

PowerSchool FAQs

(Click on a section to go there.)

[Introduction](#)

[Part 1: Implementation Timeline](#)

[Part 2: Attendance](#) (through PowerTeacher)

[Part 3: Gradebook](#) (through PowerTeacher)

[Part 4: PowerTeacher](#) (administrative questions)

[Part 5: ELL](#)

[Part 6: Special Education](#)

[Part 7: Parent Center](#)

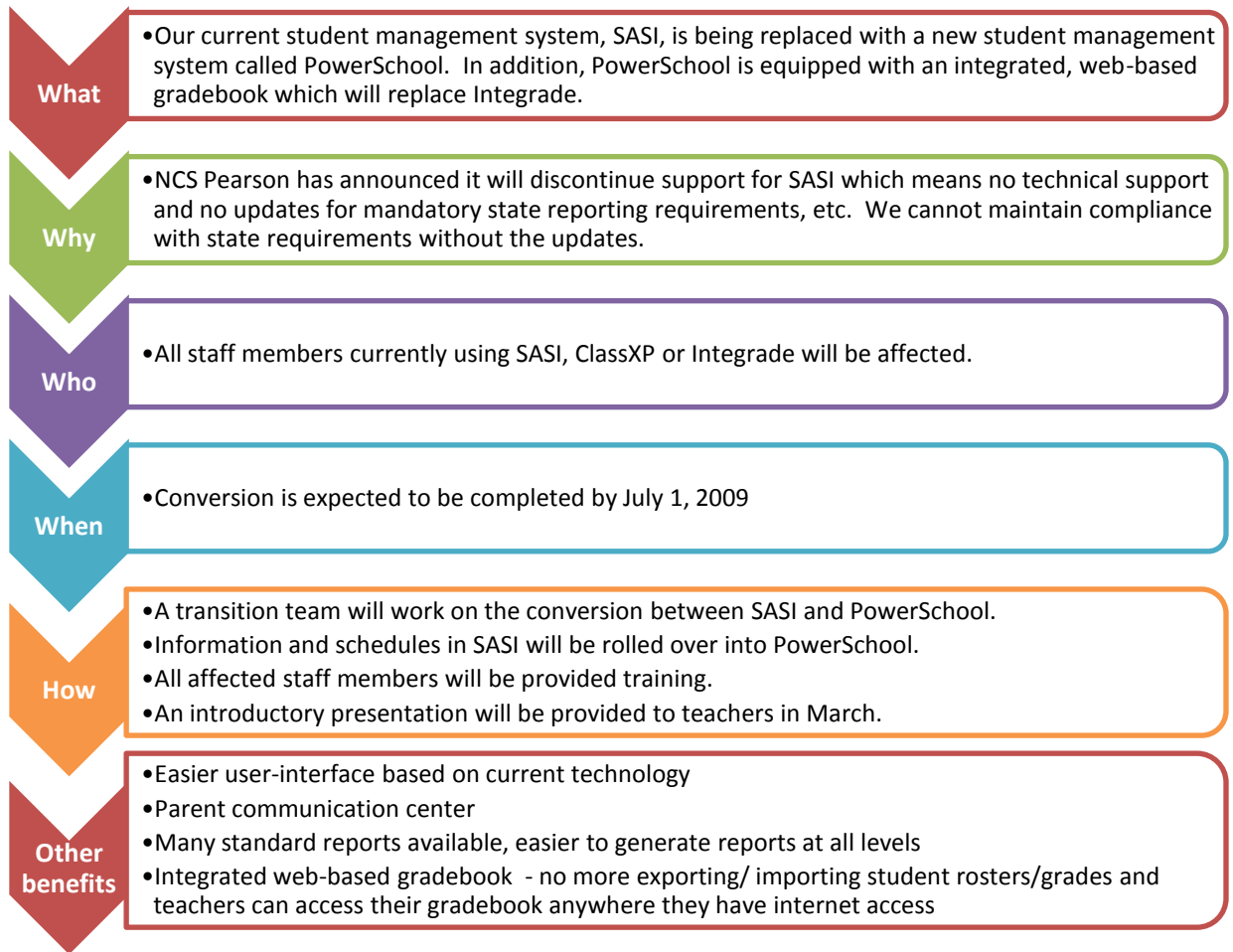
[Part 8: Miscellaneous](#)

[Part 9: Training Materials](#)

Introduction

District Newsletter

3/3/09



[← Back to Table of Contents](#)

Part 1: Implementation Timeline

Question: What is the timeline for the training schedule?

