There was a time when the sight of children walking and bicycling to school was a familiar scene in communities across California. In fact, in 1969 approximately 50 percent of children walked or bicycled to school. Today, fewer than 15 percent of children do and rates of childhood obesity and overweight are overwhelming.\(^2\)

Concerns about traffic safety are often cited as one of the main reasons children do not walk or bicycle to school.\(^3\) And for good reason, as in 2010 alone, over 21,000 California school children were sent to an emergency department and over 1,500 were hospitalized due to pedestrian or bicycle injuries.\(^4\)

Creating safe opportunities for walking and bicycling is critical to improving the safety of young pedestrians and bicyclists and to reducing overweight and obesity among California’s youth. Safe Routes to School (SRTS) programs are key to reversing these trends. SRTS programs increase the number of children who safely walk and bicycle to school through education and encouragement programs, enhanced enforcement, engineering improvements, and strong program evaluation.

**Gault Elementary School, Santa Cruz, CA**

**CALTRANS DISTRICT 5, SANTA CRUZ COUNTY**

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**PROGRAM SUMMARY**

Gault Elementary School has incorporated the Boltage system in their SRTS program. Boltage uses technology and incentives to actively encourage daily bicycling and walking to school and provides data to show program progress.

The Boltage device is a solar-powered Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) reader, which can read registered students’ RFID tag with a unique identification number. On the days that students walk or bicycle to school, they pass beneath the RFID reader which records the trips.
Boltage uploads data to a secure website so families and school administrators can see how many active trips students have logged, miles they have traveled, and calories they have burned. The system also shows the amount of greenhouse gases “saved” as a result of the avoided car trip to school. Students are motivated to earn privileges, recognition, and prizes based on the number of trips tallied – the more trips logged the more chances to win.

Accompanying the Boltage program is bicycle safety education that teaches students on-bike safe handling skills through classroom presentations and an on-bike training session.

**PROGRAM SUCCESSES**

- Students participating in the Boltage program during the 2011-2012 school year:
  - Recorded 7,529 active trips.
  - Traveled 9,617 miles.
  - Burned an estimated 412,554 calories.
- In 2012, all 238 5th grade students participated in the Boltage program.