

# Home Base Weekly Update



November 1, 2013

## NEW THIS WEEK

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- **What Additional Fixes are Coming Next, and When?**
- **Progress on Educator Evaluation Functionality**
- **Home Base Improvements Coming in Schoolnet Version 15.2**
- **Next Home Base Maintenance Weekend – Nov. 15-18**
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- **Early November Webinars on Evaluation and KPI, Pre-Formatted Reports**
- **New Quick Guide Posted on Accessing Mobile Apps**
- **Clickers and Their Compatibility with Schoolnet - Here's the PDF**
- **Glad You Asked: Select FAQs**

## IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

- **OpenClass Webinar Now Available Online; More Coming Up**

## NEW THIS WEEK

### **Progress Report on Home Base Functionality**

We're delighted to report that a lot of the functionality issues that you find crucial to your work — including Principal's Monthly Reports (PMRs) and transcripts — have been fixed.

CFO/CIO Philip Price recently shared highlights of the successful maintenance update held the weekend of Oct. 26-27. Significant recent improvements by functionality include:

- **Paper Transcripts** - Both the NC Standardized and the NC Student transcripts can now be printed and contain the correct GPA and class ranking calculations as well as historical End-of-Course (EOC) scores; *Next up*: Electronic transcripts will be operational on or before Monday, Nov. 4;
- **Report Cards** - For most LEAs, report cards can be printed without difficulty; however, we are receiving some reports of different report card issues reported by different LEAs. We're addressing these on a case-by-case basis;

- **Principal's Monthly Report (PMR)** - PMRs can now be completed, including average daily membership (ADM). To date, more than 2,100 schools — and growing — have successfully submitted their PMRs. *Note:* There was an issue with PMRs showing incorrect data, discovered and shared with data managers on Oct. 30. Some LEAs are reporting issues where students who do not attend or have never attended a particular school within the LEA are now listed on that school's PMR report with errors. Pearson is resolving this issue on a case-by-case basis, and we expect a permanent fix during the next maintenance weekend, which starts Friday, Nov. 15.
- **Gradebook Integration** - The PowerTeacher GradeBook can be used with the student assessment components of SchoolNet as well as in PowerSchool (the assessment grades in Schoolnet will transfer to PowerSchool).
- **Discipline Management** - In-school suspension may be entered on the Incident Management pages.
- **PowerSchool and CECAS** - The transfer of data from PowerSchool to CECAS is operational. *Next Up:* The reverse transfer from CECAS to PowerSchool is being implemented with an expected completion date before or on the weekend of Friday, Nov. 22. The transfer of non-CECAS data to PowerSchool is scheduled for completion before or in early December.
- **Parent and Student Portals** - Parent and student portals have been available as a local option, and instructions on the creation of parent and student accounts can be found at <http://www.nc-sis.org/recordings.html>. We understand school systems decide when and how to roll out these portals for their own good reasons, but we want to assure you that the parent and student portals are ready and available for use. *Note:* Portal access is available for both Apple and Android devices, and their apps can be found at the respective stores – search 'PowerSchool.'

### What Additional Fixes are Coming Next, and When?

The Home Base team is working feverishly to address issues that remain. Specifically, future modifications and actions include:

- ACT, SAT and CTE scores will be imported soon — we'll have that date to you by Friday, Nov. 8.
- AIG Phase 1 will be fully functional in mid-November (including the AIG Compliance report and the basic capability for data input screens); Phase II (including enhancements) will begin development in mid-November for release in January.

