

Addressing Attendance through Safe Routes to School



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Safe Routes
to School
National
Partnership

About the National Partnership

We are a nonprofit organization that improves the quality of life for kids and communities by promoting **active, healthy lifestyles** and safe infrastructure that **supports bicycling and walking.**

What is Safe Routes to School?

What Is Safe Routes to School?

A movement that

- Encourages kids to walk and bicycle to school
- Addresses barriers that make it hard or unsafe to walk or bicycle to school





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In 1969, nearly **50%** of
all children walked or
bicycled to school.

Today, just **13%** walk or
bicycle.



Consequences

- **1/3** of children are overweight or obese – triple the rate of a generation ago
- Family car trips to school make up **10-14%** of morning congestion
- Motor vehicle injuries are the **biggest** source of fatalities for children, whether as passengers, on foot or bicycle.
- Injuries and fatalities are **especially high** in low income neighborhoods

Two main categories of SRTS

- **Programs:** such as walking school buses, walk and roll to school days, bike rodeos, or walking Wednesdays
- **Infrastructure:** building and fixing sidewalks, crosswalks, paths, bicycle lanes

The Six E's

- Education
- Encouragement
- Engineering
- Enforcement
- Evaluation
- Equity

What's the Structure?

- **Federal transportation bill:** Through the Transportation Alternatives Program, provides funding for Safe Routes to School programs and infrastructure
- **State and regional initiatives:** Many states and regions have their own initiatives & funding
- **Local:** Programs generally run at local level

Upshot: Diverse program and cast of characters

Who runs Safe Routes to School programs?

- School officials
- Nonprofits
- Health departments
- Police departments



Benefits of Safe Routes to School

Addresses **many** problems

- Children's health and obesity
- Climate change
- Air pollution
- Dangers of street crime and violence
- Danger of traffic injuries when walking, biking, and using public transportation



Initially

Most interest in Safe Routes to School coming from concern about **children's health** and about the **environment**

Now

Additional benefits are increasingly the focus:

- Neighborhood safety and avoiding crime and violence
- Academic achievement
- Attendance

Safe Routes to School and Absenteeism

Transportation and Attendance

Transportation is one of the key barriers to attendance that contributes to chronic absenteeism and tardiness

A functioning transportation system requires:

Redundancy

Needs to support walking, bicycling, and public transit

For families to want kids to walk to school, communities need:

- Safety from injury from vehicles
- Safety from crime, bullying, or stray bullets



Walking School Buses

Walking School Buses

- Group of children walking together
- Pick up others at houses or corners along the way
- Usually, accompanied by parent or volunteer
- Can be daily, weekly, or every now and then
- Improves safety, increases physical activity, gets kids to school on time

Benefits for Attendance:

- With or without an adult, groups of children are safer from crime, bullying, and vehicles
- Help families juggle morning routines
- Overcome barrier of sick family members
- Daily walking school buses make the trip to school an expectation and a habit



School Buses



School Buses

- School buses are a great part of getting kids to school who live far away.
- Reduce burden on families, reduce congestion, traffic dangers, and air pollution near schools.
- Walking school buses to school bus stops can ensure kids don't miss the bus.
- Districts often try to cut buses; but they are a key part of getting kids to school.

Public Transit

- Also, great role for public transit
- Public transit is an important part of our school transportation network, especially for older students and in denser, more urban areas

To Sum Up

- Walking school buses can help overcome many of the transportation hurdles that prevent attendance
- Infrastructure improvements to walking, bicycling, and transit routes near and on the way to schools reduce injuries to kids and make it easier and safer to walk and bicycle.



Our Role



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What We Do



- Improve quality of life for kids, families, and communities
- Advance policy change
- Catalyze support for safe, healthy, active communities
- Share our deep expertise

FIRE
UP
YOUR
FEET!

Fire Up Your Feet encourages families, students and schools to work together and create active lifestyles which inspire our children to be healthy and physically active.



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**KAISER
PERMANENTE®**

**National
PTA®**

everychild.one voice.

Fire Up Your Feet

Physical Activity Tracker

- For teachers, staff, and families
- Track miles or minutes of activity during the day
- Compete to win Challenge Awards for your school stay motivated in a fun and friendly environment.

