

GROWING WITH A CHARTER SCHOOL

A CLIENT CASE SUMMARY

STUDENT TRANSIT works with public, private and charter schools of all sizes. We develop and implement solutions to meet the evolving needs of a growing organization. This short one-page summary offers a glimpse into the challenges they faced and the collaborative solution developed to meet them.

OVERVIEW: ONE TO THREE AND FOUR TO FIFTEEN

The title refers to growing from 1 to 3 schools and from 4 to 15 buses. Over the past 6 years STUDENT TRANSIT has worked with a charter school company in Indianapolis and has supported their evolving transportation requirements as all of their schools have successfully become a highly rated.

THE FIVE (5) KEY TRANSPORTATION ELEMENTS DURING THEIR GROWTH HAVE BEEN:

1. The evolution of using transportation as a marketing tool to operating standard routes.

In the beginning, transportation was used as a tool to acquire and maintain enrollment. As a result, routes were long both in terms of miles and hours. Today, as the schools have matured, they have begun to operate over standard routes based on targeted areas of enrollment and demographics. The result is more efficient routes, with transportation becoming a lower % of the budget.

2. Managing capacity as the school has added grades each year,

The schools have a wide range of grades, from K to high school. The school has evolved from a single bell time system with buses carrying multiple grade levels of children to a two-tier system with a more traditional elementary and high school split. There was a collaborative assessment of ridership on routes by age and grade to determine the true “operating capacity” of a bus.

3. Viewing transportation is both an asset and a service to the school, not just a cost.

Student Transit offered the school and they agreed to participate in our CHARTERRBUS Program (www.charterrbus.com) where we charter school buses on weekends, the summer and holidays and share the revenue with the school. In this way, we collaboratively use the vehicles to service the local community as well as generate revenue for the school. Transportation becomes an asset.

4. Having a collaborative student management policies and processes.

The bus is an extension of the school, even though there are two entities co-managing transportation. Buses have camera systems to validate on-bus issues but prevention and a focus on safety is the key to success. We co-developed with the school, a Parent-Student Transportation Handbook that outlines all safety and discipline policies and procedures. Driver support by the school and adherence to the policies have been the keys to successful student management and it has been and will continue to be a team effort.

5. Building a 100% transparent relationship.

The programs we build with the school are based on an agreed set of requirements. This includes routing, safety and budgets. We share with the school all of our costs and costing is totally transparent. The relationship we built with the school is one in which we can share ideas, problems and solutions in a way that fulfills the mission of the school.

THE FUTURE

The school is planning on opening another school next year, and by applying all of the best practices we have developed together, transportation planning and launch will be smooth and disciplined.