



Unified Improvement Plan Quality Criteria

Overview of Quality Criteria

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 school-level, district-level, and combined UIPs and to guide the state and local review of UIPs for identified schools (i.e., Improvement, Priority Improvement, Turnaround, On Watch, ESSA Identified Schools). This document outlines the criteria for “Meeting Expectations” on each of these requirements.

Directions for use

- Note that some requirements apply only to districts or only to schools; these requirements are labeled for clarity. Where requirements apply to both schools and districts, the term “site” may be used to refer to the school and/or district. **Districts submitting combined UIPs must satisfy district-level requirements as well as school-level requirements for all district schools covered by the plan.**
- Use the criteria for “All schools” in this document (indicated by light blue “ALL” icons) to guide strong improvement planning within the UIP.
- Consult the “Plan Details” section of the school’s UIP Homepage in the [UIP Online System](#) to determine the school’s unique accountability and program requirements.
- Alternatively, use the school’s state and/or federal identifications and other context (e.g., grades served, grants awarded, etc.) to identify the criteria described in this document that the school 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?



Figure 1 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:** Sites 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. Sites 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 schools or districts are labeled separately (see the “[Key to Icons](#)” below). *Grayed out sections will not be reviewed by CDE in the current school year.*

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

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

Federal Identifications

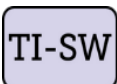
A blue circular icon with the letters "CS" in white.A blue circular icon with the letters "A-TS" in white.A blue circular icon with the letters "TS" in white.

Note that schools identified for Comprehensive Support (CS), Targeted Support (TS), 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 UIP.

These requirements are identified in two ways throughout this document:














1. Requirements for ALL schools that are also included in CS-specific requirements are marked with the blue “CS” button in the “Topic” column of the criteria tables below.
2. Additional requirements that are specific to schools with federal identifications are marked with these buttons (see “Key to Icons” at right) in the “Who must address this requirement?” column of the Quality Criteria tables below.

Title I Schoolwide Requirements

A purple rounded rectangular icon with the letters "TI-SW" in white.

Schools have the option of using the UIP to satisfy Title I Schoolwide requirements. For schools planning to satisfy these requirements in the UIP, specific requirements are indicated in this document with a “TI-SW” icon in the “Who must address this requirement” column or in the “topic” column of the Quality Criteria tables below.






Key to Icons Used in Quality Criteria tables

	All Schools and Districts
	Schools and Districts submitting Improvement Plans
	Schools and Districts submitting Priority Improvement Plans
	Schools and Districts submitting Turnaround Plans
	Schools and Districts on Year 4 of the state Accountability Clock
	Schools identified for Comprehensive Support through Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) <i>*See note on “Federal Identifications,” above*</i>
	Schools identified for Targeted Support through ESSA
	Schools identified for Additional Targeted Support through ESSA
	Schools and Districts serving grades K-3
	Schools and Districts serving grades 9-12
	Schools and Districts that have received an Empowering Action for School Improvement (EASI) Grant
	Schools that have received a Comprehensive Early Literacy Grant
	Optional: for Schools using the UIP to satisfy Title I Schoolwide requirements

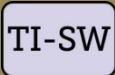
The Quality Criteria

Assurances within the Online UIP








UIP Process: Data Analysis



Who must address this requirement?	Topic	Assurance
	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 school and/or 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>	<p>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).</p>
	Data Analysis <i>READ Act</i>	<p>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.</p>
	Prior year Early Literacy Grant Goals and previous efforts (Trends)	<p>[School-level requirement] Data analysis includes reflection on and identification of trends related to all three goals designated within the Early Literacy Grant as well as the Literacy Evaluation Tool.</p>

UIP Process: Development and Posting


Who must address this requirement?	Topic	Assurance
	<p>Schoolwide Plan Acknowledgement, Monitoring and Revision <i>Title I, Part A Schoolwide Plan</i></p>	<p>[School-level requirement] This plan will serve as the Comprehensive Schoolwide Plan for schools participating in Title I, Part A Schoolwide programming.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The plan includes a comprehensive needs assessment and instructional strategies that strengthen the academic program of the school, specifically addressing the needs of students at risk of not meeting Colorado Academic Standards and Colorado English Language Proficiency standards. • The school will make the plan publicly available, monitor it regularly, and revise it as necessary based on student needs to ensure that all students are provided opportunities to meet the challenging State academic standards.

UIP Process: Stakeholder Involvement

Who must address this requirement?	Topic	Assurance
	<p>Stakeholder Input on Plan Development  </p>	<p>The plan was developed in partnership with stakeholders, including school and district leaders, teachers, parents/families, and the School Accountability Committee (SAC) or District Accountability Committee (DAC).</p>
	<p>Stakeholder Progress Monitoring  </p>	<p>The site will involve stakeholders—at a minimum, the School or District Accountability Committee—in progress monitoring the implementation of the plan throughout the school year.</p>
	<p>Local Board Adoption</p>	<p>[District-level requirement] The local board reviewed and adopted the plan</p>






Who must address this requirement?	Topic	Assurance
	Stakeholder Awareness <i>ESSA School Improvement</i>	<p>[School-level requirement] Stakeholders involved in the development of the plan were made aware of reasons for ESSA identification and were active partners in reviewing performance on related indicators and providing input on strategies or interventions related to identification.</p>
	Family Notification and Local Board Adoption	<p>[School-level requirement]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written notice of the initial plan type was shared with families within 30 calendar days of identification. • The SAC met to provide input on the improvement plan prior to the public hearing. • A public hearing was held at least 30 calendar days after the date on which the district provided the written notice. • The local board reviewed and adopted the plan.

