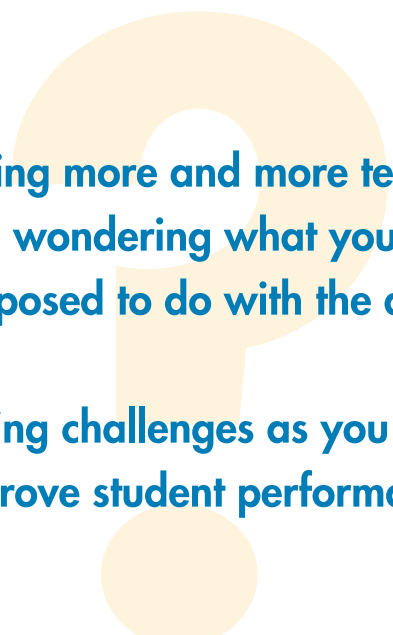




*Using standards-based  
performance data to  
guide instruction*



**Giving more and more tests—  
and wondering what you're  
supposed to do with the data?**

**Facing challenges as you try to  
improve student performance?**

**Focus on Standards  
can help.**



# Focus on Standards helps educators use student performance data to improve academic achievement

With increasing emphasis on accountability in education, today's schools are working hard to meet academic growth targets.

Reporting student scores is not the problem.

What schools really want is an effective way to improve standards-based student performance on high-stakes tests.

Focus on Standards™ is an end-to-end product that helps teachers and administrators understand the assessment data they're collecting—and learn what to do with it. In an approach that blends the use of data with the professional skills of teachers, Focus on Standards guides districts in assessing current student performance and then in designing and implementing standards-based instruction to improve academic achievement.

## What's included?

Focus on Standards includes software tools for administrators and teachers as well as on-site support and professional development services.

### **Instructional Data Management System (IDMS), a software application**

Focus on Standards provides databases of academic standards and student performance results as well as tools for analyzing the data, identifying learning gaps, creating interim assessments, and adjusting instruction.

Using IDMS, educators can examine student performance by standard, individual student, classroom, grade level, school, and district. Having a variety of data reporting possibilities is useful for keeping teachers and principals informed about student progress, prompting instructional changes and interventions, and reporting to state agencies. Teachers can also use IDMS to generate interim tests, making it easier to assess student progress and adjust instruction accordingly.

### **On-site services for administrators and teachers**

Focus on Standards provides facilitators to guide data analysis and planning for change, deliver professional development on instructional techniques and academic interventions, and support program implementation.

By bringing facilitators directly to the district or school team, Focus on Standards ensures that district staff, principals, and teachers learn how to use assessment data to develop and implement a comprehensive plan for standards-based performance—and how to use adopted text materials and strategies for improving academic achievement. With Focus on Standards, teachers and administrators learn how to do things differently to support learning.

## The Focus on Standards process

Identifying the issues is just the first step. What comes next is learning how to address them.

### Examining and analyzing data

When districts purchase Focus on Standards, their current student assessment data is loaded into IDMS. Then district educators, working with a Focus on Standards facilitator, use IDMS to analyze the data, identify areas that need improvement, and determine where to start.

*Focus on Standards supports this with the IDMS databases and analysis tools.*

### Pacing standards and aligning materials

A team at the district, school, or department level paces the applicable standards over the school year and aligns the instructional material to the newly paced curriculum. Team members also build standards-based interim assessments that reflect the paced standards.

*Focus on Standards supports this with Essential Standards as well as collections of standards-based assessment items.*

## Planning, teaching, and assessing

Teachers use the newly paced curriculum to plan lessons and provide instruction to individuals and groups. They also regularly administer short assessments that are aligned to their paced standards.

*Focus on Standards supports this with an electronic lesson planner, a protocol for centering daily work on standards, and standards-based assessments that are scored electronically.*

### Analyzing and adjusting

Teachers meet regularly in grade-level or department-specific teams. During these highly structured meetings, they analyze student progress, regroup students for instruction, share teaching strategies, and design academic interventions as needed.

*Focus on Standards supports this with a procedure to group students for instruction and a specific structure for teaching and learning.*

### Fine-tuning

Once schools begin to implement Focus on Standards, they may request that a facilitator return for additional support and mentoring.

## Essential Standards—the special ingredient

When teachers try to implement conventional standards-based teaching, they find so many different standards that they don't know where to begin.

Using Essential Standards solves that problem.

Essential Standards, included with the Focus on Standards product, are a highly focused, state-specific power set of the complete list of standards for core K–12 subject areas. In fact, they are the most critical standards that students are held accountable for mastering. Because Essential Standards reflect the content of the high-stakes assessments for each grade, teachers can use them with confidence to realign, focus, and pace their instruction. And each Essential Standard has tips for providing the related foundation knowledge, so teachers can quickly and easily prepare students for grade-level instruction.



## Making a difference with Focus on Standards

Over the past three years, teachers and principals in hundreds of schools have used Focus on Standards to support instructional change—and improve student performance on standards-based tests. What follows is a story about one of those schools.

### Using data to make changes at Roosevelt Elementary

In Southern California's Desert Sands School District, test scores for students at Roosevelt Elementary were at the bottom of the district's 14-school list. "Not surprising, considering the demographics," was the typical reaction. In contrast with most schools in the district, Roosevelt serves students on the lowest rungs of the economic ladder—and more than 90 percent of them are designated as English Language Learners.

Despite these challenges, things started to change three years ago, when principal Kathy Felci and the Roosevelt teachers implemented Focus on Standards. First, they took a hard look at their testing program, the test scores, and their teaching process. "We did an item analysis by standard for all formative assessments and found that we were testing some standards over and over—while we missed others completely," says Felci. "We were able to reduce the number of tests by 50 percent while getting more useful, individualized information." Then they examined the specific standards their students needed to learn, discussed different approaches to teaching, and regrouped students to make instruction more effective. "We worked together to meet each student's individual learning needs," she explains.

Today, visitors to Roosevelt see students and teachers actively engaged in learning—with test scores to prove it. "We've made steady progress over the past three years—and moved from fourteenth place in the district to seventh," says Felci. "We're proud of our students—and their parents are proud of them. Best of all, they're proud of themselves."



For more information about Focus on Standards, visit our website at [www.pulliamgroup.com](http://www.pulliamgroup.com) or call 866.826.1200.

## The people behind Focus on Standards

Focus on Standards is a product of The Pulliam Group—a company founded in 1999 by educators Barry and Leslie Pulliam to help schools meet the requirements of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. The Pulliams believe that teachers and school administrators who use data to guide instructional decisions can improve academic achievement for all students.

**Barry Pulliam, Ed.D.**, has nearly 40 years of experience at the school, central office, and county office level. An advocate of sound fiscal management, he most recently served as superintendent of San Bernardino County Schools in California.

**Leslie Pulliam, Ph.D.**, an educator for more than 27 years, is an expert in the area of standards-based curriculum. She also has a proven track record in helping schools improve academic achievement.

**Marilyn Gogolin** has more than 30 years of administrative and management experience in education. At the Los Angeles County Office of Education, she most recently served as chief operating officer and as acting superintendent.

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