



Streamlined Unified Improvement Plan Template Quality Criteria: District-Level

Overview

The Unified Improvement Plan (UIP) provides districts and schools with a consistent and streamlined template for capturing improvement planning efforts that increase student learning and that satisfy multiple strands of state and federal planning requirements. CDE developed these Quality Criteria to offer guidance for creating high-quality improvement plans, to clarify requirements for district-level UIPs and to guide the state and local review of UIPs for identified districts (i.e., Improvement, Priority Improvement, Turnaround, On Watch) or districts serving schools that are ESSA-identified. This document outlines the criteria for “Meeting Expectations” on each of these requirements.

Directions for use

- Use the criteria for “All districts” in this document to guide strong improvement planning within the UIP.
- Consult the “Plan Details” section of the district’s UIP Homepage in the [UIP Online System](#) to determine the district’s unique accountability and program requirements.
- Alternatively, use the district’s state and/or federal identifications and other context (e.g., grades served, grants awarded) to identify the criteria described in this document that the district is responsible for satisfying.

The Top Three Guiding Questions

The “Top Three” guiding questions outline the major elements of the improvement planning process. The questions build upon each other and facilitate alignment across the entire plan.

1. Does the plan identify high-leverage **performance priorities and targets**?
2. Does the plan focus on **evidence-based strategies** to resolve **systemic root causes** and drive improvement on identified priorities?
3. Does the plan outline a coherent approach to **implementation and adjustment** of the identified strategies?



The graphic above illustrates two ways of understanding how these Top Three elements fit together.

- **Planning Process:** The UIP is “backwards planned” from identified priorities and targets to create a road map for improvement efforts during the year.
- **Implementation:** Districts implement the actions outlined in the UIP to meet milestones, put strategies into practice, and ultimately improve student outcomes in prioritized performance areas.

Structure of the Quality Criteria

Organized by the “Top Three,” this document outlines the various UIP elements and includes criteria that, if addressed, lead to a well-developed improvement plan. Most of these criteria blend best practice with state and/or federal accountability requirements. Districts should aim to meet or exceed the criteria listed in this document. The most effective plans build a vision for improvement that remains coherent across each section of the plan: the root causes and strategies are aligned to identified priorities and targets, and the action plan is deliberately sequenced to put the identified strategies into practice. Requirements that only apply to some districts are labeled separately (see the “Key to Icons” table below). *Grayed out sections will not be reviewed by CDE during the current school year.*

“Top Three” Guiding Question	Does the plan identify high-leverage performance priorities and targets?	Does the plan focus on evidence-based strategies to resolve systemic root causes and drive improvement on identified priorities?	Does the plan outline a coherent approach to implementation and adjustment of the identified strategies?
<i>Plan Elements within Streamlined Template</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Student Performance Priorities ● Annual Target Setting ● Interim Targets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Root Causes with validation ● Major Improvement Strategies (including Evidence Base) ● Associated Resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Implementation Milestones ● Action steps

Assurances within the Online UIP

Several planning elements have been identified that can be addressed as assurances to reduce the length of narrative in the UIP. Within the online system, assurances will be customized to each school/district, based on their identification(s), students served, or other contextual factors.

Districts are responsible for fulfilling the requirements expressed in these assurances. While artifacts and evidence related to these assurances are not required to be included in the UIP, sites may be asked to provide these artifacts during a state or federal monitoring process. Districts are responsible for ensuring the completion of actions associated with these expectations. These may also be valuable artifacts to share with CDE staff or external providers that are providing technical assistance to the site.

If the district cannot attest to the completion of any of these assurances, the UIP should include a narrative explanation of how the district will address this assurance moving forward.

2024-25 UIP Template Shifts

In 2024-25, districts will have the option of working in the traditional UIP template or in a new, streamlined UIP template. This document aligns to the streamlined template.









NOTE: Districts serving schools identified for Comprehensive Support (CS) or Additional Targeted Support (A-TS) through the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) are responsible for satisfying a specific set of federal requirements in their district UIP. Additional requirements that are specific to districts serving schools with federal identifications are called out with these buttons (see “Key to Icons” at right) in the “Who must address this requirement?” column of the Quality Criteria tables below.

Key to Icons Used in Quality Criteria tables

	All Districts
	Districts submitting Improvement Plans
	Districts submitting Priority Improvement Plans
	Districts Submitting Turnaround Plans
	Districts on Year 4 of the state Accountability Clock
	Districts serving schools identified for Comprehensive Support through Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) <i>*See Note at left*</i>
	Districts serving schools identified for Additional Targeted Support through ESSA
	Districts with schools that serve grades K-3
	Districts with schools that serve grades 9-12
	Districts that have received an Empowering Action for School Improvement (EASI) Grant for District Strategic Planning

