SeniorSystems

Custom Programming Enhancements Release Bulletin
August 2011

In this bulletin...

About Release 92_0 Custom Features

This supplemental Release Bulletin describes two new features that can be made available to schools that have arranged for the required custom programming enhancements. These features allow HTML formatting for student comments and archiving/publishing student report cards, progress reports, and transcripts. Neither of these new features is automatically available, as each of them requires programming changes to your school's custom report cards, transcripts, and potentially other custom reports.

If your school is interested in implementing either or both of these new features, please send an email to reports@senior-systems.com with your requests. Please include the name of the report, the school division in your request. We will contact you and review your school's data and requirements, schedule the necessary programming with our development team, and help coordinate the implementation of these features for your system.

Custom Programming Enhancements

With release 92_0, Senior Systems has put the framework into place to support two custom programming enhancements that many schools have been requesting:

- **HTML capabilities for student comments** - allows teachers to apply standard HTML formatting to comment text that will carry over to report cards (and other grading reports) and all screen displays for students and parents in My BackPack, including Progress Reports. You can turn this feature on or off by division, and by type of comments (grade or section comments).

- **Automated Archiving/Publishing to My BackPack for report cards and transcripts** - your student report cards, progress reports, and transcripts can be automatically archived to the Student Maintenance Media tab, and can also optionally be published to students and parents in My BackPack. These archived items are not deleted during end of year processing, as student report cards currently are, and so provide an easy method to keep these documents permanently associated with the student.

Neither of these new features is automatically available, as each of them requires programming changes to your school's custom report cards, transcripts, and potentially other custom reports. The amount of programming work required will vary by school, and some schools may also want to use this opportunity to convert to Crystal Reports for their report cards and transcripts.

If your school is interested in implementing either or both of these new features, please send an email to reports@senior-systems.com with your requests. Please include the name of the report, the school division in your request. We will contact you and review your school's data and requirements, schedule the necessary programming with our development team, and help coordinate the implementation of these features for your system.

HTML Capabilities for Comments

After custom programming enhancements by Senior Systems, you can now choose to optionally convert grade and/or section comments to HTML, which allows teachers to apply standard HTML formatting to comment text that will carry over to report cards (and other grading reports) and all displays to students and parents in My BackPack, including Progress Reports. You can turn this feature on or off by division, and by type of comments (grade or section comments). In order to maintain consistency of text formatting for report cards, your school may want to establish guidelines for teachers regarding the use of particular styles and formats, such as font size and style, use of color, insertion of images, etc.

IMPORTANT: These text features may not display on all types of reports.

At this time, the only text formatting features that are supported for report cards (other than font/color/size) are bold, italic, underline, strike-through, and alignment (e.g. centering). For schools where faculty enter comments via My BackPack, certain features of the HTML editor have been disabled, but it is still possible to paste text with formatting that will not render correctly on report cards, so teacher training will be essential.

Should you later choose to disable this feature and convert comments back to text, you will lose all HTML formatting in that process.

How To Enable HTML Comments

Note: You must perform this task for each division for which you want to enable HTML comments. Note that this change is applicable to ALL academic years, regardless of the academic year that you select in Administration Maintenance.

1. Select **Maintenance > Administration Maintenance** from the main menu in the Registrar application. Then select the Division and Academic Year and click **OK**.