Answer: All affected staff members will be provided training. All teachers received a preview/demo on March 26, 2009, a Technology Early Release day. Please see the timeline for continued implementation/training:

- A sandbox account has been set up for and distributed to school personnel to practice in PowerSchool.
- May 5, 6 & 7, 2009
 - Pearson will provide specialized company training to pre-selected individuals. These individuals will be responsible for training their respective staff members. There are 6 half-day trainings over the course of the three days.
- Between May 8 and May 22, specialized groups (ELL, Special Edu., nurses, counselors, etc) will be trained.
- July 2009 – Implementation Team will release the “Go-Live” Date
- District Technology Committee Members will meet on July 27 for PowerSchool training
- One week prior to Pre-Service Week, Administrators will receive training
- Pre-Service Week (July 28 – 31), DTC members will provide PowerSchool training to their teaching staff
- September 10, 2009 (Tech Early Release) – DTC will provide end-of-quarter reporting training to their teaching staff

[← Back to Table of Contents](#)

Part 2: Attendance (through PowerTeacher)

Question: How do we take attendance?

Answer: Teachers will take attendance using PowerSchool. The current working protocol for taking attendance will remain the same. For example, in the elementary, the teacher will mark UNX for an absent student and then the front office staff changes the UNX to tardy or excused, etc – after verification. Elementary teachers will continue to take AM/PM attendance (state requirement). Elementary specials (ie: art, PE, etc) will not take attendance.

Question: What are the codes for attendance?

NEW! Answer: The PowerSchool Implementation Team wants to customize and standardize the codes across the district. A final decision will be made during implementation. Teacher codes will be standardized to Present, Unexcused Absence, and Tardy. These are the current codes being submitted to Pearson for Attendance Office Staff to use:

ISS	In School Suspension
BER	Bereavement
CHR	Chronic Illness
OOT	Out of Town
DRS	Ill-Dr.Note
FLD	School Function
GO	Guidance Office
ILL	Illness
AO	Attendance Office
EXT	Excused Tardy
CC	Career Center
NRS	Nurse's Office
LIB	Library
UT	Unexcused Tardy
OSS	Out of school suspension
DCH	Ditch
UNX	Unexcused
SH	Study Hall
WSI	Widespread Illness
RTA	Admin Referral
PEX	School Function

NEW! Question: Will you be able to see attendance from earlier in the semester for students? SASI has a 2-3 month cap and then it will not show any further back.

Answer: Yes

NEW! Question: As of right now teachers with clubs or sporting teams can access SASI to look at students outside of their class rosters, will this be possible?

Answer: We are hoping there is a daily absence list report like there is in SASI that will meet this need without requiring additional logins

NEW! Question: Will PowerTeacher show the student's pics on attendance?

Answer – No. However student pictures are loaded in the system. They can be seen in the backpack, but not in attendance.

[← Back to Table of Contents](#)

Part 3: Gradebook (through PowerTeacher)

Question: When do the “alerts” (symbols) appear next to a student’s name?

Answer: There will only be an “alert” (symbol) if a student has a specific alert (ie: Parent/Guardianship concern, medical concern, etc.)

Question: Will the time frame of grades change, since it’s a different type of exporting? Ex: Elementary schools currently cut off their grades early in order to produce report cards; but with the new system, will we have another week for grades?

Answer: Administration will need to answer but since the information doesn't have to be moved around we are hoping that teachers get more time.

Question: What is the timeframe for teachers to input grades?

Answer: Per the LHUSD Grading Policy (IKA-R), 2 grades per week

Question: Is there a place to record teacher personal comments (ie: Parent Communication Log)?

Answer: Currently, no.

More info: We haven't received the answer from Pearson about teacher personal comments, but DeerValley (who is using PowerSchool) told us they didn't think their teachers had this option. But it's certainly one we could suggest to Pearson for a future enhancement. When we start our Pearson implementation meetings, we are going to ask for a list of enhancements that will be released with 1.6.

Question: Is Kindergarten using PowerSchool?

Answer: PowerSchool 1.6 is supposed to be released June 2009. Version 1.6 has a standards-based gradebook. If PowerSchool 1.6 is available by our “Go-Live” date, yes, Kindergarten will use a modified-standards-based gradebook (similar to what they have created in Excel). If 1.6 is not available, Kindergarten will use Excel until 1.6 is released. Then, even if it’s mid-year, kindergarten teachers will switch to PowerSchool 1.6. Kindergarten teachers will have a separate training during Pre-Service week.

