

Richard C Pembroke, Jr
Chief Financial Officer (CFO)
Springfield School District

Senate Education Committee Testimony – Thursday, May 2, 2019

Good Morning.

By way of introductions, let me tell you a little about myself.

I am Rick Pembroke, currently the Chief Financial Officer of the Springfield School District (SSD). I have over 13 years of experience as a School Business Official and 21 years in the financial industry.

I have been asked to provide testimony on the implementation of the new Statewide Uniform Chart of Accounts (UCOA) and the statewide Shared School District Data Management System (SSDDMS) eFinancePLUS.

I have been a longtime proponent of uniformity and consistency across the state. I believe efficiencies can be achieved by having a common chart of accounts and a common accounting system.

In my 34 years in banking and school operations, I have gone through five or six different software conversions. Never have I come out of a conversion and said “that was easy”. It is a heavy lift that requires a great deal of resources.

For Springfield, implementing the UCOA and eFinancePLUS at the same time makes sense. We have an antiquated financial system and a separate unconnected human resource system. We will be integrating as many as eight different data bases into one system.

Springfield has been working on the software conversion since January and expects to go live July 1, 2019. We anticipate “edge modules”, which will improve the use of the system, and provide greater efficiency, will be implemented over the next couple of years. Springfield is excited about the change and looks forward to it.

I know many different districts are in very different positions when it comes to their financial systems. We have many different educational structures in Vermont. Where districts are with ACT 46 will significantly dictate how to implement the UCOA and the SSDDMS. Every district is in a different space when it comes to governance, their individual UCOA, their individual financial software, staffing capacity, priorities, and external pressures. Districts need different supports and will need to take different paths to achieve the common goal of statewide consistency.

Springfield believes the mandate to move to a UCOA and a statewide SSDDMS must remain. However, we do support our fellow districts in their need to have flexibility in how they transition to the UCOA and to eFinancePLUS. Similar to flexible pathways for our students, districts need flexibility to achieve success to this necessary system change.

One Uniform Chart of Accounts makes sense.

One Statewide Shared School District Data Management System makes sense.

Flexibility and support from the AOE is a must.

I am happy to answer any questions to the best of my abilities.

Respectfully submitted:

Richard C Pembroke, Jr