

## EDULOGGER

WRAPPING UP THE HOLIDAYS



## STORMS ROCK SOUTHERN US

BY DEREK GRAHAM

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## Hurricane Helene and The Remnants Thereof

The county seat of Buncombe County is Asheville, North Carolina. As you no doubt saw on the national news, the western part of North Carolina was slammed by the tropical storm remnants of Hurricane Helene on September 27. The ground was already soaked due to a previous weather system, and the results were devastating. Loss of life, loss of property.

Jeremy Stowe relates that his team (2 of whom had homes destroyed by the storm) paused their role in the pupil transportation business and went into the emergency management business for a while. They distributed fuel throughout the area and stocked pallets full of gasoline jugs, which were then airlifted into remote areas. They transported disabled veterans, the homeless, and others displaced by the storm.

On Friday October 25, Buncombe County Schools received students once again. Surprisingly, and in no small part due to a strong community banding together and working hard, many bus routes could be run as planned. Others were transformed to a series of community stops, in areas where buses could not travel safely due to washed out roads and shoulders, destroyed turnaround locations, and more. (continued on pg 2)

**"It's amazing to see how strong water is!"**

Jeremy Stowe, Transportation Director,  
Buncombe County



## STORMS ROCK SOUTHERN US CONTINUED

**B**uncombe County schools utilize Edulog's smart bus technology. During the storms, they communicated to parents that they should use the Parent Portal app to follow their child's bus. That way, even if the stop had been moved, parents could use the app to see the location of the bus and know when it is getting to the community stop.



### Potential Tropical Cyclone No. 8

**L**ess than two weeks earlier, at the other end of the state in New Hanover and Brunswick counties (about 350 miles away) a narrow band of intense rain - from a storm that was never named - brought a "firehose effect" of 18 inches of rain in 12 hours. Roads were washed out and school buses were knee-deep in water, but fortunately not damaged.

According to Brunswick County Schools Transportation Director Lloyd Willis, "We were able to use the Parent Portal App. to make parents aware of bus routes and time changes due to road closures. When we marked the roads closed it updated time changes and possible bus changes. All of this information was updated in Web Query and the Parent Portal app."

An advertisement for the Edulog Parent Portal app. The background is dark teal. On the left, the Edulog logo is displayed. In the center, the text reads "PARENT PORTAL" in large white letters, followed by "Communicate with parents proactively, not reactively." in smaller white text. At the bottom left, there is a purple button with the text "LEARN MORE". On the right, a white smartphone is shown displaying the app's interface, which includes a map and a schedule for a bus stop.

**EDULOG**  
**PARENT PORTAL**  
Communicate with parents proactively, not reactively.  
[LEARN MORE](#)



## WHY WE LOVE OUR CLIENTS

BY ARIKA STEELE

**D**ear Clients - this one's for you! In the journey of our business, you are the fuel that powers our engine. Your trust and collaboration drive us forward, and today, we want to celebrate that special bond.

### The Joy of Collaboration

There's something truly rewarding about working together, and we've had some unforgettable moments along the way. Whether it was a lively brainstorming session or a casual chat over Teams, those experiences remind us of the creative synergy that emerges from our partnership. Together, we turn our journey into an exciting adventure, where every twist and turn lead to new opportunities and unexpected discoveries.

### The Learning Curve

Let's be honest: you challenge us to be better every day. We've had our fair share of humorous moments when your feedback shifted our course. Remember when a simple suggestion about logistics led us to uncover a more efficient routing option? Those detours remind us that growth often comes wrapped in laughter and a bit of humility.

### The Human Connection

Beyond the transactions, we truly value the relationships we've built with you. One of our favorite memories is when a routine check-in turned into a fun conversation about your fun vacation or entertaining stories about routing ups and downs or the occasional mishap.

These moments remind us that our partnership is more than just business; it's a shared journey filled with laughter and collaboration.

### The Inspiration Factor

You inspire us daily! Your unique perspectives push us to think creatively about transportation solutions. We've worked with clients who've prompted us to explore new technologies or more sustainable practices, reminding us that innovation is a collaborative effort. Your insights keep us excited for the next leg of our journey together.

### Celebrating Success Together

Every milestone we achieve is a testament to our partnership. Think of it like a successful delivery: when we hit our targets, it's like crossing the finish line together,—complete with cheers and maybe even a little celebration! From smooth rollouts to overcoming challenges, we've shared the joy of every achievement, and it's always sweeter because we did it as a team.

### The Loyalty Factor

There's nothing more rewarding than working with loyal clients who believe in us. Did you know that repeat clients can drive up to 65% of revenue? It's a fun stat that highlights just how vital you are to our success. Your loyalty inspires us to continue to strive for excellence in every interaction and service we provide.

