

PowerSchool 6.0 Release Notes

PowerSchool
Student Information System



Released June 2009

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This edition applies to Release 6.0 of the PowerSchool software, and to all subsequent releases and modifications until otherwise indicated in new editions or updates.

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Introduction

The 6.0 release of the PowerSchool Student Information System (SIS) includes resolutions to previously identified issues, and introduces several new features and enhancements.

Installation Notes

The installer for this release is available by download from [PowerSource](#), the PowerSchool customer portal, at **PowerSchool > Downloads > PowerSchool Installers > PowerSchool Premier 6.x**.

Before installing or upgrading to this version of PowerSchool 6.0, please refer to the *PowerSchool Update Installation and Uninstall Guide*, available by download from [PowerSource](#) at **PowerSchool > Documentation > User Guides > PowerSchool > Installation, Upgrade, Backup and Configuration Guides**.

The supported releases that can upgrade to this version of PowerSchool Premier are:

- 5.2.0 with PowerTeacher Gradebook 1.1
- 5.2.1 with PowerTeacher Gradebook 1.5

Notes:

If you are upgrading from a 5.1.x release, see to the *PowerSchool Premier Sybase to Oracle Migration Guide* on PowerSource at <https://powersource.pearsonschoolsystems.com/d/54116>.

Customers currently in Implementation should remain on 5.2.1.6 until their Implementation is complete. If you upgrade from 5.2.1.6 to 6.0, 5.2.1.6 import enhancements will no longer function. However, the import enhancements will be made available in the July 2009 maintenance release. Please consult with your Project Manager prior to upgrading.

If you are upgrading from a 5.2.x release, you must run the Oracle Jobs installer 1.3 on the database node prior to running the PowerSchool installer. For more information, see the *PowerSchool Upgrade Installation and Uninstall Guide* on [PowerSource](#).

PowerSchool SIF Agent Update

With the release of PowerSchool 6.0, the existing embedded 1.5 agent will no longer be available within PowerSchool. If you are currently using the existing embedded 1.5 agent, you will need to download, install and configure the new Edustructures SIF 2 agent in order to ensure uninterrupted connectivity to your current SIF 1.5 vendors and/or services.

To help ensure a smooth transition, the following steps are recommended:

1. Contact Edustructures and establish your account relationship with the Edustructures Support team. With the upgrade to the new SIF agent, you are now a member of the Edustructures family. The Edustructures support representatives will handle all your SIF-related inquires from this point forward and are ready to take your call.
2. Download: If you are already running PowerSchool Premier 5.2.1.3 (or greater), upgrade to the new Edustructures SIF 2.0 Agent for PowerSchool in advance of the 6.0 release.

- Configure the Edustructures SIF 2.0 Agent for PowerSchool to run in SIF 1.5 compatibility mode to ensure uninterrupted connectivity to your current SIF 1.5 vendors/services.

If you have already manually upgraded your PowerSchool server to the new SIF agent from Edustructures, you will not be affected by the upgrade to PowerSchool 6.0.

PowerSchool Components

PowerSchool is comprised of several software components, each versioned independently from one another. This allows for greater flexibility of component updates as new features and bug fixes become available. Some updates may include dependencies between components. These dependencies will be communicated and built into the component update installers to prevent PowerSchool from being configured incorrectly.

The following table identifies the version number for each PowerSchool component for this release:

Component	Version Number
PowerSchool Server	6.0
PowerTeacher	1.6
PowerGrade	5.1.4
PowerScheduler	3.0.2
Oracle	10g R2 (Windows) 10g R1 (Mac) 10g R2 (Mactel)
State Reporting	sr090623
California State Reporting	2009.08
Java	1.5 1.6

Note: PowerGrade is certified to run on Windows Vista and Mac Leopard.

Documentation



In addition to the PowerSchool 6.0 documentation suite available on [PowerSource](#), be sure to check out the new and improved online help. Assistance is just a click away!

