

SafeRoutes

Alaska Safe Routes to School



Safe Routes to School Guidebook

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION & PUBLIC FACILITIES



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Safe Routes to School Guidebook

This program is designed to address safety, health and transportation considerations in the vicinity of Elementary and Middle schools (K-8) in Alaska. Thirty years ago, more than 66 percent of all children in America walked to school. Today, the number of American children who walk or bike to school has dramatically fallen to a mere 13 percent. Why are the majority of students riding a bus or being transported by car? Student safety concerns and America's increased dependence upon vehicle transportation have led to the significant decline of student walkers and bikers. Recent research indicates that 20-25 percent of morning traffic is a result of parents driving their children to school. The increased traffic has added to existing congestion problems and has created an unsafe walking and biking environment for students.

Children need physical activity to help their muscle, circulation, respiratory and immune system functioning.

There are many measurable advantages for students who walk or bike to school. The added physical activity to a student's day will help prevent obesity, promote a healthy lifestyle and reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease. The increased physical activity elevates the likelihood that children will grow into adults who lead active lifestyles, reducing their risk of health complications due to a sedentary lifestyle. Furthermore, minimizing the number of vehicles in the vicinity of schools will reduce air and noise pollution, and create a safer environment for pedestrians and bicyclists.

This program is a federal highways administration program funded through SAFETEA-LU, SEC 1404. As such it makes reimbursable grants available to schools and communities to help address planning, design and construction improvements in the vicinity of schools.

You are most likely reading this guidebook because your school environment is unsafe and you want to make a difference in your community. This guidebook will provide your community with a basic outline of the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program. Reading this guide will quickly show you the short- and long-term infrastructure changes and activities that can be implemented in your community to increase student safety. The guide also outlines a step-by-step plan to develop an SRTS program. Following this guide and process can form the basis for pedestrian improvements planning for connecting neighborhoods with schools. Grant applications for infrastructure projects and non-infrastructure activities should be accompanied by a completed SRTS Plan for the school.

Please note that additional resources and surveys are available in a printable format online at www.dot.alaska.gov/saferoutes. Contact the Alaska SRTS Program Coordinator Steven Soenksen via email at Steve.Soenksen@alaska.gov or at 907-465-4069.

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What is the Safe Routes to School Program?

The SRTS program is designed to enable and encourage children, including those with disabilities, to walk and bicycle to school; to make bicycling and walking to school a safer and more appealing transportation alternative; and to facilitate the planning, development, and implementation of projects and activities that will improve safety and reduce traffic, fuel consumption and air pollution in the vicinity of schools. This program covers elementary and middle schools in grades K-8.

The Federal Highway Administration recommends implementing the following five components to ensure a comprehensive SRTS program. They are often referred to as the 5 E's: Engineering, Education, Enforcement, Encouragement, and Evaluation.

- 9 **Engineering** – creating operational and physical improvements to the infrastructure surrounding schools that reduce speeds and potential conflicts with motor vehicle traffic, and establishing safer and fully accessible crossings, walkways, trails, and bikeways.
- 9 **Education** – teaching children about the broad range of transportation choices, instructing them in important lifelong bicycling and walking safety skills and launching driver safety campaigns in the vicinity of schools. Lesson plans and activities are available on the website to help teachers promote the SRTS program in their classrooms for kids in grades K-8. www.saferoutesinfo.org
- 9 **Enforcement** – partnering with local law enforcement agencies to ensure traffic laws are obeyed in the vicinity of schools (including enforcement of speeds, yielding to pedestrians in crossings, and proper walking and bicycling behaviors), and to initiate community enforcement such as crossing guard programs.
- 9 **Encouragement** – offering events and activities to promote walking and bicycling.
- 9 **Evaluation** – monitoring and documenting outcomes and trends through the collection of data both before and after the intervention.

Why is Safe Routes to School Important?

Research has identified many factors indicating the importance of a SRTS Program:

- 9 Over the past three decades in the United States, the childhood obesity rate has more than doubled for preschool children aged 2-5 years and adolescents aged 12-19, and it has more than tripled for children aged 6-11 years. The lack of physical activity among children contributes to obesity and health problems.

- 9 The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recommends that children get at least 60 minutes of physical activity daily. Many children could achieve or even surpass the recommendation simply by walking, biking or using other active ways to travel to and from school.
- 9 The SRTS program provides greater safety for students. Over the past several decades parental concerns about traffic and strangers have escalated thus resulting in the reduction of a child's freedom to explore his or her neighborhood without parental supervision. Programs like the "Walking School Bus" – an adult supervised walk to school – identify safe routes to school, and teach safe crossing practices and "street smart" skills.
- 9 The SRTS program reduces the amount of traffic around schools. When more students walk or bicycle to school, traffic volume and congestion decrease during school drop-off and pick-up times, making the trip much more pedestrian-friendly.
- 9 The SRTS program reduces the amount of harmful automobile emissions near participating schools. Fuel emissions contribute to poor air quality, urban smog, acid rain, and global climate change, as well as a range of health problems including bronchitis and asthma.
- 9 The SRTS program enables children to walk and bicycle to and from school in groups accompanied by adults. This gives students a chance to be more physically active, to promote safe pedestrian skills and to learn more about their environment. The program encourages people to change their neighborhoods for the better, working together to make walking and bicycling a safe and enjoyable part of everyone's life.

