COLORADO
Department of Education

Unified Improvement Plan
Quality Criteria Rubric

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. CDE uses this tool to provide technical assistance to all schools and districts and to review plans submitted by schools and districts on state-identified performance watch or federally identified for Comprehensive Support and Improvement.

Directions for use

- **All schools and districts:** Use the criteria for "All schools" in this document (indicated by light blue "ALL" icons) to guide strong improvement planning within the UIP.
- **State or federally identified sites:**
    - 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.

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.***

See the Appendix for "About the Quality Criteria" and "Planning Requirements for Federally Identified Schools".

Key to Icons Used in Quality Criteria tables

ALL	All Schools and Districts
I	Schools and Districts submitting Improvement Plans
PI	Schools and Districts submitting Priority Improvement Plans
T	Schools and Districts submitting Turnaround Plans
Clock Year 4	Schools and Districts on Year 4 of the state Accountability Clock
CS	Schools identified for Comprehensive Support through Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) *See additional details on "Federal Identifications," in the Appendix*
TS	Schools identified for Targeted Support through ESSA
A-TS	Schools identified for Additional Targeted Support through ESSA
K-3	Schools and Districts serving grades K-3
9-12	Schools and Districts serving grades 9-12
EASI	Schools and Districts that have received a *School Holistic* or *District Strategic Planning* grant in the last two years, or *Transformation Network* grant in the last three years through Empowering Action for School Improvement (EASI)
TI-SW	***Optional**:* Schools using the UIP to satisfy Title I Schoolwide requirements *See additional details on Title I Schoolwide Planning Requirements in the Appendix.*
ISD:LP	Schools and districts that have been identified for Insufficient State Data: Low Participation (ISD:LP)

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If desired, use the table of contents below to find requirements for a specific section or element of the UIP.

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The Quality Criteria

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.

UIP Process: Data Analysis

Who must address this requirement?	Topic	Assurance
ALL	**Data Analysis** CS TI-SW	The Unified Improvement Plan is the result of thorough data analysis. ● 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).
I PI T	**Data Analysis** *Improving Mathematics Outcomes K-12*	Math 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).

Who must address this requirement?	Topic	Assurance
K-3	**Data Analysis** *READ Act*	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.

UIP Process: Development and Posting

Who must address this requirement?	Topic	Assurance
TI-SW	**Schoolwide Plan Acknowledgement, Monitoring and Revision** ***Title I, Part A Schoolwide Plan***	**[OPTIONAL - School-level requirement]** This plan will serve as the Comprehensive Schoolwide Plan for schools participating in Title I, Part A Schoolwide programming. ● 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
ALL	**Stakeholder Input on Plan Development** CS TS A-TS TI-SW	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).
ALL	**Stakeholder Progress Monitoring** CS TS A-TS TI-SW	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.
ALL	**Local Board Adoption**	**[District-level requirement]** The local board reviewed and adopted the plan
CS TS A-TS	**Stakeholder Awareness** *ESSA School Improvement*	**[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.
PI T	**Family Notification and Local Board Adoption**	**[School-level requirement]** • 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.

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
ALL	**Identification of Student Performance Priorities** TI-SW	The plan identifies a limited number of Student Performance Priorities (3 or fewer) of appropriate magnitude to focus the site's improvement efforts.
ALL	**Address Indicators** TI-SW	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).
CS TS A-TS	**Address Indicators** *ESSA School Improvement*	**[School-level requirement]** The plan clearly and explicitly aligns at least one Student Performance Priority to reasons for ESSA identification: • Graduation Rate (Comprehensive Support - Low Graduation) • Overall Performance (Comprehensive Support - Lowest 5%) • Performance of Specific Student Group (Targeted or Additional Targeted Support) • Participation Rate
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.

UIP Element: Evidence & Rationale for Prioritization

Who must address this requirement?	Topic	Meets Expectations
ALL	**Evidence for Prioritization** TI-SW ISD:LP	The plan summarizes compelling evidence that demonstrates the need to focus on each identified Student Performance Priority (e.g., positive and negative performance trends, site performance relative to state and local expectations).
ALL	**Rationale for Prioritization**	The plan includes strong contextual rationale for each of the selected Student Performance Priorities. The rationale should include any contextual factors (e.g., enrollment shifts, local strategic plan priorities, and previous improvement efforts) that influenced the selection of the Student Performance Priorities.
K-3	**Evidence and Rationale for Prioritization** *READ Act*	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.
I PI T	**Evidence and Rationale for Prioritization** *Improving Mathematics Outcomes K-12*	The plan prioritizes math and provides a clear explanation to document rationale for the school- or district-wide direction. If the plan does not prioritize math, then an explanation is included with data analysis to document rationale for this decision.
CS TS A-TS	**Evidence and Rationale for Prioritization** *ESSA School Improvement*	**[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).

Who must address this requirement?	Topic	Meets Expectations
TI-SW	**Evidence and Rationale for Prioritization** *Title I, Part A Schoolwide Plan*	**[OPTIONAL - 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.

