



# Creating Safe Walking and Bicycling Communities: Safe Routes to School Decision Maker Toolkit

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## Active Transportation Tips for School District Leaders

### Ask “*what has already been done?*” to promote safe and active transportation

- How is active transportation addressed in our existing guidelines, such as:
  - Our student wellness policy? (See *California School Boards Association Sample Student Wellness Policy Guide* at [www.ca-ilg.org/srts-toolkit/active-transportation-tips-school-district-leaders](http://www.ca-ilg.org/srts-toolkit/active-transportation-tips-school-district-leaders).)
  - Our transportation policy?
  - Our safety policy?
  - Our green school operations policy? (See *California School Boards Association Green School Policy Brief* at [www.ca-ilg.org/srts-toolkit/active-transportation-tips-school-district-leaders](http://www.ca-ilg.org/srts-toolkit/active-transportation-tips-school-district-leaders).)
- What district staff have been assigned to school transportation safety? What are their concerns and priorities?
- How have district busing discussions addressed active transportation alternatives?
- What has been our district’s history with safe routes to school funding? Did the proposal process identify other unmet needs or recommended strategies?
- What committees have addressed safe routes to school? Consider youth services, citizen advisory, school-connected organizations, parent/teacher organizations, intergovernmental relations, business relations and parental involvement.
- How is active transportation and connectivity to residential neighborhoods addressed in our school siting policy?
- Have fellow trustees seen data linking physical activity and academic achievement?
- How is school transportation addressed in school site comprehensive safety plans?
- Are there particular schools that have made this a priority? What lessons can be learned from their experience?

- Are there school principals or teachers that have been training students on pedestrian and bicycle safety or offering active transportation events? How can their ideas be replicated in other school sites?
- How has our district partnered with local law enforcement?

## Set Direction and Establish Structure

- Build a shared understanding within your governance board of the benefits of students safely walking and bicycling to and from school. Back your beliefs with research. Start with [www.activelivingresearch.com](http://www.activelivingresearch.com).
- Adopt a district initiative that supports and encourages walking and bicycling to school. See *California School Boards Association Safe Routes to School Sample 5142.2* at [www.ca-ilg.org/srts-toolkit/active-transportation-tips-school-district-leaders](http://www.ca-ilg.org/srts-toolkit/active-transportation-tips-school-district-leaders). Ensure alignment of this policy with district's green school operation policy, transportation policy, student wellness policy and safety policy.
- Establish a local active transportation planning team with parent organizations, students, school administrators and staff, local law enforcement, city planners, health officials, pedestrian and bicycle organizations. Encourage collaboration across local efforts to promote resident health and safety. See *California School Boards Association Building Healthy Communities* at [www.ca-ilg.org/srts-toolkit/active-transportation-tips-school-district-leaders](http://www.ca-ilg.org/srts-toolkit/active-transportation-tips-school-district-leaders).
- Prioritize school transportation safety issues with the help of the National Center for Safe Routes to School *Prioritization Guide* at [www.ca-ilg.org/srts-toolkit/active-transportation-tips-school-district-leaders](http://www.ca-ilg.org/srts-toolkit/active-transportation-tips-school-district-leaders).
- Establish age appropriate curricular goals on physical activity and safe walking and bicycling. See *Safe Routes to School National Partnership* at [www.ca-ilg.org/srts-toolkit/active-transportation-tips-school-district-leaders](http://www.ca-ilg.org/srts-toolkit/active-transportation-tips-school-district-leaders).
- Ensure the district is working with your city or county to pursue funding opportunities.

## Walk Your Talk

- Appoint a board member to sit on the Safe Routes to School Committee to provide input on development, implementation and evaluation strategies.
- Invest and advocate for projects that support active transportation.
- Promote and participate in walk and bicycle to school events.

- Encourage board members to model physical activity. Create a challenge. Clock your walking and bicycling miles.
- Work with the superintendent or designee to evaluate active transportation goals. Request regular progress reports to the board.

Special thanks to the California School Board Association and Project Lean for much of the content of this section.

For more on active transportation, access the *Creating Safe Walking and Bicycling Communities: Safe Routes to Schools Decision Maker Toolkit* at [www.ca-ilg.org/SRTS-toolkit](http://www.ca-ilg.org/SRTS-toolkit).<sup>1</sup>



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<sup>1</sup> The *Safe Routes to School Decision Maker Toolkit* was developed by the Cities, Counties and Schools Partnership and the Institute for Local Government for the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Technical Assistance Resource Center (TARC). The SRTS TARC is a program within California Active Communities, a joint Unit of the University of California, San Francisco and the California Department of Public Health, and is funded through a SRTS Non-Infrastructure award from the California Department of Transportation.