

The Edulogger

Preparing for the New Year: Becoming the Team of Tomorrow



IT Announcement!

By Eric Fischl

The Edulog IT Department will be reserving the following quarterly windows for the performance of regular system maintenance. These windows will occur on Sundays, between 2 PM and 4 PM, Mountain Standard Time. During this maintenance period, you may experience a brief outage of your hosted Edulog applications. Thank you for your patience and please contact your Account Manager with any questions.

- December 19, 2021
- March 20, 2022
- June 19, 2022
- September 18, 2022



How Edulog's Virtual Workshop Will Enrich Your Transportation Office

By Kate Gammil

Why is it that many organizations tend to think of training as something only for new and junior-level employees? In any organization, learning and development should never stop. Continuous education and learning should be woven throughout the culture.

As employees take on new responsibilities, they will need consistent guidance along the way. By taking advantage of Edulog's Virtual Workshop, you and your team can keep up with the continued learning that today's transportation professionals want and need.

Our curriculum and course offerings were designed based on sound instructional practices and the specific needs of our industry. [Take a look at what we have to offer and enroll in Edulog Virtual Workshop today](#)

The first quarter of sessions starts January 11th, 2022!

Employee Spotlight

By Grant Dutton

Christina Restrepo Project Manager



Edulog would like to celebrate Christina Restrepo—a member of our Project Management team. Christina is a Louisiana State University graduate and Tigers superfan. She joined Edulog in February 2020. At work, she strives to help our customers be successful. She is a valued member of the team and a great collaborator across departments. In her free time, Christina is an avid camper. She takes advantage of the peace that is offered by spending time outdoors. Edulog is proud to have Christina on the team!

Favorite Food: Crawfish

Favorite Color: Blue

Favorite Edulog Product: Parent Portal

Dream Vacation: Ireland

Edulog Advice: With limited staff and personnel at our school districts, it is important to remember to utilize all of your resources, such as Edulog Support, Service Level Management, Training, Account Management, and Project Management. We're here to assist you. No matter what, we can tackle each speed bump along the way.

Quote: "You cannot get through a single day without having an impact on the world around you. What you do makes a difference, and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make."

- Jane Goodall

Reflect and Be Thankful

By Shawna Knudson

The end of the year is rapidly approaching. This offers an opportunity to reflect on 2021 and evaluate your successes and failures because even the things that didn't work out can be helpful in the long run. Below is a small list of things we can all be thankful for in the student transportation industry.

A Great Team

Not all transportation departments have a large staff but each employee has the chance to make an impact. Your team members work all year long. Let's face it, you couldn't do it without them. Support systems are critical. Be thankful for those who have helped along the way!

Technology to Make Your Life Easier

Modern transportation departments have access to many technology options. There are so many tasks that can be completely automated. Do you need a seamless way to provide parents with bus arrival information? We have an app for that! Is messaging your drivers a critical component of your daily operation? We have an app for that! Are you short drivers and are looking for ways to reduce the number of vehicles on the road? You guessed it, we have an app for that. Apps and services have revolutionized transportation routing, GPS, and communication.

Virtual, but Real Connections

Zoom meetings, blogs, social media, and other online platforms allow us to reach people anywhere with messages and collaboration requests. The needs of a 3-bus site are often the same as the needs of a 1,200-bus site. Virtual connections and changing norms and habits allow us to collaborate today in ways we couldn't even just 5 years ago.

Flexibility

The pandemic has taught us that many jobs can be done remotely. Under quarantine or temporary closure, we are still able to complete much of our work. While you can't yet drive a bus remotely, we were able to continue education with remote learning, and buses were repurposed to deliver homework and meals to students. We were not only flexible, but we were also creative problem solvers.

Your Failures

Failures are a part of life and an even bigger part of our professional development. Turn those failures into learning exercises! Then, tell someone else what you learned, because sharing is caring.

Leverage ESSER Funds to Improve Your Transportation Technology

By Andy Smith

The Need for Contact Tracing

During the pandemic, masking and a shortage of drivers made it difficult for Berkeley County Schools, West Virginia, to identify which students were on a given bus at any time, let alone if a student was on the correct bus or disembarked at the correct stop. The district employed several substitute drivers that were not familiar with the students. It was clear that a student ridership program would be necessary to effectuate contact tracing. Beyond monitoring ridership, the district needed the ability to message subgroups of parents based on which route or bus their students were assigned. Previously, messages had to be broadcast to the whole community. In addition, the district's GPS hardware was due to sunset and required replacement.

