Unified Improvement Plan (UIP) Guidance for Insufficient State Data: Low Participation Rating

Purpose

This document provides detailed guidance to support schools and districts in meeting the Unified Improvement Planning (UIP) requirements associated with the rating of Insufficient State Data (ISD): Low Participation. Additional information on the rating can be found in this fact sheet.

Requirements

UIP requirements for ISD: Low Participation align with the overall UIP theory of action and use existing elements and fields in the online UIP platform. The following discussion of UIP requirements and considerations for Low Participation are pulled from CDE's UIP Quality Criteria. Requirements for ISD: Low Participation are marked in that document with the following icon:

ISD:LP

The sections that follow provide guidance for fulfilling ISD: Low Participation requirements by UIP Element, providing site-specific considerations for how to approach meeting the requirement. The following guidance only describes how to "meet expectations" for each ISD: Low Participation UIP requirement. It does not represent the full set of UIP requirements; consult the UIP Quality Criteria for comprehensive planning expectations.

Student Performance Priorities

ISD:LP	**Address Indicators** *ISD Low Participation*	The plan includes at least one Student Performance Priority that is clearly and explicitly aligned to low overall participation rates.

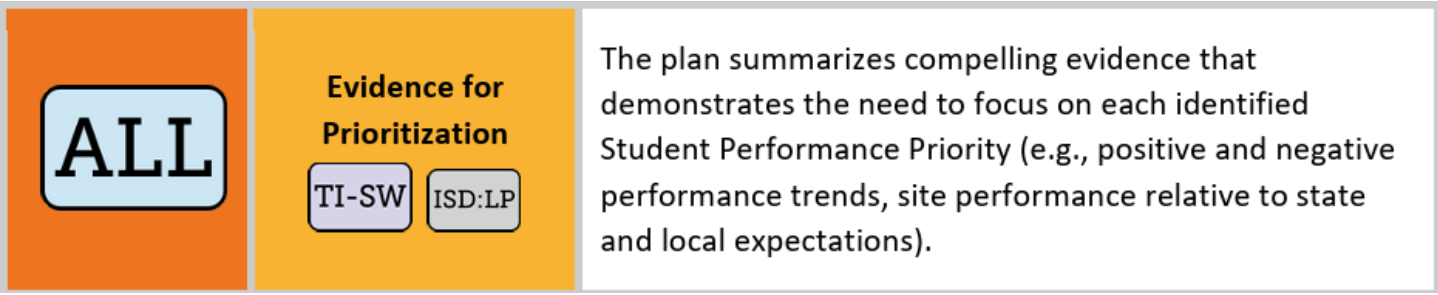
The UIP should include at least one Student Performance Priority (SPP) that is clearly and explicitly aligned to the student performance priority of Low Participation. Address this requirement on the Priorities & Targets tab of the UIP Online System.

Considerations:

Use the site-specific considerations below to determine how to develop at least one Student Performance Priority aligned to Low Participation identification. Any of the following approaches to formulating the SPP can be used to address this requirement:

- **Overall Participation Rate**: Identify the overall participation rate as a student performance priority. The rate for the performance frameworks, either single-year or multi-year, are the rates used for the ISD: Low Participation identification.
- **School-level Specific Participation Rate**: For schools spanning multiple levels (such as a K-8 or a secondary school that combines middle and high school) or for identified districts, participation rates may vary by school level. In this case, it may be appropriate to focus on improving participation rates for a particular school level (i.e., Elementary, Middle, or High).
- **School-Specific Participation Rate (Combined Plan):** For districts that submit a combined plan, the ISD: Low Participation identification may be for a specific school. Identify the participation rate that is specific to the school.
- **Single Year Participation Rate (for Multi-Year Framework ID)**: If the school or district is identified for low participation based on the multi-year participation rate (same as the performance framework), the priority could focus on making changes in single year participation. If the single year participation rate meets the state's threshold, this rate may be used in place of the multi-year participation rate in the performance framework. See frameworks on SchoolView.
- **NOTE:** If the school's context or data analysis does not support prioritizing participation rate, then ensure the UIP includes a rationale for not prioritizing participation (see "Evidence & Rational for Prioritization," below).

