

Many Steps...



One Tomorrow.

A report on the first three years of the
NATIONAL SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL PROGRAM

SafeRoutes

National Center for Safe Routes to School



PREPARED BY THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

The National Center for Safe Routes to School assists communities in enabling and encouraging children to safely walk and bike to school. Established in May 2006, the Center is maintained by the University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center with funding from the U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration.

www.saferoutesinfo.org

TODAY'S REALITY

- ✦ Today, less than 15 percent of children walk or ride their bicycles to school, down from nearly half of all children in 1969.
 - ✦ As much as 21 percent of morning traffic is generated by parents driving their children to school.
 - ✦ Combined emissions from numerous private vehicles can add up to the single greatest cause of pollution in many U.S. cities.
- *Report of the National Safe Routes to School Task Force, July 2008.*

CHANGING THE FUTURE

“Promoting Safe Routes to School has made a profound difference for our students. Four years ago, we had over 70 percent of children being driven to school — even though fewer than 5 percent lived more than 8 blocks away. Now, most kids walk or bike to school! The reduction in traffic is remarkable. The sense of community is enhanced. Kids are getting more exercise. Parents feel more connected to the schools.”

—Walk to School organizer, Illinois.

SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL BY THE NUMBERS

- ✦ All 50 States plus the District of Columbia have Safe Routes to School Coordinators
- ✦ \$370.6 million in Federal funds have been awarded by State Departments of Transportation as of January 1, 2009
- ✦ State DOTs have awarded 89 percent of the \$416 million available to States
- ✦ More than 4,566 funded schools throughout the U.S. have been awarded funds
- ✦ 47 States contribute information to the SRTS national database



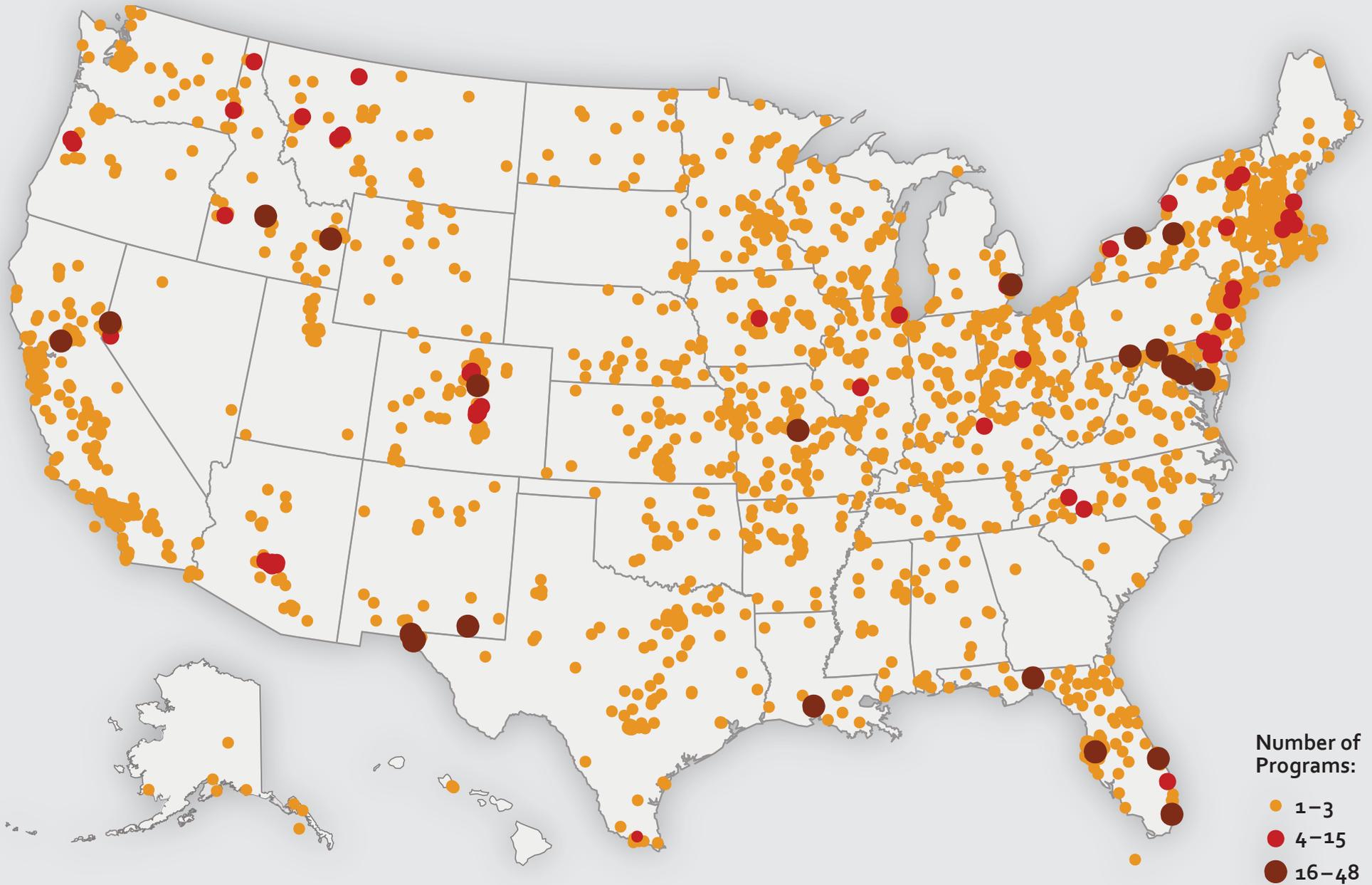
Photo by Tamara Lackey

TODAY, MORE THAN **4,566** SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES IN ALL CORNERS OF THE UNITED STATES ARE WORKING TO CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHILDREN TO SAFELY WALK AND BICYCLE TO SCHOOL.

All this has occurred in just three years, through the creation of the Safe Routes to School Program. The Program is part of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Act—a Legacy for Users passed by the U.S. Congress in August 2005. States initiated their programs in January 2006.

This document reports on the first three years of this Program—what communities are accomplishing, where the Program is today and where it can take this country in the future.

For details on SRTS projects, go to www.saferoutesinfo.org/project_list.



SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL ACROSS THE USA

The National Safe Routes to School Program reaches children, families and communities in all parts of the country. Locations above represent communities awarded SRTS funds, according to data compiled by the National Center for Safe Routes to School. To see details on SRTS projects, please go to www.saferoutesinfo.org/project_list.



Photo by Katelyn Vonfeldt

Father and son walk to school at Hendricks Avenue Elementary School in Jacksonville, Florida on International Walk to School Day, October 8, 2008.

Focusing on Communities

The map on page 3 shows a bird's eye view of the National Safe Routes to School Program and its reach throughout the United States. The multiple benefits of Safe Routes to School programs are evident when we focus in on communities. It is at the ground level where the Program's impact on American children's safety, health, environmental consciousness, and exposure to pollution and traffic congestion can be observed.

The following are a small sample of successful Safe Routes to School programs throughout the U.S. To learn more about SRTS and view other examples, visit www.saferoutesinfo.org/case_studies.

