

DISTRICT IMPROVEMENT PLANNING USER GUIDE

Creating a district performance management plan

Basic Steps in the Improvement Planning Process:

Step 1: Clarify overall purpose or desired result

Step 2: Review performance indicators, measures and targets

Step 3: Gather and organize relevant data

Step 4: Analyze trends and identify needs in each performance indicator area

Step 5: Determine root causes

Step 6: Establish targets and interim measures

Step 7: Identify major improvement strategies and implementation benchmarks

Step 8: Monitor progress

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Outcomes:

Participants will:

A new planning paradigm for Colorado

- Explain why improvement planning is changing and the timing for those changes.
- Define and describe the relationships between key planning terms.
- Understand the required components of Colorado's Unified Improvement Plan and how different components relate to one another.

Planning Processes and Tools

- Analyze data to identify trends and needs.
- Determine root causes.
- Select interim measures and implementation benchmarks.

Planning to Plan

- Develop a strategy for completing the district improvement plan.
- Identify tools to support planning processes.
- Identify additional help needed to complete the district improvement plan.

Norms

The following statements describe agreements for participation in learning experiences and are intended to allow all participants to make the most of their time.

- Be present, participate, and engage fully.
- Listen to learn; limit side conversations.
- Monitor personal technology (turn cell phones off or on vibrate, close laptops, etc.).
- Pay attention to signals to rejoin the whole group – hand-raising.
- Move and engage as a key learning strategy.
- Practice and self-organize table groups; name a facilitator, recorder, reporter, and time keeper.
- Use effective communication and exploratory language: paraphrase, clarify, summarize, question, and invite thinking.
- Suspend judgment; live in curiosity.
- Reflect continuously; complete evaluations and reflections.
- Provide feedback and post questions on the “Parking Lot.”
- Pay attention to what has meaning for you.
- Commit to follow-through.

Self-Assessment

Outcomes	I don't know what this means	I need more practice	I've got It	I could apply it in a new context	Reflections
Explain why improvement planning is changing and the timing for those changes.					
Define and describe the relationships between key planning terms.					
Understand the required components of Colorado’s Unified Improvement Plan and how different components relate to one another.					
Analyze data to identify trends and needs.					
Determine root causes.					
Select interim measures and implementation benchmarks.					
Develop a strategy for completing the district improvement plan.					
Identify tools to support planning processes.					
Identify additional help needed to complete the district improvement plan.					

A New Planning Paradigm for Colorado

Video: Poised for Change

- Why is educational improvement planning changing in Colorado?

- What is the overall purpose or desired result for these changes?

Colorado Context for Planning

- Colorado Achievement Plan for Kids (SB212-08)
- Colorado Accountability Alignment Act (SB163-09)
- No Child Left Behind

Video: Policy Framework

- What are the critical components of the policy framework in Colorado that shapes planning and accountability?

- How is the Colorado framework similar and different from No Child Left Behind?

- What is the significance of Rate * Time = Distance?

Colorado Achievement Plan for Kids

All students will exit Colorado's K-12 education system ready for postsecondary education, and/or to be successful in the workforce, earning a living wage immediately upon graduation.