The following documentation for this release is now available on [PowerSource](#):

- PowerSchool > Documentation > Release Notes > PowerSchool Premier Release Notes > PowerSchool Premier 6.0:**

- *PowerSchool 6.0 Release Notes*
- *PowerSchool 6.0 Page Changes*
- *PowerSchool 6.0 Known Issues*
- **PowerSchool > Documentation > System Requirements:**
 - *PowerSchool with PowerTeacher Gradebook Hardware and Software Requirements*
- **PowerSchool > Documentation > PowerSchool 6.x > Data Dictionaries:**
 - *Data Dictionary Reporting Views*
 - *Data Dictionary SIS Views*
 - *Data Dictionary Tables*
 - *PS_CustomFields API Guide*
- **PowerSchool > Documentation > PowerSchool 6.x > User Guides:**
 - *Address Management User Guide*
 - *Attendance User Guide*
 - *Course Prerequisites User Guide*
 - *Custom Fields and Screens User Guide*
 - *Faculty User Guide*
 - *Fees Management User Guide*
 - *Grades User Guide*
 - *Import and Export User Guide*
 - *Incident Management User Guide*
 - *Log Entries User Guide*
 - *Parent Portal User Guide*
 - *PowerLunch User Guide*
 - *PowerScheduler Load Process User Guide*
 - *PowerScheduler User Guide*
 - *PowerTeacher Portal User Guide*
 - *PowerTeacher Substitute Portal User Guide*
 - *Reports User Guide*
 - *Schedule User Guide*
 - *Standards User Guide*
 - *Students User Guide*
 - *System Administrator User*
 - *The Basics User Guide*
- **PowerSchool > Documentation > PowerSchool 6.x > Installation, Upgrade, Backup and Configuration Guides:**

- *6.x Installation Guide*
- *6.x Upgrade Installation and Uninstall Guide*
- *Intel-based Mac Migration Guide*
- *SSL Implementation Guide*
- *Server Array Configuration Guide*
- *Server Array F5 Load Balancer Configuration Guide*
- **ReportWorks > Documentation > ReportWorks 1.0:**
 - *ReportWorks Release Notes*
 - *ReportWorks Known Issues*
 - *ReportWorks Installation and Setup Guide*
 - *ReportWorks Data Mapping Guide*
 - *ReportWorks User Guide*
- **PowerTeacher > Documentation > PowerTeacher 1.6:**
 - *PowerTeacher Gradebook Release Notes*
 - *PowerTeacher Gradebook Known Issues*
 - *PowerTeacher Gradebook Installation and Setup Guide*
 - *PowerTeacher Gradebook User Guide*
 - *PowerTeacher Gradebook Data Dictionary*
 - *PowerTeacher Administrator User Guide*

New Features

This section discusses the new features in this release.

PowerSchool 6.0

The PowerSchool 6.0 release, includes the following new features:

- Address Management
- Course Prerequisites
- Intel-based Macintosh Support
- ODBC/JDBC Access to Custom Fields
- Smart Search
- Teacher Attendance Status Submission
- PowerSchool Administrator 1.0 with Custom Web Page Management
- PowerTeacher Gradebook 1.6 with Standards Grades
- ReportWorks 1.0

Address Management

With the introduction of Address Management, PowerSchool now provides a tool for address validation and boundary management. Address Management improves efficiency and accuracy in managing your address data, using cutting edge technology through visual representation of the address and boundary. PowerSchool 6.0 leverages Google mapping technology to validate student addresses including the ability to visually determine whether an address is within district and school boundaries. Through the standard Google map view customers will be able see exactly where an address is located geographically and decide on a standard, hybrid or satellite view. Zoom capability provides for identifying a location down to the street level to ensure that it is truly a residential address as opposed to a warehouse or vacant lot. With its batch functionality, customers can quickly validate many addresses in a single process and easily identify those that need to be updated.

Address Validation

Address validation is the process by which an address is authenticated by an external address validation service, Google Maps. Google Maps determines if the address is valid based on whether the address can be found in Google Maps' mapping database, and whether the address is of address level accuracy, one to which mail can be delivered, with the exception of post office boxes. If an address is valid, a geocode is associated with the address, and recorded in the student's database record. If the address is not valid, the areas of uncertainty associated with it and/or alternate addresses are identified.

