Unified Improvement Planning: Guidance for Combined Plans

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Purpose

A combined Unified Improvement Plan (UIP) is a single plan for small districts or charter school networks (1,200 students or less) and all or select schools. This UIP flexibility is intended to promote alignment of priorities, foster a districtwide vision, and reduce duplication in planning and reporting in small districts.

A combined approach to Unified Improvement Planning is most effective for small districts and charter school networks[1] (1,200 students or less) with the following characteristics:

- 1 or 2 schools total, or 1 school per grade band.
- Limited capacity, where a single, coordinated plan streamlines improvement work.
- Facing systemic issues that span multiple grade levels and can be addressed through unified district level strategies.

[1] See Submission Guidance for Eligible Charter School Networks at the end of the document for submission guidance specific to eligible charter networks.

Eligibility

Small districts and charter school networks are automatically eligible for the combined plan flexibility. Eligibility to submit a combined Unified Improvement Plan is determined annually based on district enrollment from the prior year's Student October Count.

Prior Year Student October Count	Eligibility	CDE approval required?
District 1,200 or less	Automatic	NO
Charter School Network 1,200 or less	Automatic	Must inform CDE of intent
District or Charter School Network with more than 1,200	Not eligible	N/A

Administrators can view their eligibility status in the UIP Online System and must indicate if the district is electing to submit a combined plan and which schools will be included. See instructions and screenshots on the UIP Online System in the Developing a Combined UIP in the Online System section below.

Considerations for Eligible Districts and Charter School Networks

Eligible districts or charter school networks with state or federally identified schools (e.g., Priority Improvement, Turnaround, On Watch, Comprehensive Support) may submit a combined plan; however, additional considerations apply:

- The combined plan must clearly and effectively address the specific needs, actions, and magnitude of issues at each identified school.
- The combined plan must document additional supports provided to identified schools beyond what is offered districtwide.
- Districts with schools with Turnaround ratings must include the school's turnaround strategy in the combined plan.

In some cases, developing a separate UIP for an identified school and a combined plan for the remaining schools may be the most effective approach to provide focus for the school and more closely monitor the implementation and make needed adjustments

Flexibility in Inclusion of Schools

In addition to deciding whether to include identified schools in the combined UIP, districts may also elect to omit certain schools from the combined plan if:

- The school's needs and challenges differ significantly from those of the rest of the district.
- The school is a charter or an Alternative Education Campus (AEC) with unique programming or structures that are not aligned with the context of the rest of the district.

Combined Plan Requirements

A combined UIP must:

- Be developed and submitted using the district's UIP template[1].
- Meet all district and school-level requirements, including any special grant, program, or identification expectations as defined in the quality criteria.
- Include:
    - Integration of required strategies for identified schools, such as turnaround plans.
    - Rationale for student performance priorities at the district level that considers data for each of the schools.
    - Identify trends, Student Performance Priorities (SPPs), Root Causes, and Major Improvement Strategies aligned to each of these planning elements for the district and each school.

Common Plan Considerations

Different approaches for different needs

- **School-Level**: Used when needs or challenges across schools and/or grade levels are significantly divergent. Differentiates UIP elements, including Major Improvement Strategies, by grade band (e.g., one for elementary, one for middle, one for high school).
- **Systemic**: Used when needs or challenges across schools and/or grade levels are similar and differences are minimal. Addresses systemic priorities across all schools, Student Performance Priorities, Root Causes, Major Improvement Strategies, and Actions are used across all included schools. This may include common professional development, implementation of coaching structures for all levels, etc.

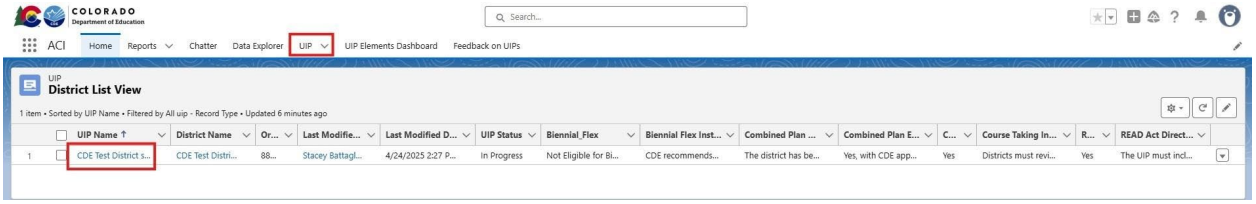
Common Misconception: Don't assume that the act of combining plans will automatically meet all requirements for included sites without explicitly addressing site-specific requirements. For instance, if a school in the district is identified as a Turnaround plan type, then the combined UIP must include a turnaround strategy for that school. See the UIP Quality Criteria and the Assurances & Requirements section of the UIP Online System template to identify and understand planning requirements for all schools and the district.

