

Easy tools for building Safer Routes to Schools

Low-cost ideas & creative solutions for planning Safe Routes to Schools programs in Mississippi

Plan a Walk to School Day

How-to Guides

Games and Activities

Safety Posters

Printable Forms

A partnership from the Mississippi Department of Transportation and Bike Walk Mississippi



The Building Blocks for Safe Routes to Schools: *The 5 E's*

ENGINEERING

- **Engineering** addresses the built environment with tools that can be used to create safer places to walk or bicycle. Improvements can include maintenance and operational measures as well as construction projects with a range of costs.

EDUCATION

- **Education** activities teach students how to walk and bike safely. Education programs can also target adults such as parents, neighbors and other drivers in the community to remind them to yield to pedestrians, to drive safely to make it safer for pedestrians and bicyclists.

ENCOURAGEMENT

- **Encouragement** strategies generate excitement about walking and bicycling safely to school. Children, parents, teachers, school administrators and others can all be involved in special events like Walk to School Day and ongoing activities like walking school buses.

ENFORCEMENT

- **Enforcement** activities can help to change unsafe behaviors of drivers, bicyclists and pedestrians. They can increase driver awareness of laws and can improve driver behavior by reducing speeds and increasing yielding to pedestrians. Enforcement activities also teach pedestrians and bicyclists to walk and bike safely and to pay attention to their environment. Law enforcement and different community members take part in making sure everyone follows the rules, including students, parents, school personnel and adult crossing guards.

EVALUATION

- **Evaluation** is used to determine if the aims of the strategies are being met and to assure that resources are directed toward efforts that show the greatest likelihood of success.

*Compiled by the National Center for Safe Routes to Schools



Editor's Note:

Perhaps you are thinking about starting a Safe Routes to Schools program at your school. You may be saying to yourself, "I would like to start a program, but we just don't have the funding for these types of programs."

At Bike Walk Mississippi, we've heard that from a lot of people but the good news the good news is that starting these types of programs is actually easier than you might think! That's why Bike Walk Mississippi partnered with the Mississippi Safe Routes to Schools program created this toolkit specifically focused on programs that you can create with little or NO-COST!!

As you flip through this toolkit, you'll find easy ideas and creative solutions for implementing Safe Routes to Schools in your community. You will find out how to start walk to school days, how to conduct bike rodeos, walking audits and other programs in your community. This toolkit will "walk" you through ways to build your team and will give you easy resources, inspire you with success stories and will give you to tools to make your programs work. This toolkit is made to be printed, copied and used as often as you'd like - feel free to hang up the posters provided or modify the templates for your needs. Just let us know so we can tell more people about the great work that YOU are doing to get more children biking and walking to school!

In Mississippi, we know that it's more important than ever to make sure our children are active and walking to school is a great way to get both kids and adults getting in their daily exercise! Let's start building a team together!

Melody Moody-Thortis, Executive Director: Bike Walk Mississippi



SafeRoutes
Mississippi Safe Routes to School Program



Easy Tools for creating Safer Routes to Schools

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MISSISSIPPI WALK & BIKE TO SCHOOL

Walk to School Day was started in 1997 by the Partnership for a Walkable America and focused its efforts on growing a one-day event that could raise awareness for the need for more walkable communities. This effort soon grew into an International movement with participation in more than 40 countries. International Walk to School Month is now celebrated around the world every October. **In Mississippi, over 55,000 students have participated in Walk to School events across the state and we want you to join the MOVEMENT!**

We asked organizers from across the state for their tips, tricks and advice to help others to start Walk & Bike to School events in Mississippi. Throughout this toolkit, you will find success stories, templates and easy to replicate programs to start creating walking and biking programs for your school TODAY!

TIPS TO GET STARTED:

1. Use this toolkit as your guide and learn from what has worked for others.
2. Start small and do that well before expanding your reach. Build your team and make a plan.
3. Get buy-in from the School Principal and PTA.
4. Make it fun and provide incentives for participating in your event
5. Check out our resources page to get in touch with MDOT's Safe Routes to Schools program, Bike Walk Mississippi and be sure to register your event online at www.walkbiketoschool.org



WALK TO SCHOOL DAY
BARR ELEMENTARY
JACKSON, MS



FUN IDEAS FOR WALK TO SCHOOL DAY

- Hold a poster contest!
- Turn your walk into a parade!
- Get permission to paint a crosswalk!
- Hold a pep rally after the walk!
- Invite local speakers and celebrities!
- Have children carry balloons or signs!
- Invite Policemen or Firemen to join!
- Hold a Health or Safety Fair

PARK AND WALK

Park and Walk are a great way to involve children who live further away and arrive more often by vehicle. Designate a central meeting area (public park or parking lot) for those who drive. Advertise the meeting time and place to everyone and encourage parents to join to get in their daily exercise too! Consider themed walks or even a parade!

WALKING WEDNESDAYS

Holding a "Walking Wednesday" program is an easy way to plan a regular day of walking for children at your school. All you need is a little community spirit and a regular routine. Meet at the same place every Wednesday and invite students, staff, family members and other community leaders to join you! Walking Wednesdays can be whatever you make them - the key is to use this day as a tool to get your children walking!

PARTNER WITH THE SAFE ROUTES STARS

Invite the Safe Routes STARS program to teach a 45 minute presentation on pedestrian or bicycle safety before or after the event, contact them at the Mississippi Department of Health.

