



Safe Routes Matters, April/May 2007

The Role of Community Enforcement in Safe Routes to School

Representatives of communities and schools can improve safety behaviors in many ways. Older students can become safety patrol members and help during drop-off and pick-up times at the schools. Adults can volunteer to become crossing guards to enforce safe behaviors at crossings. Neighborhood speed watch programs can provide opportunities for residents to educate drivers about their driving speeds while making drivers aware that the neighborhood is concerned about safety. All adults in a community need to set good examples for their children and others by crossing streets in crosswalks when they are available and following other traffic rules.

Student safety patrols enhance enforcement of drop-off and pick-up procedures at school by increasing safety for students and traffic flow efficiency for parents. Such efforts allow students to participate in promoting traffic safety where they learn skills they can use in their everyday lives. Having a student safety patrol program at a school requires approval by the school and a committed teacher or parent volunteer to coordinate the student trainings and patrols. Before beginning a program, school officials should be contacted for approval of the program and to determine how liability issues will be addressed.

Neighborhood speed watch programs, a traffic-related variation of neighborhood watch or crime watch programs, encourage citizens to take an active role in changing driver behavior on their neighborhood streets by helping raise public awareness and educate drivers about the negative impact of speeding. In these programs, residents record speed data in their neighborhood using radar units borrowed from a city or county law enforcement agency. Residents record the speed and license plate information of speeding motor vehicles. This information along with a letter is sent to the owner of the vehicle informing them of the observed violation and encouraging them or other drivers of their vehicle to drive at or below the posted speed limit. This type of awareness encourages some speeding drivers to slow down. Drivers also learn that residents will not tolerate speeding in their neighborhoods.

Adult school crossing guards can play a key role in promoting safe driver and pedestrian behaviors at crosswalks near schools. They help children safely cross the street and remind drivers of the presence of pedestrians. A guard helps children develop the skills to cross streets safely at all times. Adult school crossing guards can be parent volunteers, school staff or paid personnel. Annual classroom and field training for adult school crossing guards as well as special uniforms or equipment to increase visibility are recommended, and in some locations required. The presence of guards can lead to more parents feeling comfortable about their child walking or bicycling to school.

For more information, please see the National Center for Safe Routes to School's Adult School Crossing Guard Guidelines at www.saferoutesinfo.org/guide/crossing_guard/index.cfm.

1st Safe Routes to School National Conference Set for November 2007

The National Center for Safe Routes to School and the Safe Routes to School National Partnership proudly present the 1st Safe Routes to School National Conference: Creating, Building and Sustaining Momentum. The conference will be held November 5–7, 2007, in Dearborn, Michigan and will be hosted by the Michigan Fitness Foundation.

In addition to support for the conference, the National Center for Safe Routes to School will also be providing \$10,000 in stipend funding to assist Safe Routes to School programs with travel expenses

in order to attend the conference. Additional information on applying for the stipends will be released in early summer 2007.

The Michigan Fitness Foundation is currently soliciting presentation proposals for the conference. The submission deadline is June 8, 2007. To download the application, please visit [www.saferoutesmichigan.org/Downloadable%20Materials/CALL%20FOR%20PRESENTATION S.pdf](http://www.saferoutesmichigan.org/Downloadable%20Materials/CALL%20FOR%20PRESENTATION%20S.pdf).

To register for the conference, please visit www.saferoutesmichigan.org/nationalconference.htm.

Walk to School Registration Now Open

Registration is now open for 2007 International Walk to School, an international event where communities from over 40 countries join together to walk and bicycle to school.

Registration is free and available to individuals or organizations holding a Walk to School event in the US. To register a Walk to School event, please visit www.walktoschool.org/register. Registered schools will be displayed on an interactive US map on the US Walk to School Web site, where neighboring communities, media and other organizations will be able to view participating schools.

By registering, Walk to School organizers have access to a variety of downloadable materials, including certificates, templates for printing stickers and a frequent walker punch card. Registrants can also subscribe to receive a weekly Walk to School e-newsletter with tips and resources on holding a Walk to School event.

Walk to School Day is October 3, 2007. For more information on Walk to School activities in the US, please visit www.walktoschool.org. To see photos from last year's event, please visit www.iwalktoschool.org/photos/index.htm

The National Center for Safe Routes to School of the University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center serves as the national coordinating agency for Walk to School activities in the US. NCSRTS Director Lauren Marchetti and Program Manager Nancy Pullen-Seufert both serve on the leadership team for the International Walk to School Steering Committee.

