

## Unified Improvement Plan Quality Criteria: School-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 school level UIPs, especially for identified schools (i.e., Priority Improvement, Turnaround, On Watch, ESSA Comprehensive Support). This document contains the criteria at the “meets expectations” level of the rubric; see full rubric for additional detail.

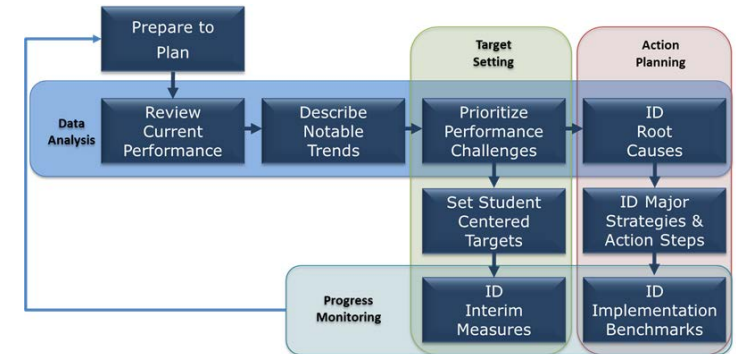
### Directions for use

- Access School Summary and Requirements tab in the [UIP Online System](#) to determine the school’s unique accountability and program requirements.
- Use the criteria described in this document as guidance for strong improvement planning within 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 of the Quality Criteria Rubric

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. Schools 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 schools are labeled separately. Greyed out sections will not be reviewed by CDE during the current school year.



This icon highlights federal school improvement planning requirements for schools identified for Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CS).

### UIP Element acronyms that may be 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="checkbox"/> 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="checkbox"/> 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Root Causes</li> </ul>
		Action Plans	
<input type="checkbox"/> 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="checkbox"/> 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="checkbox"/> 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: space-between;"> <span style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold; border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; padding: 5px 10px;">1</span> <span style="font-weight: bold;">Does the plan investigate the most critical performance areas and prioritize the most urgent performance challenges?</span> </div>		
Relevant UIP Element	Topic	Meets Expectations
<b>Brief Description</b>	Demographics and Context	Includes a description of school’s demographics and relevant contextual information about school (e.g., number of students served; student demographics, including disaggregated groups)
	Stakeholder Input and Involvement <span style="color: blue; font-weight: bold; border: 1px solid blue; border-radius: 50%; padding: 2px;">CS</span>	Describes how a variety of stakeholders (including principals and other school leaders, teachers and school staff, parents and families, and the School Accountability Committee) were meaningfully involved in UIP development.
<b>Prior Year Targets</b>	Previous Performance Targets	Reflects on the previous year’s performance targets and improvement efforts.
<b>Current Performance</b>	Current Performance <span style="color: blue; font-weight: bold; border: 1px solid blue; border-radius: 50%; padding: 2px;">CS</span>	Describes current school performance relative to local, state and federal metrics and expectations (e.g. SPF metrics, ESSA indicators).
<b>Trend Analysis</b>	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 <span style="color: blue; font-weight: bold; border: 1px solid blue; border-radius: 50%; padding: 2px;">CS</span>	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.
<b>Priority Performance Challenges</b>	Identification of PPCs <span style="color: blue; font-weight: bold; border: 1px solid blue; border-radius: 50%; padding: 2px;">CS</span>	Identifies a limited number (e.g., 3 or fewer) of student-centered Priority Performance Challenges of appropriate magnitude to focus the school’s improvement efforts.
	Selection <span style="color: blue; font-weight: bold; border: 1px solid blue; border-radius: 50%; padding: 2px;">CS</span>	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 <span style="color: blue; font-weight: bold; border: 1px solid blue; border-radius: 50%; padding: 2px;">CS</span>	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 Schools		
<b>On Watch</b>	Sustained Improvement (Prior Targets)	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	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 who received a diagnostic review</i>	Integration of evaluation	Describes how the results of the diagnostic review have informed the improvement plan.
<b>READ Act</b> <i>For schools serving K-3</i>	K-3 READ Act Data Analysis	Describes K-3 READ Act assessment performance for the previous two school years. Data are disaggregated, when reportable, by grade level, by percentage of students who have significant reading deficiencies, and by percentage of students who achieved grade level expectations in reading.
	Previous READ Act Assessment Targets	Reports and reflects on previous year's K-3 literacy performance targets specific to identified READ Act assessment.
<b>Comprehensive Early Literacy Grant</b>	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.
<b>ESSA School Improvement – Comprehensive Schools and Targeted/ Additional Targeted<sup>1</sup> Schools</b>	Multiple opportunities for stakeholder engagement. 	Describes stakeholders as active partners in multiple aspects of plan development (e.g., collaborating on data review to identify trends, reviewing reasons for school improvement identification, helping use data trends to prioritize improvement strategies).
	Stakeholders and Identification 	UIP clearly demonstrates that stakeholders were made aware of reasons for ESSA identification, reviewed performance of related indicators, and provided input on strategies or interventions related to identification.
	Prioritization (PPCs) 	UIP clearly and explicitly aligns at least one Priority Performance Challenge to indicators triggering ESSA identification (Low Graduation, Lowest 5%, Low Participation).
<b>Title I Schoolwide Program</b> <i>(if documenting Schoolwide requirements in UIP)</i>	Stakeholder Engagement	Provides a description of how stakeholders (e.g., school leaders, teachers, parents) were meaningfully 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. See this page for more information on Schoolwide Plan requirements: <a href="https://www.cde.state.co.us/fedprograms/ti/a_sw">https://www.cde.state.co.us/fedprograms/ti/a_sw</a>

