



UNIFIED IMPROVEMENT PLAN QUALITY CRITERIA (DISTRICT LEVEL)

Special Note about the State Assessment Transition and Accountability Clock Pause in 2015-16

Per [HB15-1323](#), CDE will not assign accreditation ratings or school plan types for the 2015-16 school year and the accountability clock is paused (i.e., the 2015-16 school year will not count toward the calculation of consecutive years on the state accountability clock). While the improvement planning process is expected to continue during this transition year, some typical planning practices may need to be modified. Special considerations for 2015-16 have been added to this document (beginning on page 3). These special considerations do not replace the quality criteria, but are meant to bridge any gaps during the state assessment transition.

GENERAL DIRECTIONS

The Unified Improvement Plan (UIP) is intended to provide districts with a consistent format to capture improvement planning efforts that streamline state and federal planning requirements. To assist with that process, the Quality Criteria offer guidance for creating an improvement plan that incorporates all of the state accountability and federal requirements. Quality Criteria are provided for Section III: Narrative on Data Analysis and Root Cause Identification, and Section IV: Action Plans of the UIP template. The criteria are also a resource for state and district reviewers to use in reviewing the plans.

Meeting Specific Requirements in the Plan

All districts should respond to the general indicators. However, on some elements, there are additional state and federal requirements that are unique to specific programs (e.g., Turnaround under state accountability, Title III). Therefore, clarity around (1) the district’s accreditation category, (2) whether the district has been identified under other state accountability designations (e.g., required to complete a Graduation and Completion plan), and (3) whether the district has to meet requirements identified under ESEA (i.e., Titles I, IIA and/or III) are important to take full advantage of this tool. Answer the following questions to ensure that the district plan is addressing all of the appropriate elements. The pre-populated report (section I of the UIP that CDE populates for each district) is another resource that should help to answer these questions.

Description of District under State Accountability

Which accreditation category has been identified for the district?

- Performance Improvement Priority Improvement Turnaround

(Once finalized, accreditation categories will be listed at: www.schoolview.org)

Is the district identified as a designated Graduation district and required to develop and implement a Student Graduation and Completion Plan (Colorado Statute 22-14-107)?

- Yes No

Is the district meeting Gifted Education program requirement through the UIP?

- Yes No

Description of District’s ESEA Programs

Does the district accept Title I funds?

- Yes No

Does the district accept Title IIA funds?

- Yes No











Is the district or consortium identified for Title III Program improvement?

- Yes No

Does the district have Title I Focus Schools or schools that have been awarded a Tiered Intervention Grant (TIG)?

- Yes No

In addition to addressing the general indicators, districts should look for the following symbols that apply to the district and address additional requirements for the programs identified above.

-  St - T Districts Accredited with a Turnaround Plan under the State Accountability System ¹
-  St - PI Districts Accredited with a Priority Improvement Plan under the State Accountability System ²
-  SGCP Identified for Student Graduation and Completion Plan
-  ESEA PI/T Priority Improvement/Turnaround Districts that accept I-A, and or II-A funds and/or are Title III grantee leads
-  TIIA All Districts that accept Title II-A funds
-  TIII-PI Identified for Title III Program Improvement
-  FS/T Districts with schools that are Focus Schools or TIG Grantees
-  G-ED Gifted Education Program
-  READ Colorado Reading to Ensure Academic Development Act (Colorado READ Act)
-  TLA Districts participating in the Turnaround Learning Academy (TLA)

¹ [In addition to criteria listed here, the Commissioner shall assign the state review panel to critically evaluate a school district's Turnaround Plan in accordance with 22-11-208 \(3\), C.R.S.](#)

² [In addition to criteria listed here, the Commissioner may assign the state review panel to critically evaluate a school district's Priority Improvement in accordance with 22-11-208 \(3\), C.R.S.](#)

Quality Criteria Supplement: Consideration for UIP Development for 2015-16

In response to the state assessment transition and accountability clock pause, this supplement is designed to provide districts with additional direction given the limitations of available assessment data from the state. These guiding questions are in alignment with, and in addition to, the quality criteria. Districts and schools may want to consult the document [Implications and Guidance for the UIP during the State Assessment Transition](#) in development of the plan.

