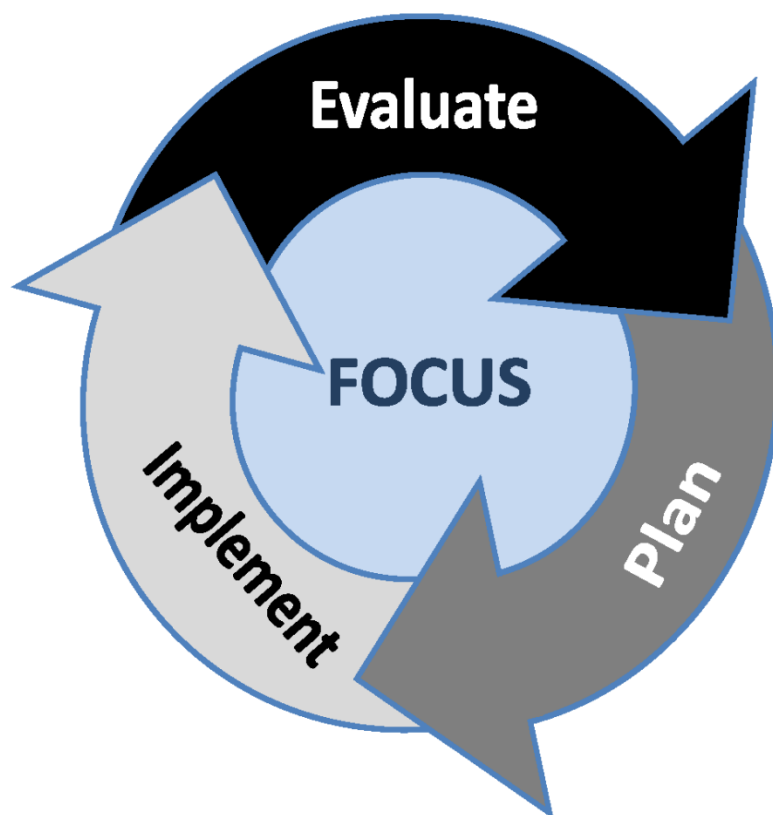




Unified Improvement Planning Handbook

Guidance for Schools and Districts for Completing a Unified Improvement Plan



Version 4.0 August 2013

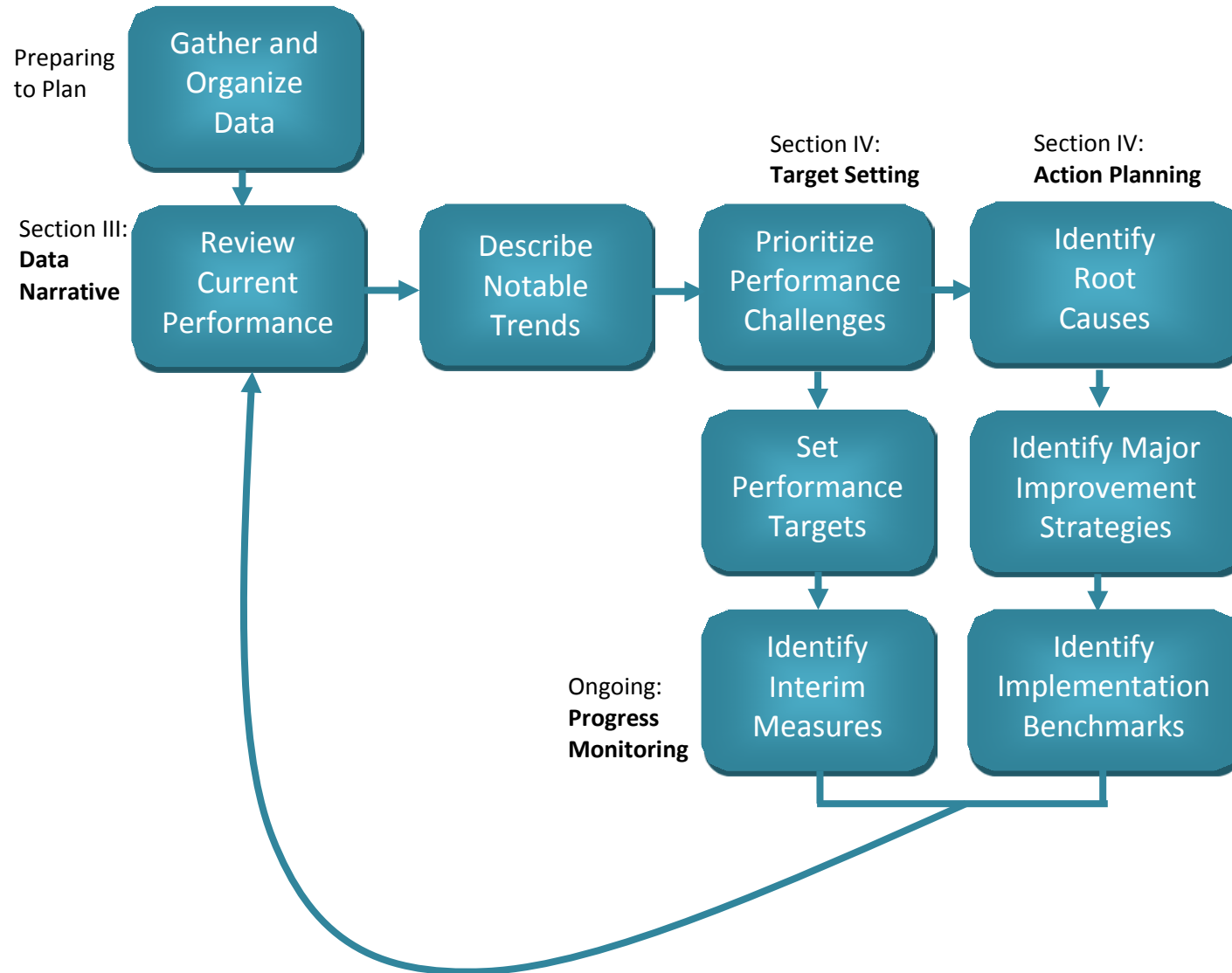
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This handbook was developed in partnership with the Center for Transforming Learning and Teaching in the School of Education and Human Development at the University of Colorado Denver.



UNIFIED IMPROVEMENT PLANNING PROCESS MAP



PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

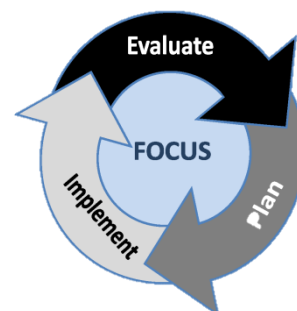
THE PURPOSE OF UNIFIED IMPROVEMENT PLANNING

In 2008, Colorado introduced the Unified Improvement Plan (UIP) to streamline the improvement planning components of state and federal accountability requirements. Adopting this approach has enabled the state to shift from planning as an “event” to planning as a critical component of “continuous improvement.” This process reduces the total number of separate plans schools and districts are required to complete with the intent of creating a single plan that has true meaning for its stakeholders. With continued implementation, the UIP process has taken on multiple functions, including the following:

Alignment	Aligns improvement planning requirements for state and federal accountability into a “single” plan to improve results for students.
Documentation	Provides a common format for schools and for districts to document improvement planning efforts. Schools/districts on accountability clock must demonstrate a coherent plan for dramatic change and adjustments over time. CDE and the State Review Panel review the plans.
Transparency	Offers a process for including multiple voices in school and district planning, including staff, families and community representatives. All plans are posted publicly on SchoolView.org.
Best Practice	Promotes improvement planning based on best-practice, including using state and local data, engaging in a continuous improvement cycle and prioritizing a limited number of strategies.
Supports	Triggers additional supports through CDE, especially for schools/districts on the accountability clock (i.e., Priority Improvement, Turnaround).

Based on the *Colorado Achievement Plan for Kids* (SB212-08), the primary purpose of improvement planning is to align efforts to: ***Ensure all students exit the K-12 education system ready for postsecondary education, and/or to be successful in the workforce, earning a living wage immediately upon graduation.*** In addition, the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) – including Titles IA, IIA and III -- requires that improvement planning be focused on ensuring that all students in the state reach proficiency in English language arts/reading and mathematics. Over time, several other programs and grants (e.g., Student Graduation Completion Plan designation, Tiered Intervention Grants, Gifted Education) have been woven into the process.

The diagram depicted here illustrates the theory of action behind Colorado’s approach to improvement planning. By engaging in a continuous improvement cycle to manage performance, districts and schools will improve their effectiveness and the outcomes for students. That cycle includes: **Focus** attention on the right things (performance indicators); **Evaluate** performance by gathering, analyzing, and interpreting data about performance; **Plan**



improvement strategies based on performance data and root cause analysis; and **Implement** planned improvement strategies. Then, enter the cycle again multiple times throughout the school year: **Evaluate** (or monitor) performance (based on interim measures) and implementation of major improvement strategies (based on implementation benchmarks) at least quarterly. Make adjustments to **planned** improvement strategies, and **implement** revised strategies, as needed.

The UIP template and associated processes are designed to increase coherence across the different steps in the continuous improvement cycle. The performance indicators, which incorporate both state and federal accountability requirements, are important signals that can help schools and districts focus their planning efforts on issues that can result in meaningful change. The template and addenda ensure that schools and districts meet both state and federal accountability requirements.

Through the Colorado state accountability system, districts and schools are assigned to one of four “plan types.” They are: Performance, Improvement, Priority Improvement, and Turnaround. These plan types identify which schools and districts will receive greater attention from the state – in terms of both increased state scrutiny of their plans and additional state support. Regardless of state plan type assignment, all districts must use the same district UIP template and all schools must use the same school UIP template. Each year, schools and districts should submit a two-year Unified Improvement Plan that gets revised and updated to reflect the current and next school year on at least an annual basis, with data reviewed at least quarterly.