Assurances within the Online UIP

Who must address this requirement?	Topic	Criteria
DATA ANALYSIS		
	Data Analysis	<p>The Unified Improvement Plan is the result of thorough data analysis.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data was analyzed from both local and state sources. • Data was disaggregated by student demographics (e.g., students with IEPs, Free & Reduced Lunch eligibility, Multilingual Learners, race/ethnicity), as applicable. • Current district performance was analyzed relative to local, state and federal metrics and expectations (e.g. SPF metrics, ESSA indicators).
	Data Analysis <i>Math Acceleration K-12</i>	Math Acceleration assessment performance data from at least the last two school years has been analyzed. Data were disaggregated by grade level, performance levels, and student demographics (e.g., Free & Reduced Lunch, IEP, Multilingual Learners).
	Data Analysis <i>READ Act</i>	K-3 READ Act assessment performance data from at least the last two school years has been analyzed. Data were disaggregated by grade level, by the percentage of students who have significant reading deficiencies, and by the percentage of students who achieved grade level expectations in reading.
STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT		
	Stakeholder Input on Plan Development	The plan was developed in partnership with stakeholders, including district and school leaders, teachers, and the District Accountability Committee (DAC).
	Stakeholder Progress Monitoring	The district will involve stakeholders—at a minimum, the District Accountability Committee—in progress monitoring the implementation of the plan throughout the school year.
	Local Board Adoption	The local board reviewed and adopted the plan.

Quality Criteria continue on the next page

1			Does the plan identify high-leverage performance priorities and targets?	
Who must address this requirement?		Topic	Meets Expectations	
STUDENT PERFORMANCE PRIORITIES				
ALL	Identification of Student Performance Priorities	The plan identifies a limited number of Student Performance Priorities (3 or fewer) of appropriate magnitude to focus the district’s improvement efforts.		
	Address Indicators	Student Performance Priorities identify performance metrics that are meaningfully related to indicators on the performance framework. Focusing on these priorities is likely to increase performance in areas of need identified in the district’s data analysis (e.g., areas where the district is not yet meeting state or federal expectations).		
Evidence & Rationale for Prioritization				
ALL	Evidence for Prioritization	The plan presents compelling evidence that demonstrates the need to focus on the identified Student Performance Priorities (e.g., positive and negative performance trends, district performance relative to state and local expectations).		
	Rationale for Prioritization	The plan includes strong rationale for the selected Student Performance Priorities. This may include a number of contextual factors, such as enrollment shifts, local strategic plan priorities, and previous improvement efforts.		
K-3	Rationale for Prioritization <i>READ Act</i>	The rationale describes performance patterns that led to prioritizing early literacy. If the data analysis does not support prioritizing early literacy, then an explanation is included to document rationale for the district-wide direction.		
I PI T	Rationale for Prioritization <i>Math Acceleration K-12</i>	The rationale describes performance patterns that led to prioritizing math. If the data analysis does not support prioritizing math, then an explanation is included to document rationale for the district-wide direction.		
Quality Criteria continue on the next page				

1	Does the plan identify high-leverage performance priorities and targets?	
Who must address this requirement?	Topic	Meets Expectations
TARGET SETTING		
ALL	Measures and Metrics	Annual Targets specify the measure (e.g., CMAS results, graduation data) and metric (e.g., mean scale score, graduation rate) that will be used to gauge progress on Student Performance Priorities.
	Quality of Target	The plan sets ambitious, attainable targets that align to the Student Performance Priorities (SPP). Where possible, targets are set using the same measure as SPP (e.g., if the SPP is focused on SAT mean scale score, target is focused on SAT mean scale score).
K-3	Targets <i>READ Act (Grade Level Expectations)</i>	The plan sets target(s) to ensure that each student achieves grade level expectations in reading by the end of grade 3.
	Targets <i>READ Act (SRD)</i>	The plan sets ambitious and attainable target(s) for reducing the number of students who have significant reading deficiencies, as measured by the district’s READ Act assessment.
<div style="display: flex; flex-direction: column; align-items: center;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 5px;">I</div> <div style="display: flex; gap: 5px;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">PI</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">T</div> </div> </div>	Targets for below grade level OR struggling students <i>Math Acceleration K-12</i>	The plan sets ambitious and attainable target(s) for reducing the number of students who are below grade level expectations or are struggling in math, as measured by local or state assessments.
Quality Criteria continue on the next page		



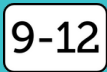
1	Does the plan identify high-leverage performance priorities and targets?	
Who must address this requirement?	Topic	Meets Expectations
<i>Interim Targets</i>		
ALL	Alignment to Annual Target	The plan identifies Interim Targets that are aligned to an Annual Target to assess the impact of the Major Improvement Strategies on student performance during the year.
	Quality of Interim Targets	Interim Targets specify expected student progress more than once during the year.
<i>Quality Criteria continue on the next page</i>		

