

School Quality Criteria

Quality Criteria for School Unified Improvement Plans (UIPs)

Overview

The Unified Improvement Plan (UIP) is intended to provide districts and schools with a consistent format to capture improvement planning efforts that streamline state and federal planning requirements and increase student learning. CDE developed the Quality Criteria to offer guidance for creating high quality improvement plans and to establish the criteria for state and local review of school level UIPs, especially for schools on the accountability clock (i.e., Priority Improvement, Turnaround). If you would like to see the criteria in a rubric format, go to: http://www.cde.state.co.us/uip/uip_general_resources.

General Directions

- ❑ Access the pre-populated report through the UIP Online System (<https://cdeapps.cde.state.co.us/index.html>) to determine the school’s unique accountability and program requirements.
- ❑ Examine the “Big Five” Guiding Questions, note their alignment with the UIP and determine which they need to address, based on previous CDE feedback (if any).



The Big Five Guiding Questions

The “Big Five” are five guiding questions that outline the major concepts of the improvement planning process. The questions build upon each other and facilitate alignment across the entire plan. Does the plan:

- 1 Investigate the most critical performance areas and prioritize the most urgent **performance challenges**?
- 2 Identify **root causes** that explain the magnitude of the performance challenges?
- 3 Identify evidence-based **major improvement strategies** that have likelihood to eliminate the root causes?
- 4 Present a well-designed **action plan** for implementing the major improvement strategies to bring about dramatic improvement?
- 5 Include elements that effectively **monitor** the impact and **progress** of the action plan?

Structure

Organized by the “Big Five,” the various plan elements are further defined and include questions that if addressed, *lead to* a well-developed improvement plan. Most of these questions blend best practice and accountability requirements. The most effective plans build a case that remains coherent across each section of the plan, rather than simply addressing each section independently. Those requirements that only apply to some schools are labeled separately at the end of each section. Greyed out sections will not be reviewed by CDE during the current school year. To better understand the alignment between the UIP (see flow map graphic) and the “Big Five,” the table on the next page provides a matrix. Location within the online UIP system is also included. Greyed out sections will not be reviewed by CDE during the current school year.

Crosswalk between the “Big Five,” Sections of the Planning Process and Tabs within the Online UIP

Big Five Question	Section of Planning Process (see flow map graphic)	UIP Online Tab	
		Main Tab	Sub Tab
1 Does the plan investigate the most critical performance areas and prioritize the most urgent performance challenges ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gather and Organize Data Review Performance Describe Notable Trends Prioritize Performance Challenges 	Section III: Data Narrative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brief Description Prior Year Targets Current Performance Trend Analysis Priority Performance Challenges
2 Does the plan identify root causes that explain the magnitude of performance challenges?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify Root Causes 	Section III: Data Narrative Section IV: Action Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Root Causes
3 Does the plan identify evidenced-based major improvement strategies that are likely to eliminate the root causes?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify Major Improvement Strategies 	Section IV: Action Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major Improvement Strategies
4 Does the UIP present a well-designed action plan for implementing the major improvement strategies to bring about dramatic improvement?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify Major Improvement Strategies Identify Action Steps 	Section IV: Action Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major Improvement Strategies Planning Form
5 Does the plan include elements that effectively monitor the impact and progress of the action plan?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set Performance Targets Identify Interim Measures Identify Implementation Benchmarks 	Section IV: Action Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School Target Setting Planning Form

1
Does the plan investigate the most critical performance areas and prioritize the most urgent performance challenges?
Applicable Plan Elements: Data Narrative, Notable Trends, Priority Performance Challenges

Brief Description	Demographics and Context	Includes a description of school's demographics and relevant contextual information about school and community.
	Stakeholder Input and Involvement	Describes a variety of stakeholders (including teachers and the School Accountability Committee) that have been involved in development of UIP in a meaningful way.
Current Performance	Current Performance	Includes an explanation of the school's current performance relative to local, state and federal expectations (e.g. SPF, ESSA).
	Previous Performance Targets	Includes a reflection on previous improvement efforts and performance targets that provides a basis for current plan.
Notable Trends	Trend Statements	Consistently describes both positive and negative trends for performance, including key elements (e.g., measure, metric, trend direction, years, and comparison point) as appropriate for available n-counts.
	Trend Analysis	Includes trends that are at the appropriate level of detail given the school's context.
	Data Sources	Includes multiple data sources with an explanation of the sources that were included or excluded for analysis.
Priority Performance Challenges (PPC)	Identification of PPCs	Identifies no more than three student-centered performance challenges describing strategic focus for school at the appropriate magnitude.
	Rationale	Provides a rationale for prioritizing the PPCs.
	Alignment to Trends	PPCs are aligned to trend analysis.
	Address Indicators	PPCs address indicators where system is not meeting expectations

1 cont.

Does the plan investigate the most critical performance areas and prioritize the most urgent performance challenges?