NATIONAL SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL PROGRAM

When the U.S. Congress provided funding to start the National Safe Routes to School Program in August 2005, it was a new movement in the United States. Grassroots programs all across the country had rallied around the concept but were in need of funding. A few states had established programs in hopes that funding would become available. Each realized that Safe Routes to School could play an important role in addressing many of the issues facing communities today. The Program addresses the need for improved traffic safety around schools, more physical activity for children, a renewed sense of community, as well as the need to reduce traffic congestion and the negative health and environmental consequences of so much driving. The National Safe Routes to School Program offers solutions to immediate community issues and brings home awareness of global problems.

See page 30 for background on the National SRTS Program.

A car-free commute changes habits of entire families

Bear Creek Elementary School, Boulder, Colorado

Families at Bear Creek Elementary School in Boulder, Colorado are leading the community into life-changing choices through a Car-Free Commute program. Through partnerships among the school, the City of Boulder, the Boulder Valley School District, and the Colorado SRTS Program, the number of students walking and bicycling to school has increased. Student travel tallies have shown that the percentage of students walking and bicycling to Bear Creek Elementary increased from 41 percent to 70 percent. A traffic count conducted by the City of Boulder found a 30 percent reduction in cars and corresponding traffic near the school.

Principal Kent Cruger serves as a role model for his students by hosting the Cruger Cup, a year-long challenge to arrive at school every day without a car. At the beginning of each month, Mr. Cruger tries a new form of transportation — he has been seen on a foot-powered scooter, a skateboard and a unicycle, and regularly car pools with other area principals to school district meetings.

“Although this initiative was initially adult-driven, it has been the students who have taken ownership of their own travel choices and inspired the adults around them,” says Cruger.

Read the full case study: www.saferoutesinfo.org/colorado

Listen to a SRTS podcast featuring Bear Creek Elementary School Principal Kent Cruger at www.saferoutesinfo.org/podcast/.

You can download audio files featuring other SRTS programs from the podcasts page or directly from iTunes.

OUTSTANDING PROGRAM AWARD

Bear Creek Elementary School was selected to receive the James L. Oberstar Safe Routes to School Award for Outstanding Local Program in 2008. The Oberstar Award is given annually by the National Center for Safe Routes to School to an exemplary SRTS program in the United States. The award is named for Congressman James L. Oberstar (D-MN) to honor his dedication to American school children as the pioneer for the National Safe Routes to School Program. Oberstar, current Chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, sponsored the Safe Routes to School legislation that strives to create safe settings to enable more parents and children to walk and bicycle to school. In 2007, the Oberstar Award recognized outstanding achievement by a State Department of Transportation (DOT) in establishing their SRTS Program. Michigan DOT received the Award in 2007.



Photo by Vivian Kennedy

Seventy percent of Bear Creek Elementary School students are engaged in walking and bicycling to school throughout the school year.

AT A GLANCE:

Bear Creek Elementary School, in the Boulder Valley School District in Boulder, Colo., has 365 students, of which only 41 percent walked or bicycled to school. Today that rate is 70 percent and growing.

FEDERAL FUNDS AWARDED: \$36,101 shared with another two schools in 2008 (\$11,000 went to Bear Creek); \$73,000 shared among six schools in 2007 for education and encouragement; an infrastructure award of \$154,000 to the City of Boulder to retrofit an intersection near the school by 2009.

PROGRAM FOCUS: Change the commuting habits of the school community and establish a new culture of walking and bicycling.

RESULTS: The school's Car-Free Commute program yielded a 30 percent reduction in traffic congestion around the school, as verified by City of Boulder traffic counts. In a single month, Bear Creek's students accrued 6,600 Car-Free Commute trips representing 4,800 miles of walking and bicycling.

ADDED BENEFITS: Established partnerships between the school district and many local agencies and non-profits to identify issues of mutual interest and pool resources.

Many reasons to walk safely—snow or shine

Green Street School, Brattleboro, Vermont

Since 2006, the number of walking school buses at Green Street School has more than tripled, thanks to parents' steady support of the Safe Routes to School program. Walking school buses are groups of children accompanied by adults for the walk to school. The group "picks up" students as it passes by their homes or a meeting place.

With the school located a quarter-mile from downtown, the parents at Green Street were concerned about traffic speeds and volumes. In July 2006, Green Street was awarded \$18,000 in Federal non-infrastructure funds. Twenty-five parents immediately stepped forward to lead walking school buses and bicycle trains, and to organize other encouragement activities.

A key component of the SRTS program at Green Street School was a public outreach effort to reduce speeding and aggressive driving near the school. The program is paying off. Before and after traffic data show a nearly 40 percent decrease in number of cars that speed in the school zone.

Green Street's SRTS Coordinator, Alice Charkes, believes that the timing of the school's 2006 SRTS grant coincided with a willingness to change. "I think the school was at a stage where it was ready," she said, adding that now Safe Routes to School is considered an integral part of how the school works.

Read the full case study: www.saferoutesinfo.org/vermont

AT A GLANCE:

Green Street School in Brattleboro, Vermont, is close to downtown and has 265 students, 48 percent of which are considered low-income students.

FEDERAL FUNDS AWARDED: \$18,000 in 2006 and \$6,975 in 2008 for public education and encouragement programs.

PROGRAM FOCUS: Increasing safety, reducing and slowing down traffic.

RESULTS: Forty percent reduction in the number of cars that speed in the school zone. The number of walking school buses has tripled.

ADDED BENEFITS: New initiatives such as Winter Walkers Club; Story Walk™.



Photo by Alice Charkes

Green Street School students walk to school, shine or snow. The Brattleboro, Vermont, SRTS program succeeded in slowing down speeding cars near the school.

Saving transportation costs

Auburn School District and the City of Auburn, Washington

As early as 1995, the Auburn School District began to link concerns about the high cost of transportation and increased childhood obesity. Plans were made to improve walking and bicycling conditions near schools, but funds were scarce. Infrastructure funding from the Federal SRTS program augmented State resources and enabled the community to make their plans a reality. Auburn School District was awarded \$185,000 in Federal SRTS infrastructure funds to remedy safety concerns along a heavily traveled road near Olympic Middle School. The project, which is near completion, includes a shared use path, crosswalks, lighting, signs, safety education and encouragement events.

To complement the infrastructure projects, the school district implemented pedestrian and bicycle safety education programs. As a result of these combined efforts, 20 percent of the 14,500 students in the Auburn School District either walk or ride bicycles to school.

At Pioneer Elementary School, which previously received State funds as part of a pilot program, students achieved the highest academic scores in the district and Principal Debra Gary attributes their success in part to their healthy, more active lifestyles. Due to the increase in the number of students walking and bicycling, the school district has been able to reduce the number of buses needed at the school from six down to one, saving a total of \$220,000 in annual transportation costs as a result of the SRTS program. Eighty-five percent of the students walk or bicycle to school at Pioneer Elementary on a regular basis.

Read the full case study: www.saferoutesinfo.org/washington



Photo by April Hurlbert

Students cross the street on their way home from Dick Scobee Elementary School in Auburn, Wash. The Safe Routes to School program at Auburn's 22 public schools is saving the school district thousands of dollars in transportation costs.

AT A GLANCE:

The Auburn School District in Auburn, Washington is saving transportation costs through Safe Routes to School programs at its 22 schools, which serve 14,500 students.

FEDERAL FUNDS AWARDED: \$185,000 for a shared use path, crosswalks, lighting, signs, safety education and encouragement events.

PROGRAM FOCUS: Increase walking and bicycling to school to reduce transportation costs. Partnerships among school district transportation department, Washington Department of Transportation and City of Auburn.

