Safe Routes to School
Planning and Program Elements
Westside Elementary and Windsor Middle

Isle of Wight County, VA
January 20, 2011
3:30 PM

Safe Routes to School Planning

1. Set Goal(s)

2. Analyze
    a. Gather Base information – assets and barriers
        1. School info – policies, boundaries, etc.
        2. Walking and biking numbers
        3. Safety issues – traffic, sidewalks, crosswalks, etc
        4. Attitudes of parents and students

3. Plan
    a. Write objectives related to each of the 5 E's (Education, Engineering, Encouragement, Enforcement, and Evaluation)
        1. Ensure SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, & Time-bound) objectives.
        2. Process objectives – what will be done
        3. Outcome objectives – what change is expected
    b. Address what is to happen, to whom, by whom, by when and in what amount.
    c. Decide what, how and when to measure

4. Execute
    a. Conduct the program and monitor progress
    b. Collect information and interpret findings
    c. Use Results
        1. Build on what is working
        2. Change what is not

Walk to School Day, 2004, Jenkins Elementary, Scituate, Massachusetts

Safe Routes to School Program Elements

1. Education

Comes before encouragement. Activities / findings should be communicated through media, school newsletter, etc…

Education for the team

1. Facilitate a neighborhood walk-about and bike-about
2. Observe school drop-off and pick-up times, tour the school zone and routes to school, identify and photograph safety concerns
3. Complete school walkabilty / bikeability checklists
4. Survey the students, parents, local officials, etc…

Education for children/parents/drivers/neighbors

Think about

- Who needs to receive information
- When the education should be delivered
- What information needs to be shared
- How the messages will be conveyed

Children

- Pedestrian safety skills
- Crossing the street, using sidewalks, watching for vehicles, visibility, etc…
- Bicyclist safety skills
- Riding in a straight line, stopping quickly, helmets, etc…
- Personal safety
- Health and environmental benefits

Parents (through print, media, training and enforcement)

- Age specific safety practices
- Correct drop off and pick up procedures
- Safe driving practices near a school

Drivers (signage, enforcement, media)

- Watch for and yield to pedestrians and bicyclists near and around the school
- Obey speed limits
- Stop completely at stop signs
- Do not block pedestrian crosswalks, stop well in advance of them

Neighbors (flyers, informational meetings, signs)

- Keep sidewalks clear
- Prune plants to enhance visibility
- Keep unleashed pets off the route

Law enforcement officer teaching children about pedestrian safety in Baltimore, MD.

Educating drivers in a school drop-off and pick-up area.

Education Activities

- teach pedestrian and bicycle safety skills to students and parents
- organize a Bicycle Rodeo or training course to teach on-bike skills
- teach the health, environmental and sustainable transportation benefits of walking and bicycling to students and parents
- educate parents and caregivers about safe driving procedures at the school(s)
- create educational materials
- teach personal safety skills to students and parents
- train school and community audiences about Safe Routes to School

2. Encouragement

Have fun – special events, mileage clubs, contests…

Walk to school days – make it a special event, banners, treats, etc…
Walking school buses / bicycle trains
Contests with celebration rewards
Hand out school route maps

Encouragement Activities
- start a Walking School Bus program
- start a Bike Train program
- host International Walk to School Day or other special event
- initiate a walking/biking mileage club or other contest
- create a park-and-walk program
- promote Safe Routes to School in the community
- initiate an incentive program for safe travel behaviors among students
- conduct a community safe driving awareness and education campaign

3. Enforcement

Deter the unsafe behaviors of drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclist.