Starting a Safe Routes to School Program

Starting a Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program is an opportunity to make walking and bicycling to school safer for children and to increase the number of children who choose to walk and bicycle. On a broader level, SRTS programs can enhance children's health and well-being, ease traffic congestion near the school and improve air quality and improve community members' overall quality of life. The steps outlined in this section are meant to provide guidance by providing a framework for establishing a SRTS program based on what has worked in other communities. Some communities may find that a different approach or a reordering of these steps works better for them.

Although it is difficult to predict, one should allow for at least one week to complete each step and a minimum of eight weeks to plan the SRTS program. Each SRTS program is unique and the projected

times should be considered estimates. Use the following step-by-step plan to organize your SRTS program.

- 9 **Step One:** Identify – Bring together the right people
- 9 **Step Two:** Organize – Hold a kick-off meeting
- 9 **Step Three:** Assess – Gather information and identify issues
- 9 **Step Four:** Plan – Make a SRTS plan
- 9 **Step Five:** Implement – Fund and act on the plan
- 9 **Step Six:** Evaluate – Use sample surveys
- 9 **Step Seven:** Sustain – Keep Moving!

Step One: Identify Interest

It will be important to identify community interests, the key players, and the focus for your SRTS Program. Start by determining what the level of interest and commitment is in your community. It will be crucial to recognize key people who will champion or advocate for the program. Identify individuals who care about making a difference in the community and who will commit to a long-term effort. Shared concerns, interests, and knowledge among a variety of community members with diverse expertise can enable groups to tackle many different issues.

Consider whether the group wants to plan for SRTS in a single school, district-wide or at another level. Each has potential benefits; for example, a school district-wide group could create policies that would impact all schools while a school-specific group could work on detailed issues relating to that school and dedicate more resources to that one location.

The following are some suggestions for accomplishing Step 1:

- 9 **Speak with school officials about your interest in the SRTS program.** Develop a working relationship with the school principal. The principal will be able to give you names of potential supporters such as teachers, parents and retired volunteers. For example, you will also want to ask the principal what rules the school has for transporting children to and from school. Some schools may require informed consent forms from parents or guardians stating that the school is not responsible for children until they are on school grounds. Schools may also require signed

permission slips before a student leaves the school with anyone other than parents or guardians. It is very important for all stakeholders to become familiar with school policies in order to avoid conflict.

- 9 **Involve children in the SRTS program** to learn what is important to them with respect to their journey to school and around their neighborhood. Ask them questions like: Do they like being driven everywhere by their parents? Would they rather walk and bicycle around their neighborhoods? What do they think about their route to school? What would they change about their trip to school?
- 9 **Contact local officials** including mayors, City or Borough Assemblies, and local law enforcement personnel to determine needs, interests, and rally support for the program. In the future, these types of individuals might be able to provide funding assistance and/or be willing to serve as task force members.
- 9 **Talk with parents** to identify concerns and individuals who would like to participate. Gathering parents to view other schools' SRTS programs is an excellent way to introduce the concept and get people excited. Regrettably, most parents who drive their children to school will not see a reason to change their behavior.
- 9 **Coalition building** is an essential part of any effort to bring social or environmental change. Meet with organizations that have an interest in safety, physical fitness or the environment that would be supportive of an SRTS program and might contribute volunteers and materials, or even join your task force.
- 9 **Attend meetings** that might have an interest in your goals, such as PTA and teacher staff meetings, public health conferences, and school board meetings

Step Two: Organize

During this step you will plan an informal meeting to get people involved in the SRTS program. At this point you have already talked to the school and the community regarding the program. It is now time to prepare for a meeting to provide information to interested persons and to organize the implementation of the program.

- 9 Send a letter to everyone in your school explaining the program and announcing the informal meeting.
- 9 Post fliers throughout the school neighborhoods announcing the meeting and send them home

with students. If your school has a website, ask for permission to post the announcement.

9 Ask prospective supporters in person, via email or by telephone to attend.

9 Place an announcement in your neighborhood newsletter or local paper.

Scheduling tips:

9 Allow four weeks of lead-time between the day you mail out invitations and your first meeting. You will receive a greater response if you give invitees ample time to plan for childcare or arrangement of schedules.

