

District Cell Phones

A history - 7 years ago when I became Technology Director, there were cell phones with phones being assigned to the maintenance, technology, transportation, facilities and foods directors, 3 assigned to the truant officers and 10-12 phones assigned to the bus garage pool for driver(s) to grab a phone to have on the bus with them.

When Superintendent Rouse was hired, the district provided him with a cell phone and shortly thereafter he started requesting phones to be provided to initially principals and shortly thereafter assistant principals. His goal was to be able to reach his administrators both during the day (not always successful because of coverage inside buildings) and in the evenings if he had questions, an emergency situation to be addressed, etc. With those phones being smartphones they could be reached via voice, text and/or e-mail. So our cell phone count increased from the 18-20 phones to over 50. We also had the situation in 2012-13 when our existing phone systems failed and we did our best to maintain communication with cell phones at the buildings during the purchasing process of the replacement system. Those additional phones were cancelled after the new phone system was up and running.

The financial impact of the additional phones was not as great in 2014-15 versus today as e-rate was subsidizing 90% of the entire cell phone service bill. The financial impact of the cellular phones has increased each year as e-rate funding has gone from 90% to 0% today as well as new rules each year disqualifying portions of the cellular bill were disallowed and we had to allocate dollars to the disallowed features versus voice only service. The disallowed services included items such as caller ID, call forwarding, call waiting, etc. So the old \$25 basic cell phone plan went from costing the district \$2.50 per month in 2014 to \$17 per month in 2015 to the full \$25 this current and future years. Because of e-rate funding in the past, we remained with Verizon for all cell phones during that time.

Today we still maintain 3 phones for bus drivers to grab along with other phones assigned to various individuals but we were able to cut the number of 'standby' phones from the 12 down to 6 cutting the cost for phones never used. In addition as we know we maintain service for several administrators including the original maintenance, foods, tech and transportation directors. Without e-rate funding our cellular phones, it was time to explore other options to reduce the overall financial impact of the phones. The topic of T-Mobile came up as they offered very favorable rates however the AT&T versus T-Mobile affected us when AT&T turned off the

partner coverage in Browning which T-Mobile relied on to provide us service. So exploring other ways to reduce costs have included:

--switching phones from Verizon service to StraightTalk (ST) or Tracfone (TF). Interestingly enough, whether ST or TF, we use a Verizon compatible SIM card so they end up with the identical service for less money. In general, each Verizon to ST migration saves us \$147 per year and each Verizon to TF migration saves us \$175 - \$300 per year. Depending on the plan types migrated from on Verizon to TF.

--reducing the number of phones at the bus garage yet still having phones available for those that do not have or unwilling to use their personal phones. After all, who wants to use an old flip phone when you can use your own smartphone.

--annually questioning the need for some phones. Example: a Carol White program person used to be assigned a phone. Each year I asked do they need the phone. Each year was yes until the year someone didn't think they needed the phone any longer which we then cancelled.

--some users including myself are on T-Mobile. These are users who live in the Cut Bank area where T-Mobile service is great and then relying on the WiFi calling using the school network during the working day around the various buildings. This strategy saves \$330 per year per phone.

Strategies going forward:

Continue the status quo which will have a run rate of \$15000-\$16000 per year. Still a few savings with possibly couple of more users to ST but until T-Mobile has a tower in the area this will be the number. This is down from an approximate \$25,000 per year a few months ago.

Continual evaluation of the needs and expectations of our staff carrying phones during and after school hours and whether we should or should not continue to maintain the district phones. We may have been somewhat lax in our expectations such as the ability to contact staff when needed in the evenings.

If it's determined principals/directors only need to be reached via cell during the day - switch phones to T-Mobile service that would work while inside the building over our WiFi. Those

phones may or may not work outside the buildings however we would know principals are reachable throughout the day. They could elect to leave the phone on the desk in the evening or take it home. Those that live outside the Browning area would have service when they were at a conference in Helena for example. T-Mobile lines run \$12.75 per month or \$153 per year so we would save \$362 - \$500 per year per phone depending if they are on Verizon or ST today.

Carrier Risks: In addition to regular month to month charges, there are exposure risks to additional charges with the various carriers.

Verizon: Roaming charges into Canada and other foreign countries depending on the rate plan. Charges for 411, long distance to Canada, overage charges. Most of the plans are now unlimited voice, text and data so our exposure risk has been reduced from just a couple of months ago. Plans now have TravelPass on them so if they do go to Canada - it's a flat \$5 per day charge to use the plan same as on the US side. Risk: moderate

Straight Talk: No risk as this is a prepaid plan. In the Canada example, it simply won't work north of the border. These users maintain the use of Verizon towers and other than the display do not see a difference for US based calling.

Tracfone: The risk of this plan is having the phone used for several months and then suddenly have excess use over a couple of days exhausting the prepaid minutes. The phone simply quits working until we reload minutes onto the plan in this situation. As long as the phones are used for school business, risk is minimal.