Performance Indicators

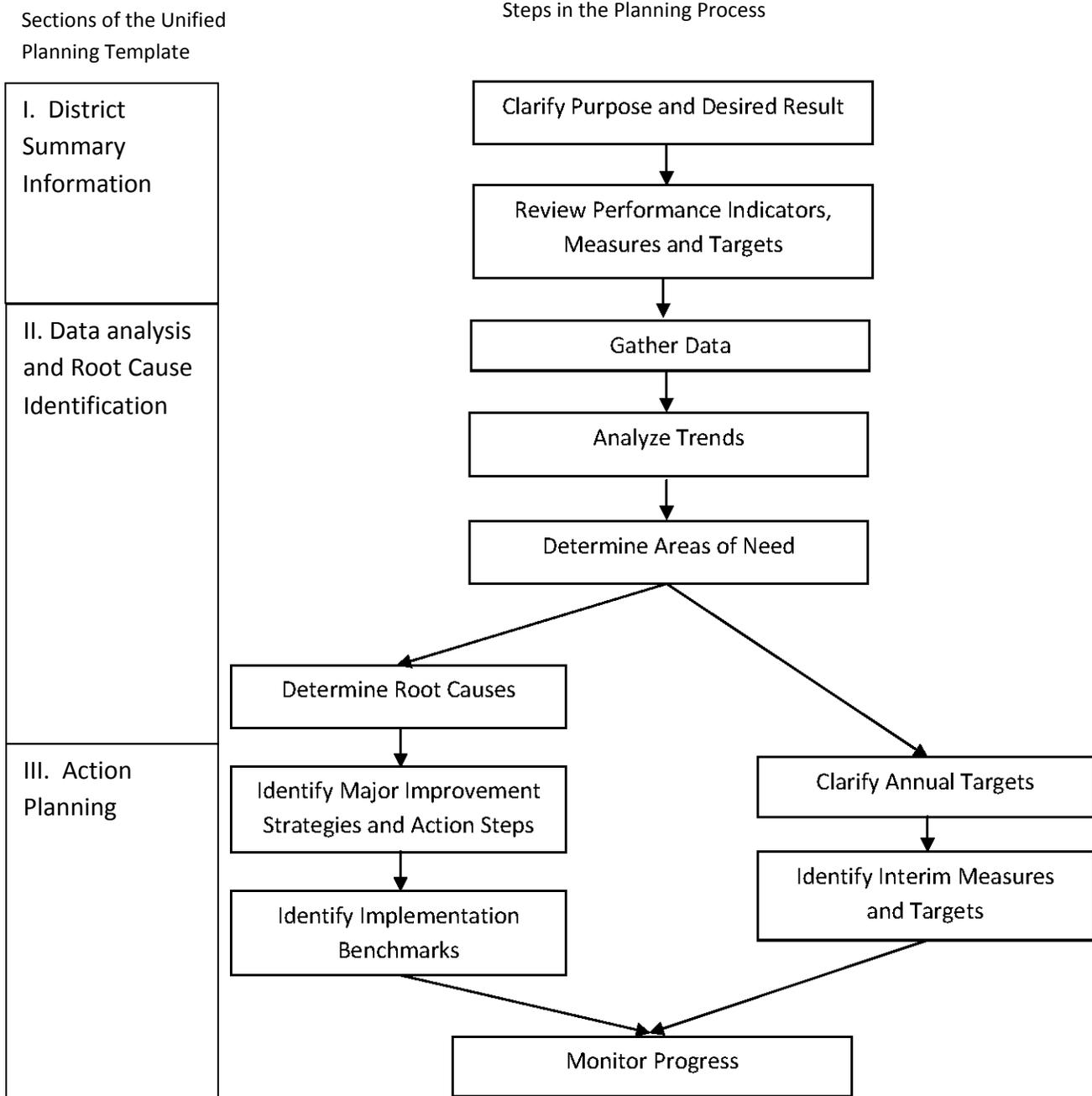
Required Performance Indicator	Measure
SB 09-163: Accountability Alignment Act	
Student Academic Growth	The Colorado Growth Model
Student Achievement Levels	CSAP Static Data
Closing Achievement and Growth Gaps	CSAP and the Colorado Growth Model data disaggregated by student groups
Post-Secondary and Workforce Readiness	Graduation rates, Drop-out Rates, ACT
No Child Left Behind	
Student Achievement	CSAP Static Data
Achievement Gaps	CSAP Static Data (disaggregated by student groups)
English Language Development and Attainment	CELA and CSAP (disaggregated for ELL students)
Educator Qualifications	Educator Transcripts

Video: Focusing on the Right Thing

- What is accountability 2.0? How is it different from the accountability system we have been used to in Colorado?

- What does it mean to say that changes to our accountability system are about focusing on the right thing?