RESULTS: \$220,000 in annual savings in student transportation costs. Twenty percent of students in the Auburn School district walk or bicycle to school.

ADDED BENEFIT: Auburn School District Transportation Department's "Partnership Approach to Safe Routes to School" program was declared a Top 50 Program of the 2008 Innovations in America Government Awards competition, administered by the Ash Institute for Democratic Governance and Innovation at Harvard Kennedy School.

“It’s a real success story. We’re saving \$220,000 in transportation costs every year...this program is standing the test of time. Each school is finding more and more ways to participate.”

*– Jim Denton, Director of Transportation,
Auburn School District, Auburn, Washington*



Photo by James T. O'Brien

Students from North Smyrna Elementary celebrate International Walk to School Day 2008 by helping former Governor Ruth Ann Minner cut the ribbon on the new sidewalk and crosswalk that lead to their school.

Safety is for everyone

Smyrna School District, Smyrna, Delaware

The Smyrna School District and the Town of Smyrna identified the goal of improving safety for children who already were walking and bicycling to school. Community members also wanted to promote physical activity among children.

Collaboration among local agencies has allowed the town to make walking and bicycling safer for schoolchildren, and to make effective use of local and Federal SRTS funding.

A combination of infrastructure improvements including new sidewalks, crosswalks, curb ramps and school zone signage at three elementary schools helped increase the number of students walking and bicycling to school.

“These improvements enhance safety for students who walk or bicycle by encouraging them to use safer crossings where traffic control devices are located, by completing gaps in the routes to school, by making routes accessible and by increasing driver awareness of school routes and the presence of children,” said Deborah Wicks, Superintendent, Smyrna School District.

In addition to the physical improvements, the schools reinforce walking and bicycling safely to school through classroom lessons, positive behavior support, posting rules for students and communicating rules to parents via newsletter and orientations. In addition, the Physical Education teachers involve students in the “All Children Exercising Simultaneously” initiative, walks around the schools, International Walk to School Day, instruction on how to use pedometers, and lessons on the health benefits of walking and bicycling.

Read the full case study: www.saferoutesinfo.org/delaware



Photo by James T. O'Brien

The trip to school is now safer for students at North Smyrna Elementary School thanks to State and local government collaboration, and Federal SRTS funds to build sidewalks and crosswalks.

AT A GLANCE:

Smyrna School District in Smyrna, Delaware, is a small school district with eight schools. Three elementary schools are participating in SRTS:

North Smyrna Elementary (42% low income)
Smyrna Elementary (37% low income)
Clayton Elementary (26% low income)

FEDERAL FUNDS AWARDED: \$523,000 in 2007-2008 for the three schools listed above, for sidewalks, crosswalks and curb construction, plus education programs.

PROGRAM FOCUS: Improving the safety of students who regularly walk or ride bicycles to school.

RESULTS: New sidewalks and crosswalks for students who were already walking to school.

ADDED BENEFIT: Thanks to collaboration between the school district, Town of Smyrna and Delaware DOT the improvements adjacent to North Smyrna Elementary were completed in six weeks, with most of the work completed before school began in August 2008.

Consider this: if 100 children at one school walk or bicycle instead of being driven every day for one school year, they will keep nearly 35,000 pounds of pollutants out of the air, and will collectively generate 12,000 hours of physical activity.

– Extracted from information published in the National SRTS Task Force Report, July 2008.

SRTS Snapshots



DULUTH, MINNESOTA AND SUPERIOR, WISCONSIN

At a Glance: The Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council has strengthened multi-jurisdictional efforts by Duluth and Superior school districts in implementing SRTS.

Federal Funds Awarded: Duluth Public School District and Superior School District were each awarded \$50,000 in non-infrastructure funds in 2007. Lincoln Park School in Duluth was awarded \$25,030 for infrastructure and \$5,000 for encouragement programs in 2006. Congdon Park Elementary School was awarded \$137,000 for infrastructure in 2007. Stowe Elementary School was awarded \$171,360 for infrastructure improvements.

Results: A new bike safety curriculum, increased cooperation between PE teachers and school administrators as well as among jurisdictions in different cities and states. Fit City Duluth's Active Living Committee worked to repeal a school district policy that discouraged students from bicycling to school.

Read more: www.saferoutesinfo.org/minnesota

WEST BOULEVARD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, COLUMBIA, MISSOURI

At a Glance: West Boulevard Elementary School in Columbia, Missouri, has nearly 300 students in kindergarten through fifth grade, and 75 children live within walking distance of school. The school had the highest rate of low income families in the Columbia School District with 95 percent of students qualifying for free or reduced rate lunches. It had been selected to receive additional staffing in order to improve academic performance.

Federal Funds Awarded: \$15,275 in 2007 for education and encouragement programs.

Results: New partnerships among entire community. Early stakeholder participation in developing Safe Routes to School strategies led to a successful remote drop-off location for walking school buses. Students gained walking buddies/mentors from a local college, a network of trained volunteers and city-wide support for walking to school.

Read more: www.saferoutesinfo.org/missouri





ORANGE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS ORLANDO, FLORIDA

At a Glance: SRTS Federal funds were awarded to four schools: Wheatley Elementary, Ivey Lane Elementary, Lake Silver Elementary, Apopka Elementary. The program is coordinated by Health Masters Club, a non-profit organization founded by pediatrician Toni Moody, who successfully tied SRTS to USDA's Team Nutrition. The result is Step Up to School™ Wellness Team Nutrition Challenge.

Federal Funds Awarded: \$50,000 for programs at the four schools for education and encouragement programs.

Results: Increased walking and bicycling, with a 37 percent increase at Ivey Lane Elementary.

Read more: www.saferoutesinfo.org/orlando

GILBERT, ARIZONA

At a Glance: The Town of Gilbert partners with two school districts and community organizations to implement SRTS in 30 schools.

Federal Funds Awarded: \$84,000 in non infrastructure funds shared by 30 schools, \$249,220 in subsequent infrastructure funds.

Results: Established district-wide education program, support from community partners; obtained baseline trip-to-school data on 18 schools; increased traffic safety with help of four speed feedback signs.

Read more: www.saferoutesinfo.org/arizona



GARFIELD SCHOOL DISTRICT GARFIELD, NEW JERSEY

At a Glance: Eight schools in an urban setting.

Federal Funds Awarded: \$18,000 for curriculum-based safety education and encouragement program.

Results: Increased the number of students safely walking and bicycling to school thanks to effectively addressing parents' concerns by providing adult supervision of walking students. Established partnerships with local agencies, including the health department and the YMCA.

Read more: www.saferoutesinfo.org/newjersey



Photo by Darleen Reveille

BREVARD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL BREVARD, NORTH CAROLINA

At a Glance: 546 students in a rural community.

Federal Funds Awarded: \$250,000 for sidewalk improvements, construction of a one-mile multi-use path, and encouragement programs.

Results: Increased opportunity to walk and bike to school safely thanks to a path that connects two schools and other community services.

Read more: www.saferoutesinfo.org/northcarolina



MIAMI-DADE WALKSAFE PROGRAM

At a Glance: 35 schools in Miami-Dade County, Florida.

Federal Funds Awarded: \$151,000 in 2007; \$123,000 in 2008 for education programs.

