Twin Rivers Unified School District

Ready for the Future of Transportation with Versatrans

Key Challenges
In 2008, four separate school districts merged to become the Twin Rivers Unified School District (USD), requiring their separate transportation terminals to work together to become one centralized department. This merger created one of the largest districts in the area, with 58 sites and 32,000 children, spread over 127 square miles. But the transportation department did not have systems in place to help them meet the challenge of providing service to such a large district. “We were in disarray without the ability to plan, monitor, and efficiently run the operation,” recalled Timothy Shannon, director of transportation services for Twin Rivers USD. Problems were mounting up: late busing, inefficient routing, lack of driver accountability, and more. “We had been working with handwritten routes,” Shannon explained. “We lacked proper routing software. Our field trip request process was ineffective and costly. We encountered late trips, and approximately five missed trips per week, resulting in many phone calls, complaints, and hours of unproductive lost staff time.”

All of this led Twin Rivers USD to search for a new technology solution in 2015. After extensive review, they determined that the Versatrans® suite was the preferred choice and the best fit for their needs.
Action Taken

“The Tyler software package was the first step to move the department out of the dark ages and change the mindset of our district,” explained Shannon. The district started out with Versatrans Routing & Planning™, and the Versatrans Onscreen® solution for GPS/AVL. “When we first started, we entered all of our traditional routes and discovered the chaotic, unproductive system we had been working with. This new software gave us the ability to visualize our routes, reassess how they were driven, plan efficient routes, print accurate driving instructions, monitor timeliness of buses, and track our students.”

Twin Rivers USD soon began implementing more pieces of the Versatrans suite, allowing them to modernize every area of their operation. Triptracker® allowed them to go paperless with their field trip program. “Automating this process has eliminated errors and increased staff productivity in our department as well on school sites. The approval process was streamlined, which reduced phone calls and overall saved money for the district,” explained Shannon.

He described the Versatrans My Stop™ mobile app as “the perfect way for us to communicate with parents.” The app uses GPS data to show parents the estimated time their child’s bus will arrive at their stop based on its route progress and can also notify users of schedule changes. Shannon said, “This program is a beneficial tool as it reduces the phone calls from parents and school staff.”

They also implemented additional features including Fleetvision® and e-Link®. “Every department utilizes one segment or more of our Tyler package,” said Shannon, “And we in the administrative office work with all the components for accountability, efficiency, goal reporting and setting, grant submission, and daily monitoring.”

Results

“The Versatrans software suite has saved the school district a significant amount of money, and at the same time elevated the transportation department to be known as ‘technology driven’ and a leader in our area,” said Shannon. “We have successfully moved our department and district out of the dark ages and ahead of others in school transportation, and we have made the transition most cost-effective.” Due to route consolidation, bell time studies, and other efficiency measures within Versatrans, Twin Rivers has saved more than $750,000 in operating costs. The reduced routes allowed the district to consolidate down to one bus terminal, resulting in further savings.

Twin Rivers USD also used the tools in Versatrans to gather data which made it possible for them to secure a $7.5 million grant from their local air district, allowing them to purchase 16 new electric buses. The district now has the largest electric fleet in the nation. “Not only do we have this excellent tool,” said Shannon, “but we also have more time and money to replace our outdated school bus fleet with new, clean-air, safe and efficient buses. It’s a win-win for the community we serve and our district.”

“School districts can see that the world is changing. Transportation must change with it,” said Shannon. “Tyler products streamline operations, greatly assist with reducing operating costs, and give you valuable data for goal setting, monitoring, and achievement. I would recommend using Versatrans without hesitation.”

In Their Own Words:

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— Timothy Shannon, Director of Transportation Services, Twin Rivers USD