

2023-2024 School Year (SY) Product & Technology Memo

A Message from the Pearson Virtual Schools (PVS) Product & Technology Team

Last year we introduced our Connections Academy (CA) value proposition: It's all about high quality and individualized learning. Based on our 20+ years as a virtual school provider and our extensive efficacy research leveraging years of student outcome data, we know what it takes for virtual learners to succeed in a dynamic and changing world. The pillars to this value proposition include:

- Building relationships between students and teachers matters most.
- Differentiated instruction for learners is key.
- Supporting teachers with the most effective tools and processes is essential.
- Engagement with families and Learning Coaches makes a difference.

Over the last twelve months, we've been working to implement a targeted strategy intended to optimize this value proposition and further our mission to deliver the best learning experience for each CA student. As an example, the Lesson Introduction Page launched in Back-to-School 2022 to provide CA teachers with a way to personalize and differentiate instruction. More than 3,700 teachers have now created close to 250,000 Lesson Intro Pages to date. Similarly, a new feature released in November of 2022 by our Small Wins team allowed teachers to create customized lists of students for a WebMail. These have quickly become popular tools for teachers to use to individualize learning. Excitement is now building for the roll out of the Custom Assessment Tool which will launch in Back-to-School 2023. Teachers are excited about the ability to create assessments to help accommodate students, tackle academic integrity issues, while saving time that can be spent with their students. When the Custom Assessment Tool launches, it will provide teachers with yet another tool for differentiated instruction strengthening our value proposition to ensure CA students succeed.

There are two new elements to the partnership model between PVS and CA schools this year. These are the Small Wins team and the Instructional Partners. The Small Wins team has released thirteen features since August of 2022. This academic year, ninety-seven school staff from thirty-two schools have been involved in the Design Thinking process led by the Small Wins team. These are three-week cycles to identify problems-to-be-solved and in real time determine right-sized potential solutions to improve Pearson Online Classroom. The Instructional Partner (IP) team launched in January 2023 and serves as a bridge between Connections Academy schools and the Curriculum, Product, & Technology teams. IPs borrow from the Small Wins playbook and employ Design Thinking to work with schools on their most pressing curriculum, instruction, and technology needs. Schools bring their prioritized needs to monthly Partnership Meetings where IPs help identify the problem-to-be-solved. IPs work to find solutions (big or small) to these needs from existing products, tools, resources, and services.

You'll learn about the Lesson Introduction Page, Small Wins, Custom Assessments, Instructional Partners and more within this memo. This memo provides an overview of how the PVS Product and Technology group is working to further our value proposition and drive our mission for the upcoming 2023-2024 school year. We hope you find these updates as exciting as we do. For additional information, please visit our [Product Highlights](#) web page.

Shelly Shires

Senior Vice President, Product & Technology

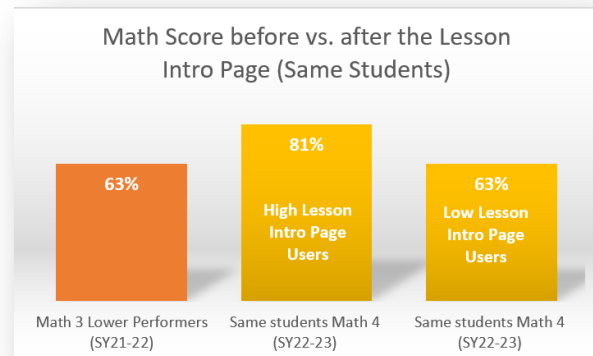
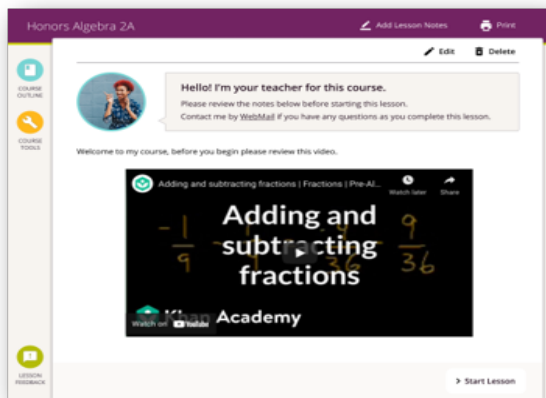
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UPDATE! Lesson Introduction Page

Close to 250,000 Lesson Introduction Pages Created by Teachers

PVS launched the Lesson Introduction Page (LIP) as a new feature at the start of the 2022-2023 School Year. The LIP is a tool designed to help teachers differentiate instruction and deliver the high-quality and individualized learning that is central to the learning experience at Connections Academy (CA). We're happy to report the LIP has been widely used across CA schools. Since its launch in August 2022, more than 3,700 teachers have created close to 250,000 LIPs.

