

## Unified Improvement Plan Quality Criteria Rubric: District-Level

### 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 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).

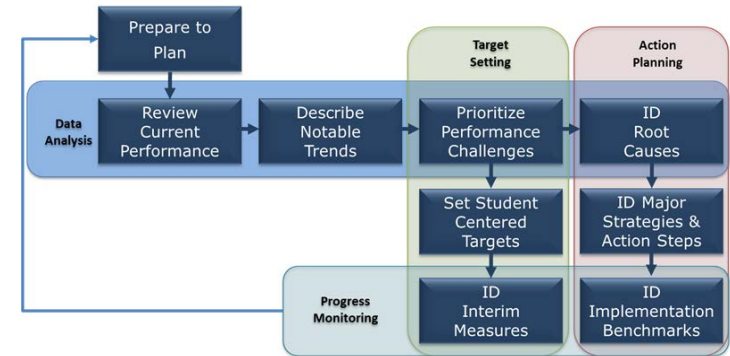
### General Directions

- ❑ Access District Summary and Requirements tab in the [UIP Online System](#) to determine the district's unique accountability and program requirements.
- ❑ Use the Meets Expectations column 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 in the column at the right (Meets Expectations). 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. District UIPs that are thorough and well-crafted, reflect a strong improvement planning process, and provide a cohesive and exemplary statement of improvement efforts may earn a rating of "Meets at a High Level."

### UIP Element acronyms used in this document:

<b>IB</b>	Implementation Benchmark
<b>IM</b>	Interim Measure
<b>MIS</b>	Major Improvement Strategy
<b>PPC</b>	Priority Performance Challenge
<b>RC</b>	Root Cause
<b>UIP</b>	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 <b>performance challenges</b> ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gather and Organize Data</li> <li>Review Performance</li> <li>Describe Notable Trends</li> <li>Prioritize Performance Challenges</li> </ul>	Data Narrative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brief Description</li> <li>Prior Year Targets</li> <li>Current Performance</li> <li>Trend Analysis</li> <li>Priority Performance Challenges</li> </ul>
<input type="radio"/> Does the plan identify <b>root causes</b> that explain the magnitude of performance challenges?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify Root Causes</li> </ul>	Data Narrative Action Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Root Causes</li> </ul>
<input type="radio"/> Does the plan identify evidenced-based <b>major improvement strategies</b> that are likely to eliminate the root causes?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify Major Improvement Strategies</li> </ul>	Action Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Major Improvement Strategies</li> </ul>
<input type="radio"/> Does the UIP present a well-designed <b>action plan</b> for implementing the major improvement strategies to bring about dramatic improvement?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify Major Improvement Strategies</li> <li>Identify Action Steps</li> </ul>	Action Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Major Improvement Strategies</li> <li>Planning Form</li> </ul>
<input type="radio"/> Does the plan include elements that effectively <b>monitor</b> the impact and <b>progress</b> of the action plan?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Set Performance Targets</li> <li>Identify Interim Measures</li> <li>Identify Implementation Benchmarks</li> </ul>	Action Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Target Setting</li> <li>Planning Form</li> </ul>

<div style="display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: 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;">1</div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <h2 style="margin: 0;">Does the plan investigate the most critical performance areas and prioritize the most urgent performance challenges?</h2> </div> </div>				
Relevant UIP Element	Topic	Does Not Meet Expectations	Partially Meets Expectations	Meets Expectations
<b>Brief Description</b>	Demographics and Context	Does not include a description of the district's demographics or contextual information.	Includes an incomplete description of district demographics and relevant contextual information about the district.	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	Does not include a description of stakeholder involvement in development of UIP.	Provides limited information about who was involved in development of UIP; some stakeholders have been consulted.	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.
<b>Prior Year Targets</b>	Previous Performance Targets	Does not reference the previous year's performance targets.	References the previous year's performance targets, but does not include any reflection or potential adjustments for the current plan.	Reflects on the previous year's performance targets and improvement efforts.
<b>Current Performance</b>	Current Performance	Does not include a description of the district's current performance as measured by applicable performance indicators.	Describes the district's current performance as measured by some applicable performance indicators, but the description is incomplete.	Describes current district performance relative to local, state and federal metrics and expectations (e.g. SPF metrics, ESSA indicators).
<b>Trend Analysis</b>	Notable Trends	Does not identify trends, or trend statements have significant issues. E.g., <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Multiple measures or metrics in one statement</li> <li>trends are outdated (e.g., does not include the most recent year).</li> </ul>	Includes partially developed statements that consistently omit key elements (e.g., measure, metrics, disaggregated groups, trend direction, years, comparison point).	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	Does not provide a description of both whole group and disaggregated student group performance trends.	Provides limited description of performance trends for some, but not all, disaggregated student groups.	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	Does not identify data sources and/or does not include data.	Uses only one data source (e.g., CMAS, local interim assessment).	Includes multiple data sources with an explanation of the sources that were included or excluded for analysis.

