

# VCSS PowerSchool Parent/Guardian Portal Quick Start Guide 2010-2011

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## Introduction

PowerSchool is the student information system used by the Vidalia City Schools System. It is a web-based application that allows parents and students to log into a secure account from home, school or work; access real-time assignments, grades and attendance; request reports; email teachers; and more.

## Create a Parent Single Sign-on Account

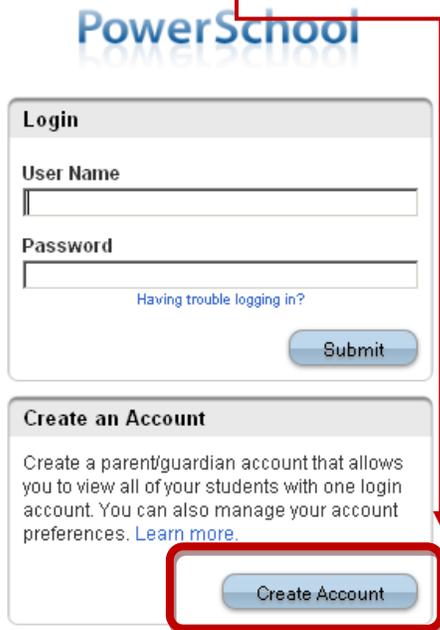
Beginning \_\_\_\_\_, parent single sign-on is offered in PowerSchool. This enables parents to create their own PowerSchool account, choosing the username and password they wish to use, and then assign each of their children to their account.

**\*\* Before you begin, make sure you have received your “Confidential ID and Password” assigned to you for each child, issued by the school they currently attend.**

The PowerSchool web address for Vidalia City Schools parents/guardians is:

1. Type the following address in your web browser:  
<http://pwrschool.vidalia-city.k12.ga.us/public>

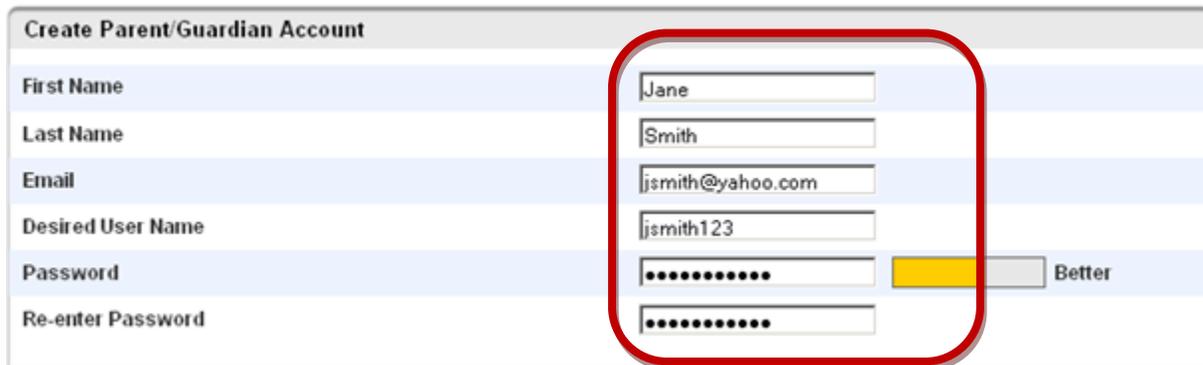
2. Click on the **Create Account** button



The screenshot shows the PowerSchool web interface. At the top, the 'PowerSchool' logo is visible. Below it, there are two main sections. The first section is titled 'Login' and contains two input fields: 'User Name' and 'Password'. Below these fields is a link that says 'Having trouble logging in?' and a 'Submit' button. The second section is titled 'Create an Account' and contains a paragraph of text: 'Create a parent/guardian account that allows you to view all of your students with one login account. You can also manage your account preferences. [Learn more.](#)' Below this text is a 'Create Account' button, which is highlighted with a red rectangular border. A red arrow originates from the top of this 'Create Account' button and points upwards and to the left towards the 'Submit' button in the 'Login' section.

The first section on the new page, [Create Parent/Guardian Account](#) , requires you to enter the following information necessary to establish your new parent/guardian account: your first and last name, the email address you wish to use to receive communications from PowerSchool; and a unique username and password with which you will use to login to PowerSchool. Keep the username simple, using letters and numbers, no spaces. The password must be at least 6 characters. Re-enter the password to ensure you did not mistype it the first time. Understand that your password is the key to securing your account. Do not share your account information with anyone! (Each parent/guardian may create their own account.) The stronger the password, the more secure it is. Using a combination of letters, numbers, punctuation and symbols will produce a stronger password.

