EZRouting
By Pathwise

Salem City Schools Student Transportation Management Success Story: From Frustration to Efficiency

Salem City (Virginia) Schools prides itself on its commitment to creating a loving and engaging environment that inspires children to reach their full potential. The school system provides valuable services to nearly 4,000 students, including daily bus transportation for approximately 2,000 students across its elementary, middle, and high schools—covering 24 different routes plus nine special needs routes.

Yet creating and managing bus routes was not always as easy—or as effective—as it should have been. Lewis Armistead, Salem City's Director of Transportation, knew the district needed a better approach to student transportation management.

Transportation Pain Points: Why Salem City Needed Change

Manual and Inconsistent Routing Created Operational Bottlenecks

Before implementing modern bus routing software, Salem City Schools struggled with an outdated, difficult-to-use system that impacted their entire transportation operation.

Critical Pain Points:

Difficult, Inconsistent Route Building Process

Salem City's previous routing application required inconsistent methods to create routes or add students to different buses, creating confusion and inefficiency. As Armistead explains, "Our previous routing application just didn't work for us. It was hard to use and required so many inconsistent methods to create routes or add a student to a different bus."

Poor Vendor Support and Responsiveness

The previous vendor's customer support team was hard to reach, often leaving Armistead without an answer to pressing questions for days at a time—delaying critical route adjustments and issue resolution.

On-Premises System Limitations

The previous software was not cloud-based, meaning Armistead could only work on bus routing when physically in the office. This also required the school's IT staff to maintain the system and troubleshoot more technical issues, adding unnecessary burden on internal resources.

No Proactive Parent Communication

Without an efficient way to share route information or collect parent feedback, the transportation office was overwhelmed by phone calls and emails—especially during the critical first week of school.

As Armistead knew: there had to be a better way. When the previous system came up for renewal, he decided to pass and started looking for a new transportation routing solution.

The Solution: EZRouting School Bus Route Planning Software

Discovery Through Competitive Evaluation

After evaluating many other vendors and competitive products, Armistead and Salem City selected Pathwise and its EZRouting solution. EZRouting stood out for a number of reasons. First, Armistead loved the fact that it was cloud-based. The team also enjoyed how intuitive EZRouting is, including its use of drag-and-drop and other powerful functionality.

"It is so easy to create new routes, create or modify a bus stop, or add students to any bus or route," Armistead explains. "[EZRouting] is extremely user friendly and quickly gives me a big picture view of all of our routes."

Seamless Implementation with Expert Support

The entire Salem City team immediately saw an improvement in training, support, and overall service from day one.

Implementation Highlights:

- Responsive support team with immediate email replies and quick video calls
- Comprehensive support portal for tackling common issues
- Cloud-based access enabling work from anywhere
- Intuitive drag-and-drop interface requiring minimal training
- Unlimited licenses to expand usage across the district

"The support portal on [EZRouting] has been great, especially to tackle common issues that other customers have faced," says Armistead. "But if I have more detailed questions, I can actually send an email directly to my customer service representative at [Pathwise]. She replies right away and either answers the question or books a quick video call to address it. The entire experience with [Pathwise]'s service has been phenomenal."

Results: How EZRouting Solved Salem City's Challenges

Pain Point 1: Difficult, Inconsistent Route Building → SOLVED with Intuitive Drag-and-Drop

The Solution:

EZRouting's school bus route planning software provides an intuitive, user-friendly interface with drag-and-drop functionality that makes it simple to create new routes, modify bus stops, or add students to any bus or route—all through consistent, straightforward methods.

The Impact:

Route creation and management became dramatically faster and easier. Staff can now build and adjust routes in a fraction of the time, without the confusion of inconsistent processes.

Pain Point 2: On-Premises System Limitations → SOLVED with Cloud-Based Access

The Solution:

EZRouting is fully cloud-based, allowing transportation staff to access the platform from anywhere with an internet connection—eliminating the need for on-site IT maintenance and office-only access.

