



Houston Safe Routes to School Webinar Series

Turning Enthusiasm Into Action: How to Get a Safe Routes to School Program Up and Running in Your School

Kori Johnson, Safe Routes Partnership

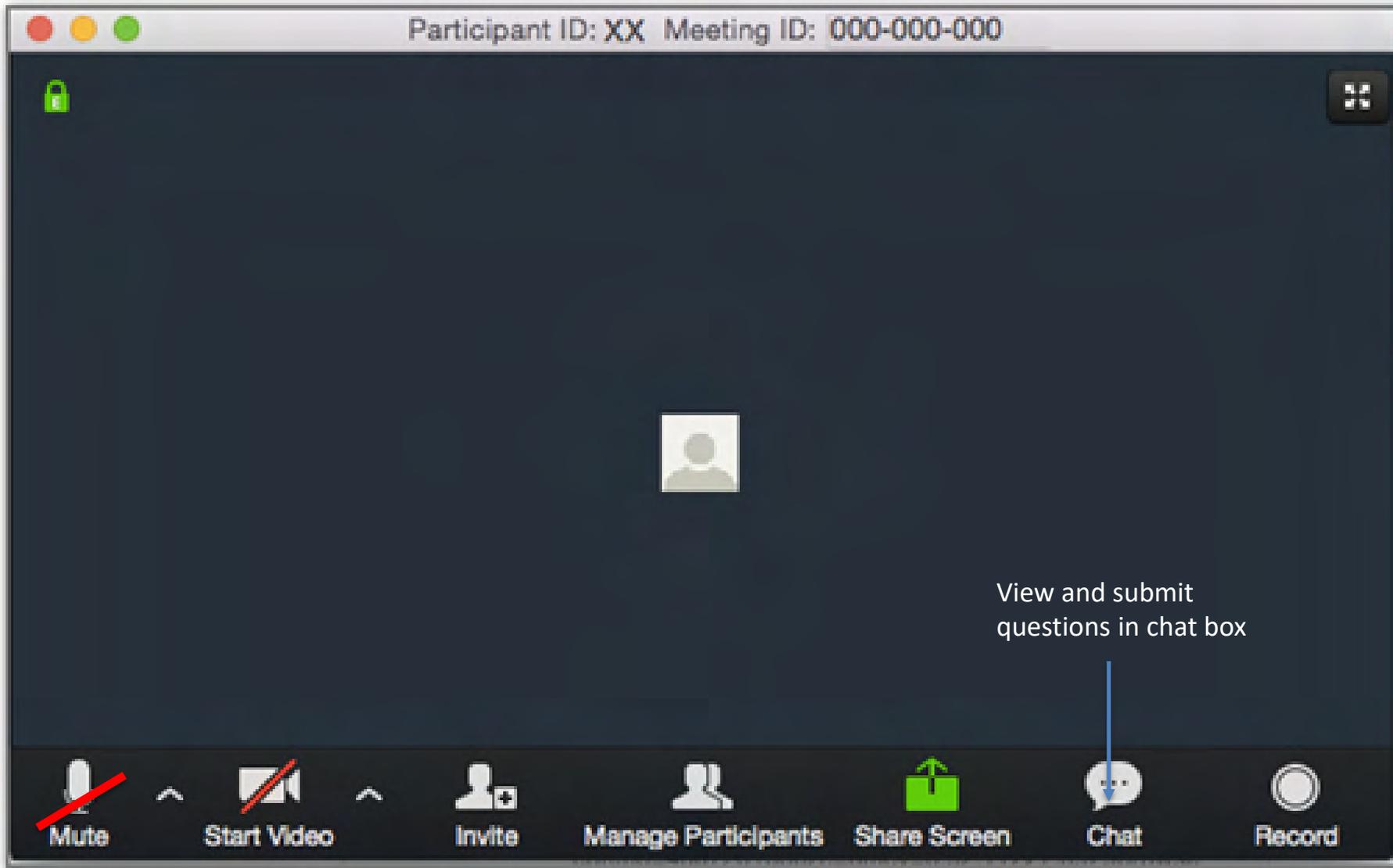
March 31, 2022





MISSION

The mission of the Safe Routes Partnership is to advance safe walking and rolling to and from schools and in everyday life, improving the health and well-being of people of all races, income levels, and abilities, and building healthy, thriving communities for everyone.



SESSION IS BEING RECORDED
PLEASE PARTICIPATE IN THE CHAT!



TODAY'S PRESENTERS

Kori Johnson

Safe Routes Partnership, Washington, DC

Audience: Introduce yourselves in the chat!

- *Name*
- *Organization, agency, or connection to Safe Routes to School*
- *What schools/neighborhoods would you be interested in working with to develop a Safe Routes to School program?*

