

Root Causes of Poor Student Achievement Results from Previous Jeffco District Unified Improvement Plans (UIPs)

The Education Accountability Act of 2009 requires each Colorado district and school to create an annual improvement plan. The Colorado Department of Education has developed a unified improvement planning (UIP) template and processes to support schools and districts in their performance management efforts.

2010/11 UIP

- "Schools lack district-wide formative and benchmark progress monitoring tools in writing to calibrate the fidelity of implementation of the district writing curriculum."
- "Students needing to catch-up do not receive quality and/or adequate time for universal/core instruction in addition to effective, aligned targeted/intensive interventions."
- "Many secondary schools do not have a systematic, tiered system of support to respond to the needs of catch-up students."
- "The district has not strategically resource mapped and allocated resources differently among schools to better meet the needs of catch-up students."

2011/12 UIP

- "Schools lack district-wide formative and benchmark progress monitoring tools in writing to calibrate the fidelity of implementation of the district writing curriculum."
- "Teaching and learning have not consistently demanded high expectations in every classroom due to superficial coverage of a large number of standards, lack of understanding of grade level mastery, lack of relevance for students, and lack of systemic progress monitoring."
- "Educators lack consistently rigorous, growth-producing feedback through the evaluation process."
- "The district is not meeting the state expectation of 100% highly qualified teachers...because an effective monitoring system is not in place for existing staff especially for secondary schools."

2012/13 UIP

- “The district lacks systemic practices in writing instruction and effective feedback in every classroom.”
- “The district lacks structures to ensure consistent quality of professional development is provided to all instructional staff.”
- “District and school leadership lack systemic understanding around multiple pathways for students to stay on track to graduate.”

2013/14 UIP

- “Systemic implementation of intentional lesson design to engage students’ conceptual understanding of their learning and increase student cognitive load is not evident in all classrooms.”
- “Educators have received inconsistent training on effective literacy instruction and the use of research-based resources.”
- “Math instruction tends not to be differentiated, lacking a variety of structures to meet students’ needs.”

2014/2015 UIP

- No UIP because of transition from TCAP to CMAS assessment

2015/2016 UIP

- “There is a need for implementation across the district of systemic evidence-based instructional practices that promote learning of rigorous literacy skills and competencies to ensure every student can “read to learn” by the end of third grade.”
- “There is a need for implementation across the district of vertical alignment (PK through 12th) and interdependence of math concept development that leads to successful learning in algebraic thinking...There is a need across the district for systemic classroom-based instruction, assessment and grading

practices throughout the elementary and middle years that focus on higher level math concepts and procedures.”

- “There is a need for consistent differentiated teaching and learning practices matched to student needs so that every student will be successful in learning rigorous math concepts.”

2016/2017 UIP

- “In many schools, there is a lack of systemic evidence-based instructional practices that promote learning of rigorous literacy skills and competencies to ensure every student can “read to learn” by the end of third grade...For many students, the various literacy interventions are not specifically matched to student learning needs and may create additional barriers to learning rather than supporting literacy growth...Evidence indicates that current professional development in standards/competency-based core instructional strategies and learning supports has had limited impact on the effectiveness of high level literacy practices and matching interventions to student needs...Evidence indicates that current professional development and resource allocation for literacy instruction has had limited impact on desired increases in student performance.”
- “In many schools, there is a lack of systemic classroom-based instruction, assessment, and grading practices throughout the elementary and middle years that focus on higher level math concepts and procedures leading to algebraic thinking...In many schools, there is a lack of systemic classroom-based practices that require application and transfer of higher order algebraic thinking to meaningful/relevant real world problems and contexts...There is a lack of understanding across the system of vertical alignment (PK through 12th) and interdependence of math concept development that leads to successful learning and algebraic thinking...There is a lack of commitment across the system to ensure consistent differentiated teaching and learning practices matched to student needs.”
- “There is a need across the district for a system-wide commitment to ensure classroom practices and programming choices that provide every student with the opportunity to successfully complete a Jeffco educational pathway...There is a need across the district for a clear understanding among students and staff of the most critical performance expectations to achieve in order to be

prepared for each student's learning pathway...The allocation (or reallocation) of resources and supports to meet students' social, emotional, engagement, and advancement needs are not addressing barriers to learning for all students (including students with educational plans)."