Leveraging ESSER Funds

The Berkeley County Board of Education (BOE) reviewed multiple options before ultimately deciding on the Edulog/Samsara solution, which included student ridership, a parent app, driver management, and dual-facing cameras. The Edulog/Samsara partnership provided a decade-long scope and allowed the BOE to leverage available ESSER Funds for a ten-year license with a one-time fee and no annual recurring costs. The district anticipates replacing tablet hardware around 2026 with no impact on the General Operating Budget.

What is the ESSER Fund?

Congress set aside approximately \$13.2 billion of the \$30.75 billion allotted to the Education Stabilization Fund through the CARES Act (Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security) for the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER Fund). These emergency relief funds address the impact that COVID-19 has had, and continues to have, on elementary and secondary schools across the Nation.

Improved Service and Communication

Eric Keesecker, Executive Director of General Education Transportation Services, told The Journal News, "We are super excited about (Parent Portal) because we were able to offer parents at the tips of their fingers, on their phones, information about their bus, their bus route, their student ridership, whether their student got on or not at the right stop, got off at the right stop. It does many other things, too. They can change stops if they want to. This is a much, much safer system."

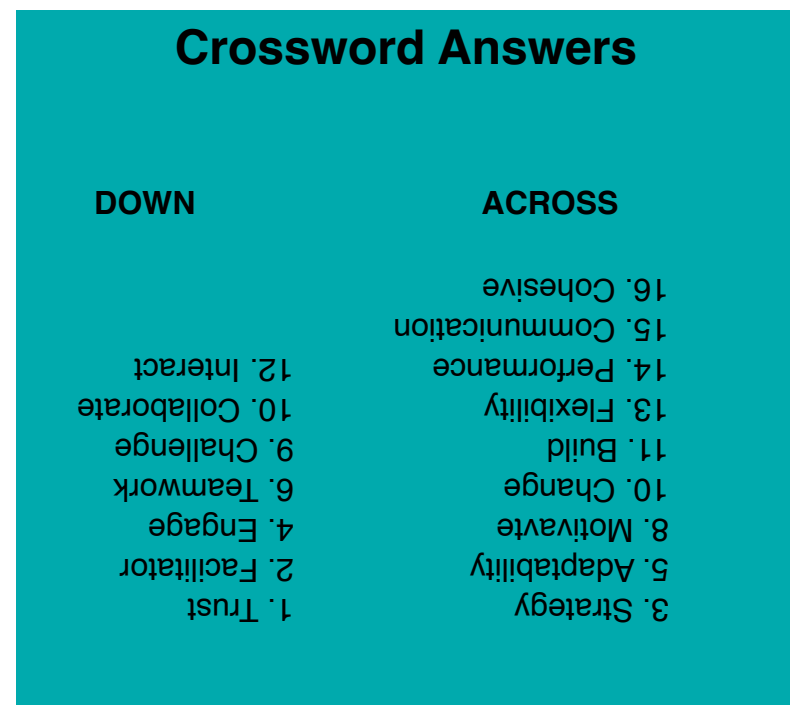
Bus drivers, particularly substitutes, will also have significant support aids available on their tablets. Digital route sheets and turn-by-turn directions will allow the district to phase out the use of paper maps and directions. For substitute drivers on an unfamiliar route, assistance from a tablet is preferable to driving with paper route sheets in one hand and the steering wheel in the other. The ridership functionality will alert drivers if a student boards the wrong bus or disembarks at the wrong stop. It is one thing for a student to be on the wrong bus but it is even more problematic for a student to get off at the wrong stop. By providing school bus drivers with the support tools they need, transportation departments can improve accountability and streamlined communication with parents and caregivers.