2. Select the Comments tab, and click **HTML COMMENTS** on the right side of the screen (this button is disabled until you have contacted Senior Systems Product Support and all custom programming has been completed for your school).
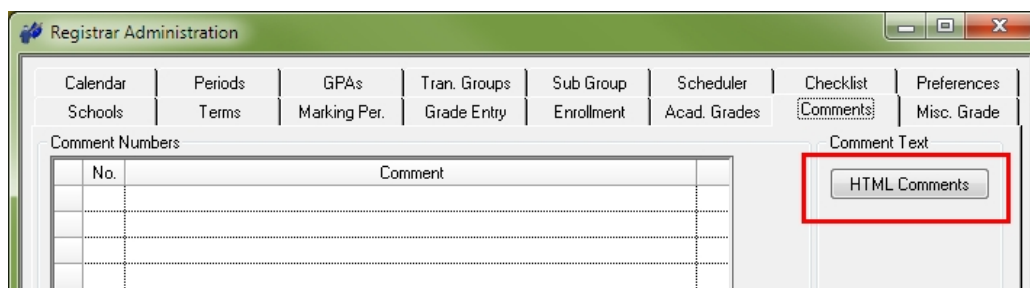
3. Click **CONVERT COMMENTS TO HTML** for the appropriate type of comments (grade or section) and then click **YES** to confirm. (To convert HTML comments back to text, you would instead click **CONVERT COMMENTS TO TEXT**.)
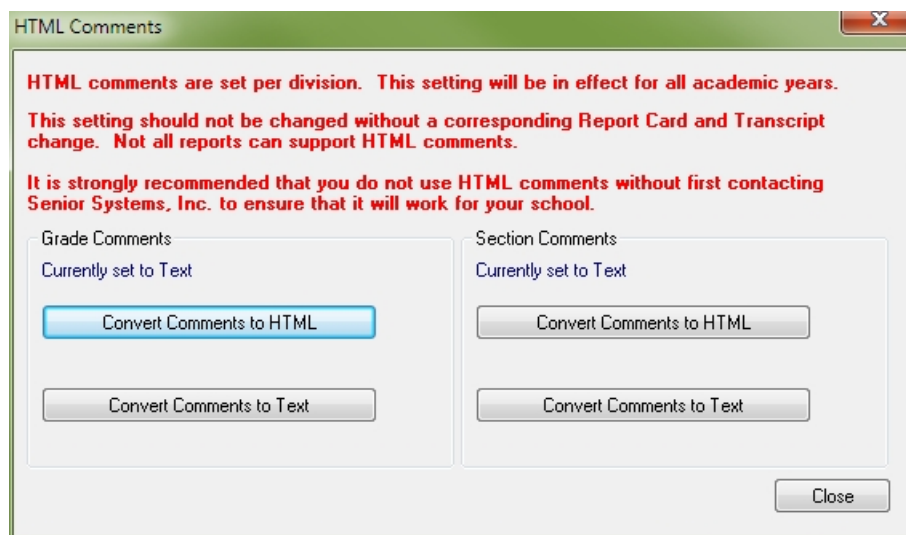

4. The counter displays the number of records as it processes and informs you when they have been updated. You can now select to convert the other comment type, or click **CLOSE** if you are finished.

Entering/Editing HTML Comments

On the My BackPack and Registrar/Teacher Administration Comment Entry screens for grading, the text entry area changes to display a formatting toolbar at the top, and editing works in a similar fashion to a word processing program.

- In Registrar, the toolbar provides for the most common text editing features. You can click on the ⓩ icon to toggle between WYSIWYG and HTML code format on the screen. There is also a new print capability available by clicking the 🖨 print icon (note that this is not a report; it only prints the text from the screen). The ⧉ Modify Font icon allows you to make several common types of font style changes.
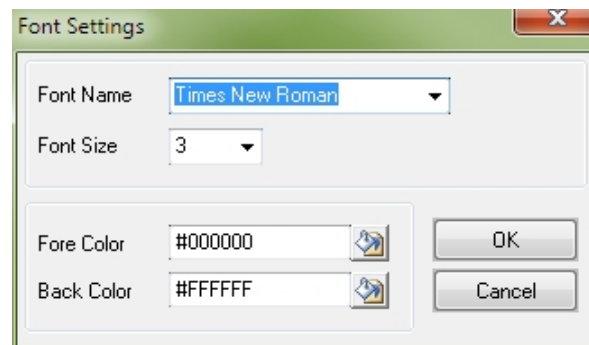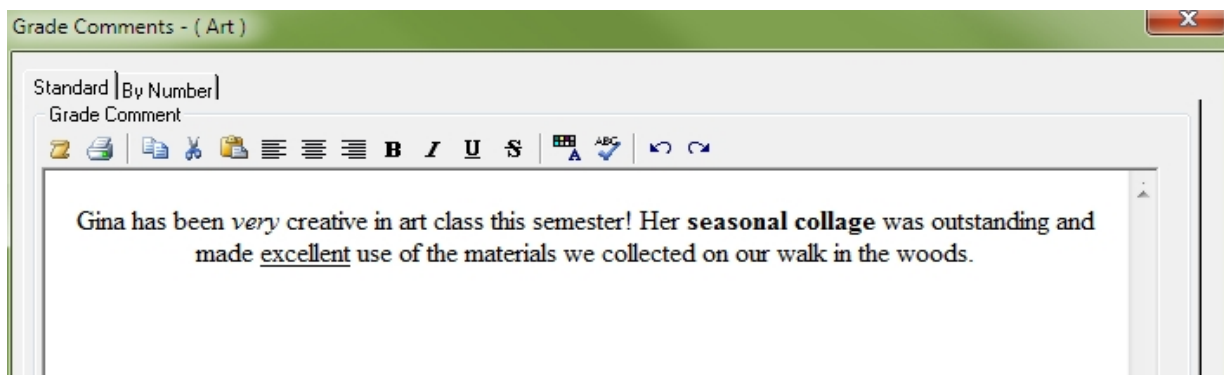
Tips: Font size selections for this editor use the older-style HTML sizes 1-7, rather than a point size. Size 3 roughly corresponds to 12 pt. text, with the lower numbers being smaller and the higher numbers being larger. Always preview to make sure your content appears as intended!

