

Enhancements to Aspen SIS and IMS

All users

Follett Notifications app



To download the free Follett Notifications app:

1. *Android devices:* Go to the Play Store.
iOS (Apple) devices: Go to the App Store.
(Currently available in the US App Store only.)
2. Search for “Follett Notifications.”

Follett Notifications is currently available on Android 4.0+ and iOS 7.0+ devices.

Keep updated on district and school news, events, and announcements with the new Follett Notifications app! Just download and activate the app to automatically receive Aspen notifications on your mobile devices from district and school administrators and teachers. You can also view previously-received notifications. Users need Aspen credentials to log on to the app.

Your Aspen user role determines the type of messages you can receive.

- All users can receive district-, school-, and class-authored messages.
- Teachers are automatically notified when a student adds or drops their course.
- Student and parents receive automatic alerts for grade thresholds and when resources or blogs are added to Pages.

Types of notifications users might receive include:

- Alarm notifications to remind you about meetings or events, such as an upcoming in-service day.

5.2 Release Notes

- Announcement notifications that provide exciting news or events, such as the hiring of a new superintendent.
- Information notifications with details about an event, such as report cards being available.
- Warning notifications about important events, such as when the district is closing due to inclement weather.

District, school, and system administrators

Improved gradebook performance

Changes were made to optimize gradebook performance for posted columns.

Follett Notifications app



Use the new Follett Notifications app to send safe, one-way communication to user groups in the district who have downloaded and activated the app. You can send notifications from either the full desktop site of Aspen (accessed on a desktop or laptop) or from the app on a mobile device.

On the full desktop site, administrators and teachers can review previously-sent notifications. District administrators can review all notifications sent at the district or school level, while teachers can only review notifications they have sent.

Management of temporary staff

New functionality enables school administrators to associate or remove temporary staff, such as substitute teachers, education assistants, and student teachers, to one or more schools simultaneously. Administrators can choose all staff, a snapshot, or a selection of staff members. (District view, **Staff > Options > Manage School Associations**)

Staff attendance

Enhanced management of staff attendance lets you easily mark a teacher absent and select a replacement. Enter a single date or a date range for the absence. Select a replacement teacher (from the teachers specified as substitutes, or staff in the same department, or all staff). Then, assign substitute teachers by period, or assign one substitute teacher for the entire day, and indicate whether the substitute teacher has gradebook access. (School view, **Attendance > Staff Roster**)

5.2 Release Notes

Mass-add students to programs

School administrators can now add several students to a program using a new procedure, **Mass Add Student Programs**. Select the program, a group of students (based on the current selection, year of graduation, homeroom, or all students), enter a start and end date for the association, and indicate whether to include active students only. (School view, **Student > Options > Mass Add Student Programs**).

Override District and School Final Average Formula

Districts, intermediate organizations, and schools assign weights to components of averages. However, by selecting a new Grade preference, you can now allow teachers to override the district's and school's final average formula in their gradebook. Teachers may want to use this when they feel that the calculation is inappropriate for their courses, in that it puts too much or too little weight on certain term or exam grades.

View and delete calculation override records

If you selected the new Grade preference allowing teachers to customize grade calculation weights for transcript average columns, you can use the new Calculation Overrides side-tab to view a list of course sections with calculation override records (School view, **Grades > Calculation Overrides**). You can also delete these records, causing those course sections to revert to the default grade calculation.

Graduation Summary and Graduation Progress page enhancements

Using the new **Graduation Summary Columns** Grade preference, root organization administrators can now specify additional transcript definition columns to appear in the Course Breakdown section of the Graduation Summary and Graduation Progress. These additional columns can be further customized with procedures through the new **Graduation Summary Procedure** Grade preference.

Update GPA and rank separately when changing student transcript grades

Previously, if you wanted Aspen to automatically update a student's GPA whenever you manually changed a grade in his or her transcript, you were forced to also update the rank of all students in student's year of graduation, possibly causing delays for schools with large graduating classes.

GPA and Rank auto-calculations are now separated to prevent this issue. Set the new **Rank mode** Grade preference to determine how the system updates student rank when a user manually modifies a transcript grade.

