ClassWallet Platform Concerns

Leadership Review and Operational Impact Report

Prepared for Leadership review

Based on the source memorandum "ClassWallet platform concerns" and a leadership analysis of program administration impact

Purpose	To present the source concerns in a concise executive report that emphasizes program operations, staff burden, compliance exposure, product responsiveness, and strategic fit.
Analytical frame	The report groups the original issues into four leadership categories and differentiates between promised but undelivered, existing but insufficient, and requested but not prioritized concerns.
Document focus	Review timelines, staff effectiveness, manual workarounds, reporting reliability, funding workflows, compliance monitoring, and vendor alignment with program needs.
Use of source material	The appendix restates the original twelve concerns in tighter report language so reviewers can see the underlying source issues in an organized form.

Executive Summary

The source document presents a detailed account of platform limitations that have become increasingly problematic as the Arkansas Education Freedom Account program has grown in size, complexity, and visibility. Read as a whole, the memo argues that the platform has not evolved at the pace required by current program operations. The result is an administrative environment marked by fragmented workflows, heavier manual intervention, slower review cycles, and diminished confidence in reporting and controls.

This is not simply a technology complaint. From an educational leadership perspective, the concerns describe a program administration problem. When staff must work around the platform to complete funding, reporting, compliance, and review functions, the system is no longer acting as an operational enabler. It is becoming an operational burden.

The most important leadership conclusion is that the issues are cumulative. Any one defect might be manageable in isolation. Taken together, they weaken staff productivity, slow response times for families and vendors, complicate compliance oversight, and divert attention away from higher-value stewardship of the program.

EFA Program impact	The platform's limitations increase review time, require manual workarounds, reduce staff efficiency, and create avoidable friction in areas that should be routine for a program of this scale.

Leadership Themes Across the Source Document

- A persistent gap exists between what was represented during procurement and what has been delivered in practice. Several functions described as core efficiencies remain absent, incomplete, or materially weaker than expected.
- The platform appears to be maturing too slowly relative to the pace of the program's growth and complexity. As EFA operations have expanded, the platform has not kept pace in the areas that matter most for administration.
- Routine operational work has become more manual than it should be. The source document repeatedly points to external spreadsheets, cross-system checks, fragmented workflows, and workaround processes that consume staff time.
- Core program controls remain thinner than they should be for a public program operating at scale. This includes reporting integrity, risk identification, workflow management, communication controls, and funding traceability.
- The concerns also raise a strategic fit question. The vendor may be listening, but the pattern described in the source document is one of slow implementation, limited flexibility, and uneven alignment with program-specific needs.

Priority Implications for Leadership Review

Not every issue carries the same operational significance. The source memo points most strongly to the following areas as the highest-priority concerns because they affect turnaround time, funding accuracy, reporting confidence, compliance visibility, and staff productivity.

Priority level	Operational area	Why it matters
Highest	Review timelines and staff productivity	Directly affects review speed, backlog risk, staff efficiency, and the program's ability to respond to families and vendors in a timely manner.
Highest	Funding workflow and reconciliation	A highly manual funding process creates risk, duplicative effort, and avoidable delays when staff must reconcile across systems.
Highest	Compliance monitoring and reporting integrity	When reports are slow, filtered in unclear ways, or require manual validation, confidence in oversight and decision-making is weakened.
High	Risk, workflow, and communication controls	Weak controls limit the program's ability to flag high-risk accounts, distinguish workflow types, and communicate clearly with schools and vendors.
High	Searchability and usability	Routine staff work slows when the platform does not support intuitive search, complete student visibility, or efficient navigation.
Moderate	Marketplace and visual enhancements	These matter for user experience, but the source memo suggests they are less consequential than funding, workflow, and compliance issues.

1. Operational Efficiency and Staff Burden

The original memo shows that the platform is not consistently reducing administrative work. Instead, staff appear to be compensating for missing, weak, or fragmented functionality through manual review, spreadsheet tracking, cross-system reconciliation, and duplicate handoffs.

This matters because platform value in a public program environment is measured not only by whether transactions can technically be completed, but by whether staff can complete them efficiently, consistently, and with confidence.

EFA Program impact	Current platform design slows routine review work, increases manual handling, and reduces the staff capacity available for direct program administration and stakeholder support.