Many previously separate federal program applications are being incorporated into PowerSchool. This action uses the capabilities of PowerSchool not inherent in NC WISE to perform many functions in these areas, offers better data validation and more

comprehensive reporting, and simplifies and consolidates user interaction for LEA personnel. Here's the status of key applications:

- **Title I – Targeted Assistance, Title I-Student Participation, Neglected and Delinquent Aggregate, and Neglected and Delinquent Student Participation** — These are currently being tested by NCDPI staff and are due to be completed by today. The preparation of documentation and training materials will be completed in advance of the expected NC updates to PowerSchool on the weekend of Friday, Nov. 8. Training will be scheduled to begin immediately after implementation.
- **Title VI-Rural Low Income Schools (RLIS)** — Testing for this has been completed, and the preparation of documentation and training materials will be completed in advance of the expected release to PowerSchool on the weekend of Friday, Nov. 8. Training is scheduled to begin immediately after implementation.
- **Exceptional Children** — (See “PowerSchool and CECAS” in the first item above).

More PowerSchool implementations for federal programs are coming. Here's the latest status:

- **Title X-Homeless** — Currently in testing, with expected release late 2013;
- **CTE Concentrator Survey** — Due to be released early December;
- **Immigrant** — To be delivered in early 2014, packaged with LEP/WAPT; and
- **Migrant** — Undergoing the testing/error correction cycle and targeted to be released in December 2013.

### **Progress on Educator Evaluation Functionality**

An inconvenient and persistent problem with the Educator Evaluation System regarding active/inactive staff appears to have been corrected with recent UID Staff data clean-up efforts. LEA payroll upload files were revised by the payroll vendors to correct the active/inactive status of staff in all locations in which they have worked. Here are the latest improvements:

- **Inactive staff members** — Previously, inactive staff members (retired, transferred, deceased, no longer employed by the LEA, etc.) were posted erroneously as active employees because they were indicated as active in the UID Staff System. Now these personnel are correctly indicated as inactive. This situation should not reoccur, as permanent fixes have been applied to the LEA payroll upload files so that the data in the UID Staff System is now accurate.
- **Teachers appearing in former locations** — This problem has been corrected through the LEA payroll and Staff UID System fixes described above for inactive staff members.
- **Principals still showing as administrators of former schools** — NCDPI staff members are using a manual clean-up process to remove the inactive building administrators from the system. This work should be completed by Friday, Nov. 8.
- **New feature for LEA central office staff** — Now the Educator Evaluation District Administrators (typically the District Human Resources Director) may manually add new staff members to the Educator Evaluation System who are not coded with one of the object codes that are automatically uploaded from the LEA

payroll and UID Staff Systems. These staff members include mentors, peer observers, etc.

- **Evaluating and observing teachers assigned to multiple schools (itinerant teachers)** — The Educator Evaluation System provides one record for each teacher. The record contains two location fields — one that lists the primary assigned school, which is highlighted, and one that lists the other assigned schools. By default, the principal of the primary school will be designated as the evaluator. If desired, principals at the non-primary assigned schools may include observations as well.
- **Availability of McREL Data** — McREL historical evaluation data will be available to LEAs from a secure website on or before Friday, Nov. 8. Instructions for securely accessing the site will be provided to District Educator Evaluation Administrators once evaluations are available. Information will include three years of evaluations in PDF format, and the 2012-13 evaluation data will be available in spreadsheet format.

*Note:* We are aware that there continues to be sporadic problems with signing onto TNL from PowerSchool. We are working with Pearson to resolve problems with the single sign-on functionality. Additionally, we have received comments from a few LEAs that evaluation data is being lost; however, after reviewing the system logs, it appears that the users in question never actually saved the observations or evaluation data before leaving the screen. We recommend that LEAs frequently save evaluation data and observation data during the process of completing the forms. In addition, we will be adding a reminder to the system screens to remember to save before exiting the screens. More information on this subject has been published on the Home Base Daily Known Issues List: <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/homebase/issues>.

We know you agree that this has been a challenging, statewide rollout of a large suite of technology tools on a tight timeline. We appreciate the dedication and hard work you and your staff have shown. It has required a great deal of patience; for that, we thank you, too. Please know we value your input and your questions. Keeping us informed helps us get to full, successful implementation sooner.