Applicable Plan Elements: Data Narrative, Notable Trends, Priority Performance Challenges

Additional Requirements for Some Schools in Data Narrative, Notable Trends, Priority Performance Challenges

READ Act <i>For schools serving K-3</i>	K-3 Literacy Trends	Includes trend data that considers K-3 literacy data.
21st Century Community Learning Centers <i>For grantees</i>	Meetings (Context)	Includes a description of how school leadership periodically meet with 21st CCLC and out-of-school time staff.
	Analysis of Student Needs (Trends, PPCs)	Demonstrates that school conducted a data analysis about how to meet the needs of its students through 21st CCLC activities.
ESSA School Improvement – Comprehensive Schools and Targeted/ Additional Targeted¹ Schools	Variety of Stakeholders (Brief Description)	Includes evidence that all stakeholders (e.g., building leaders, teachers, parents, community members, district partners) were invited to participate and multiple representatives from various groups were involved in plan development.
	Frequency of Involvement (Brief Description)	Describes stakeholders as partners from beginning to the end of plan development, with multiple, ongoing opportunities across the planning period.
	Meaningful Involvement (Brief Description)	Describes stakeholders as active partners in multiple aspects of plan development (e.g., collaborating on data review to identify trends, helping use data trends to prioritize improvement strategies).
	ESSA Indicators (Trends)	Includes an explanation of the school's current performance on each ESSA indicator (i.e., ELA and math achievement, ELA and math growth, English language proficiency for ELs, graduation rates for high schools, school quality and student success indicator) within school level needs assessment (e.g., trend statements).
	Disaggregated Student Groups (Trends)	Includes an explanation of the performance of all students and each disaggregated group (i.e., All students, English learners, Students who qualify for free or reduced meals, Students with disabilities, Students from major race and ethnic groups) within school level needs assessment (e.g., trend statements).
	Prioritization (PPCs)	Uses performance on all ESSA indicators to select PPC(s) aligned to the reasons for identification under ESSA (i.e., for CS-Lowest 5% uses overall performance of all students and relevant disaggregated groups; and for CS-low Grad Rate, uses graduation rates).

¹ LEAs may choose to document Targeted and Additional Targeted requirements outside of UIP. These criteria are included for LEAs that choose to document ESSA requirements in the UIP.

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Does the plan identify root causes which explain the magnitude of the performance challenges?

Applicable Plan Elements: Data Narrative, Root Causes

Root Cause Analysis	Identification of RCs	Identifies root causes that meet the definition (e.g., under control of school, aimed at the systems level, addresses underlying reason for student performance).
	RC Alignment with PPC and with MIS	Associates each root cause with at least one PPC that it has a likelihood of addressing and is deep enough that it provides enough focus for the resulting action plan.
	Verification Process	References multiple and current data sources (e.g. process data, perception data) used to select and verify root causes.
	Root Cause Process	Explains how root causes were identified, including stakeholder involvement.
Additional Requirements for Some Schools in Root Cause Analysis		
Course Taking Analysis <i>For secondary schools. CDE will not check until TSDL collection is reopened.</i>	Analysis of course taking patterns	Includes an analysis of student course taking patterns by disaggregated groups.
ECE Needs Assessment (SB 17-103) <i>For elementary schools on clock</i>	ECE Needs Assessment	Describes an analysis of the needs assessment that considers the required elements ² and provides an indication of what the school is doing with the results.
EASI Grant <i>For grantees (as appropriate for Exploration and Offered Services)</i>	Identification of Systems Needs of School	Provides an integrated systems analysis as a result of exploration work through EASI grant participation.
ESSA School Improvement -- Comprehensive Schools and Additional Targeted³ Schools <i>DRAFT: CDE is collecting feedback on this indicator.</i>	Identification of Resource Inequities	Describes a process for assessing and identifying resource inequities (e.g., disparities in per pupil expenditures, inequitable distribution of teachers, inequitable access to rigorous courses), including how inequities are defined and measured.

² Required ECE needs assessment elements can be found at: http://www.cde.state.co.us/uip/implementing_sb17_103

³ LEAs may choose to document Targeted and Additional Targeted requirements outside of UIP. These criteria are included for LEAs that choose to document ESSA requirements in the UIP.

<div style="text-align: center;"> 3 </div> Does the plan identify evidence-based major improvement strategies that are likely to eliminate the root causes? <i>Applicable Plan Elements: Major Improvement Strategies</i>		
Major Improvement Strategies	Evidence-Based Strategies	Identifies MIS that are evidence-based.
	Alignment to root causes	Includes MIS that align and respond to identified root causes.
	Strength of MIS	Identifies MIS that address the magnitude of the identified PPCs and have a likelihood of resolving the root cause(s).
Additional Requirements for Some Schools in Major Improvement Strategies		
Accountability Clock Strategies <i>For schools on clock</i>	Likelihood of success	Conveys a sense of urgency and has a likelihood of resulting in adequate change in performance for the school to exit the accountability clock within a reasonable timeframe.
	Turnaround strategy <i>For Turnaround</i>	Identifies a state-required turnaround strategy and details within the action plan that are aligned to the needs identified in the data narrative.
ESSA School Improvement – Comprehensive Schools and Targeted/ Additional Targeted⁴ Schools	Aligned Strategies	Provides clear and explicit rationale for selecting the intervention(s) and/or strategy(s) aligned with reasons for identification.
	Evidence-Based Interventions	Provides evidence that meets definition and all criteria for EBI for selected intervention(s)/strategy(s).
	Contextual Fit	Describes the contextual fit of the selected intervention(s)/strategy(s).

