

Unified Improvement Plan Quality Criteria: District-Level

Overview

The Unified Improvement Plan (UIP) provides 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 rubric to offer guidance for creating high quality improvement plans and to establish the criteria for state and local review of district level UIPs, especially for districts on the accountability clock (i.e., Priority Improvement, Turnaround). This document contains the criteria at the “meets expectations” level of the rubric; see full rubric for additional detail.

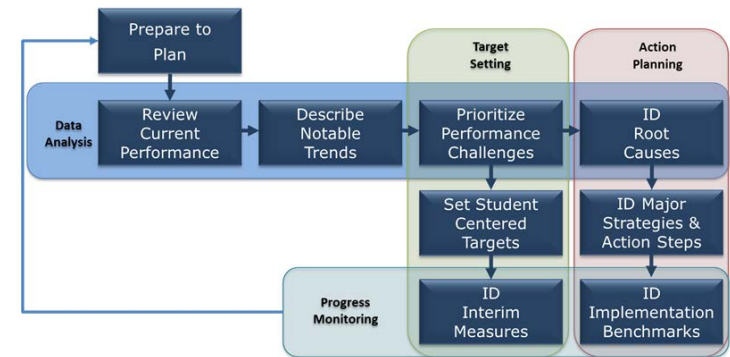
General Directions

- ❑ Access the District Summary and Requirements tab in the [UIP Online System](#) to determine the district’s unique accountability and program requirements.
- ❑ Use the criteria listed in this document as guidance for strong improvement planning in the UIP.

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:

- Investigate the most critical performance areas and prioritize the most urgent **performance challenges**?
- Identify **root causes** that explain the magnitude of the performance challenges?
- Identify evidence-based **major improvement strategies** that have likelihood to eliminate the root causes?
- Present a well-designed **action plan** for implementing the major improvement strategies to bring about dramatic improvement?
- 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. Districts should aim for meeting or exceeding the criteria listed in this document. 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 districts are labeled separately at the end of each section. Greyed out sections will not be reviewed by CDE during the current school year.

UIP Element acronyms that may be used in this document:

IB	Implementation Benchmark
IM	Interim Measure
MIS	Major Improvement Strategy
PPC	Priority Performance Challenge
RC	Root Cause
UIP	Unified Improvement Plan

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

Big Five Question	Where in the planning process is this decided? (see flow map graphic)	Where in the UIP online system is this reported?	
		Main Tab	Sub Tab
<input type="radio"/> 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 	Data Narrative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brief Description Prior Year Targets Current Performance Trend Analysis Priority Performance Challenges
<input type="radio"/> Does the plan identify root causes that explain the magnitude of performance challenges?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify Root Causes 	Data Narrative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Root Causes
		Action Plans	
<input type="radio"/> 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 	Action Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major Improvement Strategies
<input type="radio"/> 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 	Action Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major Improvement Strategies Planning Form
<input type="radio"/> 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 	Action Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Target Setting Planning Form

<div style="text-align: center;"> 1 </div> Does the plan investigate the most critical performance areas and prioritize the most urgent performance challenges?		
Relevant UIP Element	Topic	Meets Expectations
Brief Description	Demographics and Context	Includes a description of district’s demographics and relevant contextual information about district (e.g., number of students served; student demographics, including disaggregated groups)
	Stakeholder Input and Involvement	Describes how a variety of stakeholders (including principals and other district leaders, teachers and district staff, parents and families, and the District Accountability Committee) were meaningfully involved in UIP development.
Prior Year Targets	Previous Performance Targets	Reflects on the previous year’s performance targets and improvement efforts.
Current Performance	Current Performance	Describes current district performance relative to local, state and federal metrics and expectations (e.g. SPF metrics, ESSA indicators).
Trend Analysis	Notable Trends	Describes positive and negative trends in student performance data and includes key elements (i.e., measure, metric, group, direction, and comparison point, as appropriate for available n-counts).
	Data and disaggregation	Describes performance trends for all students and for disaggregated groups of students (i.e., IEP, ELL, FRL, and minority status), when n-count allows for public reporting. (When the number of students (n) is too small for public reporting, an explanation for that student group is provided.)
	Data Sources	Includes multiple data sources with an explanation of the sources that were included or excluded for analysis.
Priority Performance Challenges	Identification of PPCs	Identifies a limited number (e.g., 3 or fewer) of student-centered Priority Performance Challenges of appropriate magnitude to focus district’s improvement efforts.
	Selection	Priority Performance Challenges align to the trend analysis by focusing on challenges that are logical and high leverage; plan includes strong rationale for the selected Priority Performance Challenges.
	Address Indicators	Priority Performance Challenges address performance indicators or sub-indicators where system is not yet meeting expectations (i.e., local, state and/or federal indicators, as applicable).

Additional Requirements for Some Districts		
On Watch	Sustained Improvement (Prior Targets)	Reflection on improvement efforts demonstrates understanding of changes needed to support sustained or accelerated improvement.
Late on the clock Year 4 or later	Prior year targets and previous efforts	Describes previous actions taken to address identified Priority Performance Challenges and their degree of effectiveness (e.g., successes, gaps). These may include required Turnaround actions.
EASI Grant <i>For grantees within Exploration or Offered Services</i>	Integration of evaluation	Describes how the results of the diagnostic review have informed the improvement plan.
Gifted Education	Prior Years Target	Describes the performance of gifted education students compared to previously identified targets.
	Performance Challenge	Explicitly identifies a student-centered Priority Performance Challenge for gifted education, describing a strategic focus for district improvement efforts, either as a part of a larger district challenge or exclusively for gifted education students.

