

**Testimony to the Senate Education Committee by:
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Thank you for inviting me here today to testify. My name is Cheryl Scarzello and I am the Director of Finance for Addison Rutland Supervisory Union (ARSU) which will be merging as of July 1st and will become Slate Valley Unified Union School District. At the end of June, I will have been the Director of Finance for ARSU for three years. Prior to ARSU, I was the Business Manager for Rutland Central Supervisory Union for eight years. I have worked in the field of accounting for more than 35 years.

In April you heard from my colleague Brenda Fleming, who testified on behalf of the Vermont Association of School Business Officials (VASBO) with regard to the timeline for the statewide implementation of the Uniform Chart of Account (UCOA) and Shared School District Data Management System (SSDDMS). I would like to express my support for VASBO's position to delay mandatory implementation of the UCOA and the SSDDMS.

My district is currently in the process of implementing the PowerSchool eFinancePLUS (eFP) software with a go live date of July 1, 2019. We determined that this would be the best time for us to move to the new software. Six of ARSU's school districts merged as of July 1, 2018 and formed Slate Valley Modified Unified Union School District. On July 1, 2019, our final merger will take place and we will be going from three districts to one. Implementation at this time, while not easy, makes the most sense for us.

Among the group of eight school districts currently working toward going live on eFP as of July 1st, it is safe to say that each has chosen this time for different reasons. ARSU determined an implementation that would coincide with our final merger was best for us. Springfield School District has decided now is the best time due to the age of their current system and its lack of functionality. Other districts have decided that now is not the time for them to implement new software. Each district has unique circumstances that affect their reason for choosing whether or not to begin a financial software implementation project. And to be honest the only reason some districts will implement new software is because by law they have to.

The decision to undertake the implementation of new financial software is an important one. With applications that handle everything from human resources to purchasing, it affects an entire school system. For this reason, each district needs to carefully consider whether it has the capacity to successfully implement as the time, effort and disruptions across the whole organization are significant. I believe that extending the date for mandatory implementation would allow school districts to determine the best time to undertake this project to assure a successful outcome. It would also allow the AOE more time to build its capacity to support school districts with their work.

Thank you for your time and consideration.