

eSembler is the Web-based gradebook software for Norfolk Public Schools where student grade and attendance information can be submitted electronically to the district's Student Information System.

Basics

eSembler training videos and documentation for new teachers are available on the NPS intranet site:

http://sbo.nps.k12.va.us/Training_CD_0809/

(Video)

http://sbo.nps.k12.va.us/training/eSembler/pdf/eSembler_Training.pdf

(Documentation)

Login:

URL of NPS Gradebook page: <http://gradebook.nps.k12.va.us> (NPS Intranet)

<http://gb.nps.k12.va.us> (Public Site)

Select eSembler. Enter your network USERNAME and PASSWORD. Click Login.

On your **FIRST** login to eSembler, with successful entry of your network USERNAME and PASSWORD, will prompt you to the USER ID field, enter your Employee ID Number. **This step is only required the first time a teacher logs into eSembler.** **Note:** The FIRST login to eSembler may take several minutes while the system authenticates. Subsequent logins will be much quicker.

Assignments:

Upon a successful login, a list of your classes will be displayed. You can now select the class that you wish to work in by clicking on the class name. Or choose a specific operation for the class by selecting one of the mini buttons that appear across from the class name.

The Add Assignment tool is used to create new assignments. When creating an assignment, the teacher provides a due date, designates a category to be associated with the assignment, names the assignment, and indicates the total points possible. From Classes, click the **Add Assignment** mini-button next to the appropriate class. (Or if you are in a class, click the **Add Assignment** icon.) From Add Assignment, complete the required information. Click **Save**. **Note:** Review Updates for SY2009-10.

Attendance:

eSembler's Attendance tool provides an integrated electronic method to track and monitor Daily and Class Attendance. Teacher reported attendance information on the class level is automatically distributed to the district's Student Information System. To make sure teachers stay informed, official attendance information is periodically transferred from the district's Student Information System to eSembler. From Classes, click the **Attendance** mini-button next to the appropriate class. (If you are in a class, click the **Attendance** icon.) From Attendance, indicate the appropriate attendance status for each student. Click **Submit**.

Note: Check with your school as to the appropriate class to select for Daily and/or Class Attendance. Use the Digital Locker feature to access Daily and/or Class Attendance Procedures (Click on a Class Name, Tools, Digital Locker, select the appropriate attendance procedure).

Assignment Categories:

The Categories tool is used to organize assignments and manage special characteristics like dropped scores and assignment weighting. These characteristics dictate how student grades are averaged. In addition to dropped scores and weights, teachers may also color code categories so assignments are easily recognized on reports and grading screens. Assignment categories can be created and edited from the assignments screen. Default categories and weights have been defined for each class, but teachers can rename or delete default categories, and can create new categories. From Classes, click the **Assignments** mini-button next to the appropriate class (or click a class name). From Assignments, click **Categories**. From Categories, indicate the appropriate category information. Click **Save**. **Note:** Review Updates for SY2009-10.

Submitting Grades:

The Submit Grades tool allows teachers to review, enter, and submit progress report and report card related information for use by the district's Student Information System. From Classes, click the **Submit Grades** mini-button next to the appropriate class. (If you are in a class, click the **Submit Grades** icon.) From Submit Grades, review and select the appropriate options. Click **Submit**.

Comments:

The Comments tool provides a mechanism whereby teachers can create a detailed electronic journal of assignment, student, or class-related information. Comments can be associated with all students, a single student, or multiple students in a class. To aid in categorization of these comments, the categories of comments include Attendance, Assignments, Discipline, Event, General, Parent Contact, Personal, Phone, and Progress Notice. Additionally, teachers have the capability of indicating that a comment should be considered Private or Priority. From Classes, click the **Tools** mini-button next to the appropriate class. (If you are in a class, click the **Tools** icon.) From Tools, click **Comments**. To add a comment, click the **Add Comment** icon. From Add Comments, enter the appropriate comment information. Click **Save**.

Note: The parent portal 'summary' report will now display teacher comments. Teachers can restrict comments from appearing on the parent portal by marking the comments 'private'.

