

Drive learning

Put education in motion with E-Rate-funded Wi-Fi for school buses.



On the bus and online: E-Rate now supports Wi-Fi on school buses.

School bus Wi-Fi proved invaluable during classroom closures by creating mobile hotspots. Now the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) will help fund the internet availability that's become so critical to education.



Inclusion

Digital Inclusion and Homework Gaps are concerns nationwide. According to the FCC, 17 million Americans lack internet access at home. This broadband desert can create obstacles for students, and on-bus Wi-Fi could help close this disparity.

Benefits of Wi-Fi on school buses

In addition to extending the classroom activities into the transit system, there are several other benefits to adding connectivity to buses. Those include:



Student productivity

Simply put, the additional Wi-Fi access can help students learn. While some students only ride for a short time and many will likely use the internet for social media, games and other non-educational purposes, other students will complete homework, read assignments or do research related to their schoolwork. Pilot programs and existing connectivity on buses have indicated that students on the morning commute to school regularly do schoolwork during the ride. Online work and play were more mixed in the afternoons, but the access was largely utilized productively.



Better behavior

School buses can be loud and crazy when full of rambunctious (sometimes even violent) students. But bus riders who have their attention focused on a mobile device have entertainment and work to help keep them occupied and well-behaved, according to data published in the "Bus Boss" blog, School Transportation News and other publications.

In fact, Schools already using school bus Wi-Fi indicate there are unforeseen bonuses, like that the improved student behavior in turn allows drivers to operate buses more safely – they're better able to keep their eyes on the roads without the distractions of rowdy kids. Several school districts report a significant decrease in disciplinary issues after making the internet available on their

buses. Students arrive at school noticeably calmer and in a better frame of mind for learning.



Helpful data

School bus Wi-Fi can help keep students safe and accounted for thanks to GPS. If there's an accident or a driver simply gets lost, schools and parents can follow along in real-time. Parents can pinpoint when their children arrive at home or at school, and the internet can support live video surveillance as well. Smart video would help with monitoring behavioral incidents and other aspects of safety.



Educational support

Teachers, coaches and other staff receive advantages from on-bus Wi-Fi. Field trips, competitions, tournaments and away games sometimes put students on buses for hours. Internet connectivity provides not only students but faculty with education and entertainment options while on the road.



Improved emergency response

If there is an emergency, mobile internet provides a critical failover for contacting

first responders. Drivers and students on board are better able to call for help when they don't have to rely solely on cell coverage or radios.

First responders can also rely on GPS to locate the emergency location. Wi-Fi access can also create interoperability between bus drivers and first responders.

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