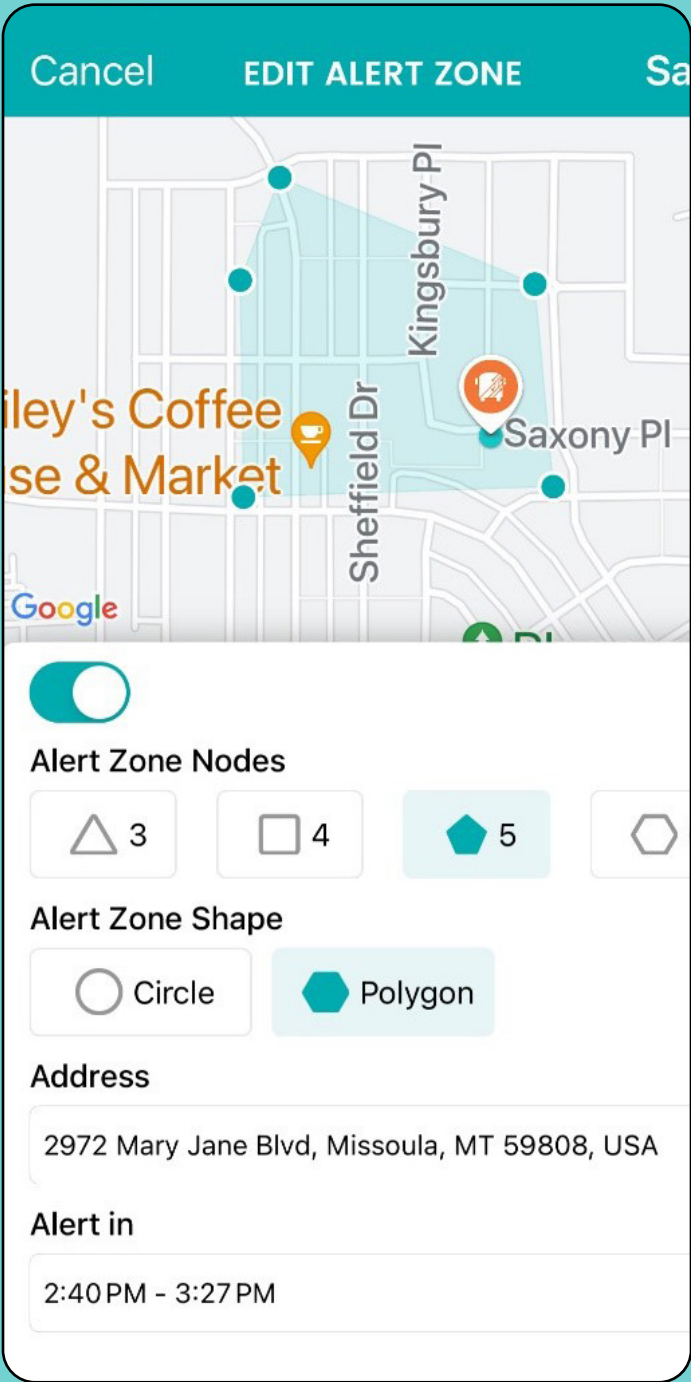
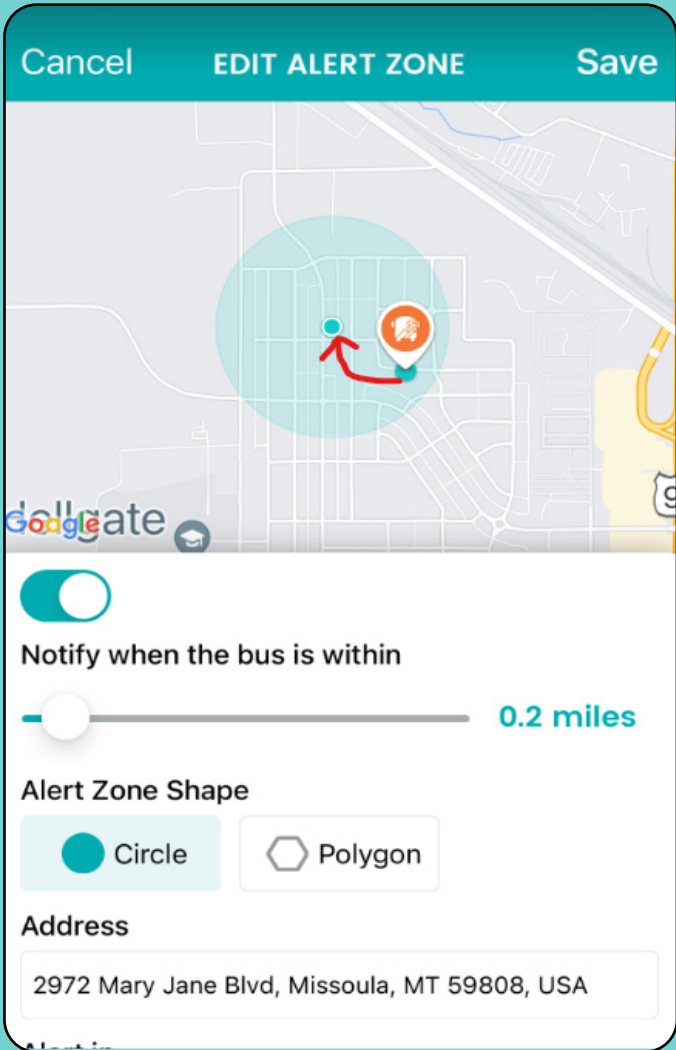
So, thank you for being the incredible partner you are. Your support and collaboration mean the world to us!



