

Client Case Study



District Profile

Bob Hagopian has been the Transport Director for MSAD 59 since 2009 — when Transfinder was awarded the State of Maine contract to provide a free of charge bus routing software to school districts.

The school district transports approximately 900 students daily to the district's four schools.

Situation

When Bob Hagopian joined the MSAD 59 school district as Transport Director he found that each year the bus drivers were driving the same route they had the previous year without adjustment for ridership changes. As long as a child was outside waiting for the bus the driver would simply stop and pick them up. The routes were driven twice a day on a two-tier schedule, transporting first the high school students and then returning to their route for children in Kindergarten through 8th grade. The first thing Bob noticed with this method when he drew the routes on a large scale map was the overlap of routes the drivers were driving. It was visually obvious there was no organization to the routing method.

Solution

The year Bob came on board at the district happened also to be the same year Transfinder was awarded the State of Maine contract to provide a free of charge bus routing software to school districts. MSAD 59 at that time did own the software, but it had not been used by previous directors, so Bob used this new opportunity to implement the software and gain training and technical support. Bob took a diligent approach to carefully complete one major task at a time to get the software functional for his use. The first task was to see that each student was geocoded on the map where he could then begin to create his routes.

One of the policies in Bob's district is that only kindergarten students are required to be picked up at their house and transported to their school. All other grades can walk some distance to either a pick up point or school. With this in mind and knowing that his buses only had approximately 50 students on them, Bob increased his bus capacity to transport 80-85 students and also required that students walk to various pick up points. Bob reduced his operation to a one tier schedule by picking up kindergartners at their house and grades 1-4 at pick up points. Students in grades 5-8 were required to walk to their junior high as well as the high school students. After dropping off the elementary students the buses could continue to the junior high to collect the high school students and bring them to the high school.



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Benefits

These changes resulted in many benefits to the district. Not only had Bob reduced his bus runs from 30 to 14, he reduced drivers' hours on the road from 30 hours to 20. With the significant increase in the price of gas, Bob's gas mileage costs did not increase. The number of students being transported has also decreased from 1,017 to about 900, with more students walking to school.

The community embraced these changes by also having volunteers and teachers walk with students to school forming "The Walking School Bus". They have found that by doing this it not only has helped to save the district nearly \$200,000, but students are also learning how to carefully cross the street by looking both ways and to not approach the street from between vehicles where a small student would not be seen by oncoming traffic.