Free resources, toolkits

- Ideas for increasing physical activity in schools
- Fun classroom activities
- Guides for organizing events at schools and/or in community
- Resources to encourage safe walking and bicycling to school and in everyday life

Healthy Fundraising Platform

- Schools and families can fundraise in a healthy way by accessing a fundraising platform that incorporates healthy activities, like fun runs and walk-a-thons
- Centered on physical activity pledges and events



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Sharing Our Deep Expertise



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Shared Use

Increasing Access to Physical Activity Opportunities

Childhood obesity has more than tripled in children and adolescents in the past 30 years.¹ Low-income communities and communities of color tend to be adversely affected by obesity and have fewer adequate places for children and families to be physically active.² In many communities, schools are centrally located and have gymnasiums, playgrounds, athletic fields,



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Using Safe Routes to School to Combat the Threat of Violence



In some communities, the danger of violence and crime discourages children from walking to school and keeps people off the street, limiting physical activity and restricting errands and trips. Violent crime and conflict can cause death, pain, and trauma, both for those directly affected and for those who witness or learn of events. Preventing violence goes hand in hand with community betterment, public engagement, street scale enhancements, physical activity and improved economic opportunities.

In underserved communities, walking and bicycling are often major ways that people get around – a necessary part of getting to school, work, the grocery store, or to other key destinations. In addition, walking and bicycling may be a particularly affordable and accessible means to get physical activity.³ At the same time, there is often more danger from traffic and from violence on the street in underserved communities.⁴ Violence within a community inhibits business, job access, healthy nutritional choices, and physical activity. Addressing violence within underserved communities is critical to economic renewal and health.

Combating Violence Through Safe Routes to School

Violence and crime affect children in communities across the country. In many communities, the actual risk of harm to children is very low, and Safe Routes to School programs can play a crucial role in helping parents feel comfortable with children's active transportation to school. In other communities, however, children face very real dangers of robbery, harassment, gang intimidation and gang recruitment. Safe Routes to School programs can assist significantly in increasing the safety of children and teens in these communities.

How can Safe Routes to School programs help with these problems? A range of potential steps are provided below. Planning and community engagement can assist in determining which of the steps are most needed and appropriate for a given community.

Using a framework known as the "Six Es," we identify specific kinds of actions that can combat violence and support Safe Routes to School. Safe Routes to School programs often use this framework to describe the steps that ensure that children can walk and bicycle safely to school. The Six Es are engineering, education, encouragement, enforcement, evaluation, and equity, which sets out the need for fair opportunities for health for all communities.

How Does the Threat of Violence Affect Safe Routes to School?

- There are 850,000 children living in gang violence "hot zones" all over the country, putting kids at risk on their way to school before they even get to the classroom.⁵
- Parents report violence and crime as one of the five primary factors affecting children's walking or bicycling.⁶
- Five percent of high school students report not going to school at least one day per month because they feel they would be unsafe at or on their way to or from school.⁴
- Almost 25 percent of students ages 12-18 reported that there were gangs in their schools.⁴

www.saferroutes.org

www.saferroutespartnership.org | Facebook.com/saferroutespartnership | Twitter @SafeRoutesNow



GREATER WASHINGTON DC

Case Study Bicycling and Walking to School as a Community: Takoma Park, MD

The City of Takoma Park Safe Routes to School program won special recognition from the National Center Safe Routes to School James L. Oberstar

schools to request Safe Routes to School activities and keeps in regular contact with the schools. Regular communication establishes the relationship and allows Lucy to learn how best to fit Safe Routes to School programming into existing school routines.



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Technical Assistance To Get Kids Walking and Bicycling Through Community Scale Policy Strategies

Utilize Our Expertise!

The Safe Routes to School National Partnership provides Technical Assistance based upon the specific needs of each city, county and/or school district seeking assistance.

For more than a decade Safe Routes to School programs have flourished across the country using the power of quality programming to raise awareness and change habits. Now, communities are boosting walking and bicycling to school and in daily life through sustainable, long-term policy change. The Safe Routes to School National Partnership can help your community or school district to build local leadership, partnerships and community support, establish walking and bicycling policies and programs that advance healthy, active lifestyles, and institutionalize ongoing funding and policy changes that support active transportation as a permanent part of your community's healthy future.



