



WHITE PAPER

# The Lack of Technology in Routing and What Can be Done

With transportation departments looking for ways to effectively route children, while meeting increasingly smaller budgets, solutions have to be found.

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*Across the nation, transportation departments are struggling with underlying communication issues that are leading to delays, poor customer service, and even children not being picked up or dropped off at the correct locations. Those in charge know that technology has advanced and it is time to bring it into the districts while adhering to budgets and regulations.*

*As an industry expert in student transportation, School Bus Logistics is uniquely positioned to share thoughts and solutions around communication issues. This white paper will look at industry trends and ways to solve these ongoing problems.*



## ISSUES IN THE INDUSTRY

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*Over the past several decades, our country—and the world—have seen enormous advances in communication technology. Mail and faxes have become nearly obsolete in daily business activities, and yet school districts and ancillary organizations still find themselves relying heavily on these outdated systems. While there is nothing inherently wrong with these technologies, they can lead to serious issues like lost information and slow turn-around times.*

*In addition to the previously mentioned problems, these systems lead to an increased occurrence of human error. Faxes can get lost—or not arrive at all—or never make it to the correct person's hands as there is no consistent or automated way to confirm that it was properly delivered. When this happens, it can take a few days for the sender to even learn the fax never made it—adding onto a turn-around of two to three days already to set up the transportation.*

*Emails and voicemail (or handwritten messages) can easily be unintentionally lost or missed. This can also happen with an email if someone replies to an old email string to submit a new student request. Should the email go to only one person, and that person is out on vacation or driving open routes, days can go by with no action taken.*

*Much like emails, phone messages can sit in voicemail and not be responded to. Often, there is a simple lack of communication between departments and a misunderstanding of information. Because communication is siloed in different systems and is reliant on humans to transfer this information, a breakdown can easily occur.*

*Departments including schools, transportation offices, administration offices, special education departments—and even a parent—must be able to communicate a specific student's transportation needs without losing critical information. For example, Johnny needs to be transported in a wheelchair-lift, accessible school bus. However, someone from the special education department forgot to provide this information to the transportation staff. Because of this, the wrong type of bus is sent to pick Johnny up and he has now missed a day of school.*

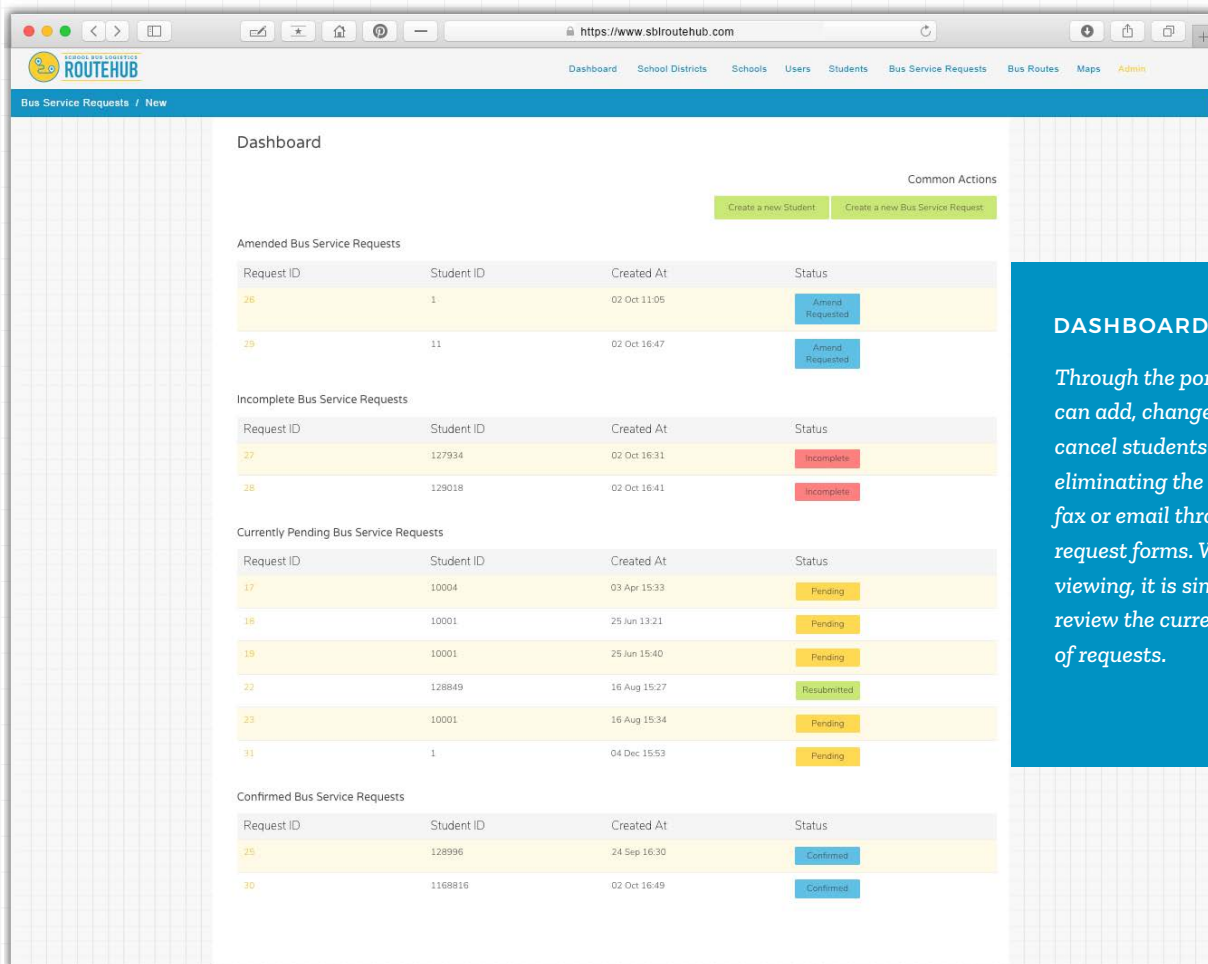
*So since technology has changed, why are districts still working within these archaic systems? According to a [report](#) by Bellwether Education Partners, "School districts struggle to provide efficient service in the face of escalating costs and increasingly complex education systems where more and more students attend schools outside their neighborhoods. Stagnant state funding streams force districts either to sacrifice service quality and forgo system upgrades or divert funds from other purposes. Federal and state regulations concerning student safety and special student populations' educational rights are at odds with strategies to improve efficiency." So how can districts get ahead while meeting budget demands and regulatory requirements?*