This handbook is intended to be used in conjunction with several other resources to strengthen the improvement planning process. This includes (1) the School/District’s Performance Framework, (2) the UIP template with the pre-populated report specific to the school or district, (3) the UIP Quality Criteria.

WHO PLANS?

Planning at the school or district level should involve multiple stakeholders. However, planning teams in schools and districts will look different based on their unique needs. In general, teams should consist of building leadership, teacher representatives and parent and/or community representatives. School and District Accountability Committees (SACs/DACs) have a specified role in the improvement planning process, defined by statute and state rules. For more details about accountability committees and their role in the planning process refer to the [District Accountability Handbook](#).

GATHERING AND ORGANIZING RELEVANT DATA

In preparation for Unified Improvement Planning, planning teams must gather and organize relevant data from a variety of sources. Planning teams use data to: identify trends and prioritize performance challenges (performance data), determine root causes (process and perception data), set targets (performance expectations), monitor progress towards

performance targets (interim measures of student performance) and monitor implementation of major improvement strategies (process and perception data). The team will need to use data made available from the state as well as data from local sources.

Required Data. At a minimum, schools and districts must reference key state data sources described in the following table:

Performance Indicator	Data Reports/Views	Available from
Student Academic Achievement and Achievement Gaps	Colorado Student Assessment Program (TCAP), CoAlt, Escritura, Lectura performance by proficiency level, grade level, content area, and disaggregated groups (over 3-5 years)	School and District Performance Framework Reports (these are not trend data) www.schoolview.org Data Center and Data Lab Student-level record data downloadable through CEDAR (password protected)
Student Academic Growth and Academic Growth Gaps	Median growth percentiles by content area (reading, writing, math and English language proficiency), grade levels, and disaggregated groups (over 3-5 years)	CDE Growth Summary Report www.schoolview.org Data Center and Data Lab Student-level record data downloadable through CEDAR (password protected)
Postsecondary and workforce readiness	4,5,6,7-year Graduation Rates Disaggregated Graduation Rates Drop-out rates Colorado ACT Composite Scores	www.schoolview.org Data Center and Data Lab Student-level record data downloadable through CEDAR (password protected)
English Language Development and Attainment (Title III Grantees only)	Note that revised definitions for AMAO 1 and 2 are pending approval from the USDE Median Growth Percentiles for ELLs	CEDAR report

Performance Indicator	Data Reports/Views	Available from
	calculated based on CELApro and ACCESS for ELLs	
	ELL Graduation Rate ELL Participation Rate	
Teacher Quality (district only)	Equitable distribution of teachers	www.schoolview.org Data Center (Teacher Equity Reports on the staff tab)
Student Engagement (Approved Alternative Education Campuses)	Indicators of student engagement	For selection of accountability measures see: http://www.cde.state.co.us/Accountability/StateAccountabilityAECs.asp

Note: Districts may also make these data sources available through district data access tools.

Suggested Data. It is likely that more detailed *local data* is available at the district and school levels. As a part of the planning process, it is expected that planning teams will gather additional local data to help provide context, deepen the analysis, and to explain the performance data. The following table describes suggested data sources that may be available at the district or school level. Planning teams should use local student learning data in addition to state data in trend analysis and target-setting. Local demographic data, school process data and perception data should be used during root cause analysis and as part of identifying implementation benchmarks.

Student Learning	Demographic Data	Process Data	Perception Data
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local summative and interim assessment results Student work samples Classroom assessment results READ Act 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School locale and size of student population Student characteristics, including poverty, language proficiency, IEP, migrant, race/ethnicity Student mobility rates Staff characteristics (e.g., experience, attendance, turnover) List of schools and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comprehensive evaluations of the school/district (e.g., SST, CADI) Curriculum documents Instructional materials Observations of Instructional Practice Academic interventions available to students Student attendance Discipline referrals and suspension rates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teaching and learning conditions surveys (e.g., TELL Colorado) Perception survey data (e.g., parents, students, teachers, community, school)

Student Learning	Demographic Data	Process Data	Perception Data
assessment results	feeder patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedules and class sizes • Family/community involvement policies/practices • Professional development (structure, participation, focus) • Services and/or programs (e.g., Title I, special ed, ESL) • Extended day or summer programs • RTI Fidelity of Implementation (based on RTI Rubrics) 	leaders) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-assessment tools

As part of the data-gathering process, district and school teams should clarify the questions that each data source will help to answer, and when during the year each data source will be available.

SECTION I: SUMMARY INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL OR DISTRICT

Section I of the UIP Template provides a brief summary of school or district performance based on both state and federal performance indicators. It is intended to highlight *why* the school or district received its accountability designations, and to summarize where the school or district meets or does not meet state and federal expectations. This section is pre-populated by the Colorado Department of Education (CDE). The tables reference data from the School or District Performance Framework Reports (SPF or DPF), may include ESEA accountability information, and relevant program data.

Performance indicators define the general dimensions of quality that help to focus school and district improvement planning on an annual basis. Both state and federal statutes define performance indicators that should be included in school and district improvement plans. For each performance indicator, Section I of the UIP template lays out measures/metrics (how the indicator will be measured), state and federal expectations (a minimum that indicates adequate performance), the school or district's performance on the indicator and whether the school or district met the expectation. Together, performance indicators, measures, metrics, and expectations provide a sharp focus for school and district improvement planning.

- a. **Performance Indicators.** The *Education Accountability Act of 2009* (SB 09-163) identified four performance indicator areas for state accountability: Academic Achievement, Academic Growth, Academic Growth Gaps, and Postsecondary/Workforce Readiness. For Alternative Education Campuses (AEC), the performance indicator areas for state accountability also include Academic Achievement, Academic Growth, and Postsecondary/Workforce Readiness, but Student Engagement replaces Academic Growth Gaps.

- b. **Measures and Metrics.** For each performance indicator required by the *Education Accountability Act of 2009*, the state has also defined required measures and metrics. The Colorado ESEA waiver also specifies measures and metrics for some performance indicator areas. The table below includes the measures and metrics for each performance indicator.
- c. **Federal and State Expectations.** Both the *Education Accountability Act of 2009* and ESEA require schools and districts to meet expectations annually in each performance indicator area. The state has established *minimum expectations* for each performance indicator; districts and schools set their own targets depending on their current performance in relationship to minimum expectations.

Table 1. Performance Indicators, Measures, Metrics, and Expectations

Indicator	Measures	Metrics	Expectations
Student Academic Achievement	TCAP, CoAlt, Lectura, Escritura in Math, Reading, Writing, and Science	Percent of students scoring proficient or advanced in mathematics, reading, writing, and science.	At or above the 50 th percentile for all schools/districts using 2010 (1-year SPF/DPF) or 2008-10 (3-year SPF/DPF) baseline values.
Student Academic Growth	The Colorado Growth Model (Growth in TCAP for Math, Reading and Writing and growth in English Language Proficiency calculated based on CELApro and ACCESS)	<p>Median student growth percentile for the school/district (Math, Reading, Writing and English Language Proficiency).</p> <p>Median adequate growth percentile (for students scoring unsatisfactory or partially proficient on TCAP, adequate growth is <i>catch-up growth</i>; for students scoring proficient or advanced that is <i>keep-up growth</i>) for Math, Reading and Writing only.</p>	<p>For Math, Reading and Writing, if the median student growth percentile for the school or district is greater than or equal to the adequate median growth percentile, at or above 45th percentile growth. If the median student growth percentile for the school or district is less than the adequate median growth percentile, at or above 55th percentile growth.</p> <p>For English Language Proficiency, if the median student growth percentile is at or above the 50th percentile.</p>
Growth Gaps	The Colorado Growth Model (Growth in TCAP for Math, Reading and Writing)	<p>Median student growth percentile (for disaggregated student groups).</p> <p>Median adequate growth percentile (for</p>	If the median student growth percentile for the disaggregated group is greater than or equal to the adequate median growth percentile, at or above 45 th percentile growth.

Indicator	Measures	Metrics	Expectations
		disaggregated student groups).	If the median student growth percentile for the disaggregated group is less than the adequate median growth percentile, at or above 55 th percentile growth.
Postsecondary Workforce Readiness	Graduation rate	Percentage of students graduating within 4, 5, 6, and 7 years.	The highest value among the 4, 5, 6, 7-year graduation rate is above 80%.
	Disaggregated graduation rate	Percent of students within disaggregated groups graduating within 4, 5, 6, and 7 years.	The highest value among the 4, 5, 6, 7-year disaggregated graduation rate is above 80%.
	Drop-out rate	Percentage of students dropping out.	At or below the state average using 2009 (1-year SPF/DPF) or 2007-09 baseline values (3-year SPF/DPF).
	Colorado ACT	Average ACT Composite score.	At or above the state average using 2010 (1-year SPF/DPF) or 2008-10 baseline values (3-year SPF/DPF).
English Language Development and Attainment (district only)	ACCESS, CELApro and TCAP	TBD – Change in definition is pending USDE approval.	AMAO 1: TBD – Change in definition is pending USDE approval.
	Disaggregated graduation rate	TBD – Change in definition is pending USDE approval.	AMAO 2: TBD – Change in definition is pending USDE approval.
		ELL median growth percentiles and median adequate growth percentiles (on TCAP) for reading, math and writing.	AMAO 3: If the median student growth percentile in reading, writing, and math for English Learners (TCAP) is greater than or equal to the adequate median growth percentile, at or above 45 th percentile growth. If the median student growth percentile in reading, writing,

Indicator	Measures	Metrics	Expectations
			and math for English Learners (TCAP) is less than the adequate median growth percentile, at or above 55 th percentile growth.
		TCAP participation rate for English learners.	If the TCAP participation rate for English learners is above 95% in at least two of the three content areas (in reading, writing and math).
		Graduation Rate for English Learners.	The highest value among the 4, 5, 6, 7-year graduation rate for English Learners is above 80%.

