TripSpark
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Why Austin ISD Chose A Parent App to Improve Their Operation

AUSTIN
Independent School District

AUSTIN ISD TRANSIT:
Independent School District, educating more than 74,000 students across Austin's metroplex

CHALLENGE:
Transporting 24,000 students safely, and keeping parents informed throughout the process

SOLUTION:
K-12 routing & scheduling software and parent app for safer, more reliable service

RESULT:
Easy and quick notifications for families

Security, Reliability and Safety for Students are Austin ISD's Top Priorities

One thing's for sure – it gets hot in Texas! While most of us love the warmth that comes with plenty of sunshine, the stifling Texas heat can be hazardous to the health of students who are often forced to wait in the blazing sun at their school bus stop. For Kris Hafezizadeh, Director of Transportation at Austin ISD in Texas, this is a huge concern. *"The first mission of my operation is to make sure I'm running a safe and reliable service"* Kris says.

Austin ISD transports around 24,000 students each day and has a large volume of routes to schedule, and drivers to assign. With scheduling that quantity of transportation, Kris says *"You've got to expect you're going to have some issues. And that's not a good feeling."* With this in mind, Austin ISD implemented TripSpark's GPS system to better protect its student population. *"I'm fortunate that I'm allowed to spend the money on these kinds of things,"* he explains. *"… you can't put a cost on the safety of students and GPS is all*

about security, reliability and efficiency. GPS has helped create an effective and efficient system, especially for tracking speed, idling, location of the buses and being able to compare scheduled routes versus actual driven. It helps us if we need to adjust stops and times to make sure we are running an effective and efficient service."

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. Kris explains *"We can see if a driver is taking a route that they're not supposed to. It also tells us if a driver is taking a better route than the one scheduled. This assists the scheduler in updating the system with this new routing information."* Aside from tracking which routes are being followed, Kris appreciates the insights he gains from the extensive data gathered and reported on. *"We are happy to have a report for idling, speed and many other things."*

Security and Safety: The Parent App

While heat is always a concerning factor, there is always the possibility of rain or ice, and even the risk of overland flooding. Considering these factors, Kris needed a way to be able to monitor his entire operation from one place, but also the ability to act quickly in the event of an emergency.

Implementing a **school bus parent app** became a priority for Austin ISD. Having the ability for parents to monitor the location of their children's bus and its arrival in real-time, to their bus stop, has had a profound impact in reducing the number of calls to the transportation office asking "Where's the bus?". Being able to see when the bus will arrive live has eliminated confusion and panic when delays occurred. Parents feel confident in the system. The security of student data is also incredibly important to all concerned stakeholders. Kris shared that the combination of the "parent cloud", the secure app, and the ability to only access information with a valid student ID, is essential for keeping private information, private. At the beginning of the school year, before routines are established, students are at risk of getting off a bus at the wrong stop. One of the things that Kris likes about TripSpark's **K12 transportation software** system is that he has access to all of a student's information, so he can act quickly in the event of a potentially stressful situation for a student and parent.

"I can see their emergency contact number and their address. That has been very, very helpful"

Monitoring the Operation from His Phone

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

Why Partner with TripSpark?

Kris's decision to work with TripSpark to ensure that future technologies for Austin ISD would be able integrate seamlessly, has been the right decision. While they're using **TripSpark's routing & scheduling software**, **VEO Now GPS** and the **WheresTheBus Parent App** for now, Kris is planning to add exciting new products with new functionality. For example, On-board tablets and student ridership will track if students get on the wrong bus or get off at the wrong bus stop.

"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 would enable his operation to grow. And as his partner, we've been glad to be able to work with Austin ISD to help them achieve their mission of safe and reliable service.

"We've received many compliments from happy parents who are able to see the arrival times of their kids' buses live and GPS has made things run smoothly"

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TripSpark Technologies is a community transportation technology company focused on helping mid-sized transit agencies and private operators increase rider satisfaction, drive revenue, and address specific operational needs. TripSpark makes this possible by nurturing strong partnerships with our customers, offering the latest technologies and providing exceptional support.

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