UIP Process: Target Setting


Who must address this requirement?	Topic	Assurance
	ELG Target (Growth)	<p>[School-level requirement] The school has set a target (either in the UIP or in the Early Literacy Grant documentation) for moving students in K-3 who are identified as below expectations or well below expectations up a tier on the identified READ Act assessment by end of year.</p>


Section 1: Does the plan identify high-leverage performance priorities and targets?

UIP Element: Student Performance Priorities




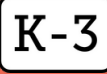
Who must address this requirement?	Topic	Meets Expectations
	Identification of Student Performance Priorities 	<p>The plan identifies a limited number of Student Performance Priorities (3 or fewer) of appropriate magnitude to focus the site’s improvement efforts.</p>
	Address Indicators 	<p>Student Performance Priorities identify student 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 site’s data analysis (e.g., areas where the site is not yet meeting state or federal expectations).</p>
	Address Indicators <i>ESSA School Improvement</i>	<p>[School-level requirement] The plan clearly and explicitly aligns at least one Student Performance Priority to reasons for ESSA identification:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Graduation Rate (Comprehensive Support - Low Graduation) ● Overall Performance (Comprehensive Support - Lowest 5%) ● Performance of Specific Student Group (Targeted or Additional Targeted Support) ● Participation Rate



UIP Element: Evidence & Rationale for Prioritization

Who must address this requirement?	Topic	Meets Expectations
	Evidence for Prioritization 	<p>The plan presents compelling evidence that demonstrates the need to focus on the identified Student Performance Priorities (e.g., positive and negative performance trends, site performance relative to state and local expectations).</p>
	Rationale for Prioritization	<p>The plan includes strong rationale for the selected Student Performance Priorities. The rationale should include any contextual factors (such as enrollment shifts, local strategic plan priorities, and previous improvement efforts) that factored into the selection of the Student Performance Priorities.</p>
	Rationale for Prioritization <i>READ Act</i>	<p>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 school- or district-wide direction.</p>
	Rationale for Prioritization <i>Math Acceleration K-12</i>	<p>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 school- or district-wide direction.</p>
	Rationale for Prioritization <i>Title I, Part A Schoolwide Plan</i>	<p>[School-level requirement] The rationale describes how the academic and/or behavioral needs of students at risk of not meeting Colorado Academic Standards and Colorado English Language Proficiency standards are prioritized.</p>





Who must address this requirement?	Topic	Meets Expectations
	Rationale for Prioritization <i>ESSA School Improvement</i>	[School-level requirement] The rationale describes how at least one target was selected because of the specific reason for ESSA identification (i.e., Graduation Rate, Overall Performance, Participation Rate, Performance of Specific Student Group).

UIP Element: Target Setting

Who must address this requirement?	Topic	Meets Expectations
	Measures and Metrics	Annual Targets specify the measure (e.g., CMAS results, graduation data) and metric (e.g., specific mean scale score, desired 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).
	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. <i>Note: Targets must be set for READ Act - Grade Level Expectations even if literacy is not identified as a Student Performance Priority.</i>






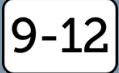
	<p>Targets</p> <p><i>READ Act (SRD)</i></p>	<p>The plan sets ambitious and attainable target(s) for reducing the number of students who have significant reading deficiencies, as measured by the site’s READ Act assessment.</p> <p><i>Note: Targets must be set for READ Act -SRD even if literacy is not identified as a Student Performance Priority.</i></p>
	<p>Targets for below grade level OR struggling students</p> <p><i>Math Acceleration K-12</i></p>	<p>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.</p> <p><i>Note: Targets must be set for Math Acceleration K-12 even if math is not identified as a Student Performance Priority.</i></p>

UIP Element: Interim Targets




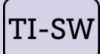

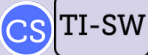




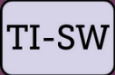
<p>Who must address this requirement?</p>	<p>Topic</p>	<p>Meets Expectations</p>
	<p>Alignment to Annual Target</p> 	<p>The plan identifies Interim Targets, specifying both a measure (e.g., NWEA) and specific metrics (e.g., RIT score), that are aligned to an Annual Target to assess the impact of the Major Improvement Strategies on student performance during the year.</p>
	<p>Quality of Interim Targets</p> 	<p>Interim Targets specify expected student progress at least twice during the year.</p>

Section 2: Does the plan focus on evidence-based strategies to resolve systemic root causes and drive improvement on identified priorities?