# WHAT'S NEW WITH PARENT PORTAL?

BY DEREK GRAHAM

Did you know that parents can now fine-tune their alerts by drawing polygons or moving the center of their notification zones? These enhancements were suggested by school district staff and are reflected in the latest parent-facing handouts on our resources page. Reach out to an Edulog staffer for the latest documents or click here to go to the Parent Portal page on our website.







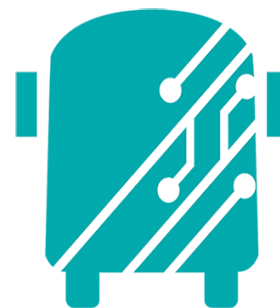
## CELEBRATING SUCCESS

BY CORI BURNS

In recognition of the dedication and hard work shown throughout the year, Edulog hosted a well-deserved afternoon of fun and festivity. This event, aimed at celebrating the collective effort and achievements of the year, took place at a local bowling alley. Whether it was striking down pins or cheering on teammates, the atmosphere was full of energy and camaraderie. Several members of our team gathered for bowling and pizza; which featured a mix of friendly competition and treats, and was a great way to build stronger bonds amongst colleagues. Team members showed off their skills (and some not-so-skillful moments), adding to the fun atmosphere. The sound of pins crashing and friendly banter filled the air.

This event served not only as a well-deserved break, but also as a reminder of the importance of teamwork and appreciation. Celebrating milestones like this helps foster a positive and collaborative atmosphere that ultimately drives greater success in future projects. The bowling and pizza afternoon wasn't just about the fun and food; it was about acknowledging the collective effort that goes into the team's success. This time together gave everyone a chance to relax and enjoy each other's company in a casual setting.

In the end, it was a perfect blend of recognition, fun, and team bonding—an event that reminded everyone why it's so important to celebrate both the wins and the hard work that makes those wins possible. Here's to more successful years ahead, filled with both hard work and moments of celebration!



# WINTER CLEAN UP

BY BARAK NELSON

After the flurry of activity prepping for the new school year and startup issues - taking hundreds of parent calls, finding lost students, filling in for missing drivers - your Edulog data may need some upkeep. There are a variety of reasons to make sure your data is as accurate as possible, whether it's for state-mandated reports, aiding district administrators to draw new boundaries, or being able to provide an accurate student roster to emergency responders when a bus is in an accident.

In Edulog SQL and Athena, there are a variety of built in tools such as worklists and search and report filters to look for inconsistencies. You can, for example, search for students who are eligible for transportation but are not assigned to a bus, or conversely, search for ineligible students who are assigned. Also leverage your drivers to “ground-truth” your data. For instance, ask them if there are any stops assigned to their runs that they don't actually stop at, places they actually stop at that aren't assigned to their runs, or if they have assigned stops where no students get on or off.

Athena users benefit from the up-front cleanup of student school/grade/program and geocode matching issues during the student import process, but Edulog SQL users can still use reports, worklists, or EMU log files to find students with these issues afterwards and clean them up. eSQL users also have the ability to look for other issues by running the Data Integrity report from the main menu of the Edulog Reports module. If deeper issues are suspected, such as unusual error messages, eSQL users may wish to have their Service Level Manager or Product Support run a diagnostic utility on the data.



As always, we are happy to help you:

- Inspect your data
- Design worklists
- Filter criteria in a logical manner
- Suggest methods to clean data
- Recommend existing fields
- Create new fields to track students:
- For example:
  - transported by exception
  - eligible but decline transportation
  - other needs defined by your district
- Automate the emailing of audit and error reports from nightly student downloads
- Answer any other questions or concerns you have.

An email to [support@edulog.com](mailto:support@edulog.com) will swiftly and automatically create a ticket in our system for you. Or, if you prefer to talk to someone you may call 800-288-2141 x 1 or 406-728-0893 x 1 to reach support.





## STAFF UPDATES



### MICHAELA STOCKHOUSE

We are excited to welcome Michaela Stockhouse back to Edulog. She previously worked for Edulog from 2012-2022 with duties ranging from working with vendors on building improvements to HR/payroll and many things in between. She is returning to Edulog after some time away to travel and to spend quality time with family. When she is not working Michaela likes to travel and work out, and she is very active in the local tango community.



### RYAN MCNALLY

We are also proud to announce that Ryan McNally is transitioning from the DCDT team to the Sales team. Ryan has worked at Edulog since 2020 and has excelled across many departments. His friendly demeanor, eager attitude and extensive knowledge of Edulog products will make him a successful asset to the sales team. He enjoys fine tuning his fantasy football league, cheering on the Griz, working out, and hitting the slopes in his free time.

**Training Opportunities Available**

[Learn More](#)

## WELCOME TO OUR SEASON OF CHANGES!

BY LAM NGUYEN-BULL

**H**ello everyone! Winter is here, bringing us brisk air, frosty mornings, and the promise of fresh starts in a new year. It's the perfect time to look at our processes with renewed focus and make some smart changes that will yield big wins, just in time for the busier months ahead.

Many of you are already familiar with the concept of LEAN. LEAN principles originated in manufacturing, but their focus on efficiency and continuous improvement can be applied to nearly any process—including getting students safely and efficiently to school. At its core, LEAN is about removing waste and creating value for everyone involved. Imagine trimming down extra bus stops, refining routes to save fuel, or even reducing wait times for families and drivers. These seemingly small improvements can add up to major changes for school districts and transportation teams.