The Winter 2016 CDE review of UIP's will:

- *Be structured with the quality criteria organized to address the four questions below.*
- *Emphasize examination of the action plan over precision in the data analysis.*
- *Continue to provide feedback to improve plan quality, in addition to comments regarding required plan components.*

Does the plan investigate the most critical performance areas and prioritize the most urgent performance challenges?

Plan Elements: Data Narrative, Notable Trends, Priority Performance Challenges

- Does the plan include an examination of available student performance data, building on previous trends?
- When possible, is local performance data considered in relationship to state assessment results?
- Is there an explanation for which data sources were included or excluded for analysis, including participation rates?
- Is there a clear rationale for the selection of the performance challenges based on available performance data?

Does the plan identify root causes that explain the magnitude of the performance challenges?

Plan Elements: Data Narrative, Root Causes

- If maintaining focus on previous priority performance challenges, does the root cause analysis process reflect a current examination of practices that contribute to the priority performance challenge? For example, if the previous root cause indicated there was not a consistent, comprehensive reading program in place, what is being implemented comprehensively and checked for efficacy recently?
- Has the identified root cause been verified with current process or perception data, particularly useful for planning given a limited availability of student performance data?

Does the plan identify research-based major improvement strategies that have likelihood to eliminate the root causes?

Plan Elements: Data Narrative, Action Planning Worksheet

- Do the major improvement strategies reflect the current context and needs of the school and those identified in previous steps of the plan?
- If the major improvement strategies are continued from previous years, is there evidence of success that is presented in the data narrative? This data may include indications of progress in climate and culture, high levels of fidelity to implementation efforts, etc.

Does the plan present a well-designed plan for implementing the major improvement strategies to bring about dramatic improvement?

Plan Elements: Target Setting Form, Action Planning Form

- Has the plan been updated to reflect the work to be completed for the 2015-16 and 2016-17 school year?
- Do action steps relate to clear changes in systems or adult practice that can be measured for success (implementation benchmarks)?
- If the plan is a Turnaround Plan, are the state required actions clearly defined in the addendum and in the action steps of the plan?
- Do targets and interim measures reflect data sources that can be currently analyzed and measured?

SECTION III: NARRATIVE ON DATA ANALYSIS AND ROOT CAUSE IDENTIFICATION

Data Narrative

The purpose of the data narrative is to describe the process and results of the data analysis for district improvement. This includes: 1) A brief description of the district; 2) An explanation regarding who participated in each step of the data analysis process; 3) The school/district accountability status and where performance did not meet state/federal expectations; 4) How current performance compares to the targets established in the prior year's plan; 5) Notable performance trends (positive and negative), what data were considered (including local data sources), and how the team determined which trends were notable; 6) Priority performance challenges, the process that was used to prioritize the performance challenges, and what makes the identified priorities more important to address immediately than other notable trends; 7) Root cause(s) associated with each priority performance challenge; and 8) How the root causes were identified, and the additional data that were reviewed to validate the root causes. A description of the selection process for the corresponding major improvement strategies is encouraged.

The data narrative should meet the overall quality criteria for the data narrative as well as the criteria specific to notable trends, priority performance challenges, and root causes. Two additional worksheets are provided to support development of the data narrative. Information about progress toward the prior year's performance targets should be included in the **monitoring progress of prior year's performance targets worksheet**. A short (bulleted list) of notable trends, priority performance challenges, and root causes should also be included in the **data analysis worksheet**. The relationship among these items should be apparent.

