause if: “1) the problem would not have occurred if the cause had not been present, 2) the problem would not reoccur if the cause were corrected or dissolved, and 3) correction or dissolution of the cause would not lead to the same or similar problems,” (Preuss, 2003).

**How to identify root causes.** One way to determine root causes includes the steps described below. In general, the process for determining root causes can be thought of as a funnel, starting with the broadest thinking possible about causes related to each prioritized performance challenge and systematically narrowing and deepening the collective understanding until the team arrives at a root cause.

- Step 1: Focus on one or a couple of closely related performance challenges (e.g., 4<sup>th</sup> grade math achievement and growth have both declined over the past three years).
- Step 2: If an external review has been done in the school/district, consider the findings of the review. If not, consider the categories of factors that typically cause performance challenges in a school or district.
- Step 3: Brainstorm possible explanations (causes) for the priority performance challenge(s). This is the time to encourage team members to think outside of the box and to get all of their thoughts on the table about what may have caused the challenge.
- Step 4: Group like causes together (or categorize the explanations).
- Step 5: Apply criteria to narrow the explanations to those that are actionable. This includes removing those explanations that are outside the control of the school or district.
- Step 6: Deepen the thinking to ensure the identified causes are “root” causes. One tool to help planning teams deepen their thinking is the “Why. . . because” process.
- Step 7: Once the team believes they have identified a *root cause*, they should verify their root cause with other data sources. This step is critical because sometimes explanations that seem to reflect the best current thinking of the planning team may not hold up once additional data is reviewed. Additional data sources typically include types of data other than student performance data.



While it is described as a series of steps, the process of identifying a root cause is iterative – planning teams may need to move back and forth among the steps in the process. For example, the team may be applying criteria to narrow their explanations when they realize that they had not identified an important explanation in the earlier brainstorming step.

Once root causes have been identified and verified (with other data sources) they can be documented in the Data Analysis Worksheet. In the data narrative, for each priority performance challenge, teams must identify the root cause(s), and explicitly reference the additional data that was reviewed to verify the root cause(s). The narrative should also describe the processes in which the planning team engaged to identify the root cause(s) and who participated.

### **Finalizing the Data Narrative**

After the school/district team has analyzed trends, identified priority performance challenges and determined root causes, then the data narrative can be finalized. The narrative should tell the story about the school/district data analysis, including the process used to engage in the analysis. The narrative should explain the connection between the notable trends, priority performance challenges and the identified root causes. If the school or district participated in an external review, what that review revealed about the school/district should also be described in the narrative and should contribute to the planning team analysis of root causes. The Data Narrative should be as brief as possible while still meeting the requirements described here.

***How to finalize the data narrative.*** There are a number of different approaches to use to finalize the data narrative. One possible approach includes the following steps: 1) Identify critical elements of the data narrative; 2) Keep notes as the team proceeds through each of the data analysis steps; 3) A small group (or individual) then generates a draft of data narrative based on data analysis notes; 4) Reach consensus among all planning team participants that the narrative tells the “data story” for the school/district and meets state criteria (Note: this critique and consensus step is critical because it ensures all planning participants own the data story for the school/district); 5) Check to ensure the data narrative includes required elements (see data narrative checklist); and 6) Revise data narrative as needed.

#### ***Data Narrative Checklist:***

- Brief description of the school/district.
- General process for developing the UIP (who participated and how).
- Accountability status (plan type and indicators where performance did not meet expectations)
- How current performance compares to prior year’s targets.
- Notable trends (at least 3 years of data), what data was considered and how the team determined the trends were notable.
- Priority performance challenges, and how and why priorities were identified.
- Root cause(s) of each priority performance challenge, how root causes were identified and what additional data was reviewed to validate each one.

## **SECTION IV: ACTION PLANS**

Action planning includes three distinct processes. They are: 1) Ensure future activities are headed in the right direction by setting/revising annual performance targets and identifying

associated interim measures; 2) Identify major improvement strategies, including action steps, timelines, resources and implementation benchmarks; and 3) Monitor progress over time by reviewing interim measures in relationship to the annual performance targets and reviewing implementation benchmarks at least four times during the school year. These three processes are described below.

### **School/District Target Setting Form**

Based on the data analysis and identification of priority performance challenges, schools and districts should clarify the targets that will focus their improvement efforts for the next two school years. If the school or district already set targets in the prior year, those targets should be updated based on the most recently available performance data.

Performance targets must be identified for *each priority performance challenge*. These performance targets need to move schools and districts aggressively towards state/federal expectations for each performance indicator, while at the same time considering what is possible in a given timeframe and the schools' or districts' current status.

At this time, there is no state penalty each year for missing annual performance targets. The sanction occurs after five consecutive years of receiving a Priority Improvement or Turnaround Plan assignment, in which case the State Board of Education may take the actions outlined in the *Educational Accountability Act of 2009* (SB-163). However, districts may choose to use evidence that schools have met annual performance targets in requesting that their plan type assignment be changed. Annual performance targets must be recorded in the School/District Target Setting Form.

### **How to set targets**

The basic approach for setting annual performance targets for state performance indicator areas includes these steps:

1. Focus on a priority performance challenge;
2. Review state (and local) expectations and determine a comparison point against which performance targets will be set;
3. Determine a timeframe to meet expectations (for turnaround/priority improvement schools/districts, the maximum timeframe for meeting minimum state expectations is five years after designation);
4. Determine the progress needed in the next two years; and then
5. Describe annual performance targets for the next two years.

### **Identifying Comparison Points**

Minimum state expectations, provided in the School/District Performance Framework reports (the "Scoring Guide" pages of the reports) serve as an initial comparison point for target setting. Minimum state expectations are defined as the minimum value for which a rating of "meets" would be assigned for the state metric included in the SPF/DPF reports for each sub-indicator. In schools and districts for which performance is below minimum state expectations, these "meets" performance levels are the initial comparison point for target setting.

Below is some guidance regarding comparison point for performance targets for districts and schools where performance is at or above minimum state/federal expectations.

***Achievement.*** For Achievement, districts/schools may want to consider the state-established Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs). Since the ESEA waiver has eliminated the calculation of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) calculations in Colorado, the AMO targets are now based on the state's school and district performance frameworks. The AMOs for 2011-2012 are the current requirements for earning a "meets" rating on the Academic Achievement indicator of the 1-year school performance framework. The AMO target is for all schools to earn an "exceeds" rating on the Academic Achievement indicator of the 1-year school performance framework. The "exceeds" cut-points are set at the proficiency rate (percent of students proficient or above) of the 90th percentile of schools in 2009-2010, the first year of the performance framework reports. In order to reach this goal, interim targets have been set annually from 2011-12 until 2015-16, with equal incremental increases for each year. So, while districts/schools who receive an "approaching" or "does not meet" rating on Academic Achievement may want to set targets that get them to the "meets" cut-point, those who receive a "meets" or "exceeds" rating may want to set targets that get them to the "exceeds" cut-point.

