

# Home Base Biweekly Update



January 25, 2013

## PREMIERE ISSUE

### **Home Base Biweekly Update Begins**

Welcome to this premiere issue of the new Home Base Biweekly Update, created to deliver the latest news to you about this exciting, statewide project.

Home Base is quite literally your “home base,” where you will easily find all of your instructional and professional tools in one place – under one login. It’s where you’ll take attendance, post grades, create your lesson plans, and communicate with students, parents and other educators. You’ll have access to assessment data, as well as the ability to create and deliver assessments. Professionally, you’ll be able to earn Continuing Education Units through Home Base, as well as have access to event sharing resources and educator evaluation data. All of this and more will be available in a suite of technology tools in one place.

This is merely skimming the surface of Home Base. As it rolls out in phases, we will always be mindful of elevating your craft with the focus always on student achievement.

## THIS WEEK

- **What Is Home Base?**
- **General Timeline**
- **Learn More at Ongoing Webinars**
- **NCDPI Service Center Coming Soon**
- **PowerSchool Outside Service Providers**
- **PowerSchool and TIMS - Data Transfer to TIMS, Transportation Role, Boundaries, Address Matching**
- **Home Base Logos and More For Your Use**
- **Many Groups Offering Input on Home Base**

### **What Is Home Base?**

Home Base aims to help educators customize learning for individual students, help parents stay engaged and encourage students to collaborate and connect. Yes, it’s

exciting!

Home Base has two key components: a statewide, instructional improvement system (IIS) and student information system (SIS) for teachers, students, parents and administrators. Teachers will be able use Home Base to access student data and teaching and learning resources. Students will be able to access their schoolwork, grades and learning activities. Parents will be able to view their child's attendance and progress, and administrators can monitor data on students, teachers and schools.

Not only will Home Base put data and resources at users' fingertips, it also will allow single sign-on access to an integrated system that includes Learner Profile and Student Information; Standards & Curriculum; Instructional Design, Practice & Resources; Assessment; Data Analysis and Reporting; and Professional Development & Educator Evaluation.

Pearson, the vendor for this project, is providing the following IIS components:

- The Schoolnet instructional management suite, including curriculum management, classroom and benchmark assessment administration, and reporting tools;
- The TestNav high-stakes online assessment delivery platform;
- The OpenClass learning management system (LMS);
- Integration between each of these platforms and with Pearson PowerSchool (student information system) and Pearson Equella (learning object repository) platforms that are being deployed under separate procurements;
- User Training;
- Instructional Resources;
- Learning objects and content libraries that are typically sold with the Online Learning Exchange products for Science and Social Studies for grades K-12;
- Assessment items from Pearson's new "Next Generation" Assessment item bank for English/Language Arts and Math for grades K-12;
- Assessment items that are typically sold with NWEA Formative Assessment item bank for Science and Social Studies; and
- Open Education Resources (OER) for English/Language Arts, Math, Science and Social Studies.

In addition to the content from Pearson, the NC Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) will be integrating curriculum, instruction and assessment resources from various content/focus areas including World Languages, Arts, Healthful Living, Career and Technical Education (CTE), English as a Second Language (ESL), Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM), Exceptional Children (EC), and Academically Gifted (AIG) education. Included in these resources will be those shared from the LEAs and Charter Schools participating in the Home Base Resource Consortium. (Read more about the consortium below under "Many Groups Offering Input on Home Base.")

Also, Home Base will include resources from institutions and organizations such as The National Archives, The Library of Congress, Britannica Online, SAS Curriculum Pathways and Intel – all of which have been recommended by the Home Base User Group. These are all being tagged to North Carolina Essential and Common Core Standards and included in Home Base.

**MORE INFO:** Please visit <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/homebase>

### **General Timeline**

The student information system (PowerSchool), Curriculum & Instruction, Classroom & Benchmark Assessment, and Educator Evaluation components of Home Base will be available to Year Round Schools in July 2013 and will be available to traditional calendar schools in August 2013. Availability of other components, including OpenClass Learning Management System will be available in October 2013. Finally, Summative Assessment components will be available statewide for school year 2014-15.

**MORE INFO:** Please visit <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/homebase/getting-ready/>

### **Learn More at Ongoing Webinars**

The Home Base team conducts two regular, monthly webinars, one especially for teachers; the other especially for technology staff.

The next teacher webinar is January 31 but has reached capacity with more than 1,000 people registered. If you have registered and know of others in your school or LEA who are also registered or interested, you could view the webinar as a group, using only one person's login information.

