



San Francisco Bike to School Day 2011 Organizer Handbook



2010 Poster Contest Artwork by Doreen P.

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In San Francisco, the number of adults riding bicycles has increased nearly 60% from 2005-2010 and in 2009, seven in 10 San Franciscans said they rode a bike. Thanks in large part to improvements like the Market Street separated bike lane, events like Sunday Streets and programs like Safe Routes to School, more people and families are cycling in general. This growing interest in cycling and its benefits were the motivation behind an October 26th, 2010 mandate from the SF Board of Supervisors to achieve 20% of all trips by bicycle by the year 2020.

About SF Bike to School Day

San Francisco Bike to School Day is an annual event for students, parents, teachers, administrators, elected officials, and others to experience the joys of cycling together to and from school. Building on the success of International Walk to School Day in October and the SF Bay Area regional Bike to Work Day each spring, San Francisco Bike to School Day was launched in 2008 with close to 500 students participating and doubled in participation in 2010 with 1,000 riders and about half as many adults taking part. ***This year, Bike to School Day will be on April 7, 2011, and we anticipate 3,000 riders!***

San Francisco Bike to School Day became an official “Encouragement” activity of the San Francisco Safe Routes to School Program in 2010. Safe Routes to School (SRTS) is an international movement in more than 40 countries with over 5,400 programs running in and all 50 US states. Safe Routes to School Programs provide an opportunity to make walking and bicycling to school safer and more accessible for children, including those with disabilities, and to increase the number of children who chose to walk and bicycle. More information on San Francisco’s program can be found at www.sfsaferoutes.org.

Schools participate by signing up online at www.sfbiketoschoolday.org or by contacting the San Francisco Bicycle Coalition at (415) 431-2453, ext 314. Participating schools may request promotional materials like posters and incentives like “frequent rider kits” (rider bags), and attend training opportunities. Each year, all k-12th grade students in San Francisco may participate in a poster contest and the winning poster will be used as the official event poster. This year’s theme is “My Family Bike Ride”. In 2010 and again in 2011, the top 3 poster contest entries will be displayed at the prestigious deYoung Art Museum in Golden Gate Park as part of the *Young at Art* Exhibition.

Organizing Bike to School Day

The key to a successful Bike to School Day event is to find a champion(s) at your school. This may be a parent volunteer, your Safe Routes to School Liaison, school staff, member of the PTA, etc.

The Bike to School Day Organizer will:

- Identify meeting points and routes
- Identify parents who can lead a Biking School Bus or Bike Train/locate other nearby schools to team up if possible.
- Promote the event to students, parents, and school staff.
- For students who live too far away from school to reasonably bike to school and be picked up by a Bike School Bus, parents may choose to drop off their child, with his or her bicycle, at designated meeting points for the Bike School Bus(es). This will be covered in detail later in the handbook.

Bike to School Day events will be run differently at the elementary, middle, and high schools levels. In elementary and middle schools, experienced parent, teacher, administrator, and other adult volunteers will need to be heavily involved in the Biking School Bus/Bike Train to ensure the students’ safety. Schools can individually request a police escort for their rides from their local district stations. By contrast, it is hoped that Bike to School Day events at the high school level will be largely organized, promoted, and run by the students themselves, with support from teachers and other school staff and community members. In 2010, one pre-school participated by

coordinating their cycling procession with the nearby elementary school. The collaboration was very successful and we hope more schools will do coordinate together this year.

Training

To get families ready to bike to school, we are teaming up with [YBIKE](#) to launch the new "Community Hubs" program at schools, teaching families bicycle and pedestrian safety on select Saturdays across San Francisco. This is open to the public with staff experienced in teaching people of all ages to ride.

Participants will learn how to ride confidently and cross the street safely
Staff will be offering bicycle mechanical check assessments and lead an optional family bike ride on the road at the end of the workshop. There will also be a bike swap at Community Hubs before Bike to School Day. The bike swap is a way for families who have bikes they are not using to donate them to be checked over and donated to families that are in need of bikes.

Schedule of the 3 Community Hub events prior to Bike to School Day:

- 2/26/11 Monroe Elementary School, insert address
- 3/5/11 Cesar Chavez Elementary School, insert address
- 3/19/11 Francis Scott Key Elementary School, insert address

All programs will be from 10 AM- 3 PM.