***Academic Growth and Academic Growth Gaps.*** For Academic Growth (as measured by CSAP/TCAP and CELApro) and for Academic Growth Gaps, districts/schools may want to consider the "exceeds" cut-point as a comparison point for target setting. In any sub-indicator area where median student growth percentiles were below median adequate growth percentiles, the median adequate growth percentile can be considered a comparison point against which to set performance targets. District and schools may also want to consider setting targets for the percent of students making adequate growth. For students scoring below proficient in the prior year this would be the percent of students making catch-up growth; for students scoring above proficient in the prior year, this would be the percent of students making keep-up growth.

***Post-Secondary and Workforce Readiness.*** For Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness, districts/schools may want to consider the "exceeds" cut-point for each metric as a benchmark for target setting.

### **Interim Measures**

Once annual performance targets are set for the next two years, districts and schools must identify interim measures, or what they will measure during the year to determine if progress is being made towards each of the annual performance targets. Interim measures should be based on local performance data that will be available at least twice during the school year. Across all interim measures, data should be available that would allow schools to monitor progress at least quarterly.

In identifying interim measures, planning teams should consider what performance data will be available locally throughout the school year and when that data will be available. Descriptions of interim measures should include: the assessment/performance measure that is administered more than once during the school year, how frequently the data will be available, and what metrics will be considered (e.g. % scoring at a particular performance level).

Annual performance targets and interim measures must be identified for each performance indicator where the school/district did not meet state or federal expectations (aligned with priority performance challenges). Both annual performance targets and interim measures must be documented in the School/District Target Setting Form.

### **Action Planning Form: Identify Major Improvement Strategies**

Major improvement strategies (e.g., differentiate reading instruction in grades 3-5) identified by districts/schools and the specific action steps (e.g., re-evaluating supplemental reading materials, providing new professional development and coaching to school staff) required to carry out each major improvement strategy should respond to and should eliminate or correct the root causes of each of the district or school's prioritized performance challenges. There should be a direct relationship between major improvement strategies and root causes and that relationship should be explicit to anyone who reads the plan. Major improvement

#### **Helpful Reminder:**

The UIP is a planning document that should span at least a two-year period. The plan should provide details on actions for the current school and the next school year.

strategies should also be research-based, in that there should be evidence that using these strategies has previously led to improvements in student performance.

Major improvement strategies, the root cause(s) the strategy is intended to address, and the details related to the key action steps for each major improvement strategy must be recorded in the action planning form.

While space has been provided for three major improvement strategies (a suggested maximum), the school/district may add other major strategies, as needed. The action planning form should explicitly identify the root cause(s) that each major improvement strategy is intended to dissolve. The action planning form should also identify which accountability provision(s) or grant opportunity(ies) the major improvement strategy will address.

**Turnaround Options.** Major Improvement Strategies identified in Turnaround Plans must, at a minimum, include one or more of the following as required by SB09-163.

- Employing a lead turnaround partner that uses research-based strategies and has a proven record of success working with schools under similar circumstances, which turnaround partner will be immersed in all aspects of developing and collaboratively executing the plan and will serve as a liaison to other school partners;
- Reorganizing the oversight and management structure within the school to provide greater, more effective support;

- Seeking recognition as an innovation school or clustering with other schools that have similar governance management structures to form an innovation school zone pursuant to the Innovation Schools Act;
- Hiring a public or private entity that uses research-based strategies and has a proven record of success working with schools under similar circumstances to manage the school pursuant to a contract with the local school board or the Charter School Institute;
- For a school that is not a charter school, converting to a charter school;
- For a charter school, renegotiating and significantly restructuring the charter school's charter contract; and/or
- Other actions of comparable or greater significance or effect, including those interventions required for low-performing schools receiving school improvement grants under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, section 1003G (i.e., turnaround model, restart model, school closure, transformation model).

Federal programs may also have requirements related to action steps, depending on the type of program and the school or district's designation. Additional requirements are indicated in the UIP Pre-populated report and described in greater detail in the Quality Criteria. Additional addenda forms may be required to supplement the UIP template to ensure that all program requirements are met.

Each major improvement strategy will include several key action steps. When completed in total, the actions steps should equal implementation of the major improvement strategy. The chart provided as part of the action planning form allows for teams to provide details on key action steps (e.g., re-evaluating supplemental reading materials, providing new professional development and coaching to school staff). Details should include a description of the action step, the timeline (when the action step will occur) over at least two years, key personnel (who will be involved in the action step), resources that will be used to implement the actions, and implementation benchmarks (described in greater detail below). Finally, some action steps may be already in process – they may be part of implementing the major improvement strategy, but the effort has already begun. The final column of the action planning form allows planning teams to identify the status of each action step (completed, in progress, not begun).

**Implementation benchmarks** are the data that will be reviewed to determine if the improvement strategies are being implemented as intended. They are measures of the fidelity with which action steps are implemented and what will be monitored by planning teams throughout the school year. They provide the school/district with checkpoints to ensure that activities are being implemented as expected. Implementation benchmarks can be organized in terms of what will happen when (e.g., in 3-months, 6-months, and 9-months). Implementation benchmarks are not student performance measures (assessment results); rather, they reference adult actions. Identifying implementation benchmarks is a critical step towards making planning part of a continuous improvement cycle.

The details of each major improvement strategy, including implementation benchmarks, should be captured in the action planning form. Planning teams can add rows in the chart, as needed.

## Monitor Progress

Both implementation benchmarks and interim measures should be monitored throughout the year (at least quarterly by School Accountability Committees) to determine if improvement strategies are being implemented with fidelity and are having the desired effects. A baseline should be established for both implementation of major action strategies and district progress towards targets (based on interim measures), and both should be reviewed regularly during the year. Planning teams may choose to develop a calendar at the beginning of the year that includes when data from interim measures and implementation benchmarks will be available and who will review it. These check-points should be included as an action step in the action planning form. Reviewing progress involves analyzing and interpreting data about the metrics that have been chosen. If progress is not being made, that may mean that the planned strategies and action steps have not been implemented fully, or it may mean that adjustments need to be made to the plan. Both should be considered and, if needed, the plan should be revised during the school year to reflect the results of the progress monitoring.