UIP Element: Root Causes


Who must address this requirement?	Topic	Meets Expectations
	Actionable Root Cause	Root Causes identify the underlying reasons for the identified Student Performance Priorities. Root causes are under the control of the site and aimed at the level of school or district systems, structures, and practices.
	Root Causes Analysis Process	The plan explains how root causes were identified and validated, including data sources used, stakeholders involved in the root cause identification process, and includes a strong rationale for selection. Process and perception data are leveraged in the validation of Root Causes.
	Early Learning Needs Assessment	The plan summarizes findings from an Early Learning Needs Assessment that meets the minimum requirements and commits to next steps based on those findings.
	Identification of Resource Inequities <i>ESSA School Improvement</i>	The root cause and rationale describe which resource inequities (e.g., instructional time, early interventions, teacher quality, family engagement, professional development) contributed to the reasons for ESSA identification.
	Identification of Systems Needs of School <i>EASI: Exploration, Transformation Network, or District Strategic Planning</i>	The plan integrates the results of a diagnostic review or system needs assessment funded by an EASI Grant (e.g., in the priority selection rationale and/or the root cause rationale.
	Analysis of course taking patterns	The plan includes an analysis of student course taking patterns by disaggregated groups.

UIP Element: Major Improvement Strategies


Who must address this requirement?	Topic	Meets Expectations
	<p>Alignment to Root Causes</p> 	<p>The plan identifies a limited number of Major Improvement Strategies (ideally 2-4) that logically connect to the Root Causes identified in the plan. <i>All root causes identified in the plan are addressed by at least one of the identified Major Improvement Strategies.</i></p>
	<p>Quality of Major Improvement Strategies</p> 	<p>The plan clearly and adequately describes strategies that, if implemented as described, have a likelihood of positively impacting results in the Student Performance Priorities.</p>
	<p>Evidence-Base</p> 	<p>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 site’s context, existing assets, identified needs, student population, and staff capacity.</p>
	<p>Assigned Resources</p> 	<p>The plan identifies resources (e.g., budget allocations, staffing) that will be used to support the implementation of identified Major Improvement Strategies.</p>
	<p>Year 4 Description of Potential Pathway</p>	<p>The plan provides a full description of the school and 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.</p>
	<p>Turnaround Strategy</p>	<p>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.)</p>
	<p>Title I, Part A Schoolwide Plan</p>	<p>[School-level requirement] The plan describes Major Improvement Strategies that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide opportunities for all students to meet the challenging state academic standards • Address the needs of students at risk of not meeting these standards.





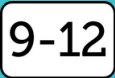
Section 3: Does the plan outline a coherent approach to implementation and adjustment of the identified strategies?

UIP Element: Implementation Milestones

Who must address this requirement?	Topic	Meets Expectations
ALL	Alignment to MIS	Each Major Improvement Strategy has two or more aligned Implementation Milestones.
ALL	Quality of Implementation Milestones 	Implementation Milestones for each Major Improvement Strategy name clearly observable or measurable indicators, which will enable staff to determine whether implementation of strategies is occurring in an effective manner.
ALL	Plan Duration	Implementation Milestones span at least the duration of plan public posting (e.g., two years for sites exercising biennial flexibility).

UIP Element: Action Plan

Who must address this requirement?	Topic	Meets Expectations
ALL	Action Steps	The plan lists critical, high-leverage Action Steps that will enable the site to meet the implementation milestones by changing school or district practices and structures as needed to put the identified strategy into practice. Action Steps should name one-time, individual actions (e.g., purchase of curriculum materials, development of PLC protocols), and may also include ongoing or recurring activities.
ALL	Progress Monitoring in Action Plan 	The plan includes Action Steps dedicated to monitoring plan implementation and impact (i.e., meetings to reflect on Implementation Milestones and Interim Targets and to identify needed implementation adjustments).

	<p>Actions to Address K-3 Reading</p> <p><i>READ Act</i></p>	<p>The plan includes evidence-based Action Steps that can reasonably be expected to have a meaningful impact for K-3 students identified as having significant reading deficiencies.</p> <p><i>Note: Action Steps must be set for READ Act even if literacy is not identified as a Student Performance Priority.</i></p>
	<p>Actions to Address Math</p> <p><i>Math Acceleration K-12</i></p>	<p>The plan includes evidence-based Action Steps that can reasonably be expected to have a meaningful impact for students identified as being below grade level or struggling in math.</p> <p><i>Note: Action Steps must be set for Math Acceleration K-12 even if math is not identified as a Student Performance Priority.</i></p>
	<p>Actions Promoting Family Engagement</p>	<p>The plan includes several high leverage Action Steps, aligned with Family, School and Community Partnering standards, to increase parent/family engagement at the school.</p>
	<p>Early Learning Needs Assessment for Schools in Turnaround</p>	<p>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.</p>
	<p>Action to address Inequities in course taking patterns</p> <p><i>Student Course Taking Report</i></p>	<p>The plan includes Action Steps to address identified patterns of significant disparity in disaggregated groups taking challenging coursework.</p>