Issue type	Issue summary	Leadership reading
Promised but undelivered	AI-assisted review tools and line-item categorization remain absent or materially incomplete.	A feature presented as a core efficiency during procurement has not been realized in operational practice.
Existing but insufficient	Dashboards are slow, filtered in non-obvious ways, and not dependable enough to serve as trusted decision tools.	Staff time is spent troubleshooting outputs rather than using the platform to manage the program.
Existing but insufficient	Search and student visibility functions are too rigid for daily use.	Basic navigation friction compounds over time and slows routine administrative work.
Requested but not prioritized	Workflow refinements tied to review speed and day-to-day administration have been requested but not moved forward with enough urgency.	The pattern suggests operational pain points are acknowledged but not acted on quickly enough to reduce burden.

Observed operational examples

- Staff rely on multiple external tools to complete workflows that should be housed within one platform.
- Baseline administrative questions can require manual research rather than real-time platform visibility.
- Routine staff tasks take longer because information must be located, confirmed, or reconstructed across systems.

2. Compliance, Risk, and Administrative Controls

A second major theme is that the platform does not yet provide the level of control expected for a public program working at scale. The memo points to gaps in aggregate spending oversight, proactive compliance tools, workflow differentiation, communication triggers, and risk flagging.

From a leadership standpoint, these are not secondary features. They are part of the operating architecture that supports consistent decision-making, defensible oversight, and credible stewardship of public funds.

EFA Program impact	The program is carrying additional compliance and control risk because staff must compensate manually in areas where system-level oversight should already exist.

Issue type	Issue summary	Leadership reading
Promised but undelivered	Robust reporting and dashboards were represented as key efficiencies, yet current reporting does not meet the practical needs of compliance review.	A reporting gap at this level affects oversight quality, leadership visibility, and staff confidence in decisions.
Existing but insufficient	Aggregate category totals and proactive compliance monitoring tools remain underdeveloped or unavailable.	Staff are forced into manual review processes shaped by system limitations instead of program design.
Existing but insufficient	Risk, workflow, and communication controls remain incomplete, including workflow distinction, notification features, and high-risk account flagging.	The absence of basic controls limits the program's ability to manage exceptions cleanly and consistently.
Requested but not prioritized	Several administrative controls have been requested but not implemented with sufficient speed.	The concern is not only that controls are missing, but that their importance to program operations does not appear to be driving faster action.

Observed operational examples

- Manual compliance review is being dictated by platform limits rather than by program design or best practice.
- Data confidence is reduced when staff cannot fully trust dashboard filters and reporting outputs.
- Communication and workflow exceptions require more manual handling than should be necessary in a mature system.

3. Product Responsiveness and Platform Development

The source memo also points to a product development pattern that is concerning from a contract management perspective. The issue is not only that enhancements are difficult. It is that documented program needs appear to be treated as secondary when they do not align neatly with broader product strategy or multi-partner deployment priorities.

This creates a credibility problem over time because the difference between listening and implementing becomes operationally significant. A vendor may acknowledge pain points, but the program still absorbs the burden if the response remains slow, partial, or unclear.

EFA Program impact	Slow implementation leaves the program reliant on manual fixes and incomplete features longer than operationally reasonable for a platform serving Arkansas-specific requirements.

Issue type	Issue summary	Leadership reading
Promised but undelivered	A school vendor application workflow was demonstrated but remains undeployed, leaving the program dependent on Smartsheet for a key operational process.	A demonstrated capability that never reaches production weakens confidence in delivery.
Existing but insufficient	The payment request feature improved tuition handling but remains too limited to be broadly leveraged without additional configuration options.	An improvement can still be operationally insufficient when it cannot be expanded to meet program need.
Requested but not prioritized	Multiple program-specific enhancements have been discussed, but progress has been constrained by product prioritization and limited urgency.	The source memo suggests Arkansas needs are heard, but not moved with the speed expected for issues affecting daily operations.
Existing but insufficient	Recent platform updates appear more cosmetic than substantive.	Visual changes do not resolve the core operational problems if searchability, discoverability, and workflow speed remain weak.

Observed operational examples

- Listening without timely implementation does not solve operational problems.
- A slower development cadence creates the perception that the program's needs are secondary to the vendor's broader product roadmap.
- In a more competitive market, implementation speed and flexibility are increasingly part of the platform value proposition.

4. Strategic Fit and Vendor Accountability

Taken together, the concerns in the source memo raise a broader strategic question: is the current platform the right long-term fit for a mature Arkansas EFA program? This question extends beyond feature-by-feature critique and reflects the combined effect of under-delivery, fragmented workflows, control gaps, and slow implementation.