**MORE INFO:** As always, email or call in your questions to the Home Base Support Center at 919.807.4357, or [homebase.incidents@its.nc.gov](mailto:homebase.incidents@its.nc.gov).

## **Home Base Improvements Coming in Schoolnet Version 15.2**

Pearson, our Home Base technology partner, is making updates to Schoolnet to improve the system and add to its functionality. Here are some key highlights coming in the mid-November release of Version 15.2 of the Schoolnet Instructional Improvement System (IIS) in Home Base:

- *Performance-Based Tasks:* Districts and schools are now able to aggregate data on performance-based tasks, as well as administer the assessment via system-generated answer sheets. The performance-based task items allow multiple types of questions to be tied together to complete one task item.

- *New Technology Enhanced Item Hot-Spot:* Test authors are now able to author, edit and report against Hot-Spot assessment items. An example of a hot spot item is a multiple-choice question about what the capital of NC is, with a map of the state showing a handful of cities marked as answer choices A-D. The student would click on the correct city to answer.
- *Accommodations:* We have introduced expanded support for students with visual impairments. Screen readers, magnification and Braille printers are now supported when taking an assessment in the test tunnel.
- *Enhanced Language Support:* Test authors are now able to write assessment items in German and French. Students are also now able to construct assessment responses in German, French and Spanish.

### **Next Home Base Maintenance Weekend – Nov. 15-18**

As mentioned earlier in this Update, the next Home Base maintenance weekend is coming up. The system will be brought down Friday, Nov. 15, at 5 p.m. and returned to service no later than Monday, Nov. 18, at 6 a.m. Please do not access Home Base during the maintenance period. Once maintenance is completed, a message will be sent to notify users that the system is up and available for use. If there is a delay in bringing up the system, users will be notified via NC SIS email.

Stay tuned for updates on what will be deployed during this maintenance weekend. Questions pertaining to maintenance weekend may be addressed to [ncsis@dpi.nc.gov](mailto:ncsis@dpi.nc.gov).

### **PowerSchool Functionality Re Guardian Emails**

In order to have guardian email addresses available for teachers to use along with their collection of parent emails, it's necessary to have the Guardian email populated on the Parents screen in PowerSchool. Parents also can populate this by logging in and opting to have emails sent to them. Note that multiple addresses can be added by using a comma to separate them.

### **Hoke County's Parent Portal Outreach Idea: Kiosks in Every School**

Our folks in the field wanted to share this great idea that Hoke County is using to help parents become familiar with the parent portal in Home Base.

At a recent RESA 4 meeting hosted by Sandhills Region Education Consortium, Hoke representatives talked about using computer kiosks to help communicate and facilitate their rollout of the parent portal. They have set up kiosks in the lobby of every school to share info and have parents sign up. In addition, a kiosk was set up at a local public library for the same purpose.

### **'Many Hats & Home Base' Webinar Aimed at Small Districts**

We know that educators, administrators and support personnel in smaller school districts often wear many hats, juggling many jobs. That's the impetus for the upcoming webinar titled "Many Hats & Home Base: Small District Implementation."

The webinar is Wednesday, Nov. 13, from 3:30 to 5 p.m.

Three of the state's smaller districts, Hoke, Lee and Perquimans, will share how they have successfully rolled out Home Base resources. Participants will leave this webinar with strategies for communication, ideas on how they might be funding the Home Base opt-in, real-life examples that apply to a small district's specific needs, and "role-alike" professional contacts who may be useful for future inquiries.

Space is limited so reserve your Webinar seat now at:

<https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/216332848>.

### **ScanIt Webinar Being Offered Because of High Interest**

Many of you have asked for more details on how to use paper-pencil tests so that the results are captured in Schoolnet. In response, the NCDPI is organizing a special ScanIt webinar Wednesday, Nov. 20, at 3:30 p.m. To register, go to <https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/188269209>.