5.2 Release Notes

Prevent intermediate org users from changing user roles	A new field, “Prevent customization”, lets a district-level administrator lock user roles so that intermediate organization-level users cannot customize them. District (Root Organization) view, Admin > Security > Role > Details .
Use ‘holding school’ for cross-enrolled students from non-Aspen primary school	Students whose primary schools do not use Aspen might want to cross-enroll at a school in your district. Your root organization can now specify a “holding” school and enable it via its Membership preferences. Then, a school registrar can enroll the student into the holding school (with an enrollment status of <i>Active No Primary</i>), and cross-enroll the student into their school using Create Secondary School Associations .
Positive attendance	<p>Aspen uses a negative attendance model, since most districts assume students are “present” and teachers record the students who are “absent.” A new preference reverses the user interface to allow teachers to collect class attendance positively: students are assumed “absent” unless a teacher marks them as “present.”</p> <p>The new “Positive attendance” preference is available in the District (Root), Intermediate Organization, and School views. If enabled in the School view, positive attendance will be taken for all classes, regardless of whether it is enabled in the district or Intermediate Organization. You can also enable positive attendance for specific courses or course sections with the Positive Attendance checkbox in the Schedule Master table.</p> <p>This preference only affects how class attendance is entered. It does not affect how teachers or attendance managers take daily attendance.</p>
Assessment entry	A new entry screen allows users to enter assessment scores for specified groups of students (School view, Assessment > Student Assessments > Assessment Entry). When entering assessment scores, an automatic fill-down functionality is available. A link to a printer-friendly Assessment Entry List is also available.

5.2 Release Notes

Procedure description enhancement

A new **Description** sub-tab features a rich text editor where users can enter a comment or warning about a procedure (District view, **Tools > Procedures > Details**). This comment appears on a pop-up when a user runs the procedure. The user can then run or cancel the job.

Associate related students

Indicate when students are related or share an address with the new **Associate Related Students** side-tab (District, Intermediate Organization, or School view, **Student > Contacts > Related Students > Options > Add**). This feature can be helpful for coordinating handouts and mailings.

Enhancements to user role privileges

Aspen administrators can give specified user roles at intermediate organizations the ability to manage field sets, filters, queries and other menu items without editing or deleting those created by the root organization (District view, **Admin > Security > Details > Organization** category > **Manage intermediate organization owned resources**). Also, the privileges for managing field sets, filters and other menu items are now separate from those for managing reference codes (District view, **Admin > Security > Details > District** category > **Reference Code – Common**).

Additional user-defined fields added to School Year Context and School Calendar Data Dictionary tables

To accommodate the assignment of state ID numbers, school closures due to inclement weather, and professional development days, the following user-defined fields have been added to the School Year Context (CTX) and School Calendar (CAS) tables and are available for use:

- 5 A fields
 - 5 B fields
 - 2 C fields
-

5.2 Release Notes

Second daily attendance

Aspen typically allows teachers or attendance managers to post only one daily attendance record per student. A new set of school daily attendance preferences allows them to collect daily attendance for a second time during the school day, which is preferable or required for some schools.

If you select the new **Second daily attendance** preference, teachers and attendance managers can select from a drop-down on their daily attendance pages whether the codes they are entering apply to the student's AM and/or PM attendance record. Using the new **AM portion absent** preference, you can also set the portion of the day, out of 1.0, that a student is considered absent by Aspen if he or she is absent from the second daily attendance collection.

Quick Letter templates

New Quick Letter templates allow staff to create letters for students based on attendance, conduct, or grades-related criteria using a combination of free text and calculation fields.

To create a Quick Letter, click the Quick Letter icon  on any student list page.

Users who also have Aspen IMS

Next Generation Science Standards available

District administrators can import the Next Generation Science Standards into Aspen. (District view, **Tools > Procedures**, select **State Standards Import > Details > Options > Run**. On the State Standards Import pop-up, select **Next Generation Science Standards** from the **Region** drop-down. Click **Run**.)

5.2 Release Notes

Schedulers (For Aspen users who build and manage school and student schedules)

Elementary scheduling and scheduling modes

To give all school levels in your district the ability to build schedules, Aspen now offers three scheduling modes:

- Elementary
- Secondary
- Both

Determine which scheduling mode to use for each school in your district in the School Schedule preferences (School view, **School > Setup > Preferences > Schedule** category). The mode you select determines the information you enter to build the schedule.