T-Mobile: minimal risk - these plans include Canada and Mexico at no additional charge and therefore there is no chance of incurring \$5 per day TravelPass charges, roaming charges, etc.

So there remain some potential options but wanted to give more background information as follow up from our last board meeting and where we were, where we are at, and with discussion, possible options going forward for discussion.

Also is the recap of cell phones. We do have some data only devices and those are additional on this list from what was displayed at the last board meeting.

Department	Cell #	User	Carrier	Annual Cost	comments
Activities	249-2463	Chanel Bird	ST	495	assigned to user
Activities	845-9908	Tony Wagner	VZ W	642	assigned to user
BES	845-3995	Jennifer Wagner	ST	495	assigned to user
BES/BA BB	845-4920	Kari McKay	VZ W	642	assigned to user - high data user
BHS	845-2008	Billie Jo Juneau	VZ W	642	assigned to user - high data user
BMS	845-4902	Angela Heavy Runner	VZ W	642	assigned to user
BMS	845-2163	Dennis Juneau	VZ W	642	assigned to user - high data user
Bus	450-8519	Bookmobile/Tutoring Bus	ST	420	Bus pool
Bus	450-5920	Bus phone	Trac	140	Bus pool
Bus	450-5253	Bus phone	Trac	250	Bus pool
Bus	450-8524	Gayle RATD	ST	495	Permanently assigned to user
Bus	450-8036	Joe Wippert	ST	495	Permanently assigned to user
Bus	450-8525	Merlin Tiny BirdRattler	ST	495	Permanently assigned to user
Bus	450-8521	Wayne BullCalf	ST	495	Permanently assigned to user
BUS	450-1533	Wayne Hall	VZ W	642	Permanently assigned to user
Colonies/ Admin	845-9944	Natasha Siliezar	TM O	300	Permanently assigned to user
FOODS	450-8691	Foods Delivery	Trac	130	
FOODS	450-2251	Lynne Keenan	ST	495	Permanently assigned to user
FOODS	885-2840	Sandra Rivas	ST	495	Permanently assigned to user
KWVINA	845-4585	Toni Tatsey	VZ W	642	Permanently assigned to user
Maint	845-3247	Aaron Mclean	Trac	150	
Maint	845-4523	Alvin Yellow Owl	Trac	150	
Maint	845-4028	Calvin Racine	VZ W	204	

Maint	845-2210	Kyle Coursey	Trac	130	
Maint	845-3210	Loren Croff	Trac	130	
Maint	845-9445	Nelson RC	ST	495	assigned to user - back to Reid off hours
Maint	450-8520	Reid Reagan	ST	495	assigned to user
Napi	845-2760	Sicily Bird	ST	495	assigned to user
Nurse	450-4873	Charlene WQ	Trac	140	assigned to user
Nurse	450-4725	Jody Sabo	Trac	140	assigned to user
Nurse	450-6135	Kim Desrosier	Trac	140	assigned to user
Security	450-8659	Security	ST	420	
SPED	845-2780	Jill Mattingly	TM O	300	assigned to user
Super	845-2063	Corrina Hall-Guardipee	VZ W	642	assigned to user
Tech	450-8842	Everett Holm	TM O	300	assigned to user
Truant	450-8843	Harold MadPlume	VZ W	204	
Truant	450-4795	Jolene Vance	Trac	140	
Truant	845-4876	WBH Parent Coord	Trac	140	
Tech	Data only	Wm Kennedy	VZ W	480	no internet @ house, for after hours support work
Curriculum	Data only	Jerci Matt	VZ W	480	request by Superintendent for after hours/off-site grant work
HR	Data only	Emorie Davis Bird	VZ W	480	new request- after hours work, no internet at home
District	Data only	Phone backup	VZ W	480	backup for new phone lines, help realize \$42,000 annual savings 3 Rivers
District	Data only	Phone backup redundant	VZ W	480	backup for new phone lines, help realize \$42,000 annual savings 3 Rivers
				16427	Estimated annual cost

Phone line costs - 3 Rivers to Montana Phone

We are set to proceed with the transition of our phone line technologies starting mid-October. Our current phone line technology is known as PRI service which runs the district \$3500 per month pre-erate for line service and long distance. We will be transitioning to SIP lines service in mid-October for a few weeks doing testing and such before full scale implementation. Since this does rely on internet we'll be putting in Verizon jet packs as backup in the event our main internet connection goes down. This will increase our Verizon bill \$960 per year which will be paid back by the \$42,000 savings. For redundancy we have our old fashioned POTS (plain old telephone service) for fax lines that can double as a 3rd backup. We would be sacrificing the remaining 10% of our e-rate funding with 3 Rivers at \$350 per month but the cost savings of transitioning now will yield a savings of \$18,000 to \$20,000 for the remainder of this fiscal year and \$42,000 to \$45,000 annually in the following years.