Note: The minimum expectations indicated in this table would earn a school or district a “meets” rating on each indicator or sub-indicator in the SPF/DPF. The level of performance that results in state ratings of “does not meet”, “approaching”, “meets” or “exceeds” are provided in the school and district performance framework report rubrics.

SECTION II: IMPROVEMENT PLAN INFORMATION

This section of the UIP template requests additional information about the school or district related to federal program participation, grants received and external reviews provided. In this section, schools/districts should enter the various improvement plan requirements the plan will meet, as well as the lead contact for the plan. Information from this section will help to determine which UIP Quality Criteria apply to the school or district.

SECTION III: NARRATIVE ON DATA ANALYSIS AND ROOT CAUSE IDENTIFICATION

The inquiry process captured in section III of the UIP template corresponds with the “evaluate” portion of the continuous improvement cycle. In this section of the UIP template, schools and districts provide a narrative that details the data story of the school or district which explains the school or district’s performance trends, priority challenges and root causes of the priority performance challenges. The data narrative creates a foundation upon which major improvement strategies and action steps are built. The UIP template includes a text box for planning teams to capture their data narrative. The data narrative should include the following elements:

1. A brief description of the school or district (a few sentences about the school, such as demographics, location or educational approach).
2. An explanation of the process used to develop the UIP including which stakeholders were involved in the data analysis (e.g., principal, teachers, SAC) and what their roles were.

3. The school/district accountability status, plan type assignment, where performance did not meet state or federal expectations (for which indicators), and the magnitude of overall school/district performance challenges.
4. How current performance compares to the targets established in the prior year's plan, and the degree to which current performance supports continuing current major improvement strategies or action steps.
5. Notable performance trends (positive and negative) in each indicator area, what data was considered (including local data sources metrics and measures), how the team determined which trends were notable, and the degree to which current trends represent a continuation from those identified in the prior year's plan.
6. Priority performance challenges that reflect the magnitude of the overall school/district performance challenge, the process that was used to prioritize the performance challenges, and what makes the priorities more important to address immediately than other notable negative trends.
7. Root cause(s) associated with each priority performance challenge.
8. How root causes were identified and the additional data that was reviewed to validate the root causes.
9. A description of the process used to select major improvement strategies aligned with the root causes of priority performance challenges is encouraged.

The data narrative should be explicit in aligning the different sections of the plan. This includes how the root causes explain the priority performance challenges, and how the major improvement strategies address the root causes of priority performance challenges.

To help local teams construct this narrative, two additional worksheets have been included in the template: 1) a worksheet titled *Progress Monitoring of Prior Year's Performance Targets* is provided to support review of progress made towards annual performance targets set for the prior year, and 2) a *Data Analysis Worksheet* is provided to support school/district teams as they identify trends, prioritize performance challenges and determine root causes. In using these worksheets, team members should notice that some elements (e.g., priority performance challenges, root causes) are referenced in multiple places in the plan. It is important that teams ensure that these elements are consistent across the plan.

Non-Example: Priority Performance Challenge not represented consistently across all sections of the school UIP

Data Worksheet: Persistently low and decreasing performance across all populations in all content areas.

Data Narrative: Raise the level of Tier I instructional rigor through professional development, monitoring and coaching.

School Target Setting Form: In grades 3-8 reading achievement data for the last three years indicates that an average of 56% of students do not meet proficiency levels on TCAP.

The process of analyzing data to construct the data narrative has been broken down into four steps: (1) Review current performance as described by the school/district performance framework report, including annual performance targets set in the UIP from the previous year; (2) Identify notable performance trends; (3) Prioritize performance challenges; and (4) Determine the root causes of those performance challenges. Each data analysis step and what planning teams should capture in their data narrative are described below.

Step One: Review Current Performance

This step involves collaboratively analyzing and interpreting current student learning data to determine the current performance of the school or district. First, the planning team should review current performance as described in the school or district performance framework report and summarized in Section I of the UIP template. The School Performance Frameworks provide information about performance in relation to state and federal expectations on the four key performance indicators: Academic Achievement, Academic Growth, Academic Growth Gaps, and Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness (high schools only). Answering the following questions will help focus team efforts as they prepare to move into the second step of identifying performance trends.

- What was my school/district's overall performance framework rating?
- In which indicator areas did the school/district not at least meet state and federal expectations (receive an "approaching" or "does not meet" rating on the district/school performance framework)?
- In which sub-indicators did the school/district not at least meet state and federal expectations?
- In which indicators and sub-indicators did the school/district not at least meet local expectations?

Planning teams must identify the performance indicator area(s) in which the school/district did not at least meet state expectations in the data narrative. Planning teams may also note areas where performance did not meet local expectations.

At this point, planning teams also should consider the magnitude of the school or district performance challenge overall. This involves looking at performance on the SPF/DPF across indicators (achievement, growth, growth gaps, and postsecondary/workforce readiness) to answer the following questions:

- Are the performance challenges of the school/district something that affects 85% or more of the students in the school? Do they affect less than 15% of the students in the school?
- Are significant performance challenges evident across all content areas? Does performance (achievement and growth) differ across content areas? Is there one content area in which performance is weaker? Stronger? Which content area?
- Are significant performance challenges evident across all disaggregated groups? Is there one or more disaggregated student group in which performance is weaker? Which group(s)?

Planning teams should describe the magnitude of the school/district performance challenge in the data narrative.

Finally, planning teams should consider the performance targets set for the prior academic year and whether or not the targets were met. Teams can use the *Progress Monitoring of Prior Year's Targets Worksheet* to capture this analysis which prompts teams to capture the following: 1) the targets from the prior year; 2) whether the target was met, and/or how close the school/district was to meeting the target; and 3) a brief reflection on why previous targets were met or not met, including the degree to which current performance supports continuing with current major improvement strategies and action steps. Note teams should avoid the temptation to use this analysis as the sole factor in decision making about subsequent targets, priority performance challenges and major improvement strategies. In the data narrative, teams should indicate whether or not each target was met. If the target was met, the team should describe if this is this worth celebration, and whether the target was rigorous enough. If the target was not met, the team should consider how far the school/district was from meeting the target, and use this information in prioritizing performance challenges for the current and next year (see below). The team should also consider the information captured in this worksheet in setting additional annual targets and in determining if the prior year's major improvement strategies and action steps are having the desired effects on student learning and/or if major improvement strategies and action steps have been implemented with fidelity (see below). Teams should capture this reflection on the effectiveness of prior year's major improvement strategies and action steps in the data narrative.

Step Two: Identify Notable Trends

Identifying performance trends involves collaboratively analyzing and interpreting at least three years of performance data to describe the performance of the school/district. Data analysis should consider each of the performance indicator areas: Academic Achievement (status), Academic Growth, Academic Growth Gaps, and Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness (high schools only). To do this, planning teams must consider all state required reports listed in the gathering and organizing section of this handbook, and any available local performance data for each of the performance indicator areas, especially in grade levels and subject areas not included in state testing. Local planning teams should use at least three years of performance data. Trends include both positive and negative performance patterns. Planning teams should include notable trend statements in the data narrative and may include these statements in the Data Analysis worksheet.

Notable Trend Statements. Notable trend statements include the following elements: the measure and metric about which the trend is being described, the content area(s), which students are included in the trend (grade-levels, disaggregated groups), the direction of the trend, the amount of change in the metric, the time period over which the trend was observed, and what makes the trend notable.

The direction of three year trends could be. . .	
Stable	
Increasing	
Decreasing	
Increasing then decreasing	
Decreasing then increasing	
Stable then increasing	
Stable then decreasing	
Increasing then stable	
Decreasing then stable	

What makes a trend notable? Planning teams need some basis for determining if a trend is notable. This involves comparing the performance of the school/district to an external reference point. These comparisons can be criteria-based or normative, in that they can answer one of two questions: How did we compare to a specific expectation? How did we compare to others? The first criteria-based reference point is the appropriate minimum state expectation. To determine if a trend is notable, planning teams should compare the performance represented in the trend to the appropriate minimum state expectation. For growth metrics, trends in median growth percentiles can be compared to median adequate growth percentiles, or the level of growth needed for the typical student to reach or maintain proficiency. Alternatively, planning teams can make a normative comparison to determine if a trend is notable by comparing the school performance trends to the district and/or state trends in the same area over the same time period, or by comparing the district trends to the state trends in the same area over the same time period. If the trend is for a disaggregated group, the trend can be compared to the trend for the school overall for the same time period. If the trend is for gifted student performance, the comparison point should consider advanced performance in the content area for which the students have been identified as gifted and a median growth percentile of 60. If the trend is for student

Examples of notable trends:

- The percent of 4th grade students who scored proficient or advanced on math CSAP declined from 70% to 55% to 48% between 2009 and 2011 dropping well below the minimum state expectation of 71%.
- The median growth percentile of English Language learners in writing increased from 28 to 35 to 45 between 2009 and 2011, meeting the minimum expectation of 45 and exceeding the district trend over the same time period.
- The dropout rate has remained relatively stable (15, 14, 16) between 2009 and 2011 and much higher than the state average for the same time period.

performance by standard within a content area, it can be compared to performance by other standards within the same content area for the same students.

Notable trends can be recorded in the Data Analysis Worksheet. The table is expandable to record a number of trends. In the data narrative, the planning team must describe notable trends (both positive and negative), what data was considered as part of identifying notable trends (explicitly including local data sources), and how the team determined which trends were “notable”.

