



WATKINS GLEN CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

CUSTOMER SPOTLIGHT

Watkins Glen Central school district uses Zonar smart fleet management technology to overhaul school bus operations and student experience.

Watkins Glen Central School District is located at the southernmost tip of the Finger Lakes in the middle of New York state. The district primarily serves the Village of Watkins Glen, which has a population of more than 2,500 and two schools: Watkins Glen Elementary School and Watkins Glen High School. Watkins Glen Central School District also serves several smaller, rural areas in nearby Schuyler County.

Watkins Glen is home to a series of significant valleys and hills, which are problematic for its old radio communication system. As soon as drivers left the friendly confines of the main village, they began losing radio communication because the signal wasn't strong enough to navigate the uneven terrain. Drivers, who, by law, aren't allowed to use their cell phones while on the road, were unable to flag issues in real time or have the school district track their location.

In January 2015, Watkins Glen Central School District began exploring options to revamp its fleet management technology with an emphasis on GPS capabilities, pre- and post-inspections and student safety. Working closely with the Zonar team throughout the first half of 2015, the school district customized a fleet management package that includes [Zonar's 2020 tablet](#) and [Z Pass ridership verification](#). These solutions addressed the district's overall needs while ensuring the security and privacy of each student's personal information.

During the summer of 2015, Watkins Glen Central School District began implementing Zonar solutions across its 18-bus fleet to prepare for the start of school in August. The fleet was outfitted with Zonar's [Electronic Verified Inspection Reporting \(EVIR\)](#) tool to ensure proper pre- and post-trip inspections, reducing the amount of paperwork for drivers, ensuring timely and accurate inspections and streamlining the maintenance process.

Previously, drivers would forget to sign inspection documents, would skip sections of the paperwork, or would only fill in a portion of the information required. For example, drivers would only write the last few numbers of the odometer instead of the full count. With EVIR on the 2020, drivers have the ability to accurately report and log pre- and post-inspection results and can flag issues in real time with the simple click of a button. With the new technology, drivers have the ability to confidently complete their inspections without fear of inaccurate reporting. Instead of reviewing 30-40 pages of documents, a Department of Transportation inspector can look at one page and easily see that Watkins Glen Central School District is in compliance.

Organization

Watkins Glen Central School District

Industry

Pupil

Location

Watkins Glen, New York

Daily Ridership

- 1,150 students
- 20 school bus drivers
- 18 school buses

Website

www.wgcsd.org

Solution

- Zonar Z Pass™
- Zonar V3™

Benefits

- Increased return on technology investment
- Streamlined tracking and account management capabilities
- Improved compliance

The 2020 with EVIR also allows Matthews Buses® to access maintenance data in real time to determine what defects the buses may have and what support technicians need to fix the issue. Previously, Matthews would've asked Watkins Glen's maintenance staff to troubleshoot the issue or they would've had to send a service technician out for a fix. In some scenarios, the school district was forced to drive the equipment to the Matthews maintenance site, which is two hours away.

Zonar technology also helped the Watkins Glen Central School District improve operations, specifically with [GPS tracking](#). On the first day of school in 2015, and the first day the Zonar solutions were deployed, a parent called the Director of Transportation to ask why the bus didn't pick her daughter up that morning. After checking the GPS log, the school district was able to share a report proving exactly when and where the bus stopped. With that data, the school district was able to prove to the parents that the bus arrived at the appropriate time, but the student was not there for pick up.

In the spring of 2016, Watkins Glen Central School District began testing Z Pass with 6th- and 7th-grade students. The full program is expected to improve the overall safety, security and accountability by allowing parents and administrators to see when and where individual students get on and off the bus. This technology gives everyone greater peace of mind, especially in scenarios such as when a bus is running late or students are returning from field trips on weekends.

Throughout the partnership, Zonar proactively worked with Watkins Glen Central School District to appropriately train staff and make sure issues were resolved as quickly as possible. Zonar has proven to be an affordable solution to the school district's GPS tracking and pre- and post-inspection issues.

"If I have a parent call and ask where the bus is at, I can simply look it up and tell them. That's exceptionally important for parents so they can have that peace of mind."

MICHELLE CLARK
DIRECTOR OF TRANSPORTATION

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.

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