Work with Us to Identify Opportunities for Financial Relief

Want to learn more about how you can use ESSER Funds to build effective transportation models for your district? Edulog can help you develop a business case for necessary investment, whether in vehicles, technology, or other major items. [Click here to talk to us.](#)



The banner features the Edulog logo at the top, which consists of a stylized cloud with a circuit-like pattern and the word 'EDULOG' below it. Below the logo, the text 'Edulog Virtual Workshop' is prominently displayed in a large, white, sans-serif font. Underneath this, in a smaller white font, is the text 'Enroll for Quarter 1 or the Whole Year' followed by the website 'www.edulog.com/workshop'. At the bottom of the banner, there are two illustrations of people working at computers. On the left, a man with a headset is shown. On the right, a woman with a headset is shown. Both are sitting at desks with computers and potted plants. The background of the banner is a solid dark blue.



The banner has a solid teal background. At the top, the text 'Crossword Answers' is written in a large, white, sans-serif font. Below this, there are two columns of text. The left column is headed 'DOWN' and the right column is headed 'ACROSS', both in white, sans-serif font. Each column contains a list of crossword answers, numbered 1 through 16. The text is white and matches the background of the banner.

DOWN	ACROSS
1. Trust	3. Strategy
2. Facilitator	5. Adaptability
4. Engage	8. Motivate
6. Teamwork	10. Change
9. Challenge	11. Build
10. Collaborate	13. Flexibility
12. Interact	14. Performance
	15. Communication
	16. Cohesive

Cheers for Peers

We are proud to announce our 4th quarter Cheers for Peers winners! This last quarter included October, also known here in these parts as Cybersecurity Month. While cybersecurity and awareness are always important to us, we step it up with extra awareness tips and user awareness training in October.

Very fittingly, then, Tsim Ly won this quarter's Cheers for Peers award for being an enthusiastic participant in our constant efforts to keep our data and our environments safe from cyber threats. Ryan Ballas, as Tsim's supervisor, also won for his efforts to reinforce the importance of cybersecurity good practices with his team members.



Ryan Ballas

For those of you who have not yet met Ryan, Ryan has been with Edulog since 2008 and since then has worn many hats. He is a former Marine, which makes him especially effective in working with fellow team members and clients to resolve issues and to do so in a way that makes everybody feel like they've won! Look for a guy with a baseball cap and an outstanding mustache, and that's Ryan!



Tsim Ly

Ryan writes of Tsim:

When I first met Tsim Ly back in 2018, he was relatively new to our team. He was on our Client Support team, specially designated to work on complex cases. I was a resource to Tsim on a complex issue and we were able to resolve the issue quickly due to his open-mindedness and willingness to ask questions during the process. I knew then that Tsim would be a great asset to any team. In 2019, my Implementation team was fortunate to accept his request to transfer to our team. We are happy that Tsim still has a desire to learn more and help others with the knowledge he has learned. I'm proud to have Tsim on our team!

Boundary Changes

By Pat Starken

Sometimes, adjusting boundaries feels like it requires an act of Congress. Many in the community engage with the school district when boundaries are adjusted. Ideally, boundary changes are best executed by the transportation department.

Keeping authority over boundary changes in the transportation department ensures that the district's priorities are met and can keep costs of any adjustments to a minimum. The transportation department knows the scope and logistics of everyday routing and is best suited to offer suggestions (and the accompanying rationales, and pros and cons) to board members and parents.

When possible, keep politics out of boundary adjustments, although this may seem very difficult. Parents will call school board members and school board members will want to make changes to the boundaries based on parent proposals. In those situations, you may want to consider [an unbiased, third-party viewpoint](#).

Have a formulated priority list at the start of any adjustments. This will help keep changes on target. Whether you're making adjustments based on a school opening or a school closing, transportation will know where those students need to be transported or redirected. You can then also lay out the feasibility of the plan to the board. This can be done in a school board work session and will allow for everyone to be on the same page.

Edulog's expert staff can help you with any upcoming boundary adjustments. We have a very robust boundary planning program that can be licensed and enabled with your data set for planning. To see some of the benefits of our boundary planning program, please [come join us at the next Edulog User Group Meeting in January](#). Hope to see you then!