2 Does the plan identify root causes which explain the magnitude of the performance challenges?		
Relevant UIP Element	Topic	Meets Expectations
Root Causes	Actionable Root Cause	Identifies Root Causes that are under the control of the district, aimed at the systems level, and target the underlying reasons for the identified Priority Performance Challenge(s)
	Root Causes Selection Process	Explains how Root causes were identified, including, data sources used, stakeholder involvement, and a strong rationale for selecting a Root cause.

Additional Requirements for Some Districts

Late on the clock Year 4 or later	Reassessment of RCs Over Time	Root Cause analysis reflects a current examination of causes.
Early Learning Needs Assessment <i>For K-3 serving districts in Priority Improvement or Turnaround</i>	<i>Early Learning Needs Assessment</i>	Summarizes findings from an ELNA that meets the minimum requirements and commits to next steps based on those findings.
	<i>ELNA for Districts in Turnaround</i>	Early Learning Needs Assessment includes a complete analysis of early elementary student achievement data . Plan identifies appropriate research-based next steps to improve early childhood programs and partnerships.
EASI Grant <i>For grantees within Exploration or Offered Services</i>	Identification of Systems Needs of District	Provides an integrated systems analysis as a result of exploration work through EASI grant participation. Process and perception data are leveraged in the validation of Root Causes.
Course Taking Analysis <i>For secondary schools</i>	Analysis of course taking patterns	Includes an analysis of student course taking patterns by disaggregated groups.

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Does the plan identify evidence-based major improvement strategies that are likely to eliminate the root causes?

Relevant UIP Element	Topic	Meets Expectations
Major Improvement Strategies (MIS)	Evidence-Based Strategies	Description of Major Improvement Strategy provides clear rationale for the selection of Major Improvement Strategies, including the evidence-base, alignment to identified Root Causes, and explanation of why the strategy is a good fit for the district's need, student population and staff capacity.
	Alignment to Root Causes	Identifies clearly-defined Major Improvement Strategies that are likely to resolve Root Cause(s) and improve Priority Performance Challenges.
Additional Requirements for Some Districts		
Accountability Clock Strategies <i>For districts on clock</i>	Likelihood of success	Major Improvement Strategies convey a sense of urgency and have a likelihood of resulting in adequate change in performance to enable the district 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.

4			Does the plan present a well-designed plan for implementing the major improvement strategies to bring about dramatic improvement?	
Relevant UIP Element	Topic	Meets Expectations		
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.		
	Assigned Resources	Assigns adequate resources (e.g., personnel, funds) necessary to implement action steps.		
Additional Requirements for Some Districts				
On Watch	Sustained Improvement	Action steps build on previous improvement efforts that moved the district off the clock or provide strong rationale for a change in approach.		
EASI Grant <i>For grantees within District Designed and Led; Offered Services</i>	Aligned Action Plan	Action plan aligns with activities or services funded by the EASI grant.		
Student Course Taking Report	Action to address Inequities in course taking patterns	Includes action steps to address identified patterns of significant disparity in disaggregated groups taking challenging coursework.		
Gifted Education	Actions to Support Gifted Students	Describes an explicit approach to meet the performance needs of gifted education students.		

5			Does the plan include elements to effectively monitor the impact and progress of the action plan?	
Relevant UIP Element	Topic	Meets Expectations		
Performance Targets	Measures and Metrics	Specifies the measure (assessment method) and metric (standard of measurement).		
	Quality of Target	Identifies ambitious, attainable targets that align to the Priority Performance Challenges. Where possible, targets are set using the same measure as PPCs (e.g. if the PPC is focused on SAT mean scale score, target is focused on SAT mean scale score).		
Interim Measures	Alignment to Target	Specifies Interim Measures that are aligned to an annual target and assess the impact of the Major Improvement Strategies on student outcomes multiple times per year.		
	Quality of Interim Measures	Lists Interim Measures that specify expected student progress over the course of the year.		
Implementation Benchmarks	Alignment to MIS	Each Major Improvement Strategy has at least one aligned Implementation Benchmark.		
	Quality of Implementation Benchmarks	Provides Implementation Benchmarks for each Major Improvement Strategy that enable staff to determine whether implementation of strategies is occurring in an effective manner and articulates a plan for adjusting implementation, as needed.		
	Plan Duration	Plan provides Implementation Benchmarks to guide and assess plan implementation for the duration of plan public posting (e.g. two years for districts exercising biennial flexibility).		
Additional Requirements for Some Districts				
READ Act <i>For districts serving K-3</i>	READ Act Targets (SRD)	Specifies ambitious and attainable target(s) as measured by the district's READ Act assessment for reducing the 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.		
Gifted Education	Gifted Education Targets	Describes annual performance targets for gifted education students.		
	Gifted Education Interim Measures	Describes Interim Measures aligned to annual performance targets for gifted education students.		
EASI Grant <i>For grantees within District Designed and Led; Offered Services</i>	Evaluation plan	Includes Implementation Benchmarks that describe how the district will monitor implementation of activities approved in the EASI grant.		