IDEAS THAT HAVE WORKED IN OTHER COMMUNITIES

Have students help plan the event or create a student planning committee.

Have children decorate the shoes they will wear on Walk to School Day.

Ask traffic officers to conduct safety events prior to the day like bicycle rodeos or "crosswalk stings" to improve driver awareness and modify traffic behavior.

Have students make nutritious snacks after the walk.

Ask PTA members to plan activities before, during or after the walk.

Invite your local newspaper to write a feature story prior to the event.

Ask a restaurant or local business to provide waters or to be the gathering place before Walk to School day.

Hold a "walk your kids home from school" event.

Let children tour an ambulance or fire truck once they arrive at school.

Hang banners promoting the event at school, along the walking route and throughout the community.

Let your event be the kick-off for a Walking Wednesdays program.

STEPS TO CREATING A SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOLS PROGRAM

The steps outlined below provide a framework for establishing a program based on what has worked in other communities. Some communities may find that a different approach or a reordering of these steps works better for them.

This guide below was adapted from the National Center for Safer Routes to School (www.saferoutes.info.org), which was developed developed by the Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center (PBIC) with support from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE).

STEP 1: BRING TOGETHER THE RIGHT PEOPLE

- Identify people who want to make walking and bicycling to school safe and appealing for children.
- Consider whether the group wants to plan for SRTS in a single school, district-wide or at another level.
- Look for existing groups where an SRTS program is a natural fit, such as a city or school district safety committee, PTA, school site council, groups that represent the disabled, wellness council or a pedestrian and bicycle advisory board.
 - If there are no appropriate groups to take on the issue, form an SRTS coalition.
- Involve children in the SRTS program to learn what is important to them with respect to their journey to school and around their neighborhood.
 - Ask them questions:
 - Do they like being driven everywhere by their parents?
 - Would they rather walk and bicycle around their neighborhoods?
 - What do they think about their route to school?
 - What would they change about their trip to school?
 - A special effort should be made to query students with disabilities about what is important to them about their journey to school as well.

Remember that someone who has enthusiasm and time to provide leadership for the group and keep things moving. However, a champion can not do it alone, he or she will need support. Building the next generation of leaders along the way will assure that the program continues.

STEP 2: HOLD A KICK-OFF MEETING

The kick-off meeting has two main goals:

1. To create a vision and
2. To generate next steps

One approach is to ask each participant to share a vision for the school five years in the future. This focuses the group on the positive, rather than what is wrong.

Another way to create a positive vision is to ask people to share a positive memory of walking or bicycling to school when they were young.

Provide a presentation on SRTS programs including issues and strategies related to engineering, enforcement, education, encouragement and evaluation.

The group can then discuss the appropriate next steps and best way to work toward their vision.

Building a Coalition of Support

Different communities will find different organizations and individuals ready to be involved. This list is not exhaustive, but is intended to provide ideas for the creation of a well-rounded group that represents a wide range of interests and expertise that are related to SRTS.

Potential Coalition Members:

School:

Principal and other administrators
Parents and students, including those with disabilities
Teachers
PTA/PTO representative
School nurse
School district transportation director
School improvement team or site council member
Adult school crossing guards
Special Education teacher

Community:

Neighborhood or community association members
Local businesses
Local pedestrian, bicycle and safety advocates
Groups representing people with disabilities

Local Government:

Mayor's office or council member
Transportation or traffic engineer
Local planner
Public health professional
Public works representative
Law enforcement officer
State or local pedestrian and bicycle coordinator

STEP 3: Gather information and identify issues

Collecting information can help to identify needed program elements and provide a means to measure the impact of the program later.

First, look at walking and bicycling conditions for students. This can be done by observing or mapping the routes that lead to school. Collecting traffic counts and speed and injury data can help identify driver-related safety issues. Walking around the school as a group to observe arrival or dismissal time can be one of the best ways to reach a collective understanding of the issues, including safety and accessibility, and potential solutions. Finding out about existing policies that may make it easier or more difficult to walk or bicycle to school can also be useful. For example, a school may not allow children to bicycle to school. Understanding and addressing underlying issues for a policy may be addressed by the SRTS plan.

Second, determine how many children currently walk or bicycle to school. The school may already know this. Parent surveys can also be used to understand parents' attitudes towards walking or bicycling to school and identify barriers to walking and bicycling that need to be addressed.

See the NCSRTS Resources for Student In-class Travel Tally and Parent Survey forms to use. SRTS coalition members can lend expertise in locating data sources and can help collect the necessary information.

STEP 4: Identify Solutions

Solutions to issues identified by the group will include a combination of education, encouragement, engineering and enforcement strategies. Safety is the first consideration. If it is not safe for children to walk and bicycle to school, then they should only be encouraged after problems are addressed.

Some problems will require engineering solutions; others may require education, encouragement, enforcement or a combination of strategies. Here the expertise of the different partners is especially valuable.

It is likely that the coalition will generate a long list of potential ideas and solutions. The next step will be easier if the list is prioritized. Are some issues more critical to address than others? Are there "quick wins" that the group can identify that would help to generate additional enthusiasm early in the program?

STEP 5: Make a Plan

The SRTS plan does not need to be lengthy, but should include encouragement, enforcement, education, and engineering strategies; a time schedule for each part of these strategies; a map of the area covered by the plan; and an explanation of how the program will be evaluated. Strategies that can be implemented early will help the group feel successful and can build momentum and support for long-term activities. Be sure to include fun activities; that is what encouragement is all about.