Basic Steps in the Improvement Planning Process



Step 1: Clarify Overall Purpose or Desired Result

During the planning process, planning teams have in mind (consciously or unconsciously) some overall purpose or result that the plan is to achieve. Because of the *Colorado Achievement Plan for Kids* (SB212-08), for districts in Colorado, the purpose of improvement planning must include: ***Ensuring 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.*** Because of the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) statute, the purpose of improvement planning must also include: ensuring all students are at least partially proficient by 2014. Districts may have additional purposes in mind for their improvement planning.

Step 2: Review Performance Indicators, Measures, and Targets

Performance indicators define the general dimensions of quality that help to focus district improvement planning, on an annual basis, as planning teams keep the long-term purpose of planning in mind. Both state (SB09-163) and federal (NCLB) statutes define performance indicators that should be included in district improvement plans. Performance indicators are further defined by the means by which performance on the indicator will be assessed, or associated *measures*, and how that measure will be quantified; or the associated *metrics*. Then *targets* for each metric specify what will constitute success, on a particular measure, within a certain period of time. Together, performance indicator areas, measures, metrics, and targets provide a sharp focus for district improvement planning.

- a. **Performance Indicators.** The *Colorado Accountability Alignment Act* (SB 09-163) which became law in 2009, identified four performance indicator areas that districts (and schools) must include in their improvement planning: student academic growth, student achievement, gaps by student groups in achievement and growth, and post-secondary/workforce readiness. To a great degree, the state performance indicator areas incorporate those required by NCLB. NCLB also requires districts to monitor performance with regard to *student achievement* and *gaps in achievement by student groups*. Additional indicator areas required by NCLB, but not SB 09-163 include: English language acquisition and teacher quality.
- b. **Measures and Metrics.** For each performance indicator required by SB 09-163, the state has also defined required measures and metrics. NCLB also specifies measures and metrics for each required performance indicator area. However, NCLB and SB 09-163 specify different metrics to use when evaluating progress towards student achievement and reducing gaps in achievement by student groups. NCLB uses the percent of students reaching the partially proficient performance level, whereas SB163 uses the percent of students reaching the proficient performance level. The other measures and metrics required for SB 09-163 are indicated in Table 1.
- c. **Targets.** Both SB 09-163 and NCLB require districts to meet certain targets, each year, in each performance indicator area. Annual NCLB targets have been established federally

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and are based on districts reaching the target of all students (and students by group) partially proficient by the year 2014. The SB 09-163 targets are based on a different end point—all students proficient by the time they graduate from the K-12 educational system. During this transition year, districts will set their own targets for each performance indicator area required by SB 09-163. Then, CDE will establish targets for improvement plans that will be in effect for the 2011-12 school year.

Table 1. Performance Indicators, Measures, Metrics and Example Targets (SB 09-163 only)

Indicator	Measure	Metrics	Example Targets
Student Academic Growth	The Colorado Growth Model	Median Student Growth Percentile Percent of students making adequate growth (for students scoring unsatisfactory or partially proficient, this is <i>catch-up growth</i> ; for students scoring proficient or advanced that is <i>keep-up growth</i>)	By the end of the 2010-2011 school year, the district median student growth percentile in mathematics will be 65. The percent of unsatisfactory or partially proficient students making catch-up growth in reading will be 50 by the end of the 2010-2011 school year.
Student Academic Achievement	CSAP in Math, Reading, and Writing	Percent of students scoring advanced, proficient, partially proficient, and unsatisfactory in mathematics, reading, and writing.	By the end of the 2010-2011 school year, 80% of elementary students in the district will score proficient or advanced on the reading CSAP.
Achievement Gaps	CSAP	Percent of students scoring at each performance level disaggregated by student groups	By the end of the 2010-2011 school year, the difference in the percent of students scoring proficient and advanced on CSAP reading assessment, between students qualifying for free/reduced lunch and those who do not, will be less than 10 percent.
Growth Gaps	The Colorado Growth Model	Median student growth percentile (disaggregated by student groups) Percentage of students making	By the end of the 2010-2011 school year, the median student growth percentile for students qualifying for free/reduced lunch and those who