UIP Element: Target Setting

Who must address this requirement?	Topic	Meets Expectations
ALL	**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.
ALL	**Quality of Target** CS ISD:LP	The plan sets ambitious, attainable targets that align to the Student Performance Priorities (SPPs). 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** *READ Act (Grade Level Expectations)*	The plan sets target(s) to ensure that each student achieves grade level expectations in reading by the end of grade 3. *Note: Targets must be set for READ Act - Grade Level Expectations even if literacy is not identified as a Student Performance Priority.*

Who must address this requirement?	Topic	Meets Expectations
K-3	**Targets** *READ Act (SRD)*	The plan sets ambitious and attainable target(s) for reducing the number of students who have significant reading deficiencies (SRD), as measured by the site's READ Act assessment. *Note: Targets must be set for READ Act - SRD even if literacy is not identified as a Student Performance Priority.*
I PI T	**Targets for below grade level OR struggling students** *Improving Mathematics Outcomes K-12*	The plan sets ambitious and attainable target(s) that are likely to reduce the number of students who are below grade level expectations or are struggling in math, as measured by local or state assessments. *Note: Targets must be set for Improving Mathematics Outcomes K-12 even if math is not identified as a Student Performance Priority.*

UIP Element: Interim Targets

Who must address this requirement?	Topic	Meets Expectations
ALL	**Alignment to Annual Target** CS	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.
ALL	**Quality of Interim Targets** CS	Interim Targets specify expected student progress at least twice during the year.

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
ALL	**Actionable Root Cause** ISD:LP	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.

Who must address this requirement?	Topic	Meets Expectations
ALL	**Root Causes Analysis Process**	The plan explains how Root Causes were identified and validated (including, e.g., 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.
K-3 + PI T	***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.
CS A-TS	**Identification of Resource Inequities** *ESSA School Improvement*	The root cause and/or rationale describe resource inequities (e.g., instructional time, early interventions, teacher quality, family engagement, professional development) that likely contributed to the reasons for ESSA identification.
EASI	**Identification of Systems Needs of School** *EASI: School Holistic Review, Transformation Network, or District Strategic Planning*	The plan integrates the results of a diagnostic review or system needs assessment funded by one of the listed EASI Grants (e.g., in the priority selection rationale and/or the root cause rationale.
9-12	**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
ALL	**Alignment to Root Causes** CS A-TS ISD:LP	The plan identifies a limited number of Major Improvement Strategies (ideally 2-4) that logically connect to the Root Causes identified in the plan. *All root causes identified in the plan are addressed by at least one of the identified Major Improvement Strategies.*
ALL	**Quality of Major Improvement Strategies** TI-SW	The plan clearly and adequately describes strategies that, if implemented as described, have a likelihood of positively impacting results in the Student Performance Priorities.
ALL	**Evidence Base** CS TI-SW	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.
ALL	**Assigned Resources** CS A-TS	The plan identifies resources (e.g., budget allocations, staffing) that will be used to support the implementation of identified Major Improvement Strategies. *Note: checking budget allocation checkboxes in the online system fulfills this requirement.*
Clock Year 4	**Year 4 Description of Potential Pathway**	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.

Who must address this requirement?	Topic	Meets Expectations
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.)
TI-SW	**Title I, Part A Schoolwide Plan**	**[OPTIONAL - School-level requirement]** The plan describes Major Improvement Strategies that • 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: Action Plan

Who must address this requirement?	Topic	Meets Expectations
ALL	**Action Steps**	The plan lists critical, high-leverage Action Steps that are aligned to the Major Improvement Strategies. Action Steps focus on changing school or district practices and structures and are sufficient to put the identified strategy into practice. Action Steps name one-time, individual actions (e.g., purchase of curriculum materials, development of PLC protocols), and also include ongoing or recurring activities.
ALL	**Progress Monitoring in Action Plan** CS A-TS TI-SW	The plan includes Action Steps dedicated to reflecting on progress monitoring (i.e., meetings to reflect on Implementation Milestones and Interim Targets and to identify needed implementation adjustments).

Who must address this requirement?	Topic	Meets Expectations
K-3	**Actions to Address K-3 Reading** *READ Act*	The plan includes scientifically and evidence-based Action Steps that can reasonably be expected to have a meaningful impact for K-3 students identified as having significant reading deficiencies. *Note: Action Steps must be set for READ Act even if literacy is not identified as a Student Performance Priority.*
I PI T	**Actions to Address Math** *Improving Mathematics Outcomes K-12*	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. *Note: Action Steps must be set for Improving Mathematics Outcomes K-12 even if math is not identified as a Student Performance Priority.*
PI T	**Actions Promoting Family Engagement**	The plan includes several high leverage Action Steps, aligned with Family, School and Community Partnering standards, to increase parent/family engagement at the school.
ISD:LP	**Actions to Address Low Participation** *ISD Low Participation*	The plan includes one or more high-leverage Action Steps to increase overall participation on state assessments.
K-3 + T	***Early Learning Needs Assessment for Schools in Turnaround***	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.

Who must address this requirement?	Topic	Meets Expectations
9-12	**Action to address inequities in course-taking patterns** *Student Course Taking Report*	The plan includes Action Steps to address identified patterns of significant disparity in disaggregated groups taking challenging coursework.

UIP Element: Implementation Monitoring Plan

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** CS A-TS	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).

Appendix

About the Quality Criteria

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

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.

The Quality Criteria are organized by the "Top Three" Guiding Questions, and 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," above). *Grayed out rows will not be reviewed by CDE in the current school year.*

The following table lists the "Top Three" Guiding Questions and shows how each of these questions aligns with the Associated Plan Elements in the UIP. *Click the questions below to go to the corresponding section in this document.*

"Top Three" Guiding Questions	*Associated Plan Elements in UIP*
Does the plan identify high-leverage performance priorities and targets?	***On the "Priorities & Targets" tab:*** ● 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?	***On the "Root Causes & Strategies" tab:*** ● 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?	***On the "Action Plan & Progress Monitoring" tab:*** ● Action steps ● Implementation Monitoring Plan

Additional Plan Processes for Federal Requirements

Planning Requirements for Federally Identified Schools



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 (Optional)



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. The ESSA Schoolwide Requirements Rubric provides additional information for schools and districts to use when planning, implementing and evaluating Title I schoolwide programs.