A How-To Handbook for Making it Safe and Fun to Walk and Bike to School
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Acknowledgements

SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL IS A PROGRAM OF
THE MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND
THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION—FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION

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SR2S PILOT ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS
Belmont Elementary, Rockford Public Schools
Cherry Creek Elementary, Lowell Area Schools
Clear Lake Elementary, Oxford Area Community Schools
Frost Elementary, Jackson Public Schools
Lincoln Elementary, Cadillac Area Public Schools
Johnson Elementary, Taylor School District
Stanton Elementary, Central Montcalm Schools
Washington Elementary, Flint Public Schools
Webster Elementary, Pontiac School District
Westlake Elementary, Lakeview School District
Winans Elementary, Waverly Community Schools

SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL STATE NETWORK PARTNERS
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Michigan Fitness Foundation
League of Michigan Bicyclists
Michigan Association of Planning
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Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance
Program to Educate All Cyclists
Wayne State University Center for Urban Studies
Wayne State University Transportation Research Group

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Welcome to
Safe Routes to School
In Michigan

Safe Routes to School is a Michigan (and federal) program to encourage and enable students to bicycle or walk to school on routes that are safe. When routes are safe, walking or biking to and from school are easy ways to ease traffic jams around schools and give students the regular physical activity they need for good health and optimal school performance.

From 2003-05 the Michigan Department of Transportation partnered with the Michigan Fitness Foundation to administer a Safe Routes to School pilot program at 11 elementary schools around the state. The purpose of the pilot was to develop a set of materials and procedures that any Michigan elementary school could use to begin its own SR2S initiative. When the pilot ended in 2005 the program was expanded statewide and made available to all schools. Since then, more than 475 Michigan schools have registered for SR2S, reaching 200,000 student families and the communities in which they live.

“Safe Routes to School is a great way for schools to promote and encourage regular physical activity to their students. Making activity a part of the daily routine for students will help them get the recommended 60 minutes per day of exercise, and they will arrive to class alert, focused and ready to learn. Safe Routes to School creates opportunities for collaboration within communities, and the result is improved programming, policy and infrastructure that benefits the entire community. Congratulations to the participating schools that are making a commitment to safe school commuting and to the health of their students.”

Governor Rick Snyder
Welcome to
Safe Routes to School

“We as parents should not have to worry about our kids getting to school safely. Every child should have a safe route to school. It is critical to our citizens’ quality of life, and we at MDOT must provide a safe, efficient transportation system.”

Kirk T. Steudle, Director
Michigan Department of Transportation

“Creating safe, healthy environments for Michigan’s school children is critical for optimal learning. The daily commute to school has great potential to set the stage for the classroom experience and we are pleased to support the Safe Routes to School initiative as a quality component of our educational system.”

Michael P. Flanagan, Superintendent of Public Instruction
Michigan Department of Education
Welcome to
Safe Routes to School
Two Michigan Success Stories

Frost Elementary School, Jackson, Michigan: Collaboration and Community Momentum

Frost Elementary School, a school in the city of Jackson, began a Safe Routes to School initiative in 2004. While the school principal and staff supported a SR2S start-up, leadership for the Frost initiative came from the Fitness Council of Jackson and the city of Jackson—representing a community wide collaborative that had just been awarded a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation grant for the design of active, livable communities.

During the first year of start-up, the SR2S team developed a marketing campaign to recruit other area schools to join the program. In the spring of 2005, a walking school bus program was launched at 5 local schools, with 10 designated safe routes throughout the city of Jackson.

The City of Jackson was also an active partner in what became the city-wide Safe Routes to School initiative. With the support of the assistant city engineer, city funding was made available to create a pedestrian island along a route to school (see photo above).

A multi-school SR2S funding award, announced in January 2008 by MDOT, included money to continue Frost’s SR2S program.