Address validation can be performed for a selection of students or interactively for an individual student. Performing address validation for an individual student can be done using the student's Addresses page or the General Demographics page, as well as during the enroll a new student process.

Boundary Validation

Boundary validation is the process by which an address is identified as being inside or outside a given boundary. Boundaries are defined by the PowerSchool administrator for districts of residence and schools, and stored in the PowerSchool database.

Boundary validation can be performed for a selection of students or interactively for an individual student. Performing boundary validation for an individual student can be done when performing the address validation process using the student's Addresses page or the General Demographics page, as well as during the enroll a new student process. The relationship of a student's address geocode to defined boundaries is indicated as "in" bounds or "out" of bounds on the interactive Address Validation page.

Google Maps License Limit

Google Maps geocoding requests, such as address validation, are counted against a Google Maps geocode request quota that is associated with each user's IP address. Each PowerSchool user has a quota of 15,000 geocode requests per day at a maximum rate of 5 geocodes per second. No matter how many users you add to PowerSchool, typically you will not run into quota limits, which can produce incorrect error messages, because each new user brings their own quota. However, if you have a large number of staff using Google Maps behind a proxy server, it is possible to exceed quota limits. This is because, when using a proxy server, all users share the same quota of 15,000 geocode requests per day and all of the users' requests appear to Google Maps to originate from the same IP address. If you require a high volume geocoding service, you can purchase a Google Maps API Premier license, which will accommodate 864,000 geocoding requests per day at a maximum rate of 10 geocodes per second. The PowerSchool application allows the entry and use of a purchased license.

Features

With Address Management, you can:

- Enable Address Management
- Set Page-Level Permissions
- Define District Boundaries
- Define School Boundaries
- Import and Export Records
- Search for Students
- Report Map Errors
- Perform Batch Address Validation
- Perform Interactive Address Validation
- Perform Batch Boundary Validation
- Disable Address Management

For more information, see *Address Management* in the PowerSchool online help or the *Address Management User Guide* available on [PowerSource](#).

Course Prerequisites

The introduction of Course Prerequisites provides the ability to define and enforce prerequisite rules that automatically limit the courses a student may request. With a multitude of options — such as percent grade, letter grade, credit hours, concurrent request, and teacher recommendation — you can build as comprehensive a rule as necessary for each course in order to help students request only those courses for which they are academically prepared to be successful.

Features

With Course Prerequisites, you can:

- View the Course List
- Enter Prerequisites for Individual Courses
- Enter Prerequisites for All Listed Courses
- Enter Prerequisites for Entire Department
- Edit Prerequisites in Simple Rule Builder
- Edit Prerequisites in Complex Rule Builder
- Enter Rule Type Information
- View Prerequisites Notes
- Print Prerequisites Notes
- Add Prerequisite Notes
- Edit Prerequisite Notes
- Delete Prerequisite Notes
- View Prerequisite Overrides
- Override Prerequisites
- Edit Prerequisite Overrides
- Delete Prerequisite Overrides
- View Recommendations
- Add Recommendations
- Edit Recommendations
- Delete Recommendations
- View Invalid Requests
- Research Invalid Requests
- Override Invalid Requests
- Edit Invalid Requests
- View Recommendations for All Students
- View Recommendations for an Individual Student
- Add Recommendations

- Edit Recommendations
- Delete Recommendations
- Register for Classes
- View Course Requests

For more information, see *Course Prerequisites* in the PowerSchool online help or the *Course Prerequisites User Guide* available on [PowerSource](#).

Intel-based Mac Support

With this release, Pearson now supports Intel-based Mac servers for all customers on single-server configurations. Performance testing for array configurations is currently underway and we expect to announce full support of Intel-based Mac before August 2009. For more information, see the *PowerSchool Premier 6.0 System Requirements* document available on [PowerSource](#).