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<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> <div style="border: 1px solid white; border-radius: 50%; width: 30px; height: 30px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin-right: 10px;">4</div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>Does the plan present a well-designed plan for implementing the major improvement strategies to bring about dramatic improvement?</p> <p><i>Applicable Plan Elements: Action Plan</i></p> </div> </div>		
Action Plans	Alignment to MIS	Aligns action steps to MIS.
	Specific and Reasonable Action Steps	Lists action steps that are thorough, attainable and can be completed within the designated time frame.
	Two-Year Action Plan	Guides plan implementation for at least two academic years.
	Assigned Resources	Assigns adequate resources (e.g., personnel, funds) necessary to implement action steps.
Additional Requirements for Some Schools in Action Steps		
Student Course Taking Report <i>For Secondary Schools CDE will not check until TSDL Collection reopens.</i>	Action to address Inequities in course taking patterns	Includes action steps to address identified patterns of significant disparities in disaggregated groups taking challenging coursework.
Family Engagement Activities <i>For schools on clock</i>	Actions Promoting Family Engagement	Includes high leverage action steps to increase parent engagement at the school that are aligned with PTA standards.
READ Act <i>For schools serving K-3</i>	Strategies to Address K-3 Reading	Includes strategies that address K-3 students identified as having significant reading deficiencies.
21st Century Community Learning Centers <i>For grantees</i>	Program activities	Includes action steps specific to 21st CCLC program activities that align to school's overall action plan.
	Family Engagement Strategies	Includes action steps specific to 21st CCLC program family engagement and learning strategies that align with the school's action plan.
	21st Century Learning Skills	Includes action steps focused on 21st Century Learning Skills (e.g., STEM, Literacy) and provides a description about how 21st CCLC out-of-school program activities support and align with the action steps.
EASI Grant <i>For grantees (District Design and Led and Offered Services as appropriate)</i>	Aligned Action Plan	Provides alignment with activities approved through the EASI grant.
ESSA School Improvement -- Comprehensive Schools and Additional Targeted⁵ Schools <i>DRAFT: CDE is collecting feedback on this indicator.</i>	Strategies to Address Resource Inequities	Selects actions that address all identified resource inequities (e.g., disparities in per pupil expenditures, inequitable distribution of teachers, and inequitable access to rigorous courses).

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Does the plan include elements to effectively monitor the impact and progress of the action plan?

Applicable Plan Elements: Targets, Interim Measures, Implementation Benchmarks

Performance Targets	Measures and Metrics	Specifies the measure (assessment method) and metric (standard of measurement).
	Alignment to PPCs	Identifies targets that address PPC(s).
	Quality of Target	Provides targets that are specific, ambitious, yet attainable. The timeframe is reasonable.
Interim Measures	Measures and Metrics	Specifies interim measure that names student measure (assessment method) and metric (standard of measurement).
	Alignment to Target	Aligns interim measure to corresponding annual target.
	Quality of Interim Measures	Lists interim measures with a schedule that specifies expected student progress multiple times a year.
Implementation Benchmarks	Alignment to MIS	Each MIS has at least one aligned implementation benchmark.
	Quality of Implementation Benchmarks	Provides benchmarks that enable staff to determine whether implementation of MIS are occurring in an effective manner and allows for mid-course adjustments that change practice.
Additional Requirements for Some Schools in Progress Monitoring		
READ Act <i>For schools serving K-3</i>	READ Act Targets (SRD)	Specifies target(s) for reducing number of students who have significant reading deficiencies.
	READ Act Targets (Grade Level Expectations)	Specifies target(s) to ensure that each student achieves grade level expectations in reading by end of grade 3.
	READ Act Interim Assessments	References interim assessments that are aligned with K-3 literacy targets.
ESSA School Improvement -- Comprehensive Schools and Targeted/ Additional Targeted⁶ Schools <i>DRAFT: CDE is collecting feedback on this indicator</i>	Monitoring Fidelity of Implementation	Shares a monitoring plan for tracking implementation and for determining if intervention(s)/strategy(s) are being implemented with fidelity.
	Evaluation of impact	Provides an evaluation plan for assessing the impact of intervention(s)/strategy(s). Includes timeline and methods for determining if the school's performance has increased on ESSA indicators that resulted in the school's identification under ESSA.
	Process for Adjustments	Shares a process using evaluation results to make adjustments or modifications. Details include how any mid-course corrections will be made if desired outcomes are not reached.

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