Results: SRTS is helping to bring the WalkSafe program, which strives to improve pedestrian safety, to high-risk schools in Miami-Dade County. Between 2001 and 2007, WalkSafe contributed to a 43 percent countywide decrease in pedestrian injuries. There was also a 64 percent decrease in pedestrian injuries of children seen or admitted to the two Level 1 trauma centers in Miami-Dade County. The program was founded at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine and Jackson Memorial Hospital Ryder Trauma Center.

Read more: www.saferoutesinfo.org/miami

To learn more about SRTS and other case studies, visit www.saferoutesinfo.org/case_studies

Training Builds Solid Programs

SRTS programs bring together diverse partners to determine goals and set action plans for their schools. One of the strengths of training is its ability to create widespread support from school staff, parents, elected leaders, transportation and health professionals, law enforcement officers and advocates. Training enables these partners to build a common understanding of the issues and equips them with knowledge to develop solutions that work in their own backyards.

Recognizing that state and community-level stakeholders need sound information to plan and implement programs, the National Center for Safe Routes to School provides several training options and a nationwide network of trained instructors. Every State has been offered two free trainings to help support capacity building efforts.





Photo by Mike Cynecki

Training offerings include:

SRTS NATIONAL COURSE

This one-day course convenes stakeholders to build a shared knowledge of the need for Safe Routes programs, strategies, a walking observation exercise of a school's dismissal process and the steps towards forming a plan for SRTS.

SRTS NATIONAL COURSE INSTRUCTOR TRAINING

This four-day training prepares individuals to teach the National Course. The course includes observation, practice and skills demonstration.

SKILLS FOR LOCAL SRTS DEVELOPMENT

This one-day course assists those most closely involved with day-to-day operation of a SRTS program with start-up, planning and evaluation activities. A web-based version is available to meet the needs of individuals who cannot travel to a training session.

MONTHLY WEBINARS

These one-hour webinars feature a variety of topics that address current issues related to conducting a local SRTS program. Past topics range from pedestrian safety education to liability concerns. Conducted in conjunction with the National Center's partner America Walks, webinars are free and open to anyone.

ENGINEERING WEBINARS

These ninety-minute webinars, conducted through the National Center's partner Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE), address countermeasures appropriate for SRTS projects.

Please visit www.saferoutesinfo.org/training/ to learn more about SRTS training.



Photo by Mike Cynécki

The SRTS National Course includes walking audits of areas around schools.

Safe Routes to School National Course

The Safe Routes to School National Course has helped build knowledge, skills and momentum for SRTS around the country. The main goals of the SRTS National Course include bringing together key stakeholders to develop a shared understanding of Safe Routes to School and motivating participants towards action.

To expand the reach of the National Course, seven instructor trainings have been conducted. There are currently 156 trained instructors throughout the country. A survey of instructors, conducted in December 2008, revealed that using the National Course has led to the following results:

- ✦ Of instructors who had been trained at least six months prior to the survey, 95 percent have used National Course materials in presentations or trainings. Sixty-eight percent of trained instructors serve local stakeholders as their primary audience.
- ✦ Eighty-eight percent of trained instructors plan to use recently updated National Course materials in the next six months.

Instructors made the following observations about their experiences teaching the Safe Routes to School National Course.

Course material has been key in giving school officials, local jurisdictions, public health officials and others **an understanding of the breadth and range of SRTS** and the importance of developing a multifaceted program that addresses all 5 Es.

It has **made what can be a daunting program seem do-able**. The National Course materials break SRTS down into pieces for folks and gives them confidence that they can do something about what is going on in their communities, and that they are not alone in trying to find solutions.

The National Course material **establishes the mindset** of people participating in the program. They first learn that SRTS is **more than building a sidewalk** segment or using a creating a walking map. This leads to better programs that incorporate more E's.

State SRTS programs have used the National Course to build capacity in their state.

State Coordinators who have elected to be trained as National Course Instructors have noted the following benefits:

It **helps me promote the SRTS Program** to many government leaders (local, state) and receive feedback to update our State's program.

It certainly helps with the big picture, understanding the comprehensiveness of the program and being able to relay this to communities. It **makes a huge difference** being able to walk away from a community having participated in the course **knowing that they not only have a grasp on the program but have started planning its implementation**. Also, I reference the materials when addressing communities questions and to give them ideas for program activities and engineering treatments.



Photo by Mike Cynecki

The SRTS National Course convenes stakeholders to build a shared knowledge of the need for Safe Routes programs, strategies and steps towards launching a SRTS program.

Moving forward in informed ways—the need for data

Data helps States and communities shape programs and understand what works. The National Center for Safe Routes to School developed the SRTS Data Reporting System, the National SRTS Program Tracking Database and the Research Program to help state and local entities evaluate the impacts of Safe Routes to School programs.

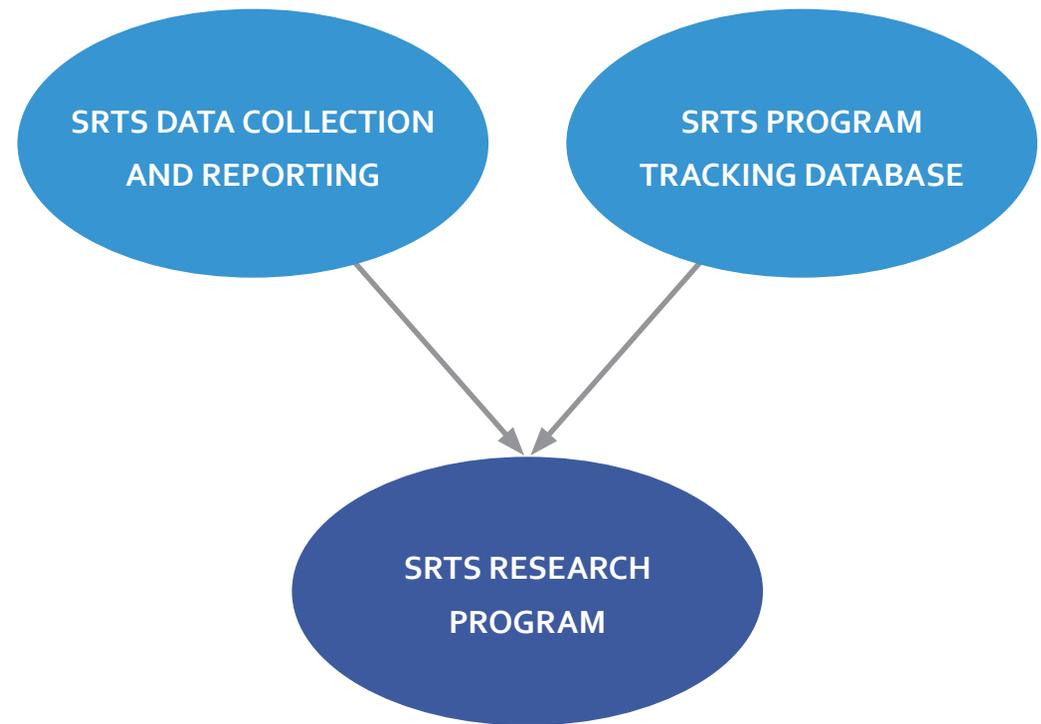
SRTS Data Collection and Reporting

In 2007, the National Center developed two standard data collection forms for local SRTS program use. Schools use the **Student Travel Tally** to count the number of children that use various transportation modes for travel to and from school. The **Parent Survey** is used to collect information about student travel, important issues, and parental opinions toward walking and bicycling to school. The National Center also collects details about local SRTS programs and the schools participating in those programs, and stores information from local programs in a centralized location.