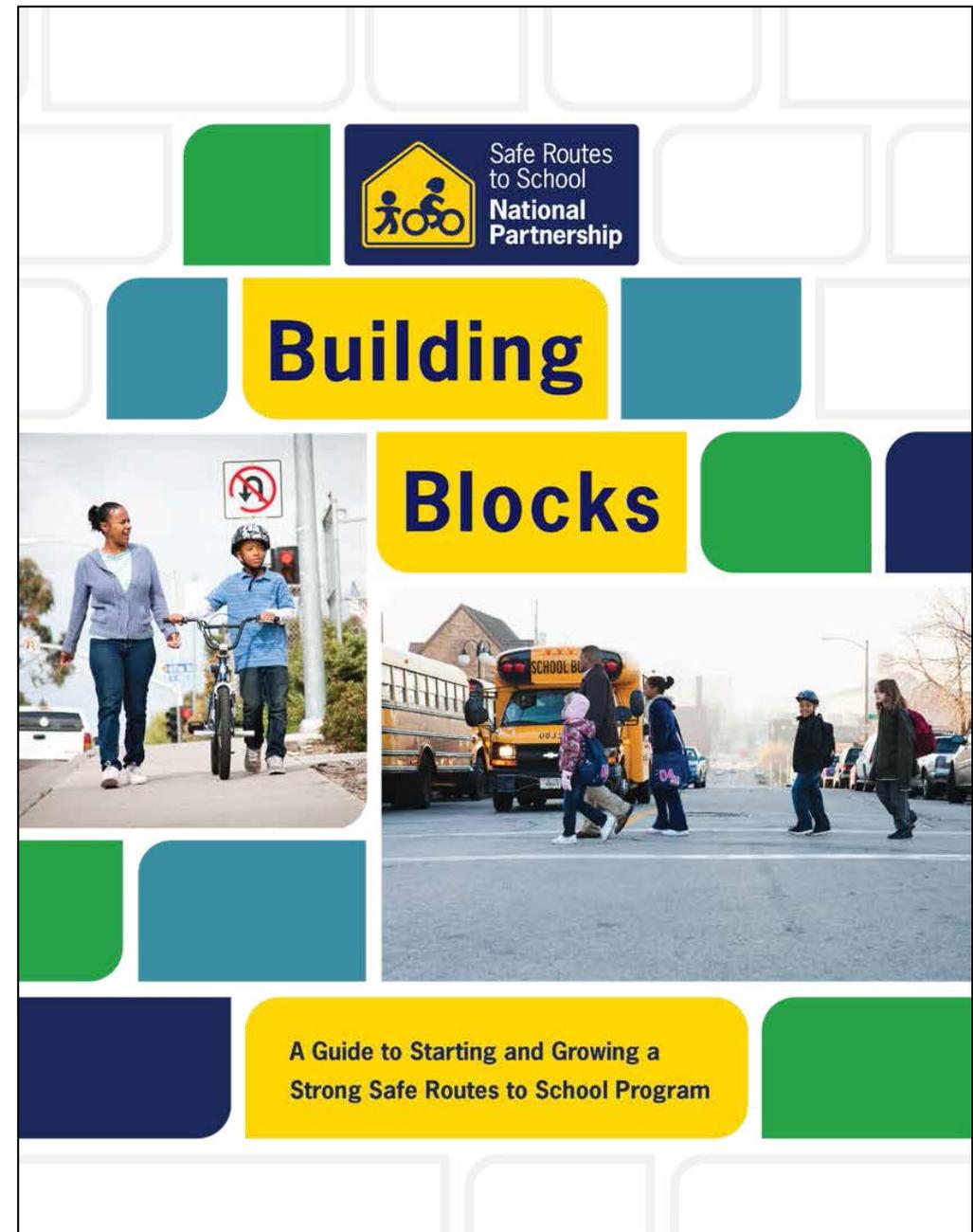


Agenda

- Welcome and Introductions
- Structuring Your Program
- Action Planning
- Connecting with Schools
- Initial Activities
- Safe Routes to School Policies
- Sustaining Momentum
- Q & A
- Reminders & Next Steps

Building Blocks Toolkit

- Step by step guide for how to start a Safe Routes to School program
- Background information
- Safe Routes to School Activities
- Safe Routes to School Task Forces
- Action Planning
- Customizable templates and resources



Program Structure



Where do Safe Routes to School programs live?

- Local/regional transportation agency
- Planning department
- Health department
- **Non-profit/community partner**
- **School district**
- **Individual School/PTA**
- Other



Benefits of School-Based Programs

- Smaller scale
- Personalization
- More control to shape program
- More flexibility
- Community buy-in
- Easier to implement small changes
- More opportunities for non-infrastructure program
- Deeper impact



Challenges of School-Based Programs

- Funding
- Less structure
- Finding a program leader/champion
- Volunteer capacity/burn-out
- Hard to make infrastructure improvements
- Limited resources/support from city and county
- Sustainability



Before you begin, get your school on board!





How to Get School Buy-In: Make it Relevant

- What do students and families care about?
- What does the school care about?
- What are the communities needs?
- How can Safe Routes to School address those needs?



How to Get School Buy-In: Making Your Case

- Tie to community need/concern:
 - Traffic safety/Traffic congestion
 - More student/family activities
 - Mental health
 - Social connectedness
- Tie to an administrator need/concern:
 - Academic preparedness
 - Not enough physical activity during school day
- ***What are some needs you see in your school community?***



How to Get School Buy-In: Building Awareness & Taking the Lead

- Share benefits of Safe Routes to School for the school community
- Share a personal story or connection to Safe Routes to School
- Share articles or information about other Safe Routes to School programs
- Show that you will take the lead, just asking for permission and support
- Come with a plan



Leading as a School-based Team

- Increase capacity
- Share responsibilities
- Expand areas of expertise – everyone brings something to the table
- Good for sustainability



Safe Routes to School Team Responsibilities

- Manage program operations, design, and implementation
- Develop program framework/branding
- Liaison with school staff and community members
- Organize program events and activities
- Seek and manage funding



Building Your Team

- Parents/caregivers
- Community partners
- Neighbors
- School staff
- Students (middle and high school)
- *Who else?*

Building Your Team – Guiding Questions

- Who will take the lead?
- Who is already connected to the school?
- What can each person bring to the team?
- What incentives can you offer to joining the team?



