

# Home Base Weekly Update



December 12, 2013

## NEW THIS WEEK

- **A Look at What's Coming in Schoolnet Throughout 2013-14**
- **Home Base Improvements Included in Upgraded Version of Schoolnet**
- **All Clear: Yep, You Can Access IIS Training Site**
- **Home Base Maintenance Weekend Dec. 13-16**
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- **Best Tips for Logging Tickets with Our Home Base Support Center Now Online**
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## IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

- **Decision Date Moved for Home Base Options**

## NEW THIS WEEK

### **A Look at What's Coming in Schoolnet Throughout 2013-14**

The resources in Schoolnet will get better and better as the tool matures. By the end of the 2013-14 school year, Schoolnet will have a lot of additional content and will continue to grow thereafter.

The NCDPI is continually seeking and vetting great resources and assessment items and expanding the set of tools available to teachers in the platform. We are especially optimistic about the prospect of being able to gather and share great work from North Carolina teachers in Schoolnet. Teachers are creating excellent lesson plans, units and assessments, and Schoolnet offers educators an opportunity to highlight and share that great work. You can find a list of what's coming in Schoolnet at <http://goo.gl/MWbszP>.

## **Home Base Improvements Included in Upgraded Version of Schoolnet**

Speaking of Schoolnet, which is the Home Base Instructional Improvement System (IIS), it was upgraded during the Dec. 7-8 weekend to Version 15.2.

This new version includes some new features, addresses many identified bugs, and is designed to improve product responsiveness and stability.

We specifically wanted to update you on challenges with Assessment Admin (within Schoolnet).

The implementation of Schoolnet 15.2 on Dec. 9 addressed many of the assessment administration issues that LEAs had previously reported. A large number of LEAs have successfully delivered classroom and benchmark assessments this week. However, the NCDPI is aware of two issues in version 15.2 that continue to present assessment administration challenges to some LEAs/charters. One of the issues relates to the ability to search for items in item central when building tests. The other issue impacts the ability of teachers to preview tests and the ability for students to take the tests online (specifically, tests with images). In both cases, teachers and students get an “Our Apologies” error in Schoolnet. We expect that these two issues will be resolved by the end of this week (by Dec. 16). Until then, we offer the workarounds described below.

### *Searching for Items in Item Central*

When searching for assessment items in item central, please avoid searching by subject. Searching for items by subject does not work as designed at this time and will result in an “Our Apologies” error. Instead, please search for items by grade or standard or some combination of grade and standard. You may also use the advance search feature to narrow the list of items. This approach should allow you to find items for your test. In addition, teachers may use the Express Test feature to generate a quick test based on the parameters (subject, grade, standard, etc.) that you set up for the test. Teachers may also create a test manually by manually entering items.

### *Taking Online Assessments*

If you have already built and scheduled an assessment and plan to deliver the assessment online, please take the following steps to ensure that your students are able to take the assessment online.

1. From the test properties page click, Preview Online Test. If you get an error message, or if you are unable to preview the test, then your students will also be unable to take the test.
  - a. If you are able to preview the test, continue with online administration of the test.
2. If you are unable to preview the test, please use the following workaround so that images/graphics will display properly and to ensure that students can take the test.
  - a. Go to Test Properties
  - b. Click Edit Properties
  - c. Go to Enable Tools and Manipulatives and click “Yes” radio button
  - d. Turn on at least one of the manipulatives (calculator, ruler, etc.)

- e. Save
  - f. Preview the test. If the test displays in preview, your students should be able to take the test online.
3. After turning on the manipulatives, if you are still unable to preview the test, teachers should print answer sheets and give pencil-and-paper versions of assessments and use the ScanIt software to load the results into the system.

For more information on how to use ScanIt, you can access the recorded how-to webinar at: <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/homebase/resources/videos/webinars/> and refer to the PowerPoint from that webinar found here: <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/homebase/training/materials/schoolnet/classroom-benchmark/scanit-webinar.ppt>, plus the ScanIt User Guide is online at: <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/homebase/training/materials/schoolnet/classroom-benchmark/20131017-nc-scanit-guide.pdf>.

Again, we expect that these issues will be resolved before Monday, Dec. 16, and we appreciate your patience as we improve your instructional improvement system. If you encounter errors while using the assessment admin module, please report the problem along with a screen shot of the error to the support center at [homebase.incidents@dpi.nc.gov](mailto:homebase.incidents@dpi.nc.gov).

**MORE INFO:** For a list of what's new, what's fixed and the info above on challenges with Assessment Admin within Schoolnet 15.2, access this document <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/homebase/updates/releases/schoolnet-15-2.pdf>.

Note: The document is found on a new page within the Home Base website under Updates called New Releases where you can look for documentation when new system releases become available to improve Home Base.

This New Releases info resides on the Updates page where you'll also find archive copies of this publication as well as the latest memos related to the project.

### **All Clear: Yep, You Can Access IIS Training Site**

The Instructional Improvement System (IIS or Schoolnet) training environment — <https://homebasetraining.schoolnet.com/Authentication.aspx> — is back up and ready for your use following improvements made by Pearson Nov. 22-Dec. 9.