Why a LEAN Approach to Routing? It's no secret that school transportation can be complex. There are countless moving parts, and even the smallest hiccup—like a new family moving to town or a last-minute route change—can throw things out of sync. With a LEAN approach, the goal is to identify and eliminate bottlenecks or “waste” points. This means finding those small inefficiencies that often go unnoticed but still consume time, energy, and money. LEAN isn't about taking shortcuts; it's about finding smarter, simpler ways to get things done. It's also about continuous improvement, which makes it the perfect philosophy to adopt as we strive to adapt and grow through each school year.

### Small Changes, Big Gains

One of the beautiful things about LEAN is that it encourages us to make adjustments that are achievable, measurable, and often require minimal disruption to existing processes. You'd be surprised at how a minor tweak can deliver a substantial payoff!

Some of the ways in which you can “manually” introduce LEAN into your processes are things you already do, like combining stops and reducing idle time. And you can do them even better using Edulog software.

### Athena and LEAN

But did you know that our new Athena routing platform weaves the LEAN approach into the very substance of your routing workflows without you having to make a single manual change?

Imagine the classic LEAN example - a person in manufacturing reorganizes their workspace so that tools are laid out in a way that recognizes and accommodates frequency of use. The ones that are used most are placed nearby, the ones that are less frequently used are placed a little further away. Spaces and hooks are neatly labeled and sectioned off so that no brain power is required to remember where things go, and if somebody borrows a tool, they can easily replace it in the proper place. In some workplaces, workstations are standardized so that every workspace for the same function is laid out the same way. (continued on page 9)



But NONE of this happens without your manual intervention. YOU have to decide to undertake the workspace analysis and reorganize your space.

In the world of Athena, LEAN thinking is built into the way information flows through the system, the way we have built workflows, and how you can lay out your workspaces.

Athena contains a fabulous LEAN innovation that requires very little effort from you - Stop Optimization. Stop Optimization is a unique groundbreaking innovation in the industry that requires no additional work from you to yield significant immediate and longer-term efficiency gains both for your teams and for your transportation systems.

Remember how LEAN shaves away those little inefficiencies that build over time to big inefficiencies? The way stops are traditionally managed is an excellent example of how small inefficiencies are introduced into a system over time. It is the rare district that rebuilds its transportation every year, down to re-placing and resequencing stops based on the student population for the year. This is because placing stops has more or less been a painstaking process. And while the assignments and sequences made in Year 1 are likely fine for Years 2 and 3, by the time Year 4 rolls around, there have been enough changes that a reassessment is in order and the level of inefficiency may warrant the time it takes to re-do assignments and sequences in a non-Athena system. But Years 2 and 3 are still not efficient



because there have been changes since Year 1. In an environment where students and families are under increasing stress and transportation operating costs are at an all-time high, every minute matters.

Athena's Stop Optimization feature brings the power of Athena's best-in-class optimization algorithm to the placement of stops. Given a set of stops and students (from data imports, a lasso tool, etc.), Athena can, using its proprietary optimization algorithm and constraints defined by the district (maximum walk distance, hazard types, etc.) automatically suggest student-stop assignments, usually reducing the number of stops to be serviced. And then, as students leave or enter the district during the school year, Athena's assignment workflow can automatically assign those students to existing stops, add a stop if more efficient, eliminate stops with no students assigned, and adjust runs, run times, and stop times as appropriate, all without requiring much manual work (except for review and approval) from the router.

(continued on page 10)



Clients who license Athena routing and Parent Portal will realize even more LEAN-style benefits à transportation details that change are automatically updated in the student schedule section of the Parent Portal app and can be automatically communicated to affected riders and caregivers through a push notification from the Parent Portal app based on change thresholds (e.g., changes affecting stop times more than 3 minutes) you define.

### Make Athena Part of Your Culture of Improvement

Here at Edulog, we know that transportation isn't just about getting students from Point A to Point B. It's about providing safe, reliable service to students and families while supporting the people who make it happen: the drivers, routers, dispatchers, and administrators who work tirelessly behind the scenes. A LEAN approach builds a culture of improvement and empowers teams to work smarter, not harder, while delivering better results.

If you are interested in hearing more about how Athena will benefit you and what the transition to Athena looks like, reach out to your Account Manager today!

Here's to a season of positive change—together!



### Routing

- Optimization
- Efficiency

### Bell Times

- Studies
- Optimization



### Contracts

- Auditing
- Analysis

### Operations

- Policies
- Metrics



### Planning

- Demographics
- Redistricting





## EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

BY CORI BURNS



We're excited to recognize Chuad Johnson for her outstanding contributions to the Documentation, Curriculum Development, and Training (DCDT) department and Edulog as a whole. Chuad is a Missoula native. She graduated from the University of Montana with a BA in Elementary Education and recently received a Master of Education in Instructional Design and Educational Technology from American College of Education based out of Indianapolis, IN. Since joining the DCDT team, Chuad has played an integral role in building coursework, Edulog websites, documentation and training programs designed to educate both our staff and clients. Her dedication to enhancing our training resources and her commitment to excellence have been invaluable. Through Chuad's hard work and proactive approach, she has helped us make significant strides in rebuilding Edulog University, expanding our internal and external course offerings, and ensuring accessibility in all our documentation and online training. With her contributions, we are well on our way to providing even stronger support to our clients in student transportation, helping them achieve their goals and make a difference in the communities they serve. Thank you, Chuad, for your dedication and the positive impact you bring to Edulog!