Districts Fight Back Against Ongoing Driver Shortages

By Spencer Jenko

As the fall semester continues, the driver shortage crisis has taken a serious toll on school transportation departments across the nation. Nowhere is this more apparent than in Massachusetts, where the Governor activated the National Guard for nearly 2 months to assist over a dozen school districts. [Nearly 240 members of Guard took part in the effort, reportedly making 15,000 pick-ups and drop-offs over 300,000 driven miles.](#) The effort was deemed a success, assisting with driver shortfalls at 13 school districts while their transportation departments took action to hire and train enough new drivers.

What kinds of actions are being taken to get more drivers in the door? With not enough qualified workers to operate at full strength, districts have to face increasingly difficult decisions to keep buses running. [The fact that, as of November, school district leaders in 11 different states have asked for assistance from the National Guard highlights how dire the situation has become across the country.](#) So what is being done?

The most obvious solution has been to increase pay rates and benefits, which has been widely used by districts with the financial muscle since the start of the pandemic. Others have used the crisis to gain approval for long-argued pay increases or to implement benefits like health insurance and 401k plans. But for many districts, monetary solutions are either not feasible, or have not done enough to bridge the gap.

Thus, increasingly radical solutions have entered the fray. In the short term, districts are recruiting drivers wherever they can. From teachers to mechanics, from administrators to coaches; seemingly no employee is above being pressed into service in getting kids to and from school. However, it still is not enough.

Longer term strategies are just now emerging. Such plans are taking the form of restructuring bell-times, expanding walk-to-school policies, even altering eligibility policies. For some of these districts, such policy changes have been considered for years but never implemented. The upheaval brought by the pandemic provided an opportunity to finally implement changes that might not otherwise have been possible.

Remember, it is never too late to start planning for the next school year. With driver shortage issues remaining for the foreseeable future, district leadership must begin to explore their options. A few planned changes made in the short term can avoid emergency unplanned changes later. [Talk to us to learn more.](#)

New Verizon Connect Partner Integration

By Andy Smith

Reveal + Edulog: Safety and Compliance

We are excited to announce that the Edulog Parent Portal app now integrates with Verizon Connect Reveal location data, allowing parents and caregivers to view the near real-time location of the school bus and to receive alerts when the bus is about to arrive at the stop.

How the Integration Works

This is a one-way integration: Edulog will pull Reveal Vehicle Location and Vehicle Name into the Edulog Parent Portal app.



Integration Benefits

- Improved visibility by using the Reveal vehicle location data in Edulog Parent Portal
- Parents get the comfort of knowing where their child's bus is
- Streamline communication to parents
- Reduced communication by providing access to GPS location data

Meet Verizon Connect

Verizon Connect helps companies of all sizes improve and grow their business. Their mission is to provide reliable data and insights about drivers, vehicles, and equipment to help make your job easier, more productive and more efficient.

Verizon Connect Benefits

- **Replay:** See everything from point A to point B

Get insight into your driver's exact route for the day, so you can see if drivers are taking optimized routes to and from jobs, understand how long a vehicle was idling, moving or stopped and know when a driver clocked in and out, and how long they were driving.

- **Alerts:** Know what happens, when it happens

Having information the moment you need it allows you to respond quickly. Our alert feature allows you to monitor driver and vehicle behavior and send a message to drivers when they violate fleet-related policies.

- **Maintenance:** Your vehicles are telling you something

When you take a vehicle out of service for maintenance—scheduled or not—it impacts your overall business. Stay ahead of scheduled maintenance events with alerts based on time of use, engine hours or distance traveled. Track maintenance spending, including what you spend on tire rotations, oil changes, brake work, critical repairs and everyday maintenance.

Learn More

We are excited to work with our K-12 transportation partners to help schools improve student safety and achieve greater health and safety compliance. Contact your Edulog account manager to learn more about the Reveal + Edulog partner integration.

Planning - How to Be Better than Mike Tyson

By Lam Nguyen-Bull

As we careen towards the end of the calendar year, many of us are finishing up our annual planning seasons. Some of us are preparing for the following school year.

Some of us are planners and others of us are pantsers (folks who fly by the seat of their pants). Covid had many questioning the point of planning when a pandemic can upend everything. As Mike Tyson famously said, "Everybody has a plan until they get punched in the mouth."

So why do we tempt fate to disrupt our plans? I'm here to tell you the point of planning is not so that you have a plan. WHAT? Go back. Read that again.

