

Lyons CSD, NY

Overcoming Challenges With Creating Different Routes



CONTACT

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Lyons CSD in New York is delivering breakfast and lunch to students' everyday door-to-door.

The district is a small rural area with high level low income, so they are a 100% free breakfast and lunch district.

They have a 2-person team on each bus, including the driver and either monitor or other staff personnel who has volunteered to help.

Beginning Sunday, March 15 when news got out that school would be closing until the end of the month (it is now since pushed to April 15), Tracy Fraser, the main router for the Lyons CSD, Lyons, NY, went into her Routefinder Pro software to begin working on creating routes to deliver to her students.

- She created a new database
- Removed the students she did not need to route to (duplicates in the system)
- Went into her Trips and deleted all of the old ones (so there would be no students assigned to any routes)
- Began creating all new ones

She started out with 15 routes and 990 students (400 more than she is usually working with when it is "business as usual"). Today, the routes have been reduced to 13, due to decreasing staff who need to now take care of family.

Challenges

Initially routes were created to stop at every door of the students in the district, because Tracy did not know who may be going to a babysitter during the day or another alternate location.

The district then created an email to send out to parents to ask if meals should be going anywhere else or for any other changes that needed to be made. Tracy received over 137 requests requiring her to make several rearrangements.

Many of those changes were to increase meals at some homes, because they were caring for more children during the day than who lived there. To remedy this Tracy worked closely with the kitchen staff to tell them how many meals needed to be on each route. The buses then were stocked with enough food to deliver extra meals to the babysitter's home while also still dropping off meals for the kids who were not home. As a 100% free breakfast and lunch district they would not go to waste.

Another struggle for Tracy was delivering door-to-door in a rural area. Many of the country homes were often pinned wrong on the map, because the homes location on the land was not the same. In addition, many homes were not clearly marked or numbered correctly. The first day consisted of a lot of backtracking – it was all new to the bus drivers who had never driven to most of these homes before.

Ensuring the same bus drivers are on the same routes each day, or the monitor, improves the accuracy of where they're going now each day, and also a comfort to the students who look forward to seeing them. Another challenge was learning which vehicles would best be used on the different routes. After being out in the field and driving to individual homes they found that some driveways or roads leading to homes would have been much better with a smaller vehicle than the larger ones initially sent out.

Food Service

To eliminate contact of staff with students the kitchen staff purchased t-shirt bags to pack each lunch and breakfast. The assistant on the bus hangs the bags on doorknobs or leaves them on their front porches. Children are asked to remain inside and wave from their windows – and it is a highlight for many of their days. To handle food allergies Tracy works closes with the kitchen staff who prepare separate boxes, so they are not in contact with the other meals, and mark them with the students names.

Tracy Fraser, Main Router, is happy to take your call and share what she's learned and the challenges she overcame with creating these new and very different routes.