

Colorado

Charter School Institute

**UIP Handbook: New Schools Supplement**

2017-2018

**Introduction**

*Note: For the purposes of this guidance, “new schools” refers to schools that are in Year 1 of operation and have little or no trend data. Normally, new schools are issued a new, unique school code from CDE.*

The state requirements for creating a UIP can be confusing for new schools. *Why would a school that has not been in existence need an improvement plan?* First, the state accountability law (SB 09-163) requires that *all* schools, regardless of circumstance, develop a UIP. Second, new schools can launch with a strong start when leaders, staff, and the community are proactive and purposeful in their efforts to be highly effective. The intent of this guidance is to help leaders, staff, and communities from new schools “plan forward” for their improvement efforts – even with limited data.

**Foundational Questions**

**Can new schools just use their start-up plans as their UIP for the first few years of operation?**

No. While start-up plans can be a highly valuable process for a new school, it does not typically meet all of the requirements of the UIP. However, the start-up plan may serve as a beginning point for developing the school’s UIP. This is especially true if staff used available data to plan for the learning needs of incoming students. Some of the strategies included in the school’s start-up plan may also be appropriate to include as major improvement strategies or action steps in the school’s UIP.

**Do new schools receive School Performance Frameworks (SPFs)? If not, how do they know where to focus their improvement plans?**

Typically, a School Performance Framework (SPF) is generated for every public school by mid to late August, based on state data from prior years. Because new schools have no state data from prior years, the state does not provide these schools a SPF in the first year of operation. A SPF will be generated in the second year. However, CSI will assign new schools an accreditation rating and plan type based on their performance as measure by the Pre-CSI Annual Review of Schools (PCARS). While new schools are at a disadvantage in those first couple of years of operation without clues from the SPF on where to focus improvement efforts, new schools are advised to prioritize collecting and analyzing local level data (e.g., screening data, benchmarking or interim data). With a robust local assessment system, new schools can quickly build descriptive information on student performance and the health of the overall system that can guide improvement efforts. CSI provides tailored interim assessment analysis to schools upon request. For questions on interim assessment analysis or to request a report for your school, please contact CSI's School Performance Analyst, [Aislinn Walsh](mailto:aislinnwalsh@csi.state.co.us).

**Do new schools receive a pre-populated report for the UIP?**

Yes, new schools that have received a school code by July will receive a pre-populated report in late August/early September just like other schools, however little or no pre-populated data is available on the reports. New schools should still use this template in developing their first UIP. The context of the new school can be described in the beginning of the data narrative.

**Considerations for drafting the UIP**

In creating an improvement plan for a new school, it is recommended that the overall guidelines found within the CSI UIP Handbook be consulted. Keep in mind that some of the guidelines in the handbook will not apply as well in a new school context. The following information provides specific adaptations to the UIP Handbook that school leaders may consider.

**Adaptation to Section II: Progress Monitoring of Prior Year’s Performance Targets**

Since the school is new, no targets will have been set in the previous year’s UIP. School leaders should indicate that this section of the UIP template is “Not Applicable” because the school is new and established no performance targets for the prior year.

**Adaptation to Section III: Current Performance and Data Analysis**

The school’s UIP is grounded in an analysis of its student performance results. The first challenge staff in a new school will face is what to use with the absence of historical student performance results. At the beginning of the school year, new schools should make every effort possible to gather local student achievement and language proficiency data to guide their planning.

**Required Data if Available**. In many cases, students in the school will have come from other Colorado public schools. As a result, CMAS/PARCC performance and growth data, and possibly language proficiency data, may be available for those students from their prior schools. Check with the sending schools for pertinent data reports. While obtaining data for students is highly recommended, the school needs to ensure data are gathered for a large enough number of students to be representative of the school. Otherwise, a small amount of data will not necessarily show the true picture of the overall needs of the students in the school.

