



Focus Learning Academy Southwest (142927)

Focus Learning Academy Southeast (142935)

Focus North High School (012529)

## Focus Special Education Practices and Procedures

Focus Learning Academy Southeast, Focus Learning Academy Southwest and Focus North High School School Boards adopted the [ODEW Model Policies](#) in FY 2025.

I. Focus will adhere to the Ohio State and Federal guidelines outlined in the Model Policies and Procedures document in daily practice in order to identify and serve all students with disabilities or those suspected of having a disability in the district.

II. Contacts:

Title	Name	Email	Phone
Special Education Administrator	Alyssa Harmon	alyssa.harmon@focuslearn.org	614-269-0150
Educational Agency Contact for policies and procedures	Carla Gilroy	carla.gilroy@focuslearn.org	614-269-0150
State Support Team Region	11	-	-

III. FAPE

- A. Focus schools will ensure a *Free and Public Education* is made available to all children with disabilities between the ages of three and twenty-one, including those who have been suspended or expelled from school, have failed or been retained in a course or grade, and are advancing from grade to grade (OAC 3301-51-02).
- B. As a public community school, Focus will serve as both the district of service and the *district of residence* and will therefore provide education to students with disabilities free of cost.

IV. Child Find

- A. Focus will ensure all students who are suspected of having a disability are identified, located, and evaluated (OAC 3301-51-03).
  1. What to expect at Focus:
    - a) Parent referral for special education:
      - (1) School district receives referral from parent or adult student



- (2) The district responds and sets up a team meeting within 30 calendar days.
- (3) The team discusses suspected limitations and disabilities as evidenced by academic, social, behavioral, etc. data.
- (4) If the team determines that the limitation is not a result of a language barrier or lack of educational opportunities, they will provide consent to the parent or adult student (60 calendar days to complete evaluation from consent). The team will provide ***procedural safeguards to the family***.
- (5) The team in conjunction with the school psychologist will create and sign a planning form with all suspected disabilities.
- (6) A school psychologist leads the team (general education teacher, intervention specialist, district representative, service providers, parent, and student) through the evaluation process to gather data.
  - (a) Evaluations may include, but are not limited to, behavioral scales, adaptive skills scales, intellectual evaluations, academic evaluations, observations, educational records reviews, review of medical records.
- (7) The school psychologist and team members will provide assessments, the school psychologist will work with the team to write a team summary, and the team will convene to discuss and determine a disability category qualification under IDEIA.
- (8) The IEP team will convene within 30 calendar days of a disability qualification to establish an IEP for special education services.

b) Focus collects data in an MTSS framework for reading, math (RTI), behavior (PBIS), and social emotional (SEL) status to provide interventions to students struggling to access the curriculum in the general education setting.

- (1) Students who are not successful in tiers 2 or 3 of MTSS will be referred for a special education evaluation with a team of the student, parent, school psychologist, general education teacher, intervention specialist, service providers and district representative.



2. Focus always prefers to meet with our parents and teams in person, but will accommodate family schedules via phone or virtual meetings when necessary.

**B. Parents or adult students who want to contact the school about an evaluation can direct all calls to Alyssa Harmon, Director of Special Education, 614-269-0150 x 2150.**

**V. Transfer students**

- A. Focus will review all transfer paperwork and adopt into practice or review transfer paperwork and convene the team to rewrite IEP or reevaluate the student with a disability within 30 calendar days. The student **will continue to receive all accommodations, protections, and specially designed instruction** during this time to avoid a lapse in instruction.

**VI. Re-Evaluation Team Reports**

- A. The ETR Team will convene every three years to obtain consent, create planning documents and discuss suspected disabilities in order to continue serving students with disabilities.
  1. What to expect at Focus:
    - a) The Special Education Administration team will contact you to let you know that the ETR for your student is approaching an expiration/lapse date.
    - b) You will be asked for your consent for re-evaluation and be part of the team to determine suspected disabilities and testing needed for your student.
    - c) You will be asked for updated background information on your student as well as information pertaining to medical needs and any changes in behavior or performance.
    - d) You will be part of the ETR team that convenes within 60 calendar days of consent to determine updated eligibility.