**Favorite Food:** Meatloaf and mashed potatoes and anything with eggplant

**Favorite Color:** Dark green

**Dream Vacation:** I'd love to go back to Italy and explore places we didn't get a chance to go to when we went in 2022. Venice is one of my most favorite places and going back would be a bonus!

**Favorite Quote:** "Keep your face always toward the sunshine and shadows will fall behind you."  
- Walt Whitman

**What is something unique about you (a fun fact) that few people are aware of:** I was cast as an extra in the first season of Yellowstone before it was popular. You can find me in the Asian tourist scene when we are on Kevin Costner's field. That scene took 8 hours to film with roughly 30 members of the film crew on location. We didn't know we'd be filming alongside Kevin Costner until we started doing scene takes. I am squinting in the scene because the sun was starting to go down. It was so fun! We had a real Grizzly bear and his trainer on site, and we had no idea the series would take off the way it did. We were able to meet the director, Taylor Sheridan, and Kevin Costner - of course.

**What do you enjoy doing in your spare time:** I really love spending time with my family and watching my boys play all the sports they love.

**Favorite place to eat in Missoula:** Koh Chang Thai

**Favorite Season:** I love fall because the weather is perfect - not too hot and not too cold. Montana is simply majestic in the season of colors changing. It also leads into the holiday season, and I love Halloween, Thanksgiving, and Christmas time! (continued on page 12)

**If you could compete in the Olympics, which sport would you choose:** Haha! I've always been a very good spectator. I have very little athletic ability.

**What are two things on your bucket list:** Going to Italy was one and I have been able to do that. The second would be going to Greece!

**Do you have any pets:** 3 dogs - Maya, Zeus, and Sunny

**If you could pick up a new skill in an instant, what would it be:** I'd like to have better math skills.

**If you had to delete all but 2 apps from your phone, which 2 would you keep:** I would keep a chat/text app and a news app.

**When did you start working at Edulog:** November 2023

**How would you describe your job at Edulog and its responsibilities to someone unfamiliar with Edulog/our products:** I help design, develop, curate, and build learning solutions for our clients and internal staff - this includes online courses within our learning management system as well as in person and remote learning opportunities. One of our goals is to help educate our clients and staff about our products as well as build robust internal training that supports professional growth and development. I assist with the creation and design of necessary documentation by collaborating with various departments and subject matter experts. I am also responsible for updating and managing our website. If it's something creative you need, I would love to do it for you!

**Favorite Edulog Product or favorite part of working here:** I have great coworkers and am super grateful for the flexibility I have with my schedule.

**Edulog advice (to clients or co-workers):** Attitudes are contagious. Is yours worth catching?



**BETTER.**

**FASTER.**

**ATHENA**

A cloud-based school bus routing solution created by industry leaders.



Get the most from your onboard technology with Driver Portal Tablets.

Improve your operation with the Parent Portal app.

**LEARN MORE:**

[www.edulog.com](http://www.edulog.com)





# ARE HALLOWEEN CELEBRATIONS AN EFFECTIVE EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY?

BY SHAWNA KNUDSON

Employee engagement is crucial for fostering a positive work environment, enhancing productivity, and retaining talent. Traditional methods like team-building exercises, training sessions, and performance incentives are common, but incorporating festive celebrations like Halloween can also play a significant role. Here's how Halloween can be an effective employee engagement strategy:



## Halloween is the Great Unifier

Halloween has a unique ability to bring people together, transcending cultural and personal differences. In a workplace setting, this can be incredibly powerful. When employees participate in Halloween activities, they share a common experience that fosters a sense of community and belonging. This unity is essential for creating a cohesive team.



**1. Inclusive Participation:** Halloween activities can be designed to include everyone, regardless of their role or department. Costume contests, pumpkin carving, and themed potlucks encourage employees to interact with colleagues they might not usually

engage with, breaking down silos and fostering interdepartmental relationships.

**2. Shared Experiences:** Participating in fun and light-hearted activities creates shared memories. These experiences can be a topic of conversation long after the event, strengthening bonds among employees. Shared laughter and enjoyment can significantly enhance team spirit and camaraderie.

**3. Cultural Integration:** For multinational companies, celebrating Halloween can help integrate employees from different cultural backgrounds. It provides an opportunity for employees to learn about and appreciate different traditions, promoting cultural sensitivity and inclusivity.



## Halloween is a Boon to Creativity

Creativity is a valuable asset in any workplace. It drives innovation, problem-solving, and adaptability. Halloween, with its emphasis on costumes, decorations, and themed activities, can be a catalyst for unleashing creativity among employees.

**1. Costume Contests:** Encouraging employees to dress up in costumes can lead to a burst of creative energy. Whether they choose to dress as their favorite characters, create pun-based costumes, or come up with entirely original ideas, the process of brainstorming and crafting a costume can stimulate creative thinking.

