Introduction to Focus School Software

Bringing Vision into Focus
To Our Very Valued Customers

Ensuring the smooth operation of your schools, while continuing to bring you the functionality you need to serve your communities, has always been Computer Resources top priority. That is, in fact, the reason we started exploring different technical and business relationships over the past several months.

You have given us excellent and consistent feedback through surveys, conversations, and interaction with our account and support teams. All of that has lead to our decision to partner with Focus School Software to help "Bring Vision into Focus." While this relationship opens up a lot of opportunities for improvement, we are working on your schedule. We remain dedicated to continuing support of Vision and ensuring that you have access to the team that has supported you over the years!

But this new relationship with Focus will certainly bring a lot of questions, and we want to make sure you have a chance to get to know the most impressive SIS on the market. This brief introduction should help you get started with that, but it really is only a starting point. Please reach out to your account rep to learn more.

We truly are working with the "Next Generation SIS" here... ALL of the big-name SIS packages, as well as Vision/MMS, were originally developed over 25 years ago. That means that they all (including Vision/MMS) have struggled to adapt to the maturing requirements in the market. Whether that's scalable hosting, data security, performance, features, mobile apps, accessibility, usability, reporting, integrations or multi-language support, all new development has had to be built on the legacy architecture of the original software. All of it. Every legacy SIS struggles to this day with that.

Except for Focus. What we found in our evaluations was an SIS that entered the market at a great time, and was built from the ground up on technology that is agile enough to respond to evolving requirements, scalable enough to serve both small and large communities, and secure enough to ensure data stays where it should to serve students. Beyond that, as you get to know Focus, you will be impressed by the number of educators, school technology professionals, and former administrators that form the company's backbone. You are indeed in good company with Focus.

Above all, I'd encourage you to reach out with questions- whether they are regarding your current use of Vision, or questions about Focus, your account reps, support team, and all of us remain committed to ensuring you have the best resources possible to run your school and serve your students.

Sincerely,

Mike Bronder, and the whole team at Computer Resources
Welcome to Focus School Software

Focus School Software, headquartered in St. Petersburg, Florida, is a nationwide innovator of SIS and ERP systems. Since 2006, Focus has kept its primary focus on the needs of school districts. Our software has been built from the ground up based on the feedback received from stakeholders in the education community.

Focus is a team of over 120 employees who support our districts around the country. In addition to 48 districts in Florida, we provide our solutions to 5 of the 10 largest school districts in the country, serving almost 2,000,000 users.

This growth has earned us the distinction of being listed on Inc. 5000’s Fastest Growing Companies list four years consecutively, in 2014, 2015, 2016, and 2017. Additionally, Focus debuted in the number 10 spot as one of the 30 Top Software Developers in the Tampa Bay area by the Tampa Bay Business Journal in March 2016.

One of the most impressive qualities that separates Focus from our competitors and is a direct benefit to every client, is that the majority of our project team members came to Focus from classrooms/schools/districts and many of them from districts that use Focus.

Their experience in education gives our team a true advantage and an understanding of the challenges faced by educators. Those that were Focus end-users have extensive product knowledge and mastery of our systems that make them experts in their roles on the project team.

Focus School Software now includes a suite of platforms, including Student Information System, Enterprise Resource Planning System, Postsecondary System, Special Student Services System, a Mobile Community App, and Attendance and Tardy solutions.
Focus SIS Overview

Focus School Software knows that the goal of using an SIS isn’t only to collect student data and submit reports. The goal is to use the technology to identify patterns and trends so educators can make informed decisions to improve student progress. Focus SIS is a fully integrated, web-based solution comprised of modules that work seamlessly together to collect, extract, analyze, and report data from a centralized relational database.

Focus SIS offers streamlined workflow, powerful document management, real-time data and reporting, and seamless integrations with third-party applications.

Our menu-driven interface provides intuitive navigation to all applicable SIS functions. The interface is user-friendly and intuitive, but when a user needs help, they can access help documentation online from any screen in the system.

Our systems are 100% web-based, supporting Chrome, Firefox, and Safari browsers and are compatible with both PC and Mac platforms for desktops and Android and iOS for mobile devices.

Student data at your fingertips anytime, anywhere, and on any device.
Focus SIS offers the following modules, features and functionality to meet the needs of districts and increase overall efficiency for each and every user:

**MODULES:**
- Student Demographics
- Enrollment and Registration
- Scheduling
- Attendance
- Grading/Gradebook
- Special Populations
- Discipline
- Graduation Requirements
- Report Cards and Transcripts
- Student Fees
- Assessments and Testing
- Robust reporting features

Our SIS is student-centric in nature and all records tied to a student follow that student throughout their time in the district. The Focus SIS provides student records in a user-friendly format giving users the ability to see ‘the big picture’ with just a few clicks.