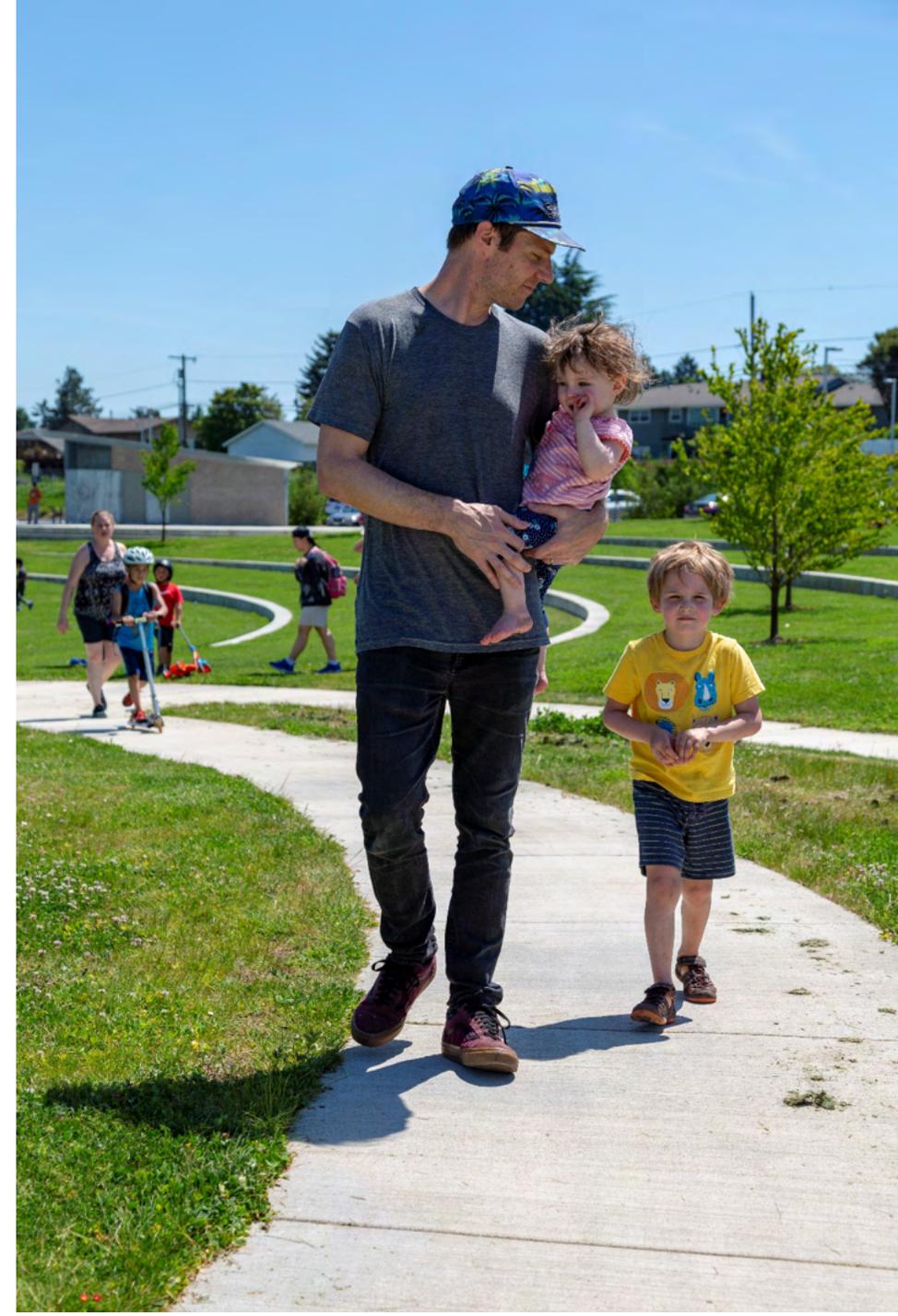
Team Member Considerations

- Time and energy
- Short vs. long term commitments
- Areas of knowledge, expertise, skill
- Diverse representation – Does your team reflect the school community?
- Enthusiasm
- Connection to school community
- Creativity and new ideas
- Ability to follow through



Additional Considerations

- Look beyond the group that is always involved in everything.
- How can you reach out to new leaders?
- How can you reduce barriers to participation?
 - Multilingual team members
 - Flexible scheduling
 - Flexible levels of commitment
 - Incentives
- It's okay to start small
- Every school is unique – make the program your own!





Safe Routes to School Team Structure

- Task Force
- Steering Committee
- PTA/PTO
- Wellness Committee
- Create your own name!



Logistics & Considerations

- How often will you meet?
- Where and when will you meet?
- What are people's roles and responsibilities?
 - Does not need to be super formal but people should know what they are doing.
- What can you commit to as a team?

ACTION PLANNING



Define Your Purpose & Set Goals

- Why are we starting a Safe Routes to School program?
- How will a Safe Routes to School program benefit our school community?
- What are our goals?
 - For the next 6 months
 - For the next year
 - For the next two years



Determine Key Actions & Activities

- Outline actions and activities that will help you reach your goal
- Goal: Increase the number of students walking to school
 - Action #1: Talk with parents/caregivers to determine why they are driving their kids instead of having them walk
 - Action #2: Based on feedback, introduce Safe Routes to School as a potential solution
 - Share information at a meeting or school newsletter
 - Follow up with parents informally
 - Activity: Host Walk to School Day event



Identify Key Partners

- Parents/caregivers
- School administration
- Front office staff
- School support staff
- Community partners
- *Who else?*