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

	Topic	Does Not Meet Expectations	Partially Meets Expectations	Meets Expectations
<b>Priority Performance Challenges</b>	Identification of PPCs	Does not identify PPCs or PPCs have significant issues. E.g., <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PPCs focus on adult actions rather than student outcomes</li> <li>• PPCs are listed as needs or next steps.</li> </ul>	Identifies PPCs focused on student performance, but (a) PPCs are not at the appropriate magnitude or (b) list of PPCs lacks focus (e.g., five 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		Provides a vague or weak rationale for prioritizing the PPCs identified, or includes a plausible PPC but lacks supporting data.	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		Includes indicators that partially address areas where the system is not meeting expectations.	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).
<b>Additional Requirements for Some Districts</b>				
<b>On Watch</b>	Sustained Improvement (Prior Targets)	Does not reflect on previous efforts	Includes a vague reference to impacts from previous improvement efforts.	Reflection on improvement efforts demonstrates understanding of changes needed to support sustained or accelerated improvement.
<b>Late on the clock</b> Year 4 or later	Prior year targets and previous efforts	Does not refer to previous efforts.	Includes a general reference of efforts undertaken. Does not describe gaps in needs or insights from implementation.	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.
<b>EASI Grant</b> <i>For grantees within Exploration or Offered Services</i>	Integration of evaluation	Does not refer to the diagnostic review.	Indicates that a diagnostic review took place, but does not integrate results explicitly into the plan.	Describes how the results of the diagnostic review have informed the improvement plan.
<b>Gifted Education</b>	Prior Year Target	Does not describe progress toward previously identified targets.	Includes an incomplete or unclear description of results.	Describes the performance of gifted education students compared to previously identified targets.
	Performance Challenge	Does not provide a clear description of the needs of gifted education students or include a priority challenge to address those needs.	Includes an incomplete or unclear description of performance needs of gifted students.	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	Does Not Meet Expectations	Partially Meets Expectations	Meets Expectations
Root Causes	Actionable Root Cause	Identified Root Causes are not under the control of the district, do not address a PPC, or are not logically connected to other plan elements.	Identifies Root Causes that do not fully meet all elements of the definition (i.e., under control of district, aimed at the systems level, addresses underlying reason for the identified PPCs).	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	Does not include a description of the selection process.	Describes a vague or incomplete Root Cause selection process (e.g., only references one data source; describes little to no stakeholder engagement).	Explains how Root causes were identified, including, data sources used, stakeholder involvement, and a strong rationale for selecting a Root cause.
<b>Additional Requirements for Some Districts</b>				
Late on the clock <i>Year 4 or later</i>	Reassessment of RCs Over Time	Root Causes are copied from prior plans and do not address past CDE feedback.	Refers to the same or similar Root Cause as in previous plans without critical re-examination. The description does not fully respond to past CDE feedback.	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>	Early Learning Needs Assessment	Does not include a reference to an Early Learning Needs Assessment.	Summarizes findings from an ELNA that does not yet <a href="#">meet the minimum requirements</a> .	Summarizes findings from an ELNA that <a href="#">meets the minimum requirements</a> and commits to next steps based on those findings.
	ELNA for Districts in Turnaround	Early Learning Needs Assessment does not indicate analysis of early elementary achievement data to improve early childhood programs and partnerships.	Early Learning Needs Assessment indicates partial analysis of early elementary achievement data (e.g., limited data sources and/or grade levels) to improve early childhood programs and partnerships.	Early Learning Needs Assessment includes a complete analysis of <a href="#">early elementary student achievement data</a> . 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	Does not reference analysis as a result of activities approved through the EASI application as expected.	Provides an incomplete or unconnected systems analysis as a result of diagnostic processes through EASI grant participation.	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	Does not include an analysis of course taking patterns by disaggregated groups.	Includes an analysis of student course taking patterns, but it is incomplete (e.g., does not examine disaggregated groups).	Includes an analysis of student course taking patterns by disaggregated groups.

