



CUSTOMER SPOTLIGHT  
Columbus City Schools





## CUSTOMER SPOTLIGHT Columbus City Schools



**Transportation  
Director of the Year  
2015**

*- Ohio Association of School  
Business Officials (OASBO)*

*“The most important benefits we have received from using the Zonar system are increased driver accountability and improved customer service. Now we can answer parents’ questions precisely and in real-time. Where is my bus? Where is my child?”*

*Steve Simmons  
Director of Transportation Services  
Columbus City Schools*



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## Overview

### Zonar Provides the Real-Time Answers Customer Service Needs

The Columbus City Schools Transportation Call Center receives between 1,100-1,300 telephone calls every school day. When you consider that their school bus fleet services 18,000 bus stops every school day you can start to appreciate the magnitude of the logistics issues faced and questions asked daily. The Zonar solution (V3, HD-GPS, 2010™ Pre- and Post-Trip Inspection and Ground Traffic Control™ Software) was the key to being able to provide the real-time answers parents and principals were seeking about bus location, driving patterns and precise time of stops. With Zonar, the transportation department call center is now able to provide the kind of information parents and principals want and dispatchers need to adjust routes and pick-up locations - in real-time.

### \$110,000 Saved With Zonar Pre- and Post-Trip Inspection Report

While the Columbus City Schools Transportation Department has been using the Zonar Electronic Verified Inspection Report (EVIR®) on the Zonar 2010™ for pre- and post-trip inspections to ensure compliance, they continue to find new ways to save money with Zonar. In an executive summary report provided by Zonar, it was noted that the average time for Columbus City Schools Bus Drivers to complete an inspection was 6 minutes and 58 seconds. However, the time budgeted was 15 minutes. So by decreasing the budgeted time to 10 minutes, an annual savings of \$110,000 was realized.

**COLUMBUS CITY SCHOOLS** operates the largest district owned fleet in the state of Ohio and is the 26th largest in the country. Columbus City Schools Transportation Department provides bus service to more than 31,000 students twice a day and operates a fleet of 764 school buses (543 district-owned and 221 contract).  
[www.columbus.k12.oh.us](http://www.columbus.k12.oh.us)



*"I think asking the driver to simply shut the bus off is something that all of us can do to reduce emissions."*

*Sure, you can add new technology to buses that will help reduce emissions, but shutting the bus off and reducing unnecessary idling is something we can all do immediately to reduce emissions and save fuel dollars at the same time.*

*Zonar makes a real difference with its idle and emissions information."*



*Phil Downs  
Fleet Supervisor  
Columbus City Schools*



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## The Details

Getting Kids to School On Time Necessary to Achieve Mission  
Columbus City Schools have a mission and pupil transportation understands it starts by kids getting to school safely and on time.

*Mission: Each student is highly educated, prepared for leadership and service and empowered for success as a citizen in a global community.*

With the transportation department making 18,000 bus stops daily the details really matter. First, they work to ensure the students are picked up and then adjust in real-time what is needed to get them to school on time.

## Zonar Enables Call Center and Dispatcher Real-Time Support

In the morning, the call center receives calls from parents asking, “Where is my bus?” In the afternoon, the calls from parents are about “where is my child?” With Zonar, the whole customer service equation has changed. Now when parents call, the call center can in real-time locate the bus on its route, determine if and what time a stop was made and adjust pick-up when appropriate. The vast majority of the time, the Zonar gathered data provides the facts. Knowing that the route and time, in real-time, changes the dynamics of the call.

## More Cost-Effective Options Available with Zonar

In the case when a stop was missed, the dispatcher can locate the bus and decide if a go-back is optimal, if another bus in the area can be directed to the pick-up or if the student can be directed to another pick-up stop. The data is shared in map form which really saves time for everyone involved including the call center, dispatcher, driver and principal. Ensuring the child gets to school is the goal and with Zonar, the transportation department has more cost-effective options available to achieve its mission.

