



A New Web-Based Software Program By A Florida Company For Reporting Student Misbehavior On School Buses Can Help Reduce Disciplinary Problems And Increase Driver Retention, According To Its Developers.

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The software program, TIRES (nka BusConduct), an acronym for Transportation Incident Referral System, is a relatively new program, reports Jules Bohanon, applications development director for IncWebs (fka Incompass) Inc. in Lakeland, Florida (previously St. Paul, MN).

Request for Assistance

The program grew out of a request for assistance by a Minnesota school district, she explains. "Basically, a few years ago, a district in Minnesota contacted us. We've been working with school districts [for] about 15 years, helping them collect and report data more efficiently. They were having a problem with behavior reporting, especially turn-around time," Bohanon says. "It was taking them too long to get the information on discipline matters to the right people," she adds. The districts procedures—similar to what a lot of districts do now—was to use a five-part carbon form, which was filled in by the bus driver. "Say Johnny was throwing spitballs on the bus. The driver fills out the form, and turns it in to the safety coordinator at the bus company, who turns it in to the school. It could be two or three days before Johnny is called in or his parents are notified," Bohanon explains. By then, particularly with younger children, the student may have forgotten his behavior, or found some way to justify it to himself. "So a week later, Johnny goes home with a report and he tells his parents he didn't do it, and of course they

believe him, and they call up the transportation director and complain—and nothing really happens,” she says.

The Anoka-Hennepin school district, for which the program initially was developed, is a large district, and was recording about 20,000 behavioral incidents a year, Bohanon reports. “There were stacks of paper everywhere. There were parents always calling. It was a disaster.”

Internet-Based System

IncWebs decided, after evaluating the situation, that an Internet-based system for reporting the information would be the best way to go, and launched a pilot program in the 1999-2000 school year. The school district recorded a 50 percent reduction in behavior complaints during the pilot period, and began using the system district-wide in the 2000-2001 school year—with 50 schools and 130 users on the system, Bohanon says.

Only 2000 Incidents

Thus far, she reports, during the period for which the district normally would have expected to have 10,000 incidents, there have been only 2,000. “They attribute that reduction to the BusConduct program, because of a couple of things,” she says. “One is the quick turn-around.” The system allows the bus driver to park his or her bus at the bus garage, fill out a report, and give [it] to a clerk, who enters the report into the BusConduct program. “Then, as soon as that happens [the incident report is automatically e-mailed] to the principal at that kid’s school,” she explains. Within the first hour of the school day, the principal can check and see what reports have been filed.

“[The principal] can see that ‘so-and-so’ did something bad on the bus. The principal can talk to the child, and enter the child’s defense on the report...and then the system prints out a really nice-looking report that goes out to the parents,” Bohanon says.

Report Looks Official

That report, she notes, “looks official,” instead of the “hand-scrawled thing” that parents would have received under the former system. “It really is official-looking, and they get it the same day—and have to sign it and return it to the school,” she adds.

The official appearance of the document seems to have a much greater effect on the students and parents, Bohanon notes. “When the principal decides what punishment is to be handed out, it’s entered into the BusConduct system, and the bus company can look on the system and see what the result was of them writing that kid up,” she says.

“They’ve never had that before. Unless the kid disappeared off the bus for a couple of days, [drivers] wouldn’t know if writing this person up had any results at all,” she explains.

Call Parent Immediately

The system also allows the school to call a parent immediately to let them know they have to pick up a child who has been suspended from riding the bus—and the bus operator can log on at noon and know how the school has responded.

“The result of that—an unexpected result—has been improved driver retention,” Bohanon says. “According to the bus companies in our regional pilot district, the number one reason for drivers leaving is not the bad pay, not the hours, but the kids that act up and make the drivers’ lives difficult,” she says. Now, she says, the bus companies serving the district are holding on to their drivers longer.

IncWebs is hoping to expand the use of BusConduct (which currently is being used or tested by a dozen or so districts)—and is offering a 90-day free trial to districts. In addition to lining up more customers, IncWebs is interested in getting comments and learning what modifications may be needed to improve the system, Bohanon says.

About BusConduct

Since 1999, BusConduct has been assisting school transportation departments nationwide with the efficient management of student conduct issues. A unique web-based software applications that has been applauded by industry experts, BusConduct eliminates paper conduct reports, efficiently tracks and routes all disciplinary issues, and has also proven to reduce the rate of conduct issues in many school districts.

BusConduct was developed and is managed by IncWebs, Inc., a Lakeland, Fla., based web application design firm.

For more information on BusConduct, and to view an interactive demo and receive immediate pricing, visit www.BusConduct.com or call (877) 604-9087.