



Russellville's Transition to Digital with Zonar and Bytecurve

Arkansas Public School District Nets Significant Payroll Savings and Improves Internal Processes

Imagine finding an extra \$15,000 in your monthly payroll budget.

Or imagine dozens of your drivers no longer worrying about coming into the garage to check their daily assignment changes because they've adopted a mobile application that delivers their shifting assignments in real time.

And, finally, imagine reclaiming dozens of work hours each month thanks to the digitization and automation of payroll processing, shrinking a process from days to hours while simultaneously increasing driver accountability.

The Russellville (Ark.) School District has accomplished this and more.

"We had a lot of spreadsheets and a lot of time invested in keeping all of our routes and drivers organized before we went on this journey to improve how we do business,"

said Christopher King, Transportation Director for Russellville School District (RSD).

"Now we've got systems in place that automate so many of our manual tasks, and we've built a communication system that makes it easy for drivers to stay connected to their tasks and for leadership to have greater confidence in our daily routes."

Key Wins For Russellville

- **Reduced payroll by \$15,000** by integrating Bytecurve accountability system
- Transitioned 90 percent of drivers to app-based clock-in system
- Reduce monthly payroll processing time by 80 percent
- Virtually eliminated payroll errors tied to driver error
- Established digital foundation for parent school bus tracking app

Pre-Digitization: Manual Processes and Familiar Challenges

RSD has more than 65 buses in its fleet deployed nearly every day

The district covers 99 square miles that run 45 routes simultaneously each morning and afternoon. The transportation department also runs trips and shuttles throughout the day to total over 250 runs per week, always with a student safety focus.

Before the district adopted GPS fleet tracking and dispatch/payroll applications, RSD faced a familiar set of challenges similar to countless student transportation fleets still operating in the analog: significant payroll and routing challenges.

They relied on manual, paper-based time tracking and outdated routing software, King said.

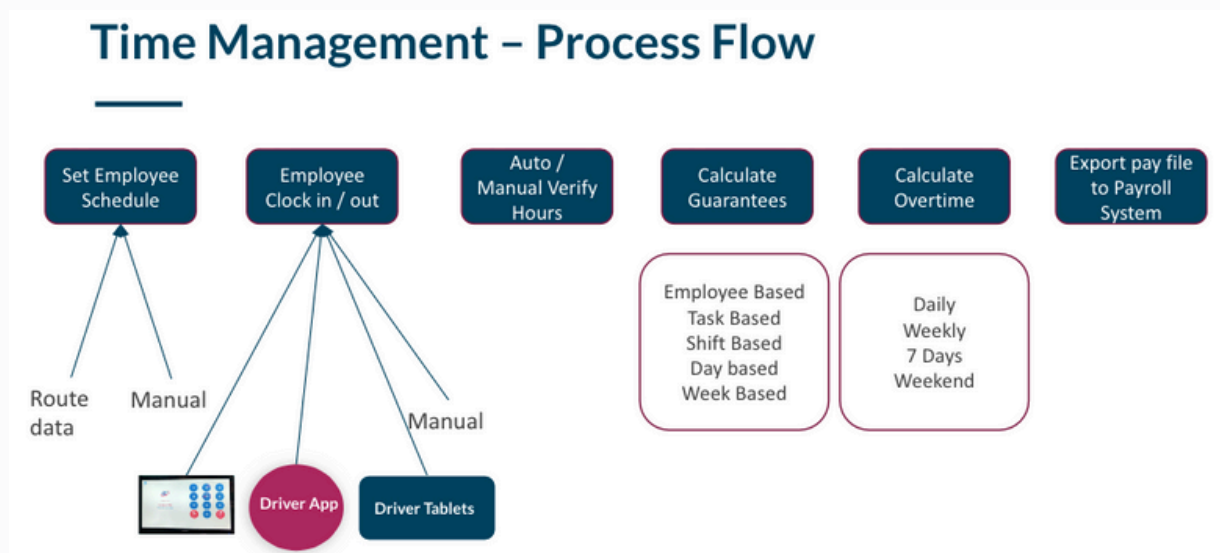
These results stem from a multi-year investment that transformed the department from a paper-based payroll and dispatch system to a fully digital process, instilling them with the confidence to soon deploy a parent mobile app.

Payroll processing previously took up to 15 days each month and resulted in high labor costs.

Errors in tracking hours were common, and there was no efficient way to verify time entries, leading to potential inaccuracies in driver pay.

Department leadership learned from speaking to other school bus fleet leaders that better options were now available.

