

School-wide Academic Focus Guide

Thoughts on Instructional Focus

A good instructional focus has the following:
Introduction, WHO, WHAT (WHY?), HOW
Indicators for Success



FOCUS

IS the one thing we do excellently, expertly, better than anyone else in every classroom for every student

IS what we are willing to hold ourselves accountable for and expect our students to know and be able to do

IS NOT simply a focus on instruction

FOCUS

- Based on every student's learning needs as evidenced by multiple sources of data that have been disaggregated by various student groups
- Touches the whole school – every professional, every classroom every day
- Principal and staff hold each other mutually accountable and expect every student to show growth in the area of the instructional focus
- No excuses for low performance based on race, gender, ethnicity, language, socioeconomic or class factors

Introduction..... A schoolwide effort to have
WHO..... All Ripley students
WHAT..... show growth in their abilities in reading comprehension
HOW..... Through the implementation of a schoolwide writing process program
Indicators of SuccessAs measured by the MAP reading, school performance based writing assessments and state achievement tests

Characteristics of a good instructional focus statement:

- Enables us to produce concrete results and reach our measurable objectives and benchmarks
- It includes all students
- All staff can relate to the focus – teachers in every grade level – in every content area and every specialty, all administrators and support staff
- It guides us in making decisions, aligning programs, and allocating resources
- It is clear and easy to communicate to staff, students, parents and community
- It is important for our students and reflects their needs
- It focuses on improving instruction
- It encompasses our objectives and benchmarks
- It is a focus we want to have guide all our work over the next years
- It will help us to decide what “good” things we need to stop doing to focus on the best things

Sample School-wide Academic Focus Statements

- A coordinated whole school effort to have Dever students show growth in their ability to read through the implementation of a balanced literacy program as measured by both the Stanford 9 and the students ability to meet the Boston Public School Standards in reading comprehension.
- A schoolwide effort to have all Jefferson High students show measurable growth in their ability to write expertly for a variety of audiences through the implementation of a schoolwide writing process program as measured by the MCAS, Stanford 9 Open Ended Assessment and schoolwide writing assessments.
- A whole school coordinated effort to have all Ripley students show growth in their ability to problem solve through implementation of a schoolwide teaching focus on problem solving in all classes. We measure our student's growth via the SAT 9 and the DSTP and student's ability to meet Delaware state standards.
- A total school coordinated effort to have Madison Middle School students show growth in their abilities in reading comprehension through the implementation of a common set of schoolwide teaching strategies in reading in all classes as measured by the MCAS and the students ability to show growth in our school based reading assessment.