"It is great that I can use it anywhere," Armistead says. "I recently went on a vacation where I spent a few hours each day working on new routes to get ready for the upcoming school year. I never could have accomplished this with our old system."

The Impact:

IT staff are freed from system maintenance, and transportation managers can work flexibly—even remotely—to keep routes up to date year-round.

Pain Point 3: Poor Vendor Support → SOLVED with Responsive Customer Service

The Solution:

EZRouting's support model includes a comprehensive self-service portal for common issues, plus direct access to a dedicated customer service representative via email and video calls.

The Impact:

Questions are answered immediately rather than going unanswered for days. The support experience has been described as "phenomenal" by the transportation team.

Pain Point 4: Parent Communication Gaps → SOLVED with Parent Portal Feature

The Solution:

EZRouting's Parent Portal feature enables the district to proactively communicate route information to the entire community, and a streamlined process lets parents submit questions or issues directly.

The Impact:

In their first year, Salem City exported all routes from EZRouting and sent them to parents, while also creating a Google form for parent feedback. They received nearly 800 responses from parents—a volume that would have overwhelmed them without EZRouting. "In the past, we might have been tempted to use something like Microsoft Word to collect their feedback and then manually modify the bus routes," Armistead says. "But with [EZRouting], we can easily make the requested changes and provide better service to our entire community."

Pain Point 5: Limited User Access → SOLVED with Unlimited Licenses

The Solution:

Unlike the previous application, EZRouting offers unlimited licenses, allowing the district to push access out to users across every school in the district.

"I've been able to push [EZRouting] out to many different users in each of our schools," says Armistead. "As they continue to learn how to use it, I'm confident that this will help us eliminate phone calls and improve our ability to resolve issues even more."

The Impact:

Expanded access means parents and staff can resolve issues more proactively, reducing inbound calls and empowering more team members to contribute to transportation management.

Pain Point 6: Data Management Inefficiency → SOLVED with Custom Fields and Centralized Data

The Solution:

EZRouting allows staff to enter data directly and offers unlimited user-defined fields, eliminating the need to maintain multiple spreadsheets or databases.

The Impact:

Centralized, customizable data management enables Salem City to collect and share vital transportation information more effectively across the district.

Why School Districts Choose EZRouting

Comprehensive School Bus Route Planning Software Features:

- **Intuitive drag-and-drop interface** for easy route creation and modification
- **Cloud-based access** enabling work from anywhere, anytime
- **Parent Portal** for proactive communication and community engagement
- **Unlimited licenses** to empower users across the district
- **Unlimited user-defined fields** for customized data collection and reporting
- **Comprehensive support portal** with direct access to dedicated customer service
- **No IT maintenance required**—fully managed cloud solution

Partnership-Driven Approach

Armistead is already planning how to maximize the results. "Our staff can already enter data, which means we don't have to maintain multiple spreadsheets or databases. Also, [EZRouting] offers unlimited user-defined fields so we'll continue to create even more custom fields to get even better at collecting and sharing vital information using [EZRouting]."

> "I wish I started with [EZRouting] much sooner. By this time next year, all of our processes will be completely different and so much better, and we owe it all to [EZRouting]." — Lewis Armistead, Director of Transportation, Salem City Schools

Salem City Schools' success demonstrates how the right student transportation management platform can solve complex operational challenges while improving service for students, parents, and staff.

From cloud-based flexibility to intuitive route management to proactive parent communication, EZRouting delivers measurable improvements across every aspect of transportation operations.

Ready to revolutionize your transportation system?

Schedule a live demo and discover why districts across the country choose EZRouting's bus routing platform for their student transportation management needs.

Visit http://www.pathwisek12.com/ to learn more about how our school bus routing software can address your district's unique challenges.

Ready to optimize your routing?

Learn more about EZRouting Suite. You can also request information and pricing!

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https://pathwisek12.com/transportation-suite