

How Integrating Finance, HR, and Payroll Helps New Albany-Floyd County Schools Support Teachers and Staff

WITH UNIFIED ADMINISTRATION™ eFINANCEPLUS



The administrative department at New Albany-Floyd County Schools has an overarching goal: to support the people who support students. "We want to take care of the needs of the people who focus on students," says district CFO Chris Street. "We want to ensure they have the information they need, they're paid on time and correctly, and reimbursed quickly and easily."

With 20 different locations district-wide and disparate systems for finance, HR, and payroll, Street and his team were spending "two to three days alone" on manual data entry, reporting, and reconciling every time they needed to get new data into their system. To get the latest information for budgeting and expenditures, Street relied on individual department-level data that he was collecting manually. Not only was this time consuming, but it also required extensive reconciliation to ensure the data was accurate.

Street knew it was time for a modern, integrated business operations system that would benefit teachers with better customer service and cleaner, more accurate data. The team made the decision to switch to eFinancePlus.

Real-Time Data for Annual Budgets and State Reporting

With eFinancePlus, Street and his team have one finance, HR, and payroll solution that shares data across functions and can automate various workflows—completing operations faster and ensuring accurate, real-time data.

AT A GLANCE



Challenges

- Reliance on individual departments for data reports
- Manual processes meant less time spent supporting staff
- Lack of access to real-time finance and employee data



Solution

- Unified Administration™ eFinancePlus
- PowerSchool SIS
- Unified Talent™ Applicant Tracking and Employee Records



Results

- Real-time, direct access to data and reporting
- Automated processes free up time for better customer service
- Direct access to purchasing information and self-service HR

"I can run a report from any time I want for any data I want," Street says. He can look up staff salaries and previous financial breakdowns in seconds, and he can trust that the data is accurate. "Instead of me having to pull data from different departments and rely on what they give me, I've got the source data right there to do what I need to do."

Street has made annual budgeting simple for his Finance team by keeping budgetary information up to date throughout the year. He can quickly identify costs related to salaries and benefits and perform "what-if" analyses.

“Having accurate data means I can effectively project revenue and expenses for the next few years. Budgeting is actually pretty simple. [Instead,] I can focus on projections and working on a few scenarios to improve salaries and benefits for staff.”

CHRIS STREET

District CFO, New Albany-Floyd County Consolidated School District, IN

Having accurate, real-time data also helps Street perform routine state reporting.

"When I report my data to the state every six months, instead of me having to do all kinds of reconciliations, making sure things are where they're supposed to be and work on the back end, we're doing it on the front end," he says. "When I go to download that report, I've got very little work to do... because every day we're staying on top of things."

While it used to take days to gather the invoices he needed, now Street can run a report for the specific object codes they need to send. "Things are much smoother with that methodology," he says.

Data-Driven Clarity During COVID-19

Already having eFinancePlus in place meant the district was able to accurately forecast budgeting data in real time throughout COVID-19 school closures. Although they experienced a 2.5% drop in enrollment, they always knew what their cashflow was and how much they could afford to spend on new costs without going into a deficit or cutting staff.

Having business operations in one place made day-to-day operations like accounting and payroll, as well as onboarding and other HR tasks, possible during remote work.

"When [the pandemic] hit in 2020, we'd already had a year of experience [with eFinancePlus], and people were able to continue with their productivity," Street says. "We were able to adjust our budgets during COVID to avoid cutting any staff."

With accurate financial projections and the ability to operate remotely, Street was even able to provide extra benefits to staff, giving teachers assurances that they could extend their paid sick days through **FFCRA**. He tracked how much sick leave the district had paid for in the fall to project and budget for extra paid sick leave in spring 2021. Additionally, he was able to get more substitutes on board by offering a higher pay rate—and had the data to know they could afford it.

Better Customer Service for Teachers

Having a unified business operations system has reduced finance team stress, increased the district's data accuracy, and improved customer service for district employees. The district's automated approval and reimbursement system means those processes can now take place in minutes instead of days without sacrificing accuracy.

"[Now,] we've gotten out of data entry, and we just check for accuracy and reconciling. So, it's not only faster and easier, it's really improved the quality of the work," Street says.

Street says younger incoming staff expect districts to have this sort of system already in place.

"It helps your employees because your employees have the expectation that they're going to get paid, reimbursed, and, if they need things, that they're going to get them quickly," he says. "New employees expect this level of technology and automation. And our current employees were able to adapt quickly to these improvements... [after] they saw how much better it was for them."

Simpler Processes and Employee Self Service

Having an automated reimbursement and streamlined finance system shifted administrative burdens off teachers and the district administrators. Teachers are now able to purchase supplies directly from their school's Amazon account while ensuring all transactions and expenses are tracked and funded properly, which removes the need to submit expense reports or reconcile expenses and funds later.

"Now they don't have to worry about the funds coming out of their pocket," Street says.

By automating requisitions, the accounting and finance teams spend less time manually reconciling transactions and more time confirming funds are coming from the right places.

"By doing this, we keep the data accurate throughout the year, so we're really buttoned up, and reporting is pretty easy," he says. "It would take days in the past to gather all the invoices and track everything. Now we just run a report and submit it. It's a breeze."

With eFinancePlus, district staff also have direct access to their payroll and W2 information via the employee access center, as well as online time reporting. Administrative staff can also work remotely if needed because HR, Payroll, and Accounting teams can all directly access their departments securely online.

These integrated processes have, in turn, increased collaboration in the district's administrative office staff.

"[Before eFinancePlus,] we were very segmented between payroll, HR, and accounting," Street says. "[eFinancePlus] forced them to talk more, to work more, to understand each other's deadlines, and understand each other's roles a little bit better."

Learn more about Unified Administration™ eFinancePlus

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