9 Ideally, your team should include 8-10 individuals. Larger groups are difficult to manage and direct.

9 Send out the invitations on school letterhead.

9 If an invitee is unable to attend the kick-off meeting, extend an invitation to be included in future meetings. Do not perceive an individual's inability to attend the kick-off meeting as his or her unwillingness to participate in the program. Include such individuals on future mailing lists.

9 Budget about two hours for this first meeting and make sure everyone signs the attendance list.

9 Remember that meetings should be made enjoyable and easy to attend. Have childcare available and provide light refreshments to maintain a relaxed atmosphere.

9 Develop a project timeline.

9 Determine what the next steps will be and assign responsibilities. If you have a large group, consider formulating subcommittees.

The kick-off meeting will set the tone and enthusiasm for the project. At the first meeting you should:

9 Using the SRTS brochure as a guide, explain the purpose of the project. Discuss the school's traffic challenges and the difficulties faced by parents or students who walk or bicycle to school.

9 Show video "Why SRTS Matters" www.saferoutesinfo.org

- 9 Talk about the growth in traffic, the decline in walking and bicycling among youth as well as the increasing concern for children’s health.
- 9 Explain how the program will work and describe the benefits for children, parents, staff, and the community. Furnish attendees with copies of this guidebook.
- 9 Show attendees Alaska’s SRTS website and the educational and promotional resources available.
- 9 Provide attendees an opportunity to talk about their safety concerns. Formulate a visible list of problems and solutions for attendees to process.

There are three main tasks to accomplish at this organizational meeting. You must identify goals, form an SRTS task force and schedule follow-up meetings.

1. Identify goals

The first task is to identify your community’s particular goals for an SRTS program. For example, are most people interested in a walking program, a biking program, or both? Does the group want an SRTS program for one school, a few schools, or the entire community? Do people want safety improved for children who already walk or bike to school? Do the safety concerns involve infrastructure – the condition of sidewalks and intersections – or something like neighborhood crime? Will the focus be simply on finding ways to change the drive-to-school habit.

2. Form a SRTS task force

The second task of the informational meeting is to recruit volunteers and discuss the development of your SRTS task force, which will ultimately be responsible for the development and implementation of the program. The task force will help to coordinate community input and be responsible for developing ideas and making decisions to move the project forward. The program’s success will hinge on a well-crafted task force comprised of individuals from a broad range of backgrounds. Formulate your task force with members who are collaborative, self-motivated, represent the whole community, and are interested in seeing positive changes completed. It is suggested that task force members remain involved for 1-3 years to insure continuity.

The following is a list of potential individuals to include:

- 9 Principal or assistant principal
- 9 3-4 parents
- 9 1-2 teachers

- 9 Healthcare professionals (school nurse, coordinated school health director, health department representative)
- 9 PTA representative
- 9 School transportation director
- 9 Neighborhood and/or community association members
- 9 Local traffic engineer
- 9 Representative from the local police or sheriff's office
- 9 School crossing guard
- 9 Community traffic safety program representatives
- 9 Local walking or cycling club representatives
- 9 Children who are already walking to school. By listening to their ideas and opinions, the SRTS team can gain valuable insights.

3. Schedule follow-up activities

The final task to be completed at the kick off meeting is to schedule a series of future planning meetings and activities. Develop a time line and potential agenda items.

Step Three: Assess

Gathering information about your community will help you develop an evidence based SRTS program that fits the concerns and needs specific to your school or community. Completing the following four activities will prepare your task force to launch the program. Be advised that this step might be more time consuming than one might expect.

1. Distribute a walkability/bikeability survey to parents, school travel tallies for students, and Parent Survey.

Distribute the survey to everyone in your neighborhood through the mail or by going door-to-door. Specify a deadline on the survey to ensure that you will receive a timely response. See the appendix for a sample survey. The surveys and other resources are available online at www.dot.alaska.gov/saferoutes

Results of the survey can be used to:

- 9 Demonstrate a need for an SRTS program.

- 9 Provide information about the barriers to program participation, safety concerns and the locations of families.
- 9 Gain information about how to structure your program to meet the needs of each child and family.

Information can be used in the evaluation process. Ideally, the survey can be conducted again at the end of each school year to see how many people have changed travel behavior.

2. Obtain a map of the neighborhood and school area

The SRTS team will prepare or obtain a school neighborhood map. There are a number of low- and high-tech ways maps can be prepared. A commercial road map pinned to a board can serve as a base map, with the other information added via markers, highlighters, pins, etc. This type of map may not show enough detail, so you will need to look elsewhere for a map that will give you the detailed information needed. Potential sources for maps include the city planning department, other planning agencies, USGS (Quad Maps available through www.usgs.gov) and the school master plan. If you can enlist the help of the school board or local government planning agency, you can gather the information and have them prepare a computerized map, or an aerial photo for you.