## PLANNING REQUIREMENTS AND STATE REVIEW OF PLANS

The Unified Improvement Planning Template was designed to meet multiple state and federal improvement planning requirements. This section describes in greater detail the requirements that are currently met by the UIP template and how those plans will be reviewed to comply with different state and federal legislative requirements.

### *What Planning Requirements will the Unified Improvement Plan Meet?*

School and district UIPs are designed to meet most state and federal accountability requirements and some competitive grant reporting requirements. This includes all improvement plans designated under state accountability (*Educational Accountability Act of 2009*), student graduation and completion plans, ESEA improvement plans (Titles IA, IIA and III), Title I program plans (i.e., schoolwide, targeted assistance) and some competitive grants (e.g., Tiered Intervention Grant, Targeted District Improvement Partnership Grant, School/District Improvement Grant).

### *Types of Requirements that the UIP will Meet*

	School Level	District Level
State Accountability (SB09-163)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Performance</li><li>• Improvement</li><li>• Priority Improvement</li><li>• Turnaround</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Distinction</li><li>• Performance</li><li>• Improvement</li><li>• Priority Improvement</li><li>• Turnaround</li></ul>
Student Graduation and Completion		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Student Graduation and Completion Plan</li></ul>
ESEA Program Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Focus Schools</li><li>• Title IA Schoolwide Program</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Title I (priority improvement or turnaround)</li></ul>



	School Level	District Level
Competitive Grants	Plan	• Title IIA 2141c (priority improvement or turnaround)
	• Title IA Targeted Assistance Program Plan	• Title III Improvement (AMAO)-
	• Tiered Intervention Grant (TIG) (Priority Schools)	• Targeted District Improvement Grant (TDIP)
	• School Improvement Grant (SIG)	• District Improvement Grant (DIG)
	• Other grants reference the UIP	• Other grants reference the UIP

Addenda forms are available for many of the programs listed above to ensure that schools and districts are able to adequately meet state and federal requirements.

### ***What school plans will be reviewed?***

The state will NOT review all school plans. Based on the *Educational Accountability Act of 2009* (SB09-163), the state will review: 1) Priority Improvement Plans and 2) Turnaround Plans. Per the ESEA waiver, the Title I Focus Schools and Priority Schools (TIG schools) will also be reviewed. Further reviews of school plans by the state will occur through ESEA monitoring to determine if school plans contain the required elements (e.g., desk review, onsite visits). This includes Title I plans for Schoolwide and Targeted Assistance.

### ***Who will review school plans?***

Districts are expected to review all school plans. Local school boards must adopt Priority Improvement and Turnaround Plans. The principal and superintendent (or his designee) must adopt school Performance and Improvement plans. A State Review Panel, appointed by the commissioner, will review all Turnaround Plans. The State Review Panel may review Priority Improvement Plans.

### ***What district plans will be reviewed by the state?***

The state will NOT review all district plans. Based on SB09-163, the state will review Priority Improvement Plans and Turnaround Plans. Based on the ESEA waiver, the state will review improvement plans to ensure that Titles I, IIA and IIIA activities are supporting activities outlined in the improvement plans. The plans for districts on improvement for Title III will be reviewed.

### ***Who will review district plans?***

The state will review all district Turnaround Plans and may review Priority Improvement plans. A State Review Panel appointed by the commissioner will review all state Turnaround Plans. The State Review Panel may review Priority Improvement Plans.

### ***What criteria will be used to review plans?***

District staff and the state are expected to use at least the following resources in the review of school and district plans:

- Unified Improvement Plan Quality Criteria (including all relevant program criteria)
- ESEA requirements for Title I Targeted Assistance Programs (addenda forms and the quality criteria include the requirements)
- ESEA requirements for Title I Schoolwide Programs (addenda forms and the quality criteria include the requirements)
- Turnaround Districts and Schools (addenda forms and the quality criteria include the requirements)
- Program-Specific Addenda

Based on the requirements of SB09-163, in addition to the Unified Improvement Planning Quality Criteria, the State Review Panel must also consider the following in their review of Priority Improvement or Turnaround Plans:

- Whether the district's/school's leadership is adequate to implement change to improve results;
- Whether the district's/school's infrastructure is adequate to support school improvement;
- The readiness and apparent capacity of the district/school personnel to plan effectively and lead the implementation of appropriate actions to improve student academic performance;
- The readiness and apparent capacity of the district/school personnel to engage productively with and benefit from the assistance provided by an external partner;
- The likelihood of positive returns on state investments of assistance and support to improve the district's/school's performance within the current management structure and staffing; and
- The necessity that the district or school remain in operation to serve students.

## **UIP TEMPLATE ADDENDA FORMS**

To better meet the needs of the schools and districts that have multiple state and federal improvement planning requirements, the state has designed several addenda forms to ensure that all requirements are addressed. The addenda form also provides additional flexibility to keep the action planning focused on improvement efforts and then use the appendices to meet any additional requirements.

The forms provide various ways to complete designated program requirements, including (1) assurances, (2) descriptions of the requirements in the form, or (3) a cross-walk of the elements in the UIP. Most addenda will be required. Addenda forms will indicate if they are required.

To use the forms, the planning team must first select the forms that apply to the district or school. They are available in Word format and can be added to the end of the UIP file. If it is unclear whether the school or district has been identified under federal or state accountability systems, the pre-populated report (section I of the UIP template) provides this information. CDE contacts are also available for further guidance.

Competitive grants (e.g., Tiered Intervention Grant) also have expectations that have implications for the school and/or district UIP and may require an addenda form. Planning

teams should consult the Pre-populated report of the UIP and/or the RFP for specific instructions.