Notifications:

The Notifications tool allows teachers to create automated email alerts for parents (the parent must have an account created on the Parent ePortal). Based on teacher-defined settings, all parents with email addresses linked to the student account will receive an automatic email if any criteria specified within the tool are met. Teachers can set thresholds based on student grade averages and missing assignments. And also messages containing narrative comments entered through the Comments tool. Information presented through emails delivered by the Notifications tool is intended to provide parents with rapid and convenient notification about a student's progress. From Classes, click the **Tools** mini-button next to the appropriate class. (If you are in a class, click the **Tools** icon.) From Tools, click **Notifications**. **Note:** Review Updates for SY2009-10.

The Notifications tool is also available to parents through the ePortal interface. Parents can choose to be notified via email when teachers post comments to their student's eSembler record or if the student falls below a certain grade average in a class. Through the ePortal interface, parents may set their own notification preferences independently of preferences set forth by teachers. Parents may also wish to unsubscribe from email notifications by clicking on the appropriate link within the Notification e-mail.

A video providing instructions to parents for creating portal accounts is available:

http://gb.nps.k12.va.us/video/Creating%20Parent%20Accounts_rev7.html

Advance

http://sbo.nps.k12.va.us/Training_CD_0809/eSembler_603/603.html

(Video)

Attach Files to Assignments:

Teachers can now attach one or more files (e.g. worksheets or reference documents) to any assignment. Files are added by selecting the **Attach** button on the **Add Assignment** screen. Once selected, a pop-up window appears that prompts the teacher to browse their local computer or network drives for the file they wish to attach to the assignment. Teachers can add an unlimited number of attachments to any assignment. Attachments can be deleted by clicking on the **delete** link located next to the uploaded assignment name. Files attached to assignments may be accessed on the **Summary** report, under the description column, from both the teacher and parent view (parent portal).

Assignment Publication Control:

Teachers can now control which assignments should be published to the parent portal via the use of the **Private** check box on the **Add Assignment** screen. Assignments marked private do not appear on the parent portal if no scores have been entered for the assignment. **Note:** Once an assignment score has been entered into the gradebook the **Private** flag is removed from the assignment and the assignment information is immediately available to parents on the parent portal.

Digital Locker:

Using a new **Digital Locker** tool, teachers can now add and save files to eSembler. Files saved by teachers are only available to the individual teacher who saved the file unless the teacher chooses the **ePortal** checkbox, in which case the file will also be available to students and parents on the parent portal. Files made available on the parent portal will appear under the **Digital Locker** heading. When adding a file, teachers can indicate one or more classes to which the file will be available.

Online Resources:

Also located under the **Tools** menu, the **Online Resources** feature allows teachers to define URLs for web resources related to one or more classes. Web links entered via this tool appears on the parent portal under the **Online Resources** heading.

Mobile Support:

eSembler now provides PDA, mobile device and smart phone support for teachers, administrators, parents and students. To access eSembler mobile, simply point the mobile device web browser to the standard eSembler login screen:

<https://gbweb.nps.k12.va.us>

The mobile device is automatically redirected to an interface that is specially formatted to work efficiently with mobile devices. eSembler mobile support presently provides view-only reports. For teachers, the reports include; **Assignments**, **Attendance**, **Averages**, **Schedules** and **Contacts**. The **Contacts** report especially may be valuable to teachers using smart phones as it provides parent and emergency telephone numbers.

Updates for SY2009-10

Version 8.00

Assignments:

Basic Mode and Advanced Mode – A button labeled Advanced Mode is located next to the Preferences button. When this button is selected, the Add / Edit Assignment tool is modified to show all advanced assignment creation options. From the Advanced Mode screen, the button name changes to Basic Mode. When selected, the Add Assignment tool returns to its default setting. The Preferences in the Basic Mode and the Advanced Mode operate independent of each other. In other words, users can create their own unique Preference options within both the Basic Mode and Advanced Mode and in either screen, select any or all available Preference options.

0 Point Assignments – Assignments can be created with 0 points possible. When a 0 points possible assignment exists, the warning for exceeding the maximum grade threshold is disabled for that assignment. When a 0 point assignment is created, any scores entered for the assignment are not considered when computing student averages.