The school neighborhood map should include:

- 9 The location of the school
- 9 Parent and school bus drop-off zones
- 9 Sidewalks
- 9 Immediately adjoining roads, with their configurations
- 9 Intersections with traffic signals and marked crosswalks
- 9 Intersections staffed with crossing guards
- 9 The surrounding road and path network (the location and names of roads and side paths within a 1-2 mile radius of the school)
- 9 The “walk-zone” or “non-transport” limits near the school where busing is not provided. This information should be available from the school’s transportation director.
- 9 The location of student residences and number of students walking from these locations. This information is very important because it will give the team a sense of where student walking trips originate, and what potential routes they can take to school.
- 9 Road names, names of landmarks, and other helpful information specific to your community.

- 9 A legend so that the mapping can be fully understood by others.

Important Note: Be sure there is a master copy so you can make duplicates in the future.

3. Complete a school site audit to assess the safety of the area and determine possible routes and conditions

Now that you have created your base maps, determine if any roadway improvements are planned near your school. Then it is time to get out and take a look at existing conditions. The main goal of this exercise is to identify specific locations on the school site and the surrounding streets that need improvements. Take time to watch what happens at the school during the drop-off and pick-up periods. It is very important to examine traffic patterns and student behaviors. Do this several days and informally interview students, teachers and crossing guards about the situation and potential dangers. In most cases, you will already know the major areas of concern such as intersections that are difficult to cross and streets that lack sidewalks. During your walk-through, keep an eye out for sidewalks that need minor repairs, corners that are in need of curb ramps, intersections that are too wide and dangerous, fast moving traffic and other related hazards. Ask students to participate in the survey. They often see safety hazards unnoticed by adults. See Resources for the Walkability and Bikeability Survey.

4. Evaluate and summarize the survey and audit results to develop your SRTS program

Survey results provide guidance and insight on what your SRTS task force needs to address in the short- and long-term. Data pertaining to student travel behavior can be acquired by a simple show of hands survey administered as teachers are taking morning attendance (see Resources for Student Travel Tally). Create a report summarizing the obstacles experienced by children walking and bicycling to school. Please forward Student Travel Tallies and Parent Survey to the Alaska SRTS Office for evaluation and processing. Photographs with location information or a short narrative helps clarify and communicate perceptions of problems. The information that you have gathered will form the basis for planning your SRTS program. Make the report available to school administrators, public officials, transportation personnel, teachers and parents.

How to Use a School Site Audit

The school site audit is designed to help you evaluate the walking and bicycling conditions by observing neighborhood intersections, streets and sidewalks used by students. You will want to use your base maps and some of the information collected such as traffic counts and the approximate locations where students live. You may want to use the Walkability and Bikeability surveys in the resources section.

As you begin to identify where students live and the routes along which they walk or bike, you will learn where to prioritize improvements. In dense city neighborhoods, students may come from every street around the school. In suburban communities, there might be a major street that carries a lot of the student foot/bike traffic. Some communities have designated these main routes as “Safe Routes” and focused on the improvement efforts along them.

At the conclusion of the site audit, gather participants together to summarize the findings and create a list of problems and improvements that are needed. If a local transportation planner is currently not part of the team, this would be a good time to speak to him or her about the problems you have identified.

Use the following tips to organize your survey data:

- 9 Use color-coded markings on the map to indicate homes of children who will be participating in the program or going to the school. Also mark safe street crossings, bicycle paths, walkways and dangerous areas.
- 9 Identify potential routes to and from school on the map that are safe and convenient.
- 9 Calculate the number of children who walk or ride a bicycle, school bus, public transportation, automobile, or use other means to and from school.
- 9 Develop a participant list that contains the names, telephone numbers, addresses, ages and grade levels of children in the neighborhood who indicated on the survey they would like to participate in the program.
- 9 Contact individuals who responded they would like to help with the SRTS program and ask them specifically how they would like to contribute. Invite them to attend the program planning meeting to learn more about what modifications need to be made and how they can help.
- 9 Speak with teachers who might be interested in having children participate in this process through the SRTS lesson plans.
- 9 Ask your local transportation department to supply traffic counts and ask your police, department of health, or local ambulance service for accident statistics or comments.

Step Four: Plan

1. Hold a Safe Routes to School Planning Meeting for the community

At the planning meeting, present the results of the neighborhood walkability/bikeability survey and the school site audit. You will want to define objectives and goals for your program based

on the data. Be sure to develop a timeline for your actions. Use the data you have collected through the surveys and informational meeting to develop an action plan for correcting safety concerns and promoting the program in the school. Be aware that you cannot tackle every problem in a short period of time. Identify the issues that need immediate attention and those that should be considered long-term. Consider making small changes immediately, such as adding traffic signs, crossing guards, and pavement markings. Long term changes, such as sidewalk projects, may require more time and a significant amount of funding. Work with police to correct enforcement issues. Train crossing guards for dangerous intersections if your school is lacking a safety officer. If snow removal is an issue during winter months, develop a working plan with the public works department to ensure students will be safe. Explore “traffic calming” techniques for situations with chronic speeding. For more information on traffic calming visit www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/tcalm/index.htm.