How to identify notable trends. The identification of notable trends involves analyzing at least three years of data for each performance indicator area, including grade level data and deeper disaggregation of student group data than what is included in the school/district performance framework report. A basic approach *could* include:

1. Identify performance indicator and sub-indicator areas where school/district performance did not meet minimum state expectations (considering school framework reports). Looking across performance indicators, select one content area as an initial focus for reviewing performance data;
2. Reference appropriate data views (reports) that include at least three years of performance data in that content area (including both growth and achievement data);
3. Make predictions about performance over time;
4. Interact with the data reports or views;
5. Look for things that pop out, with a focus on patterns over time (at least 3 years);
6. Capture a list of fact statements or observations about the data (these can be positive or negative);
7. Determine which trends are notable (should be captured in the data narrative) and/or if understanding the trend requires further analysis (disaggregating the data further);
8. Write these observations as “notable trend” statements, including all of the relevant components (as identified above); and repeat this process for each content area.

Note, planning team analysis of student performance in the school/district must explicitly consider all disaggregated groups of students. Data analysis for students identified as gifted should include at least one of the following: 1) gifted student achievement at the advanced level, 2) move-up growth trends for gifted students, and/or 3) median growth percentiles for gifted students.

Considerations for Analysis of Data for Gifted Students

Data analysis of gifted student performance should consider:

- Does data regarding gifted student performance suggest similar (convergent) issues, challenges, and areas of focus as the district as a whole? If yes, address gifted student performance as part of over-all student performance data analysis.
- Does data regarding gifted student performance suggest different (divergent) issues or challenges? If yes, consider priority performance challenges and performance targets for gifted students separately.

Step Three: Prioritize Performance Challenges

Prioritizing Performance Challenges may be the most critical step in the entire planning process, as it sets the tone for each of the subsequent steps. It involves the improvement team identifying which of their notable trends represent strengths to build upon, and which represent challenges that need immediate attention for improvement. Planning teams should draw priority performance challenges from trends that are a concern for the school/district. They should be specific statements about *student* performance. Priority performance challenges provide the strategic focus for improvement efforts. They are *not* what caused the performance, action steps that need to be taken, or concerns about budget, staffing, curriculum or instruction. They do not describe adult behavior.

Helpful Reminder:

Priority performance challenges focus on student-level data. At this stage in the planning process, resist the temptation to jump straight into identifying adult actions. Prioritizing clear performance challenges now will help the improvement team to select more effective improvement strategies later.

While schools may identify as many priority performance challenges as they deem appropriate, it is recommended that the ***three to five of the most important*** are identified. **Priority performance challenges** should focus planning efforts on the performance indicator/sub-indicator areas in which the school failed to meet state or district expectations. In selecting priority performance challenges, planning teams should also consider areas where the targets set for the prior year were not met.

Priority performance challenges come from negative trend statements. However, it is important to note that a single priority performance challenge may combine more than one negative trend statement (e.g., both the growth and achievement of 4th grade English language learners in math may point to this as a priority performance challenge). Priority performance challenges should be specific enough to be measurable but broad enough to capture the major improvement needed.

How to determine the appropriate level for a priority performance challenge. Planning teams may identify priority performance challenges at different levels of aggregation within and across each content area (e.g., overall, grade-level, standard/sub-content area level, disaggregated group level). The level of the priority performance challenge should reflect the magnitude of the school or district performance challenges overall. For example, priorities may be identified:

- At the level of overall school performance across multiple content areas (e.g., reading and writing).
- At the level of overall school performance for a single content area (e.g. math).
- At an individual grade level for a single content area (5th grade science) or across multiple content areas (the percent of 7th grade who were proficient in writing and reading has been stable over the past three years at ~45% but well below minimum state and federal expectations).

- At the standard or sub-content area (e.g., the percentage of fifth grade students proficient or above on number sense has declined from 50% to 43% to 30% over the last three years while student achievement in other standard areas has remained stable).
- For a disaggregated group of students within a single content area and grade level, within a single content area across multiple grade levels, across multiple content areas within a single content area, or across multiple content areas and grade levels (e.g., English language learners across all grade levels have had stable growth in writing with median growth percentiles of 30, 32, 31, over the past three years at a level well below the minimum state and federal expectation of 55).

To determine the appropriate level of a priority performance challenge, the planning team must first consider the magnitude of the school or district performance challenge overall and describe it in the first step of analysis. Are most of the students in the school impacted by the school's performance challenges or is there a subset of the entire student body that is affected? Do the school's performance challenges focus primarily on one content area or do they cut across content areas? Once they have considered the magnitude of the challenge overall, the planning team should continue to disaggregate data (both by content and by student group) until little or no variation in performance is found.

Consider the following example. A school-based team determines that their overall performance challenge seems to be within individual grade levels rather than cutting across grade levels and within a single subject area, math. A school-based team identifies a challenge related to performance in math for the 5th grade (i.e., the median growth percentile for 5th graders in mathematics has declined from 40 to 35 to 28 over the last three years and remains below the minimum state expectation of 55). Next, they decide to examine 5th grade math performance at the standard- and sub-content level. However, they see no variation by standard (i.e., percent of students scoring proficient and above in each of the standard areas is consistent, ranging from 30% to 35%). Next, the team looks at the 5th grade math data by disaggregated groups (e.g., growth of English language learners, minority students, students qualifying for free/reduced lunch) and observes that all groups are similar to the overall 5th grade growth. In this example, the team prioritizes the overall decline in 5th grade math; the performance challenge is not aimed at the standard-level performance or at a particular disaggregated group, but is 5th grade students overall in math.

Priority Performance Challenge Examples	Non-Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For the past three years, English learners (making up 60% of the student population) have had median growth percentiles below 30 in all content areas, substantially below the minimum state expectation of 55. • Both achievement (45% to 33% proficient or better) and growth (MGP from 30-22) in 5th grade mathematics have declined over the last three years and have been well below minimum state expectations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No differentiation in mathematics instruction when student learning needs are varied. • Decline in writing achievement. • Hispanic male performance in math at the elementary level (when district performance for math overall is substantially below minimum state expectations and Hispanic boys only make up 10% of the student population).

Priority Performance Challenge Examples	Non-Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writing performance, including growth (MGP 25) and achievement, (%P/A =20) has been stable and substantially below minimum state expectations for over five years across all grade levels (3-5). 	

How to prioritize performance challenges. The process used and an explanation of why the planning team identified certain performance challenges a priority must be documented in the Data Narrative. One approach to prioritizing performance challenges includes the following steps.

- Step 1:** Review the performance indicator areas where a priority performance challenge must be identified (any of the four performance indicators that the school or district did not meet at least minimum federal, state, or local expectations) and the magnitude of the overall school or district performance challenge.
- Step 2:** Within the focus performance indicator areas, consider all negative trends.
- Step 3:** Focus the list; determine which negative trends to combine because they are similar or reflect different ways to measure the same performance challenge. In some cases, trends will need to be combined across different performance indicator areas.
- Step 4:** Begin to identify notable trends that pop out or rise to the top as being most urgent to act on (represent some of the largest challenges faced by the school/district).
- Step 5:** Do a reality check (a preliminary and non-binding check with the team) to see which trends might rise to the level of a priority performance challenge with each person indicating current preferences (one option is to use dot voting with team members “spending” all of his/her dots).
- Step 6:** Evaluate the degree to which the proposed priority performance challenges reflect the magnitude of the overall school/district performance challenge.
- Step 7:** Achieve consensus on the top three to five priorities by applying the REAL criteria and then engaging in additional conversation as needed (e.g., through cycles of proposal(s) made by someone in the group, discussion/modification of the proposal).

REAL Criteria

Readiness

- Is this problem keeping us from moving to desired next steps? Would solving this problem build on existing momentum in our school?
- Are necessary resources available or obtainable?
- Do we have staff buy-in?

Endurance

- Do we believe that success will lead to significant and systemic change?
- Are we confident that this problem is not personality- or individually-driven?

Accountability

- Would solving this problem support our vision? Mission?
- Can we clearly describe how we believe this problem is negatively affecting performance?

Leverage

- If the problem is resolved, what is the anticipated impact on the system?
- Does the data point to the performance challenge?
- Might solving this problem create a positive “ripple effect” in the school?

Priority performance challenges can be documented (in bullet form) in the Data Analysis Worksheet. In the data narrative, planning teams must describe the priority performance

challenges that were selected, the process that they used to prioritize performance challenges, and what makes the priority performance challenges that were selected more important to address immediately.

Step Four: Determine Root Causes

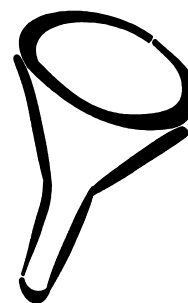
This step involves identifying the underlying causes behind the priority performance challenges identified in the prior analysis step. Root causes are statements that describe the deepest underlying cause, or causes, of performance challenges. They are the causes that, if dissolved, would result in elimination, or substantial reduction, of the performance challenge(s). Root causes describe why the performance challenges exist. They are the things that most need to change and can change. Root causes are not student attributes (such as poverty level or student motivation), but rather relate to adult behavior. Furthermore, the root cause should be something within the school or district's control.

Root causes become the focus of major improvement strategies. This is why it is critical for root causes to reflect the magnitude of the performance challenge faced by the school or district. For example, if the school or district performance challenges impact 85% of the students in the school, the absence of appropriate intervention strategies for 4th grade girls in writing is not likely to be an appropriate root cause.

A cause is a “root” cause if: “1) the problem would not have occurred if the cause had not been present, 2) the problem would not reoccur if the cause were corrected or dissolved, and 3) correction or dissolution of the cause would not lead to the same or similar problems,” (Preuss, 2003).

How to identify root causes. One way to determine root causes includes the steps described below. In general, the process for determining root causes resembles a funnel, starting with the broadest thinking possible about causes related to each prioritized performance challenge and systematically narrowing and then deepening the collective understanding until the team arrives at a root cause.