Developing a Combined UIP in the Online System

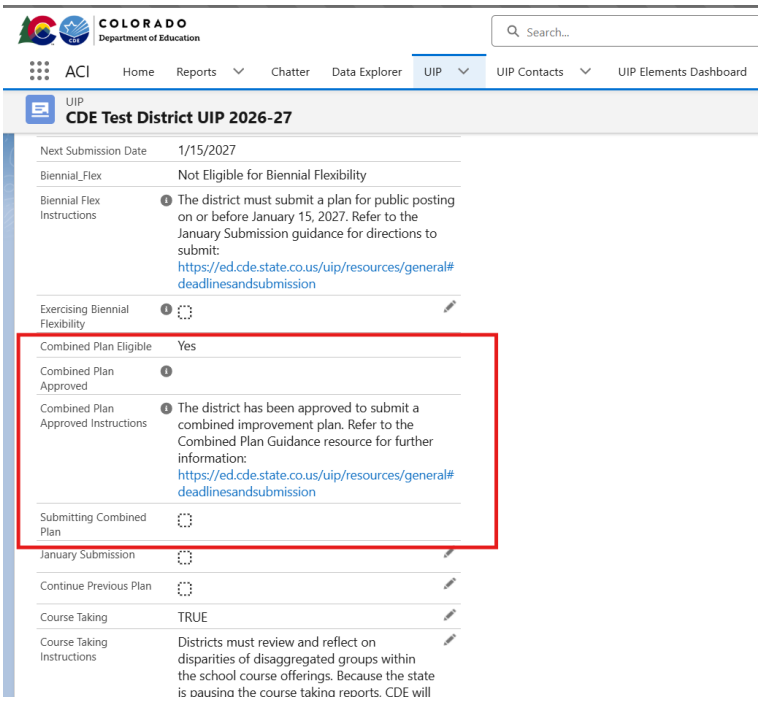
The guidance that follows is for eligible districts only. Eligible charter networks should reference submission guidance on the last page of this document (see Submission Guidance for Eligible Charter School Networks).

Determining Eligibility

Information regarding the district's eligibility to submit a combined plan can be found in the district's current UIP. Access the current district UIP template by clicking the UIP name under the "District List View" on the home screen. This will take users to the "UIP Details" page of the current district UIP.

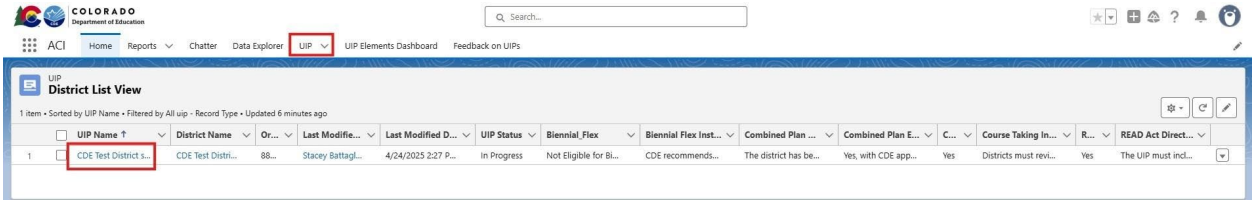


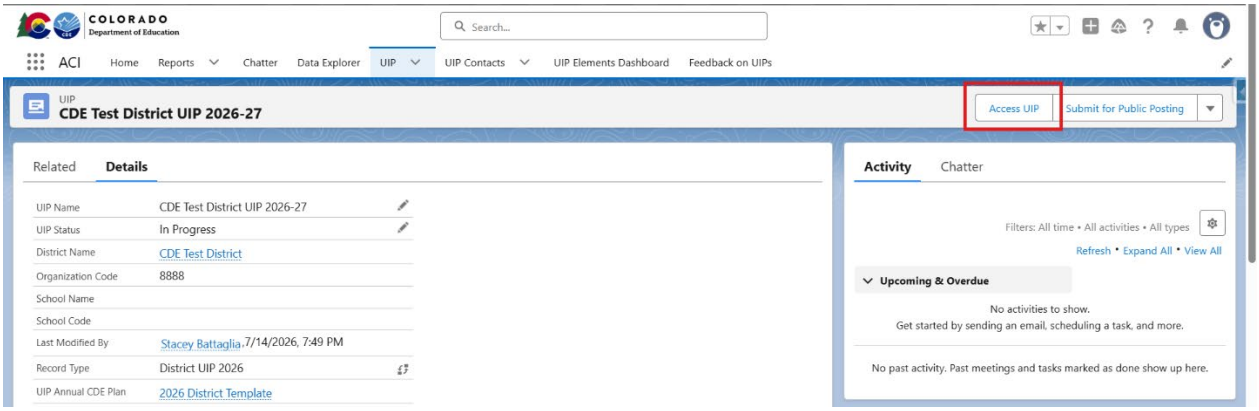
On the "UIP Details" page, refer to the "Combined Plan Eligible" field to determine if the district is eligible to submit a combined plan. The "Combined Plan Approved Instructions" field provides additional information about combined plan eligibility.



