

# Ensuring Safe Student Transport: Orangeburg County School District



When the four school districts in Orangeburg County, SC consolidated in 2019, with the district growing to 31 public schools—elementary schools, middle schools, high schools, along with three career academies—serving more than 13,000 students, Orangeburg administrators faced a number of logistical challenges.

Namely, Orangeburg County School District (OCSD) faced a problem coordinating its bus fleet and communicating with administrators, safety personnel, and parents when delays or incidents occurred on its buses. Located to the southeast of Columbia, Orangeburg County spreads across a large geographic expanse: the county and its schools cover 76 miles from east to west. A bond referendum of \$4 million dollars in 2020, which enjoyed overwhelming support from voters, enabled OCSD to make much needed technology upgrades both in the classroom and to its communications infrastructure. In particular, administrators at OCSD knew they needed to outfit their buses with new mobile radios. Prior to their partnership with Mobile Communications America (MCA), bus drivers had been using their cell phones to communicate critical messages to school administrators.

As Orangeburg County School Superintendent, Dr. Shawn Foster explained, **“turning around a school academically is something I had familiarity with, and something I felt we could achieve, but students who aren’t safe—whether that be on the playground or on buses—can’t be expected to learn. As educators, we need to take a holistic approach to our students’ learning and safety.”**

Simply put, OCSD needed a better way to ensure the safety of students on their buses as they traveled across the county.

## CUSTOMER PROFILE

### Orangeburg County School District, South Carolina

- 31 schools
- 13,000+ students
- 76 mile area

## CHALLENGES PRESENT

- Bus fleet not well-coordinated
- Bus delays and incidents difficult to communicate to staff and parents
- Drivers using personal cell phones

## SOLUTIONS IMPLEMENTED

### Motorola’s MOTOTRBO XPR 5550e Digital Mobile Radios

- WiFi and Bluetooth 4.0 allow fast and easy communication
- Outstanding coverage in South Carolina
- CapacityMax™ network connects directly to emergency services

### Motorola’s MOTOTRBO XPR 7550 Two-ways Radios

- Clear two-way voice, video, and data communication
- Push-to-Talk functionality with increased capacity and enhanced features





Bethune-Bowman Middle/High School

## Going the Extra Mile

Administrators and faculty in the OCSD demonstrated great foresight and fiscal prudence in deploying a portion of the money raised in their bond issue to update the communications infrastructure for the 31 schools and the 13,000 students under their care. While the main improvements came in improving communication for their bus drivers as they transported Orangeburg County's most precious cargo over hundreds of miles of rural roads, OCSD also invested in base stations at strategic locations and a number of portable two-way radios.



MOTOTRBO XPR 7550 Two-Way Radio

Taken together, the MOTOTRBO XPR 5550 mobile radios, base stations, and the MOTOTRBO XPR 7550 two-ways have provided Orangeburg schools with a comprehensive communications ecosystem, ensuring the safety of their students and instantaneously initiating responses from first responders in the case of an emergency.

As Dr. Foster offered, **“parents can now rest assured that their children are safe not only at school, but as they travel to and from school as well.”**

Empowering bus drivers to report incidents quickly, from garden-variety bullying to bus breakdowns to more serious disturbances, has paid enormous dividends in safely ferrying students from their school to their homes, as well as on field trips. **Given that CapacityMax™ provides comprehensive coverage from the Upstate to Hilton Head, parents and school personnel can rest assured that their children and students will never be out of contact.**

## The Best Radio Signal on the Best Radio Network

Kudos to the administrators and faculty from the OCSD for recognizing the gaps in their communication system and driving change. In going with Mobile Communications America to solve their communication problem, the Orangeburg School District decided to invest in digital radios that provide the clearest signal coverage on the market, along with the most robust communications network. As a result, today, the parents of students attending schools in Orangeburg County can rest assured that their children will be safe and protected wherever OCSD school buses may roam.

## The TRBOMAX System: Keeping Schools Connected

As Dr. Foster alluded to, having bus drivers use their cell phones to connect with administrators was not only inefficient, but, more importantly, it jeopardized student safety. After receiving their bond issue, the Orangeburg school district teamed up with MCA to outfit all the buses in the fleet across their entire district with Motorola's MOTOTRBO XPR 5550e Digital Mobile Radios.

MOTOTRBO 5550 Mobile Radios offer a number of features that make them the preferred option for school bus fleets across the country. Equipped with integrated Wifi and Bluetooth 4.0, these radios enable bus drivers to communicate with school administrators, security officers, law enforcement officials, and first responders at the push of a button. Part of the TRBOMAX radio system from Motorola, MCA's radio technology provides the largest coverage area in South Carolina (up to 95%) with its CapacityMax network.



MOTOTRBO XPR 5550e Digital Mobile Radio

CapacityMax™ is a completely secure multi-site radio network solution, with stations across the Palmetto State. Each site enables thousands of users to communicate without interference across UHF radio frequencies. **Notably, CapacityMax™ is the only radio network that connects directly to emergency services, allowing school personnel to convey critical information to first responders as they travel to the scene of an incident.**