ODBC/JDBC Access to Custom Fields

Until now, accessing custom field information through SQL was a daunting task whether you used legacy custom field storage or the new normalized model. With PowerSchool 6.0, accessing custom fields in either real tables or virtual tables is as close to simply stating the field name as possible. Taking advantage of Oracle's support for inline function calls issuing a select statement against a process will provide you with custom field data from students, teachers, courses, sections or school tables. For more information, see the *PowerSchool 6.0 Virtual Tables and Custom Fields Guide* available on [PowerSource](#).

Smart Search

The Smart Search feature is an enhancement to the administrative portal search that both expands the searchable objects and makes searching easier. With autocomplete capability, drop-down suggestions and visual clues users can now search for PowerSchool pages, stored searches and fields as well as students and staff.

Teacher Attendance Submission Status

Finding out which classes have taken attendance has never been easier than it is with the new "Green Dot" administrative view. With graphical green, yellow and red icons to indicate whether a teacher has completed attendance for the entire day, part of the day or none at all, staff can quickly determine where follow-up is needed. Select to view only teachers who have not completed attendance and then select a specific teacher to see the individual class status.

PowerSchool Administrator 1.0

PowerSchool Administrator provides functionality intended for system administrators that helps them to monitor and maintain the PowerSchool system. It includes the ability to view drive information, schedule backups and manage custom pages.

Custom Web Page Management

Hosted customers now have the ability to manage their own custom web pages instead of having to rely on Pearson staff to upload pages to the server. With import/export capability, draft version management and the ability to easily compare versions of pages, managing custom pages is easy. This functionality will be available to self-hosted customers as well.

Features

With Custom Web Page Management, you can:

- Enable Custom Web Page Management
- Migrate Custom Web Pages
- Disable Custom Web Page Management
- Upload Files
- Create Folders
- Create Files
- Enter File Contents
- Customize Built In PowerSchool Files
- Edit Files
- Publish Files
- Revert to Original Pages
- Delete Files

For more information, see *Custom Web Page Management* in the PowerSchool Administrator online help or the *Custom Web Page Management User Guide* available of [PowerSource](#).

PowerTeacher Gradebook 1.6

PowerTeacher 1.6 introduces standards into the easy-access final grade entry area of the gradebook. It also includes key enhancements such as copying multiple assignments, extra credit / maximum points validation, a gradebook lock feature, score icons appearing in the Parent Portal, term weighting enhancements, and more! PowerTeacher 1.6 also introduces enhancements to PowerTeacher Administrator.

The following are some of the enhancements in this release:

- All course standards from PowerSchool now appear in PowerTeacher gradebook
- Final Grade mode enhanced for maximum speed and ease-of-use for standards score entry
- Quick Look-up page now displays all of the student's standards scores from all courses
- Ability to copy multiple assignments
- Extra credit and maximum points score entry validation
- Lock Gradebook feature

For more information on all of the PowerTeacher gradebook 1.6 new features and enhancements in this release, see *What's New in PowerTeacher Gradebook 1.6* on [PowerSource](#).

Standards Grades

PowerTeacher gradebook 1.6 introduces the following enhancements to standards grades in PowerSchool and PowerTeacher Administrator.

Application Version Fix

This release includes a Standards version fix that synchronizes Standards and Standard Conversion Scales from PowerSchool to PowerTeacher gradebook the first time version 1.6 starts up. Only standards that are of type School will be synchronized to PowerTeacher gradebook. Standard Conversion Scale items now have a new attribute, Gradebook Value that will be initialized to the same value as the current cutoff value.

All Standard Conversion Scales will be updated to be alphanumeric types. This will be done to support the new custom numeric conversion scale types that explicitly support max, min, and decimal place attributes.

The estimated time for completing the synchronization depends on the following factors:

- Number of Standards
- Number of Standard Course Associations
- Number of Course Section Associations
- Number of Reporting Terms

Estimate for smaller districts with moderate standard usage: approximately 5 minutes.

Estimate for larger districts heavily using standards: approximately 45 minutes.

Conversion Scale Updates

Updates are now available on the Standard Conversion Scale Entry page to support standards grades in PowerTeacher gradebook. These updates include the addition of Grade Value and other user improvements.

