

transfinder

Planning for Future Success

[AKA - Transportation Succession Planning]

available organization employee internal availability continue
help business leadership strategy assistance aspiration ambition
service skills Succession promotion accomplishment
achievement counseling target Planning aim prepared
talent growth advice support potential company
plan expert resources success work preparation
development position recruiting
successors agency



Imagine your top router, dispatcher or director wins the mega lottery and abruptly retires. Your colleague's dream come true shouldn't create a nightmare for you.



Of course, recent shifts in the workplace haven't all been caused by the happy news of a winning ticket. In the last few years, we've seen dramatic shifts in the overall employment market. COVID-19 caused disruptions in practically all industries, but even since the world's return to normal the labor market has been very tight.

Unemployment is at historic lows, but many companies still have job openings they are trying to fill. Workers have more job openings to choose from and they are exercising that power.

Even before the pandemic, school transportation departments were dealing with driver shortages for many years. Now it isn't just drivers that many school districts need, many other positions have seen increased turnover. Dispatchers, routers, driver trainers, transportation supervisors and directors – school districts across the country need all the above. If your district hasn't had turnover in some of these positions, most likely you will.

In football, if the quarterback is injured, gets sick or leaves for another team, the coach makes sure to have other players who can fill that role. Most organizations are having to think on this level more frequently now because of employee turnover. Schools should be doing the same kind of succession planning with their transportation department, and probably other departments as well.

The first step in this type of succession planning should be to identify your critical positions.

What positions are performed by just one person?
If that person retired, or if they were sick for an extended period, would it have a major impact on your operation?

For transportation departments these are some positions for which you may want to consider succession planning:



- **Routing** – Routing and scheduling is the area of transportation that has the greatest impact on efficiency and effectiveness. A good router can keep a department running like a top. Without a router a department can quickly fall apart. Someone must keep routes and stops up to date with student moves, additions and changes that occur daily with student data.
- **Dispatch** – No matter how good the planned routes may be, every day has unique challenges that require someone to react and adjust the plan. Drivers call in sick, buses break down, parents call in with questions and dispatch is there to figure out how to deal with these day-to-day changes. It takes someone with experience and local knowledge and that can take time to develop.
- **Director/Supervisor** – The person running transportation should be able to step into almost any role and help out when needed. Even if they don't route or dispatch daily, it is important that they know how everything works so they help guide the vision of the operation. If the supervisor doesn't know how to use the routing software, how do they know if their staff is well trained or if the planned routes are effective?
- **Other potentially critical positions: driver trainer, maintenance**

For all your critical positions it is important to have everyone well trained and cross trained. If you have only one router, make sure someone else is trained well enough to step in if that router is out sick. Many smaller school districts will combine the route/dispatch role. If you have two people covering those positions it is helpful to have each person know the other's responsibilities. **Transfinder** has a wealth of materials in **Transfinder Community**. There are multiple online courses as well as numerous guides for all the major functionality in our software. In addition to the online resources, we have one-on-one training available with our Applications Specialists. They can work with you on your district's data and help you learn while making changes in the software.



Any vendor supporting your operation will have their own documentation for their products, but you should develop your own documentation for all your critical positions. What are the responsibilities and performance expectations? When drivers check their vehicles each day, they work from a checklist to ensure that they have inspected all the critical points. Does your router have a daily checklist that could be passed on to someone filling in for them? Even the directors of transportation should have a checklist of things they



review on a periodic basis to ensure the operation is functioning properly.

There are likely critical processes that should be done quarterly or seasonally. Prior to the beginning of school all routes should be updated to accommodate the updated student enrollment. Preventative maintenance must be done on vehicles. Make sure you have these processes documented so that if at any time a critical employee won the lottery and immediately retired, someone else could step into their role and work from that documentation.

Sometimes turnover can happen at inopportune times and it may not be possible to be prepared. **Transfinder’s Professional Services** team can help. We have consultants that have years of experience in pupil transportation. They can help with building routes, finding efficiencies to reduce routes, creating analytical reports, and many other aspects of student transportation. Sometimes you just need an extra set of hands while you are in the process of hiring new staff. Our consultants can help fill the gaps and/or help you quickly get new staff up to speed.



We’ve just scratched the surface of how you should prepare for future staff turnover. Transfinder wants to be more than just a vendor. We want to be your partner in transporting students safely to and from school. If we can help you run your operation more efficiently or effectively, please reach out. Remember, these unplanned changes can also provide opportunities to improve your operation as well so that you too can hit the lottery!

To learn more...

Please call **800.373.3609**, visit www.transfinder.com or scan the QR code.



For more information on parent apps, GPS, routing software or any other transportation solution challenges, please contact the experts at Transfinder. With over a combined century of knowledge and expertise in the industry, the team at Transfinder is committed to generating superior value by delivering user-friendly and economical solutions combined with “best in class” service. Transfinder’s skilled professionals establish and maintain a long-term relationship with every client that is built upon respect, confidence, integrity, and mutual trust.

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