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		adequate growth (disaggregated by student groups)	do not will be within 15 percentile points.
Post-secondary/workforce readiness	Graduation rate	Percentage of students graduating on time.	By the end of the 2010-2011 school year, the average ACT composite score for students in the district will exceed the state average.
	Drop-out rate	Percentage of students dropping out	
	ACT	Average ACT Composite score	
English Language Development and Attainment	CELA and CSAP	% of ELL students categorized as "making progress" in Learning English on CELA	25% of ELL students who meet federal criteria will obtain English Language Proficiency as determined by CELA.
		% of ELL students categorized as attaining English Proficiency on CELA	60% of ELL students who meet federal criteria will be categorized as attaining English proficiency on the CELA.
		% of ELL students designated as partially proficient or higher on CSAP	(See AYP targets)
Educator Qualification		% of core content teachers meeting the "highly qualified" designation.	100% of core content teachers meet the "highly qualified" designation by the end of the 2010-2011 school year.

Deconstructing SMART Goals

SMART Goals	Performance Management
Strategic	Performance Indicators
Measurable	Measures and Metrics (What will you use and how will you measure progress?)
Attainable	Targets
Research Based	Performance Indicators
Time-bound	Targets (How good is good enough? By when?)

Consider your district summary information:

- Did you fail to meet any '08-'09 targets? In which performance indicator areas?

- Focus for today:

Step 3: Gather and organize relevant data from outside and inside the system

"We are a society that is data rich, but information poor." -- Robert H. Waterman

"Multiple measures must be considered and used to understand the multifaceted world of learning from the perspective of everyone involved."
-Victoria Bernhardt

Why Use Multiple Data Sources?

Questions and Data

- What questions can we answer with the data that we have?
- What data do we need to answer the questions we most care about?

Types of Data

Demographics: enrollment, attendance, ethnicity, gender, drop-out rate, language proficiency, mobility

Perceptions: perceptions of learning environment, values and beliefs, attitudes, observations

“If you’re only looking at student learning, you’re missing 65% of the data.”
– *Victoria Bernhardt*

Student learning: achievement and growth (progress), including: CSAP, district benchmark (Interim) assessments, diagnostic assessments, progress monitoring assessments, classroom assessments, teacher observations

School Processes: Descriptions of school programs and or processes, intended curriculum, enacted curriculum, assessed curriculum, and learned curriculum

Creating Data Intersections Activity

1. Choose two categories of data (demographic, perceptions, student learning, school processes). Indicate them in the 2-way box below.
2. Write several questions that you could answer with data that intersected these two categories. Note what data (specifically) from each category you would need to answer the questions.
3. Add another category of data to your first two. Indicate the three-way intersection you are now considering in the 3-way box below.
4. Write down questions you could answer with this three-way intersection, and the data you would need to do this.
5. Now consider a four-way intersection. What questions can be answered using all four categories of data? What data would you need to collect?

Interactions	Questions that could be answered with this interaction	Data needed to answer the questions
2-Way		
3-Way		
4-Way		

Planning Process Step 3: Gather and organize relevant data.

After the focus of improvement planning has been clarified, planning teams must collect data generated from a variety of sources that can inform the planning process. Data must be gathered to measure district performance in the required performance indicator areas, including: CSAP status data (disaggregated by student groups) to measure student achievement and achievement gaps; The Colorado Growth Model reports (disaggregated by student groups) to measure student growth and growth gaps; graduation rates, drop-out rates and ACT scores to measure post-secondary/workforce readiness; CELA results to measure English language attainment; and highly qualified teacher designations for core content teachers to measure teacher quality. Local performance data also should be gathered to better understand performance including: district interim/benchmark assessment results, results from commonly administered assessments, etc.

Additional local data should be gathered to help *explain* the performance data. Districts should consider including student and teacher demographic data, perception data, and data that captures the educational processes in place in the district. For districts that have/or will have participated in a Comprehensive Assessment of District Improvement (CADI) review, district accreditation site review, or external assessment, the data generated through these review processes becomes important as well. As part of the initial data-gathering process, districts should clarify the questions that each data source will help to answer.

