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Albany County School District 1 Pilot System to Track Kids Boarding, Exiting School Bus

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Students at Albany County School District 1 elementary schools will be using a new bus rider identification system that officials in the Albany County Schools District 1 hope will increase student safety.

Each student will receive an identification card, called a ZPass, with their photo. Students will also receive a lanyard or zip tie so the passes can be worn around the neck or attached to backpacks.

Each time a student gets on or off the bus, the student scans an electronic chip-embedded card, which transmits a time and GPS (global positioning system) location to the district's transportation department. The readings can be reviewed in real time.

All Albany County School District 1 buses are already equipped with GPS and video recording equipment. Officials hope the ZPass will add another safety feature.

"Student safety is one of those things you look at in layers," ZPass adds "an enhancement, letting us know where students are when they are in our care." And that, in turn, should alleviate parents' concerns.

The system, sold by a Seattle company called Zonar, also offers a phone app for parents that allows them to see when their child boards or exits the bus, and where.

District Transportation Manager Dave Hunter would like to remind parents of students who want to ride the bus to a friend's home that they should continue to follow the district procedure of notifying the transportation department and their school ahead of time.

He added that students who forget their pass are still welcome on the bus. The driver will then document the student's name and communicate it to the school and the transportation department.

The district was prompted to look into the system in part by parents who have lived in school districts around Wyoming where the system is in use.

Questions?

Call the Albany County Schools District 1 Transportation Department at 307-721-4470.

