

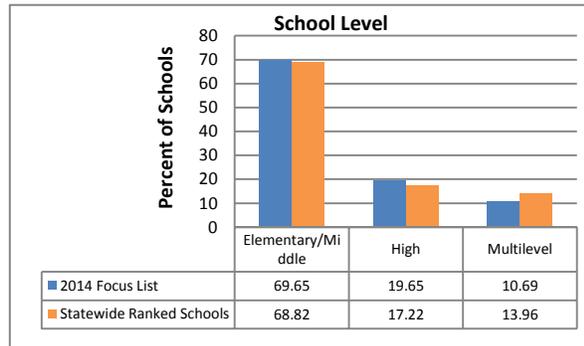
## 2014 Focus Schools in Brief

Of the schools ranked on the Top-to-Bottom List (TTB), <sup>1</sup> **Focus Schools** are schools with the largest within-school gap in achievement between the top-scoring 30% and bottom-scoring 30% of students in the school. The Focus School List must include 10% of all Title I Schools, and so the Focus School List includes about 13% of all TTB ranked schools.<sup>2</sup> This brief discusses characteristics of the 2014 Focus School List, and also compares this year’s Focus School List to the prior Focus Lists.

### Characteristics of the 2014 Focus List

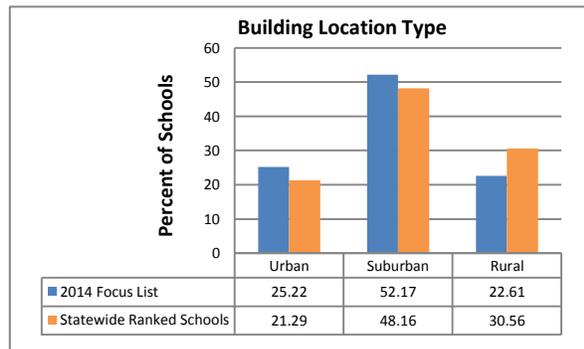
- 346 schools received the Focus designation in 2014. 110 of these schools are on the Focus List for the first time, while 133 of these schools have received the Focus designation in all three years (2012, 2013, and 2014).

- The majority of Focus Schools are elementary or middle schools. 70% of Focus Schools are elementary or middle schools, 20% are high schools, and 11% are multilevel schools<sup>3</sup>. This composition is similar to the distribution of all ranked schools statewide: 69% of all schools are elementary or middle schools, 17% are high schools, and 14% are multilevel schools.



- Public School Academies (PSAs) are proportionately represented on the Focus School List. 8% of Focus Schools are PSAs, compared to 9% of ranked schools statewide. 92% of Focus Schools are LEA schools, as are 91% of schools statewide.

- Half of all Focus Schools (52%) are located in suburban areas; this is similar to the proportion of suburban ranked schools statewide (48%). Rural schools are underrepresented on the Focus School List (23% compared to 31% statewide), while urban schools are slightly overrepresented (25% compared to 21% statewide).



- Focus Schools have lower proportions of economically disadvantaged (ED) students than non-Focus Schools. On average, 44% of students in Focus Schools are categorized as economically disadvantaged, compared to an average of 50% ED students in non-Focus schools.

<sup>1</sup> The Top-to-Bottom List is a performance ranking of schools based on achievement, improvement, and within-school achievement gaps. For more information please see TTB documentation on the accountability section of [www.michigan.gov/ttb](http://www.michigan.gov/ttb)

<sup>2</sup> Schools that are designated as Priority Schools may not be named as a Focus School.

<sup>3</sup> All percentages are rounded to the nearest whole percent. Totals may not add up to 100%.

- There tend to be lower percentages of minority students<sup>4</sup> in Focus Schools than in schools statewide. Focus Schools average 18% minority students, whereas the statewide average is 31% minority students.
- The mean student enrollment in Focus Schools is 333 students, which is 36 students higher than the mean enrollment in all ranked schools statewide of 297 students.
- On average, Focus Schools show above average improvement in student performance compared to other schools statewide.<sup>5</sup>
- The average Top-to-Bottom school ranking of a 2014 Focus School is 42, with Focus School rankings ranging from the 5<sup>th</sup> to 97<sup>th</sup> percentiles.

### **How the 2014 Focus School List Compares to the 2013 Focus School List**

*Many 2013 Focus schools are closing their achievement gaps:*

- In 2013, 349 schools were named to the Focus School List. 121 of these schools were not designated Focus in 2014. Of these 121 schools, 107 narrowed their within-school achievement gaps in 2014.<sup>6</sup> Of these 107 schools, 17 achieved Reward status in 2014.<sup>7</sup>
- The 107 schools designated Focus in 2013 that were not designated Focus in 2014 narrowed their achievement gaps closed their relative achievement gaps by a mean of 0.48 standard deviations. However, these schools still had wider achievement gaps than the average school in 2013 (0.54 standard deviations below average).<sup>8</sup>
- On average, 2013 Focus Schools that were not identified on the 2014 Focus List performed no better according to the 2014 Top-to-Bottom rankings than schools that were on both the 2013 and 2014 Focus School Lists (average rank of both groups: 44).
- On average, the schools on a given year's Focus List tend to perform slightly worse in that year's TTB rankings than in other years (see table)<sup>9</sup>.

| Year of Identification as Focus School | Average Top-to-Bottom Rank |      |      |
|--|----------------------------|------|------|
|  | 2012                       | 2013 | 2014 |
| <b>2012</b>                            | 54                         | 57   | 59   |
| <b>2013</b>                            | 45                         | 42   | 45   |
| <b>2014</b>                            | 48                         | 46   | 45   |

<sup>4</sup> "Minority" includes all ESEA-designated racial/ethnic subgroups: black, Asian, Hispanic, Native American, and multiracial.

<sup>5</sup> The average improvement composite for 2014 Focus schools is .12 standard deviations above the mean, while all other ranked schools have an average improvement composite of .02 standard deviations below the mean.

<sup>6</sup> 10 of the 121 schools off the 2014 Focus School List were named Priority Schools in 2014 and 4 schools closed or were not ranked in 2013 due to low enrollment.

<sup>7</sup> For more information on Reward Schools, please see the Reward School Policy Brief.

<sup>8</sup> This calculation excludes 2013 Focus Schools that were designated as Priority Schools in 2014.

<sup>9</sup> These calculations include only schools that were ranked in 2012, 2013, and 2014.