Kiosks for check in and check out and tardy tracking puts students in classes as quickly as possible.

The positive behaviors module allows for the acknowledgement positive student actions while the discipline module handles classroom as well as administrative disciplinary referrals and actions.

Communication with parents and students is improved through Focus messenger, which includes SMS messaging and notifications through our Community App.

The Focus integrated solution puts scheduling, attendance, gradebook and grade reporting, state reporting, and student and parent portal access into one system - improving efficiency by eliminating the need to sync different systems.

The Focus SIS solution provides a variety of ways for users to interact with student data. Dynamically driven school-based and district-based reports and functions can be used to improve, adapt, and innovate the use of student data, transaction processing, and planning. Focus also offers Advanced Reports, Custom Reports, and Data Dashboards to further enhance SIS functions.
Parent Portal and Community App
Focus Portals allow for communication between staff, students, and parents, and key information such as discipline, academic, attendance, demographics, etc. are presented in a clear and easy to use manner.

From the Focus Portal, your students and/or parents can have access to:

- Message a Teacher
- Submit a Class Request for Next Year
- View their Schedule
- View Final Grades, Course History and Class Rank Information
- Download their Report Card
- Submit a Change of Information Request Electronically
- View their progression via the Graduation Requirements Report
- Access important information via Portal Messages and Upcoming Calendar events
- And much, much more....
A Mobile App for Everyone

Focus School Software is pleased to offer the Focus Community App. The App, which is available from both the Google Play and Apple App stores, provides administrators, teachers, students, and parents a streamlined way to access student information.

From grades and attendance, to school events and social media, the Community App allows users to gain instant access to the information they want, when and where they want it.

The App allows all stakeholders to take a community approach to ensuring each and every student can fulfill their educational goals.

Administrators get access to a Students page that allows them to search for specific students either by name or student ID. Tapping on a student will show their schedule, grades, news, and planner.

The barcode button, next to the search button, will activate a device’s camera allowing the administrator to scan a student’s ID for quicker lookups.

The Student News page shows a stream of events pertaining to a particular student. These events include new assignments, grades, positive behaviors, and recent tardies/absences.

The Student Planner shows upcoming assignments and due-dates for the next week.

The News page provides a stream of announcements and messages from various sources including Focus Alerts, Facebook, Twitter, and RSS feeds.
Focus Hosting

Focus is a hosted solution:
- District Accessibility to the Data - ODBC connections to our real-time replicated database allows district programmers to pull data directly from the Focus database.
- Amazon RDS database service
- Focus replicates in multiple regions of the Amazon cloud for maximum redundancy.

In the Focus hosted environment, Focus provides a 1000Mbps Internet gateway with at least 5 redundant backbone peers. Connection between servers goes through dedicated and private 1Gbps switch.
Integrations

Focus’ easy to use Third Party Systems screen allows end-users to configure their integrations directly through the web interface. Focus API is OneRoster v1.1 certified, features grade passback and supports seamless integration with several partners, including OneNote Class, ALL In Learning, Canvas, Schoology, and more.

In addition to the API, Focus uses our built-in integration tools to manage integrations with more than 140 third-party systems for our current clients. The Focus “Manage Integrations and Scheduled Jobs” module provides powerful tools for supporting integrations with third-party systems, such as LMS platforms. From setting priorities for simultaneous integrations to managing file types, permissions, and notifications on a single screen, the Import Tools and Manage Integrations features will meet the interface needs for every district.

In all, Focus offers four options for these integrations and access to data:
1. The real-time integration using the IMS Global OneRoster standard.
2. Focus real-time REST API for data not available in OneRoster
3. Scheduled file-based integrations through Focus’s Managed Integrations screen. This screen allows programmers to integrate with any system using only the SQL programming language. This system supports ETL and file transmission via FTP, SFTP, etc.

Real-time grade passback with lots of partners.

OneRoster v1.1

OneNote Class Notebook Creator ClassLink Edsby canvas schoology ALL In Learning
Focus on Data Security
Data security is a vital part of our service. Schools and districts need to be confident that databases and web servers are secure and that student and user data will not be compromised. Focus system administrators monitor the systems 24/7 and Focus security policies and procedures follow industry standard guidelines to ensure client data is protected at all times. Granular access control from system level to data field level and SSL-encryption for all connections ensures sensitive data are safe according to the Client Policy, HIPAA, and FERPA.