Please bring a lunch and a bicycle if you have them. We will provide a limited number of adult and youth bicycles to use during the event.

Walking and Biking to School in the US

Not long ago, most kids in the US walked or biked to school – just under half of all students as recently as 1969, and for those who lived a mile or less from school, a robust nine out of ten walked or biked to class. In 2001, less than 15 percent of students between the ages of 5 and 15 walked to or from school, with a mere 1 percent biking. Even for students who live within a mile from school, just one third of them (31%) bike or walk to school these days, a dramatic decline.

At present, the majority of students in the San Francisco Unified School District are driven to school by their parents and this comes at serious costs. According to the US Environmental Protection Agency, nationally 20-25% of morning rush hour traffic is attributable to parents driving their children to school. More important, as motor vehicle traffic around schools increases, parents are convinced that walking or bicycling to school is unsafe for their children, and the percentage of children walking and bicycling to school dwindles further. However, this belief is based on fear and misunderstanding, rather than fact and data. While parents may believe that the safest way to school is for them to drive their children, being inside a motor vehicle does not ensure safety. In fact, motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for children. According to the US Centers for Disease Control from 1999-2007 58% of fatalities for ages 1-17 years (67,330) were due to "Motor Vehicle Traffic" collisions. This is in contrast to .04% of fatalities (274) from "Pedal Cyclists" nationally (children and youth 1-17 years of age). (<http://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/index.html>)

Room for improvement

- Currently, less than 0.1% of San Francisco school children regularly bike to school. Most take the bus to school or are driven by their parents. This significantly worsens traffic congestion and puts countless children at risk from motor vehicle collisions.
- 66% of students in the SFUSD do not meet recommended daily levels of activity. One quarter of students is overweight, and nearly 1 in 10 students is obese. Vehicle emissions, the largest cause of air pollution in California, are particularly unhealthy to children's respiratory systems, contributing to asthma and other illnesses. San Francisco Bike to School Day is designed to raise awareness about these dangers and costs.
- The percentage of young people in America who are overweight has quadrupled in the past 25 years. Driving children to school only exacerbates this dangerous trend, while bicycling or walking to school would help it significantly. 66% of students in the SFUSD do not meet recommended daily levels of activity. One quarter of students is overweight, and nearly 1 in 10 students is obese.
- Parents who drive their children to school also may not be aware that by driving they contribute to the traffic congestion and traffic danger surrounding the school, as well as to air pollution in the atmosphere in general. Motor vehicle use is the source of more air pollution than any other activity.¹

San Francisco Bike to School Day is designed to raise awareness about these dangers and costs. It is a day of action for students, parents, teachers, administrators, and others, to try another way to and from school. (Walk + Bike Playbook; Safe Routes to School Guide, http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/guide/introduction/the_decline_of_walking_and_bicycling.cfm).

San Francisco schools were designed to serve the neighborhoods they are located in, rather than serve as "magnet schools" as evidenced by the consistent lack of parking lots or passenger loading areas. Starting in 2011, there will be being a gradual transition back to this system as the SF Unified School District has changed their Student Attendance Area Policy to give more priority to students attending their neighborhood schools. This means that it is likely to be easier in the future for more students to walk and bicycle to school.

Safe Routes to Schools in San Francisco

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) is an international movement in more than 40 countries and all 50 states. They provide an opportunity to make walking and bicycling to school safer and more accessible for children, including those with disabilities, and to increase the number of children who chose to walk and bicycle. On a broader level, SRTS programs can enhance children's health and well being, ease traffic congestion near schools, improve air quality, and improve community member's overall quality of life. Safe Routes to School All programs share the following components, commonly known as the "5 E's": [Education, Encouragement, Enforcement, Engineering, and Evaluation](#).

During the first round of Federal Safe Routes to Schools funding, members from the Shape Up San Francisco Coalition (formed by Mayor Gavin Newsom) along with representatives from the SF Department of Public Health, Department of Children, Youth and Families, SF Bicycle Coalition, SF Police Department, SF Municipal Transportation Agency's School Traffic Safety Program, and the SF Unified School District worked collaboratively to write and win a Safe Routes to Schools non-infrastructure grant to launch a 2 year pilot program. Although this grant was awarded in early 2007, it began in fall of 2009 in 5 schools and has been expanded to 15 public elementary schools. The program has since been funded through the Metropolitan Transportation Commission through 2013. More information is available at www.sfsaferoutes.org.

