

LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT  
INTER-OFFICE CORRESPONDENCE  
**Instructional Technology Initiative**

To: Ruth Perez, Deputy Superintendent of Instruction

From: Bernadette Lucas, Director, Instructional Technology Initiative

RE: PEARSON STATUS UPDATE

DATE: March 19, 2015

This memo includes information describing the issues that have plagued teachers' attempts to implement the Pearson System of Courses. These problems have left only two schools (Lizarraga and Coughlin) that continue to try to use the Pearson application regularly. These two are among 69 schools in which more than 35,000 students have devices with the Pearson app, through which they should have unimpeded access to the Pearson System of Courses for English language arts and mathematics.

The problems with the Pearson System of Courses have resulted in less than five percent of the students within Instructional Technology Initiative schools having consistent access to the content. These problems are described in this memo.

The technical and content-related issues fall into four broad categories, all of which have had significant impacts on teaching and learning. These are detailed in the table below, and are briefly described here:

**Students cannot consistently access content**

A variety of technical issues with the Pearson System of Courses app often leave some students unable to log in to access content. The attached table provides details on some of the technical issues. The result is that [include data]. Technical problems often result in content that is missing, in the incorrect location, or otherwise unavailable to students. A third type of technical issue does not allow students to stay logged into the app. A separate document details these technical issues and their causes; the impacts on students and teachers have been profound: Access to content cannot be tied to a complex set of technical background tasks, as it is in the authentication system required to log into the Pearson app. It is important to note that some students have been left without access to content for several months.

**Pearson System of Courses only partially meets OCISS standards for universal access.**

A review by the OCISS mathematics team concluded that the needs of English language learners and Standard English learners are not met by the content. These populations account for a high percentage of the students the District serves. Teachers who want to use Pearson as core content for math sometimes need support from Title 1 coordinators or other content experts to develop strategies to meet their students' needs. Pearson is not adopted for English language arts by the State of California at this time.

**Pearson has not delivered data related to the Pearson System of Courses.**

There are no digital assessments and no assessment analytics to help guide instruction. Assessments are available on paper; digital data and analysis of results are not available. Separately, dashboard data on student usage have

not been provided to teachers or to the District. This leaves the District unable to analyze the effectiveness of implementation to provide feedback to the vendor and more effective support to teachers.

**Attempts to make the Pearson System of Courses usable have required extraordinary, unsustainable, and unscalable resources from the Instructional Technology Initiative, Information Technology Division, and Pearson.**

VLCs, MCSAs, and Pearson instructional coaches and technical support have spent thousands of hours trying to resolve Pearson-related technical issues in schools throughout ITI. Time that should have been spent providing professional development and other instructional support has been devoted, instead, to troubleshooting technical issues related to Pearson. This affects not only Pearson implementation, but also broader instructional technology integration.

**Issue #1:**

Technical issues left students unable to log in to access the content. The bulleted lists below provide details on which technical issues have been the responsibility of Pearson, the District, or both. We are presently compiling documentation of the actions the District has taken to resolve the issues.

**Pearson App Related:**

- SSO credentials do not work with Pearson “Clever” file (LAUSD uploads roster data to assign the correct content to students, sometimes Pearson has been unable to parse the roster data provided by LAUSD)
- SSO credentials could not be processed by Microsoft Azure services (When the Pearson backend online services cannot authenticate a user, the app does not revert to authenticate the user off of the locally cached password)
- App code spontaneously reverts from LAUSD code back to developer code (The “App code” is a license key that assigns the application to use the LAUSD version of the Pearson content. The app code will change on a user for no apparent reason, taking the user from the LAUSD version to the default Pearson login page and disconnected from the LAUSD SSO system and content)
- App involuntarily logs students out mid lesson; students are unable to log back in with SSO

**Instructional Impacts:**

Instruction is interrupted (5-10 minutes per issue per device) while teacher attempts to resolve the issue. Often, the issue cannot be resolved by the teacher, leaving the student without instructional content and the class without the teacher.

<b>Date Pearson notified</b>	<b>LAUSD Actions</b>	<b>Resolved?</b>	<b>Artifacts</b>
12/17/14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Notified Pearson via Pearson tracking system (please note, there was inconsistent follow through with Pearson when using their tracking system)</li> <li>● LAUSD recommended that Pearson make the login process resilient to internet connectivity and SSO issues</li> <li>● Assigned MCSAs to troubleshoot/resolve</li> <li>● Redirected VLCs from instruction support to technical support</li> </ul>	No - Pearson has made improvements in the level of performance of the app, but have not brought it to the level performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Apple - May 30th Cure Notice (Artifact # 1)</li> <li>● Helpdesk Documentation (Artifact # 2 – being finalized)</li> <li>● Pearson Quality Assurance Review (Artifact # 3 – being</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emails with Pearson reps from all levels of the project (Teachers, VLCs, MCSA, ITI staff)</li> </ul>	required by the contract.	finalized) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Logs/Reports from Pearson “Sweeps” (Artifact # 4)</li> <li>• Emails</li> </ul>
--	---	---------------------------	--

**Issues # 2:**

Content often is missing, incorrect, or can’t be accessed.

**Instructional Impacts:**

Students and teachers are unable to consistently access content; digital interactive elements designed to provide universal access to all learners is unavailable.