**VII. Individualized Education Program**

- A. Students with disabilities will be served under an adopted or updated IEP that is developed and implemented with specifically identified services as agreed upon by the Team (OAC 3301-51-07).

**B. What to expect at Focus:**

1. You will receive the **procedural safeguards at least once per year**.
2. Your student will be assigned to one certified intervention specialist that will oversee the provision of **specially designed instruction minutes** in the classroom.
3. Your student will receive all **related services** (Occupational Therapy, Speech Therapy, counseling, etc) either on-site or through a virtual partner.



4. Your student will receive all mandated **accommodations, modifications, and access to assistive technology** in the general education and intervention setting as determined by the *least restrictive environment*.
5. Your student will receive all **transition services** through activities implemented by a team of Transition Coordinators, intervention specialists, and Career and Technical Education teachers to help in the transition from high school to life outside of school.
  - a) Transition services will be monitored by indicator 13 checklist for Post-secondary training/education, competitive-integrated employment, and independent living.
  - b) The transition team includes community partners like Project Nurture, CRIS, Lead the Way, OOD, and families.
6. You will receive quarterly (9 week) updates on how your student is progressing toward **achieving their individual academic and behavioral goals**.
7. Your student will receive all **testing accommodations** as outlined in the IEP on state and district testing.

- C. The team will reconvene annually to discuss updated needs, goals, progress, and needs.

## VIII. Staff Notification Practices

- A. Focus' Special Education Administration Team will update the general education teachers about accommodations upon the completion or adoption of an IEP through an IEP at a glance that summarizes goals, accommodations, and modifications to curriculum.
- B. Focus' Special Education Administration Team will monitor the implementation of IEP accommodations, services, minutes, and modifications through regular classroom visits, monthly meetings, and **collection of service logs**.
- C. The building administration will monitor the daily workings of the various intervention settings (push in & pull out) to ensure that FAPE is provided to all students and that their privacy is protected.

## IX. Curriculum and Credit Recovery

- A. Focus' students with disabilities will have access to the general education curriculum as determined by the IEP team for least restrictive environment and specially designed instruction.
  1. Students with disabilities will follow the graduation requirements based on their graduation cohort year in the same manner as their peers.
  2. Students with disabilities may be eligible for graduation on extended standards based on a significant cognitive disability as determined by the team.



- B. Students at Focus are able to make up credits that were failed or missing from previous secondary academic years in order to stay on track for graduation.
- C. Students with disabilities are eligible for enrollment in College Credit Plus to earn credits toward a post-secondary degree. Focus' Academic Advisors can help students set this up.

#### X. Discipline

- A. Students with disabilities will not be removed from the educational setting for more than 10 school days for violations of the student code of conduct without:
  - 1. Notifying the parent
  - 2. Convening the Team to discuss *change in placement and a manifestation determination review*.
  - 3. Conducting a *functional behavioral assessment* and creating a *behavior intervention plan*.
  - 4. Providing *interim alternative educational services* during change in placement.
- B. Code of conduct violations involving **weapons, illegal drugs, and/or serious bodily harm** are considered special circumstances and are not limited to 10 days of removal.
- C. In order to prevent exclusionary discipline, Focus invites parents and students to regularly communicate with staff and discuss any concerns that may be supported by our teachers and support personnel. Feel free to contact your building director or the Director of Special Education if you have any questions or needs.
  - 1. Our team includes behavior specialists, licensed social workers, intervention specialists, paraprofessionals, and retention specialists.
  - 2. The IEP team can conduct an FBA and write an FBA to support student outcomes before any exclusionary discipline triggers a need.