Identify unsafe behaviors
Visual
Speed measurements
Recent crash reports

Driver behaviors
Speeding
Failing to yield
Running red lights/stop signs
Passing stopped school buses
Parking or stopping in crosswalks

Pedestrian behaviors
Not following directions of crossing guard or traffic signals
Not looking before crossing street
Crossing at an undesirable location
Darting out between parked cars

Bicyclist behaviors
Riding into traffic without looking
Riding against traffic
Turing left without signaling
Riding our from driveway or between parked vehicles
Not wearing helmet
Not being visible when riding in road

Roles of the Enforcement officer
1. Teach safety issues to children, school officials, parents and the community
2. Evaluate local traffic concerns, problem areas, and provide input about safe routes
3. Provide an enforcement presence that discourages dangerous behaviors
4. Monitor crossing guards and students to ensure they are acting safely & appropriately

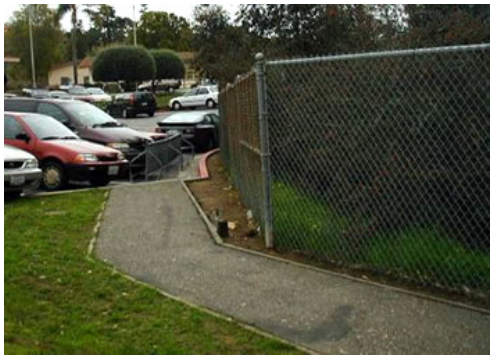
Other enforcement options
1. Safety patrols – older students become safety patrol members assist with arrival and departure, builds student role models
2. Adults volunteer to be school crossing guards
3. Neighborhood speed watch – citizens are given radar units to track and record speed data in their neighborhood.

Law Enforcement
1. Involve parents and the community that program is beginning
2. Use public awareness and education first – flyers, mailings, newspaper articles, portable speed limits,
3. Pedestrian decoy operations
4. Issue tickets last, after education, and warnings

Enforcement Activities
- create a crossing guard training program
- create a parent or student patrol program
- lower speed limits in school(s) vicinity

4. Engineering

School Zone – area around the school and a couple of blocks out
- Consult MUTCD for guidance and recommendations
- Signs and pavement markings
- Speed limit and signing
- Portable speed limit signs
- Advance warning signs



Two-mile radius of school
- Identify routes with minimal busy street crossings
- Safe street crossings
- Adequate path widths
- ADA accessibility
- Presence of Bicycle racks

Develop a school route map that shows the safest and most convenient route, and identifies areas where improvements are needed (crossing guards, signs, crosswalks, etc.)

Types of Improvements
- Simple – signs and paint
- Complex – new sidewalks, bridges, reconstructed street crossings

Engineering Activities
- construct, replace, improve or repair sidewalks
- install traffic calming measures (curb extensions, speed humps, raised crosswalks, narrowing lanes, street closures)
- create on-street bicycle accommodations (bike lanes, widened shoulders, etc.)
- build off-street walking/bicycling paths
- install, enhance or repair crosswalks
- install curb extensions to reduce the crossing distance on streets
- install new or improved signage (school zone, speed limits, crosswalk)
- install new or improved pavement markings or legends
- make existing walkways accessible to disabled students
- install bicycle parking near schools (bike racks, bike lockers, covered shelters)
- install median refuges for street crossings
- install traffic control devices (traffic signals, pedestrian signals, flashing beacons)
- increase safety and access for students walking and biking to school by redesigning pick-up and drop-off areas

5. Evaluation

Are strategies addressing the underlying problems?
Are the objectives setting reasonable expectations?
What changes will improve the program?
What are the impacts?

Occurs before, during and after.

Before (use the information to determine strategies and goals)

1. Student travel tally (can be entered into web based tools to summarize the information)
2. Parent survey (can be entered into web based tools to summarize the information)
3. Ask principal about any rules related to bicycling and walking/ crash data / safety concerns / walking biking routes
4. Assess the routes
5. Share results

During

1. Keep track of number of attendants at activities
2. Keep track of number of flyers handed out
3. Share results

After

1. Complete the student travel tally and parent survey information and compare results
2. Re-assess travel routes along which improvements were made
3. Share results

Evaluation Tools

1. Student Talley
2. Parent Survey
3. Observations – walk ability / bike ability checklist
4. Interviews – informal with parents as they drop off kids or with principal, town planner, engineer
5. Existing data – crash data, walking routes, GIS data, sidewalks, etc…

Evaluation Activities (collect data **both before and after** implementation)
- counting the number of students who walk and bicycle to and from school
- measuring parent/guardian perceptions of safety *(Parent Survey or similar)*
- obtaining planning services for expanding or improving an existing School Travel Plan.