## APPENDIX A: PLANNING TERMINOLOGY

TERM	DEFINITION
<b>Academic Achievement</b>  <b>Or</b>  <b>Achievement</b>	<p>A single point in time score on an assessment. Achievement for an individual is expressed as a test score (or “scale score”), or it may be described using an achievement level.</p> <p>Academic Achievement is one of four performance indicators used to evaluate schools and districts in Colorado.</p> <p>See also: <b><i>Status Score and Scale Score</i></b></p>
<b>Academic Growth</b>	<p>For an individual student, academic growth is the progress shown by the student, in a given subject area, over a given span of time.</p> <p>The Colorado Growth Model expresses annual growth, for an individual, with a student growth percentile in reading, writing, mathematics, and English language proficiency. For a school, district, or other relevant student grouping, student growth is summarized using the median of the student growth percentiles for that grouping.</p> <p>Academic growth is one of four statewide performance indicators used to evaluate schools and districts in Colorado. This indicator contains measures of both normative and adequate growth.</p> <p>See also: <b><i>Normative Growth</i></b> and <b><i>Adequate Growth</i></b></p>
<b>Academic Growth Gaps</b>	<p>Academic growth gaps is one of four Performance Indicators and reflects the academic progress of students in the following disaggregated groups: students eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch, minority students, students with disabilities, English Language Learners, and students needing to catch-up.</p> <p>A growth gap for any of the above disaggregated groups is defined as the difference between the median growth percentile and the median adequate growth percentile for that group.</p> <p>See also: <b><i>Normative Growth, Adequate Growth, and Subgroup</i></b></p>
<b>Academic Peer</b>	<p>Academic peers are defined as students in a particular grade with a similar CSAP score history. The concept of similar score history is discussed in the Colorado Growth Model Technical Report available on CDE's website. The CSAP score history examined includes all past scores available for a given</p>

TERM	DEFINITION
	student. So, for a student who has had low CSAP scores (consistently at the Unsatisfactory level) for the last few years, his or her growth is compared to students who have scored similarly.
<b>Action Step</b>	Something that is done to make progress towards goals. Action steps are created for each strategy and identify resources (people, time, and money) that will be brought to bear so that goals and targets can be reached.
<b>Adequate Growth</b>	<p>For CSAP/TCAP: The growth percentile sufficient for a student to reach or maintain an achievement level of proficient or advanced, in a given subject area, within three years or by 10th grade; whichever comes first.</p> <p>For CELApro: The growth percentile sufficient for a student to attain a given level of English proficiency within a specified amount of time.</p> <p>See also: <b><i>Median Adequate Growth Percentile</i></b></p>
<b>Benchmark</b>	A standard or reference by which others can be measured or judged.
<b>Catch-Up Growth</b>	<p>Growth needed for a student scoring at the unsatisfactory or partially proficient levels, in the previous year, to reach the proficient or advanced achievement level within 3 years or by 10th grade; whichever comes first.</p> <p>A student is catching up if he/she has demonstrated growth in the most recent year that, if sustained, would enable the student to reach a proficient or advanced level of achievement.</p> <p>See also: <b><i>Keep-Up Growth</i></b>, and <b><i>Adequate Growth</i></b></p>
<b>Colorado ACT Composite Score</b>  <b>Or</b>  <b>Average Colorado ACT Composite Score</b>	<p>The composite score, on the Colorado ACT, is the rounded average of a student's Colorado ACT scores across English, mathematics, reading and science.</p> <p>The average Colorado ACT composite score is the average composite score for all of the students in a district or school. Average Colorado ACT composite score is one of the required state measures of the Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness indicator.</p>
<b>The Colorado Growth Model</b>	<p>The Colorado Growth Model is both:</p> <p>(a) A statistical model to calculate each student's progress on</p>

TERM	DEFINITION
	<p>state assessments.</p> <p>(b) A computer-based data visualization tool for displaying student, school, and district results over the internet.</p>
<b>Disaggregated Group</b>	<p>A demographic subset of students.</p> <p>Colorado reports student academic growth, on the performance framework reports, for five historically disadvantaged student disaggregated groups: students eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch, minority students, students with disabilities and English Language Learners; and for students scoring below proficient.</p>
<b>Disaggregated Group Median Adequate Growth</b>	<p>The student growth percentile sufficient for the median student in a subgroup to reach or maintain a level of proficient or advanced in a subject area within one, two or three years. If the disaggregated group's median student growth percentile is high enough to reach the adequate level, this means that, as a group, students in this category are making enough growth to catch up and keep up.</p> <p>On the performance framework reports, disaggregated groups include students eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch, minority students, students with disabilities, English Language Learners and students at a performance level of unsatisfactory or partially proficient.</p> <p>See also: <b><i>Median Student Growth Percentile</i></b></p>
<b>Drop-Out Rate</b>	<p>The drop-out rate reflects the percentage of all students enrolled in grades 7-12 who leave school during a single school year. It is calculated by dividing the number of dropouts by a membership base, which includes all students who were in membership any time during the year.</p> <p>The Colorado dropout rate is an <u>annual</u> rate, reflecting the percentage of all students enrolled in grades 9-12 who leave school during a single school year, without subsequently attending another school or educational program. It is calculated by dividing the number of dropouts by a membership base, which includes all students who were in membership any time during the year. In accordance with a 1993 legislative mandate, beginning with the 1993-94 school year, the dropout rate calculation excludes expelled students.</p>
<b>Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)</b>	<p>The <b>Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)</b>, is a US federal statute enacted April 11<sup>th</sup>, 1965. This statute provides</p>

TERM	DEFINITION
	federal funds primary and secondary education. The act was originally authorized through 1970, however, the government has reauthorized the act every five years since its enactment. The current reauthorization of ESEA is the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001.
<b>Focus Schools</b>	Title I schools may be identified as a focus school if they have a (1) low graduation rate (regardless of plan type), and/or (2) Turnaround or Priority Improvement plan type with either (or both) a) low-achieving disaggregated student groups (i.e., minority, ELL, IEP and FRL) or b) low disaggregated graduation rate. This is a three-year designation.
<b>Graduation Rate</b>	<p>Colorado calculates "on-time" graduation as the percent of students who graduate from high school four years after entering ninth grade. A student is assigned a graduating class when they enter ninth grade, and the graduating class is assigned by adding four years to the year the student enters ninth grade. The formula anticipates, for example, that a student entering ninth grade in fall 2006 will graduate with the Class of 2010. For accountability purposes Colorado calculates a 4, 5, 6, and 7 year graduation rate. For both 1-year and 3-year SPFs, the "best of" graduation rate is bolded and italicized on the Performance Indicators detail page.</p> <p>Legislation, approved in 2005, also changed the way the state counts students who leave a Colorado school district to pursue a GED (General Educational Development) certificate, and to the process of verifying transfers out of a district. Previously, students bound for a GED program outside their district were treated as transfers and were removed from both the numerator and denominator of the graduation rate calculation. Under the new formula (used for the first time with 2006-2007 data), students who opt for a GED program remain in the membership base (or graduation rate denominator). While students who receive a GED certificate are counted as completers, they are not considered graduates and thereby reduce the graduation rate for their graduating class.</p>
<b>Growth</b>	For an individual student, growth is the progress shown by the student, in a given subject area, over a given span of time.

