



Maine Department of Education/Transportation

Case Study – August 2016

MADAWSKA SCHOOL DEPARTMENT

Serving towns of Madawaska, St. David and Grand Isle

District Profile

Madawaska School District has 437 students enrolled, of which 370 are transported to and from school. The district covers the towns of Madawaska, St. David and Grand Isle. The towns are located in a rural section of northern Maine. Students are transported to 2 schools in the district. In this district 78%, approximately 370 of the 470 students, are transported by school transportation. The District manages its own fleet of 5 school buses.

Solution

The District purchased Transfinder prior to the State of Maine contract with the company to provide the routing software free of charge to the states' school districts. Prior to purchasing Transfinder the District did not use any software to assist with managing their transportation needs. Transportation Director, Lisa Beaulieu began at Madawaska shortly after the District purchased Transfinder Routefinder Pro. Fortunately, when Lisa began there were still several one-on-one trainings available as part of the initial purchase, and she was able to quickly get up to speed. In addition, Lisa took advantage of Transfinder's regularly scheduled webinars, which are free of charge to all clients to help her supplement her training.

During the first full year of using Transfinder, Lisa focused on her student placements, building routes, and becoming familiar with the software's features. By the following school year Lisa was ready to use the analysis tool. That year she was able to reduce route deadhead miles (when a bus operates without carrying or accepting passengers) and eliminated one full bus run. Since that time she has cut one additional bus run totaling over 14,000 miles saved while still covering the same geographic area.

Benefits

Data Driven Decision Making – The feature that stood out the most and helped Lisa cut 2 bus runs is the Routefinder Pro route overlap feature. Lisa can open all of her routes at the same time on a map to display a visual of the data that shows where the buses are in relation to one another. She can then see if there are 2 or more buses on the same road at the same time. Using this visual she can analyze where to adjust routes in order to eliminate redundant travel miles, reduce driving time, save fuel, and reduce ride time for students – all while focusing on safety and efficiency.

Organization and Efficiency – Transportation is complex. Safety is the focus. Transportation teams deal with thousands of unique details that must all come together seamlessly in order for each student to start and end the school day on time. Lisa found that the Transfinder modules helped her and the school stay organized while delivering efficient operations. In particular, the RoutefinderPro module



helped her work on efficient and safe bus runs. After the first year of using Transfinder alongside the existing paper bus tracking files, Lisa was able to completely convert the district to the Transfinder system by the following school year. The district transportation department is now fully automated using the Transfinder modules. Because the Transfinder system has been so beneficial to Lisa and the Madawaska District, Lisa has recommended that other school districts throughout the state plan to implement Transfinder. She has reached out to a neighboring district sharing her success with Transfinder and is now a coaching partner with the neighboring district as they learn how to best use and apply Transfinder.

Communication and Security Awareness – Lisa uses the Transfinder communication tools to inform school staff about transportation. Copies of the bus run information are provided for each bus driver. This helps the drivers know what students are scheduled to get on their bus and at which stops. She provides teachers with a list of bus numbers for their students. This helps teachers know which students belong on which buses. For parents, Lisa provides accurate bus schedules listing times of their child’s pickup and drop off. This combination of communication tools helps keep everyone throughout the district informed and on schedule. And should an emergency occur, detailed and up-to-date transportation information is immediately at hand for emergency responders as well as the transportation office, drivers, teachers, school administrators, and parents.

Data driven decision making, organization, efficiency, communication, and security awareness are all benefits that Lisa experienced as she converted from outdated hand written tracking methods to a highly effective and automated transportation operation. By analyzing and adjusting district bus runs, Lisa has saved Madawaska School Department about 2,000 gallons of fuel each year which results in saving about \$4,400 per year while still covering the same school district area.

Testimonial

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