Decatur became a member of FirstNet, a dedicated wireless broadband communications platform, earlier this year in an effort to improve the district’s ability to connect and coordinate transportation operations.

With these capabilities, Bowman knew the network could provide a solution for getting food and supplies directly to her students most in need. She quickly found that one of FirstNet’s certified mobile apps, SAFEBUS Powered By Predictable Ryde, could assist with the process.

SAFEBUS, running on the reliable FirstNet network, allows school districts to leverage the capabilities of multiple technologies—including FirstNet’s Enhanced Push-to-Talk, ruggedized wireless devices and GPS tracking—in one platform to efficiently manage transportation operations.

“We worked with FirstNet and Decatur personnel to help deliver school lunches and other important items to their students,” said CEO and Founder of Predictable Ryde, Matt Vuturo. “We wanted to ensure the technology supported their goal of improving the wellbeing of students and parents communitywide.”
Using FirstNet and SAFEBUS, Decatur launched a delivery system to provide more than 400 student lunches daily, all managed by transportation personnel via the SAFEBUS app. This streamlines tracking the delivery of meals and other supplies to students, monitoring buses on dedicated routes, and providing continuous updates to parents and drivers.

A Network Parents Can Trust

This innovative approach to supporting students has helped Decatur greatly improve its relationship with parents, providing them increased visibility to school resources during these uncertain times.

“The main focus has been maintaining open communication with parents,” said Bowman. “With FirstNet, we’re able to confidently broadcast real-time updates via the SAFEBUS app to parents, including meal delivery status, bus location and more.”

Bus drivers can easily use FirstNet’s Enhanced Push-to-Talk—a feature integrated into the SAFEBUS app that enables one-touch communication—to easily interface with dispatch without bulky radios and remain focused on the safety of students.

This instant communication is essential to the district’s delivery program, but it’s primary purpose for the district is to enhance student safety and emergency response. This includes communicating bus delays, student location and emergencies to parents supported with the reliable coverage of FirstNet.

Decatur continues to integrate all of the capabilities of the FirstNet network into its transportation operations for the normal academic calendar. And for now, the district is dedicated to providing the utmost confidence to parents and students with every unanticipated challenge.