District Data Sources Inventory

Month	Interim Measures and Implementation Benchmarks				Questions that can be answered with this data	Other data needed	Monitoring Progress
	State	District	School	Classroom			Dialogue Opportunities: Date, Time, Audience
July							
August							
September							
October							
November							
December							
January							
February							
March							
April							
May							
June							

Step 4: Analyze trends and identify needs in each performance indicator area.

Data Analysis Section of the Unified Template

Narrative:

- Acknowledge any missed targets and resulting accountability identifications.
- Discuss trends in the data (based on required reports) and prioritize needs.

Worksheet (organized by performance indicator areas):

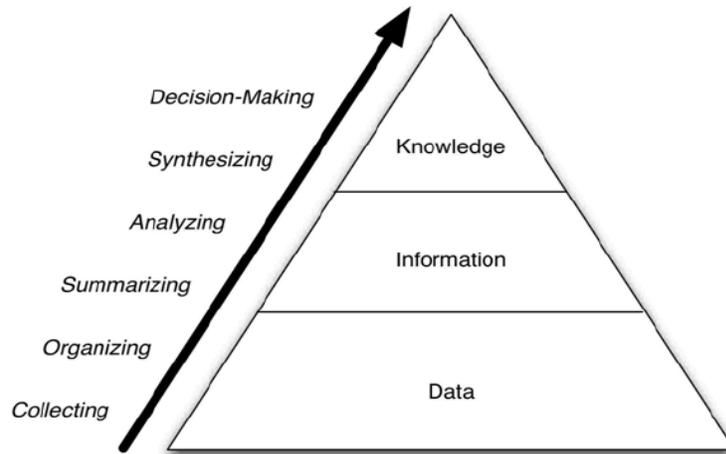
- Trends
- Priority Needs

Planning Process Step 4: Analyze trends and identify needs

This step involves collaboratively analyzing and interpreting the data to determine the districts' status quo. CDE has pre-populated a summary table in each district-specific, unified planning template which provides an overview of each performance indicator area and identifies where each district met or did not meet the targets the district set last year. Data analysis must consider each key performance indicator area: student academic growth, student achievement (status), gaps by group in student achievement and growth, postsecondary/ workforce readiness, English language acquisition, and teacher quality. First, teams will look for patterns, **trends**, and things that “pop out” in their data; making declarative statements or observations about what they see in their data. Next, teams will consider which of their observations represent strengths upon which they can build and which represent problems or areas of **need**. Finally, areas of **need** must be prioritized so that the next steps in the analysis can focus on where improvement is needed the most.

What are the most important aspects of this step in the planning process?

Moving from data to knowledge



Why go visual?

Steps in exploring data

1. Clarify how good is good enough in each performance indicator area.
2. Interact with the data (explore)
 - a. Highlight
 - b. Create graphical representations
 - c. Reorganize
3. Look for patterns, trends, things that pop out
4. Brainstorm a list of facts (observations)
5. Prioritize observations
6. Turn observations into statements of need

How Good is Good Enough?

Consider your focus performance indicator area for today. How good is good enough for that performance indicator area? How do you know?

Interacting with Data

- Highlight (color coded) based on a legend.
- Do origami – fold the paper so you can compare columns.
- Create graphic representations

Make Observations

1. Review highlighted data reports and graphical representations.
2. Look for patterns, trends, things that jump out.
3. As a group, brainstorm fact statements about your data in your focus area.
4. Prioritize Observations

Step 5: Determine Root Causes

Colorado Unified Planning Template: Identify root causes for areas of concern. Include explanations of what prevented the district from meeting its targets. This is a requirement for any missed NCLB targets, including Title I program improvement or corrective action, 2141c for Title IIA, or Title III.