(continued on page 14)



**2. Office Decorations:** Transforming the office space with Halloween decorations can be a collaborative and imaginative endeavor. Teams can work together to design and implement spooky themes, fostering teamwork and creative problem-solving. This can also make the workplace more visually stimulating and enjoyable.

**3. Creative Challenges:** Organizing Halloween-themed challenges, such as pumpkin carving contests or spooky storytelling sessions, can further encourage creativity. These activities provide a break from routine tasks and allow employees to showcase their artistic talents in a fun and relaxed environment.



### Silliness is a Humanizer

In a professional setting, employees often feel the need to maintain a certain level of formality. However, allowing moments of silliness can humanize the workplace, making it a more comfortable and enjoyable place to be.

**Breaking Down Barriers:** Silliness can help break down hierarchical barriers. When managers and employees alike participate in fun activities, it creates a more egalitarian atmosphere. Seeing a manager in a goofy costume or participating in a silly game can make them more approachable and relatable.

**Stress Relief:** Engaging in light-hearted activities can be a great stress reliever. Laughter and playfulness can reduce tension and anxiety, leading to a more relaxed and positive work environment. This can improve overall mental health and well-being among employees.

**Encouraging Authenticity:** Allowing employees to express their playful side can encourage authenticity. When people feel they can be themselves at work, they are more likely to be engaged and committed. This authenticity can lead to stronger relationships and a more cohesive team.



### Implementing Halloween as an Employee Engagement Strategy

To effectively implement Halloween celebrations as an employee engagement strategy, consider the following steps:

**1. Plan Ahead:** Start planning Halloween activities well in advance. This allows time to organize events, gather materials, and communicate plans to employees. Early planning also ensures that everyone has the opportunity to participate. (cont'd on page 14)





**2. Encourage Participation:** Promote inclusivity by encouraging all employees to participate. Provide options for those who may not want to dress up, such as decorating their workspace or contributing to a themed potluck. Make participation voluntary but enticing.

**3. Create a Variety of Activities:** Offer a range of activities to cater to different interests. Some employees might enjoy costume contests, while others might prefer creative challenges or team-building games. Providing a variety of options ensures that everyone can find something they enjoy.



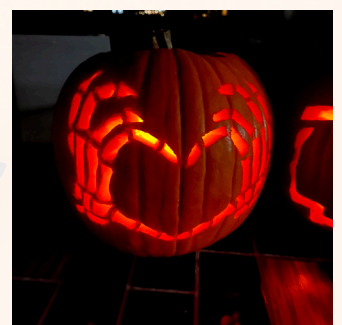
**6. Gather Feedback:** After the celebrations, gather feedback from employees to understand what they enjoyed and what could be improved. Use this feedback to plan future events and continuously enhance employee engagement strategies.

### Conclusion

Incorporating Halloween celebrations into your employee engagement strategy can have numerous benefits. It unifies employees, boosts creativity, and humanizes the workplace through moments of silliness. By planning inclusive and varied activities, you can create a positive and engaging work environment that fosters strong relationships and enhances overall productivity. So, embrace the spooky season and watch your team spirit soar!

**4. Foster Team Collaboration:** Encourage teams to work together on Halloween projects, such as decorating the office or creating group costumes. This fosters teamwork and collaboration, strengthening interdepartmental relationships.

**5. Celebrate Safely:** Ensure that all activities are safe and inclusive. Be mindful of cultural sensitivities and provide alternatives for those who may not celebrate Halloween. Create a welcoming environment where everyone feels comfortable participating.





## DCDT INTERNAL TRAINING

Our Documentation and Curriculum Development Team (DCDT) got together to go over a whole host of topics this December. Our group was excited to discuss and present on items such as accessibility, our Athena software, Driver Portal, and different tips and tricks to make our company up to date with the latest software standards. Thank you to the DCDT team for taking the time to build and present course material for our coworkers that will not only benefit ourselves as employees, but will extend to benefit the wonderful customers that we serve.



## RECIPE: BANOFFEE PIE

BY JASMINE BROWN



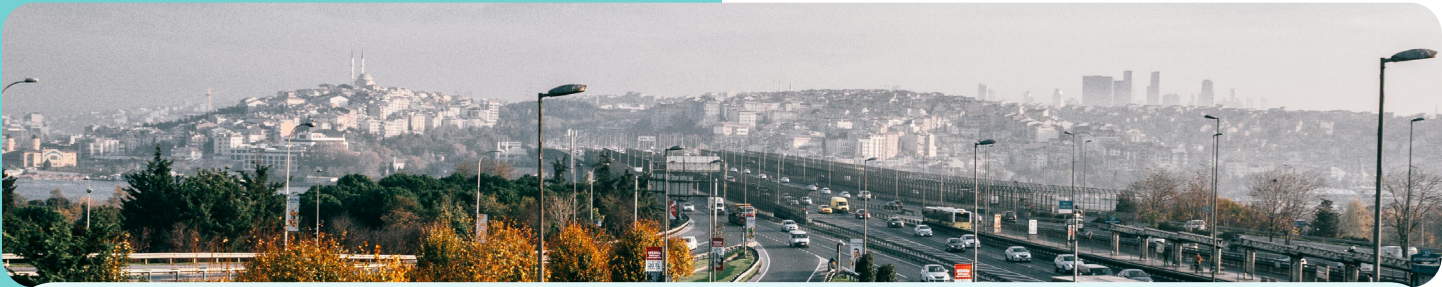
### Ingredients:

- 7 oz (one package) of Lotus Biscoff Cookies - Crushed
- 3oz melted butter
- 8.8oz Lotus Biscoff Spread - melted
- 2 ripe bananas
- 8oz Whipped Cream

### Directions:

1. Combine crushed Biscoff cookies and butter. Place combination on the bottom of your cake pan. If possible, use a paper lined cake pan with removable sides. Otherwise, a standard 8x8 Pyrex dish works. Place crust in the fridge to cool and set while moving to step two.
2. Use a microwave safe dish to melt the 8 ounces of biscoff spread (some will be used later for the topping). About 30 seconds, depending on microwave wattage. Get the crust out, and spread the melted Biscoff on the crust. Put back into fridge to chill while moving to step three.
3. Slice your bananas - not too thick, not too thin. Bring out your crust and spread, place the bananas on top evenly.
4. If you're going to make your own whipped cream, place the dish back in the fridge to chill. Otherwise, scoop out your whipped cream evenly overtop of the dish. Place the dish back in the fridge to cool, while you melt the last of your Biscoff spread.
5. Once you've melted the last bit of spread, drizzle it on top of your dessert. You can use a toothpick to make designs, or just leave the drizzle as you like.





## REFLECTING AND PLANNING FOR SUCCESS IN TRANSPORTATION BY EDULOG STAFF

As the holidays wind down and we reflect on the past year, it's the perfect time to reassess achievements and plan for the future. This mindset applies not just to personal life but equally to the world of transportation.

### Key Reflection Questions:

- What were the department's targeted objectives?
- Did we meet or exceed expectations?
- What went well?
- What needs to be revisited, adjusted, or eliminated?
- What is still missing?
- What are our goals for the upcoming year?
- What steps do we need to take to achieve them?

Answering these questions lays the foundation for effective planning. In transportation, just as in personal life, preparation, budgeting, and dedication drive success. The pursuit of productivity is essential—effective planning leads to smoother operations and a more streamlined workflow.

Reflecting on these key questions helps identify what must happen next. Once objectives are clear, list the resources needed to achieve them. Just as you would create a checklist for grocery shopping or vacation packing, compile a comprehensive list for your department's needs. Include everything from bus maintenance and staffing (e.g., new administrative staff or drivers) to training programs, conferences, and equipment

upgrades (e.g., cameras, GPS units, RFID readers, or tablets).

Remember, some resources might fall under the "wish list" category. Even if they are not essential, include them as potential enhancers of department efficiency. For example, Edulog offers consultation services to assist with state reporting preparation; along with our Advisory Services department that uses data analytics to provide Transportation Optimization, Bell-Time Optimization, District Policy and Contract Analysis, Demographics and Redistricting, Operational Assessments, and organizational change management. Benefits to tapping into this kind of resource helps reveal a more in depth understanding of your organization's data to visualize the efficiency allowing you to evaluate your options and make data driven decisions.

**Tip:** Clearly outline the costs, benefits, and justifications for both essential and wish list items to strengthen budget proposals and increase the likelihood of approval when presented to the board for decision.  
(continued on page 18)



## Tips:

- Review the annual faculty calendar to identify when the budget meeting is scheduled and mark it on all your calendars.
- Ensure you're on the email list for announcements, updates, and virtual meeting links.
- Obtain and complete the required budget format thoroughly; use extra pages if needed.
- Gather all supporting documents you might need to present your case.

**Best Practice:** Prioritize needs over wants and clearly differentiate between essential items and wish-list additions. Be prepared to scale back your proposal by having an alternative plan that is approximately 30% less than your initial request. Securing approval is just the start; staying committed to your budget is the key to long-term success.

Once a plan is set, dedication is key. Commit to your action steps with consistency. Prioritize meetings, training, and tasks that align with the department's objectives. A sustained focus



on these priorities helps transform planning into tangible results and keeps the department on track to exceed its goals.

## Benefits:

When you remain dedicated to your plan, you foster a culture of accountability within your team; for achieving departmental goals and leading to improved performance overall.

When progress is made toward goals, it inspires individuals and teams to stay engaged and invested creating a sense of momentum and motivation positive reinforcement can lead to higher morale and productivity.

A well-defined plan allows for more effective management of resources, including time, personnel, and finances. By regularly assessing progress and adjusting as necessary, you can allocate resources where they are most needed and avoid waste. Goals and growth often involve training and professional development to enhance skills and knowledge, which not only benefits individual growth but also elevates the capabilities of the entire department.

Resilience is essential in the ever-changing landscape of transportation management. When challenges arise, a proactive mindset is more likely to adapt and find creative solutions, rather than becoming discouraged.

Your department can create sustainable practices and processes that lead to continuous improvement over time, building a strong foundation for long-term success.

