



NEWS

Bakersfield City School District

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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BCSD to Implement Focus Schools Initiative

The Bakersfield City School District (BCSD) Board of Education is committed to the education of the students within the District and recognizes that there is a need to continue creating programs and initiatives to help accelerate student performance. With that goal in mind, under the recommendation of the District administration, the Governing Board has approved the Focus Schools Initiative at a meeting on January 24, 2017. The initiative will provide targeted support services and leverage resources to affect sustainable growth at schools identified as a Focus School.

The goals of the Focus Schools Initiative are to:

- Establish sustainable curricular, instructional and operational systems structures and practices at identified Focus Schools.
- Provide a system of supports and access to resources and information on model practices of schools performing well.
- Align the Focus Schools criteria to the new State Accountability Model to ensure actions are taken to accelerate student achievement.

“It is BCSD’s responsibility to provide high quality education to more than 30,000 children in this community, and currently many of them are not performing at grade level in Math and English Language Arts (ELA),” said Lillian Tafoya, Board of Education President. “I believe the Focus School Initiative will ensure equity and support in addressing the diverse needs of our children and optimize their learning.”

The Focus Schools Initiative identifies a school as a Focus School first and foremost due to continuously low student achievement. Low student performance at these schools may be attributed to school leadership and teacher experience, chronic absenteeism, student mobility and discipline, parent engagement, and overall school climate and culture. Using this criteria, the BCSD Board of Education and the District Administration have identified the following five schools as Focus Schools:

1. Fremont Elementary
2. McKinley Elementary
3. Munsey Elementary
4. Stella Hills Elementary
5. Emerson Middle

To better determine what supports will be provided to each Focus School, the District will perform a needs assessment and equity audit at each site, as well as analyze the staffing structure and alignment of Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) actions. This will be followed by District and site level support for professional development planning and instruction program design. Some of the supports may include but are not limited to:

- High priority status for hiring staff
- Collaboration with the Bakersfield Elementary Teachers Association (BETA) regarding teacher transfers
- Leadership change

- Targeted support such as instructional aides, intervention specialists, and academic coaches.

Each school will be monitored and evaluated and ongoing systems of support and staffing will be adjusted as needed. A school will no longer be considered a Focus School when it has demonstrated accelerated performance or growth in the areas of English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics based on the State Accountability Rubric for three consecutive years.

BCSD's efforts are aligned with key elements of a new accountability system recently approved by the California State Board of Education that evaluates schools and districts in areas critical to student performance, including ELA, Math, and English Language Development, and others.

The Focus School Initiative evaluation process will begin immediately, with full implementation by July 1, 2017.

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