Focus is committed to providing secure and reliable applications. Focus architecture relies on robust and secure open source software and is capable of handling strong DDOS/DOS attacks and hacking attempts.

AWS holds the following certifications and compliances:
- Soc 1, SOC 2, and SOC 3 reports
- ISO 9001, 27001, 27017, 27018 Global Standards Compliance
- PCI DSS Level 1 Certification
- FERPA Compliance
- HIPAA Compliance

Focus User Authentication and Authorization
Districts can choose to have parents and students in AD or those users can authenticate directly through Focus. Focus supports Active Directory/LDAP and ADFS/SAML 2.0. User accounts are created in Focus for all users. However, passwords are not stored in Focus. Instead, AD or ADFS is used for authentication.

If those users are authenticated by Focus, then passwords are encrypted at rest and in transit. There are several default school preference options for managing user passwords if not using AD:
- Require Complex Passwords
- Minimum Password Length
- User/Student/Parent Password expires in 60 days
- New Password cannot be the same as one of the last XX passwords used
- Forgot Password Reset

If a school or district employs ADFS, then users login through the district portal or the district’s ADFS sign on screen.

Additionally, Focus offers two-factor authentication via the Google Authenticator application for additional security upon logging into Focus. The two-factor authenticator can be enabled for select profiles.

Upon logging in to Focus, a one-time QR Code will display for scanning using the Google Authenticator app.
User Defined Fields

Focus provides for complete customization of student, user, discipline, and school fields directly via the interface to track, report, import and export additional required data. Any added fields are available in Advanced and Custom Reports. While fields have to conform to certain data standards, there are no limitations on the number of fields that can be created, nor the organization of those fields. Any field changes/modifications will occur in the UI, in real-time. Focus has a field-edits module that can be used to provide one or multiple edits per individual field.

“The system is flexible enough for our team to “own” it by configuring it and customizing it to meet our local needs without affecting core code. We have been able to do more than merely add filters and reports. We have created additional fields, tables, UI elements, alerts, jobs, and other solutions without vendor involvement and additional cost.”
Manuel Castaneda, Executive Director, Miami-Dade County Public Schools

“Focus allows us to blend system, state reporting, and local fields on the same screen. Other systems we reviewed would have forced us to separate these onto separate screens. This capability allows us to customize the screens to make data entry much easier on the users. Data quality continues to improve as a result of their Edit Rules & Workflow which gives us the ability for us to add basic edits and cross-field validations without programming. We also have the ability to create more powerful edits with simple queries.”
Doug Dillard, Systems Analyst, Escambia County School District
Focus University
The interface is user-friendly and intuitive, but when a user needs help, they can access help documentation online from any screen in the system. All help is displayed based on the user profile. So, whether you’re an administrator, teacher, student, or parent…you will only see what is relevant to you.

This user specific help is housed in our online knowledgebase, Focus University, and includes the following resources:

**User Manual/Help**
Click on the help menu in any Focus Solution to bring up the corresponding documentation, or simply type a search topic in the search box found on every page of Focus University.

**Video Tutorials**
Focus University includes a complete gallery of Focus course and lesson videos.

**Mastery Quizzes**
Once users complete the Focus on-line lessons, they can test their skills by taking the quizzes.

**Focus Forums**
Weekly webinars provide relevant information, from discussions of new features to how to perform certain processes. These forums are a great way to learn more and ask questions about Focus.

**Training Documents**
Users can download Focus training and Users’ Conference documents and presentations.

**Release Notes**
You’ll find everything you need to know about our software updates from one version to the next. Release notes for larger upgrades will also point you to help pages for new features.
Focus Annual Users’ Conference and Inform
Inform will become part of the Focus Annual Users’ Conference, giving you an opportunity to learn more about the solutions your districts use, best practices, hands-on workshops, and about other solutions your school or district might add to further improve efficiencies and simplify day-to-day tasks. This conference is a three-day event with over 65 sessions with real-life scenarios and hands-on activities.

Users have the opportunity to engage with their peers from other districts and learn how others are using our solutions. Additionally, it’s a wonderful opportunity for our users to share their insight and ideas with our executive team.

Weekly Webinars
Focus provides ongoing learning opportunities through our weekly webinars. Topics for webinar sessions are planned to coincide with the academic school calendar. From discussions of new features to how to perform certain processes, these forums are a wonderful opportunity to learn more about Focus Software. School-based users as well as district users are encouraged to participate. These webinars are available to clients at no additional cost.

Zendesk Forums
Zendesk, our online trouble ticketing system, also has customer forums and FAQs. Access to Zendesk is included for district designated staff at no additional cost.