- Step 1: Focus on one or a couple of closely related priority performance challenges (e.g., 4th grade math achievement and growth have both declined over the past three years).
- Step 2: Consider process and perception data. If the school/district has had an external review, consider the findings of the review. Process and perception data could also include data regarding the equitable distribution of teachers, TELL survey results, or Multi-Tiered System of Support reviews.
- Step 3: Brainstorm possible explanations (causes) for the priority performance challenge(s). This is the time to encourage team members to think outside of the box and to get all of their thoughts on the table about what may have caused the challenge.
- Step 4: Group like causes together (or categorize the explanations).
- Step 5: Apply criteria to narrow the explanations to those that are actionable. This includes removing those explanations that are outside the control of the school or district.



- Step 6: Deepen the thinking to ensure the identified causes are “root” causes. One tool to help planning teams deepen their thinking is the “why. . . because” process.
- Step 7: Once the team believes they have identified a *root cause*, they should verify their root cause with other data sources. This step is critical because sometimes explanations that seem to reflect the best current thinking of the planning team may not hold up once they review additional data. Additional data sources typically include types of data other than student performance data.

While it is described as a series of steps, the process of identifying a root cause is iterative – planning teams may need to move back and forth among the steps in the process. For example, the team may be applying criteria to narrow their explanations when they realize that they had not identified an important explanation in the earlier brainstorming step.

Once root causes have been identified and verified with other data sources, they can be listed in the Data Analysis Worksheet. In the data narrative, teams must identify the root cause(s), and explicitly reference the additional data that was reviewed to verify the root cause(s) for each priority performance challenge. The narrative should also describe the processes in which the planning team engaged to identify the root cause(s) and who participated.

Finalizing the Data Narrative

After the school/district team has analyzed trends, identified priority performance challenges and determined root causes, the data narrative can be finalized. The narrative should tell the story about the school/district data analysis, including the process used to engage in the analysis. The narrative should explain the connection between the notable trends, priority performance challenges and the identified root causes. If the school or district participated in an external review, the data narrative should also describe what that review revealed about the school/district and should contribute to the planning team analysis of root causes. The Data Narrative should be as brief as possible while still meeting the requirements described here.

How to finalize the data narrative. There are a number of different approaches to use to finalize the data narrative. One possible approach includes the following steps: 1) Identify critical elements of the data narrative; 2) Keep notes as the team proceeds through each of the data analysis steps; 3) A small group (or individual) then generates a draft of data narrative based on data analysis notes; 4) Reach consensus among all planning team participants that the narrative tells the “data story” for the school/district and meets state criteria (Note: this critique and consensus step is critical because it ensures all planning participants own the data story for the

Data Narrative Checklist:

- Brief description of the school/district to provide context.
- General process for developing the UIP (who participated and how).
- Accountability status (plan type and indicators where performance did not meet expectations).
- How current performance compares to prior year’s targets.
- Notable trends (at least 3 years of data), what data was considered and how the team determined the trends were notable.
- Priority performance challenges and how and why priorities were identified.
- Root cause(s) of each priority performance challenge, how root causes were identified and what additional data was reviewed to validate each one.
- Major improvement strategies associated with each root cause.

school/district); 5) Check to ensure the data narrative includes required elements (see data narrative checklist); and 6) Revise data narrative as needed.

SECTION IV: ACTION PLANS

Action planning includes three distinct processes. They are: 1) Ensure future activities are headed in the right direction by setting/revising annual performance targets and identifying associated interim measures; 2) Identify major improvement strategies, including action steps, timelines, resources and implementation benchmarks; and 3) Monitor progress over time by reviewing interim measures in relationship to the annual performance targets and reviewing implementation benchmarks at least four times during the school year. These three processes are described below.

School/District Target Setting Form

Based on the data analysis and identification of priority performance challenges, schools and districts should clarify the targets that will focus their improvement efforts for the next two school years. If the school or district already set targets in the prior year, planning teams should update those targets using the most recently available performance data.

Planning teams must identify performance targets for *each priority performance challenge*, and these performance targets must align with the priority performance challenge. The target must explicitly address the priority performance challenge and use the same metrics as the priority performance challenge to which they respond. Performance targets should move schools and districts aggressively towards state and federal expectations for each performance indicator, while at the same time considering what is possible in a given timeframe and the schools' or districts' current status.

Example of an aligned performance target

Priority performance challenge: Both achievement (45% to 33% proficient or better) and growth (MGP from 30 to 22) in 5th grade mathematics have declined over the last three years and have been well below minimum state expectations.

Performance target for 2013-14:
For 5th grade mathematics, increase the %P/A to 55% and increase the median growth percentile to 50.

At this time, there is no state penalty each year for missing annual performance targets. The sanction occurs after five consecutive years of receiving a Priority Improvement or Turnaround Plan assignment, in which case the State Board of Education may take the actions outlined in the *Educational Accountability Act of 2009* (SB-163). However, districts may choose to use evidence that schools have met annual performance targets in requesting a change to their plan type assignment. Planning teams must record annual performance targets in the School/District Target Setting Form.

How to set targets

The basic approach for setting annual performance targets for state performance indicator areas includes these steps:

1. Focus on a priority performance challenge and associated metric;

2. Review state (and local) expectations and determine a comparison point against which performance targets will be set;
3. Determine a timeframe to meet expectations (for turnaround/priority improvement schools/districts, the maximum timeframe for meeting minimum state expectations is five years after designation);
4. Determine the progress needed in the next two years; and then
5. Describe annual performance targets for the next two years.

Identifying Comparison Points

Minimum state expectations, provided in the School/District Performance Framework reports (the “Scoring Guide” pages of the reports) serve as an initial comparison point for target setting. Minimum state expectations are the minimum value for which a rating of “meets” would be assigned for the state metric included in the SPF/DPF reports for each sub-indicator. In schools and districts for which performance is below minimum state expectations, these “meets” performance levels are the initial comparison point for target setting.

Below is guidance regarding comparison points for performance targets for districts and schools where performance is at or above minimum state and/or federal expectations.

Achievement. For Achievement, districts/schools may want to consider the state-established Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs). Since the ESEA waiver has eliminated the calculation of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) calculations, Colorado now bases the AMO targets on the state’s school and district performance frameworks. The AMOs for 2011-2012 are the current requirements for earning a “meets” rating on the Academic Achievement indicator of the 1-year school performance framework. The AMO target is for all schools to earn an “exceeds” rating on the Academic Achievement indicator of the 1-year school performance framework. The “exceeds” cut-points are set at the proficiency rate (percent of students who are proficient or above) of the 90th percentile of schools in 2009-2010, the first year of the performance framework reports. In order to reach this goal, interim targets have been set annually from 2011-12 until 2015-16, with equal incremental increases for each year. These targets are available in the data center on schoolview.org for each school and district. So, while districts/schools who receive an “approaching” or “does not meet” rating on Academic Achievement may want to set targets that get them to the “meets” cut-point, those who receive a “meets” or “exceeds” rating may want to set targets that get them to the “exceeds” cut-point.

Academic Growth and Academic Growth Gaps. For Academic Growth (as measured by TCAP) and for Academic Growth Gaps, districts/schools may want to consider the “exceeds” cut-point as a comparison point for target setting. In any sub-indicator area where median student growth percentiles were below median adequate growth percentiles, the median adequate growth percentile can be a comparison point against which to set performance targets. Districts and schools may also want to consider setting targets for the percent of students making adequate growth. For students scoring below proficient in the prior year, this would be the

percent of students making catch-up growth; for students scoring above proficient in the prior year, this would be the percent of students making keep-up growth.

Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness. For Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness, districts/schools may want to consider the “exceeds” cut-point for each metric as a benchmark for target setting.

Interim Measures

Once annual performance targets are set for the next two years, districts and schools must identify interim measures, or what they will measure during the year to determine if progress is being made towards each of the annual performance targets. Interim measures should be based on local performance data that will be available at least twice during the school year. Across all interim measures, data should be available that would allow schools to monitor progress at least quarterly. Interim measures should provide data about the same students as the performance target and the same content focus. The metrics used from the interim measures should also align with the type of performance addressed in the target (e.g., achievement, growth).

In identifying interim measures, planning teams should consider what performance data will be available locally throughout the school year and when that data will be available. Descriptions of interim measures should include: the assessment/performance measure that is administered more than once during the school year, how frequently the data will be available, and what metrics will be considered (e.g., % scoring at a particular performance level).

Annual performance targets and interim measures must be identified for each performance indicator where the school/district did not meet state or federal expectations (aligned with priority performance challenges). Planning teams must document both annual performance targets and interim measures in the School/District Target Setting Form.

Action Planning Form: Identify Major Improvement Strategies

Major improvement strategies (e.g., differentiate reading instruction in grades 3-5) identified by districts/schools and the specific action steps (e.g., re-evaluating supplemental reading materials, providing new professional development and coaching to school staff) required to

Helpful Reminder:

The UIP is a planning document that should span at least a two-year period. The plan should provide details on actions for the current and the next school years.

carry out each major improvement strategy should respond to and should eliminate or correct the root causes and ultimately each of the district’s or school’s prioritized performance challenges. There should be a direct relationship between major improvement strategies and root causes and that relationship should be explicit to anyone who reads the plan. Major

improvement strategies should also be research-based, in that there should be evidence that using these strategies has previously led to improvements in student performance.

Major improvement strategies, the root cause(s) the strategy is intended to address, and the details related to the key action steps for each major improvement strategy must be recorded in the action planning form. While the form includes space for three major improvement strategies (a suggested maximum), the school/district may add other major strategies as needed. The action planning form should explicitly identify the root cause(s) that each major improvement strategy is intended to dissolve. The action planning form should also identify which accountability provision(s) or grant opportunity(ies) the major improvement strategy will address.