Recent data analysis shows the personalized instruction via the LIP leads to better student outcomes. Fourth grade teachers at Florida Connections Academy (FCA) saw students achieve significant year-over-year gains that exceeded the CA-wide results by +8 percentage points. These teachers added personalized communications and content to capture students' attention. They also provided targeted scaffolds and other student-centered instructional supports.



NEW! Small Wins Add Up

The Small Wins team is dedicated to working directly with Connections Academy (CA) schools to identify, develop, and deliver improvements to Pearson Online Classroom with a quick turn-around time. Small Wins works with groups of schools in 3-week cycles guided by a Design Thinking approach to identify and deliver small but impactful improvements to the learning platform.

13 Small Wins and Counting!

So far during the 2022-2023 SY, 33 schools and 97 school staff have participated in the Small Wins process, identifying problems to be solved, creating problem statements, and collaborating via this Design Thinking approach with a software development team. 13 features have been developed and released by Small Wins to date, including:

- Student Homepage Updates Feature Student-friendly Focus
- Schedule WebMail to be Sent at Future Day/Time
- CBA and Contact Information on My Students Page
- Teacher Gradebook Icon Defaults to Active
- Display Gradebook Icon for K-2 Students
- Update Contact Numbers from the Student Log
- Student Affirmed Pronouns

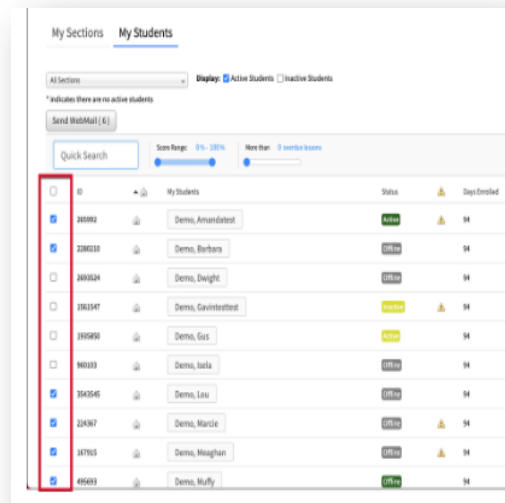
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- Staff Only Notes on the Log Page
- Send WebMail to Customized Groups of Students
- Assign a Max Score for Custom Assessment
- Student Engagement Metrics on Caretaker Homepage
- Contact Preferences and Quick Access Tool Bar on Log Page
- Upload Feedback Files to Graded Assessment

Most Popular Small Win: Send WebMail to Customized Groups of Students

The most often used Small Win is Send WebMail to Customized Groups of Students. This provides teachers with another way to differentiate by creating a customized list of students to receive a WebMail.

- *"The ability to send WebMails to a select group of students from the 'My Students' page is A DREAM COME TRUE!!!"*
- *"I use the WebMail select-student-by-section all the time. I can send out tons of WebMails letting students know when they are missing big things like tests or portfolios."*



NEW! Custom Assessment Tool

Students who experience quality formative assessments can make more than two years of growth within a single school year ([Visible Learning](#), John Hattie). For the 2023-20234 School Year, PVS is working to provide teachers with the ability to create custom assessments within Pearson Online Classroom to improve student outcomes, increase teachers' instructional efficacy, and reduce academic integrity violations.

With this new functionality, teachers will be able to create assessment items and assessments within Pearson Online Classroom, assign custom assessments to a lesson, and assign to one student, a group of students within a section, or an entire section. The new custom assessments will be delivered to students within a lesson the same way that existing lesson assessments are delivered. The new custom assessments will also appear in the gradebook in the order of the lesson they were assigned to.

Before the current school year concludes, teachers will have the opportunity to "play in the sandbox" and check out the new Customization Manager tool. In mid-May, teachers will be able to log in as demo users in MyCA and get their first hands-on experiences with functionalities and how to create, rename, assign, and publish a custom assessment using the new Customization Manager tool.