2 Does the plan focus on evidence-based strategies to resolve systemic root causes and drive improvement on identified priorities?		
Who must address this requirement?	Topic	Meets Expectations
ROOT CAUSES		
ALL	Actionable Root Cause	Root Causes identify the underlying reasons for the identified Student Performance Priorities. Root causes are under the control of the district and aimed at the level of district systems, structures, and practices.
	Root Causes Analysis Process	The plan explains how root causes were identified, including data sources used, stakeholders involved in the root cause identification process, and a strong rationale for selection. Process and perception data are leveraged in the validation of Root Causes.
K-3 + PI T *	Early Learning Needs Assessment	<i>*For Districts with schools that serve K-3 AND are identified as Priority Improvement or Turnaround</i> The plan summarizes findings from an Early Learning Needs Assessment that meets the minimum requirements and commits to next steps based on those findings.
K-3 + T *	Early Learning Needs Assessment for Schools in Turnaround	<i>*For Districts with schools that serve K-3 AND are identified as Turnaround</i> The plan identifies appropriate research-based next steps, based on the findings of an Early Learning Needs Assessment, to improve early childhood programs and partnerships.
CS A-TS	Identification of Resource Inequities <i>ESSA School Improvement</i>	The plan describes the process used to review the district's resource allocations (e.g., budget, instructional time, early interventions, teacher quality, family engagement, professional development) and identify potential inequities.
EASI	Identification of Systems Needs of District <i>EASI: District Strategic Planning</i>	The plan integrates the results of a diagnostic review or system needs assessment funded by an EASI Grant.
9-12	Analysis of course taking patterns	The plan includes an analysis of student course taking patterns by disaggregated groups.

Quality Criteria continue on the next page

2	Does the plan focus on evidence-based strategies to resolve systemic root causes and drive improvement on identified priorities?	
Who must address this requirement?	Topic	Meets Expectations
MAJOR IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES		
ALL	Alignment to Root Causes	The plan identifies Major Improvement Strategies that logically connect to the Root Causes identified in the plan. If implemented as described, the strategies have a likelihood of positively impacting results in the Student Performance Priorities.
	Evidence-Base	The plan provides clear rationale for the selection of Major Improvement Strategies, including the evidence-base for the strategy. This may include an explanation of why the strategy is a good fit for the district's context, identified needs, student population, and staff capacity.
	Assigned Resources	The plan assigns adequate resources (e.g., budget allocations, staffing) as needed to support the implementation of identified Major Improvement Strategies.
Clock Year 4	Year 4 Description of Potential Pathway	The plan provides a full description of the district's exploration of all potential pathways. This includes identification of a preferred pathway, an overview of other options considered, and a rationale for the selection of the preferred pathway.
T	Turnaround Strategy	The plan identifies a state-required turnaround strategy and articulates an action plan that is aligned to the needs identified in the data analysis. (Select from dropdown in the UIP Online System.)
<i>Quality Criteria continue on the next page</i>		

3			Does the plan outline a coherent approach to implementation and adjustment of the identified strategies?	
Who must address this requirement?		Topic	Meets Expectations	
IMPLEMENTATION MILESTONES				
ALL	Alignment to MIS	Each Major Improvement Strategy has at least one aligned Implementation Milestone.		
	Quality of Implementation Milestones	Implementation Milestones for each Major Improvement Strategy enable staff to determine whether implementation of strategies is occurring in an effective manner.		
	Plan Duration	Implementation Milestones span at least the duration of plan public posting (e.g., two years for districts exercising biennial flexibility).		
ACTION PLAN				
ALL	Action Steps	The plan lists critical, high-leverage Action Steps that must be taken to achieve the implementation milestones and ultimately, the identified strategy. Action Steps may name one-time, individual actions, or they may name ongoing or recurring activities. At least some action steps should outline discrete, individual actions that must be completed to meaningfully implement the strategy.		
	Progress Monitoring in Action Plan	The plan includes Action Steps dedicated to monitoring plan implementation and impact (i.e., by reflecting on Implementation Milestones and Interim Targets to identify needed implementation adjustments).		
K-3	Actions to Address K-3 Reading <i>READ Act</i>	The plan includes evidence-based Action Steps that will likely have a meaningful impact for K-3 students identified as having significant reading deficiencies.		
I PI T	Actions to Address Math <i>Math Acceleration K-12</i>	The plan includes evidence-based Action Steps that will likely have a meaningful impact for students identified as being below grade level or struggling in math.		
Quality Criteria continue on the next page				

3	Does the plan outline a coherent approach to implementation and adjustment of the identified strategies?	
Who must address this requirement?	Topic	Meets Expectations
	Actions Promoting Family Engagement	The plan includes high leverage Action Steps, aligned with Family, School and Community Partnering standards, to increase parent engagement at the school.
	Actions to Address Resource Inequities	The Action Plan outlines how any resource inequities identified in the Root Cause analysis will be addressed.
	Action to address Inequities in course taking patterns <i>Student Course Taking Report</i>	The plan includes Action Steps to address identified patterns of significant disparity in disaggregated groups taking challenging coursework.