¹ . Environmental Protection Agency. 2006. National Emissions Inventory (NEI) Trends Report: Average annual emissions, all criteria pollutants. Accessed at <http://www.epa.gov/ttn/chieftrends/>

Typical Schedule for Bike to School Day

Although the event will be organized and run by different groups of people at the different levels, every Bike to School Day event will unfold similarly at all levels. A typical schedule might look as follows (Adapted from Oregon Walk + Bike to School Day Playbook):

7:00am - Volunteers, officials, and team leaders meet at up to three designated residential locations within one mile from the school with banners, vests and signs. Team leaders teach groups pedestrian and bicycle safety techniques.

7:30am - Adult-led Walk + Bike School Buses begin traveling a pre-determined, designated route to the school, picking up kids at houses, street corners, parks, and/or businesses along the way. In some cases these Bike School Buses may travel under escort by the SFPD.

8:00am - Groups begin arriving at the designated school arrival/press conference/assembly location, where a welcome/Energizer station staffed by students and other volunteers is ready with healthy snacks, smoothies, and other incentives for arriving riders.

8:45am - Principal or other SF Bike to School Day leader facilitates educational assembly/press event, which could include officials, celebrities, and other speakers and performers. Students receive Bike to School Day items included in their “frequent rider kit” bag. Giveaway items may include some combination of the following: a reusable SF Bike to School Day bag, a “Be Cool: Bike to School” lanyard for keys, a bicycle bell from Trek Bicycles, a San Francisco Bike Map and Walking Guide, and fruit treat.

9:30am - Students go to class, participants are thanked, media interviews take place (if applicable).

Throughout school day – Students participate in classroom activities and lessons designed to teach them more about the health, environmental, transportation, and community benefits of bicycling to school.

3:00pm - Adult-led Walk + Bike School Buses walk and bike home, reversing routes on which they biked to school in the morning.



Safe Routes Educator, Rose Johnson, with a group of riders from Longfellow Elementary School.

5 Key Steps to Organizing Your Event

Adapted from Oregon Walk + Bike to School Day Playbook

Think R.A.P.I.D.!

- 1) **R**ecruit others and get organized
 - 2) **A**dvertise and promote the event at your school
 - 3) **P**lan the event (and be sure it's appropriate for your school)
 - 4) **I**nvolve many different people and groups to cover all your bases in the planning process
 - 5) **D**eliver! Bike to school and celebrate.
-

- 1) **R**ecruit others and get organized
 - **Contact the Bike to School Day Organizing Committee**
Visit www.sfbiketoschoolday.org, email sfbike2schoolday@gmail.com or call (415) 431-2453 ext 314. Let us know you're interested in helping with Bike to School Day, how you'd like to help, and what school you'd like to help with. Find out what's happening at other schools. We'll put you in touch with anyone else who's already organizing at your school, help get you started if you're the first person who's organizing at your school, or point you in the right direction if you're looking for something else related to B2SD.
 - **Find out who is interested.** Talk to the school principal, teachers, the school health advocate, school bicycling or outdoor clubs, parents, PTA, neighborhood association, local businesses, local churches and church groups, community organizations, youth groups, local police and fire stations – everybody and anybody you can think of who might be willing and able to help.
 - **Find an organizing team leader(s).** This should be someone talented, committed, and determined that the team will trust.
 - **Find a nearby participating school and multiply your efforts!** Check the map of participating schools at www.sfbiketoschoolday.org to find a nearby school and their contact person. Teaming up will inspire you as well as save time and energy if you can share resources like flyers and build excitement between your schools.
 - **Organize an initial meeting.** If possible, meet at the school, so that you can get a sense of what it will be like to bike to that school with students. Choose a time that will be most convenient for everyone, and put flyers up around the school and neighborhood to advertise and promote the meeting. If it's not possible to meet at the school, choose a neutral place such as a local café, church, community center, park, library or other neighborhood meeting area. Invite anyone who has expressed interest in helping organize the event, anyone who you haven't contacted yet who you think might be interested in helping, and anyone else you can think of who might possibly help.

