

Home Base Weekly Update



October 10, 2013

NEW THIS WEEK

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NEW THIS WEEK

Tips for Logging Remedy Tickets with Home Base Support Center

As more and more charter schools and LEAs are embracing more and more components in Home Base, including the initial must-use piece PowerSchool, more tickets are coming in to our NCDPI Home Base Support Center (HBSC).

To help resolve your issues as quickly as possible so you can get back to the important work of teaching, planning, directing within your particular job, it is critical for the Support Center to receive key information from you to help us and our development partners solve your problems.

With this in mind, please provide the following information on all tickets submitted to the HBSC; doing so will speed up responses and help prevent additional backlog:

Step 1: Clearly define the four W's related to your issue: Who, What, When and Where.

- **Who** — Who is accessing the application when the problem occurs? Who is being impacted (provide identifying information such as school name, student name, DOB, grade level, race/ethnicity as appropriate).

- What — What are you doing when the problem occurs? In which part of the application are you working? If a student record is involved, provide a sample student number.
- When — What time of day did the problem occur?
- Where — Which areas are known to be affected (one school, the entire LEA, one teacher, etc.)? If a server is involved, provide the server URL; if a school or entire LEA is involved, provide identifying information.

Step 2: Take a picture. Take a screen shot of the error or copy the error message you receive and include it with the ticket.

Step 3: Define what happened. Clearly state what is happening vs. what is expected or needed.

Important Note: Please make sure all tickets are logged with the Home Base Support Center at homebase.incidents@its.nc.gov. Calling or emailing an NCDPI staff member or escalating the issue directly to the vendor does not result in an HBSC ticket being created. It is very important to have a centralized place for ticket information to be collected. This way, we have documentation on all issues in all areas and can easily see where similar problems are occurring, and the Support Center can refer the ticket to the correct person or place.

Nightly Down Time Should Alleviate PowerSchool Performance Issues

To alleviate the PowerSchool performance issues related to the high volume of activity in running State Reports (specifically Principal Monthly Reports, or PMRs), Pearson will perform a restart between 6 and 8 p.m. nightly on an as-needed basis — those LEAs identified with a potential resource issue. This cycle will continue through our next maintenance weekend, which begins Friday, Oct. 18.

The root cause of the issue has been identified, and the fix will be deployed into production before or during that next maintenance weekend. The purpose of the restart is to clear all connections to LEAs' PowerSchool databases, which are the resources that are being exhausted.

Please know that we understand this is a critical time for running your PMRs. Pearson and the NCDPI have designated two Pearson project managers to work with our staff on all PMR issues.

We appreciate your patience and support as we work to resolve these issues. If the problem is resolved prior to the next maintenance weekend, we will update you via NC SIS email.

Big Change in Roles of Implementation Project Managers

Last week's issue had a late-breaking news item we'd like to expand on this week. You read that contracts with Pearson Implementation Project Managers (IPMs) have been extended through Dec. 31, 2013.

Their roles are changing significantly. Up until now, IPMs were just that: partners to help individual schools and school districts implement Home Base — in order to get this huge, statewide project up and running.

Starting this week, however, the new role for IPMs is to help answer and troubleshoot all those nitty-gritty details related to fine-tuning the known issues in PowerSchool and Schoolnet. Therefore, instead of assisting specific LEAs, now the expertise of these seasoned IPMs will be delivered across platforms by having them handle all requests for IPM services or application questions through the Home Base Support Center (HBSC).

The NCDPI Home Base Support Center and Pearson IPMs will work in teams to assist with all problem ticket resolutions. IPMs' expertise should put a huge dent in the center's ticket backlog and get ticket responses out quicker.

Also, keep in mind that outages will no longer be submitted through the IPM; instead, LEAs will revert to submitting tickets to the HBSC for all performance issues.

Some IPMs will be assigned to regions to continue conversion tasks and/or conversion corrections as needed. If you have conversion issues that are still unresolved, please submit a ticket with a spreadsheet listing those issues. This will assist the NCDPI with the PowerSchool Project signoff tasks and also provide full disclosure of remaining implementation tasks.

In summary, going forward, all issues/questions/problems/processes will be handled through the Home Base Support Center instead of through direct contact with IPMs. We believe this will enhance the services provided to LEAs and ensure that all services are distributed equitably.