<b>Date Pearson notified</b>	<b>LAUSD Actions</b>	<b>Resolved?</b>	<b>Artifacts</b>
12/17/14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notified Apple</li> <li>• Notified Pearson</li> <li>• Assigned MCSAs to troubleshoot/resolve</li> <li>• Redirected VLCs from instruction support to technical support</li> </ul>	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apple Agreement - Exhibit L (Artifact # 5)</li> <li>• Helpdesk Documentation (Artifact # 2 – being finalized)</li> <li>• Pearson Quality Assurance Review (Artifact # 3 – being finalized)</li> <li>• Emails</li> </ul>

**Issue # 3:**

Incomplete content - Full Pearson System of Courses, complete with interactive elements was not delivered until January, 2015.

**Instructional Impact:**

Teachers were unable to pre-plan instruction; students “ran out” of content.

<b>Date Pearson notified</b>	<b>LAUSD Actions</b>	<b>Resolved?</b>	<b>Artifacts</b>
		No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apple Agreement - Exhibit L (Artifact # 5)</li> </ul>

**Issue # 4**

App will not allow students to stay logged in. App is unable to adapt to routing network issues.

**Instructional Impacts:**

Students are unable to access content off-site due to the fact that they must have network connectivity to log in.

<b>Date Pearson notified</b>	<b>LAUSD Actions</b>	<b>Resolved?</b>	<b>Artifacts</b>
12/17/14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Notified Pearson requesting students have the ability to stay logged in</li> </ul>	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Helpdesk Documentation (Artifact # 2 – being finalized)</li> <li>Emails</li> </ul>

**Issue # 5:**  
 The OCISS math team determined the Pearson System of Courses does not meet the full intent of the criterion universal access, defined as the ability of all students to have equal opportunity in education, regardless of their social class, gender, ethnicity, background or physical and mental disabilities.

**Instructional Impact:**  
 Substantial LAUSD student populations are not adequately served by content; teachers must supplement core content to meet the needs of all learners.

<b>Date Pearson notified</b>	<b>LAUSD Actions</b>	<b>Resolved?</b>	<b>Artifacts</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integrated Library and Textbook Services team evaluated Pearson System of Courses as part of the textbook adoption mathematics adoption/selection process</li> </ul>	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Artifact #6 Algebra 1 Preselection Review</li> <li>Artifact #7 Geometry Preselection Review</li> <li>Artifact #8 Algebra 2 Preselection Review</li> </ul>

**Issue # 6:**

There are no digital assessments and no assessment analytics to guide differentiated instruction. Assessments were provided in paper format; digital data and analysis of results was not provided.

**Instructional Impact:**

Students do not have access to SBAC-aligned assessments in digital format, leaving them under-prepared for SBAC testing. Teachers are unable to utilize data to provide differentiated and personalized instruction to meet the needs of all learners.

Date Pearson notified	LAUSD Actions	Resolved?	Artifacts
		No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Apple Agreement - Exhibit L (Artifact # 5)</li> </ul>

**Issue # 7:**

Pearson has not provided a dashboard for student usage analysis.

**Instructional Impact:**

Teachers, schools leaders, and LAUSD central office are unable to analyze the effectiveness of implementation to provide feedback to the vendor and provide more effective support to teachers.

Date Pearson notified	LAUSD Actions	Resolved?	Artifacts
12/17/14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Notified Apple</li> <li>● Notified Pearson</li> <li>● Scheduled meetings to discuss dashboard</li> </ul>	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Apple Agreement - Exhibit L (Artifact # 5)</li> <li>● Emails</li> </ul>

**Issue # 8:**

- VLCs, MCSAs, and Pearson instructional coaches have spent thousands of hours trying to resolve Pearson-related technical issues in schools throughout ITI.
- Pearson’s attempt to provide local caching was slow to deliver and the potentially still outstanding for the K-1 app
- Pearson application does not have the capability of throttling content downloads to avoid overloading the district network.

**Instructional Impact:**

Time that should have been spent providing professional development and other instructional support has been devoted, instead, to troubleshooting technical issues related to Pearson. This affects not only Pearson implementation, but also broader instructional technology integration.

Date Pearson notified	LAUSD Actions	Resolved?	Artifacts
12/17/14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Notify Pearson re: caching server via cure notice</li> <li>● Pearson “Sweeps” (all ITI staff members are deployed to update and troubleshoot Pearson app)</li> <li>● Schools are setting aside bank time (1 day per month to plan @ Lizarraga)</li> </ul>	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Apple - May 30th Cure Notice (Artifact # 2)</li> <li>● Logs/Reports from Pearson “Sweeps” (Artifact # 4)</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emails</li> </ul>
<b>Issue # 9:</b> Troubleshooting often happens during the instructional day.			
<b>Instructional Impact:</b> Instructional time is lost when classes are interrupted to pull devices from the classroom, or to troubleshoot the software in the classroom; students lose use of the device not only for Pearson, but for learning with other application.			
<b>Date Pearson notified</b>	<b>LAUSD Actions</b>	<b>Resolved?</b>	<b>Artifacts</b>
12/17/14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimize classroom impact by using ITI staff to troubleshoot</li> </ul>	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Logs/Reports from Pearson “Sweeps” (Artifact # 4)</li> <li>• Emails</li> </ul>

**Summary of present status:**

Despite the problems described above, students and teachers at Lizarraga and Coughlin continue to try to use the Pearson System of Courses regularly. These are the only two schools of 69 in the Instructional Technology Initiative that use Pearson regularly. In these schools, any given class typically experiences one problem or more daily. Teachers report that the students enjoy the interactive content – when it’s available. When it’s not, teachers and students try to roll with the interruptions to teaching and learning as best they can.

The remaining schools – with more than 35,000 students who should have easy access to the Pearson System of Courses in English language arts and Mathematics -- have given up on attempting regular use of the app.