Once you have compiled a list of goals and objectives, collect a list of individuals willing to volunteer, assign the tasks and agree on reasonable completion dates.

After the meeting, send volunteers an organizational chart that includes the tasks, who will complete them and when they will be completed. Also, include contact information for all volunteers on the chart.

2. Decide what safety precautions must be taken

Some changes can be done fairly quickly such as painting crosswalks because they are less expensive than sidewalks. Costly improvements will require study and may take several years to complete. Be prepared to be persistent until all the safety improvements identified have been corrected.

The following should be considered:

- 9 Consider asking parents to wear a badge or tag identifying them as an SRTS volunteer.
- 9 Plan what to do if a child must stay after school or misses the group to walk home.
Volunteers should be instructed never to leave school with a child unless the parent has provided the school with instructions to do so.
- 9 Volunteers should learn pedestrian safety rules so they can demonstrate safe behaviors to students and be aware of potential dangers when walking. Volunteers must understand that they are setting an example for children and should model appropriate safety habits.
- 9 Before you start you may want to remind neighborhood residents that the SRTS program is soon to begin. Ask them to take particular caution as they drive during the morning and afternoon hours when children will be walking or biking to and from school.

3. Organize schedules

Use the information from the parent survey to find out when parents want to lead a walk to school. You may want to suggest that these volunteers meet separately to work out schedules and develop a calendar. The following issues should be considered during this process:

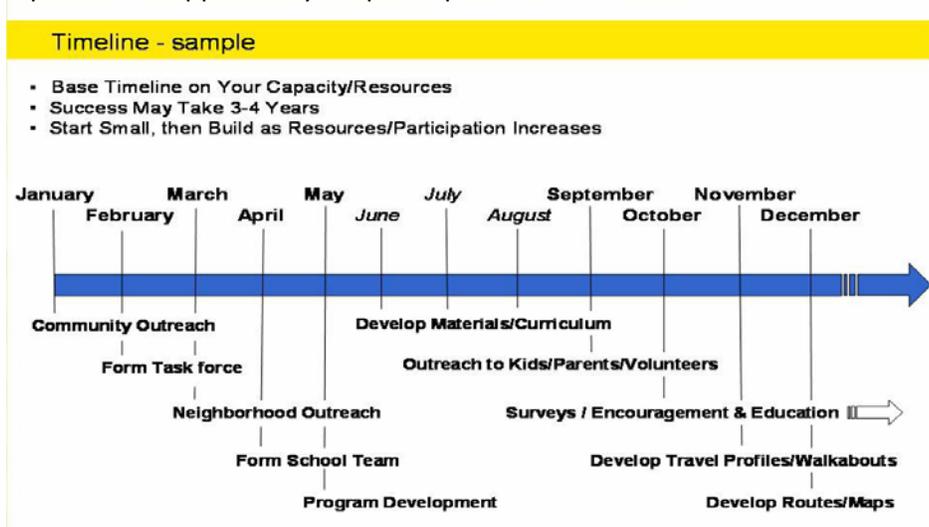
- 9 Where should children wait for pickup? (At the end of their driveway, in the lobby of their apartment building, at a designated bus stop, or another location, etc.)
- 9 Where will the children meet at the end of the school day for the walk home?
- 9 What will you do during severe weather situations? Some may choose to continue to operate if it is lightly raining or snowing, but on days when the weather becomes hazardous, you should reconsider walking.
- 9 How long will the group wait for a participant before continuing the walk or bike to school? What is inappropriate behavior and what are the consequences?

4. Send out parental consent forms

If you have not already, check with the principal to find out specific rules on parental consent policies. Your neighborhood may also want parents to sign a written consent that informs parents about the program and any potential risks. Parents who sign the form are simply giving permission for their children to participate in the program.

5. Conduct a practice walk or bike to and from school

Children, parents, and volunteers should do a practice walk to and from school. You may decide to schedule the practice walk on a weekend or evening so all parents and children can participate. The practice will help to determine how long it takes the group to get to and from school, identify any problems that might occur, allow you to correct problems prior to the kick-off day, enable parents to show their children what behaviors they expect each day during the walk and provide an opportunity for participants to meet each other.