BikeEd 2007 Conference in Austin, TX

The League of American Bicyclists will hold their bi-annual conference for cycling educators and decision makers at the Omni Austin Hotel on June 14–16, 2007 in Austin, TX. This conference will bring together more than 200 national, state and local bicycle safety educators, and government agency staff to discuss best practices, opportunities and challenges in bicycle education. Austin promises to be an exciting location for three days of workshops, plenary presentations, and on-bike training opportunities. The Austin Cycling Association is participating as local host.

For more information please contact the League of American Bicyclists at 202-822-1333, email bikeleague@bikeleague.org, or visit www.bikeleague.org/conferences/bikeed07

Safe Routes Snapshots: Waltham, Massachusetts

Safe Routes Snapshots provides a brief profile of a Safe Routes to School state or local program that highlights a particular success or issue the program faced. To submit your program for Safe Routes Snapshots, please email news@saferoutesinfo.org.

Two elementary schools in Waltham, Massachusetts with different environments are both making Safe Routes to School work for them. Set back from the main road, only 15% of Northeast Elementary School students are able to walk or bike to school. At Whittemore Elementary, located in a densely populated community in the center of town, 85% are able to walk.

With the support of the Healthy Waltham Initiative, Northeast Elementary School and Whittemore Elementary School began promoting walking to school in 2006.

"Getting children out and walking and showing them how fun and easy it is to do is our way of building a foundation for life-long healthy habits," said Nadene Stein, co-chair of Healthy Waltham and principal of Northeast Elementary.

Through customization, each school makes the Massachusetts Safe Routes to School program its own.

"These schools are different in many ways- their physical location, building and grounds, local traffic and sidewalk conditions, and demographics," said Healthy Waltham coordinator Judy Fallows. "Yet each school, with the enthusiastic support and participation of key adults, grows its program out of the personality of its own individual school community, so both are uniquely successful."

Both schools began the Safe Routes program in spring 2006 with "Walking Wednesdays." The schools organized Walking School Buses, which consist of a group of parents and children who meet at a designated location and walk from that point to school, with students joining along the way. A color-themed event provided students with a different-colored bracelet for each day they walked.

Through these walking activities, Principal Stein feels the students are able to start the day "ready to do their best learning." For the second year, Northeast elementary is receiving donations from local food stores in order to combine nutrition and exercise, by matching the color bracelet with a fruit.

Whittemore Elementary also developed a walking club, where students can pledge to walk one or more days per week in addition to the Walking Wednesdays. A Whittemore parent reports that her child "loves the Walking School Bus. My child is learning about being healthy and has some exercise before school. Also, I feel safe with my child walking with a Point Parent."

Before the program, Whittemore Elementary had 55 students out of 263 walking to school. During the week kick-off, 197 students walked to school on the peak day. The program continues to grow with five walking school buses running every Walking Wednesday. At the start of the program, 21% of students walked to school. By fall 2006, the percent of students walking had increased to 53%.

The program is expanding in Waltham, not only among the schools already implementing Safe Routes, but by adding another partner, Bright Elementary School. Additionally, the middle school may become a Safe Routes partner and serve as one of the first middle schools in the MassRIDES program.

The Massachusetts Safe Routes to School program is operated by MassRIDES, the Commonwealth's statewide travel options program, under the Executive Office of Transportation.

Safe Routes to School Program Tracking Brief: March 2007

The National Center for Safe Routes to School has released the March 2007 Program Tracking Brief. This monthly report is prepared by the National Center for Safe Routes to School to provide information about state Safe Routes to School (SRTS) programs. Each month, a different snapshot and brief analysis of one key trend across all state programs is presented.

Highlights from the March 2007 report include:

- 20 states have announced funding for local SRTS programs.
- Approximately \$24.3 million has been spent or committed for SRTS programs.
- At least 422 schools in those 20 states are participating in state-funded SRTS programs.
- All 51 states (including D.C.) have SRTS programs in various stages of progress.

To access the complete report, please visit www.saferoutesinfo.org/resources/status-reports.cfm

Featured Resource: Safety Tip Sheets for Children and Adults

The National Center for Safe Routes to School has completed two additional pieces in its Tip Sheets Series, "Tips for Parents and Other Adults for Teaching Pedestrian Safety to Children" and "Tips for Walking Safely to School."

"Tips for Parents and Other Adults for Teaching Pedestrian Safety to Children" encourages parents and other caregivers to provide their children with hands-on pedestrian safety education. The piece includes tips on being a walking role model, understanding a child's limitations and choosing a safe walking route along with safe driving messages.

"Tips for Walking Safely to School" is a colorful tip sheet meant to introduce basic pedestrian safety messages for younger elementary school-age children. Key messages are presented in brief headings with a higher level explanation to follow.

