



Michigan Safe Routes to School in Action... The Active Transportation Mini Grant Program



In 2011 the Safe Routes to School program decided to see what the impact would be from offering mini grants in the form of Walking School Bus-only projects to try to stimulate an entry point into Safe Routes to School planning and interest in walking and biking to school. By developing a competitive RFP process, it was ensured that any community in Michigan would be eligible to compete for these funds, which were capped at \$5,000 per school. 15 schools were selected with a total of \$64,050 being awarded. Based on our evaluation of the pilot program, it became clear that different communities need different interventions, so in

2013 the program was expanded to allow for any noninfrastructure initiative that included active transportation, whether walking, biking, or rolling, in an active school bus model, corner captain, or other initiatives. By 2014 observation and evaluation pointed to the need to institutionalize active transportation programs to build sustainability. At that point we launched the first district-wide initiative in the Holt Public Schools, which was targeted to build on the success they had developed in their first years with mini grant program. Since that time the mini grant program has targeted a mix of single-school, multi-school, and district-wide initiatives to create and support long-term increases in students using active transportation rather than being driven in a car.

Lessons learned from evaluation of the program include:

- Often used as a first step for schools and communities new to SRTS
- Can help build momentum to carry them through the planning/application process for infrastructure improvements
- Helps communities to identify infrastructure needs

Total Project Amount:\$377,285

- 2011: \$64,051
- 2013: \$68,854
- 2014: \$53,524
- 2015: \$78,784
- 2016: \$119,670

Total: \$384,883