Principal/Assistant Principal Evaluation Process Webinars on Tap

The North Carolina Educator Evaluation Tool for principals and assistant principals is now part of the Home Base tools. Support for the tool is being provided throughout the month of October.

Webinars on use of the new online tool are scheduled for 1- 3 p.m. the next three Tuesdays, Oct. 15, 22 and 29, with principals and assistant principals as the primary audience. A similar webinar, the online evaluation tool from the assistant principal's perspective, will be held from 1-3 p.m. on Monday, Oct. 21.

To register for any of these upcoming webinars, please visit:

<http://ncees.ncdpi.wikispaces.net/Upcoming+Webinars>

Webinars will be archived for future access and may be found here:

<http://ncees.ncdpi.wikispaces.net/Archived+Webinars+2013-2014>

MORE INFO: For additional support with the principal/assistant principal online evaluation tool, contact your NCDPI Regional Professional Development Consultant:
<http://www.ncpublicschools.org/profdev/directory/>

Home Base Partner LEAs: Spotlight on Onslow County

Home Base rollout is progressing smoothly in Onslow County, one of the NCDPI's eight Partnership LEAs (one in each of NC's eight educational regions). These partners, as early adopters of Home Base, are receiving additional state-level assistance to serve as models for statewide rollout best practices as well as issue troubleshooting.

Site Coordinators Mak Kishun and Adam Surgan have continued visiting schools in Onslow County, and are excited by the progress they're witnessing with Home Base at the individual school level. In particular, Blue Creek Elementary in Jacksonville has proven to be an exemplar school in their overall success with understanding and troubleshooting of the NC Educator Evaluation and PowerSchool systems.

At Blue Creek Elementary, Principal Paula Contreras has created a school culture with a strong sense of camaraderie and eagerness for change. Usage of Home Base is a regular focus at weekly staff meetings, which has helped with the management of technical issues and has kept teachers focused on collaborating to share solutions and ideas.

In addition, technology coach Kat Collins has done an excellent job creating training documents to help staff work through common areas of confusion. These guides have been sent to central office, and have been shared throughout Onslow County to increase the success of many Home Base users.

It is exciting to see these educators take ownership of Home Base and use their knowledge of the system to help others within their school and district.

Check future issues of the *Home Base Weekly Update* to find out what else is happening in Onslow County and at these other participating Home Base Partner LEAs/charters:

- Hertford County Schools (Region 1);
- Franklin Academy charter school, Wake Forest (Region 3);
- Lee County Schools (Region 4);
- The College Preparatory and Leadership Academy charter school in High Point that uses the moniker "The Point" (Region 5);
- KIPP Charter School, Charlotte — KIPP stands for the Knowledge is Power Program (Region 6);
- Avery County Schools (Region 7); and
- Rutherford County Schools (Region 8).

MORE INFO: Vernon T. Brown Sr. is the Home Base partnership project director. You can reach him at vernon.brown@dpi.nc.gov or by calling 919.807.4058.

Google in Education Summit to Highlight OpenClass October 19-20

The coming months will bring numerous informational and training opportunities for districts/schools to learn about the Home Base Learning Management System (OpenClass). Here is one that may be of interest: The NCDPI is excited to participate in the upcoming Google in Education Summit on Oct. 19-20 at Ravenscroft School, 7409 Falls of Neuse Rd., Raleigh.

At the Summit, the NCDPI, Pearson and local educators will be highlighting how Google Apps can be integrated into the Home Base ecosystem through the OpenClass capabilities.

If you are attending the Summit, please stop by our sessions and/or booth. To learn more about the Summit, or to attend at a 20 percent discount, see below. Please email home_base_ready@dpi.nc.gov with questions about NCDPI's participation in this event.

MORE INFO: The Google in Education Summit produced by EdTechTeam is a high intensity, two-day event that focuses on deploying, integrating and using Google Apps for Education and other Google Tools to promote student learning in K-12 and higher education. The program will feature Google Certified Teachers, Google Apps for Education Certified Trainers, practicing administrators, solution providers and representatives from the Google education teams.

[Register now](#) to send teachers, administrators, tech directors, library media specialists, tech support staff, CTOs and anyone who is interested in finding out more about leveraging Google Apps for Education to support student learning. Use the special promo code: **openclass** at checkout and receive 20 percent off any early bird or standard registration. Please note that discounts cannot be applied retroactively.