Question: Are tasks inputted in Points or Percentages?

Answer: Points vs. Percentages will be a school site based decision. However, regardless of Points, Percentages or a combination of both, mathematically, the calculation will be accurate.

Question: What happens if the internet disconnects while I’m entering grades?

Answer: PowerSchool will allow you to keep working on your grades. When the connection is restored, you will save the gradebook back to the server.

Question: What about Progress Reports?

Answer: The current working procedure for progress reports and report cards will be the same. For ex, hard copies will be sent mid-quarter and hard copies of the report card will be at the end of the 9 weeks. The Progress Report has not been designed yet. However, the elementary progress report will look similar to the multi-class progress report; the current Integrate Progress Report. Emailed Progress Reports will not be emailed by the teacher; It’s an automated process where the parent will determine how often they want the progress report emailed.

NEW! Question: How will teachers know if there are errors in end term grading?

Answer: The teacher will run a grade verification report to ensure all students in the class have a grade. Once the grades are checked “Done with Grades,” it’s stored as a snapshot on the permanent record. A historical grade log is produced and is seen by the registrar. If a teacher changes a grade, it is imperative that it is changed in the gradebook AND reported to registrar. This will be clarified before our “Go Live Date” and teachers will be provided training on the Tech Early Release, September 10, for “End-of-Quarter” Report Card processes.

NEW! Question: For end term weighting many teachers have to combine and unweight all their assignments and create a new weight for 80% and 20% for Finals, will they have to do this?

Answer: The grading terms will be pre-set up. 80/20 and Final Grade will exist and teachers will not need to combine and unweight the assignments. Further clarification will occur before our “Go Live Date” and teachers will be provided training on the Tech Early Release, September 10, for “End-of-Quarter” Report Card processes.

NEW! Question: Special Codes will already be programmed in? Make sure we have an updated list for teachers.

Answer: Currently, PowerSchool cannot mix number grades with letters (ie: NTI) in the spreadsheet. However, in version 1.6 (due to be released in June), there might be a dropdown to select a code our district can customize (ie: missing, NTI, etc). If it is not in the upgraded version, we will need to use a comment or a special number (like 1) for NTI until this enhancement is available.

NEW! Question: Grading Scales

Answer: Multiple grading scales will be set up at the District Level. Grading scales most appropriate for the course will be assigned (“default”). However, the teacher can create their own grading scale if so desired, but can only assign that new grading scale to individual students and not the entire class at once. Incomplete and Withdraw will be special codes assigned to a Grade Scale

NEW! Question: Algebra1/2 has no D. Can teachers make their own Grade Scales?

Answer: The District will create multiple grade scales. One of the grade scales will be for Algebra. Algebra teachers will need to select the Algebra Grade Scale.

NEW! Question: High School Algebra Class at the Middle Schools

Answer: The PowerSchool Implementation Team has worked out a resolution for transferring a permanent high school class (ie: Algebra) taken at the middle school level.

[← Back to Table of Contents](#)

Part 4: PowerTeacher (Administrative Questions)

Question: What are the system requirements to access the gradebook at home?

Answer: Internet access and the appropriate version of Java.

NEW! Question: As JAVA is updated will the company assure their product works with new versions?

Answer: Yes; However, there may be “hiccups” along the way. If there is a problem, one solution would be to re-install the older version of JAVA until the “bug” is fixed.

Question: Does PowerSchool allow a School-to-School Transfer of a student? Do their grades transfer?

Answer: Yes, students will transfer. However grades are not transferred from one gradebook to another. The same working protocol will apply for how we transfer grades in Integrate (ie: The sending teacher creates the progress report and the receiving teacher inputs the grade as a transfer grade).

Question: Will the gradebook and attendance have a universal password?

Answer: We will ask this question during the May 5-7 Pearson company training and have an answer by implementation time.

Question: Will the online gradebook take up bandwidth?

Answer: PowerSchool has its own dedicated server. At school, it will run on an intranet. If accessing it from home, it will use a small portion of the school’s bandwidth.

Question: Are we using the “Fork” icon? For Lunch Dollar Amounts (or continuing to use Aramark’s software)?

Answer: We are currently planning on continuing with Armark’s software and will not use the “Fork” Icon in PowerSchool.

Question: Will we be using the “Money Due” icon?