Here is a view of the Customization Manager tool:

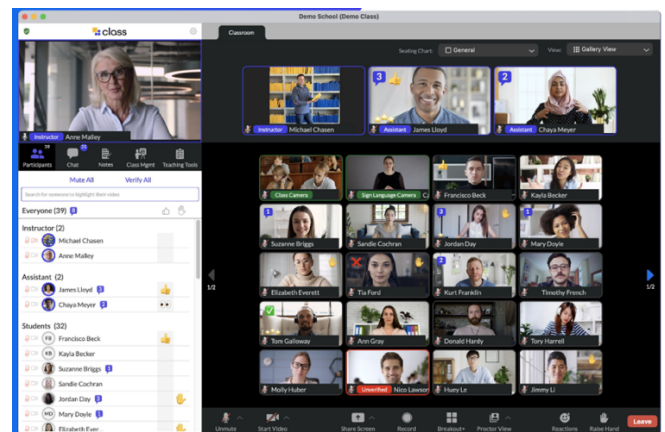
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NEW! LiveLesson with Class

As PVS strives to provide teachers with the most effective tools to help them build meaningful relationships with students and differentiate instruction, we are excited to share that Connections Academy (CA) schools will be moving to LiveLesson with Class for the 2023-2024 SY. Class is an instructionally focused and reliable synchronous learning tool with a 21st century video conferencing experience. Class will provide a more reliable LiveLesson experience as compared to our current synchronous classroom tools and meets the requirements for reliability, scalability, and performance in this key aspect of the virtual learning experience that directly relates to student performance.

In late March, nearly 100 staff members from CA schools participated in two one-hour demo sessions immersing them in the Class app for the first time. In addition, feedback from school leaders has been very positive about this move. This excitement is based on how Class combines the stability of Zoom with the robust instructional features of Adobe, and then takes everything to the next level by enhancing those teaching and learning tools to give our teachers a true best-in-class experience that will transform how they keep students engaged and personalize their LiveLesson sessions! A pilot with CA teacher volunteers yielded the following feedback:

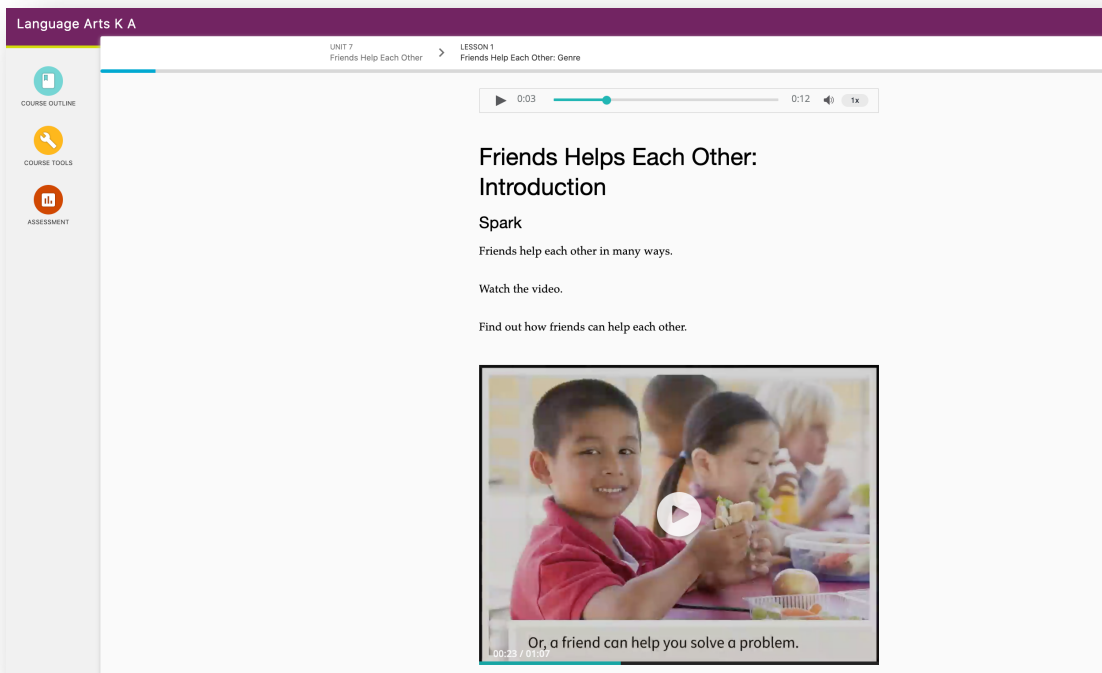
- *"The breakout room setup would be an absolute game-changer for most teachers at our school. Class allows for smoother setup and high-quality monitoring "*
- *"There was nothing I did not like about Class. It combined good things from Adobe and Zoom. "*
- *"I already begged, so I'll just say that Class is everything I need to further support students and their engagement, with some insightful data thrown in! "*



NEW! Pearson Curriculum courses for 2023-2024 SY

Based on our 20 years of experience with virtual learning, we are leveraging our expertise to provide students, teachers, and families with the best possible curriculum to support the learning experience. Pearson Curriculum courses are developed to provide alignment to national and state standards. In addition, the Pearson Curriculum is built based on the Dynamic Classroom Instructional Model which provides students with an iterative presentation of lessons with check-ins and practice at each step to help them better understand the topic. Our research shows the more students engage with the curriculum, the better they will perform. Pearson Curriculum lessons include features like pop-up examples and peer model videos to increase student engagement. Teacher model videos are also included in our new middle school math courses. Quick Checks provide students and teachers with a frequent view into student understanding.