TERM	DEFINITION
	<p>The Colorado Growth Model describes how much growth a student has made, relative to his/her “academic peers”, by providing a student growth percentile in reading, writing, and mathematics as measured by TCAP/CSAP. Student growth percentiles are provided for English language proficiency as measured by CELApro. For a school, district, or other relevant student grouping, student growth is summarized using the median of the student growth percentiles for that group.</p> <p>Academic growth is one of four performance indicators used to evaluate schools and districts in Colorado. On the Performance Frameworks, this academic growth indicator contains measures of both normative and adequate growth.</p> <p>The performance frameworks provide both normative and criterion-referenced (growth to a proficiency standard) measures of growth. The performance framework reports summarize growth for a school, district, or student disaggregated group using the median of the student growth percentiles of the school, district, or student group on CSAP/TCAP or CELApro.</p> <p>For CSAP/TCAP: It then evaluates if that growth rate is adequate, or sufficient for a student to reach or maintain an achievement level of proficient or advanced, in a given subject area, within three years or by 10th grade; whichever comes first.</p> <p>For CELApro: It then evaluates if that growth rate is adequate, or sufficient for a student to attain a given level of English proficiency within a specified amount of time.</p>
<b>Implementation Benchmark</b>	<p>A measure (with associated metric) used to assess the degree to which action steps have been implemented.</p> <p>See also: <b>Measure</b> and <b>Metric</b></p>
<b>Improvement Plan</b>	<p>Senate Bill 09-163 (The Educational Accountability Act of 2009) requires all schools and districts, in Colorado, to implement one of four types of plans: a Performance Plan, Improvement Plan, Priority Improvement Plan, or Turnaround Plan.</p> <p>Elementary and middle schools that earn at least 45% but less than 58% of their framework points, on the school performance framework, will be assigned to the</p>



TERM	DEFINITION
	<p>“Improvement Plan” category.</p> <p>High schools that earn at least 45% but less than 60% of their framework points, on the school performance framework report, are assigned to the “Improvement Plan” category.</p> <p>Improvement plans are also required for Title I schools “on Improvement,” and districts “identified for Program Improvement” based on criteria defined by ESEA.</p> <p>The Unified Improvement Plan template (for districts and schools) is designed to meet the requirements of both SB09-163 and ESEA.</p>
<b>Interim Measure</b>	<p>A measure (and associated metric) used to assess, for the level of a given performance indicator, at various times during a school year.</p>
<b>Keep-Up Growth</b>	<p>Growth needed for a student scoring at the proficient or advanced levels, in the previous year, to continue scoring at least at the proficient level in the current year and future 3 years or by 10th grade; whichever comes first.</p> <p>A student is keeping up if he/she has demonstrated growth in the most recent year that, if sustained, would enable the student to maintain a proficient level of achievement.</p> <p>See also: <b><i>Catch-Up Growth</i></b> and <b><i>Adequate Growth</i></b></p>
<b>Major Improvement Strategy</b>	<p>An overall approach that describes a series of related actions intended to result in improvements in performance.</p>
<b>Measure</b>	<p>Instruments or means to assess performance in an area identified by an indicator.</p>
<p><b>Median Adequate Growth</b></p> <p><b>Or</b></p> <p><b>Median Adequate Growth Percentile</b></p>	<p>The growth (student growth percentile) sufficient for the median student in a district, school, or other group of interest to reach an achievement level of proficient or advanced, in a subject area (reading, writing or math), within three years or by 10th grade; whichever comes first.</p> <p>For English language proficiency growth, expectations are around progressing through language proficiency levels in specified time frames.</p> <p>In the case of the performance framework, each student, in a school, has a Catch-Up or a Keep-Up growth number. If you take the median of all these numbers, you get the growth level that would, on average, enable all students to be either catching up or keeping up; whichever they need to do.</p>

TERM	DEFINITION
<b>Median Growth (Median Student Growth Percentile or Median Growth Percentile)</b>	Median growth summarizes student growth rates by district, school, grade level, or other group of interest. It is measured using the median student growth percentile, which is calculated by taking the individual student growth percentiles of the students, in the group of interest, and calculating the median.
<b>Metric</b>	A numeric scale indicating the level of some variable of interest. For example, your credit score is a metric that companies use to decide whether to give you a loan.
<b>NCLB</b>	No Child Left Behind Act, federal statute 2001, that re-authorized Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).
<b>Parent and Community Involvement</b>	
<b>Performance Indicator</b>	A specific component of school or district quality. Colorado has identified four performance indicators that are used to evaluate all schools and districts in the state: student academic growth, student achievement, growth gaps, and postsecondary/workforce readiness.
<b>Performance Plan</b>	<p>The type of plan required for those schools that already meet the state's expectations, for attainment, on the performance indicators.</p> <p>Elementary and middle schools that earn at least 58%, of their framework points, on the school performance framework report are assigned to the Performance plan category.</p> <p>High schools that earn at least 60%, of their framework points, on the school performance framework report are assigned to a Performance plan category.</p>
<b>Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness</b>	<p>The preparedness, of students, for college or a job after completing high school.</p> <p>This is one of the performance indicators used to evaluate the performance of all schools and districts in the state. This indicator includes graduation rate, dropout rate, disaggregated dropout rate and Colorado ACT scores.</p>
<b>Priority School</b>	Competitive grant (1003g) for schools identified as 5% of lowest performing Title I or Title I eligible schools, eligible to implement one of four reform models as defined by the USDE.
<b>Priority Improvement Plan</b>	One of the types of plans required for those schools that do not meet the state's performance standards.

TERM	DEFINITION
	<p>Elementary and middle schools that earn at least 35% but less than 45%, of their framework points, on the school performance framework report are assigned to a Priority Improvement Plan category.</p> <p>High schools that earn at least 30% but less than 45%, of their framework points, on the school performance framework report are assigned to a Priority Improvement Plan category.</p>
<b>Priority Performance Challenges</b>	Specific statements about the school or district's student performance challenges, which have been prioritized. (This does not include statements about budgeting, staffing, curriculum, instruction, etc.) At least one priority must be identified for each performance indicator where the school did not meet federal, state and/or local expectations.
<b>Progress Monitoring</b>	<p>A continuous improvement process by which local stakeholders check on the implementation of their unified improvement plan. In this context, progress monitoring includes the following actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Analyze data from interim measures to interpret the degree to which performance is on target and the school/district is likely to meet annual performance targets; and</li> <li>2) Analyze data from implementation benchmarks to interpret the degree to which major improvement strategies are being implemented.</li> <li>3) Make appropriate adjustments to improvement activities.</li> </ol> <p>Schools are required to engage their School Accountability Committees in monitoring</p>
<b>Root Cause</b>	The deepest underlying cause(s) of a problem or situation that, if resolved, would result in elimination, or substantial reduction, of the symptom. If action is required, the cause should be within one's ability to control, and not a purely external factor such as poverty that is out of one's ability to control.
<b>School Performance Framework</b>	The framework used, by the state, to provide information to stakeholders about each school's performance based on the four key performance indicators: student academic growth, student achievement, growth gaps, and postsecondary/workforce readiness. For Alternative Education Campuses, the more appropriate performance indicator of Student Engagement is used in place of Growth Gaps. Schools are assigned to a type of improvement plan