Connect with Community Partners

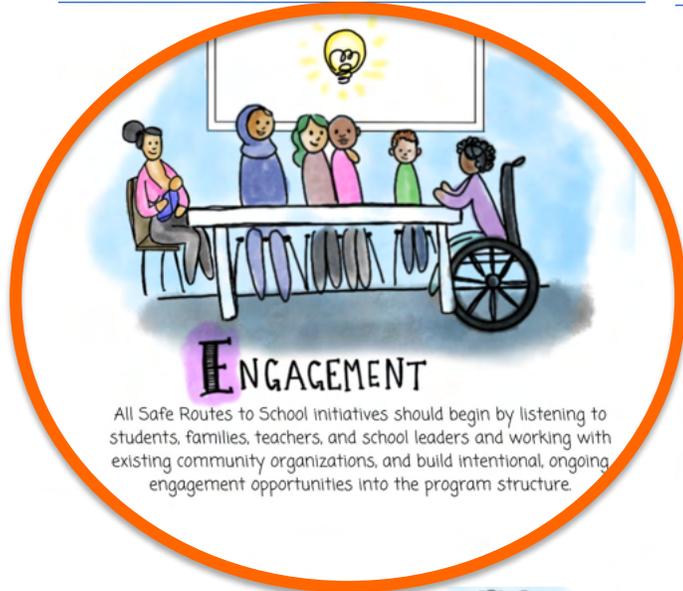
- Local hospitals and health clinics
 - Helmet giveaways
 - Helmet fittings
 - Safety assemblies
- Bike/ped organizations
 - Bike safety assemblies
 - Bike rodeos and skills courses
- Nature/environmental organizations
- Food and nutrition organizations
- Parks and Rec - Sports teams
- Arts organizations
- *Who else?*



PROGRAM FRAMEWORK

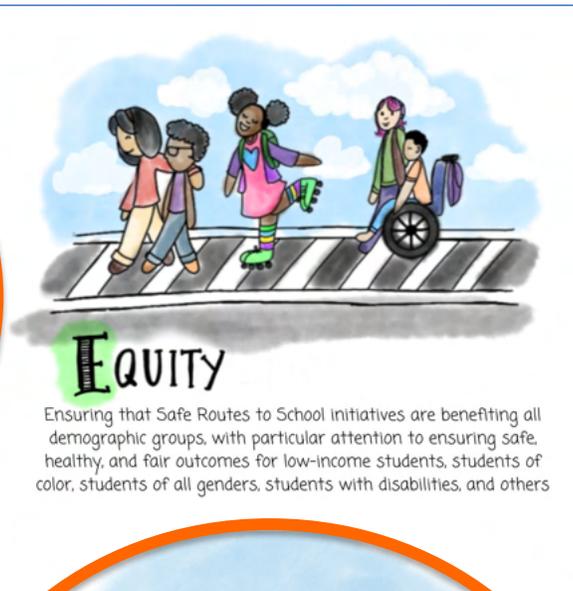


The 6 E's of Safe Routes to School



ENGAGEMENT

All Safe Routes to School initiatives should begin by listening to students, families, teachers, and school leaders and working with existing community organizations, and build intentional, ongoing engagement opportunities into the program structure.



EQUITY

Ensuring that Safe Routes to School initiatives are benefiting all demographic groups, with particular attention to ensuring safe, healthy, and fair outcomes for low-income students, students of color, students of all genders, students with disabilities, and others



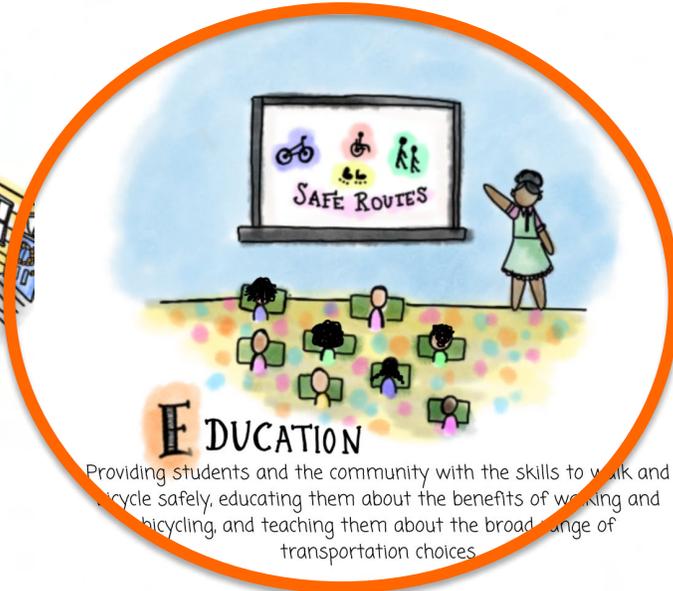
ENCOURAGEMENT

Generating enthusiasm and increased walking and bicycling for students through events, activities, & programs



ENGINEERING

Creating physical improvements to streets and neighborhoods that make walking and bicycling safer, more comfortable, and more convenient.



EDUCATION

Providing students and the community with the skills to walk and bicycle safely, educating them about the benefits of walking and bicycling, and teaching them about the broad range of transportation choices



EVALUATION

Assessing which approaches are more or less successful, ensuring that programs and initiatives are supporting equitable outcomes, and identifying unintended consequences or opportunities to improve the effectiveness of each approach



