

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). The criteria in this document sit in the “meets expectation” column of the rubric.

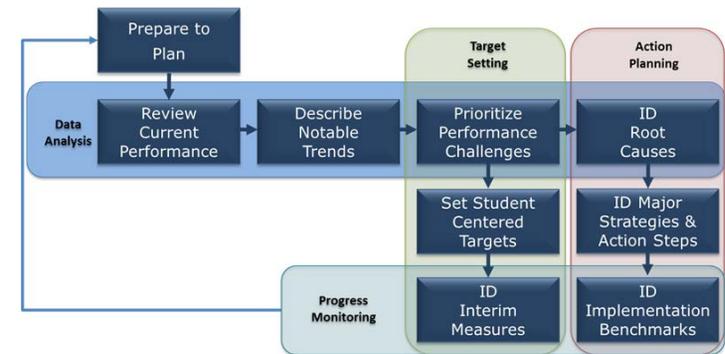
General Directions

- ❑ Access the pre-populated report, District Summary and Requirements, through [UIP Online System](#) to determine the district’s unique accountability and program requirements.
- ❑ Use the Meets Expectations and Meets Expectations at a High Level columns to guide the process.

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 the criteria in the two far right columns (Meets Expectations and Meets Expectations at a High Level). 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.

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 | |
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| | | 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 <h2 style="margin: 0;">Does the plan investigate the most critical performance areas and prioritize the most urgent performance challenges?</h2> </div> | | | | | |
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| Relevant UIP Element | Topic | Does Not Meet Expectations | Partially Meets Expectations | Meets Expectations | Meets Expectations at a High Level |
| Brief Description | 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) | Provides a response to the program requirement that can be used as a model for other districts based on thoroughness. |
| | 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. | |
| Prior Year Targets | 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. | |
| Current Performance | 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). | |
| Trend Analysis | Notable Trends | Does not include, or trend statements have significant issues. Example: Multiple measures or metrics in one statement (e.g., %P&A to MSS, trends are outdated (e.g., does not include the most recent year). | Includes partially developed statements that consistently miss 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 measure, metric, group, direction and comparison point, as appropriate for available n-counts. | |
| | Data and disaggregation | Does not provide a description of performance trends for all students and disaggregated student groups. | Provides limited description of performance trends for some, but not all, disaggregated student groups. | Describes performance trends of all students and disaggregated groups of students, when count allows for public reporting. (When the number of students (n) is too small for public | |

District Quality
Criteria Rubric



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| | | | | reporting an explanation for that student group is provided.) | |
| | Data Sources | | 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. | |
| Priority Performance Challenges | Identification of PPCs | Does not identify PPCs or PPCs have significant issues. Example: PPCs focused on adult actions. Example: PPCs listed as needs or next steps. | Identifies PPCs focused on student performance, but not at the appropriate magnitude or lacks focus (e.g., five PPCs). | Identifies a limited number (e.g., 3 or fewer) of student-centered performance challenges that focus district's improvement efforts (e.g., appropriate magnitude). | |
| | Selection | | Provides a vague or weak rationale for prioritizing the PPCs 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 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). | |
| Additional Requirements for Some Districts in Data Narrative, Notable Trends, Priority Performance Challenges | | | | | |
| On Watch | Sustained Improvement (Prior Targets) | No reflection on previous efforts | A vague reference to impacts from previous improvement efforts. | Reflection on improvement efforts demonstrate understanding of changes to support sustained or accelerated improvement. | Provides a thorough response to the program requirement that can be used as a model for other districts. |
| Late on the clock Year 4 or later | Prior year targets and previous efforts | Does not include a reference to previous efforts. | A general reference of efforts undertaken. Does not describe gaps in needs or insights from implementation. | 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 <i>For grantees within Exploration or Offered Services</i> | Integration of evaluation | Does not include reference to the diagnostic review. | References that a diagnostic review took place, but does not integrate results explicitly into the plan. | Integrates the results of the diagnostic review into the improvement plan. | |
| Gifted Education | Prior Years Target | Does not include a description of progress toward previously identified targets. | There may an incomplete or unclear description of results. | Describes the performance of gifted education students compared to previously identified targets. | |

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| Performance Challenge | Does not provide a clear priority challenge for gifted education students. | There is an incomplete or unclear description of performance needs of gifted students. | Explicitly identifies for gifted education a student-centered performance challenge describing a strategic focus for district improvement efforts, either as a part of a larger district challenge or exclusively for gifted education students. |
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| 2 | Does the plan identify root causes which explain the magnitude of the performance challenges? | | | | |
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| Relevant UIP Element | Topic | Does Not Meet Expectations | Partially Meets Expectations | Meets Expectations | Meets Expectations at a High Level |
| Root Causes | Actionable Root Cause | Root causes do not meet the definition, or are removed from other plan elements | Identifies root causes that do not fully meet definition (e.g., under control of district, aimed at the systems level, addresses underlying reason for student performance). | Identifies root causes that are under the control of the district, aimed at the systems level, and target the underlying reasons for the priority performance challenge(s) | Provides a response to the program requirement that can be used as a model for other districts based on thoroughness. |
| | 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; few stakeholders). | Explains how root causes were identified, including, data sources used, stakeholder involvement, and the rationale for selecting a root cause. | |
| Additional Requirements for Some Districts | | | | | |
| Late on the clock <small>Year 4 or later</small> | Reassessment of RCs Over Time | Root causes are problematic and do not address past CDE feedback. | Refers to the same 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. | Provides a thorough response to the program requirement that can be used as a model for other districts. |
| Early Learning Needs Assessment <small>For K-3 serving districts in Priority Improvement or Turnaround</small> | <i>Early Learning Needs Assessment</i> | Does not include a reference to an Early Learning Needs Assessment. | Summarizes findings from an ELNA that does not yet meet the minimum requirements . | 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 does not indicate analysis of early elementary | Early Learning Needs Assessment indicates partial analysis of early elementary achievement data (e.g., limited data sources and/or grade | Early Learning Needs Assessment includes a complete analysis of early elementary student achievement data . Plan identifies appropriate research-based next | |