Individualized Technical Assistance

Each community is unique. Through our individualized technical assistance we provide strategic support to local program and policy leaders via telephone calls and email correspondence on an as needed basis. We will listen to your needs, and our expert staff can help guide your policy change efforts. We can conduct webinars and conference presentations, provide best practices and case studies from around the country and the world, create model policies, assist with developing materials and action plans for grant applications, and help your community leverage additional funding for programs and infrastructure.

Workshops

We can help you to produce and lead inspiring and effective Safe Routes to School and active transportation policy workshops, designed to get critical stakeholders thinking

about and invested in the big policy picture and community-wide Safe Routes to School efforts. These workshops can be combined with local site visits, customized presentations, participating in and/or leading stakeholder meetings, and/or conducting walkabouts at schools to assess infrastructure needs. We can also follow up with you by phone and email via individualized technical assistance to build upon the meetings with stakeholders, and to develop materials and action plans.

Keynote Addresses

Sometimes community leaders need to be inspired by national experts. Our prominent and inspiring speakers bring best practices from around the country and the world, and an energy and charisma that will inspire positive change. The Safe Routes to School National Partnership can help turbo charge your community into action.

Who We Are:

Our team has helped communities and school districts throughout the country to develop community-scale Safe Routes to School programs, partnerships and action plans that have resulted in new policies that support healthy and active communities.

Contact: Maggie Cooper, Technical Assistance Manager, maggie@saferroutespartnership.org or (703) 521-1561

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Safe Routes to School program offers encourage safe walking and bicycling.

Walk Day: All schools in Takoma Park do outreach every year to help serve as a kick-off for walking and

with the Washington Area Bicycle safety rodeos are offered free of cost. The workshop features a safety riding followed by a bicycle course safe practices. Bike to School Day in May, 2012. Over 160 students and day. New bike racks will be in-growing number of students biking

ordinator will help organize Walkabouts. Parents can rotate the with the students and designated be set for each Walking School Bus. vice, SchoolPool, has been introduced finding nearby students to join a Pool is a project of Metropolitan of Governments Commuter Con-

ity: Developed by the Takoma Park in safety program reinforces safe it includes a mock crosswalk, cars, dents play the role of a pedestrian that reminds them to "walk in the



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Components of policy provisions:

- Ensure process for hiring, training, and equipping
- Work to ensure that the distribution is equitable
- Seek more funding if necessary



- Recognizes that this can be a dangerous time
- District requires schools to separate each mode from the others as much as possible
- Provides a variety of strategies





**Policy allows for accountability
& enforcement.**

Limiting Restrictions on Active Transportation



Crossing Guards



Student Arrival & Dismissal



Bike Parking



- Basic policy: Require abundant bicycle parking
- Increase with demand
- Option: Locate in visible areas, locked if necessary
- Option: Protected from elements



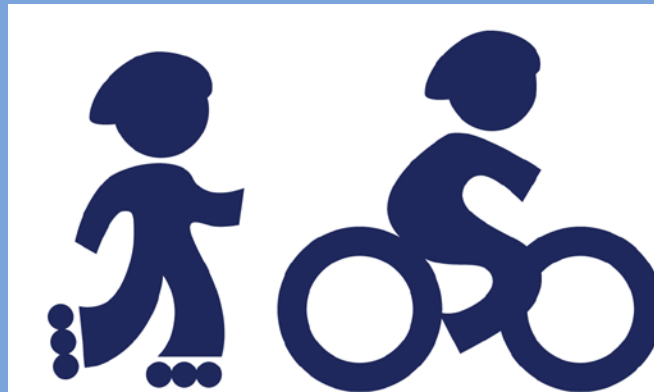
Student Transportation Department



School Travel Plan



School Design



School Siting/ Attendance Zones

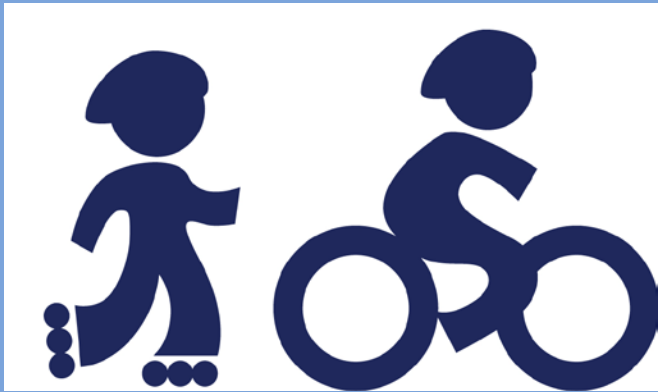




- School locations are important & long term
- Decisions are often ad hoc
- Good policies can provide a process and balance interests

Workbook has basic version











Busing

Policy 101

Why is policy important?