# THE ROUTEHUB SOLUTION

## Communication

*The core problem is that communication is lost or delayed because it isn't happening through one, consistent system. When information is siloed, mistakes will happen. Districts need to make the move to a single system of record that allows all parties to share critical data in one place. When using a system, like RouteHub from School Bus Logistics, to keep all critical data in one location, each department can input their data quickly and reduce the amount of lost or misunderstood information. RouteHub allows multiple resources from the transportation department to monitor requests and help get routing set up for students. This cuts down on issues if someone is out of the office or even in the case of route managers needing to be behind the wheel of a bus. It also serves as a great tool for management to monitor how many requests get scheduled during phases such pending, incomplete, confirmed, and scheduled.*



**DASHBOARD**

Through the portal, users can add, change and cancel students requests eliminating the need to fax or email through request forms. When viewing, it is simple to review the current status of requests.



**SERVICE REQUEST**  
Multiple requesters from schools can set up and send requests using a form that replaces faxes.

Student id number ID: 10004   Student name: Jennifer Smith   School name: Denver Middle School   Requester: admin@email.com   Status: Pending

Program: Home/School  
Reason: New to District  
Trip type: round trip

Pickup addresses:  
Weekdays: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday  
Address: 555 Main St, Denver, CO 80201

Dropoff addresses:  
Weekdays: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday  
Address: 555 Main St, Denver, CO 80201

Start service at: 2018-04-03  
Stop service at: 2018-04-26

Special equipment: None  
General comments: None  
Amendment: Hey, got the home address wrong. Please update to 123 Main St.

Student data:  
Name: Jennifer Smith  
Grade: 2nd  
Home Address: 555 Main St, Denver, CO 80201

Emergency contacts:  
Authorized to take / receive:

Buttons: Mark as Confirmed, Mark as Scheduled, Mark as Incomplete, Mark as Cancelled, Amend