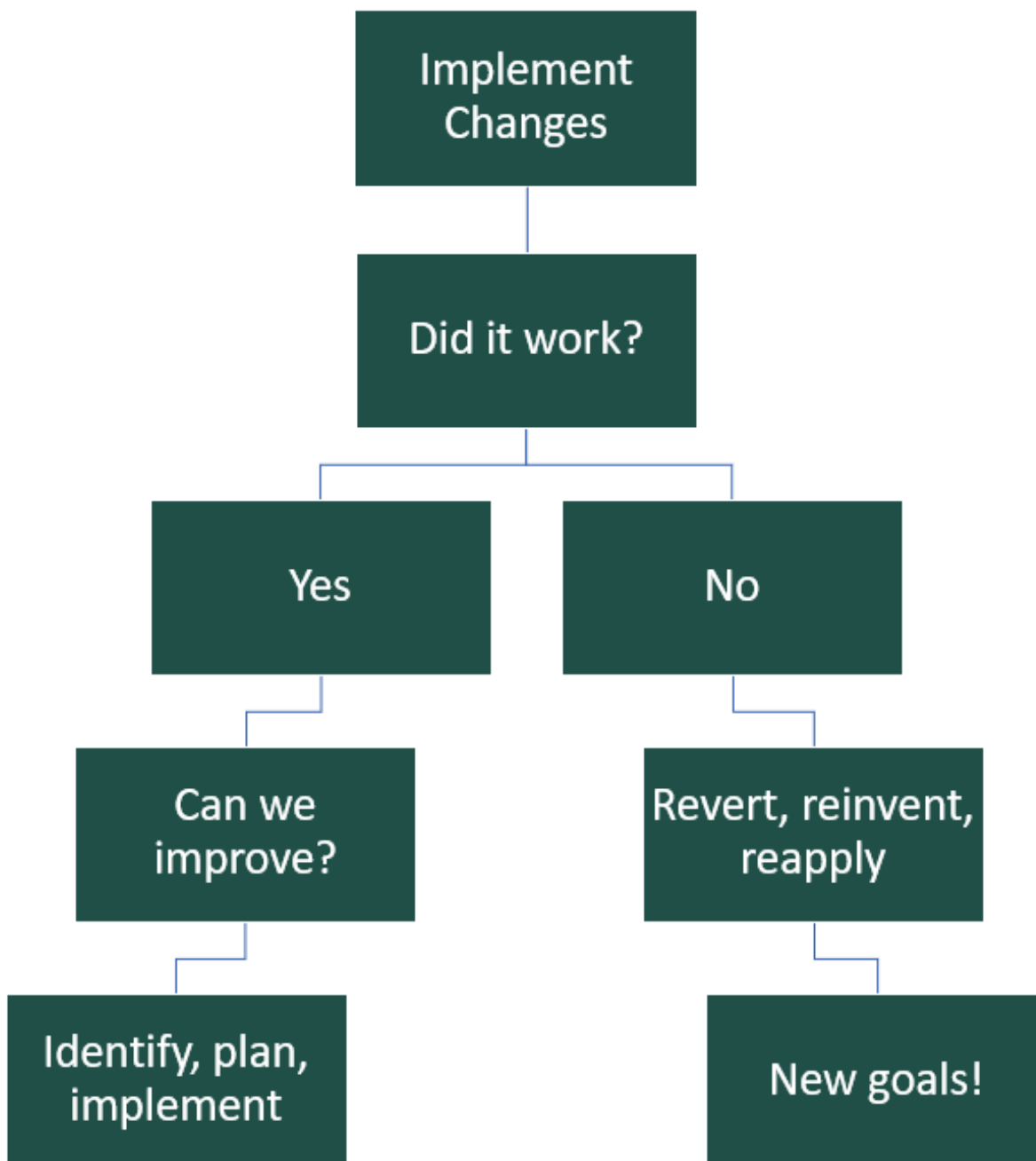
Commitment to meetings and training ensures that everyone is on the same page regarding objectives and expectations fostering a better communication within the team, reducing misunderstandings and improving collaboration. (continued on page 19)



By reflecting, planning strategically, and committing to these efforts, your department will be well-positioned for a productive and successful year ahead. As we embark on this journey, let's embrace collaboration and communication as key components of our success. Every team member plays a vital role in achieving our goals, and together we can harness our collective strengths to overcome challenges and seize opportunities.

Remember, success is not merely a destination but a continuous journey of growth and improvement. Let's carry this momentum into the new year, ensuring that our commitment to excellence drives our actions. Together, we can transform our plans into reality and make a meaningful impact in the world of transportation.

Here's to a successful year ahead—let's get started!





# Sudoku

	8	1	7	3	6	9	2	
		2	9			1	6	
	9	4	1	2		7	5	
2			3		7			
		3	5			4	7	
4					1		3	9
	4	7		1	2			
	6	5		9	3			
3	2	8		7		6		

Fill in the puzzle so that every row across, every column down and every 9 by 9 box contains the numbers 1 to 9.

Ready to harness that New Year energy and make a change?  
Interested in data to see how far you've come?

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# EDULLOGER



Thank you for reading.

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## Smarter Transportation.



## Sudoku Answers

5	8	1	7	3	6	9	2	4
7	3	2	9	5	4	1	6	8
6	9	4	1	2	8	7	5	3
2	5	9	3	4	7	8	1	6
8	1	3	5	6	9	4	7	2
4	7	6	2	8	1	5	3	9
9	4	7	6	1	2	3	8	5
1	6	5	8	9	3	2	4	7
3	2	8	4	7	5	6	9	1