Step Five: Implement

Implementing your program involves holding a kick-off event. When your SRTS program is completely planned, kick-off your implementation with some high-profile events. A kick-off event is a great way to get people excited about the SRTS program. Some suggestions for an event include:

- 9 Invite local officials, law enforcement officers, and celebrities to participate in the event and walk or bicycle to school with a group of students.
- 9 Provide healthy breakfast items and juice at the meeting spot for the event as well as incentives, such as t-shirts and bicycle helmets.
- 9 Send out a press release, inviting members of the media to be present at the kick-off, and preparing a story on your SRTS program. Positive coverage may encourage others to begin programs in other neighborhoods or schools.
- 9 Plan your kick-off event in conjunction with the International Walk-to-School week held annually the first week of October.

Step Six: Evaluate

At the end of each semester or time period decided by the SRTS task force, evaluate your program.

- 9 Fill out the SRTS evaluation form. Use this evaluation to see how your program is working and how to improve it.
- 9 Ask students, teachers, parents, school administrators and other groups involved what they think can be done better. Collect the success stories and publish them in a newsletter to send to your partnering organizations. Consider constructing an annual or semi-annual SRTS report to be distributed to stakeholders.

As you are monitoring the progress of your program be sure to address participants' concerns and revise objectives and strategies as necessary. This is important because it confirms the program is meeting its goals and objectives, it helps to identify successes and problems and it will generate additional support for the program.

The task force needs to know what is working well and what needs improvement. The program cannot grow without this information. Members of the task force must chat with parents, teachers, and administrators and request constructive criticism. Parents rapidly lose interest in programs that do not

meet their needs, but they may not be candid in their feedback without being asked.

It is useful to document the success of your program. If you already have, or if you plan to seek funding from outside sources or from your own municipal budget, potential funding sources will want evidence that you are making a difference. Are a greater number of children getting an increased amount of exercise through walking or biking to school? Is there less traffic near the school in the morning and dismissal times? Has there been a reduction in accidents or near misses?

Step Seven: Sustain

After the program is underway, it will be necessary to keep morale high and motivate participants, especially during the winter months. To keep individuals excited about the program, include daily activities or weekly and monthly contests in your SRTS plan. You can also distribute informational letters about the program at parent-teacher conferences or ask the editor of your child's school newsletter to include a section about the program. Visit our website at www.dot.alaska.gov/saferoutes to access resources to help sustain your SRTS program.

- 9 Plan for the next school year's program, as children will be graduating elementary or middle school. New parent organizers and leaders will be needed.
- 9 When a new school term begins, create a feeling of excitement among the walkers or bikers by planning a special outing or doing something exciting on the first day back to school.

Look for ways to expand your SRTS program. Promote the success of the program to other neighborhoods, the school and to the community. Here are some ways to accomplish this goal:

- 9 Promote the program by word of mouth
- 9 Include articles in your school newsletter
- 9 Post your own newsletter or e-newsletter at school
- 9 Present your program at the next PTA meeting
- 9 Ask a local news station to do a story
- 9 Write an editorial for your local paper promoting the program

Some Final Tips for Success

Congratulations! You are on your way to starting a program that can make a positive impact on the safety and physical health of your children and help strengthen your community. In addition to this guide there are many resources listed in the appendix and on the website that will help you construct and maintain your program. Take the best of the ideas that are presented here and use your creativity to develop a program that works best for your school and community. Here are some final tips:

- 9 Involve potential stakeholders and get them to buy into the program. Stakeholders include parents, teachers, law enforcement agencies, community groups, local school health councils, and roadway departments. Be sure to include students. The program is for them and their enthusiasm and participation will help breed success.
- 9 Elect a team captain who is focused and has the motivation and perseverance to keep the program moving and the other task force members motivated.
- 9 Stick to the schedule and stand by your goals and refer back to them.
- 9 Be efficient during your SRTS meetings. Shorter meetings are often more productive than long meetings.
- 9 Make your meetings open to the public. Advertise them along with other school functions to let the larger community attend. Have a spot on the agenda to allow for those not on the SRTS team to comment, and be receptive and responsive to those comments.
- 9 Accomplishing your set goals will likely not come easily. Remember that persistence, tenacity, and patience will be required.
- 9 Have fun!

Finally, celebrate successes along the way and recognize those who have invested their time and effort in the program. This is also an important aspect of an SRTS program. It will foster a sense of community for the team and provide encouragement and incentive to stay the course.

APPENDIX

Things To Do If There Is A Speeding Problem In Your Neighborhood

- 9 Talk to your neighbors and community leaders to find if there is actually a problem. If others support your concerns, a solution is most likely to be found.
- 9 Ask your local police department to monitor speeds in the area. In addition to ticketing speeders, many police departments own speed display trailers. Ask if the trailers can be placed along the streets you have identified as having the speeding problem.
- 9 Let drivers in the area know that speeding is not acceptable. Include messages in community and school newsletters, and on signs throughout the neighborhood.
- 9 Ask your city to redesign your street to slow motorists through construction of traffic calming devices. Motorists commonly speed on streets that are straight and wide. Traffic calming devices can slow motorists' speeds through the construction of road treatments, which include raised devices (such as speed humps and raised crosswalks), roadway narrowing, curves in the roadway or trees planted along the street.

