WINNER

★ Maine Administrative School District No. 75

User-Friendly Traversa Solution Leads to District Gains

Key Challenges

In the busy world of student transportation, staff have full plates even when everything is going right. They certainly don't have time to fight with technology that doesn't support their needs. Unfortunately, this was exactly what Adam Mayo, director of transportation for Maine School Administrative District No. 75 (MSAD 75), found himself doing when he began working for the district. "That first year I spent countless hours, often until 2:00 a.m. or when I could no longer focus, in my new office figuring out how to add students to routes, entering new students who had just registered, and ensuring drivers would have route sheets come the first day of classes," Mayo explained. "Thinking this was just a first-year learning curve, I continued to explore the software daily, and paid for training, including traveling off-site and watching webinars. The second and third years came and went and I still struggled with the software, continuing to spend precious hours focusing on a program that did not work for our district."

The technology in use was the only transportation system reimbursed by the state, so Mayo felt that he had to stick with it even though he found that "it took time away from other very important factors within the department such as personnel management, safety and training, and overall operations."

Organization Profile

- Industry: Public School District
- Location: Topsham, Maine
- Student Enrollment: 2,440
- Number of Employees: 62
- Tyler Client Since: 2017
- Tyler Products Used: Traversa
- Contact: www.link75.org

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Action Taken

Then at an industry event, Mayo took a look at the Traversa® transportation management solution. He said, "[Traversa] opened my eyes to what other routing software could do for me — the additional features available, the user-friendliness." Even though it would mean purchasing a program instead of using the reimbursed system, he convinced his district administration that Traversa would help him run the best operation, and that the increased efficiency could lead to huge savings in the long run.

MSAD 75 went live with Traversa on January 1, 2018, and started to see immediate improvement over their old system. Mayo described how only a few weeks prior to the go-live date, he had hired a new employee without much student transportation experience: "Within his first week with the department, he was tasked with setting up the 130-plus routes we operate in Traversa. As a true testament to the user-friendliness of the program and ease of navigation, with limited knowledge of the software and school transportation, he was able to build all of the routes and assign our 2,400 students to their buses in just four days." This quick turnaround was a welcome change of pace compared to Mayo's many months of labor with the previous system.

When drivers came back from their holiday break they were greeted with new route sheets created in Traversa, which included turn-by-turn directions and images, student schedules, and an easier-to-read format. This immediate benefit to the whole transportation staff soon had everyone on board with the new solution.

Results

"Since the implementation, I have been able to focus my time on more important department needs," Mayo explained, "which has helped promote better driver morale, a greater focus on safety and training, and long-range planning for the future of the department. All tasks that once took a lesser place on the to-do list, largely because of the amount of time spent on routing, trips, and student management."

He started seeing cost savings right away: Traversa was so easy to use, he no longer had to pay for extensive training and services which had historically cost $6,000 to $12,000. MSAD 75 is also planning to use Traversa to find further savings, including a review of walk distance parameters, consolidation of routes, and tracking of mechanical records. Mayo is already looking to the future: "It is our goal to add further advancements to Traversa such as Tyler Drive™, GPS units, and advanced trips. This will further our ability to use the software to reduce costs, by looking at the greater picture of how we operate our routes, the timing of routes and stops, and how trips are currently scheduled, routed, and billed."

Mayo has been spreading the word of his success to other Maine districts: "Many districts have found themselves in the same position I was once in, trying to sell a product to a school board or administration that would now require additional funds, instead of the currently 'free' program. With these districts, I have been able to share my experience of success in moving away from the state-provided software. I continue to advocate for Traversa and find ways for it to improve the operations of my department, and the experience of the communities and families we serve. Traversa has allowed us to provide a higher level of customer service to the families we serve through student transportation."

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