Horizon Elementary School, Holt: SR2S for Smaller Towns and Rural Settings

Horizon Elementary School in Holt started a walking school bus program in 2009 with a total of five walking school bus routes, but by 2013 Horizon had grown the program to 15 walking school bus routes, sizably increasing the number of children who walk and bike to school. In 2011, Horizon’s principal, David Hornak, applied for a mini-grant with the National Center for Safe Routes to School and was awarded $1,000 to pay for bike locks and signage for their “walking school bus” program. Horizon competed with 300 other schools nationally for this mini-grant. Later in 2011, Horizon was awarded a federal grant through MDOT and partnered with Delhi Charter Township, the Ingham County Road Commission, and the City of Lansing to install sidewalks and crosswalks on Ambler Street and Washington and Willoughby roads, the busiest intersections near Horizon Elementary.

Horizon Elementary is an avid participant in Walk and Bike to School Day events. Principal David Hornak, who was awarded the Governor’s Fitness Award in the category of Champion of Health in 2013, had led by example and constantly encourages his students to lead healthy and active lifestyles.

Additional Michigan success stories, including examples of urban SR2S initiatives, are located in Appendix V, Victories and Success Stories.
In 2005, the United States Congress authorized the first Safe Routes to School federal program and funding stream in the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) transportation bill. In 2012 funding for SR2S was renewed through the new Federal Transportation Act Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21). Under this new act, SR2S was combined with other programs under the new Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP). These federal funds flow through the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs). In Michigan, SR2S school/community teams may apply for funds from MDOT only after the team completes the planning process described in the SR2S Handbook you are holding.

The planning process is a series of steps that a SR2S team takes to answer two important questions: “what are the barriers to walking and bicycling to school on safe routes?” and “how do we remove or diminish those barriers?”

5 PLANNING STEPS
1. Register the school Safe Routes to School initiative at www.saferoutesmichigan.org and consider attending a regional training.
2. Build a multidisciplinary SR2S team.
3. Collect parent and student surveys.
4. Collect environmental information with a bicycling and/or walking audit.
5. Complete an Action Plan of projects and activities to eliminate or reduce barriers, using survey and environmental audit findings.

Walk to School Day is a great way to launch Safe Routes to School and is highly recommended; however, it is not a required planning step.

ACTION PLAN
The SR2S Action Plan pictured on this page is a worksheet that the team completes as the last planning step. The Action Plan describes Safe Routes to School activities and projects in five areas: Engineering, Education, Encouragement, Enforcement and Evaluation.
Examples include:

- Evaluating student and parent attitudes toward walking and bicycling to school
- Engineering safer street crossings or bike lanes
- Educating students about safe walking behaviors
- Encouraging parents to form walking/bicycling groups or obey speed limits in school zones
- Enforcing current laws or starting a community watch program

Completion of the Action Plan also requires the team to identify the steps they will follow to implement the project or activity (column 2), which is responsible for each step (column 3), target dates for completion of steps (column 4), identifying necessary permissions (column 5), and other partners, if any, (last column).

The Action Plan worksheet is available on the enclosed CD.

**THE SR2S HANDBOOK**

All materials and procedures that are needed to complete each planning step are provided in the SR2S Handbook modules. However, the first two pages of each module contain all the information needed to get started.

**Making Change**

**Easy Win**

- Street survey information and audit information to develop a SR2S Action Plan that includes short and long term solutions. Complete only to assist to build momentum and gain public support for other outcomes that will take more time.

- Encouraging students to form walking or bicycling clubs and trail groups in their community.

- Educating students in safe walking behaviors.

- Evaluating student and parent attitudes toward walking and bicycle to school.

- Planning for Safe Routes to School, cont.

**TIP! Read the first two pages in each module to get started.**

Easy-to-read information on the first page includes:

- Description of the activity.
- Why, when, and where advice.
- Easy win ideas and tips.
- List of customizable materials on the CD.

An easy-to-follow checklist on the second page provides step-by-step directions to complete the activity.