You can also cut and paste more extensively formatted text from MS Word or other word processing programs; always be sure to double-check the results if you use the cut-and-paste technique!

- In My BackPack, the student comment entry screens utilize the standard HTML editor for My BackPack, which has an extensive toolbar for HTML formatting. Note that on the student comment entry screens, you will need to click an **EDIT COMMENT** button to access the HTML editing window for each comment block (because the editor toolbar increases screen length, scrolling is kept to a minimum by only expanding the edit window for one student at a time). If you need assistance with using this editor, click the 🔲 Help icon in My BackPack, and select the 'How To Use The HTML Editor' topic near the top of the left navigation pane.
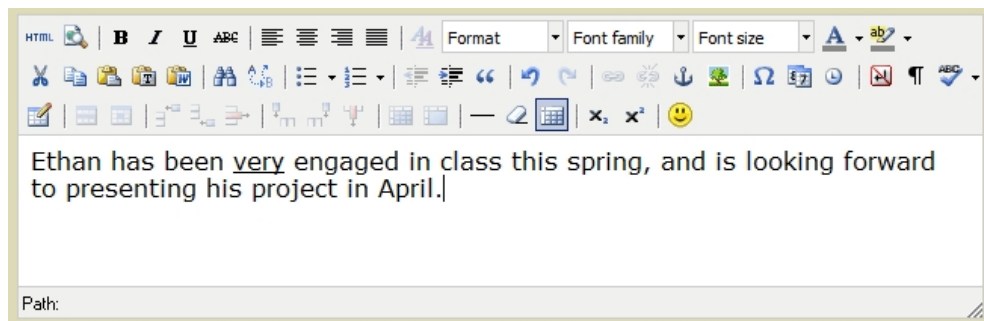
IMPORTANT: Several of the HTML Editor buttons have been disabled for comment entry in My BackPack because these features will not render correctly on report cards. Specifically you cannot use HTML indent, sub- and super-script, horizontal lines, or bullets/numbered list features. At this time the only text formatting features that are supported for report cards (other than font/color/size) are bold, italic, underline, strike-through, and alignment (e.g. centering). Please use caution if you paste text from MS Word or other sources which may contain unsupported text features.

Archiving and Publishing Report Cards and Transcripts
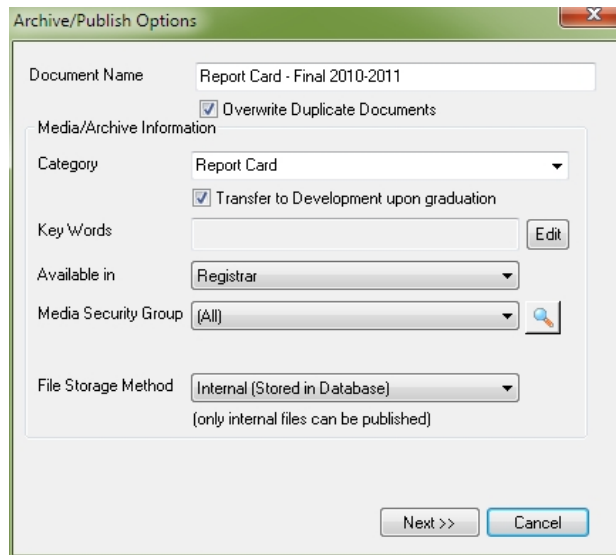
After custom programming enhancements by Senior Systems, you can now archive copies of student report cards, progress reports, and transcripts to the Student Maintenance Media tab. Any items stored on the student media tab may also optionally be published to students and parents in My BackPack, so this process can be used to publish these documents electronically.