Required Element (definition)	Criteria
<p>Data Narrative (overall)</p> <p><i>Describes the “data story” and process of data analysis; a synthesis of the analysis and presentation of notable findings.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes a brief description of the district to provide context. • Reflects that a district team reviewed the performance summary provided in the District Performance Framework (DPF) report, (and Section I of the pre-populated UIP Template), and specifies where the district did not meet local, state (approaching, does not meet on DPF) and/or federal performance expectations. • Reflects that the team reviewed progress toward prior year’s performance targets, and specifies the degree to which improvement efforts (major improvement strategies and action steps) were associated with intended improvements in student learning (represented in the performance targets). May also reference interim measures (local assessment results). • Specifies where the district did not meet local, state/federal (approaching, does not meet on DPF) performance expectations. • Identifies what additional performance data (state and local student learning data) were used in the analysis of trends. • Describes notable trends in data (both positive and negative) and what makes them notable. • Describes priority performance challenges (based on notable negative trends). • Describes the process used to prioritize the performance challenges, and why the identified challenges were prioritized. • Describes root cause(s) of each priority performance challenge. • Describes how root causes were identified and verified with more than one data source (e.g., classroom observations, lesson plans) and what data were used. • Describes stakeholder involvement in the different steps of the plan development process (e.g., District Accountability Committee, staff, parents, community members). <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specifically includes description and analysis of the following data: dropout rate, graduation rate, completion rate, truancy rate, suspension rate, expulsion rate, mobility rate, and number of habitually truant students. <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicates that the district conducted an analysis of the equitable distribution of teachers (ESEA requires districts to ensure that poor and minority children are not taught at higher rates than other children by inexperienced, unqualified or out-of field teachers). District’s analysis should include student and teacher demographics in relation to achievement data and examine trends across schools within the district. <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies the specific factors that prevented the district from meeting its AMAO targets (e.g. lack of an aligned English Language Development curriculum). • Describes the scientifically research based strategies that will be employed to improve the English language development and academic achievement of English learners. • Identifies coordination with other programs, if applicable. • Identifies the strengths and weaknesses of the current plan, specifically major improvement strategies and/or Action Steps to meet the linguistic (AMAO 1 and 2) and academic (AMAO 3) needs of English Language Learners.

SGCP

TIIA

TIII-PI

Required Element (definition)	Criteria
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TLA

- For districts participating in the Turnaround Learning Academy, the data analysis includes themes revealed in the diagnostic review(s).

Previous Performance Targets

- Provides targets set in previous year’s plan.
- Describes progress toward targets.
- Describes the degree to which previous improvement efforts were effective.

Description of previous targets and progress toward meeting target.

Notable Trends

Description of notable trends for every performance indicator, identified based on analysis of three years of data.

- Describes both positive and negative trends that are notable for all performance indicators using at least three years of data.
- Notable trend statements include:
 - Measure
 - Content area
 - Metric
 - Group(s) of students
 - Direction of the trend (e.g., declining, flat, increasing)
 - Comparison point (i.e., what makes the trend notable)
 - Amount of change in the metric
 - Time period
- Specifies performance indicator areas for which the district did not at least meet state (i.e., academic achievement, academic growth, academic growth gaps, post-secondary/workforce readiness), federal (e.g., Title III AMAO’s), or local performance expectations.
- Includes analysis of data at a more detailed level than that presented in the DPF. For example, patterns over time:
 - within a grade level (per content area, disaggregated group);
 - within a disaggregated group of students; and/or
 - within a sub-content area (e.g., number sense in mathematics).
- Includes analysis of relevant local performance data (e.g., interim measures).
- To the degree that data are available, includes analysis of the performance of all students in the district (e.g., pre-K-2, 11th and 12th) and includes performance in subjects not tested by the state.

G-ED

- Includes trend data for gifted student performance at aggregate or grade range level, and within disaggregated groups of students (e.g., minority, gender, Free and Reduced Lunch, ELL).
- Trend analysis is provided for gifted students for at least one of the following 1) Achievement at the Advanced level 2) Move-up growth, and/or 3) Median Growth Percentiles.