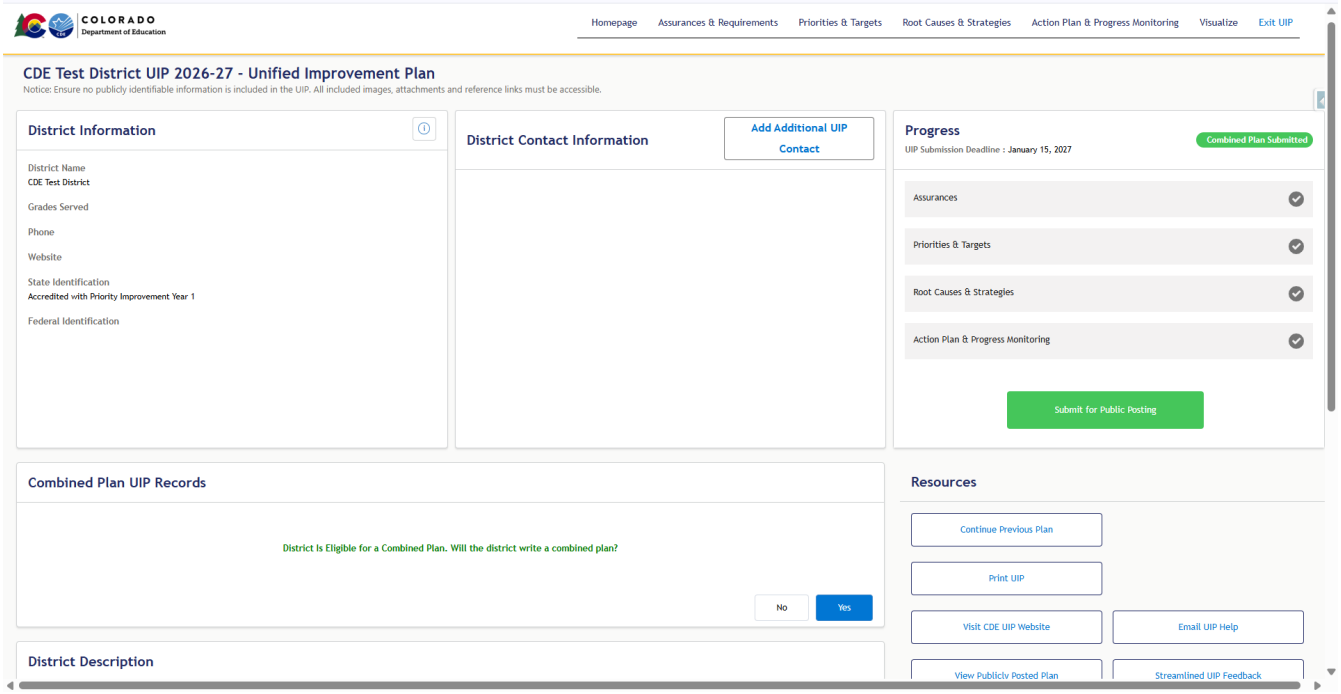
Submitting a Combined Plan

A combined plan must be completed and submitted in the district UIP template. Access the current district UIP template by clicking the UIP name under the "District List View" on the Home screen. This will take users to the "UIP Details" page of the current district template.



