

Case  
Study

## LAKOTA LOCAL SCHOOLS

Liberty Township, Ohio

### LAKOTA PARTNERS WITH PETERMANN FOR EXPERTISE AND NATIONAL RESOURCES

Lakota Local Schools' mission is to support academic excellence by ensuring all Lakota students achieve to their fullest potential. Because student achievement is the district's primary goal and they are the experts in that area, they decided to go outside of the district to find the experts in student transportation, an area in their district that needed improvement.

#### CHALLENGES: *Time, Money and Attention*

As most districts, Lakota was facing substantial budget constraints and needed to find ways to save money and become more efficient in operational areas. Creativity was in need. Also, administration needed more time to focus on student academics and achievement; therefore it was necessary to reduce the amount of time they had been spending on transportation services issues, specifically related to customer service, routing, and employees. "Transportation is not our core business, educating student is," said Chris Passarge, Chief Operations Officer.

#### SOLUTIONS: *Proven Best Practices and Employee Attention*

Petermann brought to the table what Lakota was looking for — expertise, best practices and a focus on employees. Systems were put in place in order to optimize routing, and processes were established to recruit, train and retain the best people. Employee training and incentives were increased. Communication protocols were created in order to keep Lakota and Petermann always aligned and on the same page. "Petermann is always invited to the table so that we're all in lock step, so that they understand the big picture. This is not a typical vendor relationship, it is a true partnership," said Passarge.

#### Lakota

##### *By the Numbers*

- Partnership start: 2004
- Student enrollment: 17,000+
- Student ridership: 11,000+
- Number of buses: 173
- Number of routes: 138
- Special education buses: 19



*"We have a true partnership with Petermann. It's not a vendor relationship."*

Chris Passarge,  
Chief Operations Officer



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## **RESULTS:** Savings and Efficiencies, Satisfied Employees, More Time for Education

The district has realized significant financial savings over the years. For example, over \$1MM was saved when the contract was renewed in 2010. This amount was more than what was expected, especially since Petermann was not the lowest bid, but rather the best value. This was a big win for the district as they were able to apply the savings to the classroom and keep teachers onboard. The partnership has enabled the operational dollars to go further.

The student transportation employees are more satisfied because their concerns are being addressed continuously, and training and development has increased and evolved. Overall, they are getting more time and attention, something that had been missing.

The district now can spend more time focusing on their primary purpose — educating students. Their phones aren't ringing with transportation issues and concerns. "Because Petermann is onboard, we don't have to worry about student transportation like we did, and because they are able to react quickly to issues, customer service and satisfaction has increased significantly," said Passarge.

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