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.

Because of the pause on the 2019-20 state assessment system due to COVID-19, the state has placed a pause on the 2020-21 state accountability system. For additional information about the pause can be found here. Additional guidance for improvement planning for the 2020-21 school year can be referenced here: www.cde.state.co.us/uip/resources. This document will continue to provide the foundation for planning expectations and the review of plans submitted to CDE.

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:

- ○ 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. 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**
○ Does the plan investigate the most critical performance areas and prioritize the most urgent ***performance challenges***?	• Gather and Organize Data • Review Performance • Describe Notable Trends • Prioritize Performance Challenges	Section III: Data Narrative	• Brief Description • Prior Year Targets • Current Performance • Trend Analysis • Priority Performance Challenges
○ Does the plan identify ***root causes*** that explain the magnitude of performance challenges?	• Identify Root Causes	Section III: Data Narrative Section IV: Action Plans	• Root Causes
○ Does the plan identify evidenced-based ***major improvement strategies*** that are likely to eliminate the root causes?	• Identify Major Improvement Strategies	Section IV: Action Plans	• Major Improvement Strategies
○ Does the UIP present a well-designed ***action plan*** for implementing the major improvement strategies to bring about dramatic improvement?	• Identify Major Improvement Strategies • Identify Action Steps	Section IV: Action Plans	• Major Improvement Strategies • Planning Form
○ Does the plan include elements that effectively ***monitor*** the impact and ***progress*** of the action plan?	• Set Performance Targets • Identify Interim Measures • Identify Implementation Benchmarks	Section IV: Action Plans	• 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 the current plan.
Notable Trends	Trend Statements	Consistently describes both positive and negative trends for performance, including key elements (e.g., measure, metric, disaggregated groups, 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
Additional Requirements for Some Schools in Data Narrative, Notable Trends, Priority Performance Challenges		
On Watch	Sustained Improvement (Prior Targets)	Reflection on improvement efforts demonstrate understanding of changes to support sustained or accelerated improvement.
Late on the clock **Year 4 or later**	Prior year targets and previous efforts	Includes a description of previous actions to address identified challenges and their degree of effectiveness (e.g., successes, gaps). This may include required Turnaround actions.
EASI Grant *For grantees within Exploration or Offered Services*	Integration of evaluation	Includes updates to the data narrative based on the results of the diagnostic review, pathway planning or pathway implementation process.
READ Act *For schools serving K-3*	K-3 Literacy Trends	Describes current K-3 literacy performance – inclusive of READ Act assessment data. Data are disaggregated by grade level when reportable.
	Previous Performance Targets	Describes previous year's K-3 literacy performance targets specific to identified READ Act assessment. Data are disaggregated by grade level, by students who have significant reading deficiencies, and by students that achieved grade level expectations in reading when reportable.

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*	
Comprehensive Early Literacy Grant	Current Performance	Describes current K-3 literacy performance – inclusive of READ Act assessment data. Data are disaggregated by grade level and reflected upon the ELG funding goal criteria.
	Prior year ELG Goals and previous efforts (Trends)	Includes reflection and identifies trends related to all three goals designated within the ELG as well as the Literacy Evaluation Tool.
21st Century Community Learning Centers *For grantees*	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 Targeted[1] 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).
Title I Schoolwide Program (if documenting Schoolwide requirements in UIP)	Stakeholder Engagement	Provides a description of how stakeholders (e.g., school leaders, teachers, parents) were involved in the development of the plan.
	Needs Assessment	Provides the outcomes of the school's comprehensive needs assessment, as well as a description of the data sources used in the process. Findings should include detailed analysis of all student subgroups; an examination of student, teacher, school and community strengths and needs; and a summary of priorities that will be addressed in the schoolwide plan. For more information on Schoolwide requirements, see the Program Plan Requirements and Rubric.

[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.

2		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		
Late on the clock Year 4 or later	Reassessment of RCs Over Time	Root cause analysis reflects a current examination of causes.
Course Taking Analysis *For secondary schools. CDE will not check until TSDL collection is reopened.*	Analysis of course taking patterns	Includes an analysis of student course taking patterns by disaggregated groups.
Early Learning Needs Assessment *For K-3 serving schools on clock*	Early Learning Needs Assessment	Describes an analysis of the needs assessment that considers the required elements and provides an indication of what the school is doing with the results. Additional resources for meeting this requirement can be found: http://www.cde.state.co.us/early/elna
EASI Grant *For grantees within Exploration or Offered Services*	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 Targeted[2] Schools	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.