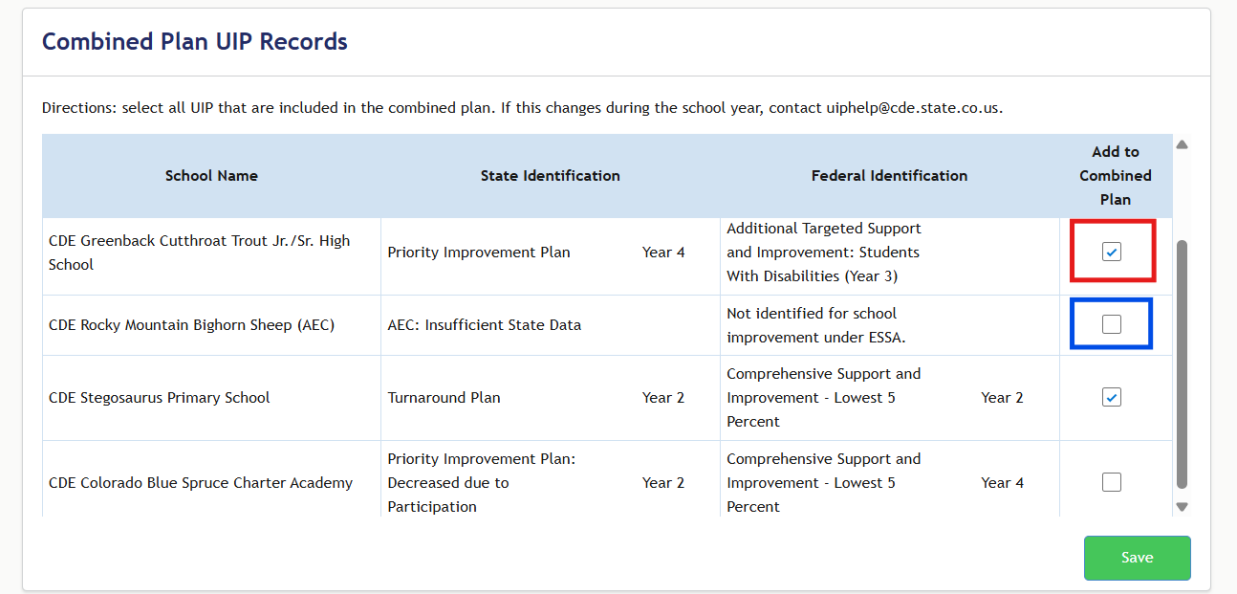


Select the “Access UIP'' button to access the district UIP record. The UIP will open in a new window. Once in the UIP, the District Admin will be able to select which school(s) should be included in the combined plan. If the district is eligible to submit a combined plan, a card will appear on the Homepage to indicate if the district will be submitting a combined plan. If “Yes”, the district will be prompted to select which schools to include in the combined plan. If the district selects “No”, and decides that it will submit a combined plan, refresh the page and select “Yes”.



Homepage Tab

To include schools in the combined plan, click the checkbox to the right of the school name. See the screenshot below for an example. District Admins use checks to indicate the school is included in the combined plan (red box) and omit checks when a school will not be included in the combined plan for this year's UIP (blue box as an example). Be sure to click Save to save which schools will be included in the combined plan.



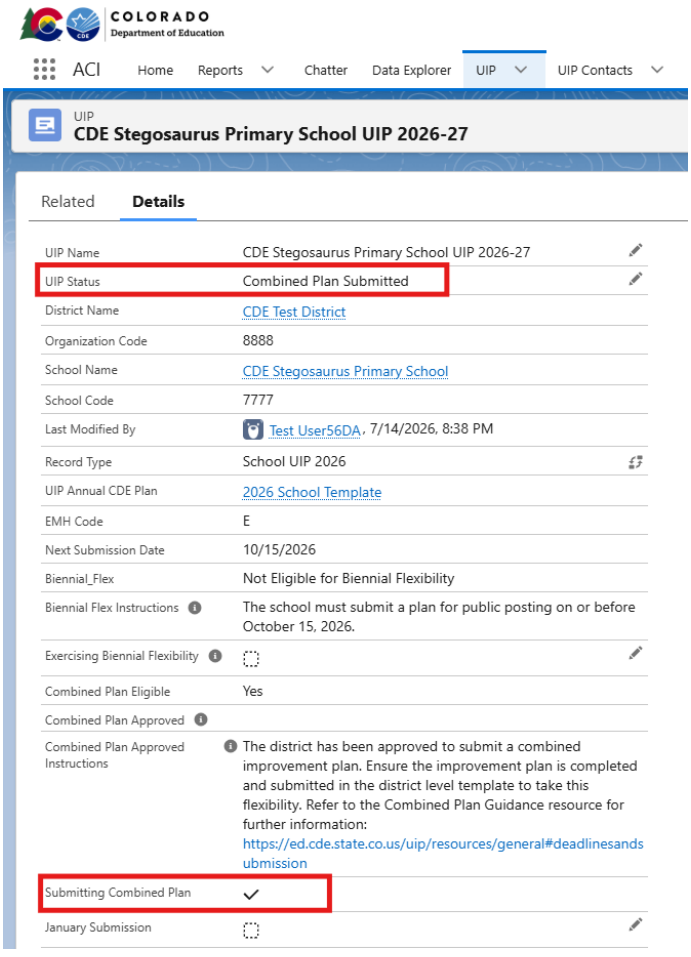
Combined Plan UIP Records

Directions: select all UIP that are included in the combined plan. If this changes during the school year, contact uiphelp@cde.state.co.us.