3. Enter **your First Name** and **Last Name**
4. Enter an **Email** address where you would like correspondence to go
5. Enter a **Desired User Name** (this can be anything you want it to be as long as you **Do Not** use any special characters.)
6. Enter a **Password** of your choice, the **Re-enter** the same **Password** (Password must be a minimum of **6** characters in length.)



Create Parent/Guardian Account	
First Name	Jane
Last Name	Smith
Email	jsmith@yahoo.com
Desired User Name	jsmith123
Password	..... Better
Re-enter Password	.....

The second section on this page, [Link Students to Account](#) , requires you to enter the following information for at least one student: student's name, access ID (**5-digit** parent/guardian username/web ID provided by school), access password (**5-character** parent/guardian password provided by school), and your relationship to the student. **The password is case-sensitive.** Be sure to enter the access ID and password exactly as provided to you or you will receive an invalid information error. (This access ID and access password is the same as what parents used for logging in directly to PowerSchool in previous years.) You may enter the information for up to seven students. If you have more than seven students you will need to create more than one account.

7. Type in your child's name under **Student Name**
8. Enter the current **Access ID** and **Access Password (upper-case letters)** you use for the child you typed in (If you do not know your Access ID and Access Password, please visit one of the secretaries at your child's school.)

9. Enter your **Relationship** to this student from the drop-down list
10. Repeat step #7, #8, and #9 on all other children you may have in the District whose **User Name** and **Password** you know

**Link Students to Account**

Enter the Access ID, Access Password, and Relationship for each student you wish to add to your Parent/Guardian Account

Student Name	Access ID	Access Password	Relationship
1. Meredith	Smith123	••••	Mother, natural/adoptive
2. John	Smith480	••••	Mother, natural/adoptive
3.			- Choose
4.			- Choose
5.			- Choose
6.			- Choose
7.			- Choose

11. Click the **Enter** button to complete the Parent/Guardian Account generation process (You will then be re-directed back to the Login Page.)

Be sure to click on  to save your account information! Below is a snapshot of a sample account.

As you save your information, you will receive an error message if any piece of information is missing or incorrect. If you receive an error, be sure to correct or fill in missing information, retype your password and access passwords and save once more.

Once you have successfully created your new account, use your new username and password to login to PowerSchool.

Your next screen will be a confirmation that your PowerSchool account has been created. Log back in using your User Name and Password. This is the area you will log into on all future visits to PowerSchool.



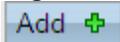
Congratulations! Your new Parent/Guardian Account has been created. Enter your Username and Password to start using your new account.