The tips sheets are also available in black and white versions that are more easily photocopied. Spanish-language versions of the sheets are currently being developed.

To access the tip sheets, please visit www.saferoutesinfo.org/resources/education_tip-sheets.cfm

News Briefs

Five Safe Routes to School State Coordinators and their co-instructors gathered in Richmond, Virginia, in mid-March to complete an intensive three-day Safe Routes to School National Course

Instructor Training. The participants are now officially trained to deliver the SRTS National Course in their own state.

Participants included:

- Jakob Helmboldt (VA SRTS Coordinator) and John Bolecek (VA DOT)
- Julie Walcoff (OH SRTS Coordinator) and Joe Glinski (OH FHWA)
- Sharon Okoye (CT SRTS Coordinator) and Mary McCarthy (University of Connecticut)
- Sara Janes (WY SRTS Coordinator) and Jay Meyer (WY Bike/Ped Coordinator)
- Morgan Wilson (KY SRTS Coordinator) and Tiffani Jackson (KY Bike/Ped Coordinator)
- Josue Yambo (VA FHWA) and Lorenzo Casanova (VA FHWA)

Virginia Governor Tim Kaine delivered opening remarks at the SRTS National Course taught on Tuesday, March 13.

The SRTS National Course is designed to bring together the right mix of community stakeholders to create sound Safe Routes to School programs. The one-day course, developed by the Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center and maintained by the National Center for Safe Routes to School, addresses safety, health and transportation issues. A partnership of funding from FHWA, CDC, NHTSA and EPA supported its development.

Since the first course deliveries in 2005, the SRTS National Course has been widely taught and used. A recent NCSRTS survey of all Course instructors revealed more details about how the Course is being used to serve communities. Ninety percent of instructors reported that they had incorporated some of the Course materials into other presentations or education, so the vast majority have used the Course training and materials to inform their work and disseminate information about SRTS. When asked about the audiences they are reaching when using the Course materials, 57 percent identified traditionally underserved communities; 88 percent worked with those addressing unsafe conditions where children are presently walking and 71 percent taught audiences that want to promote physical activity. Course instructors are very involved in Safe Routes to School; over 50 percent of instructors surveyed report that Safe Routes to School is often part of their work.

For more information on the National Course, please visit www.saferoutesinfo.org/training/national_course/index.cfm

NCSRTS completes overview of State SRTS programs categorized by application process

The National Center for Safe Routes to School has produced a document that provides a snapshot of State Safe Routes to School (SRTS) programs categorized by application process and other special attributes. It was developed in January 2007 based upon the Center's review of State SRTS program information available online or in the public realm at that time. This document was created to provide an overview of State SRTS application processes and does not constitute formal Program Guidance or endorsement of specific application processes or materials by the Federal Highway Administration.

To access the document, please visit www.saferoutesinfo.org/online_library/details.cfm?id=1209

SRTS in the News

The following is a brief compilation of Safe Routes to School-related news stories from across the country. Web links to the following news stories are time sensitive, so some stories may not be accessible after the initial publication date or may require registration.

Meadowview receives \$250,000 for Safe Routes program

www.shreveporttimes.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20070501/NEWS04/705010319/1002/NEWS

The Shreveport Time
May 1, 2007

Walk this way

www.boston.com/news/local/articles/2007/04/29/walk_this_way/

Boston Globe
April 27, 2007

Officials work to stop school zone speeders

www.ktvotv3.com/Global/story.asp?S=6363659&nav=1LFs

KTVO-TV
April 12, 2007

Walking: There's a movement afoot

www.kansascity.com/238/story/49885.html

Kansas City Star
April 1, 2007

Schools pushing wellness

www.timeswv.com/intodayspaper/local_story_091005705.html?keyword=topstory

Times West Virginian
April 1, 2007

Let kids outdoors

www.latimes.com/news/opinion/commentary/la-oe-williamson29mar29,0,6859834.story?coll=la-home-commentary

Los Angeles Times
March 29, 2007

N.H. hopes to get more kids to walk, bike to school

www.boston.com/news/local/articles/2007/03/22/nh_hopes_to_get_more_kids_to_walk_bike_to_school/

The Boston Globe
March 22, 2007

Walk this way

www.milehighnews.com/1editorialbody.lasso?-token.folder=2007-03-22&-token.story=188992.112112&-token.subpub=

Mile High News
March 22, 2007

Child safety goes back on the road

www.montecitojournal.net/archive/13/11/837/

Montecito Journal
March 15, 2007

For more news stories relating to Safe Routes to School, please visit the NCSRTS News Room at [www.saferoutesinfo.org/news room/](http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/news_room/)

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