The National Center for Safe Routes to School has collected:

- 26,000 Student Tally Sheets with trip-to-school information.
- 154,000 Parent Surveys with parents' opinion on walking and bicycling to school.

The information has been reported by 1,932 schools in 47 States.



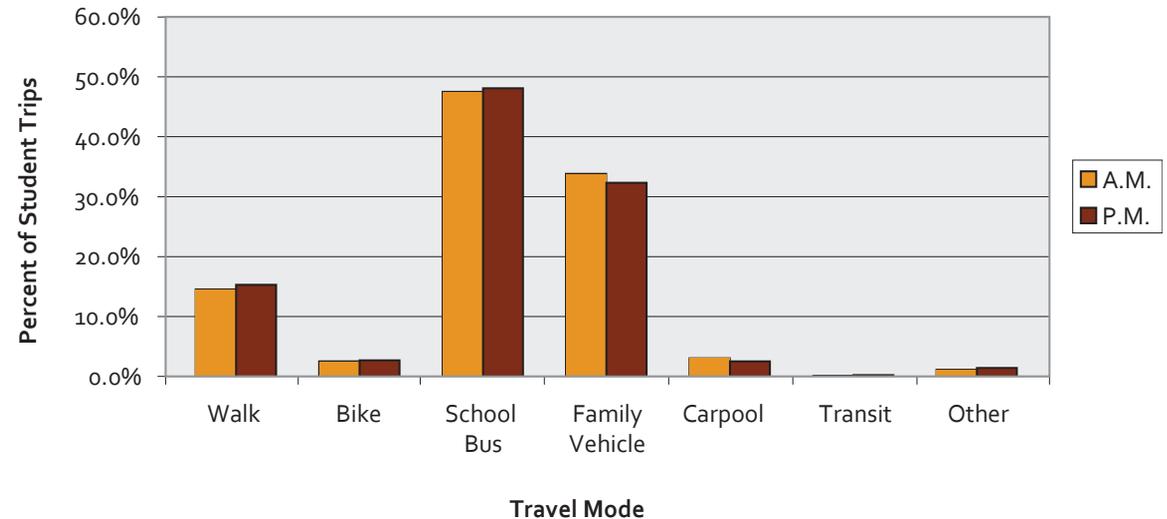
The National Center offers two ways for local SRTS programs to submit their data:

- Programs may enter data into the system using web-based data entry screens:
www.saferoutesinfo.org/tracking/datatools/.
- Programs may send data forms to the National Center for entry. National Center staff process the forms and ensure the data are correctly loaded into the SRTS Data Reporting System.

The National Center also offers data collection and data entry technical assistance by phone and email.

After the data are entered into the Data Reporting System, local programs can view, save and print summary reports of their Parent Survey information and Student Travel Tally Sheets. These reports are specific to each school within a program and can be used to plan SRTS activities and inform parents and other stakeholders.

Morning to Afternoon Travel Mode Comparison



Students' travel data from schools around the country are collected and analyzed at the National Center for Safe Routes to School. This sample shows travel habits for morning and afternoon student trips for a sample school. As of January 2009, information has been reported by 1,932 schools in 47 States.

SRTS Program Tracking

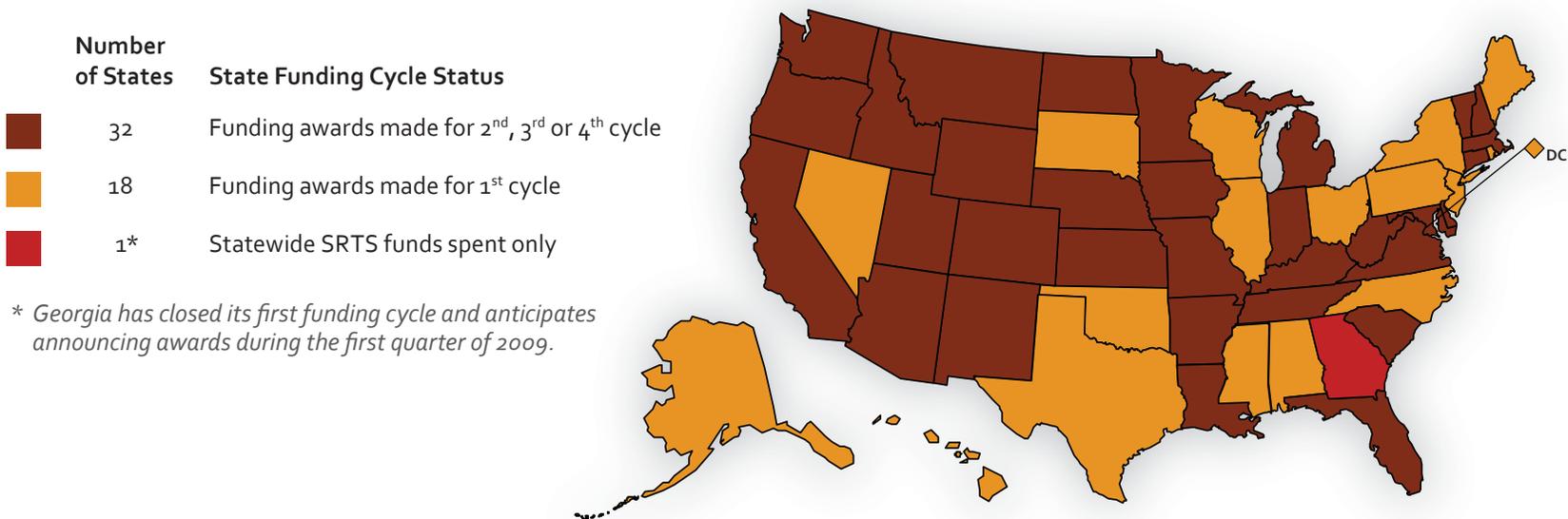
The National Center maintains a database of the individual projects funded by the National SRTS Program, as reported by State DOTs. The database contains detailed information about each project including planned SRTS strategy type (non-infrastructure programs and infrastructure projects), state, city, funding information and schools impacted.

Each quarter, National Center staff prepare a tracking brief using information reported by the State Coordinators. The Quarterly Tracking Briefs provide a picture of the National SRTS Program as a whole. Tracking reports can be viewed at www.saferoutesinfo.org/resources/tracking-reports.cfm.

As of January 1, 2009, the 50 states and the District of Columbia had announced \$370.6 million in total awards for Safe Routes to School programs. States' Departments of Transportation have awarded 89 percent of the \$416 million that has been made available to states through the end of 2008. All 50 states and the District of Columbia have obligated Safe Routes to School funds.

There were more than 4,566 local SRTS programs spread throughout the U.S. as of January 2009, with an increasing number of programs competing for funds. In the last quarter of 2008, for example, of the 5,890 programs applying to State DOTs for Federal funds, 37 percent were selected for funding. Thirty-five percent of the states have awarded funding for their first cycle, and 63 percent have made awards for their second, third or fourth cycles or have a rolling application or other process for awarding funds.

Application Funding Cycles Completed by State Programs (as of January 1, 2009)



Research Program

In January 2008, the National Center, through additional funding from the Federal Highway Administration, launched a comprehensive research program that uses the tracking system and standardized forms to develop a nationwide data set. The data set will be used to determine the impact of SRTS programs. Findings are intended to inform local SRTS programs and decision makers at the local, state and national levels. The following are descriptions of the components of the research and evaluation program.

