

The Facts about Focus Schools



Toward preparing students to be college, career, and culturally ready graduates

In focus schools, the state, school district and school work together to improve the achievement of the lowest-performing students in English and math, and to increase the graduation rate.

The goal is to focus on the students' needs, which may include:

- A dedicated block of time each day for reading.
- A dedicated block of time each day for math.
- A curriculum aligned with the state's standards for English and math.
- A reading program that includes all the elements of good reading.
- A reading program that has a curriculum for students who are performing at grade level and additional materials for struggling students.
- Specialists in literacy.
- Time set aside for teachers to work together.
- A program to create a safe, orderly school.

Focus schools will assess the needs of their struggling students and develop a plan to address them, with help from the state. The plan will specify actions to be taken, key dates for reporting progress, and ways to check if the work is being done. The improvement plan will be tailored to each focus school.

The Alaska Department of Education & Early Development may provide focus schools with a staff contact person, coaches in reading and math, a computerized way to keep track of the

improvement plan, training conferences in topics such as helping students with disabilities and English language learners, mentors for new teachers or principals, and school improvement funds as they become available. After two years, a school will no longer be a focus school if it shows enough improvement.

What you can do as a parent

Ask your school how you can contribute to your school's improvement plan and how to help your students to do their best.