At the meeting, talk about what you'd each like Bike to School Day to look like at your school. Create a timeline for the coming months and assign tasks. Get an idea of what you think you'll need for the day of the event, including the number of volunteers. Finally, don't leave the meeting without making a date for the next meeting!

- **Follow up.** Start the communication chain, so that people can begin contacting each other directly. Remind everyone of what they committed to do. Make sure everyone knows when the next meeting is, and where it will be held. Stay connected!
- **Build partnerships.** Beyond the B2SD Committee, other groups, organizations, businesses and agencies involved in health, transportation and physical activity can often provide resources such as money, printing, volunteers, incentives and media help.
- **Keep everyone informed.** Engage and inspire them, and keep them excited about the work they're volunteering to do!

2) Advertise and promote the event at your school

- **Request outreach materials.** The San Francisco B2SD Organizing Committee has a limited supply of Bike to School Day advertising and outreach materials, including signs, flyers, banners, brochures, and other materials. You may download flyers from our website. You may also want to create posters and banners for your school event. Students, parents, teachers, or volunteers may be interested in designing a Bike to School Day poster and banners that are unique to your school.
- **Get the word out.** Include information about the event in the school or community newsletter; post information about the event on the school's website or your PTA website; make phone calls; post fliers at local bike shops and other businesses, as well as community parks and boards; hand out fliers and brochures at school and community events at public places; and hold informal informational meetings at the school and throughout the neighborhood to let students, teachers, and community residents know what is going on. Get event information to email lists, community groups and facilities. Ask if you can go into each classroom to give an educational talk to inform and engage students about Bike to School Day. Get kids involved in spreading the word!
- **Encourage classroom activities.** We will be making lessons specific to Bike to School Day available to interested teachers. Check www.sfbiketoschoolday.org for more information. Include other bicycle safety education that will help students be more informed and prepared on Bike to School Day, such as helmet safety demonstrations (helmet "melon drops"), pedestrian safety assemblies, and personal safety education. Art projects, student surveys, walk/bike to school contests, walks and school or community bike rides can motivate kids and get them excited about Walk + Bike to School Day.
- **Introduce bicycle safety education at your school.** Attend a Community Hubs event across San Francisco. More information at www.ybike.org. If your middle school has a Presidio YMCA-run after-school bike club, those experienced students could help educate their peers.
- **Find a local media sponsor.** Does someone on your team or volunteer list work at or know someone else who works at a local media outlet? Get the local community newsletter, newspaper, neighborhood blog, or other media outlet to sponsor your event.
- **Find a food sponsor.** Contact a local restaurant, bakery or other food business to get snacks, juice, energy bars, fruit, water and other healthy food items to give to participants during their walk and at the school event table.

3) Plan the event

- **Connect with the San Francisco B2SD Organizing Committee.** We are a clearinghouse of information on Bike to School Day, a central information and connection hub, and a cheerleading team for the many groups and people organizing Bike to School Day events at individual schools across the city. While it is up to you to make Bike to School Day happen at your school, we are here to support schools, organizations, students, community groups, and any other groups and individuals organizing this event in whatever way we can.