**Recommended Student Learning and Process Data**. If the school collects screening or pre-assessment data, then local data is available at the beginning of the school year and can be referenced in the UIP (assuming the n-count is large enough). The following table lists suggested data sources that may be collected at the school level for this purpose. Local student performance data (first column) should be used in data analysis (e.g., trend statements, priority performance challenges) and target-setting. Local demographic, school process and perception data (second through fourth columns) should be used during root cause analysis and as part of identifying implementation benchmarks.

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| **Used for Data Analysis and Target Setting** | **Used for Root Cause Analysis and Implementation Benchmarks: Data Collected at Beginning of School Year** | | |
| **Student Learning** | **Demographic Data** | **Process Data** | **Perception data** |
| * Initial local benchmark or interim assessment results * Student work samples * Beginning of the year classroom assessment results * Language proficiency data | * School locale and size of student population * Student characteristics (FRL, IEP, race/ethnicity) * Staff characteristics (experience, expertise) | * Instructional materials * Observations * Academic interventions available to students * Student attendance * Discipline data * Class size * Family involvement * Professional development * Services and/or programs (Title 1, Special Ed, ESL) | * Teaching and learning conditions surveys * Parent/Student survey data * Self-assessment tools based on best practices |

Once the school has identified various sources of data, data analysis can occur. Following are some questions that might help jump-start the local data analysis process.

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| **Questions to Consider** | **Potential Data Source(s)** |
| Given the current students in our school, how are our students performing/have they performed in the various content areas? Is there a content in which they are performing higher or lower than another? | * Students’ prior year CMAS/PARCC results * Beginning-of-the year interim assessment results |
| Are there particular standards within specific content areas on which our current students might show greater needs than on others? | * Beginning-of-the-year /interim assessment results disaggregated by content standard * Classroom-administered pre-assessment results * Student work samples |
| Are there particular disaggregated groups (e.g.,  Free/Reduced Lunch, minority students, students with disabilities, English Language Learners) of students to which we might need to pay particular attention? | * Prior year’s TCAP results disaggregated student groups. * Beginning-of-the-year interim assessment results disaggregated by student group * Classroom administered pre-assessment results disaggregated by student groups |
| To what degree might language proficiency be a barrier for our students and their learning? | * Beginning-of-the-year language proficiency assessment (W-APT) |
| To what degree might attendance or discipline be issues for our school? | * Attendance and behavior data from the first few months of school |

**Adaptation to Section IV: Trend Statements**

Since the school is new, no trend data will be available. However, schools may use the data analysis to identify potential areas of weakness and growth.

**Adaptation to Section V: Priority Performance Challenges**

While existing schools use data produced by their systems in prior years to identify their priority performance challenges, new schools can use current data to identify potential student performance challenges for areas of focus. For example, the beginning-of-year interim assessment results may point to the need to increase a focus on literacy. Lacking student achievement data, the school may examine their demographics and choose an area of focus based on what schools with similar demographics generally encounter as challenges. For example, if the demographics show a high number of English Language Learners (ELLs), the school may choose to focus on ensuring high quality language development through literacy. The key to completing this step of the planning process is to use the school’s current data to determine a specific student performance focus or foci.

**Adaptation to Section VI: Root Cause Analysis**

Root cause analysis may be challenging for new schools because root cause is typically about identifying past practices that have contributed to a particular student performance result(s). For new schools, root cause analysis can be thought of as a process of identifying ***potential*** barriers to student learning. Through root cause analysis, the school staff should proactively identify aspects of the school educational offerings that, if not addressed, could cause low student achievement results. For example, if the school’s current data (data analysis) reveals a priority performance challenge related to the math and reading performance of ELLs, the school might identify as a potential barrier (root cause) the lack of a system for early identification and monitoring of language proficiency development of ELL students.

New schools should refer to the CSI UIP Handbook for information on completing the Target Setting, Major Improvement Strategies, and Action Plan sections of the UIP.