“We knew there had to be a better way to manage our fleet and, more importantly, manage our drivers and staff,” King said. ***“We were committed to taking a data-based approach and finding the right technologies to improve our operations across the board.”***





Transition to Zonar for GPS and Bytecurve for Payroll Modernization

Three years ago, the district began a multi-phase modernization process. Initially, they upgraded to Transfinder's web-based version and installed new security systems and cameras on buses. Having successfully onboarded its first batch of new technology, the department leaned into the next round of enhancements.

In the following phase, they added Zonar GPS and tablets to streamline route tracking. During this upgrade, the district learned about Bytecurve's compatibility with Zonar, prompting them to explore Bytecurve's digital timekeeping and payroll features.

"Bytecurve sounded interesting to us as we knew the paper-based model for payroll was rife with administrative challenges and not the most accurate," King said.

"We went in open-minded and were pleased to see how much the system could help our team accomplish."

Implementing Digital Timekeeping and Payroll

King and his team, including Dispatch and Payroll Specialist Christina Herdman, who managed a significant portion of the new tech implementation, took a measured and methodical approach to adopting the new technologies.

In January 2024, the Russellville Schools student transportation department ran both paper-based and digital payroll systems in parallel to ensure accuracy and get accustomed to the new process. By March, they transitioned fully to digital payroll for standard routes and continued manual tracking for special trips, athletics, and other events.

By April, all payroll was fully digitized, with positive impacts on operational efficiency and payroll accuracy.

"We took steps to make sure we weren't rushing into a new system that would cause too much disruption, but we also set a reasonable timeline to move away from all the paper systems," Herdman said.

"I'm pleased with how much progress we made in a short time, and you can't argue with the results we've seen."

And now they've found that aspirational place where the technology provides real-world proof of its impact.

1250 East Diehl Road Suite 402, Naperville, IL 60563

Bytecurve.com



Benefits of Going Digital

The switch to Bytecurve and Zonar has brought substantial savings and operational improvements. By comparing monthly payroll before and after the transition, the district noted a **\$15,000 reduction in labor costs, even after providing raises for bus drivers**. Small reductions in time added up, saving enough to potentially fund additional buses each year.

“All those 10 minutes here and 15 minutes there, those really do add up,” King said. ***“And it’s just wonderful peace of mind to know the drivers and the admin staff are on the same page for timesheets.”*** Herdman said it’s shaved hours of back-and-forth communication with drivers and other staff from her weekly routine.

The real-time GPS data provided by Zonar, integrated with Bytecurve, helped to ensure route accuracy, manage deviations, and track actual trip durations versus planned times, which was essential for monitoring costs and making adjustments.

“Our data today is just incredible,” King said. ***“And how we use it to improve services is exciting for our students and the community we serve.”***

Adapting Staff to the New System

Transitioning to a digital-first organization required training and adjustment, especially for veteran drivers who initially expressed apprehension about almost any new technology.

With guidance and training, most drivers adapted well and began using the Bytecurve DriveOn app to clock in and out, King said.

And in no time, Bytecurve’s app functionality, with its automatic login and easy interface, became popular among drivers as a quicker alternative to the old ways of doing business.

“It’s well over 95 percent (of our drivers) who use it every single day,” King said. ***“They realize it’s a better way to do their jobs.”***

Future Enhancements: The Parent App

The district plans to roll out Transfinder’s Stop Finder app for parents, offering real-time tracking for students.

Currently, they are refining routes and syncing student stops as they launch new student transport technologies.

“We’re continuing to invest and improve the way we operate to provide the best possible service to our community,” King said.



Customer Service and Ongoing Support

RSD praised Bytecurve and their other technology providers for their outstanding customer service. Bytecurve’s team has been responsive, resolving queries and implementing fixes quickly.

This level of support has reduced the need for frequent meetings, allowing the district to address issues swiftly and keep operations running smoothly.

“It feels like every time we have an issue, they’re on it for a few minutes, and we’re in a better place,” Herdman said.

“It’s real peace of mind to know support like that is always so close and ready.”

Conclusion: Significant Cost Savings and Enhanced Operations

Through the combined adoption of Bytecurve and Zonar, the RSD transportation department successfully transitioned from paper-based to fully digital operations, achieving measurable cost savings, greater payroll accuracy, and streamlined internal processes.

Drivers quickly became comfortable with the new technology, and staff shaved dozens of hours from processing payroll while reducing errors and recording significant cost savings.

With its user-friendly mobile app and robust payroll and dispatch features, backed by strong customer support, Bytecurve has become a valuable partner in helping the district improve its transportation needs and better serve its students and community.



1250 East Diehl Road Suite 402, Naperville, IL 60563

Bytecurve.com