TERM	DEFINITION
	based on their performance across all of the indicator areas.
<b>School Plan Type</b>	The type of plan to which a school is assigned, by the state, on the school performance framework report. The school plan types are: Performance, Improvement, Priority Improvement, and Turnaround. This is also the type of plan that must be adopted and implemented, for the school, by either the local board (priority improvement and turnaround) or the principal and the superintendent (performance and improvement).
<b>Schoolwide Plan (Title I ESEA)</b>	A comprehensive plan required of Title I schools that operate Schoolwide Programs. This plan has 10 required components, including the need for a comprehensive needs assessment and analysis, as well as a yearly evaluation. The plan must be developed and evaluated in conjunction with parents.
<b>Strategy</b>	Methods to reach goals. Which strategies are chosen depends on coherence, affordability, practicality, and efficiency and should be research-based.
<b>Students Below Proficient</b> <b>Students Scoring Below Proficient</b>	Students who scored Unsatisfactory or Partially Proficient in the prior year's CSAP. Adequate growth for these students would enable them to reach Proficient or Advanced within three years or by 10th grade; whichever comes first.

TERM	DEFINITION
<b>Student Growth Percentile</b>	A way of understanding a student's current score based on his/her prior scores and relative to other students with similar prior scores. The student growth percentile provides a measure of academic growth (i.e. relative position change) where students who have similar academic score histories provide a baseline for understanding each student's progress. For example, a growth percentile of 60 in mathematics means the student's growth exceeds that of 60 percent of his/her academic peers. In other words, the student's latest score was somewhat higher than we would have expected based on past score history. Also referred to as a "growth percentile."
<b>Target (Performance)</b>	A specific, quantifiable outcome that defines what would constitute success in a particular area of intended improvement, within a designated period of time.
<b>Targeted Assistance Plan (Title I) ESEA</b>	This plan is a requirement for Title I schools that operate Targeted Assistance programs. The plan has 8 components that focus on how students, most at risk of not meeting state standards in reading and/or math, will be served.
<b>Turnaround Plan</b>	<p>One of the types of plans required for those schools that do not meet state expectations for attainment on the performance indicators.</p> <p>Elementary and Middle schools that earn 35% or less, of their framework points, on the school performance framework report are assigned to a Turnaround plan category.</p> <p>High schools that earn less than 30%, of their framework points, on the school performance framework report are assigned to a Turnaround plan category.</p> <p>In Colorado's state accountability system, schools that are assigned to the turnaround plan category must engage in one of the following strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employ a lead turnaround partner that uses research-based strategies and has a proven record of success working with schools under similar circumstances, which turnaround partner will be immersed in all aspects of developing and collaboratively executing the plan and will serve as a liaison to other school partners;</li> <li>• Reorganize the oversight and management structure within the school to provide greater, more effective support;</li> <li>• Seek recognition as an innovation school or clustering with other schools that have similar governance management</li> </ul>

TERM	DEFINITION
	<p>structures to form an innovation school zone pursuant to the Innovation Schools Act;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hire a public or private entity that uses research-based strategies and has a proven record of success working with schools under similar circumstances to manage the school pursuant to a contract with the local school board or the Charter School Institute;</li> <li>• For a school that is not a charter school, convert to a charter school;</li> <li>• For a charter school, renegotiate and significantly restructure the charter school's charter contract; and/or</li> <li>• Other actions of comparable or greater significance or effect, including those interventions required for low-performing schools under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 and accompanying guidance (i.e., "turnaround model," "restart model," "school closure," "transformation model").</li> </ul>

## UNIFIED IMPROVEMENT PLAN QUALITY CRITERIA (SCHOOL LEVEL)

### GENERAL DIRECTIONS

The Unified Improvement Plan is intended to provide schools with a consistent format to capture improvement planning efforts that streamline state and federal planning requirements. To assist with that process, the Quality Criteria offers guidance for creating an improvement plan that incorporates all of the state accountability and Title I requirements. Quality Criteria are provided for Section III: Narrative on Data Analysis and Root Cause Identification, and Section IV: Action Plans of the unified improvement planning template. The criteria are also a resource for state and district reviewers to use in reviewing the plans.

### Meeting Specific Requirements in the Plan

All schools should respond to the general indicators. However, on some elements, the state's accountability and the Title I program have additional requirements that are unique to that program. Therefore, clarity around (1) the school's plan type assignment, (2) the kind of Title I program operated in the school, and (3) whether the school has been identified as a Title I Focus School, are important to take full advantage of this tool. Answer the following questions to ensure that the school plan is addressing all of the appropriate elements.

#### Description of School's Plan Type under State Accountability

What plan type has been identified for the school?

☐ Performance ☐ Improvement ☐ Priority Improvement ☐ Turnaround ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

(Confirm through your district. Once finalized, plan types will be listed at: [www.schoolview.org](http://www.schoolview.org))

#### Description of School's Title I Program

What type of Title I program does the school operate?

☐ Schoolwide or ☐ Targeted Assistance

(Confirm at: [www.cde.state.co.us/FedPrograms/danda/tiaschlst.asp](http://www.cde.state.co.us/FedPrograms/danda/tiaschlst.asp))

Is the school identified as a Focus School under Title I? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Does the school receive a Tiered Intervention Grant under Title I? ☐ Yes ☐ No

In addition to addressing the general indicators, schools should look for the following symbols that apply to the school and address those additional criteria:



TITLE I SCHOOLWIDE PROGRAM



TITLE I TARGETED ASSISTANCE PROGRAM



TITLE I FOCUS SCHOOL



TITLE I SCHOOLS WITH PRIORITY IMPROVEMENT OR TURNAROUND PLAN TYPE



TURNAROUND PLAN TYPE UNDER STATE ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In addition to criteria listed here, the Commissioner shall assign the state review panel to critically evaluate a public school's turnaround plan in accordance with 22-11-210 (4), C.R.S.

