

School transportation software helps New York district adapt quickly to the challenges of the pandemic

Jericho School District able to adjust and maximize efficiency of bus routes, thanks to partnership with Transfinder

The pandemic era has been a trying time for transportation departments in school districts around the country, but for the Jericho School District on Long Island, New York, the challenges of COVID-19 have been made significantly easier to manage thanks to its bus routing and transportation platform, Routefinder PLUS from Transfinder.

Jericho is consistently ranked as one of the highest achieving districts in the state, and includes just over 3,100 students, with three elementary schools, one middle school and one high school. Lori-Ann Savino has been the Director of Transportation in the district for more than ten years, prior to which she served in other districts in a variety of transportation roles for another decade.

Improving routing efficiency

Savino says that bus routing is one of the most important responsibilities of her department, and the district has used Transfinder's Routefinder software for that purpose since before she became director. "Part of the appeal to come to Jericho was that they used Transfinder for routing, which I was already very familiar with," she says.

Transfinder provides a variety of intelligent routing, scheduling and fleet maintenance solutions that optimize school transportation logistics, and districts can select which solutions they use based on their needs. Jericho uses Routefinder for routing and

Servicefinder as its bus maintenance platform.

Savino says the software platform is vital to maintaining an efficient operation. "Transfinder saves a lot of time for us in the central office as we plan routes, but also for the drivers because it maximizes the efficiency of their routes. It's a more educated way to manage school transportation."

The district had been using Transfinder's Routefinder software for years and decided to upgrade to the new Routefinder PLUS in summer of 2021. "Routefinder PLUS has been a significant improvement," she says. "It's cloud-based so it's much faster and more efficient, and we don't need to support it with our district IT staff. The system automatically connects to our student database every night, so it's always up-to-date."

Quickly adapting to pandemic's impact

Savino says that the pandemic has presented a variety of challenging scenarios for busing and transportation in the district. In the 2020-2021 school year, for example, Jericho went to a hybrid schedule of online and in-person learning, so bus routes had to run on two different schedules.

Entering the school year this past fall with full time in-person learning, the district needed to adapt its usual bus routes again to reduce ridership, minimizing the risk of virus transmission. "I had to reroute all



our buses so that each bus had just two students per seat—preferably siblings—while keeping ride times well under 30 minutes," she says.

And after the holiday break, the district was presented with the opposite scenario, needing to maximize the number of students per bus because of a driver shortage caused by the rapid spread of the omicron variant. "That required a lot of rerouting, and that could happen suddenly because the virus spread so quickly," she says.

Fortunately, Savino says she and her department were up to the challenge. "Using Transfinder made these situations so much easier to deal with and adapt to," she says. "If we had to manually reroute our buses repeatedly, it would take us weeks of work. Instead, we can do it quickly and easily. Honestly, I don't know what we would do without Transfinder."

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