Elementary schedules consist of blocks for academics, lunch, specialists, recess, etc. Similar to secondary schedules, you need to enter information in Aspen to prepare to build an elementary schedule. Preparing to build an elementary schedule includes:

- Creating courses with special elementary parameters, such as **Minimum minutes per session**. Then, create course programs, which group these courses together. The Grade One course program might consist of ELA, Math, Science, Social Studies, etc.
- Grouping students and assigning those groups to course programs.
- Creating elementary build scenarios, including defining lunch information.
- Using the Workspace Matrix and its drag and drop interface to build your schedule.

Select the new **Both** scheduling mode for a school such as a middle school where you need to create an elementary schedule for grades five and six, and a secondary schedule for grades seven and eight. You then determine which mode to use by grade level in the **Elementary schedule grade level cutoff** field. When selecting the Build view on the settings bar, you determine if you want to go to the **Secondary Mode** or **Elementary Mode**.

5.2 Release Notes

Enrollment reserve seating

You can now use reserved seating to set aside seats in a section to prevent the class from filling completely and to save places for students who have not yet had time to make their course requests.

To reserve seats in course sections, select the **Use reserve seats** checkbox in the build scenario preferences (Build view, **Scenario > Preferences**). When enabled, the **Enrollment reserve seats** field appears for each course section on the Workspace (Build view, **Workspace > Sections > Details**). Type the number of seats you want to reserve for each section during the build process.

Teachers

Improved gradebook performance

Changes were made to optimize gradebook performance for posted columns.

Gradebook mode calculation

A mode statistic has been added to Aspen's gradebook Assignment Statistics pop-up, which appears when a value is selected in the **Average Score** row (Staff view, **Gradebook > Scores**). (The mode value occurs the most often in a data set.) Mode joins other statistics in the pop-up: Average, Median, High score, Low score, and Standard deviation. If more than one mode value occurs, the values are separated by a comma.

Weight pop-up for gradebook average columns

In certain cases, if a post column is an average column, you can now click on the post column's name in your gradebook column header to view the grade calculation weights applied to the average's component grades via a pop-up. This occurs if the following conditions are met:

- Your administrator has defined that column as an "Other Average" or "Final Average" in your district's transcript definition.
- The column is associated with a grade calculation and the grade calculation contains non-grouped weights.

5.2 Release Notes

Gradebook Due Date and Assignment Date Enhancement

When you create an assignment in the gradebook, Aspen automatically applies the current date to the **Date due** and **Date assigned** fields (Staff view, **Gradebook > Assignments**). Aspen now detects when you edit the **Date assigned** field to a date in the future, and automatically updates the **Date due** field to match (so it does not display an earlier date).

Gradebook Overall Cumulative Average Column

A new user gradebook preference lets you display a **Cumulative** column in the gradebook (Staff view, **Gradebook > Scores**). This overall cumulative average includes all grades and scores entered since the beginning of the class, regardless of term. Aspen calculates the overall cumulative average using the average mode specified in your gradebook. The **Cumulative** column only appears if the District and School have enabled their preferences.

Positive Attendance

Aspen uses a negative attendance model, since most districts assume students are “present” and teachers record the students who are “absent.” Administrators can now set the user interface to allow you to collect class attendance positively: students are assumed “absent” unless you mark them as “present.”

If your district determines that all courses in your school or a course section you teach are required to take positive attendance, the following changes appear in your attendance input pages:

- On the class attendance input page (Staff view, **Attendance > Class > Input**), seating chart page (Staff view, **Attendance > Class > Seating Chart**), and trends page (Staff view, **Attendance > Class > Trends > Enable Attendance Buttons**), a message indicates that positive attendance is being taken displays prior to posting or saving.
 - When taking class attendance that has not yet been posted, all students are marked absent by default.
 - The **P** (Present) and **A** (Absent) codes appear by default.
 - When attendance is posted, Aspen creates absence records for students not marked present. Any tardy or dismissal entries are recorded as usual.
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5.2 Release Notes

If your district or school requires you to take positive attendance, it only changes how you enter attendance for your classes. You still post daily attendance to the office as you normally would.