All these root causes disappeared after Jason Glass arrived. Were they all successfully addressed? Or do they all still exist?

UIPs Under Jason Glass

2017/2018 UIP

- "All schools currently do not have the full capacity to meet all students' early literacy learning needs due to inequitable resources and support, for a variety of reasons, including inconsistent structures and routines across schools for foundational classroom (core) reading instruction, variable evidenced-based instructional practices to differentiate teaching for all learners' needs, and lack of literacy transfer and application to other content areas."
- "The district and schools have not provided equitable resources and support for math students to have a well-established foundation in: mathematical reasoning to explain, justify, and evaluate their thinking used to solve problems and applications of reasoning across content areas."
- "Due to inequitable resources and support, schools have limited capacity to differentiate instruction and engage students in relevant, authentic tasks, specifically in the core areas of mathematical reasoning and conceptual understanding in addition to memorization of facts."

2018/2019 UIP

- "Inequitable early academic access, resources, and support that transform the student experience to focus on demonstrated student learning and development needs inclusive of cognition, communication and language development, emotional & social development, health & physical development, literacy, and math"
- "There is a lack of engaging student learning experiences for middle level students. Many Jeffco students have not fully engaged in their learning due to a lack of student agency (voice and choice in their learning) and relevance (real world application) with high expectations for all learners."

- “There is a lack of student learning experiences for both career and college connections during the high school years that will ensure students are ready and able to connect to career, college, and life as productive citizens. In the information age, “one size fits all” instruction doesn’t meet the needs of all high school students. Teachers still need additional support and training to personalize instruction for a variety of customized pathways (students choosing their own career and college paths) in high school.”

2019/2020 UIP

- “In Jeffco, we are intent on providing rich and authentic learning experiences for all students built on the foundation of “student task” – or what teachers create for students to do in the classroom. We want our students to have the opportunity to develop skills and abilities such as collaboration, adaptation to changing conditions, communications, creative problem solving, and civic and global engagement. The district has provided tools and supports for our teachers and staff to develop student tasks with these objectives as a priority across all levels and all schools...Supporting students to connect their learning from authentic experiences in a variety of settings, including state tests, has been inconsistent. This shift to a new way of teaching and learning takes time and one hypothesis for the dip in district test scores may be attributable to the learning curve associated with this new pedagogical approach.”
- “While the district has focused on authentic learning experiences for our students, factual information and deep content knowledge remain important. For the state accountability assessments, about 60% of the CMAS test measures factual information, with the remainder focuses on problem-solving and critical thinking. **An analysis of the district CMAS performance by standards shows the lowest performing areas are the critical thinking sections, specifically integration of knowledge & ideas as well as prose constructed response for English language arts and reasoning and modeling for mathematics...Jeffco students generally are performing lower on the CMAS items that require more critical thinking and problem-solving (writing, modeling and reasoning)** and [because they] may be experiencing fewer opportunities to demonstrate these higher-level thinking skills on district, school, and classroom tasks and tests.”

- In other words:
 - Teachers are struggling with “changing the student task” and applying the “deep learning” methodology (could that have anything to do with the fact that kids can’t read?)
 - Students don’t get enough opportunities to demonstrate their critical thinking and problem solving skills on...classroom tasks and tests [this makes no sense: Jeffco students’ poor scores on applying their knowledge to critical thinking and problem solving (exactly what PISA tests for) is due to their not having enough practice demonstrating those skills in classroom tasks and tests – which could also just provide more evidence that our kids haven’t learned these critical 21st century skills].

UIP Under Kristopher Schuh/Tracy Dorland

2020/2021 UIP

- Inconsistent district/school/classroom leadership, data-based decision making, family partnerships, tiered supports and evidence-based practices to meet all students’ needs.
- Depending on the school and/or classroom, all students may not receive or benefit from effective continuous improvement processes to meet their varied academic, behavioral, and social-emotional needs.
- District supports have not been integrated across all departments to develop and support systemic leadership, data-based decision making, family partnerships, tiered supports and evidence-based practices to meet all students’ needs.