## SECTION III: NARRATIVE ON DATA ANALYSIS AND ROOT CAUSE IDENTIFICATION

### Data Narrative

The purpose of the data narrative is to describe the process and results of the analysis of the data for school improvement. This includes: 1) A brief description of the school or district; 2) An explanation regarding who participated in each step of the data analysis process; 3) The school/district accountability status and where performance did not meet state/federal expectations; 4) How current performance compares to the targets established in the prior year's plan; 5) Notable performance trends (positive and negative), what data was considered (including local data sources), and how the team determined which trends were notable; 6) Priority performance challenges, the process that was used to prioritize the performance challenges, and what makes the identified priorities more important to address immediately than other notable negative trends; and 7) Root cause(s) associated with each priority performance challenge, how the root causes were identified, and the additional data that was reviewed to validate the root causes.

The data narrative should meet the overall quality criteria for the data narrative as well as the criteria specific to notable trends, priority performance challenges, and root causes. Two additional worksheets are provided to support development of the data narrative. A short (bulleted list) of trends, priority performance challenges, and root causes should also be included in the **data analysis worksheet**. The relationship between these items should be apparent. Information about progress towards the prior year's performance targets should be included in the **monitoring progress of prior year's performance targets worksheet**.

Required Element (definition)	Criteria
<b>Data Narrative (overall)</b>  <i>Describes the "data story" and process of data analysis; a synthesis of the analysis and presentation of notable findings.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reflects that the team reviewed the performance summary provided in the School Performance Framework (SPF) report (and Section I of the pre-populated Unified Improvement Planning Template).</li><li>• Specifies where the school did not meet local, state/federal (approaching, does not meet on SPF) performance expectations.</li><li>• Reflects that the team reviewed progress towards prior year's performance targets, specifically the impacts of previous improvement efforts (major improvement strategies) on student performance.</li><li>• Identifies what additional performance data (state and local student learning data) were used in the analysis of trends.</li><li>• Describes notable trends in data (both positive and negative).</li><li>• Describes priority performance challenges (based on notable negative trends).</li><li>• Describes the process used to prioritize the performance challenges, and why the identified challenges were prioritized.</li><li>• Describes root cause(s) of each priority performance challenge.</li><li>• Describes how root causes were identified and verified with more than one data source (e.g., classroom observations) and what data were used.</li><li>• Describes stakeholder involvement in the different steps of the plan development process, including, for example, School Accountability Committee, staff, parents, community members.</li></ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Specifically describes involvement of parents and school staff (including, for example teachers, principal, program administrators -such as Even Start, Homeless Education, Early Reading First-, and pupil services personnel).</li></ul>


TI-SW

TI-TA



Required Element (definition)	Criteria
<b>Previous Performance Targets</b> <i>Description of previous targets and progress toward meeting target.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides targets set in previous year's plan.</li> <li>Describes progress toward targets.</li> </ul>
<b>Trends</b> <i>Description of notable trends for every performance indicator, identified based on analysis of three years of data.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Makes explicit to which performance indicator/sub-indicator the trend applies, and the direction of the trend (e.g., strengths and challenges).</li> <li>Specifies performance indicator areas where the school failed to meet state/federal (academic achievement, academic growth, academic growth gaps, post-secondary/workforce readiness), or local performance expectations.</li> <li>Includes analysis of data at a more detailed level than that presented in the SPF report, for example, patterns over time: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>within a grade level (per content area, disaggregated group);</li> <li>within a disaggregated group of students; and/or</li> <li>within a sub-content area (e.g., number sense in mathematics).</li> </ul> </li> <li>Reflects that the team reviewed progress towards prior year's performance targets, and specifies the degree to which improvement efforts (major improvement strategies and action steps) were associated with intended improvements in student learning (represented in the performance targets). May also include reference to evidence from interim measures (local assessment results).</li> <li>Includes analysis of relevant local performance data (interim assessments, etc.).</li> <li>To the degree that data are available, includes analysis of the performance data for all students in the school (e.g. pre-K-2, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>), and includes performance in subjects not tested by the state.</li> </ul>
<b>Priority Performance Challenges</b> <i>Specific statements about the school's performance challenges (not budgeting, staffing, curriculum, instruction, etc.), with at least one priority identified for each performance indicator where the school did not meet federal, state and/or local expectations.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Priority performance challenges describe the strategic focus for the school considering every sub-indicator for which the school did not meet expectations. <i>Note: Priority performance challenges do <b>not</b> need to be identified for <b>every</b> sub-indicator (e.g., math achievement, ELL student growth in reading) for which the school did not meet expectations.</i></li> <li>Identifies <i>at least one</i> priority performance challenge for every indicator (achievement, growth, growth gaps, post-secondary/workforce readiness) for which minimum state/federal were not met (approaching, does not meet on SPF).</li> <li>Identifies priority performance challenges based on analysis of performance trends that are of the appropriate magnitude given the SPF rating for the school.</li> <li>If they are closely related, combines more than one negative trend statement in the description of priority performance challenges (note performance challenges may cut across performance indicators).</li> <li>Specifies challenges that consider analysis of data at a more detailed level than that presented in the SPF report, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>within a grade level over time (e.g., consistently not meeting expectations in 4<sup>th</sup> grade mathematics for three years);</li> <li>within a disaggregated group of students; and/or</li> <li>within a sub-content area (e.g., number sense in mathematics).</li> </ul> </li> <li>Includes as a priority performance challenge, the performance of lowest performing disaggregated student group(s). Required for Title I focus schools; recommended for all others.</li> </ul>



Required Element (definition)	Criteria
<p><b>Root Causes</b></p> <p><i>Statements describing the deepest underlying cause, or causes, of performance challenges, that, if dissolved, would result in elimination, or substantial reduction, of the performance challenge(s).</i></p> <p></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifies one root cause for each priority performance challenge (note: the same root cause could apply to multiple priority performance challenges, and should be listed next to each priority performance challenge to which it applies).</li> <li>• Specifies “causes” the school can control (e.g., the school does not provide additional support/interventions for students performing at the unsatisfactory level) rather than describing characteristics of students (e.g., race, poverty, student motivation).</li> <li>• Reflects analysis of multiple types of data (in addition to performance data and including local data sources) in the identification and verification of root causes.</li> <li>• Root causes are of the appropriate magnitude given the SPF rating for the school. For example, for schools with performance that does not meet state expectations on a large number, or all of the performance indicators/sub-indicators, explicitly considers broad, systemic root causes.</li> <li>• Root causes for low achieving disaggregated groups are specifically identified.</li> </ul>




## SECTION IV: ACTION PLANS







Section IV of the Unified Improvement Plan includes the *School Target Setting Form* and the *Action Planning Form*. The School Target Setting Form includes columns for: priority performance challenges, performance targets for two school years, interim measures, and major improvement strategies. For each major improvement strategy, action planning worksheets include: the root cause(s) addressed by the major improvement strategy, action steps, resources, people responsible, and timeline. Quality criteria for each of the components of both of these worksheets are described below. There should be a logical connection among the elements listed in the columns.