The document is especially notable for linking current functionality to procurement-era representations. That distinction matters because it shifts the conversation from routine enhancement requests to trust, alignment, and vendor accountability.

EFA Program impact	The report points to a widening gap between vendor commitments, current functionality, and the level of responsiveness the program now requires.

Issue type	Issue summary	Leadership reading
Promised but undelivered	Several features highlighted during the procurement process have not materialized in the form or timeframe implied during selection.	This raises a trust question distinct from ordinary backlog management.
Existing but insufficient	The platform remains dependent on the patchwork of external tools rather than functioning as a unified administrative system of record.	Fragmentation at this level affects operating confidence, data consistency, and staff workload.
Requested but not prioritized	The pattern of responses suggests that some Arkansas-specific needs are treated as exceptions rather than as central operating requirements.	That posture is difficult to reconcile with a public program that requires dependable, program-specific support.
Existing but insufficient	Vendor responsiveness is present at the conversation level but too slow at the implementation level.	The difference between hearing the concern and resolving the concern has become operationally material.

Observed operational examples

- Trust is affected when procurement-era representations and current functionality diverge.
- Fragmentation has cumulative costs in time, staff effort, and confidence.
- The market is changing, and newer competitors may offer greater flexibility, faster iteration, and stronger alignment with evolving program needs.

Overall Evaluation

Viewed as a leadership report, the source memorandum is persuasive because it is detailed, specific, and grounded in daily operations. It does not rely on general dissatisfaction. It points to recurring breakdowns in the places where a platform should create leverage for staff: review, reporting, funding, compliance, visibility, and workflow control.

The strongest conclusion from the source document is that the burden is cumulative. The platform may still be usable for certain core transactions, but the surrounding operational work has become too manual, too fragmented, and too dependent on staff intervention. In that respect, the platform is not consistently extending administrative capacity; it is consuming it.

The source memo also supports a narrower but important conclusion about accountability. The concern is no longer limited to whether a specific enhancement will eventually be delivered. The larger issue is whether the platform is evolving in step with the Arkansas EFA program's size, complexity, and public expectations.

Conclusion

This report supports a clear leadership concern: unresolved platform limitations are affecting review times, staff effectiveness, workflow efficiency, reporting reliability, and compliance administration. Those effects are significant because they divert time and resources away from higher-value oversight and service to families, schools, and vendors.

The current market context also matters. Newer companies are entering this space with more flexibility, faster implementation cycles, and a stronger willingness to adapt to program-specific needs. For that reason, the document should be read not only as an account of current operating concerns but also as an indicator that unresolved issues may become increasingly consequential for future vendor decisions if they are not addressed in a timely and credible manner.

Appendix A. Source Issues

Purpose and Context

This document outlines significant concerns and grievances regarding ClassWallet (CW) as the platform vendor for our program. These concerns are grounded in my direct experience as a member of the ADE team that evaluated ClassWallet's RFP response and selected them as a vendor. Based on that evaluation, the platform currently delivered does not reflect the product, roadmap, or capabilities demonstrated during the RFP process.

Eighteen months into our contract, the ClassWallet platform remains largely unchanged from the system implemented during the program's first year in 2023. This lack of progress is increasingly problematic as the Education Freedom Account (EFA) / Education Savings Account (ESA) market continues to grow and mature, and as expectations from families, vendors, and administrators increase accordingly.

1. Failure to Deliver RFP-Promised Functionality

During the RFP process, ClassWallet demonstrated and touted several capabilities that have not been delivered or made available:

- **Line-item categorization and AI-assisted review tools** were presented as core efficiencies for administrators. These tools have not been implemented, nor have we received a clear roadmap or timeline for their delivery.
- **Marketplace vendor expansion**, including major retailer offerings, has not materialized.
- **Personalized and robust reporting dashboards** were emphasized during the RFP. The dashboards provided today fall well short of those representations.

Collectively, these gaps undermine confidence that the platform we selected is the platform we are receiving.

2. Reporting and Dashboard Deficiencies

The reporting and dashboard tools developed for our program are among the most significant operational pain points:

- Dashboards are slow to load and frequently filtered in non-obvious ways, resulting in fractured or misleading data.
- The lack of transparency around filtering forces staff to question data validity and spend additional time troubleshooting rather than administering the program.
- Reporting outputs do not meet operational or compliance standards for a program of this size and complexity.

Rather than empowering staff, the dashboards create uncertainty and inefficiency.

