

# News Release



## For Immediate Release

2/3/16

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## Z Pass™ Technology Keeps Children Safe and Transforms School Transportation

**ZANESVILLE, Ohio** – A group of schools throughout Southeastern Ohio has been part of an exciting pilot that promises to transform school bus transportation.

During the 2015-2016 school year, nearly 32,000 students have been assigned identification cards fitted with radio frequency identification device (RFID) technology. As kids board and leave the bus, a scanner picks up their card signal and logs these events. Combined with GPS units, the system transmits the location data to a secure server that school officials can access if needed.

The system, called Z Pass™, is designed to enhance child safety and parents' peace of mind. Using Z Pass, if a child gets on a school bus, district officials can quickly check the system and determine bus and stop information. This critical data can be relayed to concerned parents, caregivers and when necessary, law enforcement personnel. Many districts have implemented the second phase of Z Pass called Z Pass Plus, where parents can sign up to receive secure, simple text notifications of child on and off times and locations. The cost of the GPS hardware units, software and RFID cards was covered as part of an Ohio Department of Education Straight A Fund grant awarded in August 2014.

The grant project, "Optimizing Transportation Efficiencies in a Cross-District Consortium," was born from a shared services concept charged with discovering opportunities to reduce costs while improving services for students and teachers. A wide variety of research and areas of exploration led the team to focus efforts on rising transportation costs – an ever-increasing budget item for rural Ohio counties.

The grant committed to reducing transportation costs by reducing bus idling time, improving bus routes, quantifying and monitoring student ridership and sharing services across districts where practical. Currently 20 school districts, one Board of Developmental Disabilities, four Educational Service Centers and two Information Technology Centers are part of the consortium. The group plans to expand to an even larger area of rural Ohio, adding 55 districts and more than 90,000 students during the 2016-2017 school year.

For more information on the project's progress and expansion updates, visit the Ohio Shared Services Collaborative's website – at [www.OhioSSC.org](http://www.OhioSSC.org).