<sup>1</sup> 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?

Relevant UIP Element	Topic	Meets Expectations
Root Causes	Actionable Root Cause	Identifies Root Causes that are under the control of the school, 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.
<b>Additional Requirements for Some Schools</b>		
Late on the clock <i>Year 4 or later</i>	Reassessment of RCs Over Time	Root Cause analysis reflects a current examination of causes.
Early Learning Needs Assessment <i>For K-3 serving schools in Priority Improvement or Turnaround</i>	<i>Early Learning Needs Assessment</i>	Summarizes findings from an ELNA that <a href="#">meets the minimum requirements</a> and commits to next steps based on those findings.
	<i>ELNA for Schools in Turnaround</i>	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 School	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.

<div style="display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: space-between;"> <span style="font-size: 2em; border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; padding: 5px 15px;">3</span> <span style="font-weight: bold; font-size: 1.2em;">Does the plan identify evidence-based major improvement strategies that are likely to eliminate the root causes?</span> </div>		
Relevant UIP Element	Topic	Meets Expectations
<b>Major Improvement Strategies (MIS)</b>	Evidence-Based Strategies  	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 school's need, student population and staff capacity.
	Alignment to root causes  	Identifies clearly-defined strategies that are likely to resolve root cause(s) and improve priority performance challenges.
Additional Requirements for Some Schools		
<b>READ Act</b> <i>For schools serving K-3</i>	Strategies to Address K-3 Reading	Includes evidence-based strategies that will likely have meaningful impact for K-3 students identified as having significant reading deficiencies.
<b>Accountability Clock Strategies</b> <i>For schools 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 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 <i>For Turnaround Plan Type</i>	Identifies a state-required turnaround strategy and articulates an action plan that is aligned to the needs identified in the data narrative.
<b>ESSA School Improvement – Comprehensive Schools and Targeted/Additional Targeted<sup>2</sup> Schools</b>	Alignment to identification  	UIP clearly and explicitly aligns at least one major improvement strategy to indicators triggering ESSA identification (Low Graduation, Lowest 5%, Low Participation).




<sup>2</sup> 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.

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.
<b>Additional Requirements for Some Schools</b>		
On Watch	Sustained Improvement	Action steps build on previous improvement efforts that moved the school off the clock or provide strong rationale for a change in approach.
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 Family, School and Community Partnering standards.
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 <sup>3</sup>	Action to address Inequities in course taking patterns	Includes action steps to address identified patterns of significant disparity in disaggregated groups taking challenging coursework.
Title I Schoolwide Program <i>(if documenting schoolwide requirements in UIP)</i>	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-performing 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 opportunities for all students to meet standards, align to and implement identified Major Improvement Strategies, and address the learning needs of all students (with particular emphasis on students needing the most support).  See <a href="#">schoolwide guidance</a> on activities that are allowable under the Schoolwide Program.  For more information on Schoolwide requirements, see the <a href="#">Program Plan Requirements and Rubric</a> .

<sup>3</sup> Shading indicates this requirement will not be reviewed by CDE for 2021-22.

5 Does the plan include elements to effectively monitor the impact and progress of the action plan?		
Relevant UIP Element	Topic	Meets Expectations
<b>Performance Targets</b>	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).
<b>Interim Measures</b>	Measures and Metrics	Specifies Interim Measures that identify the measure and metric.
<b>Interim Measures</b>	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.
<b>Implementation Benchmarks</b>	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).
<b>Additional Requirements for Some Schools</b>		
<b>READ Act</b> <i>For schools serving K-3</i>	READ Act Targets (SRD)	Specifies ambitious and attainable target(s) as measured by the school'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.



<b>Comprehensive Early Literacy Grant</b>	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.
<b>EASI Grant</b> <i>For grantees within District Designed and Led; Offered Services</i>	Evaluation plan	Includes implementation benchmarks that describe how the school will monitor implementation of activities approved in the EASI grant.
<b>Title I Schoolwide Program</b> (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 <a href="#">Program Plan Requirements and Rubric</a> .