District Quality
Criteria Rubric



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| | | achievement data to improve early childhood programs and partnerships. | levels) to improve early childhood programs and partnerships. | 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. | |

| <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="background-color: #f4a460; border-radius: 50%; width: 40px; height: 40px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin-right: 10px;">3</div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>Does the plan identify evidence-based major improvement strategies that are likely to eliminate the root causes?</p> </div> </div> | | | | | |
|--|---------------------------|---|--|---|---|
| Relevant UIP Element | Topic | Does Not Meet Expectations | Partially Meets Expectations | Meets Expectations | Meets Expectations at a High Level |
| Major Improvement Strategies (MIS) | Evidence-Based Strategies | Does not identify MIS or the strategies have significant issues (e.g., rationale for selection, evidence base, alignment to root cause are missing and the overall strategy is weak). | Provides some evidence or rationale for the effectiveness of the selected MIS, but it is incomplete. | 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. | Provides a response to the program requirement that can be used as a model for other districts based on thoroughness. |
| Additional Requirements for Some Districts in Major Improvement Strategies | | | | | |

District Quality
Criteria Rubric



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| Accountability Clock Strategies <i>For districts on clock</i> | Likelihood of success | Lacks urgency and does not identify MIS that will result in adequate change in performance. | Provides an incomplete plan that has a loose connection to changing performance enough to exit the district from the accountability clock within a reasonable timeframe. | Conveys a sense of urgency and has a likelihood of resulting in adequate change in performance for the district to exit the accountability clock within a reasonable timeframe. | Provides a thorough response to the program requirement that can be used as a model for other districts. |
| | Turnaround strategy For Turnaround | 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. | |

| 4 | | Does the plan present a well-designed plan for implementing the major improvement strategies to bring about dramatic improvement? | | | |
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| Relevant UIP Element | Topic | Does Not Meet Expectations | Partially Meets Expectations | Meets Expectations | Meets Expectations at a High Level |
| Action Plans | Alignment to MIS | Does not include action steps or they are so limited that readers cannot understand what is needed for implementation of MIS. | Provides loose alignment between action steps and MIS. | Aligns action steps to MIS. | Identifies high leverage action steps that can be used as a model for other districts. |
| | Specific and Reasonable Action Steps | | Describes theoretical activities rather than specific tasks needed to achieve MIS; provides a sequence that is not logical. | Lists action steps that are thorough, attainable and can be completed within the designated time frame. | |
| | Plan Duration | | Outlines a plan that does not at least cover the spans for public posting. | Guides plan implementation for the duration of plan public posting (e.g. two years for districts exercising biennial flexibility). | |
| | Assigned Resources | | Assigns some resources (e.g., personnel, funds) but at too broad a level to carry out actions. | Assigns adequate resources (e.g., personnel, funds) necessary to implement action steps. | |
| Additional Requirements for Some Districts | | | | | |
| On Watch | Sustained Improvement | There is little or loose connection to previous improvement efforts. | Actions reflect a general theme from previous improvement efforts. | Action steps build upon previous improvement efforts that moved the district off the clock or provides strong rationale for change in data analysis. | Provides a response to the program requirement that can be used as a model for other districts based on thoroughness. |
| EASI Grant <i>For grantees within</i> | Aligned Action Plan | Does not reference activities approved through the EASI application as expected. | Action steps provide a vague or incomplete alignment with activities approved through the EASI grant. | Action plan aligns with activities approved through the EASI grant. | |

District Quality Criteria Rubric



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| <i>District Designed and Led; Offered Services</i> | | | | |
| Student Course Taking Report | 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 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 disparities in disaggregated groups taking challenging coursework. |
| Gifted Education | 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. |

| 5 | | 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 | Meets Expectations at a High Level |
| Performance Targets | Measures and Metrics | Does not include annual performance targets or is missing big sections (e.g., provides achievement but not graduation targets). | Lists targets that do not specify measures or do not specify metrics. | Specifies the measure (assessment method) and metric (standard of measurement). | Identifies high leverage action steps that can be used as a model for other districts. |
| | Quality of Target | | Lists targets that are general and/or not likely to be attainable. The school 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). | |
| Interim Measures | Alignment to Target | Does not include benchmarks to monitor implementation progress or benchmarks are off mark (e.g., written as targets or student performance | 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 strategies on student outcomes multiple times per year. | |
| | Quality of Interim Measures | | Lists interim measures but it is not clear student progress can be assessed more than once a school year or provides vague expectations for student progress. | Lists interim measures that specifies expected student progress over the course of the year. | |

District Quality
Criteria Rubric



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| Implementation Benchmarks | Alignment to MIS | expectations 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 on Benchmarks | | Includes implementation benchmarks that use a checklist approach, rather than assessing effectiveness. It may not be clear that implementation can be assessed or mid-course corrections made. | Plan provides 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. | |
| Additional Requirements for Some Districts | | | | | |
| READ Act <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. | Provides a response to the program requirement that can be used as a model for other districts based on thoroughness. |
| | 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. | |
| Gifted Education | 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 unclear or misaligned interim measures to targets for gifted education students. | 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 | There is no implementation monitoring plan of approved EASI activities. | Implementation benchmarks provide a vague or incomplete strategy 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. | |