The training environment was moved to a new data center with an upgraded hardware/software operating environment. Note: If you see a "Gone Astray" message, click the "Sign In" at the top right of your page, and it will direct you to the login page.

Thanks again for your patience.

### **Home Base Maintenance Weekend Dec. 13-16**

As announced here last issue, we wanted to remind you that another Home Base maintenance weekend will take place this weekend, Dec. 13-16. The system will shut down on Friday, Dec. 13, at 5 p.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.

Several updates are planned including PMR, AIG and SAR data collection modifications as well as other miscellaneous enhancements. You may view the upcoming changes in the 2013 North Carolina Release Notes found here:

[http://www.nc-sis.org/Documents/requirements/North\\_Carolina\\_Release\\_Notes\\_5-Dec-2013.pdf](http://www.nc-sis.org/Documents/requirements/North_Carolina_Release_Notes_5-Dec-2013.pdf).

Home Base will be returned to service no later than 6 a.m., Monday, Dec. 16. If there's a delay bringing up the system, users will be notified via NC SIS email.

### **Mark Your Calendars: Home Base Symposium on Tap in February**

The 2014 Home Base Symposium is set for Feb. 17-19, 2014 at Greensboro's Sheraton Four Seasons, Koury Convention Center. We know you don't want to miss it!

This year's theme is "All Roads Lead to Home Base," which describes our ultimate goal of integrating Student Information, Standards and Curriculum, Instructional Design, Practice and Resources, Assessments, Data Analysis and Reporting, and Professional Development and Educator Evaluation into one system with single sign-on capability.

Great strides have been made in this massive project we call Home Base, and as we continue on this journey, we want to provide you, the users, a clear roadmap of how we plan to get there together.

This will be the 28th year for the conference but our first as the Home Base Symposium — as most of you know, this replaces the former NC WISE conference (just as the new student information system, PowerSchool, replaces NC WISE as the SIS tool).

Cost is \$115 for registration postmarked by Jan. 31, 2014, and \$250 for late registration postmarked on or after Feb. 1, 2014. The \$250 fee applies to on-site registration as well. So take advantage of early registration now.

In the lead-up to the symposium, we'll tempt you with program and speaker highlights in coming issues of *Home Base Weekly Update*, so keep checking your "in" box.

**REGISTRATION INFO:** Online registration is available at <http://www.nc-sis.org/symposium14.html>. Remember, registration is not complete until payment and a copy of the completed registration form are received at NCDPI. When completing registrations, please ensure your email address is correct. Certificates of Attendance will be sent to the email addresses entered on the registration form. More details on the conference and instructions on when and where to send payments can be found here:

[http://www.nc-sis.org/documents/symp\\_2014/Home\\_Base\\_Symposium\\_Letter\\_2014.pdf](http://www.nc-sis.org/documents/symp_2014/Home_Base_Symposium_Letter_2014.pdf).

**ROOM RESERVATIONS:** Several rooms have been reserved at the Sheraton Four Seasons Hotel for Home Base Symposium guests. Find the hotel reservation form here:

[http://www.nc-sis.org/documents/symp\\_2014/Home\\_Base\\_Hotel\\_2014.doc](http://www.nc-sis.org/documents/symp_2014/Home_Base_Hotel_2014.doc). Please complete the form and mail or fax it to the Sheraton Hotel address/phone number listed

on the form. Do NOT submit the hotel reservation form to NCDPI. Please remember to state that you are with the Home Base Symposium when making reservations.

**MORE INFO:** Please contact Terra Dominguez at [terra.dominguez@dpi.nc.gov](mailto:terra.dominguez@dpi.nc.gov).

### **Best Tips for Logging Tickets with Our Home Base Support Center Now Online**

We've reported here a few times previously what we call "best practices" for logging tickets when you need help from the Home Base Support Center (HBSC). We've now gathered these tips to create a one-page Home Base Support Center Help Guide available online.

You can reach this document from a couple of places: first, as one of the six major links from the website landing page's Home Base Toolkit:

<http://www.ncpublicschools.org/homebase/>. Click on the middle link, second row, "How to Get Home Base Help."

Second, you can go to our Resources page to the new Support Center link there:

<http://www.ncpublicschools.org/homebase/resources/support-center/>

That page not only features the Help Guide but also direct links to the Leads list for both LEAs and for charter schools. Each school district and charter school was asked to identify their own "lead" and back-up lead for the three main areas of Home Base — student information system (PowerSchool), instructional improvement system (Schoolnet) and the educator effectiveness system, which includes professional development (the TNL tool).

Here's the LEAs Leads list link:

<http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/homebase/resources/support-center/lea-leads.xls>

Here's the charter schools' Leads list link:

<http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/homebase/resources/support-center/charter-leads.xls>

The Leads list is your first go-to for help, but you can also reach out to the HBSC by phone, 919.807.4357, weekdays 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. or by emailing [homebase.incidents@its.nc.gov](mailto:homebase.incidents@its.nc.gov). That email is how a ticket gets logged in Remedy, the software program the center uses.

