

Home Base Weekly Update



November 8, 2013

NEW THIS WEEK

- **Attention ScanIt Users: Scan Your Answer Sheets Before Maintenance Weekend**
- **Educator Evaluation System Login Issues**
- **A Guide on Quickly Creating Assessments with Passages**
- **Next Home Base Maintenance Weekend Is Nov. 15**
- **Strategic Planning Underway for Partnership LEAs**
- **Online Home Base Professional Development System Pilot Is Full**
- **Webinars Here, There and Everywhere**
- **Exploring the 4 Cs of 21st Century Learning on the Web (Interactive Tools) – Communication**
- **Worth Repeating: Tips for Logging a Remedy Ticket**
- **Glad You Asked: Select FAQs**

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

- **Attention, Small Districts: 'Many Hats & Home Base' Webinar Is Just for You**
- **Home Base Improvements Coming in Schoolnet Version 15.2**

NEW THIS WEEK

Attention ScanIt Users: Scan Your Answer Sheets Before Maintenance Weekend

As part of the upcoming update of the Schoolnet component of Home Base to version 15.2, there will be an update to the ScanIt software which will result in new scan sheets when printing to plain paper. If you have paper answer sheets that students have completed or that you plan to use with assessments scheduled over the next week, it is very important to get those results scanned in before the close of business (5 p.m.) next Friday, Nov. 15.

Changes during the maintenance weekend will impact your ability to use the current answer sheets generated for use with ScanIt. If you have assessments scheduled after Nov. 15 and plan to administer them using paper-pencil, please hold off on printing until

Monday, Nov. 18. We will provide an update after the maintenance window on moving forward with the use of ScanIt.

If you run into any problems using the ScanIt software, please contact the Home Base Support Center at homebase.incidents@its.nc.gov. Be sure to include ScanIt in the subject line and include the screen shots of any error messages or problems that are occurring when you use ScanIt. You can also reference the guide for using ScanIt at <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/homebase/training/materials/schoolnet/classroom-benchmark/20131017-nc-scanit-guide.pdf>.

Educator Evaluation System Login Issues

During the last several days, users in many LEAs have experienced login issues when attempting to log into the Home Base Educator Evaluation System (a.k.a. NCEES). Truenorthlogic believes that these issues are being caused by degraded server performance that appears to be associated with the calendar function in the system. To restore system response time and ensure that users are able to use the system's core functionality to finish PDPs, observations, and evaluations, Truenorthlogic disabled the calendaring functionality temporarily at 2:30 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 7.

Once Truenorthlogic has optimized the calendaring functions, they will bring the functionality back online. We do not yet have a timeline for bringing the calendar function back online. All existing calendar events will be preserved and will be visible when the calendar function is restored. We apologize for the trouble users have experienced over the last few days, and we are committed to improving the Educator Evaluation System to ensure that it supports the needs of our LEA end-users.

A Guide on Quickly Creating Assessments with Passages

A new quick reference guide has been posted online with screenshots to guide you through the process for creating an assessment with one passage and multiple questions related to that passage. Access it here: <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/homebase/training/materials/schoolnet/classroom-benchmark/passage-multi-question-assessments.pdf>.

Next Home Base Maintenance Weekend Is Nov. 15

The Home Base application will be brought down for maintenance at 5 p.m., Friday, Nov. 15. 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.

Upcoming fixes that are expected to go into production during this maintenance weekend will include PMR, AIG and SAR data collection and validation updates, as well as other miscellaneous enhancements. More details will be given as we move closer to the date.

Home Base will be returned to service no later than 6 a.m., Monday, Nov. 18. If a delay in bringing up the system should occur, users will be notified via NC SIS email.

Strategic Planning Underway for Partnership LEAs

The Home Base partnership team has begun the process of strategic planning for the upcoming months with partnership sites. In an effort to help LEAs best utilize Home Base components, objectives and action plans are being formed to guide the direction that leadership will take as they continue to take advantage of what is available to them. The meeting with Onslow County has already occurred, and meetings with Hertford, Lee, Avery and Rutherford counties, as well the KIPP and Point charters, are planned.