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3		Does the plan identify evidence-based major improvement strategies that are likely to eliminate the root causes? *Applicable Plan Elements: Major Improvement Strategies*
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 *For schools on clock*	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.
	Late on the clock: After SBE Action	Includes strategies that are aligned with state board directed action. If applicable, provides a clear role for external partners in the description of the major improvement strategy.
	Year 4 Description of Potential Pathway	Provides a full description of the school and district's exploration of all potential pathways. This includes identification of a preferred pathway and a rationale for why each option has potential to work or not.
	Turnaround strategy *For Turnaround Plan Types*	Identifies a state-required turnaround strategy and details within the action plan that are aligned to the needs identified in the data narrative.
	For Turnaround strategy serving K-3	The school identifies research-based strategies focused on early learning addressing areas identified in the needs assessment.
ESSA School Improvement – Comprehensive Schools and Targeted/ Additional Targeted[3] 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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4		Does the plan present a well-designed plan for implementing the major improvement strategies to bring about dramatic improvement? *Applicable Plan Elements: Action Plan*
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	Action to address Inequities in course taking patterns	Includes action steps to address identified patterns of significant disparities in disaggregated groups taking challenging coursework.
On Watch	Sustained Improvement	Action steps reflect alignment and urgency building upon previous improvement efforts that moved the school off the clock.
Family Engagement Activities *For schools on clock*	Actions Promoting Family Engagement	Includes high leverage action steps to increase parent engagement at the school that are aligned with PTA standards.
READ Act *For schools serving K-3*	Strategies to Address K-3 Reading	Identifies reading strategies currently implemented to address K-3 students with significant reading deficiencies and provides evidence that strategies will have meaningful impact.
Comprehensive Early Literacy Grant	Strategies to Address Evidence Based Reading	Identifies reading strategies currently implemented through ELG to address K-3 reading outcomes, provides evidence that strategies will have meaningful impact, and aligns to areas identified as opportunities within the literacy evaluation tool.
21st Century Community Learning Centers *For grantees*	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 *For grantees within District Design and Led and Offered Services*	Aligned Action Plan	Action steps provide alignment with activities approved through the EASI grant.

4 cont.	Does the plan present a well-designed plan for implementing the major improvement strategies to bring about dramatic improvement? *Applicable Plan Elements: Action Plan*	
ESSA School Improvement -- Comprehensive Schools and Additional Targeted[4] Schools	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).
Title I Schoolwide Program (if documenting schoolwide requirements in UIP)	Focus on entire educational program	Action steps describe the strategies the school will use to upgrade the entire educational program to improve the achievement of the lowest-achieving students.
	Timeline	Actions steps include a description of how and when the strategies will be implemented.
	Alignment to CNA	Action steps address areas identified in the comprehensive needs assessment.
	Focus on Standards, Strategies and Student Needs	Action steps describe how strategies will: • Provide opportunities for all children, including each of the subgroups of students (as defined in section 1111(c)(2)) to meet the challenging State academic standards; • Use methods and instructional strategies that strengthen the academic program in the school, increase the amount and quality of learning time, and help provide an enriched and accelerated curriculum, which may include programs, activities, and courses necessary to provide a well-rounded education; and • Address the needs of all children in the school, but particularly the needs of those at risk of not meeting the challenging State academic standards Note: See schoolwide guidance on activities that are allowable under the Schoolwide Program. For more information on Schoolwide requirements, see the Program Plan Requirements and Rubric.

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5		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 Priority Performance Challenge(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 *For schools serving K-3*	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.
Comprehensive Early Literacy Grant	ELG Funding Target (K-3 Reduction of SRD)	Includes an above or well-above target for reducing number of students with significant reading deficiencies in K-3 using the identified READ Act assessment.
	ELG Funding Target (Grade Level Expectations)	Includes target to ensure each student achieves grade level expectations by end of grade 3 with an above or well-above trajectory to ensure ambitious, but attainable results.
	ELG Funding Target (Growth)	Includes target for moving students in below or well below category up a tier by end of year in K-3 on the identified READ Act assessment.
EASI Grant *For grantees within District Design, Led, Offered Services*	Evaluation plan	Includes implementation benchmarks that describe how the school will monitor implementation of activities approved in the EASI grant.

5 cont.	Does the plan include elements to effectively monitor the impact and progress of the action plan? *Applicable Plan Elements: Targets, Interim Measures, Implementation Benchmarks*	
ESSA School Improvement -- Comprehensive Schools and Targeted/ Additional Targeted[5] Schools	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.
Title I Schoolwide Program (if documenting schoolwide requirements in UIP)	Evaluation of Impact	Describes how the school, with assistance from the LEA, will annually evaluate the implementation of, and results achieved by, the schoolwide program, using data from the State's annual assessments and other indicators of academic achievement to determine whether the schoolwide program has been effective in increasing the achievement of students in meeting the State's academic standards, particularly for those students who had been furthest from achieving the standards.
	Process for Adjustments	Describes how the school will revise the plan, as necessary, based on the results of the evaluation, to ensure continuous improvement of students in the schoolwide program. For more information on Schoolwide requirements, see the Program Plan Requirements and Rubric.

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