Add URL – A new tool that allows users to associate one or more web sites with any assignment. Teachers may enter a Title and a URL. The form is intelligent and will automatically modify the entry if ‘http://’ is not included in the URL. If the teacher enters ‘https://’ then this is also allowed. If a title is not provided, then the URL itself is displayed on all tools and reports. One or more URLs can be associated with any assignment. The URLs associated with an assignment are presented on the Add Assignment tool and on the Summary report assignment description.

Assignment Types – A new feature in the Add / Edit Assignments tool called Assignment Types. This drop down selection tool appears above the Categories drop down and offers the following options: Typical and Extra Credit (Assignment). The Typical option is selected by default. The functionality of the Extra Credit (Assignment) option works just like the former Extra Credit Only checkbox; that Extra Credit Only checkbox has now been removed.

Automatic Grouping – When a teacher uses the Add Assignment tool to initially create an assignment, classes with the same course number are automatically pre-selected in the Copy to Classes area. This option is controlled by a new Preferences option labeled ‘Automatic Grouping’ which is on by default.

Default Score – A Default Score option is included in the Add / Edit Assignment tool. When a score is entered in this field, all students are automatically awarded the Default Score upon assignment creation. This new feature appears to the right of the Points Possible option. In cases where a default score is applied to an assignment and later replaced with a Retake, Override, or Special Grade score, the following legend will be displayed on the struck out Default Score on the Summary report: ‘This Default Score was awarded to all students upon assignment creation. This Default Score does not reflect the actual score earned by this student on this assignment.’ All students are awarded the Default Score if they were active in the class on the assignment due date (i.e. were not Withdrawn). Copying the default score information is not automatic when using the Copy Grades or Copy Assignments tools.

Fractional Multiplier – Teachers can set a fractional multiplier for assignments. Within the Add / Edit Assignment tool, under the Multiplier option, the drop down list has been replaced by a text box allowing teachers to set any whole number or fractional multipliers including 0.05, 0.10, 0.15, 0.20, etc. The default value for this field is 1. The maximum multiplier is still restricted by the appropriate administrative template.

Maximum Retake Modification – The Maximum Retake option functionally has been changed so that value entered represents the maximum score rather than a maximum percentage. The option has been renamed to ‘Max Retake Score’ and the percentage symbol has been removed.

Numbering – Interface changes to the Assignments screen: First, the due date for assignments has been shortened to MM/DD instead of MM/DD/YYYY. The width of the Due column has been shortened accordingly. Also, an additional column has been added labeled ‘#’ which displays the number of the assignment (right justified). This numeric value matches the numbers on Grade All and the Spreadsheet report based on the default sorting method set for those three screens. The Numbering option has been added as a display preference and is set to on by default.

Scores Entered – Assignments screen displays a new column labeled Scores. This column will display the total number of assignment scores that have been entered for each assignment allowing the teacher to quickly ascertain which assignments are graded, not graded, or partially graded.

Total Points Default Setting Via Preferences – New Preferences option in the Add / Edit Assignment tool. The new Preferences option allows teachers to define their default value for Total Points via a drop down list with values ranging from 0 to 200. The district defined value is selected by default.

Categories:

Sorting – Teachers can sort categories by selecting up and down arrows next to each category listing. If the sort order is not changed by a teacher, the sort order remains alphabetical. Once the sort order is changed by a teacher, new categories added are placed in alphabetical order below the existing sorted categories.

Grade Assignment and Grade Student :

Special Grades Behavior – Grade entry related to special grades has changed. The behavior has been changed so that when a grade modifying special grade is entered in the Score or Retake columns or the check mark is selected (I for Incomplete, M for Missing, etc.), the special grade value is removed from the Score or Retake columns and automatically moved to the Override column. Also, when the special grade is removed from the Override column (or changed), the appropriate check box is also deselected.

Notifications :

Assignment Score of 0 – The tool now includes an option to be notified when a student receives an assignment score of zero (0). This rule only applies when an actual score of 0 is entered. The rule does not apply to special grades with zero values.