The primary function of a plan and the planning process isn't the plan itself. If you Google "what is the purpose of an action plan," you'll find that plans are important because they help you identify how to achieve an objective (what resources you need, what steps are on the way, etc.).

Take a step back and it's easy to see that plans are important because they require us to identify our objectives. If you're part of a larger group, alignment is paramount. After all, if you know where you're going, you can figure out any number of ways to get there, even if your first plan leads you directly to a punch in the teeth.

So yes, PLAN. Invest time to identify the objective. Puzzle how you'll get from A to B. And then plan for what you'll do after you get punched in the kisser. This is the part that we often leave out of "planning", but omitting it is [how an elite boxer might end up with an indefinite suspension from boxing](#).

Planning for Plan Failure

Planning for plan failure is very simple. None of us know exactly how our original plans will fail, but we do know that our plans will fail. Part of planning for failure is, of course, to try to anticipate the major risks to Plan A and sketch out potential recovery plans for each of those. But this exercise can spiral and, in a group setting, demoralize. Spend some time and energy on this, but don't get bogged down.

Instead, focus on:

- Identifying your failure benchmarks
- Identifying the process to figure out a new path to Point B (or your new destination)

The objectives of every recovery plan are to (a) know when it needs to be triggered, and (b) avoid being paralyzed by the catastrophe.

Sample Failure Recovery Plan

- (1) Identify the triggered failure benchmark
- (2) Decide if original Point B should still hold; if not, identify new Point B



(3) Figure out how to get from where you are to Point B

Some failures are easy to identify (the punch in the mouth, for example); others are a slow slide from tolerable to intolerable. Knowing what failure looks like requires you to know what success looks like, and then figure out how big a divergence from success can be before it's a failure.

For many of us, success can be measured with a set of operational metrics (on-time performance, missed pick-ups, parent calls, vehicle occupancy, etc.) that also lend themselves to failure benchmarking. Identify your failure benchmarks

and put them in your plan document. Then, identify your plan for if the failure benchmarks are hit. The plan can be as simple as a simplified and modified planning process that looks like a small annual plan. The important thing is that you have a plan, so that when the inevitable failure occurs, you know what to do next, rather than scrambling for a coherent thought.

And now for the obligatory weightlifting connection! Weightlifters train to get stronger, more mobile, and to get to position better and faster. We train to hit lifts under pressure. We also train to be able to handle the inevitable missed lift. Once I miss a lift, it's easy to fall into a spiral of "what if" and "I should have"; none of this will help me hit the next lift. Instead, I have to have already drilled HOW to recover mentally and physically from a missed lift, and it will NEVER involve dissecting what just went wrong (this is for later, to design a new training cycle). It will ALWAYS be: (a) acknowledge that I missed, (b) identify what my revised goal is (a single simple cue that is different from the one that caused me to miss), and (c) go execute.

Why do I keep connecting weightlifting and the work we do here? Simply put, it's because both require delivery of results under pressure. While the work we do every day to deliver students to and from school safely and on time is very complex, a lot of the mental discipline of how to stay on track and recover from failure in this work is very similar to how we have to handle ourselves as athletes, musicians, caregivers, you name it.

If you would like to talk to any of our team members about how to identify failure benchmarks or ask us how to plan for or recover from failure, [reach out to our Advisory Services team](#). Also, [check out this resource for some annual planning ideas](#).

"Everybody has a plan until they get punched in the mouth."
-Mike Tyson

EDULOGGER CROSSWORD

Bring a Coworker. This is going to be a hard one.



Across

- 3. An elaborate and systematic plan of action
- 5. Flexibility to fit changed circumstances
- 8. Give an incentive for action
- 10. Become different in some particular way
- 11. Make by combining materials and parts
- 13. The property of being easily bent or shaped
- 14. The act of doing something successfully
- 15. The activity of conveying information
- 16. Combining well to form a unified whole

Down

- 1. Belief in the honesty and reliability of others
- 2. Someone who makes progress easier
- 4. Consume all of one's attention or time
- 6. Cooperative labor done by a group
- 7. A connection that fastens things together
- 9. A call to engage in a contest
- 10. Work together on a common project
- 12. Do something together

Information About the Edulogger

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