**Login**

**User Name**

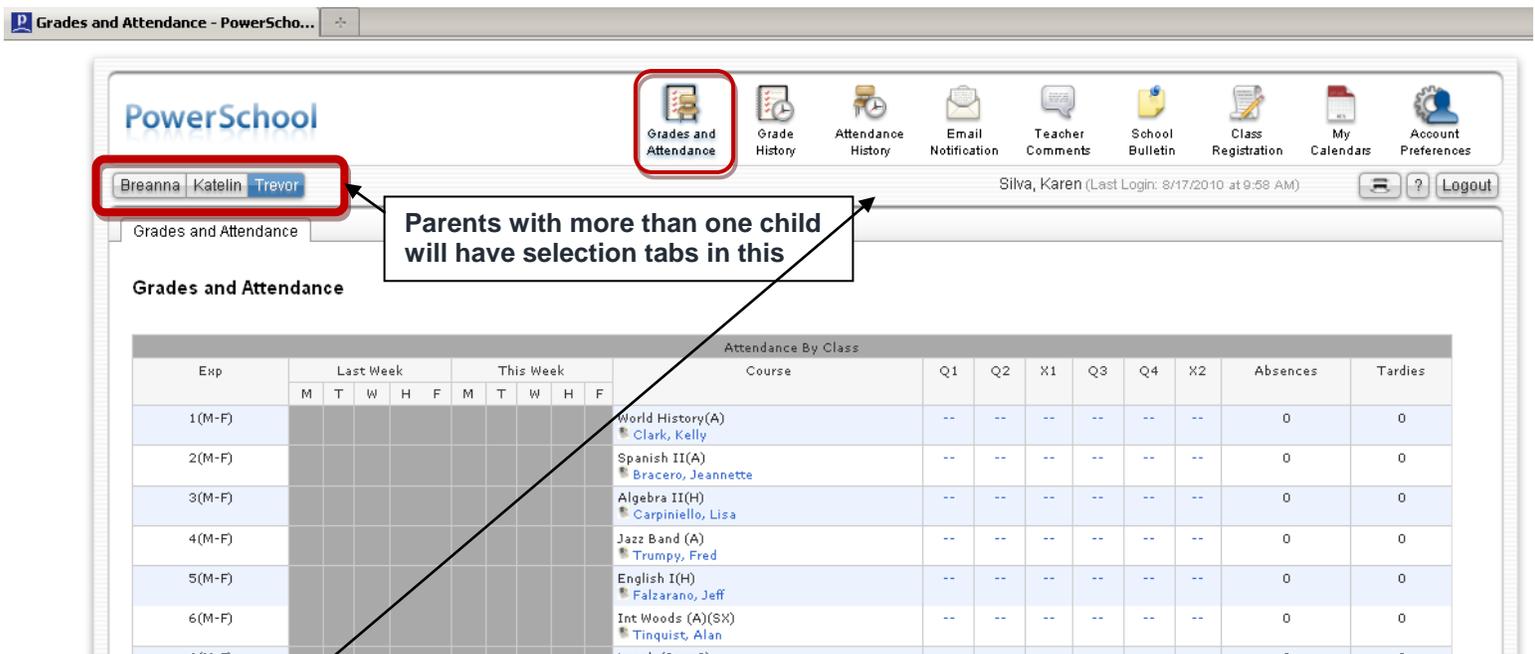
**Password**

[Having trouble logging in?](#)

If you need to add additional students you may do so after logging in by clicking on the *Account Preferences* icon, clicking on the *Students* tab, and then clicking on . Each of your student's names will show side by side on the navigation bar, on the left below the icons, linking you to available functions in the PowerSchool parent portal for each student. Click the student's name in the navigation bar to view that student's information.

## The PowerSchool Environment

PowerSchool opens to the **Grades and Attendance** page. It is a quick lookup page which shows classes, teachers, grades and attendance which pull from the teacher gradebooks for the current term. Once grades start to appear under the terms, you may double-click the grade to see class assignments.



PowerSchool

Grades and Attendance

Breanna | Katelin | Trevor

Silva, Karen (Last Login: 8/17/2010 at 9:58 AM) Logout

Parents with more than one child will have selection tabs in this

Exp	Last Week					This Week					Course	Q1	Q2	X1	Q3	Q4	X2	Absences	Tardies
	M	T	W	H	F	M	T	W	H	F									
1(M-F)												--	--	--	--	--	--	0	0
												--	--	--	--	--	--	0	0
2(M-F)												--	--	--	--	--	--	0	0
3(M-F)												--	--	--	--	--	--	0	0
4(M-F)												--	--	--	--	--	--	0	0
5(M-F)												--	--	--	--	--	--	0	0
6(M-F)												--	--	--	--	--	--	0	0

Other pages may be accessed by clicking on the icons in the menu bar at the top of the screen.



Grades and Attendance

**Grades History** shows final term grades that have been stored into student course history.



Attendance History

**Attendance History** gives a breakdown of dates absent and absence reasons. On days when school is not in session, a dash will appear.



Email Notification

**Email Notification** allows you to choose what reports you would like emailed to you and how often. This feature is optional, and reports can be quite voluminous. Most of this information can be obtained from the web pages.

What information would you like to receive?

Summary of current grades and attendance

Detailed reports showing all assignment scores for each class

Detailed report of attendance

School announcements

Balance Alert (Note: Will only be sent when a student is low on funds.)

How often?

Send now?

Email Address(es)   
(separate multiple email addresses with commas)

**TIPS:**

Multiple email addresses can be entered by placing a comma (,) between each email address. (No spaces) e.g.: myemail@yahoo.com,myworkemail@workplace.net

When email reports are received, DO NOT reply to the email. These emails are generated by an auto notification system. Your email responses will not be routed to the school or the teacher. Please email the teacher directly with questions.

Be advised that teachers may not be able to update their grade books on a daily basis.



**Teacher Comments** allows you to view comments teachers have made relative to the class. You may also find comments in the Grades and Attendance area relative to the term.



**School Bulletin** allows access to the school bulletin if one is published. Some buildings publish a weekly bulletin to the Somerset Hills School District website instead.

**Class Registration** is for course requests for the coming year. Although at times students are able to make selections on this page, it is current district policy that this is done while in the office of their guidance counselor.