ENGAGEMENT

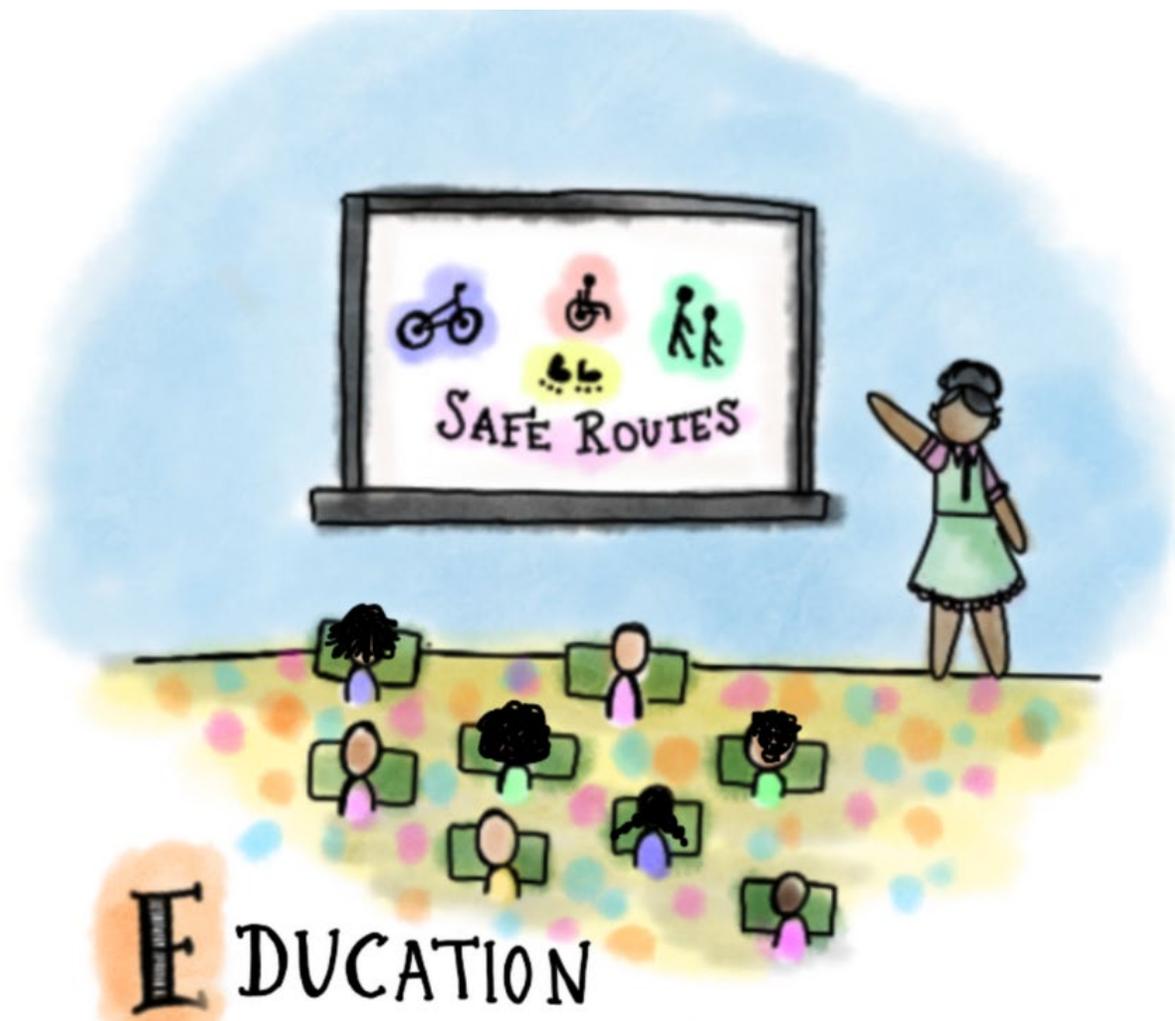
All Safe Routes to School initiatives should begin by listening to students, families, teachers, and school leaders and working with existing community organizations, and build intentional, ongoing engagement opportunities into the program structure.

HAPPY WALK-TO-SCHOOL DAY



ENCOURAGEMENT

Generating enthusiasm and increased walking and bicycling for students through events, activities, & programs



E DUCATION

Providing students and the community with the skills to walk and bicycle safely, educating them about the benefits of walking and bicycling, and teaching them about the broad range of transportation choices



Benefits of Non-Infrastructure Programming

- Low-cost
- “Quick win”
- Short timeline
- Customizable
- Broad participation
- Builds momentum
- Fun!



Examples of Non-Infrastructure Programming

- Walk and Roll to School Day
- Bike and Roll to School Day
- Walking School Bus programs
- Remote drop off and pick up programs
- Incentive programs and contests
- Giveaways
- Walking and biking groups
- Safety campaigns
- Bike rodeos

Bike & Roll to School Day – May 6th, 2022

- [National Center for Safe Routes to School](#)
 - [Bike & Roll to School Day](#)
- Resources for planning Bike & Roll to School Day events
- Event registration – not required!
- Downloadable materials



Your School Name Here

**is participating in Bike to School Day on
Day, Month Date, Year**

Join children and adults around the world to celebrate
the benefits of walking and bicycling.

About our event:

Learn more at walkbiketoschool.org

Walk to School Day is coordinated in the U.S.A. by
the National Center for Safe Routes to School.

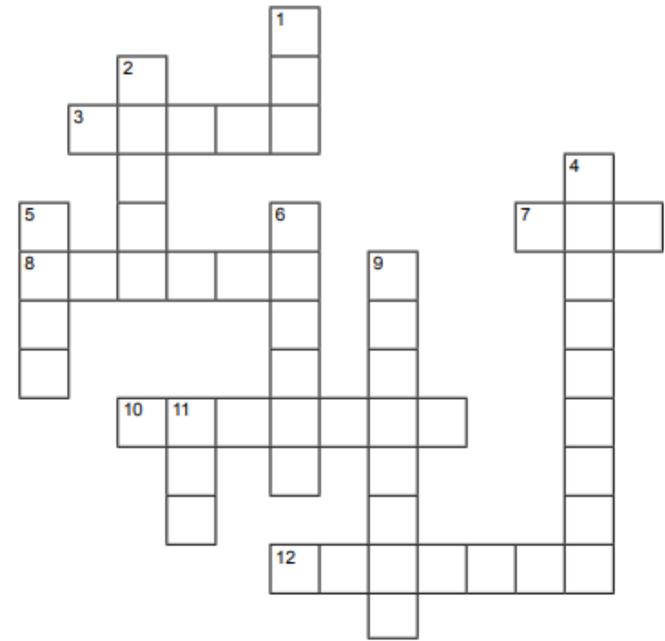


Walk & Roll to School Day – October 5, 2022

- [National Center for Safe Routes to School](#)
 - [Walk & Roll to School Day](#)
- Resources for planning Walk & Roll to School Day events
- Event registration – not required!
- Downloadable materials



Crossword



Across

3. Obey traffic _____ and signals.
7. Bike to School Day takes place in the month of _____.
8. Instead of sitting at home, walking helps kids be _____.
10. Walking to school is a chance to spend time with your family and _____.
12. International Walk to School Day takes place in the month of _____.