## Principals Kept “In-The-Know”

The school principals are the transportation department’s “other” customer alongside parents. With Zonar, the principal has access to up-to-date information on bus arrivals. Many of the Columbus City Schools principals have chosen to “self-serve” by accessing

## CUSTOMER PROFILE

### Industry

Public School Transportation

### Organization

Columbus City Schools, Transportation

### Location

Columbus, Ohio

### Transportation Fast Facts

- Number of Students: 31,000
- School Bus Fleet: 764
- Annual Budget: \$52 million
- Routes Daily: 750
- Bus Stops Daily: 18,000
- Annual Diesel Fuel: 1.2 million gallons

### Website

[www.columbus.k12.oh.us](http://www.columbus.k12.oh.us)

### Challenges

- Ensure Students’ Transportation & Safety
- Achieve Regulatory Compliance
- Maximize Efficiency & Cost-Savings

### Solution

Zonar’s Fleet Management System

- V3™ HD-GPS
- EVIR® Pre- and Post-Trip Inspection
- Ground Traffic Control®

### Benefits

- Real-Time Customer Service
- Increased Driver Accountability
- Pre- and Post-Trip Inspection Compliance
- Better Planned Vehicle Maintenance



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this information through Zonar because it is accurate and so easy to use. In the event of a delay, the call center is able to alert the principal and ensure the children are not charged with a tardy.

### **The Day Starts About 5:30 A.M. and Doesn't End Until 10:00 P.M.**

Steve Simmons, Director of Transportation, says most people think the buses are used just for going between the home and school; however the buses often go until 10:00 P.M. to support academic programs. This includes field trips, which totaled 5,000 last year. "Zonar helps the transportation department to be efficient in accomplishing everything it needs to as well as maintain careful control of our expenses."

### **Pre- and Post-Trip Inspection is What Gets the Bus Rolling**

Looking back at the decision to purchase Zonar, Phil Downs, Fleet Supervisor, remembers, "There were a lot of GPS systems out there but only Zonar had HD-GPS and verified pre-and post-trip inspection for compliance." That's what gets the buses rolling at the start of the day and back at the end of the day. Phil reports that in addition to having good inspections and the data needed to demonstrate compliance, they actually have improved maintenance practices now because good inspections means fewer breakdowns.

### **Zonar is Woven into the Fabric of Day-to-Day Decision Making**

Shortly after Zonar HD-GPS was implemented, the transportation department ran a Zonar produced speed report and found that many bus drivers had exceeded the 55 mile an hour speed limit at least once a day. This data was posted anonymously and the next day there was a 50% reduction in buses exceeding the posted speed limit for buses. Columbus City Schools Transportation uses Zonar as part of their everyday work to help make decisions regarding their "Yellow Fleet" of buses as well as their "White Fleet" of cars and tractors.



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### Winning Clean Air Award Gets Assist with Zonar “Footprint Data”

The Transportation & Fleet Services Department at Columbus City Schools has become a real power user of Zonar. So, when the Idle Emissions Module was added to the Zonar Ground Traffic Control software, full advantage was taken of the data it presented. The “footprint” data really focused the attention on idle times and the impact it had on the environment and fuel cost. Phil Downs said, “This really contributed to the understanding that we needed to change behaviors which in turn contributed to our winning the Clean Air Award from the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission this year.”

### Outcomes: Improved Accountability and Customer Service

Steve Simmons said, “The most important benefits we have received from using the Zonar System are increased driver accountability and improved customer service.

We know the students come first, but we are also driven by wise fiscal choices, and Zonar has helped us do both, better. I also want to point out that you don’t need to be a large school district to realize all the same benefits.”

## ZONAR: IT PAYS TO HAVE THE RIGHT FLEET MANAGEMENT PARTNER

Zonar provides electronic fleet inspection, tracking and operations solutions for public and private fleets. Our products are effective, driven by customer satisfaction and affordable by design. We’ve made it our business to do right by our customers. You will notice the difference.



### Increase safety and security

Zonar’s V3™ and Z Pass™ provide real-time bus fleet tracking and ridership information for instant reports on the location of each bus and the students onboard.

### Bus inspections

Zonar’s 2020® Android Tablet offers the highest level of safety with our patented EVIR® Electronic Verified Inspection Report. DOT mandated pre- and post-trip inspections are automated and verified using Zonar’s technology.

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