Planning Process: Step 5 Determine Root Causes

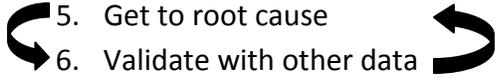
This step involves identifying the underlying causes behind the need areas identified in the prior analysis step. A cause is a “root” cause if: the problem would not have occurred if the cause had not been present, the problem would not reoccur if the cause was corrected or dissolved, and correction or dissolution of the cause would not lead to the same or similar problems (Preuss, 2003). Identifying root causes is a critical precursor to determining improvement strategies and action steps. In general, the process for determining root causes can be thought of as a funnel, starting with the widest thinking possible about causes related to each prioritized need (brainstorming, thinking outside of the box), narrowing to actionable causes (applying criteria), and then deepening the thinking to ensure the identified causes are “root” causes. Once the team believes they have identified a *root cause*, they should verify their root cause with other data sources. Several of the processes and tools below support different components of identifying root causes. This step is critical, because improvement strategies and action steps, that respond directly to root causes of low performance, result in improvements in performance.

- Why is it important to identify root causes?

- How will you know when you have identified a root cause?

Steps in Explaining Data

1. Generating explanations (brainstorm)
2. Categorize/ classify explanations
3. Narrow (eliminate explanations over which you have no control)
4. Prioritize
5. Get to root cause
6. Validate with other data



Root Cause Questions

- Would the problem have occurred if the cause had not been present?
- Will the problem reoccur if the cause is corrected or dissolved?
- Will correction or dissolution of the cause lead to similar events?

Five Why's

Explanation

1. *Why?*

Because:

4. *Why?*

Because:

2. *Why?*

Because:

5. *Why?*

Because:

3. *Why?*

Because:

Action Planning

Step 6: Establish Targets and Interim Measures

Based on the data analysis and identification of priority needs (step 4), district should clarify the targets that will focus their improvement efforts for the coming year. For the performance indicator areas established by NCLB, annual targets have already been set. During this transition year (2009-2010 school year), districts will need to set their own annual targets for the performance indicator areas identified by SB 09-163. These annual targets need to move districts aggressively towards ensuring all students exit the district ready for postsecondary education, and/or to be successful in the workforce, while at the same time considering what is possible in one year, given the districts' current status. In every performance indicator area, where improvement is needed, districts should also identify interim measures or what they will measure during the year to determine if progress is being made towards the annual targets.

Step 7: Identify Major Improvement Strategies and Implementation Benchmarks

Major improvement strategies identified by districts and the specific action steps required to carry out each major improvement strategy should respond to and should eliminate or correct the root causes (step 5) of each of the district's prioritized needs (step 4). 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. Within each major improvement strategy, the corresponding resources (federal, state or local) that will be brought to bear, to complete the action steps, should also be identified. For each improvement strategy, the team should also determine what data will be reviewed to determine if the improvement strategies are being implemented as intended. These measures are called Implementation benchmarks.

Step 8: Monitor Progress

Both Implementation benchmarks and Interim Measures should be monitored throughout the year to determine if improvement strategies are being implemented with fidelity and having the desired effects. Implementation benchmarks can be organized in terms of what will happen in 3 months, 6, months, 9 months. Interim measures should be based on local performance data that will be available at least twice during the school year. 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. A calendar should be developed, at the beginning of the year, for when the planning team will monitor progress during the school year. 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 monitored.

Step 6: Establish Targets and Interim Measures

Clarify Annual Targets

What is your annual target for the performance indicator area on which you focused today?

Step 7: Identify Major Improvement Strategies Implementation Benchmarks

Step 8: Monitor Progress

Video: Planning as a Process

- What does it mean to say planning should be a process rather than an event?

- How is this new approach to planning different from prior state improvement planning processes?

Rubric URL: www.cde.state.co.us/Fedprograms/NCLB/downloads/tiia_rubric.pdf

Planning to Plan Notes

When will you complete your improvement plan? Who will be a part of the planning process?

How will you complete each step?