SAFETY MONITORING PROGRAM

Understanding safety outcomes is an important part of evaluating the SRTS program. The National Center uses a comprehensive database of exposure data, local program details, large-scale state and national crash databases, and advanced analytical techniques to develop and implement a process to monitor, document, and measure potential safety outcomes from SRTS programs.

SRTS STRATEGY EVALUATION

This project examines strategies that might improve walking and bicycling conditions or encourage use of existing facilities. The National Center uses an expert panel and available data to identify strategies of interest for further study.

SAFETY INDEX DEVELOPMENT

Engineers and other local transportation professionals have requested a tool to assist with the identification and prioritization of infrastructure improvement needs along school routes. The National Center oversees a technical expert group in the review of existing instruments, testing and final development of a safety index to meet this need.

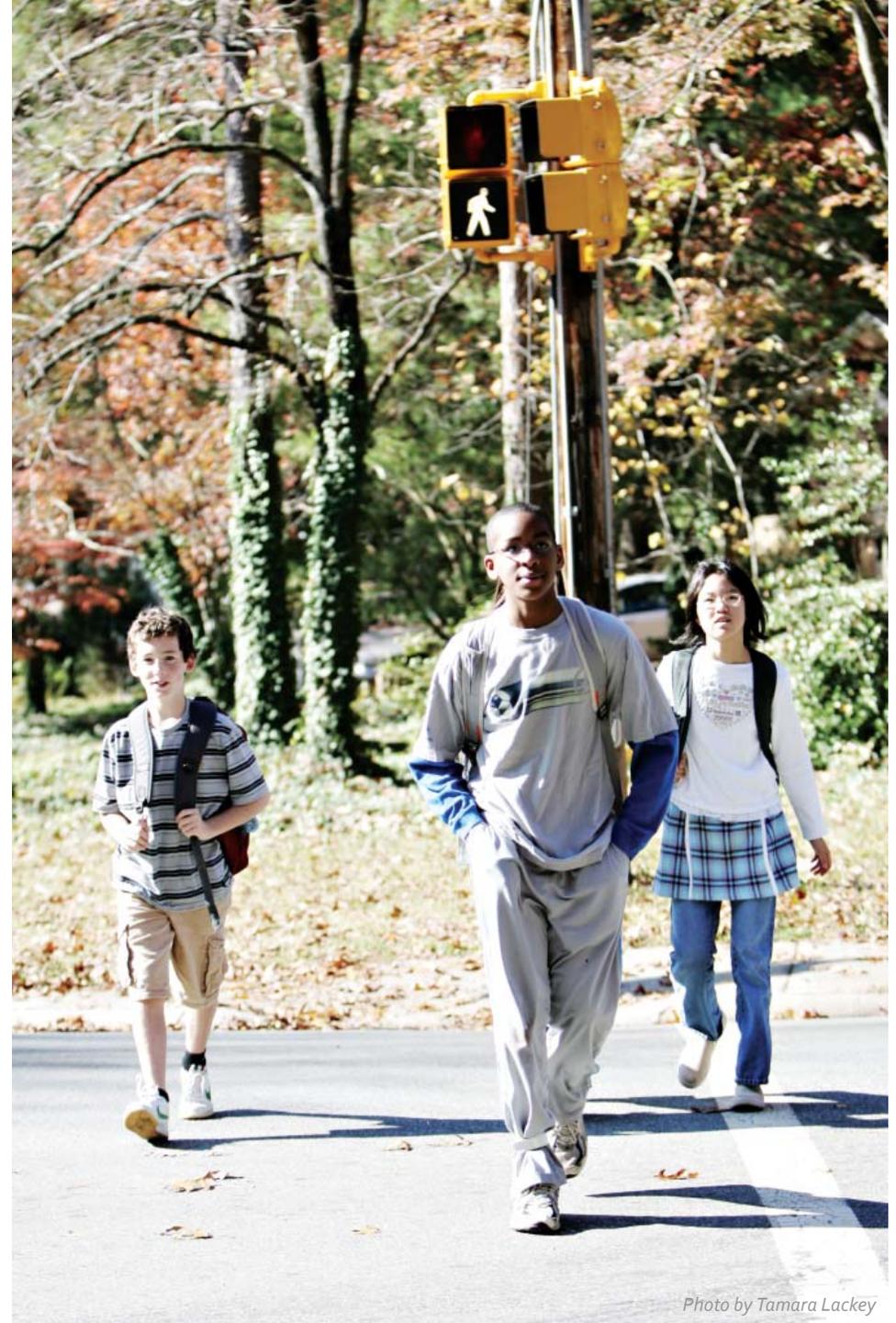


Photo by Tamara Lackey

Growth of Walk to School Day indicates more communities ready for Safe Routes to School

Walk to School Day celebrations help build interest and support for Safe Routes to School. More than one-half of the schools that hold one-day events continue to promote walking and bicycling to school throughout the year. In recent years, many SRTS programs are using Walk to School Day to kick-off long term activities.

GROWING A MOVEMENT: 12TH WALK TO SCHOOL DAY, OCTOBER 8, 2008

Since 1997, communities around the United States have been celebrating Walk to School Day. In its twelfth year, participation reached a record high with approximately 2,800 events from all fifty states and the District of Columbia registered on the Walk to School Web site (www.walktoschool.org). Many more communities held events but did not register.

Walk to School events build enthusiasm for walking to school, promote the benefits of walking and bicycling and bring visibility to any safety concerns. Issues like increasing physical activity among children, environmental stewardship, pedestrian safety and community-building are all cited as top reasons why communities participate.



Photo by A. J. Wolfe

From left, Zoe, Eryn and Vivian, kindergarten students at Snowden Elementary School in **Memphis, Tennessee**, walk to school during Walk to School Day, October 2008.



Photo by Kimberly Reed

Students at Rye Elementary School in **Rye, New Hampshire**, carry their Walk to School Day banner on their way to school, October 2008.

In their own words:

“International Walk to School Day is an extension of our daily walking program and an opportunity for community volunteers to teach our students about specific safety issues and how to develop a healthy lifestyle.”

– Walk to School event organizer, Oklahoma

*“In two weeks since it started we have doubled our participants and expect that to double in a couple of weeks. **I expect this will take on a life of its own.** We’re excited.”*

– Walk to School event organizer, Montana

“Kids are taking much more ownership of “wanting” to participate — they don’t want to be left out and are talking to parents more about the need to do this!”

– Walk to School event organizer, California



Morristown Elementary School in **Morrisville, Vermont**, celebrated International Walk to School Day on a chilly October 30, 2008. In this photo, some students pose with Tricia O'Regan (fourth from left), P.E. teacher.



Ainsley, third grader at Wilson Elementary School in **Wilson, Wyoming**, bicycles to school on Walk to School Day, October 2008. “It was 30 degrees and beautiful that morning,” recalls mother Holly Pratt. “There are 220 students at the school, and we counted 200 bicycles on the racks.”

The Impact of Walk to School Events

Schools and communities are monitoring their own progress:

- + 55% are tracking the numbers of children walking and bicycling to school
- + 27% are measuring health outcomes related to walking and bicycling to school
- + 18% are studying the environmental impact of their walking and bicycling to school.

