

HB 16-1440: Flexibility in UIP Submission

Overview

In 2016, the Colorado legislature expanded flexibility around biennial (every other year) submission of the Unified Improvement Plan (UIP) through HB 16-1440. This flexibility is now available to all schools with a Performance plan type assignment and districts that are Accredited or Accredited with Distinction. Previously, only small, rural schools and districts were eligible for biennial UIP submissions.

Frequently Asked Questions

When may eligible schools and districts begin to exercise this flexibility?

Eligible schools/districts can exercise flexibility beginning this next school year in 2016-17, so that their next UIP posting would be by April 2018. Schools and districts can also delay a year and submit a plan for posting in 2016-17. The “off” year would then be for 2017-18. The state will not dictate when a district exercises this flexibility.

What happens if our district or school has a Performance plan type one year, but gets Improvement the next?

According to the bill, the school or district must maintain at least a plan type of Performance to retain the flexibility. Therefore, a school or district that slips to a lower plan type (i.e., Improvement, Priority Improvement, Turnaround) must submit the UIP for public posting that same school year. The posting timeline for each plan type can be viewed in the table below.

UIP Posting Timeline

Finalized Plan Type	Annual Submission	Submission Dates
Performance or Distinction	Biennial (every other year)	April 15 (public posting) every other year
Improvement	Annual	April 15 (public posting) every year
Priority Improvement or Turnaround	Biannual (twice a year)	January 15 (CDE review) and April 15 (public posting) every year

How should my school or district ensure that accountability requirements are still being met annually?

Although eligible schools and districts may submit biennially, certain program requirements (e.g., ESEA, Gifted Education, READ Act) require annual updates. The UIP team is working with the programs that use the UIP to meet their accountability requirements to ensure that no other reporting requirements will be needed during “off” years. Regardless of reporting requirements, this flexibility around the planning process does not change program implementation expectations.



How should schools and districts handle Accountability Committee expectations when submitting biennially?

Accountability Committee expectations still stand (e.g., SAC quarterly monitoring of plan implementation, DAC recommendations on district spending priorities), although committees would not need to provide recommendations on the UIP until the plan is being updated for public posting.

What if my district is eligible for the flexibility, but we have schools with an Improvement plan type or schools on the accountability clock? Do we still need to send in the schools' plans every year?

Yes. Regardless of the district's plan type, schools with an Improvement plan must submit at least once a year (by April 15) and schools on the clock must submit twice a year (by January 15 for CDE review and by April 15 for public posting). Larger districts will need to manage the submission timeline for all of their schools carefully. Some resources are being developed to assist districts with tracking school timelines.

Even if we are eligible for the flexibility, can we still submit our plans annually? Can we still use the online UIP system to maintain our improvement plans during the "off" years?

Yes, schools and districts can submit plans for posting at any time. You can also continue to update your UIPs in the online system in the "off" years without submitting them for public posting.

What are the implications as we transition into to the UIP Online System?

After two years of transitioning into the online UIP, it is expected that all schools and districts migrate into the online system by the 2016-17 school year. For those schools and districts that are already maintaining their plans in the online system, many elements will be available for population with the 'copy from last year' button when the system "rolls" to the next school year (over the summer). For example, Section III, Prior Year Targets will populate from the second set of targets identified in Section IV, Target Setting. In other words, a target identified for 2016-17, will become a "prior target" for the 2017-18 submission. However, the biennial submission may leave some gaps (e.g., future action steps and targets in the two-year cycle). CDE will consider options to address these gaps moving forward.

As a small district, we take advantage of the flexibility to submit a combined plan (one UIP for the district and all of our schools). Does this biennial (every other year) submission change our ability to use a combined plan?

Small, rural districts may still submit a combined plan. However, the entity with the lowest rating will determine the timeline. For example, a district with a Performance rating with all schools assigned a Performance plan may submit a combined plan every other year. If one of the schools drops to an Improvement plan type, then the combined plan must be submitted annually. The district may opt to create a separate plan for the school with an Improvement/Priority Improvement/Turnaround plan type (submitted annually) and retain the biennial flexibility for the district and remaining schools. CDE is always available to help districts think through the best course of action.

Where can I learn more?

For additional questions, contact the Improvement Planning team (uip@cde.state.co.us) or Lisa Medler, Executive Director of Improvement Planning (medler_l@cde.state.co.us or 303-866-6993).