Forming Committees

Coalitions sometimes create committees to take on the major tasks, allowing members to focus on a specific activity related to their skills and interest. Some possible SRTS committees include:

Mapping and information gathering committee

Obtains maps, collect information about where children live, the routes they take to school and the condition of the streets along the way, including accessibility barriers for children with disabilities.

Outreach committee

Collects input from parents, teachers and students, and publicizes the program to the school and community.

Education and encouragement activities committee

Works closely with school administration and teachers to put education and encouragement activities in place, gathers materials for activities and solicits donations for programming and prizes.

Enforcement and engineering committee

Develops recommendations for enforcement and engineering solutions. Works closely with local government and other resources to find funding and make improvements.

Traffic safety committee

Identifies unsafe drivers' behavior and develops an education campaign to increase awareness.

STEP 6: Fund the Plan

In this toolkit, we will cover different resources for creating Safe Routes to Schools programs that can be done with very little cost involved. However, some changes, such as new sidewalks, may need large amounts of capital. There are several places to seeking funding for these activities including:

Federal Funds: Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP), STP- Set Aside (Both come from Federal Transportation bill)

National Organizations offering other assistance: National Safe Routes to Schools Partnership, America Walks, www.walkbiketoschool.com, American Heart Association, Bike/Ped Information Center, Center for Disease Control and Prevention.

State Funding for Safe Routes Programs in Mississippi: Mississippi Department of Transportation (www.goMDOT.com)

State Organizations offering other assistance: Mississippi Department of Health, Bike Walk Mississippi, Mississippi Department of Education, Partnership for a Healthy Mississippi, Gulf Regional Planning Commission and your local city government.

PLANNING A WALK TO SCHOOL DAY IN 7 DAYS

Planning a “Walk to School Day” event can take many weeks or several months, but what do you do if you only have a week to plan? Below you will find a quick guide to planning a Walk to School Day event in just 7 days. Check out our online toolkit for even more resources at: www.bikewalkmississippi.org

DAY 1:

- Obtain the school principal’s approval for a Walk to School Day event.
- Register the event at the national website: walkbiketoschool.org
- Decide a central meeting point for everyone to start walking and encourage those close to the school to walk from their homes with a family member.

DAY 2:

- Use today to invite parents and students to join you on Walk to School Day.
- Use Emails, Social Media Groups, Schoolwide Listserv and other means for communicating to teachers, students and parents (Partner with PTSA).
- Download our free Event Posters and Templates, change them for your needs and promote!

DAY 3-5:

- Get in touch with the local police and ask them to be present during your event.
- Recruit trusted volunteers to be on site to help walk with students. Ask teachers, parents and school staff to help by walking with the children on the day of your event.
- Spread the word! Put up fliers around the school and be sure to utilize email, school Facebook pages or other electronic means to quickly spread the word!

DAY 6:

- Send home reminders to parents about Walk to School Day this Wednesday!
- Send out another email or social media reminder (or best way to reach your parents)!
- Alert the local media about your event!

DAY 7:

- Make an intercom announcement reminding students that tomorrow is the day we walk!!
- When children leave for the day, say “See you tomorrow morning at Walk to School Day”!

PLANNING A WALK AT SCHOOL EVENT

Sometimes situations or circumstance mean that planning a Walk TO School event might not be right for you.

Planning a Walk AT School Event can be held around the perimeter of the school, around the track, on the soccer field or in the gym during inclement weather. Walk AT School events can be held before school or during recess, P.E. class or assembly.

You can also tie these events into other classroom activities or even a walking parade!

We've outlined for you a few ideas for holding a successful Walk AT School event for your students.

What does a Walk AT School event look like?

Students can arrive early to school and walk together around a designated spot. A soccer field or gym work great!

All P.E. classes focus on walking for the day. Students hold walking contests throughout the day.

Hold a Special Assembly focused on pedestrian safety, health and fitness.

Speakers could include local health or safety advocates, local elected officials, fitness celebrities or law enforcement. Your assembly could be safety or fitness themed!

Hold a Walking Parade!

Encourage the school band or mascot to join to encourage other students as they walk.

Build a Team of Support

- Get the School Principal's permission to hold a Walk AT School Event.
- Put a team together (Include parents, PTSA, school staff)
- Find allies to support your event
 - Tip: Include Law Enforcement, Crossing Guards, Public Officials, Media

Planning your event

- Decide when and where you will walk.
- Consider asking a speaker to present or speak at your event
- Promote the event to parents and students
 - Tip: Announcements, Flyers, PTSA Listserve

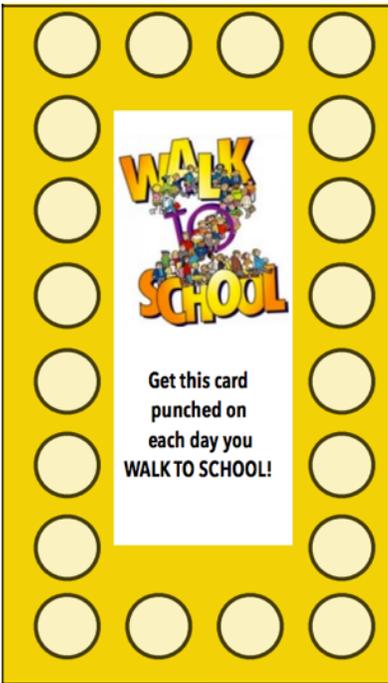
Building Excitement

- Use incentives to create excitement
 - Tip: Contests, Popcorn Party, Awards
- Hold a walking themed poster contest
- Remind students with announcements and Walk AT School banners.
- Give students a certificate of participation or give away door prizes at the walk.

