

Exiting Focus School Status

Based on inputs from various stakeholder consultations including the State's COP, NCDPI will maintain the list of Focus Schools for a three-year period. Maintaining focus status for the full three-year period will ensure 1) sufficient time for the LEA to fully implement interventions, and 2) sufficient time for the State to monitor and support the implementation of interventions to increase the likelihood that interventions result in sustained student achievement for all student subgroups. Schools will exit focus status when, three years from initial identification, a new list of Focus Schools is developed and the applied methodology no longer results in the school's designation as a Focus School.

In order to exit Focus School status, Focus Schools must demonstrate sufficient progress based on the following criteria:

- Meet a minimum proficiency standard/graduation rate of 60%;
- Make progress on closing significant achievement gaps between subgroups by demonstrating no subgroup gaps greater than the state three-year average;
- Make progress toward meeting "all AMOs" defined as meeting at least 90% of the achievement Annual Measurable Objectives in the "all students" subgroup (including the other academic indicator) and the AMOs in all other subgroups; and
- Meet the 95% participation rate rule for all subgroups.

As described in section 2.D.v on page 78, after the State transitions to new assessments in the 2012-13 school year, the State will conduct analyses of the assessment scores in reading, English/language arts and science in order to establish a minimum threshold that links/equates to the current expectation of a minimum standard of 60% proficiency. The expectation is that the new assessments will have more rigorous performance standards than the current assessments.

Focus Schools will also be subject to the same escalating consequences described on pages 51-52 if they fail to achieve 95% participation for any subgroup. These consequences will be implemented with the new accountability model starting in the 2012-13 school year.

LEAs with identified schools that do not exit this status must establish a School Implementation Team with a designated coordinator for each Focus School. If the LEA chooses to utilize an external provider, the LEA must also develop transparent selection criteria for providers. The implementation team will utilize the NC Indistar® Tool to facilitate the continuous improvement process through initial needs assessment related to specific indicators of effective practice; the creation of implementation plans to fully implement indicators of effective practice; and the self-monitoring of progress toward full implementation of interventions designed to support the low-performing subgroup(s).

NCDPI will monitor and evaluate the implementation of the interventions for each of these schools through the use of the NC Indistar® Tool. In addition to utilizing the online tool, NCDPI will conduct on-site reviews for gathering qualitative data through surveys, interviews, focus groups, and classroom observations. LEA funds may be coordinated with oversight from the NCDPI to ensure that the implementation of interventions occurs in a manner that encourages rapid student achievement.