- **Consult other resources.** While we hope this Handbook is chock-full with useful information, when it cannot answer your question, consult the wealth of links and resources in the “Resources” section at the end of this manual to point you in the right direction. We recommend the Oregon Walk + Bike to School Playbook (the inspiration and starting point for San Francisco’s B2SD Handbook). A related and also recommended guide from Oregon Walk + Bike that can be found at the same web address is their Walk + Bike ‘School Bus’ Guidebook. Also notably useful, even though it is only a guide to organizing a Walk to School Day, is the CDC’s KidsWalk-to-School Guide.
- **Start an Organizational Chart.** When you meet with your team, an organizational chart will help you all figure out what needs to be done to make the event a success, when it needs to be done by, and who will be responsible for doing it, along with other information. Develop a timeline. List all tasks, estimate how many people/hours are needed, and decide when they should be completed by. Be sure to include contact information for everyone already involved, such as the team leader(s).
- **Assess your school’s area safety.** Survey and consult parents, administrators, and students, to find the best routes to school for bicycles. Walk the streets immediately adjoining the school and the surrounding neighborhood in the morning and after-school commute times to assess the safety. For Safe Routes to School Program schools walking and bicycling maps have been created and are available for download at www.sfsaferoutes.org.
- **Determine the most secure bike parking situation.** We will be providing a Valet Parking Kit to help you keep track of your participants and their bikes. More specific instructions will follow when your materials are dropped off. There has been a dramatic reversal of position in the SFUSD around bike parking in the last 3 years. The SFUSD Director of Sustainability, Nik Kaestner, (email: kaestnern@sfusd.edu) secured a regional Transportation Fund for Clean Air funding to purchase and install parking for up to 16 bicycles at every elementary school and parking for 26 bicycles at every high school. Consult your principal for more information. The racks are being installed in 2011 so they may not be available at your public school in time for SF Bike to School Day. You may need to work with the school to come up with a creative solution for the day. In some cases all that is needed is a secure, fenced corner of the schoolyard with good visibility, and a long cable to lock bikes. (It is also helpful to encourage students not to ride their fanciest bike to school.) In the most extreme cases, volunteer students, parents, teachers, or school staff may be needed to staff the bicycle parking station.
- **Plan and map your route(s) carefully.** With information gleaned from your surveys, choose starting locations in parks or other quiet locations which are easily accessible, safe places to meet at early hours in the morning, and big enough to accommodate small groups. Choose routes that minimize time on busy roads and conflicts with aggressive commuting drivers at busy intersections. Determine what streets or intersections, if any, are so unsafe that they will need posted volunteer crossing guards or guides. Bicycle the route yourself during the morning commute. Conduct a practice walk or bike with other parents and students. Map your route(s) so that they are easy to follow on Bike to School Day.
- **Train adult Bike School Bus leaders.** The B2SD Organizing Committee will be organizing trainings for all prospective Bike School Bus leaders through the Community Hubs program. If possible, all adult Bike School Bus leaders should attend this training. Make sure all adult leaders who cannot attend this training are qualified to lead a Bike School Bus.
- **Connect student with bike rental companies, if needed.** Parents of those students who will need to borrow or rent a bike to participate in Bike to School Day will need to arrange this in advance with a bike rental company. This includes completing all paperwork, including liability form and damage deposit, and picking up the bike itself before the day of the event.
- **Send out parental consent forms.** If the school requires parents to sign a consent form for their child to bike to school on Bike to School Day, be sure those forms are sent out with plenty of time.
- **Plan the welcome table/Energizer station.** Use the request form at the end of this Handbook to request goodies, prizes, and educational information for the welcome table and Energizer station. Any food you plan to have will need to be arranged well in advance with whoever is providing it.

- **Coordinate your educational assembly.** If you plan to have a short education assembly, press conference, or other welcome event before the students go to their classes, you will need to plan this in advance with the school principal and anyone who will be speaking or helping put on the assembly. If you're holding a press conference, you'll need to be in regular communication with media outlets to be sure they show up at your event; you will also want to write and issue a press release.
- 4) Involve many different people and groups in the planning process
- **Let the San Francisco B2SD Committee help you!** When you register your school with the SF B2SD Committee, you will have access to our many resources, as well as those of our partners, including the SF Department of Public Health, Municipal Transportation Agency, San Francisco Bicycle Coalition, (DCYF), San Francisco Police Department, and other organizations. While it is up to you to make Bike to School Day happen at your school, we are here to support schools, organizations, students, community groups, and any other groups and individuals organizing this event in whatever way we can.
 - **Recruit volunteers.** You will need volunteers to pull off your event, and the earlier you recruit them, the better off you'll be as the date approaches. You'll need experienced parent bicyclists to serve as "Bike Bus drivers"; adult volunteers to set up, staff, and take down the welcome tables/energizer stations; student, teacher, or parent bicycle parking volunteers; even volunteer "celebrities", officials, or others to help facilitate the educational assembly at the school.
 - **Request official MTA, DPW, or SFPD support, if needed.** If you would like an SFPD escort for any of your Bike School Buses, or if you would like SF MTA or DPT support at critical intersections, you will need to request these by March 31st, 2011 from your local police station captain. For those who will be receiving an SFPD escort or other city agency support, you will need to thoroughly brief the SFPD or other city agency on your school's Bike to School Day plan, including carefully going over the route(s) you plan to take, and providing them with a map of the route.
 - **Manage your volunteers.** Maintain regular check-ins with volunteers – well before deadlines – to make sure they are progressing on their projects and fulfilling their commitments. Ideally, you will be able to do this in person, at regularly scheduled meetings, or by phone or email. Leaders should provide necessary guidance and information and give positive feedback and encouragement. Be sure volunteers know exactly what tasks need to be filled, what time commitment they need to make, and any other critical information. Contact all of your volunteers and get confirmation of their commitments in the days immediately leading up to the event.
- 5) Deliver! Bike to School and celebrate.
- **Communicate!** When the day is nearly upon you, you'll need to communicate with all your volunteers and team members, the school, parents, students, and others to be sure all runs smoothly and everyone does what they are supposed to do. You cannot communicate too much during these days!
 - **Follow your plan.** While some improvisation will doubtless be necessary on the day of the event, sticking to your plan will help you achieve the goals you seek, and will help assure that the event runs as smoothly and safely as possible.
 - **Have fun!** Have a great time on Bike to School Day. Celebrate the work you've put into organizing the event and the many achievements of your dedicated team, celebrate the difference you're making in your community, your school, and the lives of all the school's students, and – most important – celebrate the students who've taken the bold step of riding their bike to school! They've helped themselves, by improving their health, their school community, by helping cut down on dangerous school traffic, and their world, by helping not emit more carbon into the atmosphere. It's an achievement worthy of great celebration. Have a great one!