2008 HIGHLIGHTS

- Schools from all 50 states and Washington, D.C. held events, and more than 40 countries participated in International Walk to School Month and Walk to School Day in October 2008.
- Record high of 2838 registered events, with more events not registered.
- More than 50 percent of registered schools hold activities throughout the year.
- About 50 percent of registered events are part of Safe Routes to School programs.
- Seventy-five percent of organizers said their event led to policy or engineering changes to improve walking conditions, such as changing existing policies to encourage walking or bicycling or the addition of sidewalks or paths.

Top three reasons that communities participate in Walk to School Day:

- Increase physical activity / Prevent obesity
- Support for a Safe Routes to School program
- Address pedestrian safety



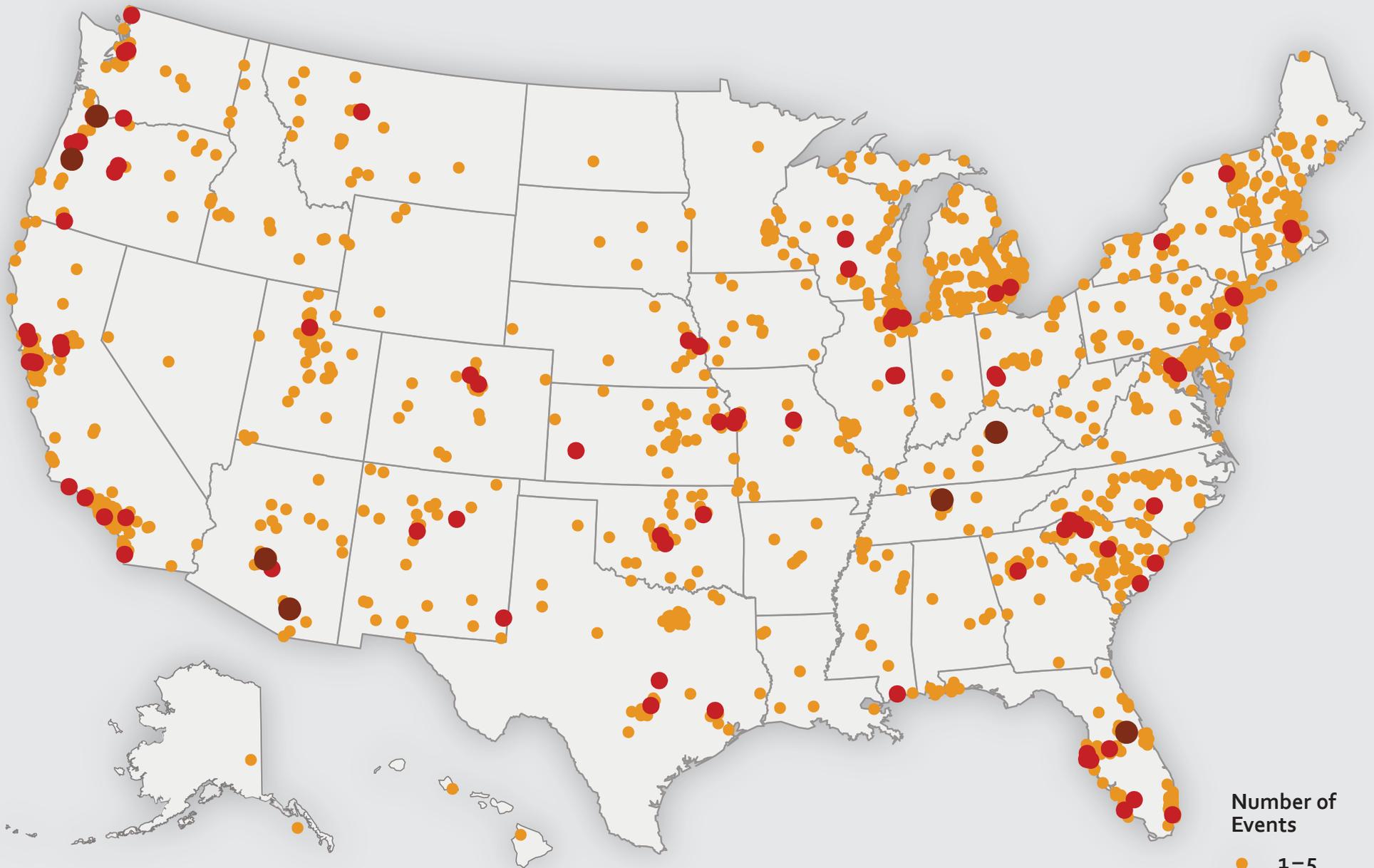
Photo by P. Wayne Gosnell

Students from Blanco Elementary School in **Blanco, Texas**, relish the small town feeling of their community in the Texas Hill Country during Walk to School Day 2008.



Photo by Jim Peterson

The first National Walk Our Children to School Day was held in Chicago in 1997 and included Mayor Richard M. Daley (center). What began at a single school quickly grew into events all over the U.S. and more than 40 countries.



2008 WALK TO SCHOOL EVENTS ACROSS THE USA

How we got here

In August 2005, the U.S. Congress passed Section 1404 of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act — a Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). This law designated \$612 million in Federal transportation funds, distributed through each State's Department of Transportation (DOT), to enable and encourage children to walk and bicycle to school; improve the safety of children walking and bicycling to school; and facilitate projects and activities that will reduce traffic, fuel consumption, and air pollution near schools.

In January 2006, as directed in the law, State DOTs around the country began hiring full-time SRTS Coordinators to lead the new program. The new State Coordinators had a challenging task ahead — to establish a new Federal funding program that brought together infrastructure (construction) projects alongside non-infrastructure (education, encouragement and enforcement) programs.

The new State programs had significant support. Advocates at the local and national level rallied together to begin new grassroots programs throughout the country, and to support the Program at the national level. The SRTS National Partnership was formed, which today includes a network of more than 400 organizations. As part of SAFETEA-LU, Congress also established a SRTS National Clearinghouse (today called the National Center for Safe Routes to School) to provide “behind the scenes” support to the States, offer a repository of information and advice to local programs, and to track the Program's progress as funds began to roll out.

As of January 2009, States have accomplished much, including:

- All 50 States and the District of Columbia have State Coordinators and funded programs in place.
- All States and the District of Columbia have announced a combined total of \$370.6 million in SRTS awards. This equals 89 percent of available funding.
- More than 4,566 schools are participating in the National Safe Routes to School Program.

“...there was a ‘national authority’ in place ...we were always able to show fairly easily that what we were proposing was consistent with best practice as shown in the National Course and the documentation the National Center was compiling and making available.”

—Michael Eberlein, retired State Coordinator, Michigan, and recipient of 2007 Oberstar Award for Outstanding State SRTS program.

THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

At its inception, the National Center recognized the urgent need for quality information and set an ambitious start-up agenda to assist States in building their own Safe Routes to School programs.

Today, a strong network of State Coordinators and local program leaders, an engaged group of advocates and an increasing body of knowledge on “what works,” are helping the National SRTS Program come into its own. All of this is built on a solid foundation:

- ✦ State Coordinators are a network of experts who discuss issues and share successes through a Listserv, conference calls and an annual meeting, all coordinated by the National Center for Safe Routes to School.
- ✦ An array of trainings to fit local and State needs have been developed by the National Center. This includes the SRTS National Course.
- ✦ The National Center provides two free trainings to each state.
- ✦ More than 150 instructors, including some State Coordinators, have been trained to teach courses that assist stakeholders in planning and implementing new programs.
- ✦ The National Center has developed a data system to measure trip-to-school transportation mode and parent attitudes. As of January 2009, 1,932 schools in 47 states have contributed data.
- ✦ The Safe Routes to School Guide is one of several popular resources published by the National Center. Online resources are accessible to everyone at www.saferoutesinfo.org.