Down

1. Walk to school instead of riding in a car or _____.
2. When crossing the street, look left, _____ and left again for traffic.
4. On your bike, make sure to keep both hands on the _____.
5. _____ or bike to school for International Walk to School Day!
6. When riding your bicycle, always wear a _____.
9. Teachers and _____ can walk during lunch.
11. Walk, don't _____ across the street.

Make Your Own Activity!

- Walks & Roll Wednesdays
- Wellness Wednesdays
- Crossing Guard Appreciation Days
- Link to an event already taking place:
 - Field Day
 - Assemblies
 - Conferences
 - Back to School
 - After school programs
- *What else?*



SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL POLICIES



What is a policy?

- Written statement
- Binding
- Sets out a general approach to be applied broadly





Benefits of Policy Change

- Institutionalize good ideas
- Reach more people
- Lead to more consistent implementation
- Create accountability
- Establish relationships and responsibilities



Safe Routes to School Policy Levels

- Federal
- State
- Region
- Town/City/County
- **School District**
- **School**



How can school districts benefit from Safe Routes to School policies?

- Physical activity supports academic achievement
- When children are healthier, they learn better
- Physically active kids have better attendance rates
- Safe Routes to School helps children arrive safely at school

Working with School Boards

- To start: Do some basic research & get the inside scoop on school board members.
- Build relationships with board members by first looking to inform and engage them.
- Figure out what a board member wants. What is important to them? Would they like to serve on your task force? Ask!



Working with School Boards

- Meet with board members before presenting your ideas at a board meeting.
- Keep your superintendent in the loop.
- Offer your resources & recognition & SRTS photo ops.



Topics for Safe Routes to School Policies

- Support
- Guidance and Authorization
- Logistics
- Planning and Design





Support Statements

- Support for Safe Routes to School
- Policies that Limit School Restrictions
- Student/Parent Handbook



Guidance and Authorization for Safe Routes to School Components

- Walking School Buses
- Bike Trains
- Walk and Bike to School Day Events
- Recommended Routes
- Traffic Education
- Shared Use

A group of diverse school children, including boys and girls of various ethnicities, are walking along a concrete sidewalk in front of a red brick school building. The building features large, multi-paned windows. The children are dressed in casual clothing, some wearing backpacks. The scene is captured during the day, with natural light illuminating the scene.

Logistics

- District Task Force
- School Teams
- Duties of School and Transportation Departments
- Wellness Committees

A row of orange bike racks is lined up on a sidewalk. The racks are made of smooth, curved metal and are arranged in a perspective that leads the eye towards the background. To the right of the racks is a garden bed with various green plants and small white flowers. The sidewalk is made of light-colored rectangular tiles. In the background, a tree trunk is visible, and the scene is lit with soft, natural light, suggesting an outdoor setting like a school campus.

Planning and Design

- School Travel Plans
- Site Design
- Bike Parking
- School Siting



School District Policy Opportunities

- Wellness Policies
- Board Policies
- Administrative Regulations

District Wellness Policies

- Required by federal law for schools participating in federal student nutrition programs
- Widely present
- Historically weak on physical activity
- Good opportunity to incorporate language about kids walking and biking
- Wellness policies or traditional board policies both effective.



Informal School Policy Opportunities

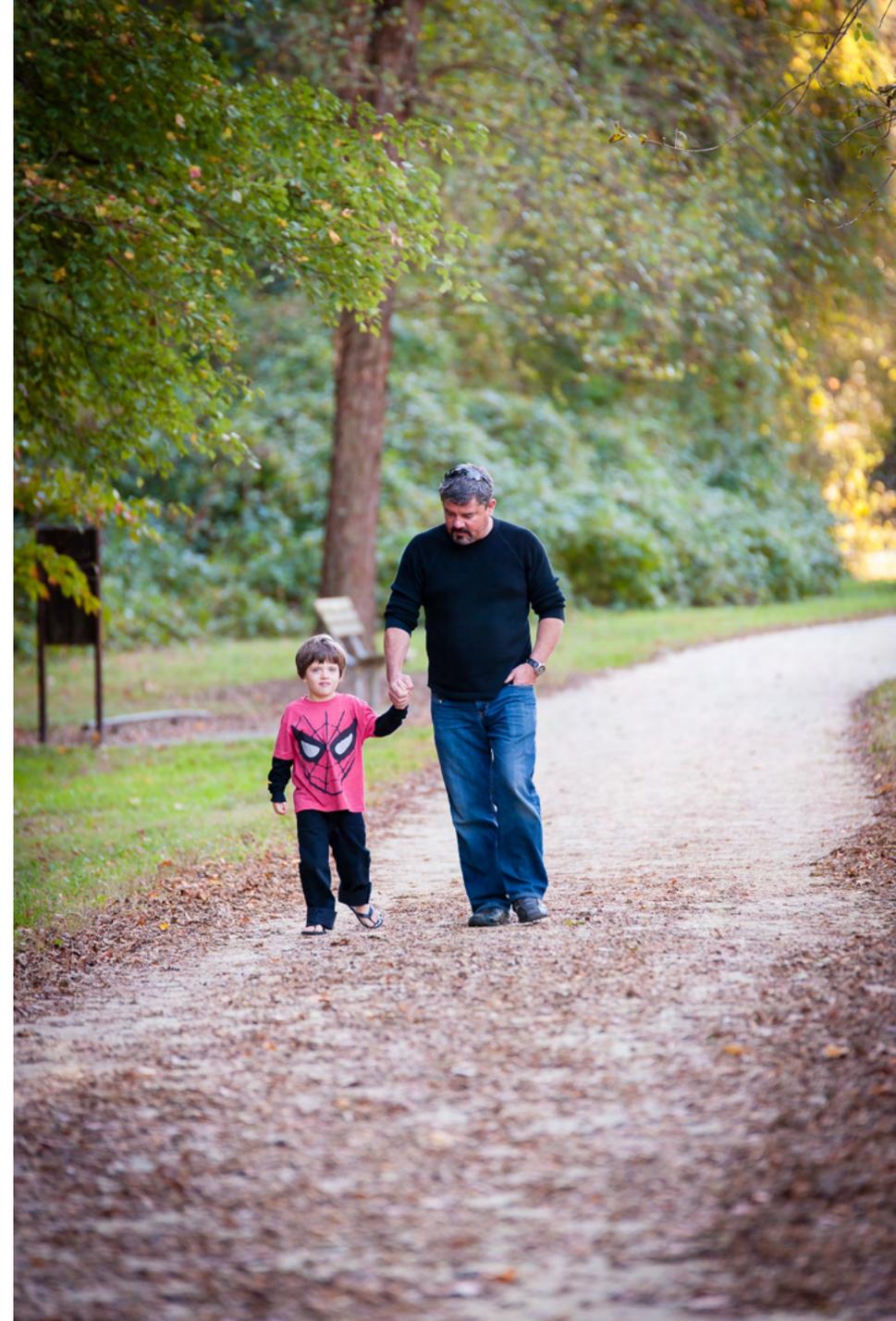
Less formal school policies can be key:

- Families and student handbooks
- Webpages
- Transportation department policies
- Curricula (e.g. health and PE)
- Other plans or policies required by state law (safety plans, etc.)
- Remember to actively include students and give them decision-making power



The Policy Workbook

- [Free online tool](#) that lets you review different possible policy provisions
- Allows creation of very own policy tailored to your local needs
- Educational resource & national tool
- Joint project between Safe Routes Partnership and ChangeLab Solutions



Beginner Policies

- Support for Active Transportation
- Support for Safe Routes to School
- Roles of Districts, Schools, Students, Parents/Guardians
- Minimizing Driving
- District Task Force
- School Teams
- Traffic Safety Education
- Walking School Bus and Bike Trains
- Walk/Bike to School Day
- Student/Parent Handbook
- School Wellness Policy



Resources on Working with School Districts

SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP



Healthy Students, Thriving Districts: Including Safe Routes to School in District Policies

Key Facts for School Board Members and Superintendents

CA4-health
healthy places...healthier lives

Safe Routes to School National Partnership

SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP

**Cultivating Support for Safe Routes to School:
A Guide to Building Relationships with School Board Members and Superintendents**



CA4-health
healthy places...healthier lives

Safe Routes to School National Partnership

SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP

Checklist:
Working With Your School District Board to Support Healthy, Active Students

Safe Routes to School National Partnership
CA4-health
healthy places...healthier lives

This checklist offers questions and actions to consider when preparing to work with your school board in support of Safe Routes to School, whether through official board policies, revised procedures, or other approaches. It should be used with its companion document, *Cultivating Support for Safe Routes to School: A Guide to Building Relationships with School Board Members and Superintendents*.

- 1. Do Your Homework**

Research: Explore the Basics

 - Who is on the school board? What are their basic profiles?
 - What is the district's mission and vision?
 - What current district transportation policies exist – either board policies or internal transportation department policies?
 - What has been in the news recently about the board or the district?

Get the Inside Scoop: Explore Board Nuances

 - Is there anyone you know that may already have a working relationship with a board member? Would the superintendent or other district or school staff have insight into the board's dynamics?
 - What are the main priorities for different board members? Which board member might be your best ally?
 - Are there tensions on the board? How can you navigate that?

Take the Pulse of Your Community: What Are the Key Issues and How Do Walking and Bicycling Fit In?

 - What do community members see as key community needs and priorities, and how can that inform your efforts? Talk to a wide variety of community members from different demographic groups, sectors, and neighborhoods.
 - What are the general attitudes toward walking or bicycling? What are the attitudes of parents?
 - How do students travel to and from school? What barriers exist to safe walking or bicycling to school?
 - Are there school initiatives, such as skills training in PE, that support walking and bicycling?
 - Who are current champions for walking and bicycling? For student health? For equity? What kinds of coalitions exist that could support your efforts? If there's not a promising coalition, gather your allies and start one!

Resources and People

 - District Website; District Policies and Regulations
 - Board Meeting Minutes; Past Board Meeting Attendees
 - Local Paper & Relevant Blogs
 - School Travel Data (may need to be collected)
 - Parent Handbooks
 - School Arrival and Dismissal Plans
 - Superintendent and District Office Employees
 - Principal and School Secretary
 - Transportation Safety Director
 - School Wellness Committee
 - Students, Parents, and PTA
 - Neighborhood Groups and Community Members
- 2. Determine Your Goal**
 - Do you know your ultimate goal? What change do you want to see?
 - What is your plan to get to your goal? Work with your allies to map out each step, the relationships, and your timeline.
 - What is the best timing to request your key priorities? Do budget negotiations happen at a given time, and if so, should you avoid introducing other topics at that time? Will elections affect the board's attention or membership?

Resources and People

 - District Calendar
 - Community Stakeholders, Champions, and Allies
 - Safe Routes to School Coalition
- 3. Make Connections: Meet Board Members and Explore Their Interests and Concerns**
 - Which board member or members are likely to be friendly to your goals? Schedule a one-on-one meeting with your best prospect.
 - Be prepared with talking points that link physical activity and health to core district themes: academic success, classroom behavior, and attendance.
 - Be friendly, and listen and learn about the board member's initiatives, concerns, and main goals. Can you connect your goal to these issues?
 - Identify resources, technical assistance, or other support you can provide to the board or district as ideas are explored and implemented.
 - If the board member is supportive, what steps can he or she take to help? Be as specific as you can. Is the board member willing to champion your idea to the rest of the board?
 - Can you engage board members by inviting them to attend a bicycle rodeo or join a walking school bus?
 - Can you join a committee and contribute to district goals? The district wellness committee may be a good place to support your goals and establish yourself as a credible, constructive force.