Introduction to OpenClass Webinar Is October 15

As announced last issue, OpenClass, the Learning Management System (LMS) in Home Base is coming soon, offering a platform in which students and teachers can have 24-hour access to assignments, chat boards, collaborative spaces and more.

To learn more about OpenClass, plan to participate in an Introduction to OpenClass webinar offered Tuesday, Oct. 15, from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. Please register at <https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/316288752>.

IIS Webinar Slated October 17 on Data Driven Instruction and Student Profile

This webinar on data driven instruction and the student profile in Home Base is specifically designed for school administrators. It will be held on Thursday, Oct. 17, from 3:30-4:30 p.m. To register, please visit: <https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/133272465>.

Webinars will be archived for future access and may be found here: <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/homebase/resources/videos/webinars/>.

MORE INFO: For additional information about IIS webinars, please visit <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/homebase/training/schedule/>.

Glad You Asked: Select FAQs on NC Educator Evaluation System

"Glad You Asked" is a Q&A feature where Home Base team members address questions from the field. This week, we've devoted the entire section to questions about the NC Educator Effectiveness System since there are many current questions out there. If this leaves you yearning for more, we invite you to check out the full set of FAQs online at <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/homebase/faq/>.

Q: Will central office staff, superintendent or support staff evaluations be in Home Base?

A: Not at this time. The system includes teacher and principal/assistant principal evaluations. LEAs/charters may choose to work with the vendor to expand the functionality to include building evaluation processes for central office staff and superintendents. An LEA choosing to add functionality will incur additional costs and will work directly with the vendor.

Q: What do I do if I receive a SAML error message when trying to access the NC Educator Evaluation System?

A: First, clear the cache in your Internet browser settings. Then, close your browser session and attempt to log in again. If this does not work, then contact your Data Manager and HR Director and ask them to follow the procedures at the following link: <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/homebase/getting-ready/implementation/user-roles-access/access-issues.pdf>

Q: What do we do about teachers who go out on leave?

A: There is nothing you need to do in the Evaluation System for teachers who will return to teaching during the school year. You can choose "No Evaluation" for teachers who do not return during that school year. If the above does not apply, please follow your local procedures for teachers on leave.

Q: What do I do if I cannot access the observation rubric?

A: Please make sure the teacher has successfully marked "complete" and sent forward the Training/Orientation step in the system. This will allow the observation rubric to be accessible for Career Abbreviated evaluations. This will also allow the Pre-Conference step to take place for Career Full and Probationary evaluations.

Q: How do we handle itinerant teachers?

A: Primary locations are stored in HRMS. Secondary locations are stored in payroll. The payroll contact person in each district would be able to make sure these teachers appear at the correct location. Itinerant teachers should show up at each location to which they are assigned.

Q: Can I add/delete teachers who are not in my district in the NC Educator Evaluation System tool?

A: No. Data in the Educator Evaluation System comes from Payroll, UID Staff System and your local Human Resources Management System (HRMS). These are the authoritative source systems for the data that flows to the Educator Evaluation System. If you see inaccurate data in the Educator Evaluation System, please correct the data in the authoritative source system. For a complete mapping of all Educator Evaluation System data elements back to the source system, see pages 15-18 in the District Administrators Guide under the Help Guides tab in the Educator Evaluation System.

Q: How do I delete names of teachers who are no longer in my district but are listed in my NC Educator Evaluation System?

A: Using your district's accepted protocol, contact your payroll department to ensure that the individual is inactivated in the payroll system, the UID Staff System, and the Human Resources Management System (HRMS).

Q: What happens if we change a teacher's evaluation from Career Full to Career Abbreviated during the course of the year?

A: Although this is not recommended, if you change from Career Full to Career Abbreviated or vice versa, this starts the evaluation cycle again. The data does not transfer. However, if you choose to change plans, we recommend you make this decision prior to beginning the first observation.

MORE INFO: Submit any questions you have about Home Base to homebase.incidents@its.nc.gov.

HOME BASE WEEKLY UPDATE INFO

We encourage you to share this Update, and for past issues of Home Base Weekly and Biweekly Updates, please visit <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/homebase/updates/>

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