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New Pearson Curriculum Courses Available for Preview

The new Pearson Curriculum courses for 2023-2024 SY will soon be available for teachers to preview in the Virtual Library. Schools in non-approval states have the choice to **opt-in** to these courses which include:

- Algebra 1, Geometry, Algebra 2
- English 9-12
- Science K-2
- Social Studies K

In addition, twenty-nine Pearson Curriculum courses are available and will be offered by all Connections Academy schools during the 2023-2024 SY. These Pearson Curriculum courses include:

- Language Arts K-8
- Math 6-8
- Science 3-8
- Physical Science
- Biology
- Chemistry
- Physics
- Social Studies 3-5
- American Government
- Economics
- Geography & Society
- World History

Teacher Prep and Planning: NEW! Scope & Sequence Documents

Scope & Sequence documents for the Pearson Curriculum courses are being created to help teachers plan and prep. PVS gathered feedback from teachers to help ensure the Scope and Sequences will effectively meet their needs. The documents will illustrate the correlation to standards at the lesson-level to help teachers plan on a lesson-by-lesson basis, particularly with the upcoming release of the new Custom Assessment tool. The full set of planning and preparation tools for teachers includes:

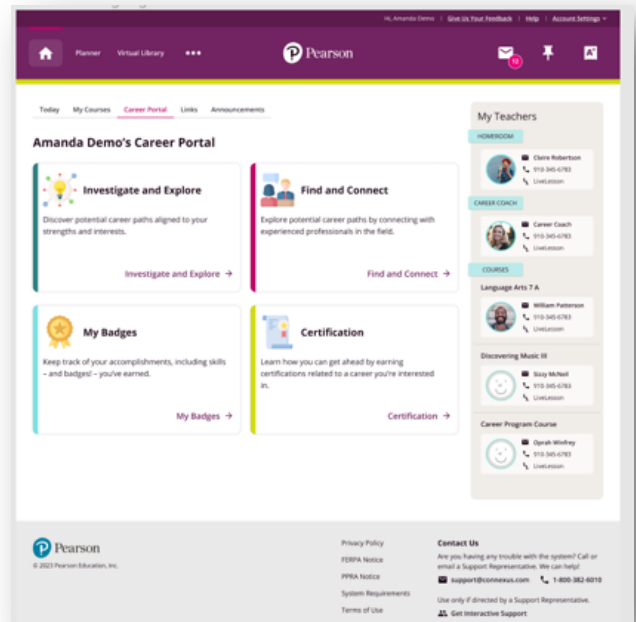
- Opt-in Courses: Previews of Base courses (available June 1-June 15)
- Opt-in Courses: NEW! Pearson Curriculum Course Guides (available June 1-June 15)
- Standards Alignments (available during summer)
- Scope & Sequence Documents (available during summer)

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NEW! Career Program

PVS is excited to be launching a new middle- and high-school focused career program at several Connections Academy (CA) schools during the 2023-2024 School Year (GRCA, INCC, WillCA, WACA-G, and WACA). This program will enhance pathways for students to opportunities beyond high school, be it in the job market or in further education. The program will give students a better sense and greater confidence with their post-secondary path forward.

The program will be anchored by a newly developed Career Home Page that will link to external tools students will utilize for career exploration, badging, connection with industry professionals, pathway courses, and certification resources. Students will see four clickable tiles. **Investigate and Explore** will take students to interactive tools, assessments, and real-world exploration that will help them discover career pathways. **Find and Connect** will provide students with opportunities to connect with a network of industry professionals through events coordinated via their Career Coach. **My Badges** will enable students to access their Credly dashboard. **Certification** will provide students with information about career pathway course tracks that will equip them with the knowledge and skills needed to prepare for national and industry certifications.