Step	Tools/Resources	Help Needed	When? Who?
Step 1: Clarify overall purpose or desired result			
Step 2: Review performance indicators, measures and targets			
Step 3: Gather and organize relevant data			
Step 4: Analyze trends and identify needs in each performance indicator area			
Step 5: Determine root causes			
Step 6: Establish targets and interim measures			
Step 7: Identify major improvement strategies and implementation benchmarks			
Step 8: Monitor progress			

Planning Terminology

Planning Terms	Definition
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 to reach goals and targets.
Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)	Colorado's determination of incremental progress towards meeting the goal of all students being PROFICIENT in reading and math, as noted by CSAP, Lectura, or CSAPA, by 2014. Note: For AYP purposes, Partially Proficient, Proficient and Advanced are considered PROFICIENT.
AMAOs	Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives. The NCLB, Title III Accountability measures.
Baseline	The initial value of a metric against which future values will be compared to determine if progress is being made towards targets.
Catch Up	For a student who scores at the Achievement Level of Unsatisfactory or Partially Proficient on Statewide Assessments, the amount of academic growth the student must attain to score at the Proficient Achievement Level on Statewide Assessments within three years or by tenth grade, whichever is sooner.
CELA Proficiency (CELA Pro)	Colorado English Language Assessment for Proficiency: standards based language proficiency assessment given annually to ELLs and used for Title III accountability and to calculate Title III AMAOs.
CSAP	Colorado Student Assessment Program.
CSAPA	Colorado Student Assessment Program Alternate: the standards based assessment used to measure content knowledge for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.
ELD Standards	English Language Development Standards
ELLs	English Language Learners
FEP	Fluent English Proficient
Fluent English Proficient	Students at this level are able to understand and communicate effectively with various audiences on a wide range of familiar and new topics to meet social and academic demands. They are able to achieve in content areas comparable to native speakers, but may still need limited linguistic support. [CELA Level 5]
Goal	A projected state of affairs that a school or district plans or intends to achieve—a desired end-point following intentional effort. Goals are set within performance indicator areas.
Interim Measure	A measure (and associated metric) used to assess performance for a given performance indicator at various time intervals during a school year.
Implementation Benchmark	A measure (with associated metric) used to assess the degree to which action steps have been implemented. (See also measure and metric.)
Keep Up	For a student who scores at the Achievement Level of Proficient or Advanced on Statewide Assessments, the amount of academic growth the student must attain to score at the Proficient Achievement Level or higher

Colorado's Unified Improvement Plan for Districts

Planning Terms	Definition
	on Statewide Assessments for the succeeding three years or until tenth grade, whichever is sooner.
Lectura	State 3rd and 4th grade reading assessment in Spanish; similar to CSAP reading assessment. Lectura is administered to those students who receive their primary Reading instruction in Spanish.
LEA	Local Educational Agency; this can be a School District, BOCES or the lead school district in a multi- school district consortium.
Limited English Proficient	Students at this level are able to understand and be understood in many to most social communication situations. They are gaining increasing competence in the more cognitively demanding requirements of content areas; however, they are not yet ready to fully participate in academic content areas without linguistic support. [CELA Levels 3 and 4]
Measure	Instruments or means to assess the performance in an area identified by an indicator, or what will be measured for a given performance indicator.
Metric	A quantification for a given measure or performance indicator.
Move Up	For a student who scores at the Achievement Level of Proficient on Statewide Assessments, the amount of academic growth the student must attain to score at the Advanced performance level on Statewide Assessments within three years or by tenth grade, whichever is sooner.
NCLB	No Child Left Behind, federal statute 2001
Non-English Proficient (NEP)	This level includes students who are just beginning to understand and respond to simple routine communication through those who can respond with more ease to a variety of social communication tasks. [CELA Levels 1 and 2]
Participation Rate	Percentage of students in a school or district taking a state assessment, including: CSAP, CSAP-A, Lectura, or CELA*
Performance Indicator	A general dimension of school or district quality. Colorado has identified four performance indicators: student academic growth, student achievement, achievement and growth gaps, and postsecondary/workforce readiness.
Root Cause	The deepest underlying cause or causes of positive or negative symptoms within any process that, if dissolved, would result in elimination or substantial reduction, of the symptom.
SASID	State Assigned student identifier number
SEA	State Education Agency
Strategy	Methods to reach goals. Which strategies are chosen depends on coherence, affordability, practicality and efficiency and should be research-based.
Target	Specific, quantifiable outcomes that set expectations or define what will constitute success on particular measures within a certain period of time.

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