**My Calendars**, a personal calendar application, is a tool to help parents and students stay on top of daily events and better manage their time. Using My Calendar, you can subscribe to and receive homework and school event information in the form of a calendar on your desktop computer. With My Calendar, you can:

- Subscribe to calendars to keep up with homework assignments, grades, school events, and more.
- View more than one calendar at a time from within a single unified window to quickly identify schedule conflicts and pockets of free time. Keep your priorities straight with a built-in To Do list.

**IMPORTANT:** In order to use My Calendar, you must first have iCal installed on your computer. You will need Mac OS X version 10.2.3 or later to use iCal. iCal is available as a free download. For more information, visit the Apple Inc. Web site at [www.apple.com/ical](http://www.apple.com/ical).

**Account Preferences** is on parent accounts only. It allows parents to update account information and add additional students (if Access ID and Password are obtained from the school).

Click the Help icon  in the upper right portion of the screen below menu for help and information about the page you are on when using PowerSchool's parent portal.



Remember to Logout when you are done.

## Log Out of PowerSchool Parent Portal

When you are finished working in PowerSchool Parent Portal, it is important to log out of the application, which can be done from any page in the application.

**Note:** If you are not actively working in PowerSchool Parent Portal, your session may time out. If so, you need to log in again.

## Communicating with Teachers

PowerSchool is a tool to increase communication between parents and teachers. We are excited at the potential of this new application, but realize that with this comes a shift in the way we work and communicate. We believe that along with teachers, it is also important for parents to become educated in the process of grades and assessment. Before PowerSchool, parents received grade information only upon request or at scheduled times. With the PowerSchool Parent Portal, it will now be possible for parents to check grade information at any point in the year. With that in mind, parents need to know and understand the following:

1. Each teacher has his or her own grading system. Some teachers work on a straight points system while others weight the scores according to assignment categories (tests, quizzes, etc). Some give grades for class participation while others do not accept late work. Our teachers inform all of their students at the beginning of the course of their expectations and their grading system. For this reason, it is very important for parents to read the grading policy provided by each teacher.
2. Grades can change dramatically in the first few weeks of each marking period. In the beginning of each term, you may see zeros or large shifts in the class average of your child. When there are only one or two assignments in the grade book, a low or high score can make a dramatic change in the overall grade average. The grade book instantly recalculates the overall grade as every assignment is entered.
3. Teachers need time to grade projects, assignments and tests. Each day teachers are expected to have new material and lesson plans ready for class. Many teachers are also involved in extracurricular activities that take time to plan and attend. With that in mind, teachers do need time to get the assignments graded. For example, a teacher will not be able to post grades for an essay assignment the next day when he/she has 25 students in their class. We have asked our teachers to try to have all grades entered into PowerSchool within a reasonable period of time. Please be patient as it does take time.

4. Teacher email links are available in PowerSchool, or on our district website. You may communicate with the teacher through email or by phone. If you choose to use email, realize that due to the nature of the job, most teachers have little time to respond to email during the school day. Do not expect an immediate response to email messages. However, if you do not receive a response from the teacher within a day or two, please contact your child's Assistant Principal.

## **Student Grade Concerns**

Although our staff is always willing to talk with you about your son's or daughter's progress, we have found that following the steps below can often resolve your concerns:

1. Talk with your child first. Ask them what the situation is with their grades.
2. Read the grading policy of the teacher. This may answer the question of why the student has received the grade or explain how the assignments add up to the current average.
3. Check to see if there is an assignment description. In the Class Score Detail screen, if the assignment is listed in blue it will have more information about the assignment. This may help you in understanding what was involved or expected for a particular assignment.
4. Check the date of the assignment. An assignment handed in late may receive deductions from its score. Remember - early in the marking period, overall grades can fluctuate dramatically because of the lack of assignments in the grade book.
5. See if there are any missing or late assignments that could be affecting the overall grade average.
6. Realizing that no system is perfect, if a discrepancy is found please send one email to the attention of the teacher. We are all working together to achieve the highest level of consistency and accuracy possible. Please be patient as we continue with developing this program to be the best it can be.

If you are using an email client application (i.e. Outlook, Entourage, etc) clicking on one of the teacher names under the Course title will allow you to send an email directly to the teacher. Please do not modify the subject line that is automatically entered onto the mail message. The subject line will help ensure that the message is identified as a parent contact to our staff within our email system.

If you are using a web-based email such as Yahoo or Hotmail, note the email address when you move your mouse over the name and send email through your web email. Depending on which web browser you are using it may appear in the lower left corner of the window when you hover your mouse over the teacher's name.

***Access ID and Access Passwords / old User Names and Passwords are available from each buildings administration office, but must be picked up by parent/guardian of student. Staff will not give information over the phone or by e-mail for you and your children's protection.***