Answer: We will continue to use BlueBear but might be able to transfer data and use the money due icon.

Question: How will GPA be calculated?

Answer: The same formula used today will be applied

NEW! Question: Can we see AIMS Scores?

Answer: Yes

[← Back to Table of Contents](#)

Part 5: ELL Questions

Question: Can we use the Spanish Report Card option? (The report card will be in Spanish).

Answer: Yes

Question: Is there a way to have a customized grading table?

Answer: Yes, PowerSchool will have a place for teachers to group students (ie: ELL Group). That ELL Group can be assigned a customized grade table.

Question: Can there be an alert if a student is ELL?

Answer: Yes – if the District decides to add this as a custom alert.

[← Back to Table of Contents](#)

Part 6: Special Education Questions

Question: Can we search for SpEd student information in PowerSchool?

Answer: Yes, however, the IEPs will remain in SEAS.

Question: Will IEPs be in PowerSchool?

Answer: No. IEPs will be found in SEAS.

Question: Can there be an alert if a student does have an IEP and/or 504 Plan?

Answer: Yes – if the District decides to add this information as a custom alert.

Question: Is there a way to have a customized grading table? (ie: SDC Program)

Answer: Yes, PowerSchool will have a place for teachers to group students (ie: Special Education Group). That SpEd Group can be assigned a customized grade table.

[← Back to Table of Contents](#)

Part 7: Parent Center

Question: How do we see if parents have logged in to the Parent Center (to know if they have checked their child's grades)?

Answer: Teachers can see if parents have logged into the Parent Center. It's in the backpack, select screens drop down - called Net Access Summary. There also is a report on the Admin side that we can use to see which parents have logged in, how long they were logged in, etc.

Question: Can we use the School Bulletin Board area to post bulletins to parents?

Answer: Yes

Question: Can we place certain policies in the School Bulletin Board area (i.e.: attendance policies)?

Answer: Yes

NEW! Question: Can teachers mass e-mail welcome letters to parents?

Answer: Teachers do not have the option to send out a class "mass" email. Schools can post bulletins to the parent portal. Teachers have a report feature which would allow them to create a Mail Merge for hard-copy Welcome Letters

NEW! Question: Bulletins - Are they school wide or can they be individualized for each teacher?

Answer: Teachers do not have the option to send out a customized class "mass" email. Bulletins are school wide; Teachers can post comments to individual students

Question: Can parents see their home address in the Parent Portal? For ex, if they have the wrong address, maybe they'll recognize it's the wrong/outdated information and call the school to update it.

Answer: No; The only item the parents can change in the Parent Portal is their email address; The address is not listed.

Question: Can we use the "Sandbox Parent Portal" to show parents how to use the Parent Portal during Open Houses?

Answer: Yes; Please contact your DTC Rep to view the Sandbox Parent Portal.

Question: If a parent has more than one child (siblings) – does the parent have ONE log in to see BOTH children?

Answer: Currently, no. The parent will have a unique log in for both children (or as many children as they have). However, a future enhancement is planned to have one account per family.

Question: What is the set log-in for parents? (ie: Galileo / Student ID log ins?)

Answer: Particulars will be answered during implementation

Question: Does the Parent Center require JAVA?

Answer: No

Question: How will the parents be trained?

Answer: Pearson has developed best practices and provided suggestions from other school's implementations. The Implementation Team will review their suggestions. Ideas have included:

Letters mailed to parents, Emails to parents, Information will be provided through School Bulletins, Parent Open Houses, School Open House, School Orientations, and information will be posted on our LHUSD website

Question: Will parents be able to see if a grade is weighted in the Parent Center?

Answer: Yes

[← Back to Table of Contents](#)

Part 8: MISC

Question: Who will be the “Help Line”?

Answer: You will have the same help resources you have today for SASI and Integrate.

Question: Secure Print – Is there anything more we need to do?

Answer: No

[← Back to Table of Contents](#)

Part 9: TRAINING MATERIALS

Training Videos:

PowerSchools: <http://www.pearsonschools.com/demos/powerschool/videos/tour/>

PowerTeacher: <http://www.pearsonschools.com/demos/powerteacher/videos/>

North Dakota: <http://www.edutech.nodak.edu/powerschool/resources/tutorials/>

Manuals have been placed on the AllShared L:Drive / PowerSchool (folder)

Please contact your DTC rep to use the PowerSchool “Sandbox” practice log-ins.

[← Back to Table of Contents](#)