<span style="font-size: 2em; border: 1px solid white; border-radius: 50%; padding: 5px 15px; display: inline-block;">3</span> Does the plan identify evidence-based major improvement strategies that are likely to eliminate the root causes?				
Relevant UIP Element	Topic	Does Not Meet Expectations	Partially Meets Expectations	Meets Expectations
<b>Major Improvement Strategies (MIS)</b>	Evidence-Based Strategies	Does not identify MIS or the MISs have significant issues. E.g., <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does not include rationale for selection</li> <li>Does not include evidence base,</li> <li>Does not align to Root Cause</li> <li>The overall strategy is weak.</li> </ul>	Description of MIS provides some evidence or rationale for the effectiveness of the selected MIS, but it is incomplete	Description of Major Improvement Strategy provides clear rationale for the selection of Major Improvement Strategies, including the evidence-base and explanation of why the strategy is a good fit for the district's need, student population and staff capacity.
	Alignment to Root Causes	Does not include evidence base, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does not align to Root Cause</li> <li>The overall strategy is weak.</li> </ul>	Offers a loose or incomplete connection between MIS and Root Causes. May list the same MIS for multiple years without progress or re-examination.	Identifies clearly-defined Major Improvement Strategies that are likely to resolve Root Cause(s) and improve Priority Performance Challenges.
Additional Requirements for Some Districts				
<b>Accountability Clock Strategies</b> <i>For districts on clock</i>	Likelihood of success	MISs lack urgency and are unlikely to result in adequate change in performance.	Provides an incomplete plan and it is unclear that the plan will change performance enough to exit the district from the accountability clock within a reasonable timeframe.	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>	Does not identify a state-required turnaround strategy or lacks detail on selected strategy.	Identifies a required turnaround strategy, but does not include detail in the action plan.	Identifies a state-required turnaround strategy and details within the action plan that are aligned to the needs identified in the data narrative.

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Relevant UIP Element	Topic	Does Not Meet Expectations	Partially Meets Expectations	Meets Expectations
<b>Action Plans</b>	Alignment to MIS	Does not include action steps, action steps are so limited that readers cannot understand what is needed for implementation of MIS, or action steps do not align to identified MIS.	Provides loose alignment between action steps and MIS.	Aligns action steps to MIS.
	Specific and Reasonable Action Steps		Describes theoretical activities rather than specific tasks needed to achieve MIS; sequence of actions is unlikely to be completed in the time frame.	Lists action steps that are thorough, attainable and can be completed within the designated time frame.
	Assigned Resources		Assigns some resources (e.g., personnel, funds) but these may not be adequate to carry out actions.	Assigns adequate resources (e.g., personnel, funds) necessary to implement action steps.
<b>Additional Requirements for Some Districts</b>				
<b>On Watch</b>	Sustained Improvement	Plan reflects little to no progression from or connection to previous improvement efforts.	Actions reflect slight progress from previous improvement efforts.	Action steps build on previous improvement efforts that moved the district off the clock or provide strong rationale for a change in approach.
<b>EASI Grant</b> <i>For grantees within District Designed and Led; Offered Services</i>	Aligned Action Plan	Does not acknowledge activities approved through the EASI application.	Action steps provide a vague or incomplete alignment with activities approved through the EASI grant.	Action plan aligns with activities or services funded by the EASI grant.
<b>Student Course Taking Report</b>	Action to address Inequities in course taking patterns	Does not include action steps to address identified patterns of disparities in disaggregated groups taking challenging coursework.	Includes limited or vague steps to address significant disparities in disaggregated groups taking challenging coursework, but it is not clear that those steps will have an impact.	Includes action steps to address identified patterns of significant disparity in disaggregated groups taking challenging coursework.
<b>Gifted Education</b>	Actions to Support Gifted Students	Does not identify actions that will explicitly support the needs of gifted education students.	Provides a vague or misaligned approach to meeting the performance needs of gifted education students.	Describes an explicit approach to meet the performance needs of gifted education students.