Major improvement strategies must be of the appropriate magnitude given the overall performance challenges of the school/district. Planning teams in a school/district with performance that does not meet state expectations for many or all of the performance indicators/sub-indicators should consider broad, systemic strategies. For schools/districts with a Priority Improvement or Turnaround plan type, major improvement strategies must identify an approach to improvement that would result in enough change in performance for the school/district to have an accreditation rating of Improvement or above (thus moving off of the accountability clock) within a reasonable time frame. This is a key criterion for evaluation by CDE and by the State Review Panel.

Turnaround Options. Major Improvement Strategies identified in Turnaround Plans must, at a minimum, include one or more of the following as required by SB09-163.

- Employing a lead turnaround partner that uses research-based strategies and has a proven record of success working with schools under similar circumstances, which turnaround partner will be immersed in all aspects of developing and collaboratively executing the plan and will serve as a liaison to other school partners;
- Reorganizing the oversight and management structure within the school to provide greater, more effective support;
- Seeking recognition as an innovation school or clustering with other schools that have similar governance management structures to form an innovation school zone pursuant to the Innovation Schools Act;
- Hiring a public or private entity that uses research-based strategies and has a proven record of success working with schools under similar circumstances to manage the school pursuant to a contract with the local school board or the Charter School Institute;
- For a school that is not a charter school, converting to a charter school;
- For a charter school, renegotiating and significantly restructuring the charter school's charter contract; and/or
- Other actions of comparable or greater significance or effect, including those interventions required for low-performing schools receiving school improvement grants under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, section 1003G (i.e., turnaround model, restart model, school closure, transformation model).

State and federal expectations include specific requirements related to action steps, depending on the type of program and the school or district's designation. With the passage of SB 13-193,

schools with a Priority Improvement or Turnaround plan type assignment must now include action steps to increase parent involvement in the school. Additional program requirements are indicated in the UIP Pre-populated report, and described, in greater detail, in the Quality Criteria. Additional addenda forms may be required to supplement the UIP template to ensure that all program requirements are met.

Each major improvement strategy will include several key action steps. When completed in total, the actions steps should equal implementation of the major improvement strategy. The chart provided as part of the action planning form allows for teams to provide details on key action steps (e.g., re-evaluating supplemental reading materials, providing new professional development and coaching to school staff). Details should include a description of the action step, the timeline (when the action step will occur) over at least two years, key personnel (who will be involved in the action step), resources that will be used to implement the actions, and implementation benchmarks (described in greater detail below). Finally, some action steps may be already in process – they may be part of implementing the major improvement strategy, but the effort has already begun. The final column of the action planning form allows planning teams to identify the status of each action step (completed, in progress, not begun).

Implementation benchmarks are the data that will be reviewed to determine if the improvement strategies are being implemented as intended. They are measures of the fidelity the implementation of action steps that the planning team will monitor throughout the school year. They provide the school/district with checkpoints to ensure that activities are being implemented as expected. Identifying implementation benchmarks is a critical step toward ensuring that the planning process results in a continuous improvement cycle.

Implementation benchmarks are not student performance measures (assessment results); rather, they reference adult actions. Teams should consider both outputs (e.g. professional development sessions held) and outcomes (e.g., new instructional strategy implemented) in determining if a major improvement strategy has been implemented with fidelity. In identifying implementation benchmarks planning teams should answer the question, “What would you accept as evidence that the expected outputs and adult outcomes have occurred?” Implementation benchmarks can be organized by “what will happen” and “when” (e.g., in 3-months, 6-months, and 9-months).

Planning teams must capture the details of each major improvement strategy, including implementation benchmarks, in the action planning form. Planning teams can add rows in the chart as needed.

Monitor Progress

Both implementation benchmarks and interim measures should be monitored throughout the year (at least quarterly by School Accountability Committees) to determine if improvement strategies are being implemented with fidelity and are having the desired effects. A baseline should be established for both implementation of major action strategies and district progress towards targets (based on interim measures), and both should be reviewed regularly during the

year. Planning teams may choose to develop a calendar at the beginning of the year that includes when data from interim measures and implementation benchmarks will be available and who will review it. These check-points should be included as an action step in the action planning form. Reviewing progress involves analyzing and interpreting data about the metrics that have been chosen. If progress is not being made, that may mean that the planned strategies and action steps have not been implemented fully, or it may mean that adjustments need to be made to the plan. Both should be considered and, if needed, the plan should be revised during the school year to reflect the results of the progress monitoring.

UIP TEMPLATE ADDENDA FORMS

To better meet the needs of the schools and districts that have multiple state and federal improvement planning requirements, the state has designed several addenda forms to ensure that all requirements are addressed. The addenda forms also provide additional flexibility to keep the action planning focused on improvement efforts and then use the addenda to meet any additional requirements.

The forms provide various ways to complete designated program requirements, including (1) assurances, (2) descriptions of the requirements in the form, or (3) a cross-walk of the elements in the UIP. Addenda forms indicate if they are required; customized directions are also available in the district's/school's pre-populated report.

To use the forms, the planning team must first select the forms that apply to the district or school. They are available in Word format and can be added to the end of the UIP file. If it is unclear whether the school or district has been identified under federal or state accountability systems, the pre-populated report (section I of the UIP template) provides this information. CDE contacts are also available for further guidance.

Competitive grants (e.g., Tiered Intervention Grant) also have expectations that have implications for the school and/or district UIP and may require an addenda form.

PLANNING REQUIREMENTS AND STATE REVIEW OF PLANS

The Unified Improvement Planning Template was designed to meet multiple state and federal improvement planning requirements. This section describes in greater detail the requirements that are currently met by the UIP template and how those plans will be reviewed to comply with different state and federal legislative requirements.

What Planning Requirements will the Unified Improvement Plan Meet?

School and district UIPs are designed to meet multiple state and federal accountability requirements and some competitive grant reporting requirements. This includes all improvement plans designated under state accountability (*Educational Accountability Act of 2009*), Student Graduation Completion Plans (SGCP), Gifted Education Program, ESEA improvement plans (i.e., Titles IA, IIA and III), and some competitive grants (e.g., Tiered Intervention Grant).

Types of Requirements that the UIP will meet

	School Level	District Level
State Accountability (SB09-163)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance • Improvement • Priority Improvement • Turnaround 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accredited w/ Distinction • Accredited • Accredited w/ Improvement • Accredited w/ Priority Improvement • Accredited w/ Turnaround
Student Graduation and Completion	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Graduation and Completion Plan
ESEA Program Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus Schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Title I (Priority Improvement or Turnaround) • Title IIA (Priority Improvement or Turnaround) • Title III Improvement (AMAO)
Gifted Education	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Districts and Administrative Units Gifted Education Program Plan
Competitive Grants and Other Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tiered Intervention Grant (TIG) • Colorado Graduation Program (CGP) 	N/A

Addenda forms are available for many of the programs listed above to ensure that schools and districts are able to adequately meet state and federal requirements.

What school plans will be reviewed by the state?

The state will NOT review all school plans. Based on the *Educational Accountability Act of 2009* (SB09-163), the state will review: 1) Priority Improvement Plans and 2) Turnaround Plans 3) Title I Focus Schools 4) schools receiving a TIG grant and 5) schools receiving Colorado Graduation Pathways (CGP) funding will also be reviewed by CDE. Further reviews of school plans by the state will occur through ESEA monitoring to determine if school plans contain the required elements (e.g., desk review, onsite visits).

Who will review school plans?

Districts are expected to review all school plans. Local school boards must adopt Priority Improvement and Turnaround Plans. The principal and superintendent (or his designee) must adopt school Performance and Improvement plans. CDE reviews plans in some cases (see the above description for more detail). A State Review Panel, appointed by the Commissioner, will review all Turnaround Plans. The State Review Panel may review Priority Improvement Plans.

What district plans will be reviewed by the state?

The state will NOT review all district plans. Based on SB09-163, the state will review Priority Improvement Plans and Turnaround Plans. Based on the ESEA waiver, the state will review these improvement plans to ensure that Titles IA, IIA and III activities are supporting activities

outlined in the plans. The plans for districts on Title III Program Improvement and Student Graduation and Completion Plans will also be reviewed. Plans for districts leading Gifted Education Programs will also be reviewed.

Who will review district plans?

The state will review all district Turnaround Plans, Priority Improvement plans, and any plans reviewed for certain program requirements (see above for more detail). A State Review Panel appointed by the commissioner will review all state Turnaround Plans. The State Review Panel may review Priority Improvement Plans.

What criteria will be used to review plans?

District staff and the state use at least the following resources in the review of school and district plans:

- Unified Improvement Plan Quality Criteria (including all relevant program criteria)
- Addenda forms and the UIP Quality Criteria specific to Priority Improvement and Turnaround Plans
- Program-Specific Addenda

Based on the requirements of SB09-163, in addition to the Unified Improvement Planning Quality Criteria, the State Review Panel must also consider the following in their review of Priority Improvement or Turnaround Plans:

- Whether the district's/school's leadership is adequate to implement change to improve results;
- Whether the district's/school's infrastructure is adequate to support school improvement;
- The readiness and apparent capacity of the district/school personnel to plan effectively and lead the implementation of appropriate actions to improve student academic performance;
- The readiness and apparent capacity of the district/school personnel to engage productively with and benefit from the assistance provided by an external partner;
- The likelihood of positive returns on state investments of assistance and support to improve the district's/school's performance within the current management structure and staffing; and
- The necessity that the district or school remain in operation to serve students.