How To Archive/Publish Student-Specific Documents

1. Proceed with your normal process to create and review report cards, transcripts, or other student-specific documents prior to printing.

2. Once you are satisfied that the content is correct and complete, click **ARCHIVE** on the Report creation screen.
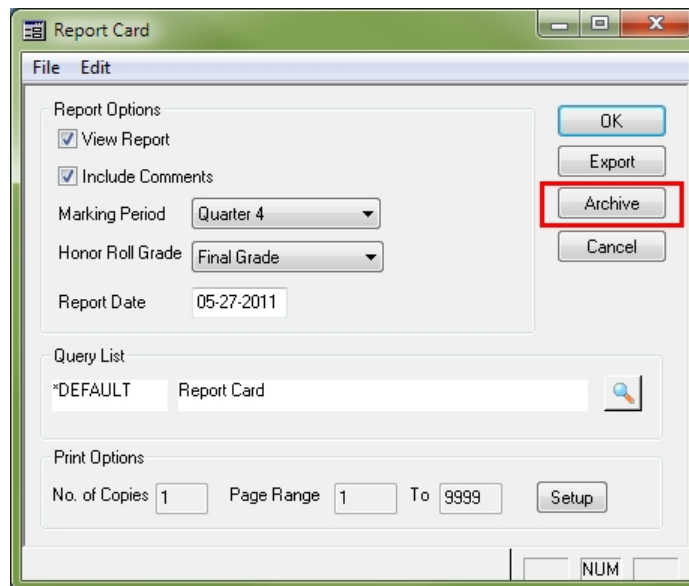
3. If applicable, select the marking period grades to include on the report from the pop-up dialog and click **OK**.

4. Select the Archive options as desired and click **NEXT.** You can optionally modify the Document Name and, if you are archiving again for the same marking period, you can choose whether or not to 'Overwrite Duplicate Documents'. The fields in the Media/Archive section correspond with fields on the student Media tab, and you can adjust these if needed to set the values correctly for this document.

Note: Except for the special category of Portrait (which is a hard-coded system value used for student photos), the values for the Category field are defined using Code Maintenance in System Administration (Media Category). The Media Category is only used to filter media items when later creating queries to view student media. Your school may want to set up a special media category for Report Cards, but this is completely optional.

5. Select the Publish options as desired and click **NEXT**. If you want to publish this document to My BackPack, be sure to check the 'Publish Document' checkbox, and set or adjust the other security and display controls as needed. If you do NOT want to publish to My BackPack, simply un-check the 'Publish Document' checkbox.

> **Note:** If you wish to publish to a specific display group folder, it must already exist.
> See Setting Up Display Group Folders for Publishing to MBP for more details about how
> to set up these folders.