#### XI. EOC Testing

- A. Students with disabilities are not exempted from passing Ohio's Graduation Tests (End of Course [EOC]) for Algebra 1 and English Language Arts II.
  - 1. General education teachers and intervention specialists are trained in providing extra help and practice in taking the tests on the computer and in focusing on Ohio's "power standards" that are most often tested.
  - 2. Focus has **alternate pathways** for graduation that students who are not successful in passing the Graduation Tests.
    - a) Focus Industry Recognized Credential Programs:
      - (1) STNA
      - (2) Phlebotomy
      - (3) Cosmetology
      - (4) Construction
      - (5) CDL



(6) Rise Up

(7) Sigma Leadership

3. Our Academic Advisors, CTE team, and IEP team will work together to determine the best path for your student to complete the competency standards for graduation.

- B. Any students who have significant cognitive disabilities will have a team decision using the Alternative Assessment for Students with Cognitive Disabilities (AASCD) tool to determine eligibility.

## XII. Graduation

- A. Students with disabilities will complete the same graduation requirements as their peers in order to achieve a high school diploma.

1. This includes completing courses, demonstrating competency (passing tests or completing an alternative pathway), and showing readiness (state and local seals).
  2. As seen above (*XI: EOC Testing*), Focus has developed several Industry Recognized Credential programs that will earn students 12 points upon completion that will count toward demonstrating competency.
    - a) We encourage *all* students to complete an IRC regardless of passing the EOC tests in order to better prepare students for transition to life after graduation
    - b) Students with disabilities *will receive training in Workforce Literacy starting in 9th & 10th grade alongside a Career Based Intervention program.*
    - c) Students with disabilities *will enter an IRC of their choice in 11th and/or 12th grade.*
      - (1) The IEP team in conjunction with the Academic Advisor will work with the student to help match aptitude and interest with the available programs at Focus to help align enrollment with future success.

- B. Students with disabilities *will be identified for graduation readiness by October or within 30 days of enrollment if after October* in order to assign them to a graduation tracking plan within Focus' student information system.

1. Academic Advisors will review your student's credits and transcripts, place in current & credit recovery courses, and make a plan to move students toward being on track for graduation.
  2. The IEP team will support the student in working on course completion & credit recovery as necessary alongside other IEP goals and objectives.
  3. The CTE team will partner with the IEP team to support the student with disabilities through any IRC programs and provide accommodations as allowable by state agencies and tests to help ensure success.



4. Delay in completion of academic plans will result in family meetings with Academic Advisor, CTE team, and IEP team to determine next steps to support student success.

**XIII. Drop-Out Prevention (strategies, actions upon withdrawal)**

- A. Students with disabilities at Focus are often at risk of dropping out. To help prevent or recover from dropping out, Focus provides the following supports:
  1. Regular communication about excessive absences and habitual truancy in order to prevent withdrawal from school due to non-attendance.
  2. Credit recovery courses with a work at your own pace rate
  3. Access to on-site Social Workers to help guide students with disabilities to services and resources to meet physical and emotional needs outside of the classroom.
  4. Retention specialists that will identify patterns in chronic absenteeism and respond with the following:
    - a) Contact with the family to set up absence intervention plan meetings
    - b) Assistance with transportation
    - c) Connection to Focus partners for resources
    - d) Communication with student to provide encouragement and connection to the school
  5. Focus offers an Off-Site Educational Opportunity to students with disabilities who have extreme limiting factors in their lives such as being a parenting student or significant health challenges that limit regular attendance in order to maintain enrollment and progress toward graduation.
    - a) Contact your building director with questions regarding this program and eligibility.
- B. Upon withdrawal from Focus, students with disabilities will receive a letter explaining why they were withdrawn and welcoming them to re-enroll as soon as possible.
  1. Focus understands that there are many reasons a person might drop out of school through nonattendance or through direct withdrawal. In either circumstance, our team welcomes you and your student with disabilities to discuss your options at Focus to make school work for you.
- C. Withdrawn students are contacted through phone calls, texts, and emails welcoming re-enrollment during the current school year to encourage them to return to school and work toward completing graduation requirements.