School Name	State Identification		Federal Identification		Add to Combined Plan
CDE Greenback Cutthroat Trout Jr./Sr. High School	Priority Improvement Plan	Year 4	Additional Targeted Support and Improvement: Students With Disabilities (Year 3)		☑
CDE Rocky Mountain Bighorn Sheep (AEC)	AEC: Insufficient State Data		Not identified for school improvement under ESSA.		☐
CDE Stegosaurus Primary School	Turnaround Plan	Year 2	Comprehensive Support and Improvement - Lowest 5 Percent	Year 2	☑
CDE Colorado Blue Spruce Charter Academy	Priority Improvement Plan: Decreased due to Participation	Year 2	Comprehensive Support and Improvement - Lowest 5 Percent	Year 4	☐

Save

If a school is selected to be included in the combined plan, the UIP Online System will automatically check "Submitting Combined Plan" on the school's UIP record. If a district decides to not include a school in the combined plan, the UIP Online System will automatically uncheck the "Submitting Combined Plan" checkbox on the school's UIP record. Once the district submits the combined plan for public posting, the school's UIP status will automatically update to "Combined Plan Submitted".



COLORADO Department of Education

ACI Home Reports Chatter Data Explorer UIP UIP Contacts

UIP

CDE Stegosaurus Primary School UIP 2026-27

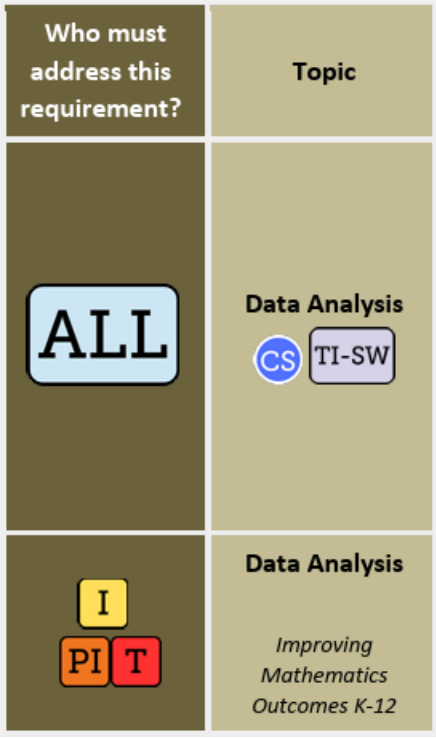
Related **Details**

UIP Name	CDE Stegosaurus Primary School UIP 2026-27
UIP Status	Combined Plan Submitted
District Name	CDE Test District
Organization Code	8888
School Name	CDE Stegosaurus Primary School
School Code	7777
Last Modified By	Test User56DA, 7/14/2026, 8:38 PM
Record Type	School UIP 2026
UIP Annual CDE Plan	2026 School Template
EMH Code	E
Next Submission Date	10/15/2026
Biennial_Flex	Not Eligible for Biennial Flexibility
Biennial Flex Instructions	The school must submit a plan for public posting on or before October 15, 2026.
Exercising Biennial Flexibility	☐
Combined Plan Eligible	Yes
Combined Plan Approved	
Combined Plan Approved Instructions	The district has been approved to submit a combined improvement plan. Ensure the improvement plan is completed and submitted in the district level template to take this flexibility. Refer to the Combined Plan Guidance resource for further information: https://ed.cde.state.co.us/uip/resources/general#deadlinesandsubmission
Submitting Combined Plan	✓
January Submission	☐