APPENDIX A: PLANNING TERMINOLOGY

TERM	DEFINITION
Academic Achievement Or Achievement	<p>A single point in time score on an assessment. Achievement for an individual is expressed as a test score (or “scale score”), or it may be described using an achievement level.</p> <p>Academic Achievement is one of four performance indicators used to evaluate schools and districts in Colorado.</p> <p>See also: <i>Status Score and Scale Score</i></p>
Academic Growth	<p>For an individual student, academic growth is the progress shown by the student, in a given subject area, over a given span of time.</p> <p>The Colorado Growth Model expresses annual growth, for an individual, with a student growth percentile in reading, writing, mathematics, and English language proficiency. For a school, district, or other relevant student grouping, student growth is summarized using the median of the student growth percentiles for that grouping.</p> <p>Academic growth is one of four statewide performance indicators used to evaluate schools and districts in Colorado. This indicator contains measures of both normative and adequate growth.</p> <p>See also: <i>Normative Growth</i> and <i>Adequate Growth</i></p>
Academic Growth Gaps	<p>Academic growth gaps are one of four Performance Indicators and reflect the academic progress of students in the following disaggregated groups: students eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch, minority students, students with disabilities, English Language Learners, and students needing to catch-up.</p> <p>A growth gap for any of the above disaggregated groups is defined as the difference between the median growth percentile and the median adequate growth percentile for that group.</p> <p>See also: <i>Normative Growth, Adequate Growth, and Subgroup</i></p>
Academic Peer	<p>Academic peers are defined as students in a particular grade with a similar CSAP score history. The concept of similar score history is discussed in the Colorado Growth Model</p>

TERM	DEFINITION
	Technical Report available on CDE's website. The CSAP score history examined includes all past scores available for a given student. So, for a student who has had low CSAP scores (consistently at the Unsatisfactory level) for the last few years, his or her growth is compared to students who have scored similarly.
Action Step	Something that is done to make progress towards goals. Action steps are created for each strategy and identify resources (people, time, and money) that will be brought to bear so that targets can be reached.
Adequate Growth	For TCAP: The growth percentile sufficient for a student to reach or maintain an achievement level of proficient or advanced, in a given subject area, within three years or by 10th grade; whichever comes first. See also: <i>Median Adequate Growth Percentile</i>
Benchmark	A standard or reference by which others can be measured or judged.
Catch-Up Growth	Growth needed for a student scoring at the unsatisfactory or partially proficient levels, in the previous year, to reach the proficient or advanced achievement level within 3 years or by 10th grade; whichever comes first. A student is catching up if he/she has demonstrated growth in the most recent year that, if sustained, would enable the student to reach a proficient or advanced level of achievement. See also: <i>Keep-Up Growth</i> , and <i>Adequate Growth</i>
Colorado ACT Composite Score Or Average Colorado ACT Composite Score	The composite score, on the Colorado ACT, is the rounded average of a student's Colorado ACT scores across English, mathematics, reading and science. The average Colorado ACT composite score is the average composite score for all of the students in a district or school. Average Colorado ACT composite score is one of the required state measures of the Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness indicator.
The Colorado Growth Model	The Colorado Growth Model is both: (a) A statistical model to calculate each student's progress on state assessments.

TERM	DEFINITION
	(b) A computer-based data visualization tool for displaying student, school, and district results over the internet.
Disaggregated Group	<p>A demographic subset of students.</p> <p>Colorado reports student academic growth, on the performance framework reports, for five historically disadvantaged student disaggregated groups: students eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch, minority students, students with disabilities and English Language Learners; and for students scoring below proficient.</p>
Disaggregated Group Median Adequate Growth	<p>The student growth percentile sufficient for the median student in a subgroup to reach or maintain a level of proficient or advanced in a subject area within one, two or three years. If the disaggregated group's median student growth percentile is high enough to reach the adequate level, this means that, as a group, students in this category are making enough growth to catch up and keep up.</p> <p>On the performance framework reports, disaggregated groups include students eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch, minority students, students with disabilities, English Language Learners and students at a performance level of unsatisfactory or partially proficient.</p> <p>See also: <i>Median Student Growth Percentile</i></p>
Drop-Out Rate	<p>The drop-out rate reflects the percentage of all students enrolled in grades 7-12 who leave school during a single school year. It is calculated by dividing the number of dropouts by a membership base, which includes all students who were in membership any time during the year.</p> <p>The Colorado dropout rate is an <u>annual</u> rate, reflecting the percentage of all students enrolled in grades 9-12 who leave school during a single school year, without subsequently attending another school or educational program. It is calculated by dividing the number of dropouts by a membership base, which includes all students who were in membership any time during the year. In accordance with a 1993 legislative mandate, beginning with the 1993-94 school year, the dropout rate calculation excludes expelled students.</p>
Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)	The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) , is a US federal statute enacted April 11 th , 1965. This statute provides federal funds primary and secondary education. The act was

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	originally authorized through 1970, however, the government has reauthorized the act every five years since its enactment. The current reauthorization of ESEA is the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001.
Focus Schools	Title I schools may be identified as a focus school if they are Turnaround or Priority Improvement, and (1) have low achieving disaggregated student groups (i.e., minority, ELL, IEP and FRL) and/or (2) low graduation/disaggregated graduation rate. This is a three-year designation.
Graduation Rate	<p>Colorado calculates "on-time" graduation as the percent of students who graduate from high school four years after entering ninth grade. A student is assigned a graduating class when they enter ninth grade, and the graduating class is assigned by adding four years to the year the student enters ninth grade. The formula anticipates, for example, that a student entering ninth grade in fall 2006 will graduate with the Class of 2010. For accountability purposes Colorado calculates a 4, 5, 6, and 7 year graduation rate. For both 1-year and 3-year SPFs, the "best of" graduation rate is bolded and italicized on the Performance Indicators detail page.</p> <p>Legislation, approved in 2005, also changed the way the state counts students who leave a Colorado school district to pursue a GED (General Educational Development) certificate, and to the process of verifying transfers out of a district. Previously, students bound for a GED program outside their district were treated as transfers and were removed from both the numerator and denominator of the graduation rate calculation. Under the new formula (used for the first time with 2006-2007 data), students who opt for a GED program remain in the membership base (or graduation rate denominator). While students who receive a GED certificate are counted as completers, they are not considered graduates and thereby reduce the graduation rate for their graduating class.</p>
Growth	<p>For an individual student, growth is the progress shown by the student, in a given subject area, over a given span of time.</p> <p>The Colorado Growth Model describes how much growth a student has made, relative to his/her "academic peers", by providing a student growth percentile in reading, writing, and</p>

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	<p>mathematics as measured by TCAP/CSAP. Student growth percentiles are provided for English language proficiency as measured by CELApro. For a school, district, or other relevant student grouping, student growth is summarized using the median of the student growth percentiles for that group.</p> <p>Academic growth is one of four performance indicators used to evaluate schools and districts in Colorado. On the Performance Frameworks, this academic growth indicator contains measures of both normative and adequate growth.</p> <p>The performance frameworks provide both normative and criterion-referenced (growth to a proficiency standard) measures of growth. The performance framework reports summarize growth for a school, district, or student disaggregated group using the median of the student growth percentiles of the school, district, or student group on TCAP or CELApro.</p> <p>For TCAP: It then evaluates if that growth rate is adequate, or sufficient for a student to reach or maintain an achievement level of proficient or advanced, in a given subject area, within three years or by 10th grade; whichever comes first.</p> <p>For CELApro: It then evaluates if that growth rate is adequate, or sufficient for a student to attain a given level of English proficiency within a specified amount of time.</p>
Implementation Benchmark	<p>A measure (with associated metric) used to assess the degree to which action steps have been implemented.</p> <p>See also: <i>Measure</i> and <i>Metric</i></p>
Improvement Plan	<p>Senate Bill 09-163 (The Educational Accountability Act of 2009) requires all schools and districts, in Colorado, to implement one of four types of plans: a Performance Plan, Improvement Plan, Priority Improvement Plan, or Turnaround Plan.</p> <p>Elementary and middle schools that earn at least 45% but less than 58% of their framework points, on the school performance framework, will be assigned to the “Improvement Plan” category.</p> <p>High schools that earn at least 45% but less than 60% of their framework points, on the school performance framework report, are assigned to the “Improvement Plan” category.</p>

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	The Unified Improvement Plan template (for districts and schools) is designed to meet the requirements of both SB09-163 and ESEA.
Interim Measure	A measure (and associated metric) used to assess, for the level of a given performance indicator, at various times during a school year.
Keep-Up Growth	<p>Growth needed for a student scoring at the proficient or advanced levels, in the previous year, to continue scoring at least at the proficient level in the current year and future 3 years or by 10th grade; whichever comes first.</p> <p>A student is keeping up if he/she has demonstrated growth in the most recent year that, if sustained, would enable the student to maintain a proficient level of achievement.</p> <p>See also: <i>Catch-Up Growth</i> and <i>Adequate Growth</i></p>
Major Improvement Strategy	<i>An overall approach that describes a series of related actions intended to result in improvements in performance.</i>
Measure	Instruments or means to assess performance in an area identified by an indicator.
Median Adequate Growth Or Median Adequate Growth Percentile	<p>The growth (student growth percentile) sufficient for the median student in a district, school, or other group of interest to reach an achievement level of proficient or advanced, in a subject area (reading, writing or math), within three years or by 10th grade; whichever comes first.</p> <p>In the case of the performance framework, each student, in a school, has a Catch-Up or a Keep-Up growth number. If you take the median of all these numbers, you get the growth level that would, on average, enable all students to be either catching up or keeping up; whichever they need to do.</p>
Median Growth (Median Student Growth Percentile or Median Growth Percentile)	Median growth summarizes student growth rates by district, school, grade level, or other group of interest. It is measured using the median student growth percentile, which is calculated by taking the individual student growth percentiles of the students, in the group of interest, and calculating the median.
Metric	A numeric scale indicating the level of some variable of interest. For example, your credit score is a metric that companies use to decide whether to give you a loan.
NCLB	No Child Left Behind Act, federal statute 2001, that re-