2011 School Sign-Up form - San Francisco Bike to School Day
For use with schools not signing up online

Return to: SF Bicycle Coalition
833 Market St., 10th Floor
San Francisco, CA 94103
Fax# (415) 431-2468

This form is available online at: www.sfbiketoschoolday.org

Please use the form to request participant "Frequent Rider Kits" (souvenir bags), help and additional information. We will accommodate your requests as we are able and look forward to hearing from you!

Due to limited supplies:

- * Please only ask for what you expect to use
- * Prizes are for students and/or classrooms that participate in SF Bike to School Day
- * Requests are subject to availability (of people and materials).

School: _____ **Anticipated # of riders** _____

Name: _____

What is your role at the school? _____

Email: _____ **Phone:** _____

How did you hear about SF Bike to School Day? _____

Did your school participate last year? Y/ N _____

of 11" X 17" posters requested: _____

of "I Biked Today!" stickers (sheet of 30) _____

of Barricades (if available, to create temporary bike parking at your school) _____

of additional volunteers requested? * _____

*We will be looking for additional volunteers to help chaperone rides. If we are able to find volunteers to support your event, we ask that you keep them updated to any logistical changes and be available by phone or email in the time leading up to your event.

Requesting Police Escort

SF Police Department has instructed that interested schools should request Police Escort and school area traffic enforcement from their local station a week prior to the event- by March 31st, 2011.

Additional comments or feedback

Case Studies

Rosa Parks Elementary School, Portland OR - On October 8th, 2008, Portland, Oregon was one of many communities throughout the world, including San Francisco, to observe International Walk and Bike to School Day. Over 44 schools (and more than 150 throughout Oregon) celebrated programs that encourage kids to get to school under their own power.

In Portland, the day's festivities were centered at Rosa Parks Elementary School. Rosa Parks is one of 25 schools in the Portland area that receive comprehensive "Safer Routes to Schools" program, which is funded through City of Portland's Community and Schools Traffic Safety Partnership, via thanks to traffic fine revenues.

At Rosa Parks, a select group of students met with various dignitaries, including mayor-elect Sam Adams, Schools Superintendent Carole Smith, and ODOT Regional Manager Jason Tell, to share their ideas and challenges about walking and biking to school. Portland's Safe Routes to School program is managed by the Bicycle Transportation Alliance (BTA).

Roosevelt Middle School, Eugene, OR - In Eugene, OR, Roosevelt Middle School also celebrated International Walk and Bike to School Day. Shane Rhodes, program manager for Eugene's Safe Routes to Schools program, says their event included "bike-blended smoothies, fire-juggling cyclists, music, and a special appearance by the Oregon Duck". Rhodes added that more than 25 schools will be participating in Walk and Bike to School Day in Eugene this year up from 8 schools last year).