**PLANNING AND HANDBOOK MODULES**

The SR2S Handbook modules correspond to four of the Michigan Safe Routes to School planning steps. Directions to complete the first planning step, register the school initiative and attend training, are located on the SR2S website. The website address is www.saferoutesmichigan.org. Contact the Michigan Fitness Foundation at (800) 434-8642 if additional assistance is required.

The planning steps and corresponding Handbook modules are:

- Build a multidisciplinary SR2S team
  → SR2S Team module

- Collect parent and student information with state surveys
  → Behaviors and Attitudes module

- Collect and prioritize environmental information with a bicycling and/or walking audit
  → Safe Routes module

- Action Plan
  → Making Change module and A-Z appendices
The calendar on this page is provided as an example of how to schedule SR2S activities over the course of a school year. However, each Safe Routes to School initiative is unique and the local team should determine the pace and calendar that is reasonable for their school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Walk to School Day</th>
<th>SR2S Team</th>
<th>Behaviors and Attitudes</th>
<th>Safe Routes</th>
<th>Making Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sept.</td>
<td>Plan Walk to School Day</td>
<td>Recruit core SR2S team</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov.</td>
<td>Team meeting</td>
<td>Distribute and collect parent and student surveys</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec.</td>
<td>Team meeting</td>
<td>Analyze survey information</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan.</td>
<td>Team meeting</td>
<td>Plan for environmental audit</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb.</td>
<td>Team meeting</td>
<td>Assign tasks for route assessment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar.</td>
<td>Team meeting</td>
<td>Identify routes to assess</td>
<td>Distribute audit flyers</td>
<td>Invite guests</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Conduct walking/biking route assessment</td>
<td>Identify other experts needed on team</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>Plan for the next fall's Walk to School Day</td>
<td></td>
<td>Action planning meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>June-Aug.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Complete Action Plan</td>
<td>Submit funding application if desired</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
HANDBOOK EXTRAS

Appendices
The Michigan Safe Routes to School Handbook appendices cover a wide range of topics developed to supplement the five activity modules. The materials list located on the module overview page includes the titles of appendices that help complete the module activities. It may also be helpful to scan the appendix titles and consult those appendices that address questions the team has.

Compact Disc (CD)
A CD of Handbook materials is located at the end of the appendices. Many of the documents can be customized for local use, printed, and then copied for distribution. The customizable materials on the CD include:
- Flyers
- Invitation letters
- Press releases

This symbol indicates that a customizable version of the document is included on the CD.

In addition to customizable materials, other materials that SR2S teams may wish to copy and distribute are located on the CD. For a complete list of these documents, open the CD folder titled CD Materials. A partial list of the materials you will find includes:
- Bicycle Education Lessons, Worksheets and Handouts
- Good Nutrition Tips
- SR2S Newsletters

In a few instances, Handbook materials are available only on the CD. For example, Bicycle Education Lessons and supportive materials have been provided only as electronic files. The sun safety tips and SR2S newsletters are also located only on the CD.

DVD
A 14-minute Safe Routes to School DVD is also located on the inside back cover of the binder. This DVD is a fast-paced overview of the five SR2S activities described in the Handbook modules. Michigan elementary schools and SR2S teams that participated in a two-year pilot project are featured on the DVD. The DVD is an effective tool to introduce Safe Routes to School to new SR2S team members and community stakeholder groups. The DVD can be obtained by contacting the SR2S Office at 1-800-434-8642.

Other Helpful Materials
Excellent materials to help educate and engineer for, encourage, enforce, and evaluate Safe Routes to School are available from other organizations and agencies in Michigan and nationally. A partial list of these organization can be found in appendices H, I, J and O.

Handbook Training
Safe Routes to School training is provided free of charge with the Handbook. Call the SR2S office at 1-800-434-8642 or check the SR2S website, www.saferoutesmichigan.org, for an up-to-date training schedule. Training includes a field experience of the route assessment and other interactive exercises to help SR2S teams easily complete the five activities.

Technical Support
Technical assistance is available free of charge through the SR2S office and website. Contact the office at 1-800-434-8642 or submit questions at the website (www.saferoutesmichigan.org).