Narrow-lanes. There are several ways to narrow a street. Paint is simple low cost way to narrow the street off travel lanes. If the narrower lanes can result in a striped shoulder, the shoulder will provide refuge for disabled motor-vehicles. The shoulder stripe will also provide better drive guidance. Interior traffic lanes can be narrowed to 10 feet wide to encourage slower speeds. Narrow lanes can also result from road-diet projects which can include paved medians, center turn lanes, bicycle.

Starting a Walking School Bus: The Basics

What is a walking school bus?

A walking school bus is a group of children walking to school with one or more adults. It can be as informal as two families taking turns walking their children to and from school, or as structured as a route with meeting points, a timetable and a regularly rotated schedule of trained volunteers.

A variation of the walking school bus is the bicycle train, in which adults supervise children riding bikes to school. The flexibility of the walking school bus makes it appealing to communities of all sizes with varying needs.

Parents often cite safety issues as one of the primary reasons they are reluctant to allow their children to walk to school. Providing adult supervision may help reduce those worries for families who live within walking or bicycling distance to school.

Why Develop a Walking School Bus?

Studies show that fewer children are walking and biking to school, and more children are at risk of becoming overweight. Changing behaviors of children and parents requires creative solutions that are safe and fun.

Start Simple

When beginning a walking school bus, remember that the program can always grow. It often makes sense to start with a small bus. Pick a single neighborhood that has a group of parents and children who are interested. It's like a carpool-without a car-with the added benefits of exercise and visits with friends and neighbors. For an informal bus:

1. Invite families who live nearby to walk.
2. Pick a route and take a test walk.
3. Decide how often the group will walk together.
4. Have fun!

When picking a route, answer these questions:

1. Do you have room to walk?
2. Are there sidewalks and paths?
3. Is it easy to cross the street?
4. Do drivers behave well?
5. Does the environment feel safe?

Reaching More Children

Success with a simple walking school bus or a desire to be more inclusive may inspire a community to build a more structured program. This may include more routes, more days of walking, and more children. Such programs require coordination, volunteers, and potential attention to other issues, such

as safety training and liability. The school principal and administration, law enforcement and other community leaders will likely be involved.

First, determine the amount of interest in a walking school bus program. Contact potential participants and partners: parents and children, law enforcement officers, principals and school officials, and other community leaders.

Second, identify routes.

The amount of interest will determine the number of walking routes. Walk the routes without children first.

Third, identify a sufficient number of adults to supervise walkers.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends one adult for every six children. If children are ages 10 or older, fewer adults will be needed. If children are ages 4-6, one adult per three.

Next, finalize the logistics.

- 9 Who will participate?
- 9 How often will the walking school bus operate? Will the bus operate once a week or every day?
- 9 When do children meet the bus? It is important to allow enough time for the slower pace of children, but also to ensure that everyone arrives at school on time.
- 9 Where will the bus meet children – at each child’s home or a few meeting spots?
- 9 Will the bus operate after school?
- 9 What training do volunteers need?
- 9 What safety training do children need?

Finally, kick-off the program

A good time to begin is during International Walk to School Week held annually in October. Invite city and school officials to participate in walks.

For more information on how to organize a walking school bus program, visit:

Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center

www.walkingschoolbus.org

PANA Walking School Bus Guide

www.panaonline.org/programs/khz/actionkits/wsb/index.php

California Walk to School

www.cawalktoschool.com/files/2005/walking_school_bus.pdf

Go For Green

www.goforgreen.ca/asrts/pdf/How2_WSB.pdf

Active and Safe Routes to School

<http://www.saferoutestoschool.ca/index.php?page=walkingschoolbus>

Safety Tips

Pedestrian safety skills:

- 9 Use sidewalks or paths. If there are no sidewalks or paths, walk as far from the motor vehicles as possible on the side of the street facing traffic.
- 9 Watch for motor vehicles turning or pulling out of driveways.
- 9 Choose a route with the fewest streets to cross. Avoid crossing busy or high speed streets.
- 9 Wear reflectors and/or brightly colored clothes.
- 9 Watch for parked motor vehicles that may be getting ready to back up or pull forward.
- 9 Before crossing, always look for motor vehicles even after the light changes to green or a crossing guard says it is okay to cross.
- 9 Obey traffic signs.
- 9 There is safety in numbers.

Bicyclist safety skills:

Preparing for the ride:

- 9 Wear brightly colored, close fitting clothing.
- 9 Tie your shoes.
- 9 Wear a properly fitted helmet.
- 9 Ride a bicycle that fits.
- 9 Ride a bicycle that is in good condition.
- 9 Do not carry anyone else on the bike.
- 9 Do not carry anything in your hands.