3. Limited Willingness to Support Program-Specific Needs

ClassWallet has consistently directed us to existing reports or existing platform features when we request enhancements. These features often do not meet our documented needs.

When additional functionality is requested, we are frequently told that:

- The request would require "extensive product development," or
- The feature is not prioritized unless it can be deployed across multiple partners.

While this approach may make sense from a business perspective, from a customer standpoint it signals that our program's needs and pain points are not a priority.

4. Undeployed and Abandoned Features

ClassWallet demonstrated a school vendor application workflow to our team last year. That functionality has still not been deployed. As a result:

- We continue to rely on a third-party Smartsheet application for school vendors.
- This creates unnecessary fragmentation and manual work for both staff and vendors.

5. Excessive Reliance on Subcontractors and External Tools

One of the most significant structural issues with ClassWallet is the degree to which program administration depends on external systems:

- **FACTS** for SIS and applications
- **Smartsheet** for vendor and school workflows
- **Box** for data sharing
- **Excel spreadsheets** to manually reconcile and merge data across systems

This patchwork of tools introduces data integrity risks, increases staff workload, and is incompatible with efficient program administration.

6. Core Usability and Search Limitations

Several basic platform functions are insufficient for daily operations:

- There is no single location to see all student information within ClassWallet.
- Search functionality is archaic:
    - Partial student name searches are not supported.
    - Names must be spelled identically and capitalized the same to return results.
- Staff frequently must keep the platform open in multiple browsers simply to view a student's purchase history while conducting other tasks.

These limitations significantly slow routine administrative work.

7. Lack of Transparency Around Existing Features

There is evidence that some platform capabilities exist but are not communicated to program staff:

- We were repeatedly told it was not possible to update a purchase category after approval.
- During training with ClassWallet validation members, I discovered that this functionality does in fact exist.

This lack of transparency undermines trust and raises concerns about the extent to which we are being informed about platform capabilities.

8. Payment Request Feature Limitations

A payment request feature introduced this year has meaningfully improved tuition payment efficiency. However:

- We have requested the ability to expand this feature to additional vendors.
- ClassWallet has been unable to add even basic configurations such as:
    - A free-text field
    - Program-specific customization options

As a result, the feature cannot be fully leveraged to meet our program's needs.

9. Compliance and Aggregate Spending Oversight

Our program is required by law to limit spending in certain categories. ClassWallet has been unable to provide:

- Aggregate category totals across accounts
- Tools that support proactive compliance monitoring

This forces staff into a burdensome, manual review process that is dictated by system limitations rather than program policy or best practices.

10. Missing Risk, Workflow, and Communication Controls

Several requested administrative controls remain unaddressed:

- No reliable way to distinguish payment requests from Direct Pay requests for expedited review
- No ability to notify schools when a payment is rejected
- No mechanism to flag high-risk accounts
- No improved process to confirm enrollment for schools and families

These gaps limit our ability to manage risk and communicate effectively with stakeholders.

11. Disruptive Updates and Superficial Enhancements

Recent platform changes have raised additional concerns:

- Security updates caused connection issues for staff over several weeks, significantly disrupting operations.
- Visual marketplace updates improved appearance but did not improve:
    - Searchability
    - Item discoverability
    - Family understanding of available options

These changes felt cosmetic rather than substantive and did not meaningfully improve functionality.

12. Cumbersome and Resource-Intensive Funding Process

The process required to fund accounts and maintain accurate balances within ClassWallet is highly manual and places a significant operational burden on ADE staff.

- Funding actions require multiple handoffs, reconciliations, and manual verification steps that are not well integrated into the platform.
- There is no streamlined, end-to-end funding workflow that allows staff to easily track funding status, adjustments, or exceptions in a single place.
- Staff must routinely rely on external spreadsheets and cross-system comparisons to ensure funding accuracy, increasing the risk of error and duplicative effort.
- The lack of real-time visibility into funding movements makes it difficult to answer basic questions from families, schools, or leadership without extensive manual research.

Rather than serving as a system of record for account funding, ClassWallet functions as only one component in a broader workaround. The cumulative effect is a funding process that requires a disproportionate amount of staff time and expertise to manage, diverting resources away from higher-value program oversight and support.

Closing Perspective

Taken together, these issues suggest that ClassWallet has not evolved its platform in alignment with the growth of the EFA/ESA landscape or with the needs of our program. The cumulative effect is an administrative system that is fragmented, inefficient, and increasingly misaligned with program requirements, stakeholder expectations, and representations made during the RFP process.