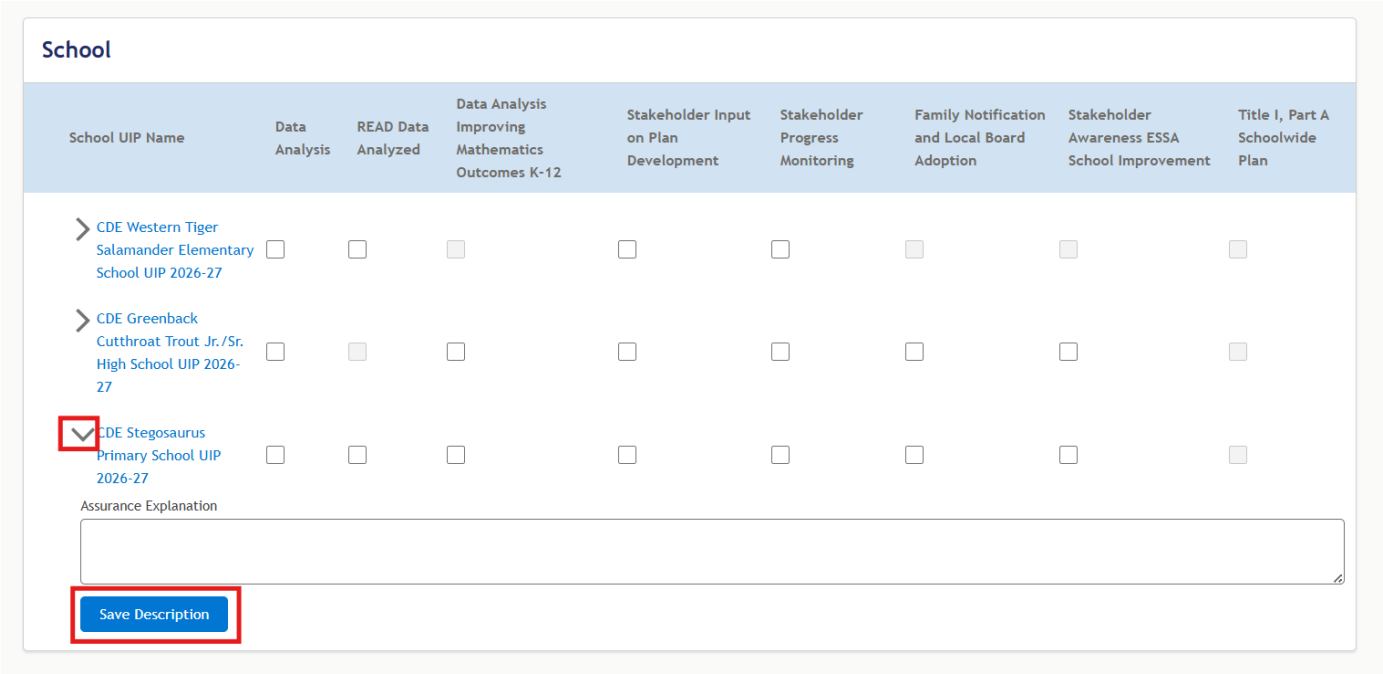
The UIP Online System will automatically pull in the requirements for the schools that are selected to be included in the district's combined plan. Based on the school's performance ratings, the associated assurance statements, customized pre-populated requirements, READ Act Targets, Improving Mathematics Outcomes K-12 Targets, and/or Turnaround Strategies will be integrated into the district's combined UIP record.

Assurance & Requirements Tab

Information integrated from school UIPs begin to show on the Assurance & Requirements tab on the district's UIP record. Below the district's Assurance & Requirements box will be the included schools' Assurance statements. The titles for these assurances are aligned with the "topic column" within the assurances of the Quality Criteria (see screenshot to the right). To read the complete assurance statements for the school, refer to the Assurance Statement Supplement Resource.



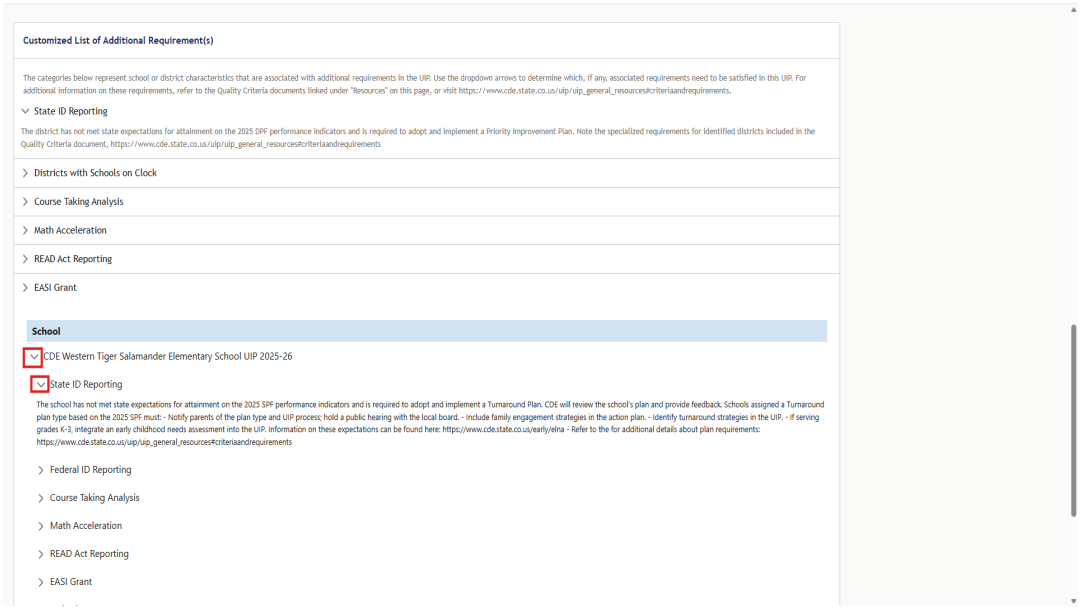
When looking at the schools' included assurance statements, white clickable checkboxes indicate that the assurance is a requirement based on the school's performance rating. Checkboxes that are grayed out are not required for the indicated school. If the school cannot attest to the completion of any assurance listed, a narrative explanation may be added in the text box below the assurances by selecting the dropdown caret to the left of the school's name. Be sure to click Save Description to save the narrative explanation.