The instructional components of Home Base and impact on instructional practice are the primary of focus of the partnership coordinators presently. Each LEA is introducing Schoolnet at a different pace and is approaching the opportunity to use OpenClass for collaboration and course management in unique ways. For these reasons, site coordinators will be taking care to prepare individual site plans for each, based on local need.

Online Home Base Professional Development System Pilot Is Full

The new online Professional Development (PD) system pilot launches next week with the four-week, facilitated course Introduction to Universal Design for Learning.

This pilot, which has reached capacity at two sections of 30 participants each, runs Nov. 11 through Dec. 15.

The purpose of this initial pilot is to test the functionality of the new Online Professional Development System, which is one of the components of Home Base. As of today, we know that the enrollment function and wait list features work well.

These sessions filled up quickly, and the wait list is closed. We did hear from lots of educators expressing disappointment that they couldn't enroll. Based on such strong interest, this course topic will be offered again once the pilot sessions have concluded.

Please stay tuned for future offerings of Universal Design and many other instructor-facilitated courses as the NC Professional Development System is fully rolled out next semester. Thank you for your interest and support of this work.

MORE INFO: Dr. Geetanjali Soni, geetanjali.soni@dpi.nc.gov.

Webinars Here, There and Everywhere

- Tuesday, Nov. 12, from 1 to 3 p.m.
NCEES Online Evaluation Tool: Mid-Year Professional Development Plan Updates
Registration link: <https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/196273833>.
- Wednesday, Nov. 13, from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m.
Introduction to OpenClass
Registration link: <https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/253620104>.
- Wednesday, Nov. 13 from 3:30 to 5 p.m.
Small District Implementation Webinar (see full description under In Case You Missed It)
Registration link: <https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/216332848>.
- Thursday, Nov. 14 from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m.
IIS Webinar for Teachers: Manual Test and Item Creation
Registration link: <https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/163326432>.

Exploring the 4 Cs of 21st Century Learning on the Web (Interactive Tools)

Exploring the 4 Cs of Communication, Collaboration, Critical Thinking and Creativity on the web will provide educators the opportunity to maximize the interactivity of the internet to enhance teaching and learning. The next webinar in this series focuses on Communication and will be held Friday, Nov. 22, from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. It's especially targeted to K-12 classroom teachers, but enrollment is open to all interested.

Examine a variety of resources with the potential for growing students' 21st-century learning skills. Participants will collaboratively explore resources and have the chance to share experiences and additional activities related to the 4 Cs, including;

- Using a web 2.0 tool to enhance students' communication skills,
- Brainstorming ways the tool can be used in the classroom,

- Elaborating, refining, analyzing and evaluating your own ideas in order to improve and maximize communication skills, plus
- Exploring ways to nurture the home/school connection.

Registration link: <https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/662596817>.

MORE INFO: Donna Albaugh, Donna.Albaugh@dpi.nc.gov.

Worth Repeating: 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).

While we have had some recent issues with tickets queueing up but not reaching the Support Center, resulting in delayed responses, we are working with ITS to quickly correct that issue so that all tickets are addressed in a timely manner.

Please continue to log tickets when you have issues.

To help resolve your issues as quickly as possible, it is critical for the Support Center to receive key information from you to help us and our development partners solve your problems. It sounds simple, but always make sure your ticket includes your LEA number, your county, and your issue (for example, PMR, RPG, Attendance, etc.)

In addition, 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? Provide contact both email and phone number and an alternate for someone who can get in touch with you quickly. Delays in contacting you can cause the delays in resolution. 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? What did you click and what happened when you clicked it? 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. Error messages are not helpful without knowing what you were doing and what was clicked (see Step 1).

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. If you call or email a concern, you must get a ticket number. If a ticket number is not generated, it is not being tracked and could get lost. 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.

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: Will the scores from assessments I give through Schoolnet show up in the PowerTeacher Gradebook?

A: Yes, if you select the option for a score to be shared with PowerTeacher Gradebook, those scores will automatically populate the Gradebook.

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

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

Attention, Small Districts: 'Many Hats & Home Base' Webinar Is Just for You

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.

Hear how some of our smallest LEAs are implementing Home Base. Lee, Perquimans and Hoke will share their lessons learned and experiences in the following areas: curriculum management, assessments, parental access, and identifying funding for opting in.

Space is limited so reserve your Webinar seat now at:

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

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.

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/biweekly/?year=2013>

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