Other Fun Ideas

- Play music while students are walking to get them excited about physical fitness.
- Plan a Walk AT School event in the morning and invite parents to join for coffee and light breakfast.
- Set up a Park and Walk: For students who live too far away to walk, designate a nearby spot where children can be dropped off by parents or buses and students, parents and teachers can walk together as a group.

PROGRAM INCENTIVES THAT WORK:



WALK TO SCHOOL PUNCH CARDS

Punch Cards are an easy way to incentive children to walk to school. Print out a sheet of punch cards and assign a goal for a number of days that children walk to school. Offer prizes for students that walk to school for 5, 10 or more days!

Visit www.bikewalkmississippi.org to visit our online downloads where you can print out free walk to school punch card sheets.

POSTER CONTESTS

Poster contests are a fun way to educate children about walking and biking. Create a theme or a lesson based on why walking and biking is good, how to safely bike or walk or in conjunction with an event. Award prizes for the best poster and display all the posters on the wall or in the hall to celebrate biking and walking!

MILEAGE CLUBS

Mileage clubs and contests encourage children either to begin walking and bicycling to school or to increase their current amount of physical activity by making the idea of walking fun! Start a mileage club at your school with prizes after the mileage goal has been reached. You can challenge students as individuals and award prizes on total mileage or create a competition among classrooms or other create a competition among similar age groups at different schools.

FREQUENT RIDER

Frequent rider programs help to engage those who typically arrive to school by bus or car. Every time a child walks or bikes to school he or she gets to cross off the bike/walk box on his/her card worth two points. A child who rides the bus or in a car checks the carpool/bus box worth one point. A child who walks to the bus can count that as two points. Every card must be signed by a parent or guardian. When the children have completed their card, they turn it in and get an instant reward by choosing something from the grab bag plus they get a new card. At the end of the year, there will be a raffle. Prizes can include bicycles, helmets, lights bags, hats, t-shirts or other goodies.

OTHER INCENTIVES THAT WORK WELL:

Pedometers, water bottles, charm bracelets and classroom parties can also serve as fun incentives. Many groups brand their program and create t-shirts to promote their event. T-shirts can be a great way to make everyone feel part of the MOVEment!



McWillie Elementary: Peace & Unity Walk

After many years of planning Walk to School Day events, McWillie Elementary in Jackson, Mississippi decided it was time to promote more than just walking. The hope behind the Peace & Unity Theme was to remind others that the world is bigger than just what you see on TV or in the media. Organizers wanted to remind their community that children do not see color, they only see love. Children from all different backgrounds participated in the walk, along with teachers and parents and reminded us all that the world needs more peace and unity.



To celebrate International Walk to School Day in October, 2016, over 400 students at McWillie Elementary school gathered shortly after school began to walk together around the block surrounding the school.

In order to plan the event, the PTA worked in partnership with McWillie Principal, Dr. Sara Harper and Mrs. Tracy Frazier. They worked with the City of Jackson to make arrangements to block off the street and publicized the event through the school's social media page, word of mouth and flyers promoting the event were sent home with every child. The team worked with the Mississippi Department of Health to secure donations of bottled water and contacted the Jackson Police Department to arrange for officers to walk with the children and reminded the students the positive role that police officers can play in a child's life. McWillie Elementary is also the only Montessori school in the Jackson Public School System, which brings with it a diverse group of

students but also the challenge of students attending the school from outside the surrounding neighborhood. Unlike typical neighborhood schools that might hold a Walk to School event, McWillie navigated this issue by gathering the students together shortly after their arrival. Prior to the Peace and Unity Walk, the students worked with teachers to make signs that said, "Love", "Peace", "One race" and other encouraging messages to hold during the walk. In order to set the tone for the true meaning of the walk, organizers invited a Baptist reverend, an Imam from a local mosque and a Catholic priest to perform a litany over the intercom as students recited the litany responses in their respective classrooms. Dr. Robert Luckett, a McWillie parent and Director of the Margaret Walker Center at Jackson State University led the walk and reminded children about the importance of coming together as a human race, friendship and accepting differences. Meanwhile, PTA volunteers set up a coffee and water station for parents to attend the litany presentation. After a short group stretch, the diverse student body walked along parents, teachers, police officers and volunteers, as Vee Caldwell told us, "It was a beautiful sight to see".

Tips and Advice from PTA President Vee Caldwell

"If you are worried that you don't have enough resources to pull an event like this off, remember that you don't have to have monetary resources - all it takes is an idea and vision!" She encourages other communities to work with volunteers, utilize your partners, get buy-in from the principal and teachers and even ask friends to help. The most important thing is to use events like this to bring people together!



For this article, Bike Walk Mississippi spoke to Peace & Unity Walk organizer, Revetia Caldwell, McWillie's PTA President and recent recipient of the PTA "School of Excellence" award.