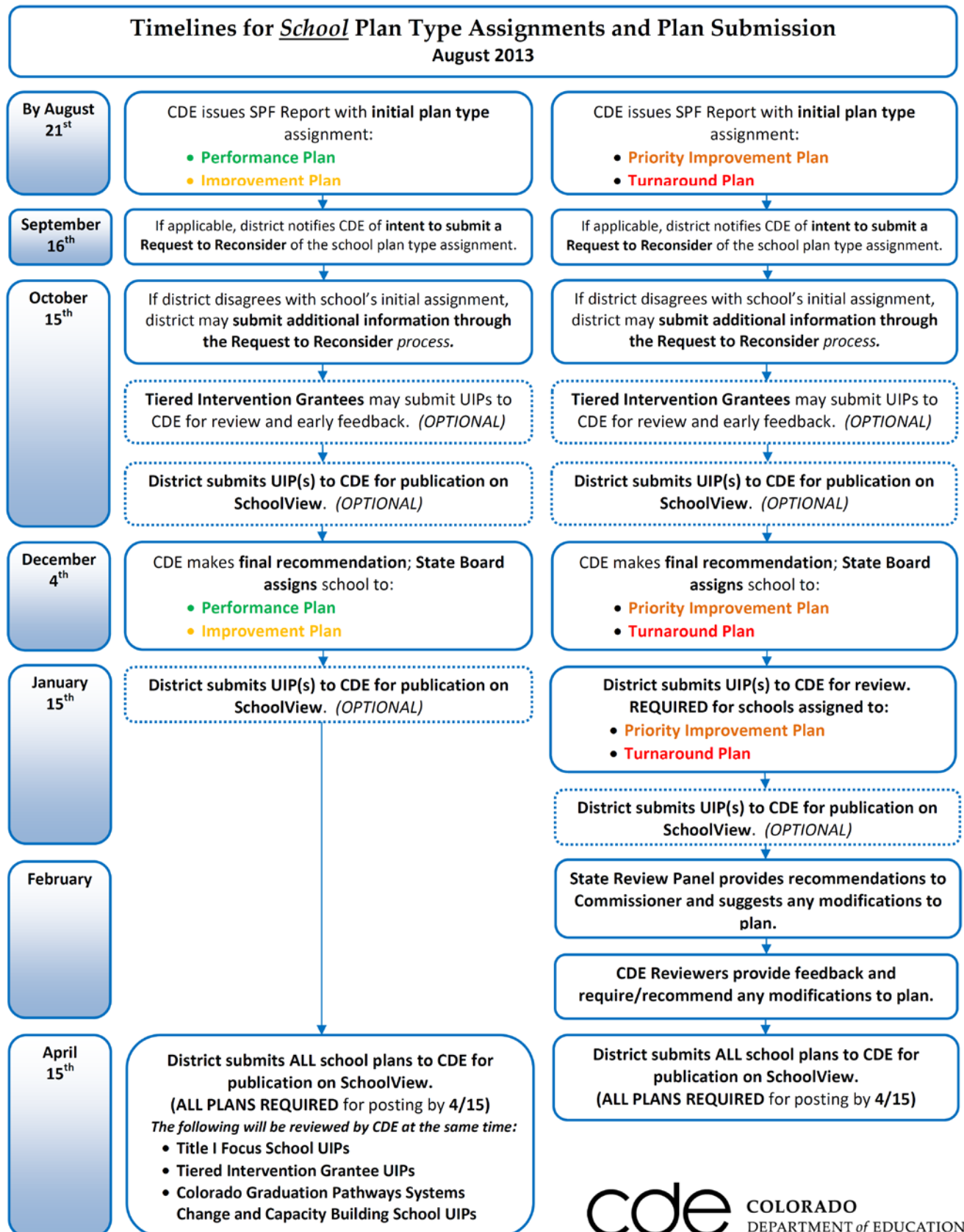
TERM	DEFINITION
	authorized Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).
Performance Indicator	A specific component of school or district quality. Colorado has identified four performance indicators that are used to evaluate all schools and districts in the state: student academic growth, student achievement, growth gaps, and postsecondary/workforce readiness.
Performance Sub-Indicator	Specific components of school or district quality that make up each Performance Indicator. For example student academic growth is comprised of performance sub indicators for Reading , Writing, Math and ACCESS for ELL's.
Performance Plan	<p>The type of plan required for those schools that already meet the state's expectations, for attainment, on the performance indicators.</p> <p>Elementary and middle schools that earn at least 58%, of their framework points, on the school performance framework report are assigned to the Performance plan category.</p> <p>High schools that earn at least 60%, of their framework points, on the school performance framework report are assigned to a Performance plan category.</p>
Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness	<p>The preparedness, of students, for college or a job after completing high school.</p> <p>This is one of the performance indicators used to evaluate the performance of all schools and districts in the state. This indicator includes graduation rate, dropout rate, disaggregated dropout rate and Colorado ACT scores.</p>
Priority School	Competitive grant (1003g) for schools identified as 5% of lowest performing Title I or Title I eligible schools, eligible to implement one of four reform models as defined by the USDE.
Priority Improvement Plan	<p>One of the types of plans required for those schools that do not meet the state's performance standards.</p> <p>Elementary and middle schools that earn at least 35% but less than 45%, of their framework points, on the school performance framework report are assigned to a Priority Improvement Plan category.</p> <p>High schools that earn at least 30% but less than 45%, of their framework points, on the school performance framework report are assigned to a Priority Improvement</p>

TERM	DEFINITION
	Plan category.
Priority Performance Challenges	Specific statements about the school or district's student performance challenges, which have been prioritized. (This does not include statements about budgeting, staffing, curriculum, instruction, etc.) At least one priority must be identified for each performance indicator where the school did not meet federal, state and/or local expectations.
Progress Monitoring	A continuous improvement process by which local stakeholders check on the implementation of their Unified Improvement Plan. In this context, progress monitoring includes the following actions: 1) Analyze data from interim measures to interpret the degree to which performance is on target and the school/district is likely to meet annual performance targets; and 2) Analyze data from implementation benchmarks to interpret the degree to which major improvement strategies are being implemented. 3) Make appropriate adjustments to improvement activities. Schools are required to engage their School Accountability Committees in monitoring
Root Cause	The deepest underlying cause(s) of a problem or situation that, if resolved, would result in elimination, or substantial reduction, of the symptom. If action is required, the cause should be within one's ability to control, and not an external factor such as poverty that is out of one's ability to control.
School Performance Framework	The framework used, by the state, to provide information to stakeholders about each school's performance based on the four key performance indicators: student academic growth, student achievement, growth gaps, and postsecondary/workforce readiness. For Alternative Education Campuses, the more appropriate performance indicator of Student Engagement is used in place of Growth Gaps. Schools are assigned to a type of improvement plan based on their performance across all of the indicator areas.
School Plan Type	The type of plan to which a school is assigned, by the state, on the school performance framework report. The school plan types are: Performance, Improvement, Priority Improvement, and Turnaround. This is also the type of plan that must be adopted and implemented, for the school, by either the local board (priority improvement and turnaround) or the principal and the superintendent (performance and

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	improvement).
Strategy	Methods to reach goals. Which strategies are chosen depends on coherence, affordability, practicality, and efficiency and should be research-based.
Students Below Proficient Students Scoring Below Proficient	Students who scored Unsatisfactory or Partially Proficient in the prior year's CSAP. Adequate growth for these students would enable them to reach Proficient or Advanced within three years or by 10th grade; whichever comes first.
Student Growth Percentile	A way of understanding a student's current score based on his/her prior scores and relative to other students with similar prior scores. The student growth percentile provides a measure of academic growth (i.e. relative position change) where students who have similar academic score histories provide a baseline for understanding each student's progress. For example, a growth percentile of 60 in mathematics means the student's growth exceeds that of 60 percent of his/her academic peers. In other words, the student's latest score was somewhat higher than we would have expected based on past score history. Also referred to as a "growth percentile."
Target (Performance)	A specific, quantifiable outcome that defines what would constitute success in a particular area of intended improvement, within a designated period of time.
Turnaround Plan	<p>One of the types of plans required for those schools and districts that do not meet state expectations for attainment on the performance indicators.</p> <p>Elementary and Middle schools that earn 35% or less, of their framework points, on the school performance framework report are assigned to a Turnaround plan category.</p> <p>High schools that earn less than 30%, of their framework points, on the school performance framework report are assigned to a Turnaround plan category.</p> <p>In Colorado's state accountability system, schools that are assigned to the turnaround plan category must engage in one of the following strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employ a lead turnaround partner that uses research-based strategies and has a proven record of success working with schools under similar circumstances, which turnaround partner will be immersed in all aspects of developing and collaboratively executing the plan and will serve as a liaison to other school partners;

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reorganize the oversight and management structure within the school to provide greater, more effective support; • Seek recognition as an innovation school or clustering with other schools that have similar governance management structures to form an innovation school zone pursuant to the Innovation Schools Act; • Hire a public or private entity that uses research-based strategies and has a proven record of success working with schools under similar circumstances to manage the school pursuant to a contract with the local school board or the Charter School Institute; • For a school that is not a charter school, convert to a charter school; • For a charter school, renegotiate and significantly restructure the charter school's charter contract; and/or • Other actions of comparable or greater significance or effect, including those interventions required for low-performing schools under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 and accompanying guidance (i.e., "turnaround model," "restart model," "school closure," "transformation model").

APPENDIX B: TIMELINE FOR SCHOOL PLAN ASSIGNMENTS AND PLAN SUBMISSION



APPENDIX C: TIMELINE FOR DISTRICT ACCREDITATION AND PLAN SUBMISSION

