



## Kingdom East School District

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Secretary Dan French  
Vermont Agency of Education  
1 National Drive, Davis 5  
Montpelier, VT 05620

November 10, 2020

Dear Secretary French,

We would like to advocate for a change in the rollout for the statewide financial reporting software. First, we are fully supportive of the end goal to extract data and have cross district fiscal and program comparisons to improve the state's education finance quality and efficiency. However, our Director of Finance, Superintendent and business office are excruciatingly frustrated with how the roll-out of the new software has gone - both the lack of some basic functionality and the timing (in the middle of a pandemic).

Simply put, the Vermont Agency of Education did not follow an efficacious bidding process, and the software chosen is low performing, full of glitches, and causes much more work to simply pay bills, create budgets and analyze the district's spending. The software makes mistakes and already one auditor has filed a formal letter of complaint for a district audit -- illustrating the problems with eFinance.

**Solution:** *Have the Agency of Education work closely with the eFinance software provider and fix the problems, PRIOR to requiring any remaining districts to switch to the eFinance platform - including those mid stream.*

On October 6th the auditor for the Addison Central School District listed the accounting problems with the eFinance software and found a number of specific problems with the financial audit. It is essential that we spend and account for our taxpayers dollars both wisely and properly. How can we do this when the state's chosen software does not work well?

Below is a summary of the problems with the software as reported by an accountant who audited the Addison Central School District.

1. Inability to get a useful summary trial balance with useful columns to understand current year financial activity. The trial balance only had ending balances, not the traditional beginning balances, current year debits, current year credits, and ending balances.
2. Cognos (Business intelligence iweb based reporting and analytic tool. It is used to perform data aggregation and create user friendly detailed reports.) used to address when #1 above was out of balance and would not agree with other system reports run. Each report would

have a different variance which made them unreliable.

3. Bank reconciliation does not reconcile to G/L. Bank reconciliations have to be performed manually.
4. Detail reports are cumbersome when exported to excel. The information downloaded from eFinance to excel was generated into one report. These reports can be easily manipulated (this opens up the risk of nefarious actions)!
5. No due to/from accounting feature
6. Inability to print an AP listing that ties to G/L
7. Reports can't be run for timing after month end for encumbrances
8. Check numbers have to be manually entered. System does not start from the last check, There were duplicate check numbers
9. The document management system is labor intensive
10. Names on checks can be changed in the system after the check has been issued
11. The system does not print check stubs

Our community struggles with education taxes, and as we venture further into the economic uncertainty of the pandemic, we shudder to think that at the end of the year our financial records will have a number of detail and reporting problems.

We are asking that the rollout requirement of eFinance be delayed until problems 1-11 (and others) are remedied. Our superintendent has instructed our Director of Finance to operate two financial software systems because we simply can not trust the new system to accurately do our accounting. This is expensive, exhausting and inefficient, not to mention a challenge in normal times, COVID aside.

Our Superintendent, Jennifer Botzjorns, and Director of Finance, Tisha Hankinson, are more than happy to share specifics if this is needed. We look forward to receiving a response to our request and appreciate your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Cynthia Stuart, Board Chair

Holly Taylor, Board Finance Committee member,

Jake Simpson, Board Finance Committee member.

Cc: Rep. Scott Beck, Sen. Joe Benning, Rep. Scott Campbell, Rep. Marty Feltus, Sen. Russ Ingalls, Sen. Jane Kitchel, Rep. Paul Lefebvre, Rep Patrick Seymour, Rep Katherine Sims, Sen. Robert Starr, Rep. Vicki Strong, Rep. Terri Lynn Williams