MEMORANDUM

TO: Superintendents and Business Managers
FROM: Bill Bates, Chief Financial Officer
SUBJECT: SSDDMS Project Update
DATE: March 11, 2021

This memo provides an update on the Shared School District Data Management System (SSDDMS) project. Topics include several implementation items, the Vermont Agencies' of Education and Digital Services (AOE and ADS) response to the request for a project "pause" by a number of SUs/SDs and the agencies' testimony and position on H.91

SUs/SDs Implemented

As of July 1, 2020, Vermont has 19 SU/SDs live on eFinancePlus, with five SU/SDs from Round 5 going live on July 1, 2020. Round 6 is well underway and we are splitting Round 6 into two new groups. The first group are those who are able to continue implementation and meet the current Phase 1 go-live date of July 1, 2021 (less than four months away). The second group is made up of SU/SDs that for several different reasons will need to take advantage of the Pause that is explained further in the next sections.

Project Pause

As project sponsor, I recommended a pause on the project a few months ago. Since that time, we have consulted with several stakeholder groups and completed a review of the project. Using this information, the AOE and ADS have worked with PowerSchool (PS) to develop a plan to correct the most critical issues SUs/SDs have identified with the eFinancePlus system, reporting, and the implementation. AOE is in support of a pause for future Rounds so that PS can address the following items over the next few months:

1. **Reporting** – PS will be ensuring our top 10 reports are built and working in Cognos and will work towards getting some of them built into eFinancePlus as a canned report. The Governance Group has formed a sub-group to work with PS on this.
2. **Enhancements –**
   a. PS has re-confirmed the Bank Reconciliation enhancement will be ready before the next Round (Round 6) goes live on the software on July 1, 2021. All parties have agreed to this a year ago before we started the Round 6 implementation, but since it continues to be brought up by those not on the system yet, it's important to mention

Contact Information:

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this point again. Detailed specs of the enhancement are currently under review by the Governance Group.

    b. Several significant enhancements are included in version 20.11 (v20.11) which has been beta-tested by a Sub-Group of the Governance Group and is ready for VT to install. A more automated Due-to Due-from enhancement is included in v20.11 along with a Student Activities module. We are working with PS and the Governance Group to schedule the upgrade over the next one to two months for those live on eFinancePlus as well as those going live this July 2021 from Round 6.

3. **Training** – A new series of advanced training has begun based on Vermont user feedback and support case data. These sessions are being recorded and will continue over the next two to three months as sequenced below:

    a. **Week 1**: ledgers/tables, budgeting/personnel budgeting

    b. **Week 2**: onboarding / new hires, EAC

    c. **Week 3**: purchasing, AP processing

    d. **Week 4**: benefits management, leaves

    e. **Week 5:** receivable and receipting, journal entries and detailed displays

    f. **Week 6:** payroll processing, state regulatory reporting

    g. **Week 7:** reports , Q&A

    h. **Week 8:** reports , Q&A

Legislative Activity

On Friday February 26, 2021, myself and ADS's Director of Information Technology for AOE Kevin Viani testified on H.91 and to provide an update on the SSDDMS project. AOE and ADS are concerned that the bill as currently drafted will have the unintended consequence of ending the project. AOE has we have also met with the sponsor of the bill, Rep. Christie, to go over his concerns and discuss how to best support the project going forward.

Project Update

The update includes schedule adjustments planned now, and proposed adjustments with an extension to statute deadline. The following items explain these points in more detail:

1. The current statute requires SUs/SDs to be on the SSDDMS by July 1, 2022. Since receiving the request to pause further implementations, the AOE and PowerSchool have refrained from starting new Rounds (i.e. Round 7 was supposed to begin Jan. 1, 2021).

Until notified of a change to the current statute date, the AOE will continue supporting the current Pause underway as explained below. Please know however that the AOE is asking the General Assembly for an additional six-month extension to the current deadline, pushing it to Jan. 1, 2023.

2. Several districts in Round 6 will likely go live on Jul. 1, 2021 as originally planned as they are so close to completing Phase 1, while others in Round 6 who are unable to complete Phase 1 by the deadline may, after discussing with the AOE, take advantage of the pause and start over at a later time.

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3. Next week the AOE will survey all remaining districts not yet started including the Round 6 SUs/SDs choosing to defer, to ask for preferred timeline choices from the options below under each of the two Scenarios depicted.

Until the AOE is notified that an extended date has been approved and the deadline is changed, we will proceed as planned with timelines listed in Scenario-One below.

4. Remaining Phase-1 timelines to select from are based on one of the following two scenarios:

Scenario One: If the extension is not granted and the deadline remains Jul. 1, 2022:
Option A – (4/1/21 thru 12/31/21)
Option B – (7/1/21 thru 3/31/22)
Option C – (10/1/21 thru 6/30/22)

Scenario Two: If the extension is granted and the deadline is changed to Jan. 1, 2023:
Option D – (10/1/21 thru 6/30/22)
Option E – (1/1/22 thru 9/30/22)
Option F – (4/1/22 thru 12/31/22)

5. Finally, the AOE hopes to expand the state's project team by adding:
    a. A Business Analyst consultant to support the project and help in the continued evaluation of PowerSchool proposed replacements to several of the applications they would like to sunset while ensuring requirements are being met.
    b. Retain a consultant with Vt. school district experience to assist the AOE and PowerSchool with continuous improvement in the areas of training, reporting, enhancements, and customer support analysis.

Should you have any questions regarding the above information or other project related topics, please email our AOE Team at aoe.ssddms@vermont.gov.

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