What is a policy?

How do we make policy
change?





WALKING
SCHOOL
BUS!

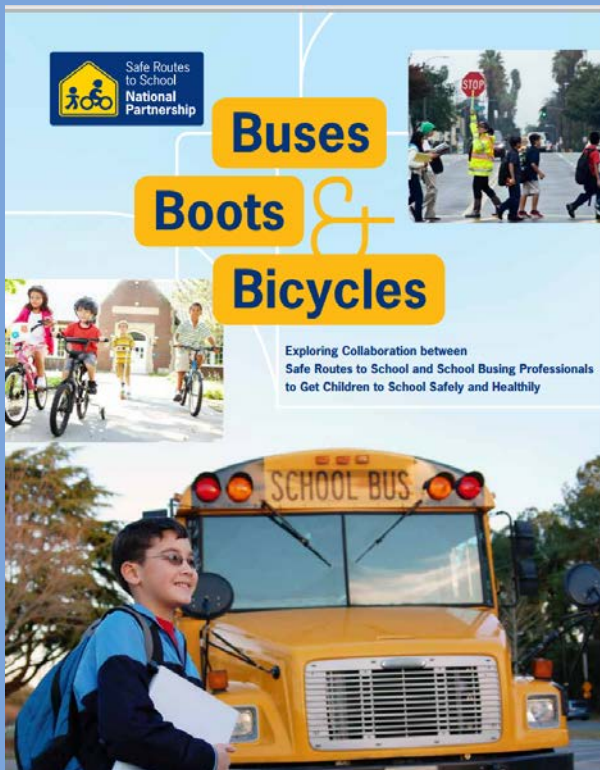
Martin Luther King Jr.
Elementary School



Goal: Healthy, Thriving Kids and Communities



Additional Resources



Safe Routes to School National Partnership

Buses & Boots & Bicycles

Exploring Collaboration between Safe Routes to School and School Busing Professionals to Get Children to School Safely and Healthily



SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

A Primer to Understanding the Role of School Boards and Principals

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School boards and principals are the gatekeepers to schools; their investment and relationships with stakeholders are essential to the success of Safe Routes to School. Charged with advancing the academic achievement of students, school boards and principals are faced with myriad challenges including meeting standardized test results, dealing with shrinking budgets, supporting over-extended teachers and maintaining facilities. At the same time, school boards and principals can have a strong influence on the way in which students travel to and from school. There are many policies, procedures and projects that can be advanced at the school and district level to address parental concerns to improve safety, increase physical activity and get more students walking and bicycling to school. Safe Routes to School practitioners can be most effective by recognizing the priorities of school boards and principals and by better understanding how those priorities align with the benefits of Safe Routes to School.

Introduction to Safe Routes to School

During the past 15 years, the Safe Routes to School movement in the United States has grown larger and more sophisticated. Walking and bicycling to school is attracting more and more interest from leaders and decision-makers at the local, regional, state and federal levels. As such, Safe Routes to School practitioners have been expanding their efforts to encompass policy, systems and environmental changes in their work. With declining federal transportation dollars dedicated to bicycling and walking and the uncertainty of state budgets, it is even more important to ensure that stable funding streams and supportive policies are pursued locally to safeguard long-term support for walking and bicycling to school and in daily life.

Understanding the Roles and Responsibilities of the School Board Members

There are more than 14,000 school boards operating throughout the United States whose primary function is to address the educational needs of their students. The make-up of each district varies in size, socioeconomic status and urbanization; a district's school board could be equally as diverse. These factors are integral to the make-up of the school board and are important to understand before engaging with school boards. School boards can be appointed or elected and work to set the direction for the district, make or approve funding decisions, provide support for the implementation of policies and hold the system accountable to these policies, all while engaging and representing the

How do you get policies adopted?

- **Engage:** Get people excited about their vision for change
- **Assess:** What's the problem? What solutions are there?
- **Propose:** Draft a strong policy that expresses the vision
- **Advocate:** Identify and meet with decision makers
- **Implement:** Stay focused even after a policy gets adopted