TripSpark
EDUCATION

Austin ISD
K12 school transportation operators in Austin, Texas

Current Solution
K12 software & parent app for safer, more reliable service

Result
Parents and staff simply love the quality of service

Why Austin ISD Chose A Parent App To Improve Their Operation

Kris Hafezizadeh is the Director of Transportation at Austin ISD in Texas. Sufficed to say, it gets hot in Texas, which can be both a source of discomfort as well as safety issue when students are forced to wait in the sun at their assigned stop. This is a huge concern for Kris because "the first mission of my operation is to make sure I'm running a safe and reliable service."

Austin ISD transports around 24,000 students a day, with an equally robust amount of routes to schedule, and drivers to assign. Handling that amount of transportation, Kris says "You gotta expect you're going to have some issues. That's not a good feeling." With that in mind, Ausin ISD implemented a GPS system in order to better protect its student population. "I'm fortunate that I'm allowed to spend the money on these kinds of things," he explains. "But you don't put a cost on the safety of students."

"GPS is all about security, reliability and efficiency.
8 years ago, we went with GPS based on this."

K12 Scheduling Software and Data

For routing and scheduling, Kris uses TripSpark's K12 transportation software solution. He appreciates that it synchronizes GPS and routing information. "We can see if a driver is taking some other route they're not supposed to be. It also shows if a driver is actually doing it right and the scheduler needs to update it." Besides ensuring that his actual routes are being followed, he appreciates having the insight from the data gathered and robust reporting tools. "We are able to have a report for idling, speed and many other things."

Security and Safety: The Parent App

"I was looking for a way to help students and the community to see their bus arrivals at their stops." Besides heat, there is also the possibility of rain or ice, and even the risk of overland flooding. Kris needed a way to be able to monitor his entire operation from one place and also the ability to act quickly in the event of an emergency.

Implementing a parent app is a priority for Austin ISD. Having the ability for parents to monitor the location of their children will reduce the amount of "where's my kid" calls to the office. But more importantly, parents will feel more confident in the system. The security of student data is also incredibly important to all concerned stakeholders. Kris says that the parent cloud, the secure app and the ability to only access information with a student ID is essential for keeping private information, private.

At the beginning of the school year, Kris says that students are at risk of getting off a bus at the wrong stop. One of the things that he likes about the K12 transportation software system is that he has access to all of a student's information.
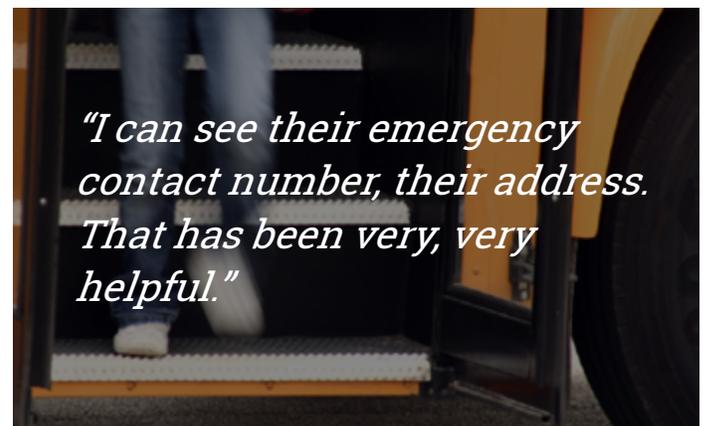
"I can see their emergency contact number, their address. That has been very, very helpful."

Monitoring the Operation From His Phone

Kris needs to respond quickly to issues that can develop at any time, day or night. Buses are used to transport students to nighttime football games, for example. He loves the fact that he can easily pull up schedule information, bus locations and student information from his mobile device anywhere and at any time. Recently, Austin encountered some severe flood conditions while Kris was away from the office. Three schools were evacuated and even the superintendent was brought into help out. Kris was still able to help run the evacuation process from his phone, saying "that was quite impressive."

Why Partner With TripSpark?

In the end, Kris decided to work with TripSpark in order to ensure that future technologies would be guaranteed to integrate seamlessly. While they're using scheduling software and the parent app for now, in the future Kris is planning on adding new products with new functionality. For example, if he were to add on-board cameras or a RFID card reader system to enable full student tracking, he needs to be sure that they'll integrate properly with the office software.

"We chose TripSpark because they can synch together technologies better."

This was an important issue when Austin ISD went to RFP. In Kris's opinion, moving towards a single-source solution will enable his operation to grow. And as his partner, we're glad to be able to work with Austin ISD to help them achieve their mission of safe and reliable service.

"The presentation to us, the customer service aspect. TripSpark scored higher on many points."