Before the webinar, you may want to review the documentation on how to use ScanIt found here:

<http://www.ncpublicschools.org/homebase/training/materials> under the heading Classroom and Benchmark Assessment (Schoolnet). The document is called "NC ScanIt Guide." Here's the direct link:

<http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/homebase/training/materials/schoolnet/classroom-benchmark/20131017-nc-scanit-guide.pdf>

### **Early November Webinars on Evaluation, and KPI, Pre-Formatted Reports**

Rounding out the upcoming webinar report are these two on tap the first week of November:

- Tuesday, Nov. 5, 1-3 p.m.

"Mid-Year Professional Development Plan Updates," related to the Educator Effectiveness System Online Evaluation Tool (TNL)

This webinar offers a chance to review the process for completing the mid-year review of the teacher's Professional Development Plan (PDP). The webinar will include:

- A review the State Board of Education policy on the evaluation process,
- Both the teacher and principal process for accessing the existing PDP, reviewing the plan at mid-year, and authenticating the plan, plus
- Resources, strategies and best practices for developing SMART goals at the mid-year review to promote continuous professional growth.

Register here:

<https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/455097744>.

- Thursday, Nov. 7, 3:30-4:30 p.m.

An Instructional Improvement System (IIS) webinar is scheduled for district administrators on "KPI and Pre-Formatted Reports."

Register online at:

<https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/315660937>.

### **New Quick Guide Posted on Accessing Mobile Apps**

Three screenshots demonstrate how to quickly set up access to mobile apps in Home Base's PowerSchool.

You can find that new quick guide, "Accessing Mobile Apps" here on our Training Materials page under "general training":

<http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/homebase/training/materials/general-training/access-mobile-apps.pdf>.

### **Clickers and Their Compatibility with Schoolnet - Here's the PDF**

We shared the following information last issue with a link to a PowerSource document that turned out to be inaccessible. Our apologies. We've now added a direct link to the pdf at the end of this article:

Schoolnet is compatible with a number of clicker types for student test-taking purposes. Refer to the link below to view a document designed to provide steps to prepare compatible clickers for Schoolnet use, as well as how to activate the clickers for student testing using the Schoolnet application. The pdf, "Accessing Mobile Apps," is found here:

<http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/homebase/training/materials/general-training/access-mobile-apps.pdf>

## **Glad You Asked: Select FAQs**

"Glad You Asked" is a Q&A feature where Home Base team members address questions from the field. 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:** In the past, we were not permitted to print ClassScape assessment items. Are there copyright concerns with printing paper/pencil assessments in Home Base that contain items that are in the NCDPI\_Benchmark or NCDPI\_Classroom collections?

**A:** It is permissible to print the NCDPI\_Benchmark and NCDPI\_Classroom assessment items and assessments that contain these items for use in NC classrooms. These items and assessments must not be used or reproduced for financial gain or any other purposes.

**Q:** Is the difficulty level of an assessment item available in Schoolnet?

**A:** The functionality to add the difficulty level to an item is available in Schoolnet. LEAs and charters can add the difficulty level to any item that is created locally. There are plans to include the difficulty levels for the assessment items in the NCDPI\_Benchmark and NCDPI\_Classroom collections. As soon as a timeline for adding the difficulty levels to the NCDPI items is available, we will let you know.

## **IN CASE YOU MISSED IT**

### **OpenClass Webinar Now Available Online; More Coming Up**

The Oct. 15 introductory webinar on OpenClass is now available for you to view online: <https://vimeo.com/77076236>. View it to find out how OpenClass can present course content, promote social learning to explore subjects, enhance project collaboration and involve users in active discussions.

Another Introduction to OpenClass webinar is geared toward teachers and administrators but is open to anyone interested. It will be held on Wednesday, Nov. 13, from 3:30-4:30 p.m., so mark your calendars. Here's the registration link: <https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/253620104>.