



Arkadelphia Public Schools
Nikki Thomas, Superintendent
Jimmy King, Director of Support Services



January 2025 Safety Report

- The State recently approved a new total investment of \$50 million in statewide grants to improve security and make Arkansas schools safer. We are expecting the grant to open in the next few weeks and have been told that we will most likely get approximately the same amount we got with the last grant (approx \$170K).

Transportation / Student Safety

- The Arkansas Department of Education has launched a \$5 million transportation modernization grant program. The application process closes January 31, 2025. At least 25% of the grants will be awarded to support rural and remote public schools. One of the approved purposes of this grant is “Developing options for reducing and improving efficiencies, including without limitation exploring the use of fleet vehicles or using technology to more efficient routing.” Mr. King has already submitted an application to add routing software. The Arkadelphia School District would like to add an AI-enabled transportation platform and tablets in order to establish safer and more efficient routes for our students. AI-enabled technology would enable us to select safe stops that adhere to district policies, improve our on-time arrival rate, and reduce the time students spend at a stop or on the bus, ultimately maximizing in-classroom learning time.
- Onboard tablets ensure the right students are boarding the correct bus, as well as getting off at the correct stop. Furthermore, drivers can have access to important information about disciplinary actions, allergies, individual pickup/drop-off procedures, and turn-by-turn navigation. Additionally, through the AI platform, student scanning

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technology will send automated push notifications to parents when the student scans on/off the bus and when the bus is approaching their stop.

- Streamlined communication of route changes to parents will further enhance student safety and overall parent satisfaction and engagement.
- In summary, our transportation team will be better equipped to serve students by having access to critical information for planned and on-the-fly route changes. Therefore, our district will be able to:

Create, consolidate, and change routes proactively, temporarily, and/or on the fly.

Run daily routes, while easily responding to driver or vehicle substitution needs, and immediately send communications to parents and drivers

Comprehensively track vehicle information and systematically handle pre-and post-trip inspections and resulting work orders

Evaluate on-time arrival and make the necessary changes.

Provide real-time insights to parents into bus locations and student ridership.

Immediately notify drivers of a change in schedule or route and provide turn-by-turn directions so the new route can be easily followed.