Enable/Disable Standards Final Grade Entry in PowerTeacher Portal

Now that standards final grade entry is available in PowerTeacher gradebook, teachers should no longer see the Standards Final Grade Entry option in PowerTeacher portal. For districts that need to enable this option on the PowerTeacher portal due to page customization, a setting is now available on the Standards-based Final Grade Entry Options page (**Start > School > Final Grade Entry Options > Standards-based Grading**). For more information, see PowerSchool online help.

Quick Lookup Page Update

With the introduction of standards to PowerTeacher gradebook, enhancements have also been made to the student Quick Lookup page in PowerSchool, PowerTeacher portal, and Parent portal. On the Quick Lookup page, click **View Standards Grades** to see all standards grades and teacher comments. For more information, see PowerSchool, PowerTeacher portal, and Parent portal online help.

PowerTeacher Administrator Preference Setting

A new page is now available in PowerTeacher Administrator to enable preferences for how to display standards and citizenship in PowerTeacher gradebook. For more information, see PowerTeacher Administrator online help.

Introducing ReportWorks 1.0

ReportWorks 1.0 is the next-generation custom report development solution for PowerSchool Premier and Chancery SMS. ReportWorks provides an intuitive user interface and workflow, powerful query construction without the need for SQL knowledge, and an expansive report design toolset. There are three, broad function sets within ReportWorks, including the following:

- **Developer Application** – The application used by report developers to design and publish reports.
- **Report Runtime** – The area within the SIS where report generators select a report to run, enter parameters, schedule report jobs, and generate output.
- **Security/Administration** – Areas within the SIS where administrators setup developer and runtime user (report generator) access to ReportWorks, control the number of concurrent reports, district configuration related to ReportWorks, and view and manage report jobs. and manage report categories.

ReportWorks 1.0 provides the functions necessary for end-to-end report development. Available data sets in the initial release include "Student: Basic Personal" (ID, contact, demographic, and school enrollment, and custom field data) and "Student: Basic + Schedule" (all "Student: Basic" data plus class enrollment and scheduling setup class enrollment, section, course, and student schedule setup data along with the data included in "Student Personal data"). Future versions of ReportWorks will extend the data access capabilities by providing additional data sets, such as grades, attendance, discipline incidents, (PowerSchool), and attendance grades.

Enhancements

This section discusses the enhancements in this release.

Last Login

To ensure that your account is secure and your information protected, PowerSchool, PowerTeacher, and PowerSchool Parent now include the date and time of the last time you logged. This information appears on the Start page next to your name. If you hover over the date and time, you can view how your last session ended — by logging out, timing out, or logging off due to multiple concurrent logins. You will not see how your last session ended if it ended for any other reason, such as a server reset. This information can be used to alert you to any unusual account activity. If you experience any unusual account activity, report it to your school.

Resolved Issues

This section discusses the issues that have been resolved in this release.

PowerTeacher Gradebook

Assignment Name Abbreviation

Previously, assignments with an abbreviation of 28 to 30 characters would produce a system error when copied. This issue is now resolved. Now, the assignment Name field has a maximum character length of 25 and no system error occurs when copying the assignment.

Citizenship Columns Not Appearing When Term Changes

Previously, when the term in which a section was being taught was changed in PowerSchool, Citizenship final grade entries were not being created for the new reporting terms attached to the section's new term in PowerTeacher gradebook. This issue is now resolved. Now, if the section's term has changed in the sync code, the new Citizenship final grade entries are created in PowerTeacher gradebook, and the old final grade entries attached to the old reporting terms are deleted if there were no grades entered for those reporting terms.

Copy Assignments Error

Previously, when attempting to copy an assignment from one class where by the assignment publish date is set to **On a specific date** and that date does not fall within the term dates of the new section you are copying the assignment to, a system error occurred. This issue is now resolved. Now, the error does not occur and the copied assignment's publish date defaults to **Immediate**.