<span style="font-size: 2em; border: 1px solid white; border-radius: 50%; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">5</span> Does the plan include elements to effectively monitor the impact and progress of the action plan?				
Relevant UIP Element	Topic	Does Not Meet Expectations	Partially Meets Expectations	Meets Expectations
<b>Performance Targets</b>	Measures and Metrics	Does not include annual performance targets, omits targets for key indicators (e.g., provides achievement but not graduation targets), or does not align to PPCs.	Lists targets that do not specify measure (assessment method) or do not specify metric(standard of measurement).	Specifies the measure (assessment method) and metric (standard of measurement).
	Quality of Target		Lists targets that are loosely aligned to PPCs, overly general, and/or unlikely to be attainable. The district will likely not meet state and/or federal expectations in a reasonable timeframe.	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).
<b>Interim Measures</b>	Alignment to Target	Does not include Interim Measures to monitor student performance progress or measures are off mark (e.g., written as targets, Implementation Benchmarks,, or action steps).	Lists Interim Measures with an inconsistent or unclear relationship to annual 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 but it is not clear that student progress can be assessed more than once a school year, or measures provide vague expectations for student progress.	Lists Interim Measures that specify expected student progress over the course of the year.
<b>Implementation Benchmarks</b>	Alignment to MIS	Does not include Implementation Benchmarks to monitor implementation progress, or benchmarks are off mark (e.g., written as targets, Interim Measures, or action steps).	Lists Implementation Benchmark(s) without a clear relationship to the Major Improvement Strategy.	Each Major Improvement Strategy has at least one aligned Implementation Benchmark.
	Quality of Implementation Benchmarks		Includes Implementation Benchmarks that measure completion, rather than assessing effectiveness (e.g., a checklist of actions). It may not be clear that implementation can be meaningfully evaluated or mid-course corrections made.	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	Does not include Implementation Benchmarks to monitor implementation progress	Implementation Benchmarks are identified, but they do not cover the span for public posting.	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**

<b>READ Act</b> <i>For districts serving K-3</i>	READ Act Targets (SRD)	Does not specify target(s) for reducing the number of students who have significant reading deficiencies.	Includes reading target(s), but does not focus on reducing the number of students who have significant reading deficiencies.	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)	Does not specify target(s) to ensure that each student achieves grade level expectations in reading by end of grade 3.	Includes reading target(s), but does not ensure that each student achieves grade level expectations by end of grade 3.	Specifies target(s) to ensure that each student achieves grade level expectations in reading by end of grade 3.
<b>Gifted Education</b>	Gifted Education Targets	Does not provide targets for gifted education students.	Provides unclear or misaligned targets for gifted education students.	Describes annual performance targets for gifted education students.
	Gifted Education Interim Measures	Does not provide interim measures for gifted education students.	Provides Interim Measures that are unclear or misaligned to targets for gifted education students.	Describes Interim Measures aligned to annual performance targets for gifted education students.
<b>EASI Grant</b> <i>For grantees within District Designed and Led; Offered Services</i>	Evaluation plan	There is no plan for monitoring the implementation of EASI-funded activities.	Implementation Benchmarks provide a vague or incomplete plan to monitor activities approved through the EASI grant.	Includes Implementation Benchmarks that describe how the district will monitor implementation of activities approved in the EASI grant.