Priority Performance Challenges

Specific statements about the district's performance challenges (not budgeting, staffing, curriculum, instruction, etc.), with at least one priority identified for each performance indicator where the district did not meet federal, state and/or local expectations.



- Identifies priority performance challenges based on analysis of negative performance trends that are of the appropriate magnitude given the overall performance of the district.
 - Describes the strategic focus for the district considering every sub-indicator for which the district did not at least meet state expectations.
 - Identifies at least one priority performance challenge for every indicator (i.e., achievement, growth, growth gaps, post-secondary/workforce readiness), for which the district did not meet state expectations (e.g., approaching, did not meet on DPF). *Note: Priority performance challenges do **not** need to be identified for **every** sub-indicator (e.g., math achievement, ELL student growth in reading) for which the district did not meet expectations unless it is a specific program requirement (e.g., grantees on Title III improvement that miss AMAO 3 will need to examine the growth gaps for ELL students).*
 - If they are closely related, summarizes multiple trends to identify priority performance challenges. Performance challenges may also cut across performance indicators, for example describing both achievement and growth.
 - Specifies challenges that take into account analysis of data, including analysis at a more detailed level than that presented in the DPF report. For example:
 - for cohorts of students (e.g., 3rd grade in one year, 4th grade in the next year, 5th grade in the third year);
 - within a grade level over time (e.g., consistently not meeting expectations in 4th grade mathematics for three years);
 - within a disaggregated group of students;
 - within a sub-content area (e.g., number sense in mathematics).
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- Clearly identifies the needs of gifted students in at least one priority performance challenge for which the district did not meet state or local expectations in student achievement, growth, or growth gaps; or for which the gifted data indicate a divergent performance challenge for gifted students/student group.

Root Causes




Statements describing the deepest underlying cause, or causes, of performance challenges, that, if dissolved, would result in elimination, or substantial reduction of the performance challenge(s).

- Identifies at least one root cause for each priority performance challenge. The same root cause may apply to multiple priority performance challenges, and should be listed next to each priority performance challenge to which it applies.
- Specifies “causes” the district can control (e.g., the district does not provide additional support/interventions for schools improvement) rather than describing characteristics of students in the schools (e.g., race, poverty, or student motivation).
- Reflects analysis of multiple types of data (in addition to performance data and including local data sources) in the identification and verification of root causes.
- Root causes reflect the appropriate magnitude given the overall performance for the district (e.g., a district that does not meet most or all the state performance indicators/sub-indicators should identify root causes that are broader and describe issues in the overall system).

SECTION IV: ACTION PLANS

Section IV of the Unified Improvement Plan includes the *District Target Setting Form* and the *Action Planning Form*. The District Target Setting Form includes columns for: priority performance challenges, annual targets for two years, interim measures for the current year and major improvement strategies. For each major improvement strategy, action planning worksheets include: the root cause(s) addressed by the major improvement strategy, action steps, resources, people responsible, timeline and status. Quality criteria for each of the components of both of these worksheets are described below. There should be a logical connection among the elements listed in the columns.

District/Consortium Target Setting Form



Required Element (definition)	Criteria
<p>Performance Targets (2 years)</p> <p><i>A specific, quantifiable performance outcome that defines what would constitute success in a performance indicator area within the designated period of time.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specifies ambitious but attainable annual targets for every performance indicator (achievement, growth, growth gaps, and post-secondary/workforce readiness) where the district did not at least meet state expectations. • Identifies at least one target related to each priority performance challenge. • Specifies a target for the group(s) of students that is consistent with the related priority performance challenge (e.g., if 3rd grade is identified in the priority performance challenge, targets should be set for that group). • Specifies the measure (e.g., TCAP, CoALT, Escritura, Lectura, ACT) and metric (e.g., median student growth percentile, % reduction in dropout rate) for which the target is being set. • Includes the required state metrics for that performance indicator (e.g., % proficient and advanced on TCAP for Achievement); targets for additional metrics maybe identified also. • Sets targets for increasing performance over time in a way that would, at a minimum, result in the district meeting state expectations in a reasonable timeframe (e.g., within 2 years if a district has been on Turnaround for 3 years). (n/a for CDE 2016 Winter Review) • May include targets associated with required district performance indicators (e.g., English language attainment and high school completion rates).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes targets for each of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reducing student truancy rate; ○ Reducing dropout rate; ○ Increasing student attendance rate; ○ Increasing graduation rate; ○ Increasing completion rate.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specifies target(s) for gifted education students that is/are consistent with the related priority performance challenge (e.g., group, measures).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specifies target(s) for reducing the number of students who have significant reading deficiencies. • Specifies target(s) to ensure that each student achieves grade level expectations in reading.