6. Check your settings and then click **FINISH** to begin the archive process.

7. Once the files have been archived, the Import Complete dialog is displayed, and you can
    optionally choose to save a merged PDF copy of all the reports (if you have not already done
    so prior to beginning the archive/publish process). To save a merged PDF copy, click **YES**,
    navigate and enter the file name, and then click **SAVE**, OR just click **No** to skip creating a
    PDF. The report is now available on the Student Maintenance Media tab for each student,
    and, if you chose to publish to My BackPack, is viewable on the My Documents screen for the
    appropriate My BackPack users.
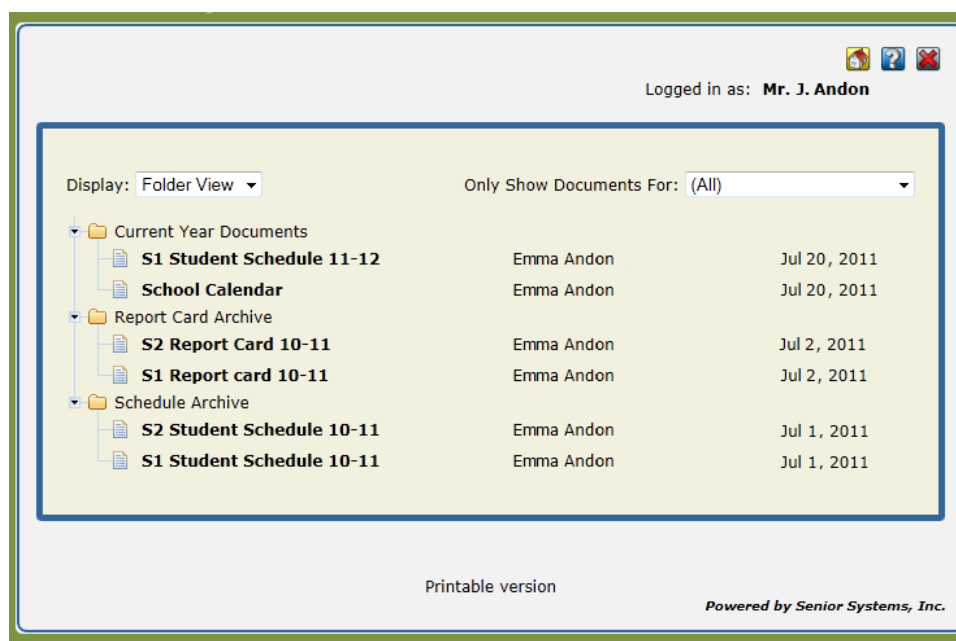
Setting Up Display Group Folders for Publishing to MBP

You can optionally choose to set up folders that are used to organize and group the published documents that users see on their My Documents page in My BackPack. For example, you might want separate folders for academic items like Report Cards and Transcripts, Parent Newsletters, Student Awards, Athletic Schedules, etc. These folders are purely for ease of presentation and navigation by users, and if a document is not assigned to a display group folder, it will just display in the root level list. If you want to use display group folders, they must be set up in advance, so that you will be able to select the correct folder when you publish media items to My BackPack.

Following is an example of a screen in My BackPack where some of the documents are assigned to display group folders. Users can expand and contract the view for each folder, or they can select List View which shows all documents in a single list:

Folder View:

List View:

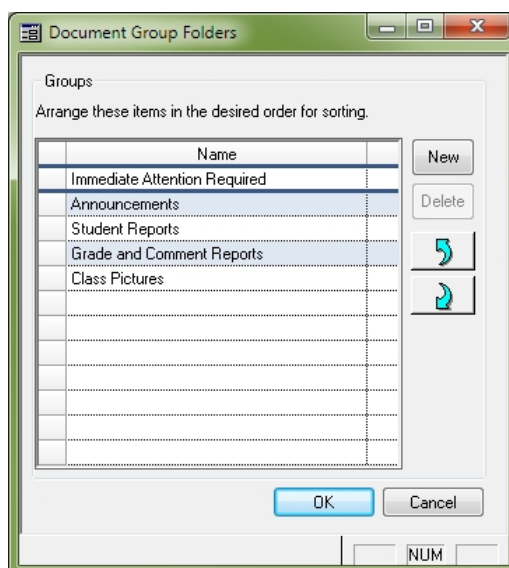**To set up or maintain document group folders for My BackPack:**

1. Select **Documents > Group Folder Maintenance** from the main menu in the System Administration application.

2. **To add or edit document group folders**, create or select the document group folder to work with:

- **To add a new document group folder**, click **NEW**. Type the Name into the new blank row in the table.
- **To edit a document group folder**, click on the row to select it. You can then edit the Name field, or use the [↺] Up and [↻] Down buttons to move it to a different location in the display sequence.
- Click **OK** to save changes.

3. **To remove a document group folder**, click on the row to select it and click **DELETE**. Then click **YES** to confirm.

> **Note:** If there are any documents currently published to that folder, you will receive a warning that those documents will now be moved to the root level for all affected users. You can then choose to continue with the operation or cancel.