Fill Scores Error when Field Left Blank

Previously, when using the Fill Scores feature to mass fill final scores, if the percent field was left blank the final scores would not appear in PowerSchool Quick lookup or Parent portal Quick Lookup. This issue is now resolved. Now, if final scores letter grades are entered using the Fill Scores feature and the percent field is left blank, the percent defaults to the value defined for that letter grade. PT-1440

PowerTeacher Gradebook Default Setting

Previously, when adding a new staff member in PowerSchool, the default gradebook setting was PowerGrade. In addition, the security page did not hide the teacher password. These issues are now resolved. Now, the default gradebook setting is PowerTeacher gradebook, and the teacher password no longer displays as plain text.

Quick Lookup Page Truncates Comments

Previously, when viewing teacher comments for Student Final Grades on the Quick Lookup page, comments with semicolons or colons did not display correctly. This affected the Quick Lookup page in PowerSchool, PowerTeacher portal, and Parent portal. This issue is now resolved. Now, teacher comments for Student Final Grades appear correctly when using semicolons or colons.

Score Syncing Errors

Previously, the syncing of students' assignment scores from PowerTeacher gradebook to PowerTeacher portal was prevented when the assignment score was less than the minimum percent cutoff for the gradescale attached to that assignment. In addition, the default zero cutoff value for grade scales was not correctly set if an 'F' or '0' appeared in the gradescale and a different grade value (such as X) was used for a failing grade. These issues are now resolved. Now, syncing of assignment scores from PowerTeacher gradebook to PowerTeacher portal works correctly.

PowerTeacher Administrator

Changing Default Port

Previously, when modifying the server.xml to change the default Tomcat port from 7880, PowerTeacher Administrator would not work correctly unless an additional config file was updated as well. This issue is now resolved. Now, when modifying the server.xml file and changing the default port, PowerTeacher Administrator will work correctly without any additional configuration files. PSR-258

Issues Running on Firefox Browser

Previously, PowerTeacher Administrator did not function correctly when running on the Firefox browser. This issue is now resolved. Now, updates to PowerTeacher Administrator have fixed the previous issues encountered on Firefox.

Section Readiness Report Update

The following issue resolutions regarding the Section Readiness Report are included in this release:

- Fields are now aligned when viewing the report using the Firefox 3.
- Random lines no longer appear on the Detail page of the generated report.
- School Year pop-up menu displays year ranges (for example, 2008-2009).
- Teacher names and email addresses appear correctly in the email dialog, and the checkboxes now work correctly.

Server Array Limitations

Previously, when running in a server array environment, PowerTeacher Administrator had to be set to run on a dedicated node. This issue is now resolved. Now, PowerTeacher Administrator can be set to load balance across nodes.

Teacher Timeout Setting Overridden

Previously, the administrative user timeout setting in PowerSchool was overriding the timeout settings entered in PowerTeacher Administrator. This issue is now resolved. Now, the timeout setting entered in PowerTeacher Administrator is no longer tied to the setting in PowerSchool.

Session Timeout Error

Previously, PowerTeacher Administrator would not properly redirect to a login page when the session expired. Instead an error message would appear. This issue is now resolved. Now, a login page in a popup window appears to restart the session.

Unpublish Pushed Content

Previously, there was no mechanism to remove links that were pushed to teachers. This issue is now resolved. Now, pushed links can be removed from all teachers or selected teachers. For more information, see the PowerTeacher Administrator online help.

Known Issues

A list of known issues and their workarounds (if applicable) are available on [PowerSource](#):

- **PowerSchool > Documentation > Release Notes > PowerSchool Premier Release Notes > PowerSchool Premier 6.0**
- **ReportWorks > Documentation > ReportWorks 1.0**
- **PowerTeacher > Documentation > PowerTeacher 1.6**

Please review this list before contacting PowerSchool Technical Support.

Page Changes

A list of additions, modifications, and removal of pages is available on [PowerSource](#):

- **PowerSchool > Documentation > Release Notes > PowerSchool Premier Release Notes > PowerSchool Premier 6.0**

If you have customized PowerSchool-provided pages, check this list to see if the base page has changed. You should use any new PowerSchool-provided versions of your corresponding custom pages as the bases for your customizations. If you do not do so, your custom page may lack new functionality, not work correctly, or remain subject to any known issues resolved by the update.