Resources and People

Data, Statistics, and Other Materials Showing the Need for and Benefits of SRTS Activities (program data, interviews and videos, reports and testimonials)

 - School Administration and Staff
 - Students and Parents
 - Community Partners
 - Health Department
 - Law Enforcement

Safe Routes to School National Partnership www.safeschoolpartnership.org | Technical Assistance Resources Center www.ca4health.org

SUSTAINING SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL





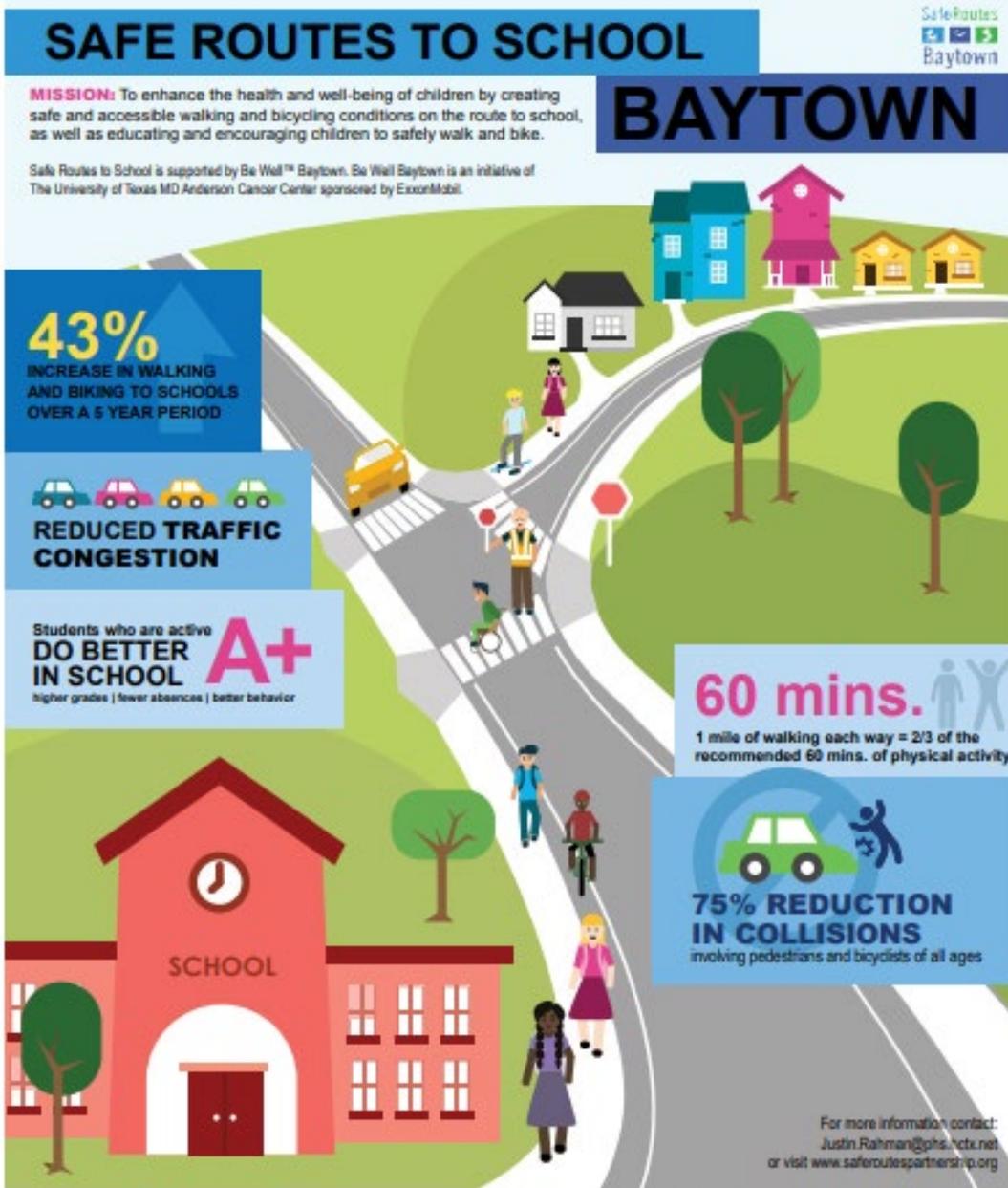
Funding Encouragement and Engagement Activities

- School fundraisers
- Local community organizations and foundations
- Donations
- Volunteer time
- Business sponsorships
- Pool resources with program partners



Connect with Local Programs & Partners

- Get new ideas
- Meet other Safe Routes to School champions
- Team up for events
- Share Safe Routes to School information
- Create a regional Safe Routes to School task force
- Advocate for infrastructure improvements and Safe Routes to School policies



Safe Routes to School Baytown

- Harris County Public Health, City of Baytown, Goose Creek Consolidated Independent School District
- [2019 Safe Routes to School Action Plan](#)
- Walk to School Day events
- Safe Routes to School + Safe Routes to Parks
- *Tip: Connect your program with safe access to other destinations around your school – parks, recreation centers, libraries, etc.*



Acres Homes Safe Routes to School Pilot Program

- [Be Well Acres Homes](#) MD Anderson Initiative
 - Community health and wellness
 - Create Safe Routes to School action plan
- Pop up traffic playgrounds
- Bike rodeos
- [Tactical urbanism](#) projects
 - Low-cost, temporary changes to improve the built environment
 - Creative crosswalks
- ***Tip: Connect with other community health and wellness initiatives***



Contact Information

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*Have an idea for a Safe Routes to School webinar topic?
Email Kori or share in the chat!*