Seating Chart Reset

You can now quickly clear a seating chart and start fresh. Use the Design Mode link on the right of the screen to see the class seating grid, and click **Reset** to clear the grid and reorganize student seating for the class. (Staff view, **Gradebook > Seating Chart**)

Override District and School Final Average Formula

Districts, intermediate organizations, and schools assign weights to components of averages. However, in some districts, teachers can override the district's and school's final average formula in the gradebook (Staff view, **Gradebook > Details**). The **Grade calculation weights** section appears if the preference is enabled. After you change the weighting in a grade column, click **Gradebook > Scores** to see how the weights were applied. You can also apply a specific weighting to your other classes.

View and delete calculation override records

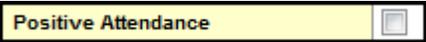
If your administrator allows you to override and customize the weights applied to your district's or school's average formula in the gradebook, you can view a list of your calculation override records on the new **Calculation Overrides** side-tab (Staff view, **Tools > Calculation Overrides**). You can also delete these records, causing those course sections to revert to the default grade calculation.

Add Assignment button moved on Gradebook Score page

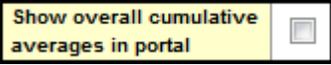
Previously, teachers could add assignments in the Gradebook Scores page (Staff view, **Gradebook > Scores**) by using the **Add** button, located on the header of the last assignment column on the right. Doing so required users to scroll through all of the class's prior assignments.

Now teachers can now create assignments more efficiently by clicking the relocated, renamed **Add Assignment** button at the top of the Scores page.

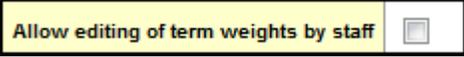
5.2 Release Notes

<i>New or updated preference</i>	<i>Where to access</i>	<i>Description</i>
<p>New District (Root Organization), Intermediate Organization, and School preference for Class Attendance:</p> 	<p>District (Root Organization) view, District > Setup > Preferences > Class Attendance category</p> <p>Intermediate Organization view, Intermediate Organization > Setup > Preferences > Class Attendance category</p> <p>School view, School > Setup > Preferences > Class Attendance category</p>	<p>Requires all teachers in the organization to take class attendance positively. In other words, students are presumed absent unless a teacher marks them present. This preference can be enabled at the district, intermediate organization, and school level. However, when enabled in the School view, positive attendance will be taken for that school, regardless of the district's or intermediate organization's settings.</p> <p>This preference only affects how class attendance is entered. It does not affect how teachers or attendance managers take daily attendance.</p>

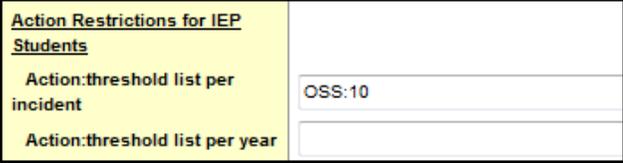
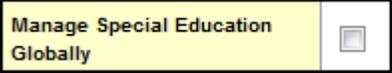
5.2 Release Notes

<p>New District (Root Organization) Family/Student Portal preference:</p> 	<p>District (Root Organization) view, District > Setup > Preferences > Family/Student Portal category</p>	<p>Determines whether an overall cumulative average for students appears in the Family and Student portals (Academics > Details). The overall cumulative average includes all grades and scores entered by the teacher since the beginning of the class, regardless of term. Aspen calculates the overall cumulative average using the average mode specified in the teacher's gradebook. Aspen uses the heading Cumulative for overall cumulative averages in the Family and Student portals.</p>
<p>New District (Root Organization) Student preference:</p> 	<p>District (Root Organization) view, > District > Setup > Preferences > Student category</p>	<p>Allows a school to designate a student as the family courier for school mailings and handouts, to reduce waste and duplication of effort. When registering a student, the school registrar can designate a related student as the courier.</p>

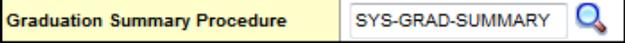
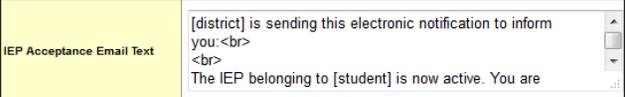
5.2 Release Notes