Required Element (definition)	Criteria
<p>Interim Measures</p> <p><i>A measure (and associated metric) of student performance used to measure performance in a specified indicator area, at more than one point during a school year.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describes the measure(s) to be used to monitor progress in student performance toward reaching each target. • Includes only measures that are administered/scored/reported more than once during the school year. • Specifies how frequently the data from the measure(s) will be available. • Specifies metrics associated with each interim measure (e.g., NWEA RIT Growth scores, Acuity subscale proficiency scores).

Action Planning Form

Required Element (definition)	Criteria
<p>Major Improvement Strategies</p> <p><i>An overall approach that describes a series of related actions intended to result in improvements in performance.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies an overall research-based approach based on a theory about how performance will improve. There must be evidence that the research-based strategies have been effective in a similar context. • Identifies the specific approach (e.g., not “improve reading instruction,” rather “implement formative assessment practices in all 3rd -10th grade classrooms during reading instruction”). • Each identified major improvement strategy is designed to respond to the identified root cause(s), ultimately address the associated priority performance challenges and improve student performance. • Includes strategies associated with required district performance indicators (e.g., English language attainment, educator quality and high school completion rates). • Includes strategies of an appropriate magnitude given the overall performance for the district (e.g., a district that does not meet most or all the state performance indicators/sub-indicators should identify strategies that are broader and address issues in the overall system).
<p>St - T</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must include at least one of the state-required Turnaround strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Turnaround Partner ▪ District Management ▪ Innovation Designation ▪ School Management Contract ▪ Charter Conversion ▪ Restructure Charter ▪ School Closure ▪ Other Strategy of Comparable or Greater Effect

Required Element (definition)	Criteria
<p>St - PI</p> <p>St - T</p> <p>SGCP</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies an approach to improvement that will result in enough change in performance for the district to have an accreditation rating of Improvement or above (thus moving off of the accountability clock) within a reasonable time frame. <i>Note: this is a key criterion for evaluation by the State Review Panel.</i> Identifies at least one major improvement strategy that is designed to result in (1) improved dropout prevention, including student attendance, and (2) improved student engagement and re-engagement.
<p>Action Steps <i>Activities that detail how major improvement strategies will be implemented and are specific enough to allow district leaders to determine that major improvement strategies have been accomplished.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes specific details needed to implement the major improvement strategies (e.g., professional development and associated follow up that will be provided, how parents will be engaged in the major improvement strategy). Includes the development of systems and processes for managing the major improvement strategy or strategies. Includes the specific steps that any external consultants or contractors (if the district is working with external consultants/contractors) will take to implement the major improvement strategy. Details when implementation benchmarks and interim measures will be analyzed and interpreted and who will be involved.
<p>SGCP</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies the manner in which the district and parents will work together to address dropout risk factors and remediation strategies.
<p>TIIA</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As appropriate based on analysis in Section III (data analysis and narrative), identifies actions to address the equitable distribution of teachers. As appropriate, Title IIA funds are allocated to support strategies that address the priority performance challenges and root causes identified in the data analysis.
<p>TIII-PI</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describes specific scientifically-based research strategies that will be used to improve the academic achievement and English Language Development for English Learners.
<p>G-ED</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes actions that address the Tier II or Tier III strategies or approaches that are evidenced-based in gifted education (e.g., supplemental curriculum, compacting, acceleration, higher level critical and creative thinking, expanded/extended opportunities, grouping with appropriate instruction, adjusted pace for direct instruction and formative practice). Describes the professional development that will have positive and long-term impact to improve performance of gifted students (or to increase capacity of educators working with gifted students). Includes activities for parental awareness and involvement in improvement strategies.
<p>READ</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes strategies for addressing K-3 students identified as having significant reading deficiencies pursuant to the READ Act
<p>TLA</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describes the action steps funded by the Turnaround Learning Academy grant.