The National Center organizes an annual meeting of State SRTS Coordinators from the 50 States and the District of Columbia. The 2008 meeting (pictured above) was held in Minneapolis. The 2009 meeting is in Portland, Oregon, in conjunction with the SRTS National Conference, August 19–21, 2009.

THE NATIONAL SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL TASK FORCE

The U.S. Congress also established a National Safe Routes to School Task Force, charged with developing a strategy to advance the Program nationwide. The Task Force published its report in July 2008, available at www.saferoutesinfo.org/task_force/.

The Task Force recommended making the National SRTS Program a permanent feature of transportation legislation. It also listed as future strategies: efficiency and coordination among programs, additional funds to reach more children, expanded funding eligibility (going to 12th grade instead of the current K-8th grade limit), more partnerships, addressing societal barriers to walking and bicycling, and implementing innovative solutions from around the country.

Also in July 2008, the GAO issued a report (July 2008: GAO-08-789) offering a positive assessment of the new National Safe Routes to School Program and recognizing that its main legislative requirements have been achieved. The report recommended more work toward a comprehensive evaluation plan, and more collaboration with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

LOOKING FORWARD TO THE FUTURE

Although it is relatively small, the National Safe Routes to School Program encapsulates solutions to many challenges America faces today — safe access to walking and bicycling, the opportunity for more physical activity, a reduction in traffic congestion and cleaner air.

Because communities recognize its potential to change the habits of a generation, the National Safe Routes to School Program has grown by leaps and bounds during its first three years. However, much work remains to be done. Only a small fraction of schools have been able to participate in the National SRTS Program. On average, for every application that receives funding, another two must be turned down. Even among schools that have been part of the initial funding, some have received only a small amount and must address other safety issues before children can safely walk and bicycle to school.

More schools around the country are becoming engaged through Walk to School Day events, and want to build new sidewalks, make street crossings safer, and educate and encourage students to walk and bicycle to school. The interest shown by parents, students, school and community leaders all across the country is a hopeful sign that the National SRTS Program can help to change how children will view transportation choices throughout their lives.

“Imagine that a child born today will be able to grow up with safe walking and bicycling to school as a daily option, and become an adult who understands why such an option is important.”

– Lauren Marchetti, Director, National Center for Safe Routes to School

About the National Center for Safe Routes to School

The National Center for Safe Routes to School serves as the clearinghouse for the Federal Safe Routes to School program. The Center supports the three basic objectives of the federal program:

- ✦ Enable and encourage children to walk and bicycle to school;
- ✦ Improve the safety of children walking and bicycling to school; and
- ✦ Facilitate projects and activities that will reduce traffic, fuel consumption, and air pollution near schools.

The National Center strives to support SRTS programs in such a way that communities are motivated to build and sustain these programs beyond the extent of dedicated Federal funds. Main activities include technical assistance and training, promotion and marketing, program tracking and evaluation.

The National Center is housed within the University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. Funding for the National Center for Safe Routes to School is provided by the Federal Highway Administration, initially led by Tim Arnade and currently under the direction of Rebecca Crowe, Safe Routes to School Program Manager.

The National Center is directed by Lauren Marchetti. Lauren has more than 30 years of experience conducting programs to reduce motor-vehicle-related deaths and injuries. She helped launch the Partnership for a Walkable America and International Walk to School Day. She has led USDOT projects to raise national awareness of pedestrian issues.

The National Center's work is conducted in collaboration with a network of national organizations and experts from across the country.



Photo by Tamara Lackey

CORE STAFF

Lauren Marchetti, *Director*
Nancy Pullen-Seufert, *Associate Director*
Austin Brown, *Program Manager*
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Raquel Rivas, *Marketing Manager*

*With assistance from Toole Design Group led by
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America Walks
American Association of State Highway and
Transportation Officials
Governors Highway Safety Association
Institute of Transportation Engineers
Toole Design Group

FHWA PROGRAM MANAGER

Rebecca Crowe, *FHWA Office of Safety*

The National Center also collaborates with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, and the Safe Routes to School National Partnership.

In addition, the National Center for Safe Routes to School collaborates with hundreds of experts in a variety of fields from around the country.



Photo by Tamara Lackey

NATIONAL REVIEW GROUP

The National Center for Safe Routes to School established a National Review Group comprised of more than 30 transportation, education, health and advocacy leaders, to provide advice and feedback on the goals and objectives of the National Center. Members are:

Katie Adamson
YMCA of the USA
Washington, DC

Barbara Alberson
California Department of Public Health
Sacramento, CA

Roger Allen
Evanston/Skokie School District 65
Evanston, IL

Leon Andrews
National League of Cities
Washington, DC

Elizabeth Blackburn
Environmental Protection Agency
Office of Children's Health Protection
and Environmental Education
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Dana Carr
US Dept of Education
Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools
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Andy Clarke
League of American Bicyclists
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Sarah Coakley
Delaware Department of Transportation
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Esther Corbett
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Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle
Professionals
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Mary Pat King
American Diabetes Association
Alexandria, VA

Renee Kuhlman
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Lt. Rick Reynolds
Hagerstown Police Department
Hagerstown, MD

Sharon Roerty
National Center for Walking and Biking
Maplewood, NJ

Sandy Schefkind
American Occupational Therapy
Association
Bethesda, MD

Stephanie Shipp
Federal Transit Administration
Washington, DC

Lois Thibault
US Access Board
Washington, DC

Ian Thomas, PhD
PedNet Coalition
Columbia, MO

Arthur Wendel, MD
Centers for Disease Control and
Prevention
National Center for Environmental
Health
Chamblee, GA

Paul Zykofsky
Local Government Commission
Sacramento, CA



Safe Routes to School National Conference

The 1st National Safe Routes to School Conference, in Dearborn, Michigan (2007), had a sell-out crowd of 400 attendees. The National Conference is co-presented by the National Center for Safe Routes to School and the Safe Routes to School National Partnership.

The 2nd SRTS National Conference will be hosted by the Bicycle Transportation Alliance in Portland, Oregon, on August 19 – 21, 2009.

For more information, including registration: www.saferoutesconference.org

NATIONAL CENTER RESOURCES

Safe Routes to School Guide:

www.saferoutesinfo.org/guide/

Case studies:

www.saferoutesinfo.org/guide/case_studies/index.cfm

Submit case studies by e-mailing info@saferoutesinfo.org

Data collection forms:

www.saferoutesinfo.org/resources/evaluation_form-descriptions.cfm

Tracking reports:

www.saferoutesinfo.org/resources/tracking-reports.cfm

List of State SRTS Coordinators:

www.saferoutesinfo.org/contacts

E-newsletter:

www.saferoutesinfo.org/news_room/newsletter

Sign up for news from NCSRTS:

www.saferoutesinfo.org/news_room/newsletter/signup.cfm

Podcasts:

www.saferoutesinfo.org/podcast/

Training, including Webinars:

www.saferoutesinfo.org/training/

Local programs from around the country:

www.saferoutesinfo.org/project_list

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