For example, the screenshot above shows that the first school is required to meet the READ Data Analyzed assurance statement while the second school does not need to meet the requirement of the READ Data Analyzed assurance statement.

In this section of the UIP, if the assurance statement is checked true or if information is added to the Assurance Explanation box, this data will transfer and appear on the individual school UIP records. If someone updates the school's UIP record for Assurances & Assurance Explanation, the district's UIP will reflect the changes made from the school's UIP. The information shown will reflect the last update from either the district or school UIP record. CDE recommends that if schools are included in the district's combined plan, the individual school UIP records should not be updated by any user.

Below the Assurance Statement section, a customized list of additional requirements for the district will appear. The “School” header in the blue bar will include the customized list of additional requirements for the included schools. Customized additional requirements for each school included in the combined UIP can be found by clicking the dropdown caret to the left of the school’s name and the different program requirement headers.



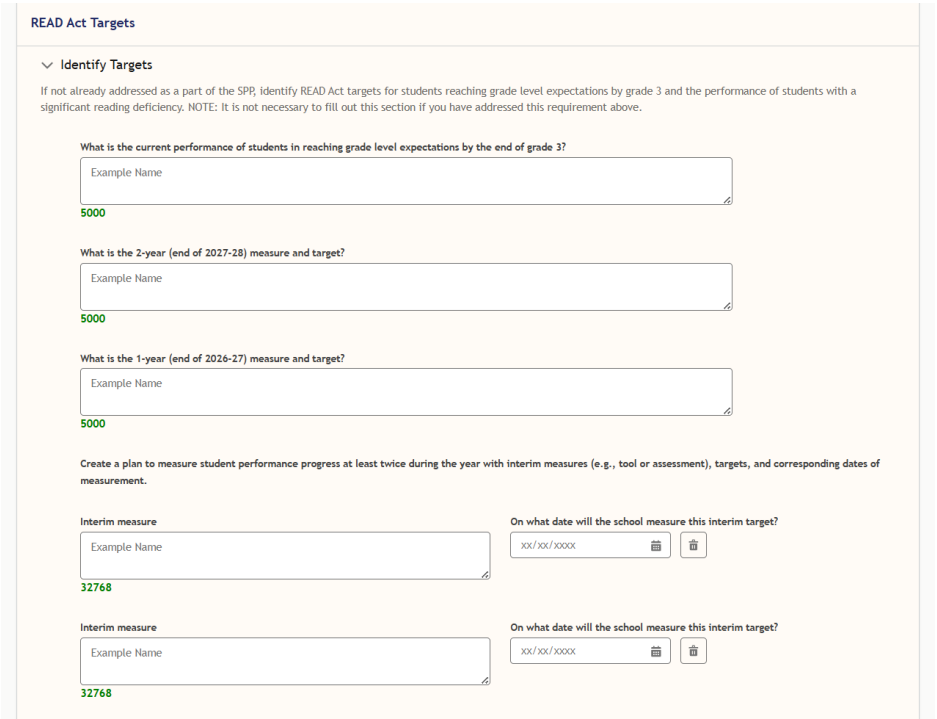
If a school is identified under Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the school’s ESSA Profile will be available to download for planning purposes. The ESSA Profile will NOT be included in the publicly available UIP for the district or school.



