

# **Shared School District Data Management System (SSDDMS)**

**Report by the Vermont Agencies of Education and Digital Services pursuant to Act 185, Sec. E.500.5 to the  
House and Senate Committees on Education**

**January 13, 2023**

# Project Executive Summary:

- The **Uniform Chart of Accounts (UCOA)** is a uniform list of account codes/numbers used by the SU/SDs to categorize all of their Education revenue, expenditures, assets, liabilities and fund equity.
- The AOE and the Field use and maintain the UCOA across all SU/SDs to provide a common framework to capture original transactions, organize that data logically and provide a consistent basis for reporting on the results.
- The **Shared School District Data Management System (SSDDMS)** is a state project to implement a common statewide enterprise resource planning (finance and human resources) software system.
- In 2018 the Vermont General Assembly made adoption of this software system mandatory for all SU/SDs.
- Prior to 2018, migration to the software system had been voluntary.

# Project Executive Summary:

- Implementation of the SSDDMS chosen software system has been difficult and the software has not always worked as intended.
- Accordingly, The General Assembly has passed several extensions of the implementation timeline.
- Currently 20 SU/SDs are using the software system while others continue to use their pre-existing accounting and human resource systems.
- The Agency of Education and Agency of Digital Services have been working in concert with a stakeholder group of school business managers and human resource professionals to assess the capabilities of the of the software system and the challenges their colleagues have experienced with implementation and operation.
- This stakeholder group (the Path Forward Group) has also developed recommendations for improvement and additional legislative action.

# Project Executive Summary:

- The Legislative Report as submitted December 16, 2022 provides the following:
  - A summary of the background of development and implementation of the software system and its current status.
  - A survey and analysis of perspectives of SU/SD business managers, human resource professionals and other relevant staff on the utility of the software system, its challenges and potential future approaches.
  - A recommendation for legislative action and summary of additional action steps the Agencies will take to support school systems and ensure access to important school financial data.

# Project Executive Summary:

- The Agencies and Path Forward Group surveyed both SU/SDs using the software system as well as those that have not yet migrated on their system experiences. The group found:
  - Approximately 50% of the current users report that the software system either does not meet or only partially meets the needs of their SU/SD.
  - 25%, (5)\* of the SU/SDs responded they would prefer to continue using the software system.
  - Of the users that have not migrated, over 85% were satisfied or mostly satisfied with their current system.
  - Of the SU/SDs not using the software system, only one has expressed interest and has migrated to the new system.
- \*Footnote – This includes those who expressed concern with headache/cost of another migration.

# Project Recommendation:

- Based on the survey data from the field and with the unanimous consent of the path forward group, the Agencies recommend that the General Assembly strike the underlying mandate in Act 11 of 2018 (Special Session) to require SU/SD's adopt the software system.
  - This will allow districts currently using the system to change to a new system if desired and allow SU/SDs not using the system to migrate to the software system if they decide that it works best for their district.
- The Agencies recommend the continued mandate of the Uniform Chart of Accounts to ensure good comparability of financial data across SU/SDs.
- The Agencies will continue to find ways to support better and more effective collection of school financial data.

# Acknowledgements:

- The Agencies of Education and Digital Services are very grateful to the members of the Path Forward Group for their contributions to this report.
- The Path Forward Group includes school business managers representing the Vermont Association of School Business Officials (VASBO) and school human resources administrators belonging to Vermont School Human Resources Professionals, Inc. (VSHRP).
- The Group's membership represented both SU/SD using the SSDDMS chosen software system, and those who have not migrated.

# Acknowledgements:

- Path Forward Group Membership:
  - **Michelle Baker**, former Business Manager of **Harwood UUSD** and VASBO Past President.
  - **Heather Bushey**, Business Manager of **Essex Westford Educational Community Unified Union SD**
  - **Jim Fenn**, Business Manager of **Windsor Central SU**
  - **Brenda Fleming**, Business Manager of **Rutland NE**
  - **Tisha Hankinson**, Business Manager of **Kingdom East SD**
  - **Rick Pembroke**, Business Manager of **Springfield SD**
  - **Megan DeVinny**, Human Resources at **Grand Isle SU** and VSHRP President
  - **Amanda Butler**, Human Resources at **Bennington-Rutland SU\***
  - **Germaine Cross**, Benefits Coordinator at **Maple Run SD**
  - **Nancy Griffith**, Human Resources at **North Country SU**
  - **Bill Bates**, Chief Financial Officer (CFO) at **AOE**
  - **Sean Cousino**, Deputy CFO at **AOE**
  - **Ted Gates**, Support Specialist at **AOE**
  - **Tim Holland**, Project Manager at **ADS**
  - **Tracey Delphia**, Agency IT Director for AOE at **ADS**
- \*Footnote – Upon acceptance of a new job, Amanda stepped down from the Path Forward Group



# Questions