

Why West Fargo Chose a Single Vendor for Student Tracking



West Fargo (ND) Public Schools

School transportation department in West Fargo, ND

Problem/Challenge

Looking for a hassle-free way to add GPS RFID student tracking

Solution

Integrated system of scheduling, dispatching and bus / student tracking

Result

Successful launch of RFID student and bus tracking system

About West Fargo Public Schools

West Fargo has a clear mission statement describing how their operation is “committed to providing student transportation services in a safe, timely, and respectful manner while maintaining a supportive and courteous presence in the community.” Behind the scenes, a great deal of work is needed by their staff and their K-12 transportation technology to achieve this mission. One of the key pieces of technology to enhance service and safety is the GPS student tracking system.

Transportation Director, Bradley Redmond was intent on having a reliable GPS tracking system to convey accurate information on the location of West Fargo’s student riders. As well, he was intent on avoiding the integration issues that

can occur when dealing with multiple vendors.

“As our GPS contract was coming to an end, we sought out other school district and bus contractor experiences. A common theme was that several were struggling with integration issues between their vendors.”

When adding new technology like a GPS tracking system, the challenges get bigger and the stakes get higher. Bradley can’t afford any downtime or technical problems when it comes to student transportation. He was concerned about the task of integrating their student database

with a new RFID card system. And according to the reports from other districts and contractors, Bradley says that his concerns were justified. From what he heard, it was almost impossible to expect multiple software and hardware vendors to work together in order to build a viable solution.

“The vendors kind of just gave up.”



The Single Vendor Solution

Bradley approached TripSpark because West Fargo was already employing the K-12 transportation software solution that included scheduling and dispatching. Because the existing software was already tied into their student information, Bradley says “rolling out RFID to one of our elementary schools was refreshingly easy and required very little effort on our end.” When

working with a single vendor, there is more assurance that the various technologies will integrate properly.

What’s better is that because the reliability of integrating single source products, Bradley was relieved to discover how easy it was to add and work on the new technology. “The solution felt like plug and play,” he exclaims. “The system is working flawlessly.”

And we’re happy to work with West Fargo (ND) Public Schools too. As their operation grows, we’re confident that they’ll have no trouble living up to their all-important mission statement.

“It was exciting and reassuring to see an integrated GPS system that leveraged our existing TripSpark software.”

Crisis Averted Even as it Began

Almost immediately, Brad says that their RFID system has shown its value. In the first few weeks of school, a kindergarten student appeared to go missing in their bus system, having not gotten off at their assigned stop. This obviously

was a major concern for staff and certainly the student’s parents. By looking up the RFID tracking information, staff was able to verify that the student had, in fact, gotten on the bus. The driver was alerted immediately and they pulled over to

inspect the bus. The student was found sleeping soundly at the back. Within 5 seconds, the student was located and within 2 minutes, the parents were informed and the driver was able to return to the stop to let the student off.

The Results

Implementing the GPS system went smoothly, according to Bradley. He appreciates being able to leverage their existing TripSpark software in order to migrate to the newer K-12 transportation software solution

for scheduling and routing. And of course, support for every product in his system is only a single phone call away.

“We are really happy with our decision to move to a “one stop shop solution” from TripSpark.”