The next technology webinar is February 19 from 3:30 to 5 p.m. Please register at: <https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/239527097>

### **NCDPI Service Center Coming Soon**

We are in the process of organizing and staffing an NCDPI Home Base Service Center to handle your questions and inquiries. Watch for updates here in future issues.

### **PowerSchool Outside Service Providers**

NCDPI Chief Financial Officer Philip Price has this reminder for local educators considering PowerSchool Outside Service Providers:

Several vendors/associations/contractors/etc. are approaching both local education agencies (LEAs) and Charter Schools offering PowerSchool services or assistance to help with the change from eSIS to PowerSchool. Also, we are aware of regional conferences and non-Pearson PowerSchool User Groups where these services could be offered.

While many of these entities are extremely reputable and offer workable and reliable services/assistance for the PowerSchool product, we need to emphasize that some of the North Carolina specific functionality within PowerSchool is still being defined. That may present some unique issues for your implementation if these entities are unaware of what has been changed or modified to meet specific North Carolina requirements.

Please watch your email, newsletters and other resources for additional updates on the PowerSchool component of Home Base.

**More Info:** If you have any questions, please contact the NCDPI Service Center at [homebase.incidents@its.nc.gov](mailto:homebase.incidents@its.nc.gov)

### **PowerSchool and TIMS**

The student information system (SIS) side of Home Base performs many key functions – like helping districts build their student bus routes through the Transportation Information Management System (TIMS). TIMS is a mapping-based system of school bus routing supported through NCDPI's Transportation Services Section.

TIMS pinpoints student residences so school system transportation departments can assign students to appropriate school bus stops, then build bus routes for each school. So how does PowerSchool serve our TIMS needs?

The TIMS-Build process of transferring a file from NC WISE to TIMS will be replicated in PowerSchool (the SIS side of Home Base). NCDPI is discussing with Pearson the current NC WISE functionality of allowing TIMS data managers to access and modify the address portions of a student record without being able to make changes to other student data. Further, NCDPI and Pearson are working out the best way to utilize the geo-coding capabilities of PowerSchool (allowing school-based personnel to ensure newly enrolled students do, in fact, live within the appropriate attendance area) while continuing to make sure addresses match TIMS mapping. Finally, the attendance boundaries needed by PowerSchool can likely be exported from TIMS, depending on the accuracy of the current boundaries being maintained in TIMS for any given county.

(Please see the next four specifics related to PowerSchool and TIMS – Data Transfer to TIMS, Transportation Role, Boundaries, Address Matching.)

**MORE INFO:** Derek Graham, Section Chief, NCDPI Transportation Services, 919.807.3571 or [Derek.Graham@dpi.nc.gov](mailto:Derek.Graham@dpi.nc.gov)

### **PowerSchool and TIMS - Data Transfer to TIMS**

Currently, TIMS relies on getting the “TIMS-Build” student data file from NC WISE. In the move to PowerSchool, that same type of layout has been provided to Pearson – a “flat file” with fixed width fields – and TIMS expects that will stay the same with one exception. A request has been made to omit populating the Social Security number field for student info as it is not needed in TIMS. Of course, this is an added protection of student privacy, too.

### **PowerSchool and TIMS - Transportation Role**

In NC WISE, a “transportation role” provided the functionality where TIMS data managers could receive rights to access a limited number of fields in the student record, including the residence address and alternate addresses. This allows the transportation department to directly correct street name spellings needed to locate students for the purpose of assigning school bus stops. A similar capability is requested in PowerSchool. This has been assigned to the group working on system security.

### **PowerSchool and TIMS - Boundaries**

Another PowerSchool feature allows data on geographic boundaries to be entered. This can help determine if students are enrolling in the right school. These boundaries can be hand-drawn (against a background of the Google Maps street network) or they can be imported via a series of Lat-Longs points (Latitude/Longitude). TIMS also uses school attendance boundaries. Accuracy and level of use vary from LEA to LEA. There is an export feature for LEAs wanting to extract some boundaries from TIMS to be imported into PowerSchool. The points in TIMS are stored in “State Plane Coordinates” and will need to be converted to Lat-Longs. LEAs should contact their TIMS project leader for assistance with this process.