NEW! Pearson Enrollment Portal

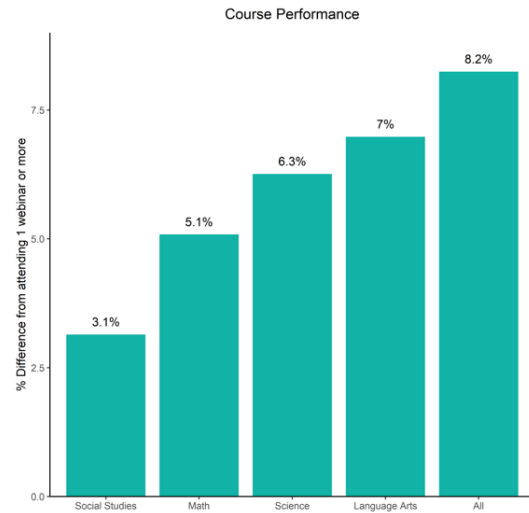
PVS will be implementing a new Pearson Enrollment Portal (PEP) this coming October for the launch of Spring 2024 enrollment. Eleven Connections Academy (CA) schools will take part in this launch: ARCA, ALCA, ColoCA, ColoCAD, ColoCAS, Inspire, MOCA, NCA, ORCAP, VACA, and WillCA. The new PEP will provide an improved experience for enrolling families and a streamlined workflow for CA schools. Families will have access to a self-service application portal that is mobile friendly and provides multi-language support. Spanish will be part of the launch with additional language support to come. Schools will have greater visibility into the enrollment pipeline while reporting and dashboards will be configurable to their needs. A comprehensive go-to-market plan will help ensure a successful launch of the Enrollment Portal with demos, training for schools and enrollment teams (both synchronous and asynchronous), and a dedicated hyper care support plan.

UPDATE! Learning Coach Webinars Make a Difference

A recent analysis confirmed that students of Learning Coaches who attend webinars as part of the *Getting Started* or *Adding to Your Toolbox* series presented by Learning Coach Support (LCS) have significantly higher performance and participation in their courses in comparison to students of Learning Coaches who did not attend any of the webinars. In short, it makes a difference for students if their Learning Coaches attend these webinars.

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The analysis showed that course performance was most strongly related to Learning Coach attendance at webinars that involved understanding the curriculum lessons and Pearson Online Classroom tools, as well as webinars on the science of motivation, coaching multiple students, and helping students develop writing skills. Similarly, Learning Coach attendance at the webinar “Coaching for Character, Grit, Self-Control” was most strongly related to course participation, and this effect was most pronounced in math courses. This graph provides a look at the effect that attending even one webinar from either of the series has on student participation and performance.



These webinars are hosted by LCS on a rolling basis throughout the school year and are designed to help Learning Coaches understand their role as well as how they can best support their students. Learning Coaches can register for these webinars via Learning Coach Central while schools can promote the webinars in school newsletters or sending WebMail messages to families.

NEW! Partnership Model: Instructional Partners

The Instructional Partner (IP) team launched in January of 2023 to serve as a bridge between Connections Academy (CA) schools and the Product & Technology group. IPs borrow from the Small Wins approach and employ Design Thinking to work with schools on their most pressing curriculum, instruction, and technology needs. Schools bring their prioritized needs to monthly Partnership Meetings where IPs help identify the problem-to-be-solved. Over the course of the next several weeks, IPs work to find solutions (big or small) to these needs from existing products, tools, resources, and services. A key to success for IPs is the communication and collaboration with other groups across PVS to sort through school needs and find possible solutions.

During the first quarter of 2023, IPs had more than 1,100 contacts with school staff across 37 schools. They tracked 294 issues and were able to provide school wins to 139 of them. On average, IPs tracked 7.93 issues per schools and resolved 3.73 issues per school during this first quarter of 2023. IPs will continue their work to support schools into the 2023-2024 School Year. Below you'll find the Exit words from the teachers who attended the very first Partnership Meeting in January along with more recent quotes from teachers who participated in the process.



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- *“I love how much we are working to meet with teachers and address needs this year. I think it's helping a lot with teachers feeling heard and vital improvements being made to the program. THANK YOU!” - Participant from FVCA*
- *“Thank you for following up in a timely fashion after these meetings - we really appreciate that!! We also appreciate your deep dive into the concerns we have!! A+!” - Participant from OCA*
- *“As we continue to meet and review concerns, the issues start to overlap and solutions are available for multiple concerns. This is amazing!” - Participant from FCA*
- *“I love these meetings. I look forward to them every time! It's impressive that we are productive the entire 1.5 hours. That is unheard of!” – Participant from MOCA*
- *“This was an innovative and enriching platform to discuss problems/solutions across different schools and programs.” - Participant from POA*