More information on Oregon's Walk and Bike to School Day programs can be found at WalknBike.org.

(Source: Adapted from BikePortland.org website: <http://bikeportland.org/2008/10/08/portland-schools-participate-in-international-walk-and-bike-to-school-day>)

Marin County, CA - A low percentage of children were walking or bicycling to school, which contributed to poor physical health in children, traffic congestion, and air pollution.

MCBC's Safe Routes to Schools program, one of the first in the country and a model program, combines promotional and educational programs with locally based design solutions to improve physical conditions for children walking and bicycling to school, provide skills training, and offer mode choice incentives. Developed in nine pilot communities, education/promotion and engineering/infrastructure are the principal components of the program.

Throughout the school year, MCBC provides pedestrian and bicycle safety skills training along with curriculum materials to help students understand modal choices and the impact of their choices on the environment. Events such as Walk and Bike to School Day are tailored by each school to meet their needs. Some schools schedule events weekly; others schedule them once a month. Two schools use volunteers as crosswalk monitors on these days.

A significant success of the program is the Frequent Rider Miles contest that rewards students for walking and bicycling to school. Students use pre-made tally cards to keep track of the number of times they walk, bicycle, carpool, or bus to school. Points are earned for each trip, and a raffle is held with prizes at the end of the school year. The grand prize at each school is a new bicycle.

Schools in two communities, Mill Valley and Fairfax, mapped typical routes that students used to walk and bicycle to school and proposed safety improvements along these routes. Using this analysis, Fairfax received a Transportation Enhancements grant from the County Congestion Management Agency to complete the gaps in the sidewalks along a major school route. Mill Valley received funding to improve access to and from a local bicycle path and to provide enhanced pedestrian crossings throughout the community.

Results

Significant changes in student modal shares have been documented by MCBC since initiating the program. Data collected through student surveys in 2000 show that about 23 percent of students walked or bicycled to and from school. Surveys given at the end of the school year in 2001 found that the mode share for walking and bicycling had increased to 33 percent. This amounts to more than 3,500 children walking or bicycling to and from the nine schools included in the pilot program. Equally significant, the data show that carpooling increased from 12 percent to almost 20 percent, and the percentage of children being driven alone in their parents' cars decreased from about 66 percent to 48 percent.

Resources

San Francisco Bike to School Day: <http://sfbiketoschoolday.org/>

San Francisco Safe Routes to School Program: <http://sfsaferoutestoschool.org/>

San Francisco Bicycle Coalition: <http://www.sfbike.org/>

San Francisco Walk to School Day: <http://www.sfwalktoschool.com/>

San Francisco Bike to Work Day: <http://www.sfbike.org/?btwd>

SF Metropolitan Transportation Agency School Area Safety Program:
<http://www.sfmta.com/cms/osafe/indxlisafe.htm>

SF Department of Public Health: <http://www.sfdph.org/dph/default.asp>

Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) Bicycle Resource Guide: <http://bicycling.511.org/>

National Center for Safe Routes to Schools: <http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/index.cfm>

Marin County Safe Routes to Schools: <http://saferoutestoschools.org/index.shtml>

Oregon Walk and Bike to School: <http://walknbike.org/>

California Department of Health Bicycle Safety:
<http://www.cdph.ca.gov/HealthInfo/injviosaf/Pages/BicycleSafety.aspx>

California Department of Health Safe Routes to Schools:
<http://www.cdph.ca.gov/HealthInfo/injviosaf/Pages/SafeRoutestoSchool.aspx>

CalTrans Safe Routes to School: <http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LocalPrograms/saferoutes/saferoutes.htm>

California Department of Health School Policy Manual for Safe Bicycle Riding:
<http://www.cdph.ca.gov/HealthInfo/injviosaf/traffic/Documents/SchoolHelmetPolicyManual-VOSP.doc>

Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center: <http://www.pedbikeinfo.org/>

Centers for Disease Control (CDC) Kids Walk-to-School: <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/kidswalk/>

International Walk to School Day: <http://www.iwalktoschool.org/>

Walk to School Day in the USA: <http://www.walktoschool.org/>

California Walk to School Headquarters: <http://www.cawalktoschool.com/>

WalkBike Marin: <http://walkbikemarin.org/>