### **PowerSchool and TIMS - Address Matching**

The critical function needed to assign students to school bus stops and routes – to predict bus arrival time at the home stop, at school, etc. – is matching the student address to the map used in TIMS. This map has been developed and maintained by the LEA transportation department, usually based on an initial download of a centerline street map from the county government GIS department. Address ranges, street name

spellings and street network connectivity are updated in TIMS as needed to ensure bus routes are accurate and students can be located.

The default way of checking street names and addresses in PowerSchool is to geocode (that is, to address-match) the student's residence to Google Maps. Using the VALIDATE button, the data manager can request to see a map of the student residence which can help determine if the residence is, in fact, inside the attendance area for that school.

If the address does not match exactly, PowerSchool and Google Maps will suggest alternate addresses, based on similarly spelled streets. For instance, ABBOTTS LANE may not match, but suggestions of ABBOTT LANE or ABBOTTS CHURCH ROAD may be suggested. The data manager then has the option of selecting one of the suggestions and hitting the ACCEPT button will automatically change the address in the student record.

*Important Note:* Because Google Maps may or may not contain the same street spellings as the county GIS department or TIMS, an automatic changing of street names or house numbers provides potential problems with data. Based on conversations with PowerSchool staff, we believe that enabling the VALIDATE button but disabling the ACCEPT button is the best solution to ensure continuing communication between schools and the transportation department.

### **Home Base Logos and More For Your Use**

As you begin thinking about reaching out to your district, school, PTA, other parent groups and more about the coming school year, we want to help you spread the word about READY and Home Base. To do so, we've posted a communications handbook online that provides guidance on the proper use of the READY and Home Base logos, as well as overviews. The communication guidelines were created to ensure that material for Home Base and READY maintain consistent and accurate branding.

**More Info:** Visit <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/ready/resources/>

### **Many Groups Offering Input on Home Base**

Designing Home Base, with so many cutting-edge and far-reaching roles and functions, has not occurred in isolation – far from it. NCDPI Leadership and the system developers have met and continue to meet regularly with, among others, these advisors: A Home Base External Stakeholders Advisory Group, a Home Base Resource Consortium, a Home Base Instructional User Group and the NC WISE Configuration Control Board (CCB).

The 36-member Home Base External Stakeholder Advisory Group consists of select LEA staff, education association representatives and other stakeholders. Invitations have been issued to add a charter school representative to the group. Members meet every eight to 10 weeks and provide guidance and feedback on implementing Home Base. Meetings are face-to-face with the option of attending virtually. If you know someone who'd like to serve, please email: [home\\_base\\_ready@dpi.nc.gov](mailto:home_base_ready@dpi.nc.gov) with the subject line: Stakeholder Charter Rep.

A great way to get involved is through The Home Base Resource Consortium. There are currently 52 members representing local school districts and charters schools. Membership is open to all who apply. As with the External Stakeholders, we hope to add a charter school representative soon. Consortium members meet monthly to make recommendations about sharing resources and to discuss best practices for vetting, aligning and including resources in Home Base. Meetings are virtual with an occasional face-to-face gathering, usually once a year. **Next Meeting:** January 29. If your LEA is not already represented on the Resource Consortium and you would like to join, please email [home\\_base\\_ready@dpi.nc.gov](mailto:home_base_ready@dpi.nc.gov).

Our largest advisory group, at 79 members, is the The Home Base Instructional User Group made up of teachers, principals and instructional technology directors from nearly 30 LEAs and charter schools across the state. This group meets monthly to discuss end-user ideas and needs, to voice potential issues or concerns, and to let NCDPI know what members see as valuable tools in Home Base. Meetings are virtual with occasional face-to-face meetings of select members. **Next Meeting:** This group meets in person February 19 and 20 at the Department of Public Instruction specifically to review content that will be available through Home Base.

The NC WISE Configuration Control Board consists of NC WISE LEA Coordinators who meet monthly to review and advise NCDPI on enhancements, functionality and best practices of the student information system (SIS). This group has provided input on the next generation of the SIS - PowerSchool. Meetings are virtual with select members attending face-to-face. Once the full transition to PowerSchool is completed, this group will be renamed.

**More Info:** To find out more about involvement in Home Base, please visit <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/homebase/improvement/>

For the full of list of group members, email a request to [home\\_base\\_ready@dpi.nc.gov](mailto:home_base_ready@dpi.nc.gov) with the subject line: Home Base Groups List.

### **HOME BASE BI-WEEKLY UPDATE INFO**

**\*\*\*LINKS: PC users might need to press the CTRL button when clicking on a hyperlink in this document.**