Exempt Assignment Scores – The tool now includes an option to be notified when a student receives an Exempt (special grade) assignment score.

Frequency Selections – If a user attempts to Save or Apply and a Frequency has not been set, then they will receive the following Warning message: ‘The notification frequency has not been set. Please select the appropriate checkbox(es) to indicate frequency you would like these notifications delivered.’

Graded Assignment Notification – A new option provides information when a new score has been added to an assignment. The notification message states: ‘For the class <CLASS NAME> <PERIOD>, taught by <TEACHER>, a score of <SCORE> has been recorded for the assignment titled <ASSIGNMENT NAME>.’

Incomplete Assignment Scores – The tool now includes an option to be notified when a student receives an Incomplete (special grade) assignment score.

Interface Changes – Interface changes in the tool are as follows: 1) The radio buttons have been removed and replaced with a check box that when selected, indicates that a notification should be received; 2) The ‘Report Frequency’ label has been changed to ‘Frequency’; 3) The ‘Below’ blue box has been reduced in width; 4) the default value in the Below drop down list has been changed to 75; 5) The None option in the Below drop down list has been removed; 6) When the check box for the Student Average option is not selected, the Below drop down option is grayed out and may not be selected; 7) The Comments options have been reformatted into two columns of similar length. The Apply to All Classes option now includes a Select / Deselect All option; 8) The Delivery Method option / row does not appear except in cases where the district has enabled Phone Notifications; 9) Unexcused Absence & Tardy options have been moved below the New Assignment option.

Message Changes – To increase the brevity of Notification messaging, changes include: 1) the e-mail reply to address is now named ‘<DISTRICT>’ with the Reply To address still set to the district e-mail address; 2) the subject line is now ‘Gradebook: <STUDENT FIRST NAME> <STUDENT LAST NAME>’; 4) the period (.) punctuation has been removed from the subject line; 5) all appearances of the text ‘For the class <CLASS> <PERIOD>’ have been changed to ‘For <CLASS> <PERIOD>’; 6) the year has been removed from all dates presented in notifications – specifically assignment due dates; 7) in all cases where a teacher name is presented, the name format is now changed to first initial and last name only – the full first name is no longer presented; 8) the format of <PERIOD> has been changed so that the ‘Period’ label is removed and only the period number/letter is presented in parenthesis [e.g. <CLASS> (02)].

SMS Text Messaging – A new tool delivery option titled SMS Text Messaging. When this option is selected, a data entry element appears below the SMS Text Messaging check box which prompts the user to enter a mobile phone number (3 text fields) and their carrier (drop down list). When this option is selected, eSembler will deliver multiple text messages to the recipient. For all text messages, the textual information presented in the heading and footer areas is omitted to increase the brevity of the message. When a Notification contains more than one notification message, each individual notification message is sent as a separate text message. Messages longer than 160 characters are typically broken into two or more messages by the recipient's carrier automatically. Messages longer than 160 characters are typically treated (and billed) as separate / multiple messages.

Reports:

Attendance (Daily) – The Attendance (Daily) report has been split into multiple reports. The current Attendance (Daily) report has been renamed to Attendance (This Week). The following new reports were created with the only difference from the Attendance (This Week) report being the Preferences that are selected: Attendance (This Week); Attendance (All Weeks). Each of these reports have the same report heading as the report link.

Summary – Notifications Log: The Summary report now includes a table detailing the Notifications sent about specific students. The report table displays the following information: Generated On; Generated By; To; and Message. The Generated On field displays the date and time the message was generated (MM/DD, HH:MM). The Generated By field displays either ‘Teacher(s)’ or ‘Parent/Student.’ The To: field shows the e-mail address where the Notification was sent. The e-mail address features a ‘mail to’ hypertext link. The Message field displays a ‘View’ hypertext link. When the hypertext link is selected, a pop-up window is displayed showing the text of the sent message. This table displays information about all notifications sent by all teachers and all users. This information only presents information about e-mails that were generated. The report is not able to display whether or not the email was delivered by the mail server. This option has been added to the appropriate Summary templates and set to OFF by default for Parents/Students and ON by default for Teachers.