Cal/Amp®

Cobb County Schools Invests in School Bus Fleet Intelligence

School bus tracking app connects and protects Atlanta area families and schools

Suburban Atlanta Districts Invests in a Smarter School Bus Experience

Cobb County School District leveraged Sourcewell to make the buying process easy when onboarding Synovia's Fleet Intelligence software

78,000 students

1,100 buses

1,500 employees

And one huge challenge: Combating some of the country's most notorious traffic while transporting Georgia's second largest group of students to and from school every day.

The team at Cobb County School District's Transportation Department faces a host of major challenges every day as they manage one of North America's largest and most dynamic school bus fleets.

Keeping safe and experienced drivers behind the wheel. Ensuring students are well behaved aboard their buses. And keeping parents appraised as weather, traffic and the occasional transportation curveball keeps the entire staff on their toes.

To help manage this diverse set of challenges, the Cobb County team relies first on a well-trained, highly committed staff of transportation professionals.

And those people rely on a host of technologies designed to keep students safe and enhance fleet operations.

With so many students and a coverage area of approximately 400 square miles, Cobb County turned to CalAmp to serve its GPS-powered Fleet Intelligence needs.

From helping mechanics in the garage remotely diagnose why a bus is broken down on the side of the road and assisting the dispatch team reroute buses around accidents to delivering driver reports focused on improving driver behaviors to managing their payroll system, CalAmp has delivered a robust suite of solutions focused on improving operations and safety.

To the make buying process simply, Cobb County leveraged the Sourcewell purchasing platform. Synovia and parent company, CalAmp, participate in the Sourcewell buying cooperative.

https://youtu.be/CtBgwcRT3kw

"The CalAmp software supports nearly every function of our operations and allows us to make more intelligent decisions," said Bryan Snyder, Director of Transportation, Cobb County Schools. "The software is easy to use and delivers so much functionality that was clearly designed with the school bus fleet in mind. It's a major part of our success formula."

To Tow or Not to Tow?

Whether you're a transportation expert with decades of experience or a newly minted driver with only a months' worth of experience on the road, the problem remains the same: how serious is serious?

When a check engine light is flashing, and the vehicle is performing poorly; do you pull over and order a tow truck or push it a few miles hoping to get back home?

For the everyday motorist driving a personal vehicle, the calculation is challenging but not overwhelming. Stressful but manageable.

But if you've got 35 elementary school children who may have to deboard the bus on a busy street and reboard another bus as traffic speeds by only feet away, the decision is fraught with peril.

That's what makes Synovia's engine diagnostics tool so powerful.

A driver can alert the garage of a check engine light in real time and the mechanic is able to quickly determine the type of fault and appropriate response.

Sometimes a rattling under the hood may seem more serious than the sound lets on, and the driver can safely complete their route and return to the yard for maintenance.

But another warning light – alerting an alternator ready to fail perhaps – flashing while the vehicle operates without other distress symptoms is a cause for serious concern: pull over somewhere safe before the bus is stranded in a more precarious location.

Mike Warner has been managing maintenance fleets for private and public organizations for decades.

As the leader of the Cobb County maintenance department, he's grateful to have the remote access provided in the Synovia Fleet Intelligence solution.

"It's hard to describe the peace of mind we get from the Engine Diagnostics tool, when you consider the position we were in previously," Warner said.

"A bus would be running poorly and we just didn't know so we almost always had to err on the side of caution because we always have to put safety first. But we would get buses back to the garage and find minor issues that didn't require such drastic maneuvering."

Today, the fleet always has multiple sets of eyes ready to diagnose a problem, whether the bus is two miles from the yard or across the state transporting a sports team on an early Saturday morning.

"Knowing the issues in real time, and being able to communicate to the driver, to dispatch and even to administrators if they need to know, is powerful and it's improving the way we operate," he said.

Parents Understand if you're late, they just want to know.....

Traffic in and around greater Atlanta is well known as some of the worst in the country, so parents around Cobb County, situated north of Atlanta proper, understand when buses run late or get caught up in unexpected congestion.

But in an era when connected mobile devices allow us to track the baking of a delivery pizza and the arrival of a rideshare, parents and administrators expect real-time information to alleviate the worry associated with late or even broken-down buses.

"We live in a different world now," Snyder said. "And we know we have to adapt to serve our community with the information they need to manage their lives well because so much depends on getting your child off to school safely and on time."

They adopted Synovia's award-winning Here Comes The Bus mobile app that delivers real-time vehicle tracking as well as push notifications and email alerts when the bus is approaching a home or designated stop.

The app captured an Innovation Award from IHS Markit in 2019 for its intuitive user interface, reliability and customer satisfaction. The app has garnered 4.6 stars on the Apple app store with more than 65,000 reviews and has been downloaded more than 2 million times.

"It just works. And our community has embraced it with more than 2,000 downloads in the first weeks it was released and thousands more since," Warner said. "Our goal is to have 70 percent penetration by the end of this school year and for every parent who needs it to have it."

Sourcewell makes buying simple

Large school districts are sometimes required to issue an Request for Proposal to make a purchase as significant as a multi-year Fleet Intelligence solution that includes a school bus tracking app like Here Comes The Bus.

Yet many districts over the cumbersome RFP process by working through Sourcewell, one of the nation's leading buying platforms.

Sourcewell's analysts streamline the procurement process by developing RFPs and IFBs for national, competitive solicitations that meet or exceed local requirements.
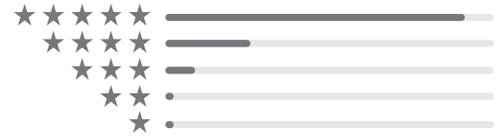
Synovia's Fleet Intelligence offerings are available to school districts and contractors through established contract pricing from a competitive RFP process.

And this is just the beginning...

Our mobile app delivers many of these same powerful features on your smart device and has earned 4.7 stars on the app store with nearly 500 reviews. That's hundreds of fleet managers like you, who rely on the mobile app to stay connected to their fleet no matter where the job takes them.

Ratings and Reviews

4.7
out of 5

451 Ratings

Great app!
★★★★★

Feb 12
mecacmom

Great way to monitor my vehicles on the go! No longer chained to my desk.

Love it
★★★★★

Mar 15
AbsDoRight

I love it. I'm able to track my buses...

Pretty cool
★★★★★

May 2
Ebbarnes20

Love how I can watch the fleet and when they use the reds ambers and making a stop...

Convenient way to locate vehicles
★★★★★

May 16
tcpind79

Love how I can watch the fleet and when they use the reds ambers and making a stop...

About CalAmp

CalAmp (NASDAQ: CAMP) is a telematics pioneer leading transformation in a global connected economy. We help reinvent businesses and improve lives around the globe with technology solutions that streamline complex IoT deployments and bring intelligence to the edge. Our software applications, scalable cloud services, and intelligent devices collect and assess business-critical data from mobile assets, cargo, companies, cities and people. We call this The New How, powering autonomous IoT interaction, facilitating efficient decision making, optimizing resource utilization, and improving road safety. CalAmp is headquartered in Irvine, California and has been publicly traded since 1983. LoJack is a wholly owned subsidiary of CalAmp. For more information, visit calamp.com, or LinkedIn, Twitter, YouTube or CalAmp Blog.

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