Evidence & Rationale for Prioritization



The UIP must include a statement describing the evidence and rationale used to identify Low Participation as a SPP. Address this requirement on the Priorities & Targets tab of the UIP Online System. The following scenarios provide considerations for this task.

Considerations:

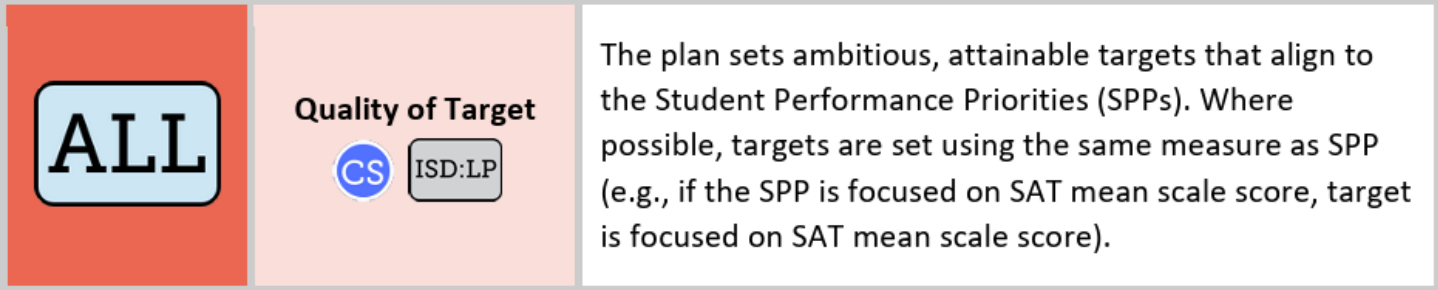
Consider using one or more of the following approaches to providing the required Evidence for Prioritization to satisfy this requirement:

- **Rating identification for low participation:** CDE's ISD: Low Participation rating and these planning requirements may serve as the site's evidence and rationale for identifying state assessment

participation as a Student Performance Priority. Acknowledge the school's or district's ISD: Low Participation rating in the Evidence & Rationale section of the UIP to note this connection.

- **Description of trends in participation over time:** Briefly describe evidence of participation practices and participation over time. The statement may address the following questions: Is the participation rate increasing or decreasing? Have practices changed? Is there more focus on standards implementation and associated assessment?
- **Standards Alignment:** The district may want to improve participation rates in order to leverage improved state assessment data quality and representativeness and support alignment to standards and local measures. This rationale would be appropriate for schools and districts looking to align instruction and assessment grounded in the standards.
- **Participation not included as Performance Priority:** For sites that don't include participation as a priority, provide the rationale for not selecting state assessment participation.

Target Setting



The UIP must set annual targets for increased participation. Address this requirement on the Priorities & Targets tab of the UIP Online System. The following considerations apply to setting annual targets for Student Performance Priorities for ISD: Low Participation.

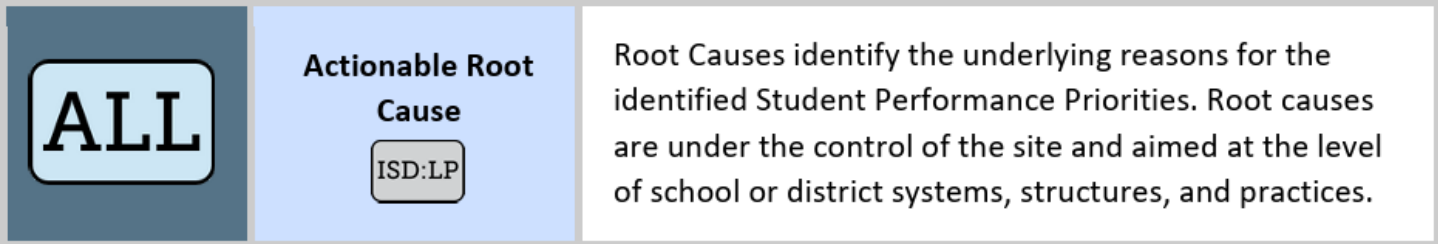
Considerations:

The following guidance on target setting aligns to the scenarios outlined in the Student Performance Priority section above:

- **Overall Participation Rate**: Set targets for ambitious and attainable increases in the overall participation rate for the school or district.
- **School-level Specific Participation Rate**: For schools spanning multiple levels (such as a k-8, or a secondary school that combines middle and high school) or for identified districts, the participation rates may vary across grade spans. Set targets for ambitious and attainable increases in participation at a particular school level (i.e., Elementary, Middle, or High).
- **School-Specific Participation Rate (Combined Plan):** For districts that write a combined plan, the Low Participation identification may be for a specific school. Set targets for ambitious and attainable increases in participation that are specific to the school.
- **Single-Year Participation Rate (Multi-Year Framework)**: If the school or district is identified based on multi-year participation rate (same as the performance framework), set single year participation targets.

***Note**: It may be difficult to identify appropriate interim targets aligned to the annual targets. If measures cannot be identified, the interim targets may be left blank. To support strong progress monitoring, ensure that robust implementation milestones aligned with selected major improvement strategies/action steps are identified to achieve the annual target.*

Root Causes



The UIP must identify the Root Cause(s) of the student performance priority of Low Participation, or issues at the level of school or district systems, structures, and practices that have led to low participation. Address this requirement on the Root Causes & Strategies tab of the UIP Online System.

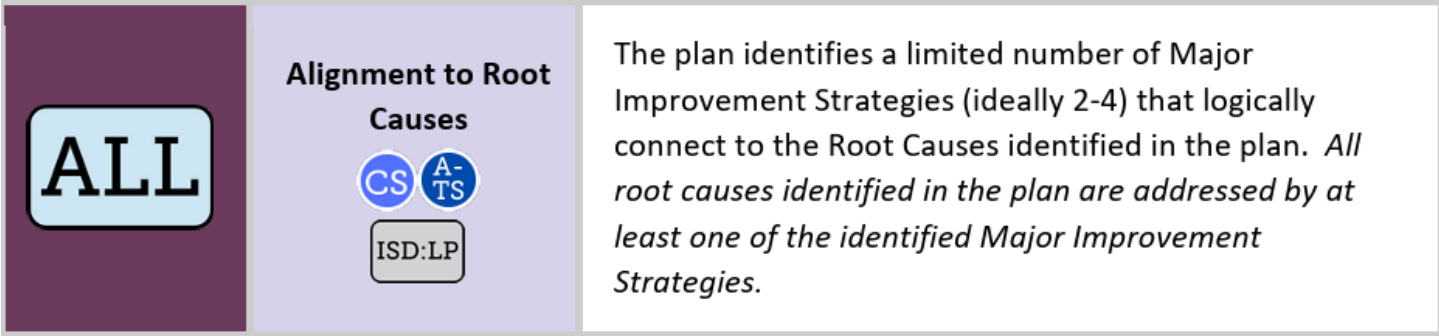
Considerations:

A variety of factors are likely to contribute to low levels of participation in state assessments. Consider the following school- or district-level systems, structures and practices and questions to help explore and identify the Root Cause(s) of Low Participation:

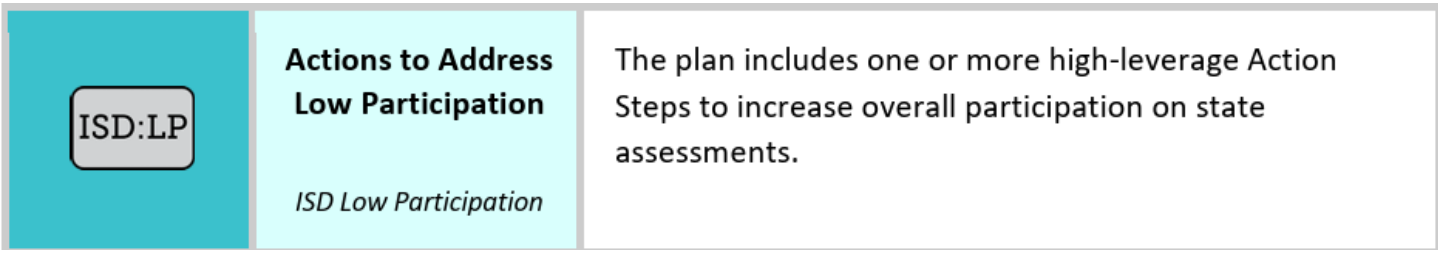
- **Testing Policies and Communications:** Examine parent excuse policy and procedures. Consider the framing and values with related communications.
- **Culture of Data Use:** Examine the culture of data/assessment use. What is understood about state assessments? What barriers exist to using state assessment data?
- **System Transparency:** There may be uncertainty or trust concerns with the community about state data use and value related to state assessments. How does the school or district foster trust in state assessments through transparency and information sharing?
- **Standards Alignment:** How well aligned are existing instruction, resources and assessments to the Colorado Academic Standards? Since state assessments are grounded in the Colorado Academic Standards, conducting an analysis to determine any gaps between school instruction and those standards may help stakeholders to find greater meaning in the data from state assessments (and thus improve participation rates). Results from state assessments may then provide crucial data to support strong alignment across critical educational systems.
- **Historic priority:** Understand the previous use of state assessment data and the drivers for those circumstances (data literacy, value for system alignment, etc.). Understand what the current value and priority is among stakeholders related to state assessments and what may have changed over time.

Major Improvement Strategies & Action Plan

After identifying the Root Cause(s) of Low Participation, planning efforts should focus on selecting evidence-based strategies and actions to address them. Depending on the overall improvement efforts of the school, the approach to responding to Root Cause(s) of Low Participation may be captured in its own Major Improvement Strategy, or it may be embedded as action steps within another strategy.



The UIP must identify a Major Improvement Strategy to address the identified Root Causes (school- or district-level systems, structures, and practices issues) of the student performance challenge of Low Participation. Address this requirement on the Root Causes & Strategies tab of the UIP Online System.



The UIP must identify one or more high-leverage Action Steps meant to increase rates of participation in state assessments. Actions should aim at putting Major Improvement Strategies into practice and ultimately address the Root Cause(s) of the issue.

Considerations

When selecting a Major Improvement Strategy and Action Steps to address the Root Cause(s) of Low Participation, consider the following approaches:

- **Culture of data/assessment use:** Strategies or actions may focus on supporting a culture that examines available data, including assessments, in order to make strategic instructional adjustments to address student learning needs. This resource from IES and associated IES toolkit support an understanding of strong data culture, including the professional learning, structures and systems needed for effective implementation. This additional resource from Expeditionary Learning provides a high level summary and steps in that culture shift.
- **Community engagement about data/assessment use and value:** Consider what actions may be needed to engage with stakeholders more broadly, including staff, local school boards and families. Concrete actions taken by schools and districts can build trust and improve transparency. Be sure to prepare

internal stakeholder to explain and support any external communication made to families. Actions may include:

  - Sharing simple, jargon-free letters explaining how data identifies learning gaps and directs resource allocation to demystify the test purpose.
  - Showing parents and high school students how scores provide actionable diagnostic data or satisfy college readiness benchmarks to highlight individual benefits.
  - Engaging community leaders early to address cultural or system concerns regarding standardized testing.

- **Assessment Administration Support:** See the following CDE resources for schools and districts looking to strengthen their administration and data quality processes.
  - Supports for District Assessment Coordinators: This site provides information that may be helpful for the more technical aspects of the assessment administration process.
  - Assessment Literacy: Resources from the Colorado Assessment Literacy Program are available from CDE to support educators' efforts to expand their understanding of the varied purposes and uses of assessment information and guiding instruction to improve student engagement and learning.
  - Participation resources from CDE Assessment support shared understanding of state assessments and address potential misunderstandings.