During the ride:

- 9 Choose a route with the fewest streets to cross.
- 9 Look for other vehicles to the left, right, in front, and behind.
- 9 Pay attention to your surroundings.
- 9 Watch for vehicles turning into or exiting at driveways.
- 9 Stop at all intersections.
- 9 Ride in a straight line.
- 9 Follow all traffic laws.
- 9 If riding in the street, ride in the same direction as motor vehicles.
- 9 Use hand signals when turning and stopping.
- 9 Obey traffic signs and signals.



9 Always check in and behind for traffic before changing lanes, crossing intersections, or turning.

9 If riding on a sidewalk or path, ride slowly and be prepared to stop quickly.

Snow safety skills:

9 Choose a good pair of winter boots.

9 Walk on the sidewalks, if possible. If it is not, then walk against the flow of traffic and as close to the curb or edge as you can.

9 Wear bright colored clothes.

9 Do not wear a hat or scarf that blocks your vision or makes it hard for you to hear traffic.

9 Ice and snow make can make it harder for vehicles to stop. Do not cross a street until the approaching motor vehicle has come to a complete stop. Make eye contact with drivers to know that they see you and are respecting your turn to cross.

9 Snowdrifts can be hazardous by covering curbs and obscuring the view of the street.

9 Bending your knees and taking slower, shorter steps can greatly reduce your chances of falling.

Bear safety tips:

9 Make your presence known.

9 Give the bear plenty of room.

9 Stay calm and don't make any sudden moves.

9 Do not make eye contact.

9 Stand your ground. Do not run away or turn your back on the bear.

9 Look for signs of agitation and aggression. If a bear stands up, it is just curious.



- 9 Back away slowly, speaking in a calm monotone voice.
- 9 If a bear chases you, throw something on the ground to try and distract it.
- 9 Don't climb trees. Most black bears and some grizzlies can climb.

Moose safety tips:

- 9 Don't feed moose. It's illegal.
- 9 Never throw anything at a moose.
- 9 If a moose charges, try to get behind a tree.
- 9 If a moose attacks, get on the ground and cover your head as best you can.
- 9 Remember, moose kick with both sets of legs.

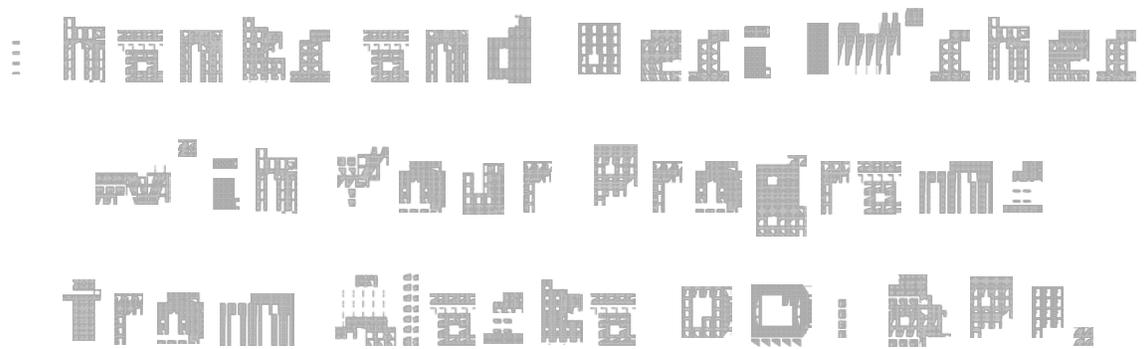
Key Indicators for Success

Outcome	Measure Before and After	Direction of Change
Behavior of Children	Number of Children walking to and from school	More
	Number of children bicycling to and from school	Better
	Skills for walking and bicycle safety	More
Behavior of Drivers	Number of vehicles arriving and departing school at drop-off and pick-up times	Fewer
	Speed of vehicles in and around school area	Slower
	Aggressive driving behavior	Less



	Number of driving trips by parents and length of morning and evening commute	Less
Community Facilities	Quality of walking environment: number and usefulness of sidewalks and bike lanes	Better
	Safety oriented intersections	More
Crashes and Injuries	Number of traffic crashes involving children walking or biking to and from school	Lower
	Severity of injuries	Less severe
	Number of conflicts between vehicles and pedestrians /bicyclists which would be likely to lead to crashes (i.e. near misses)	Lower
Community buy-in	Number of different types of people involved in the SRTS effort	More
	Level of commitment and energy displayed by the SRTS task force	Higher
	Parent enthusiasm about SRTS and allowing their children to walk and bike to school	Higher
Environmental Quality	Level of air and noise pollution in school area	Lower
	Land devoted to parking and drop-off/pick-up areas	Less





SafeRoutes

Alaska Safe Routes to School



www.dot.alaska.gov/saferoutes