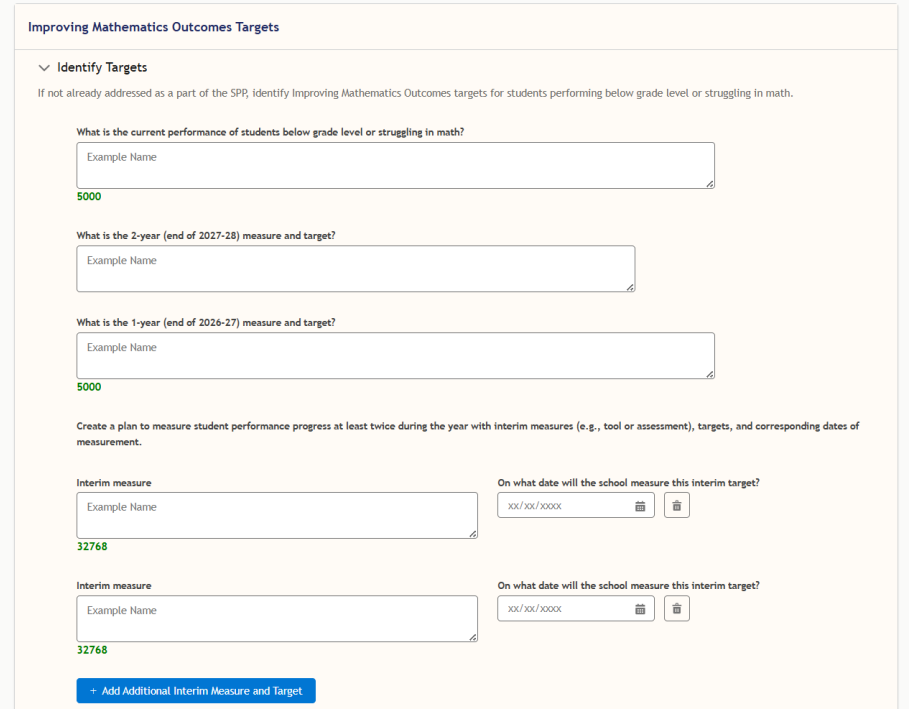
Priorities & Targets Tab

For combined plans, the included schools could prompt additional READ Act Target box and/or Improving Mathematics Outcomes K-12 boxes to be included, depending on the school’s performance rating. The READ Act Target box and Improving Mathematics Outcomes K-12 box should be used if not already addressed as part of the Student Performance Priorities.

READ Act requirements apply to sites that serve kindergarten through third grade students. Nearly every district or BOCES in Colorado meet this requirement. Be mindful of whether schools included in the combined plan also need to meet this requirement. See the screenshot at right of READ Act Targets fields.

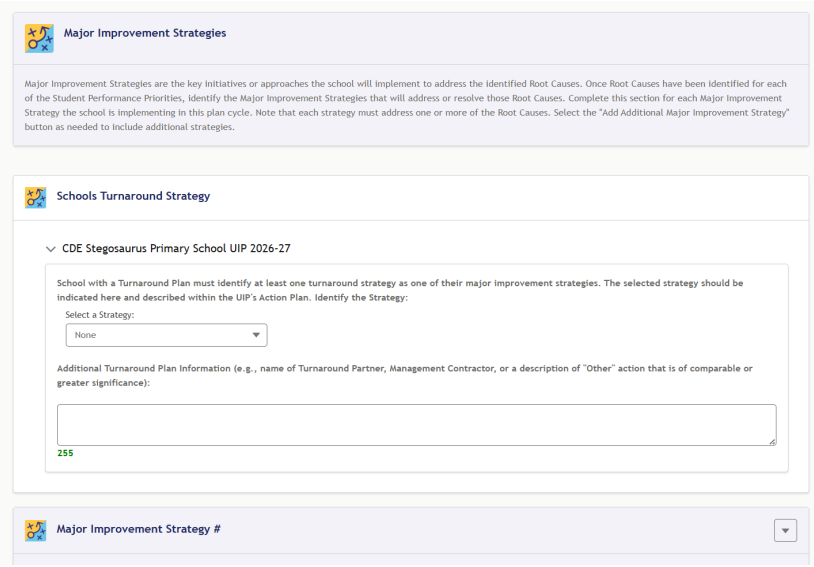


Improving Mathematics Outcomes K-12 requirements apply to sites that serve kindergarten through 12th grade and have an Improvement, Priority Improvement, or Turnaround performance rating. See the screenshot below for an example of Improving Mathematics Outcomes K-12 Targets fields.



Root Causes & Strategies Tab

Sites that have a performance rating of Turnaround are required to identify a state-required turnaround strategy and articulate an action plan aligned to needs identified in data analysis. If the district and/or one of the included schools in the combined plan have a Turnaround performance rating, a turnaround strategy box will populate in the Major Improvement Strategies section on the Root Causes & Strategies tab on the UIP template. See the screenshot below for an example of Turnaround Strategy fields.



Action Plan & Progress Monitoring Tab

There are no additional features or integrations that populate on this tab for combined plans.

Submission Guidance for Eligible Charter School Networks

A Charter School Network with 1,200 students or fewer and authorized by a single authorizer may submit a single plan to satisfy the school plan requirements of its schools. If a Charter School Network has 1,200 or less students during the October student count, and would like to exercise the ability to submit a combined plan, the district/authorizer Accountability Contact, District Admin, or District User should email UIPHelp@cde.state.co.us the following information:

- School names and school codes that will be submitted as a combined plan
- Indicate which school UIP will be submitted as the combined plan for all schools
- In the School Description on the Homepage of the UIP that will be submitted as the combined plan, must state that the plan meets the requirements for the following schools with the school names and school codes that are included in the combined plan

To meet public posting requirements, SchoolView will be updated to display the combined UIP for all included schools.