Required Element (definition)	Criteria
Timeline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specifies the month(s) and year(s) when each action step will take place. • Identifies a logical sequence of action steps. • Demonstrates how the plan will be carried out over at least a two-year timeframe.
Key Personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describes who will be responsible for implementing the action step(s); may be a position or a role.
Resources  	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies funds (including local, state, federal funds) or other resources (e.g., staff time, expertise, external contracts) necessary to implement the action step(s). For example, .2FTE of an instructional coach will be devoted to implementing this action step -- Local funds and Title I pay for the position. • Aligns resources with the proposed action step in a clear manner. • Specifies the amount of the resource (e.g., money, time). • Identifies use of funds that is appropriate and allowable for each funding source. <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If ESEA funds support action steps, the ESEA Title funds are included and aligned with the major improvement strategy. For Title I PPC set asides funds, specifies Title I – PPC. • If the district identifies an issue with the equitable distribution of teachers in the data analysis, then resources are used to support proposed actions. • Aligns use of Title IIA to support the action steps, as well as meets the state priority for use of Title IIA funds, including (1) professional development, (2) recruitment, retention and distribution of effective teachers and/or (3) activities that ensure teachers will be highly qualified. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Accounts for the entire projected total of the district’s 2013-14 Title IIA allocation. Use the 2012-13 allocation as a baseline. <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describes how gifted education funds will be used to support improvement strategies and action steps.
Implementation Benchmarks <i>A measure (with associated metric) used to assess the degree to which action steps have been implemented. (Note: not performance measures.)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specifies what will be measured (with associated metrics) and when data will be collected to assess the degree to which major improvement strategies and associated action steps have been implemented. <i>Note: implementation benchmarks may be quantitative or qualitative.</i> • Includes an implementation benchmark for every action step. <i>Note: a single implementation benchmark may be used to measure implementation for several different action steps.</i> • Identifies implementation benchmarks that have a clear relationship with the associated action step(s).
Status <i>Progress toward action step completion</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Optional, unless directed by a competitive grant program. • Indicates the status of the action step. • May include specific information, such as date completed.

Required Element (definition)	Criteria
Additional Documentation	
St - T	<p>Required Addendum</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Required for districts accredited with a Turnaround plan type.
SGCP	<p>Required Addendum</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describes the supports the district will provide to students who leave school prior to graduation and educational alternatives available to students (e.g., adult basic education, general education development, workforce or job training). Describes implementation of recommendations from Practices Assessment.
ESEA PI/T	<p>Required Addendum</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete Section V- Proposed Budget for use of ESEA Title funds in 2015-16 is completed. Form is completed for all applicable Title programs. Use 2014-15 allocations as baseline for budgeting. Must budget 10% of projected Title IA allocation for Priority Performance Challenge. Must budget full projected Title IIA and III allocations.
TIII-PI	<p>Required Addendum</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completes form for Grantees Identified for Improvement under Title III (AMAOs). A description of the requirement or crosswalk to the UIP data narrative or action plan (including page numbers) is evident.
G-ED	<p>Required Addendum</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrates the academic accountability requirements for the gifted student disaggregated group into the district's overall plan for improvement and growth. It is highly recommended that improvement foci blend with the district's data narrative and action plan, unless gifted student data directs efforts toward a different content area, grade level, or student sub-group.