<p>New School Grade preference:</p> 	<p>School view > School > Setup > Preferences > Grade category</p>	<p>Determines whether teachers can override the weights applied by the district's (or school's) final average formula in their gradebook. If this preference is enabled, teachers can specify their own weights and formulas consisting of one or more Post Columns. When updating the Post Columns, Aspen uses the teacher's formula to update the Final Mark Post Column.</p>
<p>New School Grade preference:</p> 	<p>School view, School > Setup > Preferences > Grade category</p>	<p>Allows teachers to view an overall cumulative average in the gradebook (Gradebook > Scores). The overall cumulative average includes all grades and scores entered by the teacher since the beginning of the class, regardless of term. Aspen calculates the overall cumulative average using the average mode specified in the teacher's gradebook. The Cumulative column only appears in the gradebook if the District (Root Organization) enables it in the Family/Student Portal preference, and the teacher selects it in their user preferences on the Gradebook tab.</p>

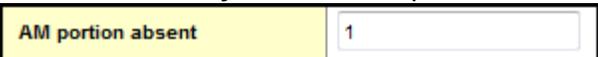
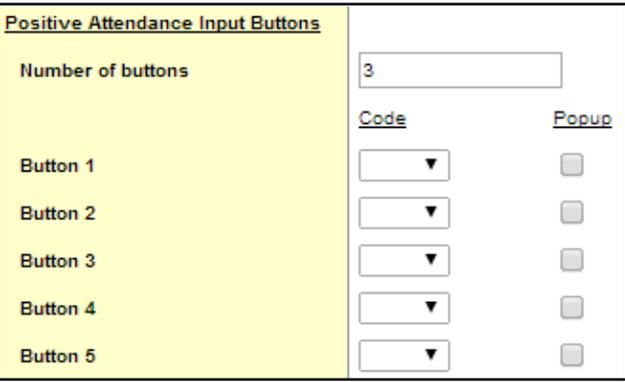
5.2 Release Notes

<p>New and updated District (Root Organization) Conduct preferences:</p> <p>Action: threshold list was renamed to Action: threshold list per incident</p> <p>Action: threshold list per year was added</p> 	<p>District (Root Organization) view, District > Setup > Preferences > Conduct category</p>	<p>Allows setting a limit of the number of conduct actions, such as detention, for Special Education students that are allowed per type of incident and per year.</p>
<p>New District (Root Organization) Membership preference:</p> 	<p>District (Root Organization) view, District > Setup > Preferences > Membership category</p>	<p>Allows root organization to create a school that serves as a holding school for students who will cross-enroll into schools in district, but whose schools do not use Aspen. The root organization first creates the holding school on the Schools side-tab (Options > Add), then specifies it as the holding school here.</p>
<p>New Special Education preference:</p> 		<p>Determines if Special Education can be managed globally.</p>

5.2 Release Notes

<p>New District (Root Organization) Grade preference:</p> 	<p>District (Root Organization) view, District > Setup > Preferences > Grade category</p>	<p>Enables administrators to define additional transcript columns to appear in the Course Breakdown section of the Graduation Summary and Graduation Progress. This allows teachers, scheduling managers, families, students, and other page viewers to view additional course information.</p>
<p>New District (Root Organization) Grade preference:</p> 	<p>District (Root Organization) view, District > Setup > Preferences > Grade category</p>	<p>Enables administrators to select a procedure to customize the columns specified in the Graduation Summary Columns preference.</p> <p>For instance, if the Final Grade column is set to appear with a message based on the final grade value, a procedure created for that purpose is selected here.</p>
<p>New District Schedule preference:</p> 	<p>District (Root Organization) view, District > Setup > Preferences > Schedule category</p>	<p>Fields to copy to Schedule Change from Course Drop.</p>
<p>New Special Education preference:</p> 	<p>Special Education view, Admin > Preferences</p>	<p>Defines default text for IEP Acceptance notification e-mail.</p>