### School Target Setting Form:

Required Element (definition)	Criteria
<b>Performance Targets (2 years)</b>  <i>A specific, quantifiable performance outcome that defines what would constitute success in a performance indicator area within the designated period of time.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Specifies ambitious but attainable target(s) for every performance indicator area (achievement, growth, growth gaps, and post-secondary/workforce readiness) where the school did not at least meet state expectations (approaching, did not meet on SPF), including at least one performance target related to each priority performance challenge.</li> <li>Identifies the group or disaggregated group of students to which the target applies (e.g., 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, English Language Learners).</li> <li>Specifies the measure (e.g., CSAP, CSAPA, Escritura, Lectura, ACT Composite) and metric (e.g., % proficient or advanced, % partially proficient, median student growth percentile, % of students making catch-up growth) for which the target is being set.</li> <li>Includes the required state metrics for that performance indicator; targets for additional metrics may also be identified.</li> <li>Sets targets for increasing performance over time in a way that would, at a minimum, result in the school meeting state expectations within five years.</li> <li>Provides specific, actionable targets which may be at the grade or disaggregated group level (e.g., English Language Learners, habitually truant students).</li> <li>May include targets associated with required district performance indicators (e.g., English language attainment and educator quality).</li> </ul>
<b>Interim Measures</b> <i>A measure (and associated metric) of student performance used to measure performance in a specified indicator area, at more than one point during a school year.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For each annual performance target, describes what will be used to measure student performance to monitor progress in reaching the target.</li> <li>Includes only measures that are administered/scored/reported more than once during the school year.</li> <li>Specifies how frequently the data from the measure will be available.</li> <li>Specifies metrics associated with each interim measure (e.g., NWEA RIT Growth scores, Acuity subscale proficiency scores).</li> </ul>

## Action Planning Form

Required Element (definition)	Criteria
<b>Major Improvement Strategies</b>  <i>An overall approach that describes a series of related actions intended to result in improvements in performance.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describes an overall research-based approach based on a theory about how performance will improve. There must be evidence that the strategy has previously resulted in improvement in performance, such as that specified by a priority performance challenge.</li> <li>Describes the specific change in practice that will result from the action steps (e.g., not “improve reading instruction,” rather “implement formative assessment practices in all 3-5 grade classrooms during reading instruction”).</li> <li>Explicitly responds to the identified root cause(s).</li> <li>Specifically addresses the needed instructional improvement.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Must include at least one of the following approaches: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Turnaround Partner</li> <li>School Management</li> <li>Innovation School</li> <li>School Management Contract</li> <li>Charter Conversion</li> <li>Restructure Charter</li> <li>School Closure</li> <li>Other Strategy of Comparable or Greater Effect</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Action Steps</b> <i>The activities or actions that will be taken to implement a major improvement strategy.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describes the detailed and specific steps that school or district personnel will take to implement the major improvement strategy.</li> <li>Describes the specific steps that any external consultants or contractors (if the school is working with external consultants/contractors) will take to implement the major improvement strategy.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assures that Title I students are only taught by highly qualified teachers.</li> <li>Includes high quality and on-going professional development for teachers, principals, paraprofessionals and other staff (as appropriate) based on root causes.</li> <li>Describes parental involvement strategies consistent with the school’s Parent Involvement Policy and Parent Compact.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Includes high quality professional development that increases understanding of the appropriate use of multiple assessment measures and how to use assessment results to improve instruction.</li> <li>Describes how students who are most at-risk will be identified and given timely assistance, and the potential interventions that will be provided to them.</li> <li>Describes strategies to assist preschool students in the successful transition from early childhood programs to local elementary school programs.</li> </ul>

Required Element (definition)	Criteria
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assures that the program gives primary consideration to providing extended learning time and accelerated, high-quality curriculum, and minimizes the removal of children from the regular classroom during regular school hours for instruction.</li> <li>Describes how the progress of Title I students will be reviewed on an ongoing basis to determine whether or not the program must be revised if progress is not sufficient.</li> </ul>
	<u>Includes action steps that specifically address performance challenge of the lowest performing disaggregated group(s).</u>
<b>Timeline</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Specifies the month(s) and year when each action step will take place.</li> <li>Identifies a logical sequence of action steps.</li> <li>Represents a two year timeframe.</li> </ul>
<b>Key Personnel</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describes who will be responsible for implementing the action step(s), may be a position or a role.</li> </ul>
<b>Resources</b>  	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clearly aligns resources with the proposed action step.</li> <li>Must include total funds budgeted for the improvement strategy, including local, state and federal funds.</li> <li>May include: staff time, expertise, external contracts. For example, .2FTE of the instructional coach will be devoted to implementing this action step. Local funds and Title I pay for the positions.</li> <li>Specifies the amount (of money and/or time).</li> <li>Specifies the source (e.g., Title I, district, school, PTA).</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describes how other ESEA Title Programs (Title I, Parts B, C, and F; Title II, Parts A, B, and D; Title IV, Parts A &amp; B; and Title V) are integrated and coordinated, if applicable.</li> <li>Indicates how violence prevention programs, nutrition programs, housing programs, Head Start, adult education, vocational and technical education, job training, etc., are integrated, if applicable.</li> <li>Activities are allowable under Title I and align with the intent of the funding source</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Directly identifies Title I resources and how they are coordinated with other resources.</li> <li>Activities are allowable under Title I and align with the intent of the funding source</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Activities are allowable under Title I and align with the intent of the funding source</li> <li>Indicates how federal funds for professional development will be used.</li> </ul>
<b>Implementation Benchmarks</b> <i>A measure (with associated metric) used to assess the degree to which action steps have been implemented. (Note: Not performance measures.)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Specifies what will be measured (with associated metrics) and when data will be collected. <i>Note: Implementation benchmarks may be quantitative or qualitative.</i></li> <li>Describes when implementation benchmarks will be analyzed and interpreted and who will be involved. <i>Note: Analyzing and interpreting implementation benchmarks and making adjustments to action steps should be included in the action steps.</i></li> </ul>

Required Element <i>(definition)</i>	Criteria
<b>Status</b> <i>Progress toward action</i> <i>step completion</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Optional, unless directed by a competitive grant program.</li> <li>• Indicates the status of the action step.</li> <li>• May include specific information, such as date completed.</li> </ul>

## Appendix C: Annual Timeline for School Planning and Accreditation