**MORE INFO:** Lastly, here's the direct pdf link to guide in case you want to save or print it:

<http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/homebase/resources/support-center/help-guide.pdf>.

### **Wave 2 OpenClass Training Is a Success!**

Wave 2 training on OpenClass began this week in Summerfield with representatives from Alleghany, Asheboro City, Beaufort, Burke, Cabarrus, Chapel Hill-Carrboro, Charlotte-Mecklenburg, Davidson, Davie, Gray Stone Day, Hickory, Hyde, Longleaf School of the Arts, Oxford Prep and Perquimans counties and charters.

Participants have been especially excited to discover how user friendly OpenClass is. During training, they've learned how to use the learning management functions and have spent time planning their implementation.

Michael Pillsbury of Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools says, "Teachers will be able to truly demonstrate 21st-century technology with OpenClass. It is easy for students to use and a

great way for teachers to manage and organize resources and stay focused on the ultimate goal of educating our children."

Implementation ideas include piloting one or two online courses, incorporating the discussion threads as a way to engage students in several classrooms, and developing online professional learning communities (PLCs) to collaborate on lesson plans/units prior to loading the finished lesson plans/units in Schoolnet.

Determining the right time to start using OpenClass is a decision the leadership of a district/charter school makes, but it's ready when they are. Additional communications will be sent early next year to district superintendents and charter school leaders regarding upcoming training opportunities. Stay tuned!

**BTW: Pearson Tech Notes Reach National/International Audience, Not Just NC**

We are pleased that many of you are receiving and reading the Pearson Tech Notes that are disseminated by Pearson to the NC technical contacts for PowerSchool. While these notes are informative and useful, please be advised that they are published for all of Pearson's national and international customers and may not be aligned with the North Carolina Home Base deployment cycles and timelines. Therefore, NC Home Base users should always rely on communication from the NCDPI before implementing technical changes.

**Having an Issue? Maybe It's Common to Others, Too**

Just a reminder that if you're having an issue related to using Home Base, you might first want to check our posted Daily Known Issues section on the web. That way, you can tell at a glance if it's already on the "radar" and being addressed or if it might truly be unique to your situation.

If there is an issue, it's posted by 6 p.m. in the categories shown below. Note that Support Center Tickets, the first category, is a round-up of HBSC ticket totals with the top ticket issue topics noted from the previous 24 hours. The running total for it (shown here as 47) merely means we've posted in this category 47 times. The other running totals more closely reflect numbers of issues, but sometimes they are updates to previously reported issues.

You access this chart from two spots: Directly off the main NC Public Schools homepage by clicking Home Base Daily Update, (<http://www.ncpublicschools.org/homebase/issues/>) and on the Home Base website by clicking Known Issues (<http://www.ncpublicschools.org/homebase/issues/>).

CATEGORY	CURRENT	ARCHIVE
Support Center Tickets	<a href="#">Current Issues</a> (47)	<a href="#">Archive</a> (0)
NCEES	<a href="#">Current Issues</a> (7)	<a href="#">Archive</a> (9)
PowerSchool	<a href="#">Current Issues</a> (34)	<a href="#">Archive</a> (18)

PowerTeacher Gradebook	<a href="#">Current Issues</a> (4)	<a href="#">Archive</a> (1)
Schoolnet	<a href="#">Current Issues</a> (9)	<a href="#">Archive</a> (11)
NCDPI Reports	<a href="#">Current Issues</a> (3)	<a href="#">Archive</a> (0)
State Reporting	<a href="#">Current Issues</a> (3)	<a href="#">Archive</a> (3)
LEA Outage Reporting	<a href="#">Current Issues</a> (33)	<a href="#">Archive</a> (0)

### **One More 'Update' Coming Your Way This Year**

Heads-up: Next week will be the last Home Base Weekly Update for this year, the Dec. 19 edition. Because of the holidays, we won't publish on Dec. 26 or Jan. 2.

So look for your first 2014 issue on Jan. 9, and definitely look forward to a great new year in all you do.

### **IN CASE YOU MISSED IT**

#### **Decision Date Moved for Home Base Options**

With the roll-out of Home Base in the fall of 2013, we know that local educators have been so busy dealing with PowerSchool and other "must-use" elements that it has been challenging to get to the optional parts of the system that can be so helpful and powerful for classroom teachers.

Those opt-in pieces include Schoolnet, OpenClass, the Professional Development system and its PD courses and transcript features for educators, and more. That's why the NCDPI has extended the window for local school districts to make a final "opt-in" decision for the non-required parts of the Home Base system to July 15, 2014.

By opting in, local districts agree to pay \$4 per student based on average daily membership (ADM) and will be able to fully use all parts of Home Base — not just PowerSchool, the NC Educator Evaluation System and state-required online assessments. More detail about options to show your opt-in decision are still to come, so stay tuned.

#### **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.