5.2 Release Notes

<p>New School Daily Attendance preference:</p> 	<p>School view, School > Setup> Preferences > Daily Attendance category</p>	<p>Select this preference to enable teachers and attendance managers to collect daily attendance for a second time during the school day. If selected, when they are posting daily attendance, they can now select from a drop-down whether the codes they are entering apply to the students' AM and/or PM daily attendance records.</p>
<p>New School Daily Attendance preference:</p> 	<p>School view, School > Setup> Preferences > Daily Attendance category</p>	<p>For schools that take second daily attendance during AM or PM activities or classes, this preference determines what portion of a day, out of 1.0, a student is considered absent by Aspen if he or she is absent from the second daily attendance collection.</p>
<p>New School Class Attendance preferences:</p> 	<p>School view, School > Setup> Preferences > Class Attendance category</p>	<p>Determines the following factors for classes using positive attendance: the number of attendance input buttons available to staff members, the code for each button, and whether a pop-up is displayed.</p>

5.2 Release Notes

<p>Renamed set of School Class Attendance preferences:</p> <p>Previously, this set of preferences was called Input Buttons.</p> <p>Now it is called:</p> <div data-bbox="205 472 835 849" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p><u>Negative Attendance Input Buttons</u></p> <p>Number of buttons <input type="text" value="5"/></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Code</th> <th>Popup</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Button 1</td> <td>A ▼</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Button 2</td> <td>T ▼</td> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Button 3</td> <td>EX ▼</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Button 4</td> <td>D ▼</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Button 5</td> <td>TXT ▼</td> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> </div>		Code	Popup	Button 1	A ▼	<input type="checkbox"/>	Button 2	T ▼	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Button 3	EX ▼	<input type="checkbox"/>	Button 4	D ▼	<input type="checkbox"/>	Button 5	TXT ▼	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>School view, School > Setup> Preferences > Class Attendance category</p>	
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<p>New School Daily Attendance preference:</p> <div data-bbox="205 930 835 984" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>Classroom input type <input type="text" value="Period"/></p> </div>	<p>School view, School > Setup> Preferences > Daily Attendance category</p>	<p>For schools that take second daily attendance during AM or PM activities or classes, this preference determines whether staff members take second daily attendance by period or homeroom.</p>																		
<p>New School Daily Attendance preference:</p> <div data-bbox="205 1157 758 1211" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>Classroom input period <input type="text" value="B5"/></p> </div>	<p>School view, School > Setup> Preferences > Daily Attendance category</p>	<p>For schools that take second daily attendance during AM or PM activities or classes, this preference determines which period the second daily attendance is recorded in. This only applies if the user selects Period at the “Classroom input type” preference.</p>																		

5.2 Release Notes

<p>New District (Root Organization) preference:</p> 	<p>District (Root Organization) view, District > Setup > Preferences, General category</p>	<p>Limits the display of addresses in the intermediate organization and school views to only those addresses associated with that organization or school.</p>
<p>Renamed User Gradebook preference: Previously, it was called Semester running total. Now it is called:</p> 	<p>Staff view, Set Preferences > under Averages</p>	
<p>New School Grade preference:</p> 	<p>School view, School > Setup > Preferences, Grade category</p>	<p>Determines when rank will be auto-calculated in the transcript detail.</p>
<p>Renamed School Grade preference: Previously, it was called Rank mode. Now it is called:</p> 	<p>School view, School > Setup > Preferences, Grade category</p>	<p>Ranking mode to be used when a transcript detail triggers rank to be recalculated.</p>

5.2 Release Notes

Changes to User Roles and Privileges

Review your user roles to ensure the settings are appropriate for the default user roles used in your district and any customized roles you've created from Aspen's default roles.

The following table lists **new** and **updated** user role security privileges in Aspen:

<i>New or updated privilege</i>	<i>Default roles affected</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Where to access</i> <i>District view, Admin > Security > Roles > Details</i>
New user roles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special Education User - School • Special Education Manager - School 		Allow for special education access for users in the School view.	
New system table: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff Attendance Sub 	Instructor: R Personnel Manager: C R U D G M School Administrator: C R U D G M Staff: R System Administrator: C R U D G M		Staff category

5.2 Release Notes

<p>New User Role Category:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Notifications <p>New System Tables:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Notification• Notification Subscription• User Device	<p>System Administrator: Notification: C U D G M User Device: D G M</p>	<p>Supports the new Follett Notifications app.</p>	<p>Notifications category</p>
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