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Wicomico County Public School District

Mission Statement: To provide all students an educational foundation and a set of skills which will enable them to become responsible and productive citizens in our society.

The Wicomico County Public School System is a quality pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade school system located on the beautiful Delmarva Peninsula in Wicomico County, MD.

Covering 522 acres of property and 2.2 million of building space, the school system has 25 schools as well as the Wicomico Early Learning Center, Career & Technology Center, and an administrative office complex.

Buses serve 85% of all county students with 129 routes and cover more than 2 million miles a year.

According to the article “**School Bus Routing Goes Digital**” in the *Delmarva Daily Times*, Dave Reeve, transportation director for the Wicomico School District, estimated savings of \$45,000 by increasing the efficiency of bus routes by using Routefinder Pro from Transfinder Corporation.

School Bus Routing Goes Digital

Situation

Until recently, school transportation officials charted school bus trips in Wicomico County the old-fashioned way. On a paper map, they affixed pins to represent bus stops and drew color-coded lines for the routes.

Solution

Now, Transportation Director Dave Reeve said his office does more work on computers, using digital maps that are easier to read and update. It helps reduce bus route overlap in the far-flung county – an important cost-saving measure when applied to 133 buses logging more than 7,000 stops on a typical school day.

“Can we do more without putting additional buses on the road?” Reeve said. “By increasing the efficiency of bus routes by 1 percent, the Board of Education will keep a bus off the road – a savings of more than \$45,000,” said spokeswoman Tracy Sahler.

“High-tech software mapping school bus routes is becoming increasingly popular because planners need access to more information than can be stored on a paper map,” said Antonio Civitella, CEO of Transfinder in Schenectady, N.Y.

Benefits

Reeve uses the computer mouse to draw a polygon around several bus stops in Nanticoke. The program calculates the number of students boarding buses in that area, which helps Reeve meet bus capacity targets.

Additionally, the data also included the names and addresses of the students living in areas serviced by those stops.

“We have huge amounts of information,” he said.

Wicomico schools also have data stored on the approximate bus route times. To gather the information, bus drivers took turns with RouteBuilder, a GPS transponder. The device, about the size of a wallet, recorded the time and coordinates of a driver’s scheduled stop. That information was automatically uploaded to a remote server operated by Transfinder.

“Updating, instead of creating, is a lot easier,” Reeve said.

While Reeve is a big proponent of the routing software, he said there’s no substitute for traveling to a bus stop and making sure it’s safe. “You still need feet on the ground to make sure it works the way it’s supposed to work,” he said.

“This is why we design our software as an assistant – not something that will do all the work for you,” Civitella said.

SOURCE:

Delmarva Daily Times - MD,

“School Bus Routing Goes Digital,”

By Greg Latshaw - Staff Writer

July 19, 2009



David Reeve, Wicomico County Board of Education supervisor of transportation, works on his computer on the new bus transportation computerized map system. The dots indicate bus stops or where a student lives. Each color represents a different school.

Photo from Todd Dudek - Delmarva Daily Times- *School Bus Routing Goes Digital* (2009)