Oxford, MS: Walking Wednesdays



Planning and Promoting Walking Wednesday:

The most important part of these programs is getting buy-in from a variety of stakeholders. During this time, some of the community partners that supported Walking Wednesdays including the City of Oxford's City Planner, Mayor and Wellness Council with support from the Oxford Police Department and the Boys and Girls Club of Oxford. The Oxford School District, including its school board, superintendent and principals also assisted in the effort.

Using this support as a backbone for the program, Brad Martin went to work to organize Walking Wednesdays. He primarily worked to build relationships with school principals, parents and recruiting volunteers.

Brad worked with a team to develop branding for the program and created signs to put up around the schools to promote the event. Each week, he put up Walk to School signs to promote the program at each of the four locations. Part of the planning for multiple locations included having physical maps of each of the routes and posting signs every week to designate the "Drop off" spot for each walking location.

To help promote the program, Brad worked with local media and schools to publicize the event in the Jr. High Newsletter, on the School District Website and in the Community Section of the Oxford Eagle. In addition to the day of the event, he spent the majority of his time was recruiting and scheduling volunteers, recruiting them primarily from Ole Miss, partnering with exercise science classes and getting the word out through the school's newspaper Daily Mississippian. In the fall of 2011, he also recorded a radio PSA to promote the program to the community. Brad attended Parents night at Oxford Elementary and Middle School in order to build relationships and make the parents more aware of Walk to School programs.

From 2010 - 2011, Walking Wednesday events were held at four schools:

Bramlett Elementary, Oxford Elementary, Della Davidson Elementary and Oxford Middle School. During these events, an average of 300 children participated in Walking Wednesdays every week in Oxford, MS.

For this article, Bike Walk Mississippi spoke to *Brad Martin, former Safe Routes to Schools Coordinator for the University of Mississippi. He led the program as a graduate assistant from 2010-11. Brad now works at the Mississippi Department of Health in the Preventive Health Division. Bike Walk Mississippi asked Brad to share his experiences planning Walking Wednesday events at four schools throughout the City of Oxford.*

Walking Wednesdays, Walk TO School Bramlett Elementary, Oxford Middle School and Della Davidson Elementary

Every Wednesday, Walk to School Events would begin at 7:30am. Brad asked volunteers to arrive by 7:15am and divided them up by location. Brad divided up the incentives among the four schools and made sure that each volunteer was equipped with training and instructions. He asked that each designated volunteer count the number of kids in attendance and to take down the names of all of the volunteers walking with the children.

Walking Wednesdays, Walk AT School Oxford Elementary

While the students at Oxford Elementary also participated in Walking Wednesdays, due to traffic, infrastructure and safety concerns, these students participated in these events on the walking track after they arrived at school. Announcements were made before school began announcing Walking Wednesday, with students walking together on the quarter mile track at Oxford Elementary. Six - Eight volunteers were placed at different areas around the track to assist with the large number of children and to monitor student behavior. Students would begin walking at 7:25 and walked for 25 minutes. Students received "I Walked today" stickers and were given additional incentives as they returned to class.

TIPS FOR PLANNING AN EVENT

with special guest, Brad Martin

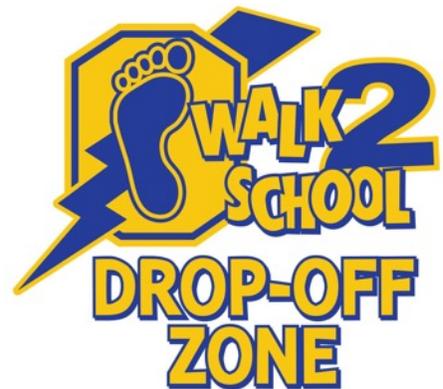
- *Communication with participants is key to your success. Find ways to communicate quickly through text and social media to ensure that everyone knows about any last minute changes. Every week, we made determinations based on weather and highly recommend finding easy ways to communicate these changes to everyone involved.*
- *Build relationships with school principals. Get buy-in from the schools.*
- *Don't forget to get photo releases for both children and adults involved in your event.*
- *Be sure to thank your volunteers. We held a Thank you Luncheon and followed up with volunteers after each event.*
- *Do everything you can to build trust. In order to have a successful event, everyone involved has to trust you. One way to do this is to build relationships, include the parents and school officials and invite Law Enforcement to join you on the walk. Have clear and constant communication with all involved.*
- *As you are planning, be sure to think about your goals. Consider tracking how far students walk over a period of time and including incentives, games, prizes and challenges that make it more interactive for students, parents, teachers and volunteers. One possible idea would be to hold an assembly every year on International Walk to School day or to incorporate health topics or themes.*

Incentives:

- *We worked very hard to keep consistent branding with our event and even branded our incentives. These incentives were key to encouraging the children and included wrist bands, frisbees, footballs, reflectors and water bottles. We tried to include incentives and prizes that continued to promote physical activity.*
- *Even if you don't have a lot of available funding for incentives, utilize branding your event on your materials and incentives to help make the event your own.*

Lessons Learned:

- *If I had to do it again, I would make better use of social media. It was difficult to rely on printed materials as our primary promotional tool and recommend updating information on a regular website and social media.*
- *Though we never had any issues, I would recommend doing simple background checks on volunteers. I recruited heavily from Ole Miss, especially from FCA, sororities and underclassmen. I relied on people that I knew and students recommended from our partners.*
- *If there is a change in school leadership, continuing the program at a high level can be tough - this is why it is particularly important to build relationships with a variety of people in the schools, make yourself readily available to principals and be adaptable.*





WEST POINT, MS: WALK TO SCHOOL DAY

West Point, Mississippi knows a thing or two about planning Walk to School Days. The city was one of the first to receive a grant through Safe Routes to Schools funding awarded through the Mississippi Department of Transportation in 2007. Since that time, the City has partnered with the West point school district to hold an annual Walk to School day every year in October. **Each year, on average, over 600 children participate in West Point's annual Walk to School Day.**

Melanie Busby is a grantwriter for the City of West Point and formerly worked for the West Point School District, she is also a parent and the primary organizer behind West Point's Safe Routes to Schools Walking and Biking program. Bike Walk Mississippi asked her to shares her experience with planning a Walk to School event and asked what suggestions and helpful hints you could give to those thinking about starting a program at their local school.