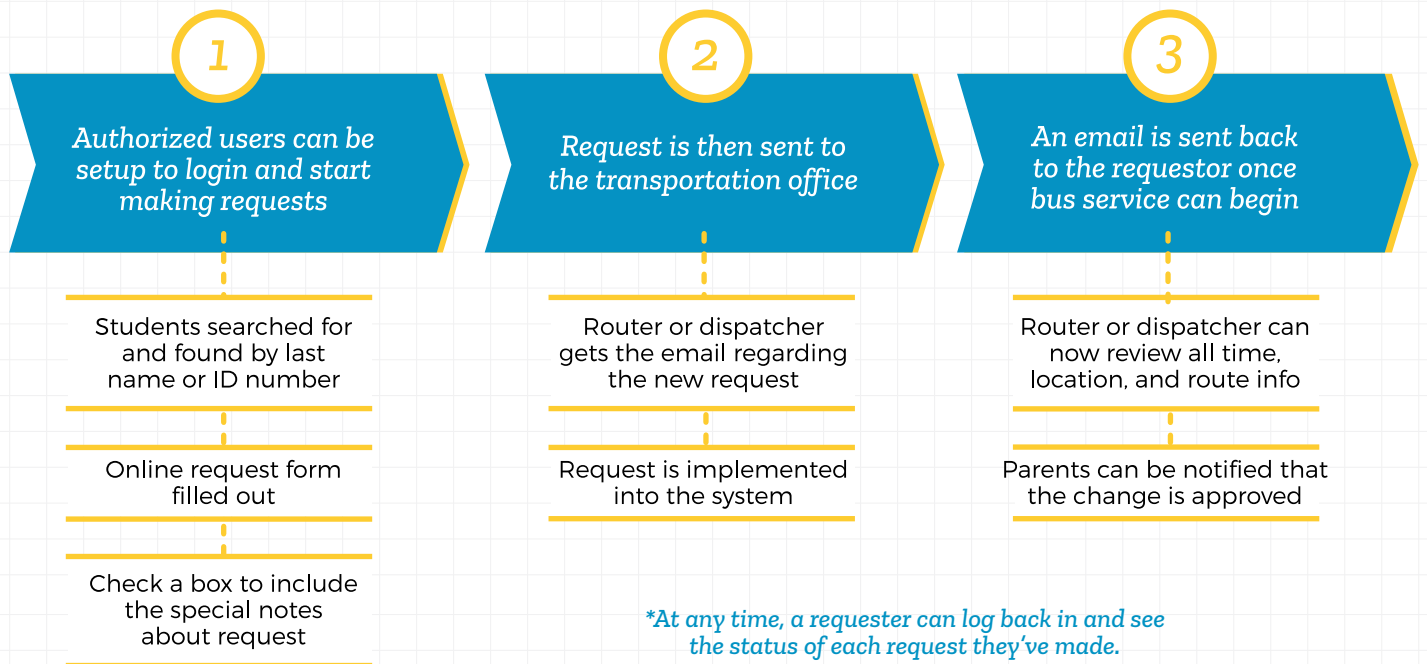
**PENDING SERVICE REQUEST**  
Authorized users can log in from anywhere and see the status of routing requests.



## Process

So how does this all work? Let's review the process using the example of Johnny. Authorized users, such as school secretaries or the special education department, can be set up to login and start making requests. Johnny would be found by last name or ID number, and then an online request form filled out and they can check a box to include a note that he will need a wheelchair-lift, accessible school bus. This request is then sent to the transportation office.

At this point, the router or dispatcher gets an email regarding the new request. At any time, a requester can log back in and see the status of each request they've made. An email is sent once bus service can begin and, at that point, they can review time, location, and route info in order to notify the parent.





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## **Faster turn-around times to set up transportation for students**

*Due to the national school bus driver shortage, too many routers are having to drive routes. This means that many requests from schools and other departments are not getting the attention they need to get student requests completed for new routes and stops. Using RouteHub to maintain a single point of information means that any user in the office can help complete requests more efficiently. School Bus Logistics offers this type of support service as well on an as-needed basis. From any one of our offices across the United States, we can log into RouteHub and help complete and setup requests when local staff is strapped for time.*

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## **No longer a breakdown in flow of information from one system to another**

*When school districts perform nightly imports into Transfinder, Versatrans, or any other routing system, data gets lost and overwritten. When performing daily changes in routing systems, transportation staff can log into RouteHub and see what route the child was on the night before—as long as data was properly synced. This helps save time when trying to figure out what route the child was on so that routes can be updated and kept as current as possible.*

*By using RouteHub, anyone with access can review multiple requests for each student and see who made them. For example, two requesters from the same school can see if, when, and who made the request for any student at that school and if it has been received, is pending, or has been scheduled.*

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## Tracking down information is no longer time consuming and costly

When information gets lost it can take hours or days to find it, plus additional time needed to set up the service once it's found. However, in seconds, staff can look up a child in RouteHub and request to have transportation canceled even for just one afternoon. Once this happens, multiple people in the transportation office can monitor requests and take action. Oftentimes, students go home sick or have a doctor's appointment but the bus still comes to the school that afternoon because somebody did not get the message. Properly and efficiently communicating this information saves time, money, and resources for a transportation department and, ultimately, the entire district.

With districts across the nation trying to increase efficiencies through technology, routing communication is a small piece of the puzzle. According to an [article on Curbed.com](#), "[School bus transportation] could be considered the largest transportation system in the country, moving more than 25 million passengers every weekday. Count every single vehicle used in every mass transit system in the United States, then multiply that figure by two, and that's the rough number of vehicles in this massive fleet, which serves every corner of every state." It may be one of the largest transportation systems in the country, but buses are getting older, charter school choice is on the rise, and safety is an ever-increasing concern—leaving districts with a lot to consider.

Though these issues can seem overwhelming to tackle, RouteHub streamlines communication and processes to make a big technology leap simple. As a cloud-based platform, the software can be updated as frequently as needed in order to ensure districts have the tools required for optimal routing. By decreasing the amount of time employees spend tracking down and managing data, districts can save a substantial amount of time and, by extension, money. With proper communication, students are scheduled faster, make it into the classroom sooner, and parents are happier.

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TO LEARN HOW ROUTEHUB CAN BENEFIT YOUR DISTRICT,  
AND FOR A FREE DEMO OF THE SOFTWARE, CONTACT

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