



District Profile

Regional School Unit (RSU) 44 currently transports 767 students to three elementary schools and one shared middle school/high school and covers 270,000 miles a year.

Ron Deegan is the transportation director for RSU 44 in Bethel, Maine. Ron has been in the transportation industry for over 30 years and is a Certified Director of Pupil Transportation (CDPT), earning his professional certification from the National Association for Pupil Transportation (NAPT). Ron joined RSU 44 as transportation director in 2007. He has been using Transfinder through the Maine school transportation software program for 6 years now.

Situation

When Ron joined RSU 44 the district was not using a computerized routing system, so when Maine's Department of Education awarded a contract to Transfinder to provide routing software to school districts in Maine, Ron immediately jumped on board and began training as one of 10 districts participating in a three year pilot program. Prior to that, the routing methodology at the district was similar to many other districts that ran a manual operation. Routes were drawn by hand on a map with a continuous paper chase throughout the district to keep track of routes and field trip scheduling.

Solution

As part of the Maine school transportation software contract, Transfinder provided not only its flagship routing software 'Routefinder Pro', but also provided 'Infofinder le' for district communication and field trip management, 'Infofinder I' to provide busing information to the community on the district's website and 'Servicefinder' for fleet maintenance. Transfinder's suite of solutions immediately helped Ron deal effectively with personnel changes. The district was losing two of his bus drivers due to retirement. Because of Ron's ability to track student attendance in the transportation software he knew he had two buses running at 60% capacity. Ron was able to quickly change routes and schedules to use those buses to cover routes of the two drivers he was losing. After analyzing existing routes and student delivery schedules and making minor adjustments, the students' time on the bus increased only minimally but he saved the district \$27,000 a year.

Additionally, the district had a fourth elementary school with a population of 30 students. The district was considering closing this small elementary school, yet some parents were concerned that their children's ride time would be greatly increased. The

superintendent asked Ron to calculate the projected time students would be on the bus so the board and community could make a fair judgment while considering both district and parent concerns. Using the software Ron had all the information he needed at his fingertips as well as the ability to export the information to Excel for easy analysis and to share the results with other members of the school district.

Benefits

As a small rural district the transportation office is minimally staffed so efficiency is of highest importance. In addition, significant adjustments in the operation, which result in large immediate savings typically occur when there is a major change happening to the district, or when you first introduce software to the operation. When those efficiencies or major changes have been implemented the objective of managing your operation becomes “how to be proactive to make up for the non-controllable: fuel, parts, garage electricity...” and this is the balancing act that Ron is currently and effectively managing with the software.

Speaking about customer service, Ron added “I wear many hats at the district in addition to transportation, so it’s very important that when I call Transfinder’s support I have someone instantly who understands my needs and can recommend a solution. Transfinder has consistently delivered this level of support. I also appreciate the custom reports that Transfinder puts together for me.”

Currently Ron’s operation is running nearly paperless. All district administrators have a designated level of access to the ‘Infofinder le’ program so field trips can move seamlessly through the approval process. Links for both ‘Infofinder le’ and ‘I’ have been created on the district website making them easily accessible to district personnel, parents, and the community.

In addition, because Maine’s school transportation software program is offered as a hosted solution, Ron has found it extremely beneficial to his district which has limited resources. The software is provided by the state at no cost to the district. The Maine school transportation software program has eliminated the need to purchase additional hardware to run the software solutions making the whole program valuable to the district.



Testimonials:

Ron Deegan can be reached via email at:

deeganr@sad44.org

or by Phone at: 207-824-2185

District URL: http://www.sad44.org/pages/MSAD_44_Bethel/Transportation