What are the steps you have taken over the years to plan a successful Walk to School Day event in West Point?

Melanie Busby (MB): Step 1: In my experience, the first thing an organizer should do is to contact the school principals to see if they are willing to participate. Buy-in from the Principals is KEY to a successful event. We asked Principals to actively participate on the day of the event.

Step 2: After getting buy-in from the school Principal or Principals, deciding on a meeting place and meeting time. In West Point, many of the schools are close together with four schools located within four blocks of each other - so organizers picked a central park downtown to meet, located that was two blocks for the younger children and four blocks from the Junior High. Melanie also suggests contacting local police officers asking them to block off traffic during the walk and provide escorts for younger children.

Step 3: We registered our event with International Walk/Bike to School Day at www.walkbiketoschool.org which has helped up obtain prizes and other helpful resources. Planning for the event was done by Melanie Busby along with staff in the Mayor's office and the School District's Parent Liaison.

Step 4: Next, I hired a graphic designer to create a colorful flyer to promote the event - you don't have to hire someone, just make sure the flyer you use is eye-catching and includes all the right information. We sent a poster home with each of the students.



Step 5: We worked to get volunteers, law enforcement and elected officials to partner with us to help us make the event a success. School Principals joined us on the walk as did many teachers, parents and additional volunteers. We required parents to come to walk with their children who were in Kindergarten or Pre-K, one year we also had additional support from a local sorority who gave out water and walked with the children and West Point's Mayor even joined the fun, supported our efforts and even walked with the children!

Step 6: As I was preparing for our event, I also made plans for publicity. I recommend doing what you can to get media coverage during and after the event if possible. On several occasions, our Walk to School Day event was featured in the newspaper.

TIPS FOR PLANNING AN EVENT:

with special guest, Melanie Busby

Give some thought to finding a good centrally located meet-up spot and a time that works for all the students.

This meeting place can be a public park or a nearby parking lot where parents can bring children to walk together to school. When deciding what time to hold your event, think about the needs of the children. Remember that in many schools, some children rely on eating breakfast at school, so make sure you plan your event early enough for children to meet up, walk to school and arrive in time for breakfast. Another suggestion is to ask the Principals, what time they would suggest, ask them to help lead the walk and make sure you have enough time to do the walk, complete the sign up sheets and make any announcements.

One the day of the event, make sure you have multiple sign-in sheets.

If you want to record who walked, it can be overwhelming to get hundreds of children signing up at once. We typically have 20-30 sign-up sheets just in case, it makes it much easier the day of the collect the information.

Try to create some incentives for participation. *Everyone loved wearing stickers on their shirts and classroom competitions work well - organizers could offer a pizza or popcorn party for the classroom with the most participants.*

One year, we used "Fitness Finders" as an incentive for children to walk to school. We purchased the starter kit which offered program documents, punch-cards and basic training. This allowed us to have a system for tracking how much the children walked. Everyone quickly wanted to earn a charm - event walking extra laps around the playground at recess, it also allowed us to reward the children for distance walking instead of equally awarded points for those who walked from a shorter distance. We've also used badges, stickers and classroom competitions as incentives.



Lessons Learned: *One year we encouraged bicycling to school as well - however, in our experience it was tricky because some parents that allowed their children to ride bikes TO school didn't have a way to get them home (especially if their children rode the bus). Instead, something that we have done that I would recommend is planning a bike rodeo obstacle course. We held one on a Saturday and partnered with two West Point bicycle patrol police officers who taught a bike safety class - anyone who completed the course also received a free bike helmet. With funds from our Safe Routes to Schools grant, we were also able to purchase bike racks for the schools who didn't have them, allowing for bike parking for children close enough to ride to and from school on their bikes.*

NATIONAL WALK TO SCHOOL DAY

Walk or Ride Your Bike to School Today



Thursday, October 30th

SCHOOLS PARTICIPATING:

Meet beginning at 7:00 a.m.
at Sally Kate Winters Park
Walk begins at 7:20 SHARP

Catherine Bryan - Adult must accompany

East Side - Adult must accompany

Central School

Fifth Street School

First Methodist Daycare - Adult must accompany

First Baptist Daycare - Adult must accompany

Meet beginning at 7:00 a.m.
at Bryan Foods Parking Lot
Walk begins at 7:20 SHARP

Church Hill

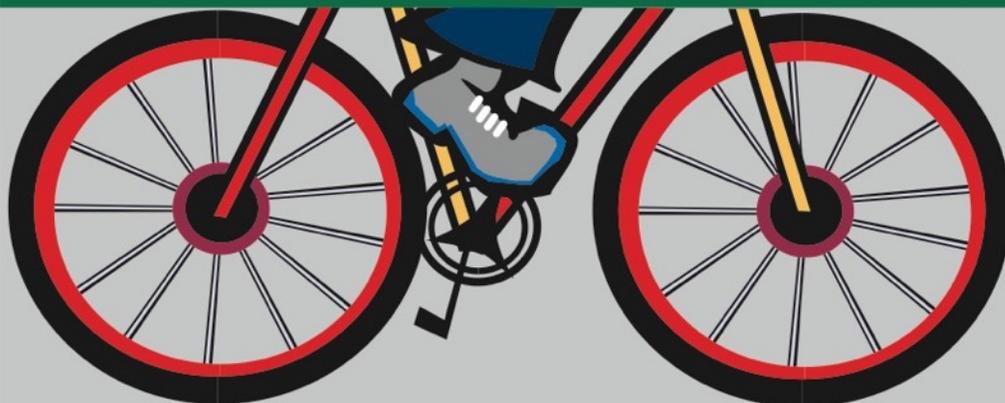
South Side

Clay County Daycare - Adult must accompany

Car riders may be dropped off from 1st grade up to participate in the walk

Free prizes for EVERY Walker or Bike Rider

Class with most walkers or bike riders wins a class prize



Sponsors:

Safe Routes to Schools,
City of West Point Mayor
and Selectmen,
Youth Leadership Alliance,
Excel by 5



WHAT IS A WALKING SCHOOL BUS?

A walking school bus is a fun and safe way for children to walk to school in a group. Typically, during a walking school bus, children who live nearby walk in groups with parents and volunteers, together they travel house to house (or a nearby corner) and together they “pick up” students on the way to school.

The idea became popular as a way to address parent’s concerns about security with children walking to school alone. A Walking School bus is an opportunity for children to participate in a supervised walk while providing a way for families to socialize and get to know their neighbors.

While some Walking School buses can be informal, they should always have a pre-established meeting place and time. Some organizers hold them every day or on certain days every week. You can do whatever feels right to you but a good tip is to start simple and grow from there - start with two families who take turns walking their children to school with a clear timeframe for how long the route takes. Slowly add more families and (if needed) a couple of volunteers. The program can always grow once you see how it works. You can expand to a neighborhood or kids on a certain street.

A variation on the walking school bus is known as a “bicycle train” - which follows the same idea but with adults riding with or walking alongside children riding bicycles to school. If you have parents that have the desire to walk to school or see their children walk to school but cite safety as the primary concern, a walking school bus might be a great place for you to start.

This year, the Safe Routes to Schools National Partnership created an entire toolkit around Walking School Buses. Check out “*Step by Step: How to Start a Walking School Bus at your School*” online at:

<http://saferoutespartnership.org/resources/toolkit/step-step>



MIDTOWN BIKE CLUB: JACKSON, MS

In the fall of 2012, after receiving a non-infrastructure grant from MDOT's Safe Routes to Schools program, Bike Walk Mississippi and Midtown Partners, Inc. partnered together with members of the Jackson Bike Advocates to launch the "Midtown Bike Club", a weekly pilot program with 5th graders enrolled in Project Innovation, Midtown Partners' after-school educational program. Each week, the Midtown Bike Club met to learn about bicycle safety, repair and maintenance.

Each Friday, volunteers taught the students different aspects of bicycle education including:

- **Introduction:** The first class served as an introduction to assess a baseline of each student. Worksheets included labeling parts of the bicycle and creative problem solving on identifying challenges to biking to school. Each student completed a test as a baseline on their bicycle safety knowledge.



-Bicycle safety training:

-Students participated in several classes focusing on bicycle safety. This included teaching the rules of the road, proper hand signals, proper clothing and precautions. Students participated in a Bike Rodeo in the parking lot where they were taught on-bike skills and had the opportunities to practice these skills in a controlled environment. Each student took turns putting on the proper safety gear, completing an obstacle course with turns, stops and signals.





- **Riding in the Rain:** As part of the preparation for children to be safe riders, this class taught students about proper gear, tips and engaged them in discussion about safety riding in inclement weather.
- **Bike Jeopardy:** (Another great opportunity to teach children about bicycling on a rainy day) The Bike Jeopardy game is based Seattle's *Cascade Bicycle Club's* version. Divide students into 2-3 teams and use a dry erase board or chalkboard as the game board with question categories. The "host" asks each team to select a category and a number value with approximately 30 seconds to answer the question. If they answer correctly, the point value is added to their total score; if the answer is incorrect, the point value is deducted from the final score. The game continues until all categories and values have been selected. Team with the highest points wins. The Midtown Bike Club based it's questions on bicycle safety, rules of the road and bike maintenance.
- **Bicycle Maintenance:** One of the courses that the students enjoyed the most was learning how to repair a flat tire. We demonstrated to the entire class how to fix a flat tire. We then divided the class into two groups (in our case, girls vs boys), pairing each group with an instructor. Each individual in the group worked to deflate the tube, loosen the rubber tire, and either used a patch kit to repair the tire or replaced the tube entirely and re-pumped the tire. To add another element, the Midtown Bike Club students raced against the clock to see which group's members could quickly and correctly finish all a repaired flat.
- **Bicycle Repair:** At the end of the semester, students several time at the site of Spokes Community Bike Shop. They were taught the basics of repairing a bicycle with simple tools and we allowed to "Earn-a-Bike" based on their participation in the Midtown Bike Club. Spokes also opened its doors two days every week for other children and community members to learn about bicycle repair, safety and maintenance.





BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

Education and Safety are key components to creating bicycling and walking programs for children.

It is important to educate students, parents, teachers and other drivers about the rules of the road. Education is a critical step in these efforts. In the guides that follow, you will find biking and walking safety tips and printable posters you put up in your school and around your community.

For more information on Bicycle Safety in Mississippi, visit the statewide bicycling safety website: www.changelanestopass.com

It is important to remind children how to cross the street safely and how and where to walk when sidewalks don't exist.

Walking Tips for Children:

- Wear Bright Clothing and Reflective Material.
- Always walk on the sidewalk if one is available.
- When Walking in the Road, ALWAYS walk FACING Traffic.
- Carry a Flashlight and Identification.
- Make eye contact with drivers of oncoming vehicles
- And when crossing the streets.
- Cross roads at Intersections. Don't assume drivers will stop.
- Walk in groups whenever possible and use caution

ALWAYS REMEMBER:

WALK FACING TRAFFIC (Left side of road)

BIKE WITH TRAFFIC (Right side of road)

Bicycle Safety is important for people of all ages. Make sure that children know the rules of the road and how to safely operate a bicycle.

Bicycle Tips for Children:

- Make sure students know how to prepare for a ride.
- Teach them to check their tires & lights before riding.
- Make sure they ALWAYS wear a helmet when riding.
- In Mississippi, bicycles are considered vehicles, which means that they must obey traffic laws.

This means:

- Riding on the right-hand side of the road - they should ride bicycles in the SAME DIRECTION AS TRAFFIC.
- State law prohibits bicycles from riding more than two-abreast (two bicycles side by side).
- Bicyclists must stop at stop signs, red lights and use turn signals when riding.
- Make eye contact with the drivers before crossing the road. If needed, stop, get off the bike and walk the bicycle across a busy intersection.

HOLDING A BIKE RODEO

Bicycle rodeos, also known as as cycling skills clinic is a fun way to introduce and educate children to bicycle safety skills.

These events teach children the importance of seeing, being seen, and remaining in control of the bike at all times, they are a great way for new bicyclists to practice and to develop skills that will help avoid crashes.

Some rodeos are designed as large, municipal events with skills activities, exhibits and games, while others are much smaller in format, requiring a smaller number of volunteers.

Bike Rodeos will look different depending on your set-up, number of volunteers, budget and time. The key is simply to make sure that your participants get a chance to practice simple bicycle drills and learn how to safely maneuver on a bike.

No matter the size of the clinic, you simply want your participants to feel more comfortable on a bike when they leave.

Parents must reinforce the safety messages and their expectations for their children's behavior in and around traffic. Through practice and experience, safe behaviors can become habits. This is simply a tool to help ensure that children are comfortable and confident on a bicycle.

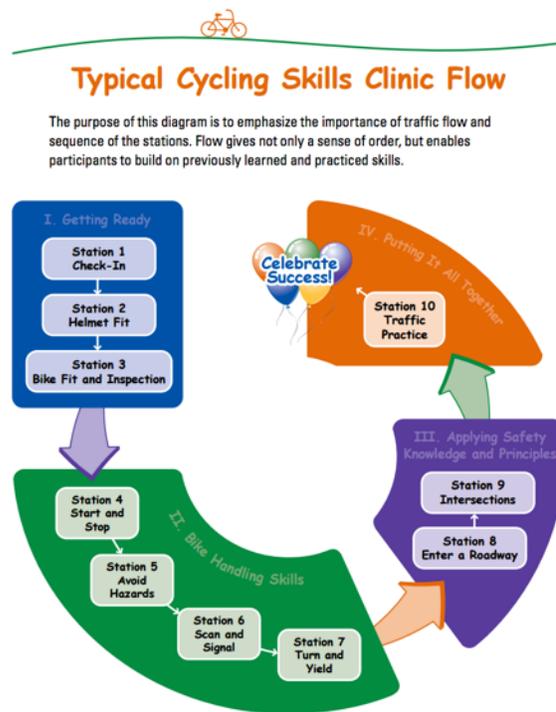
There are many resources available to help you plan your bike rodeo. You can hold one on your own using these tools or you can partner with local bike clubs or the Mississippi Department of Health's STARS program to assist you.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration provides a detailed guide that will be helpful to you as you assess your size, format and target audience. You'll find the online guide available for download at:

www.nhtsa.gov/Driving-Safety/Bicycles/CyclingSkillsClinic

What Do You Need?

- Section of a parking lot, playground or paved space to run the rodeo.
- Waiver—it is a good idea to have each child and parent sign a waiver form to release you and your group from liability in case of injury.
- Children! The ideal age group is 5-12 year-old. The children must bring a bike and helmet!
- Consider providing snacks, water, and sunscreen.
- Bike Rodeo Kit, which includes: 20 orange cones, 10 road signs, and sidewalk chalk.
- If you are planning a bicycle maintenance check, be sure to bring tools and pumps.
- Several volunteers at each station Volunteers can be used to pick up cones that are knocked over, and help students navigate through courses.
- If you are planning a helmet giveaway or are distributing other safety items, you will need to provide instructional materials to go along with these items.



ENFORCEMENT & SAFETY ISSUES



Concern for Safety is one of the biggest issues when it comes to children biking and walking to school. School zones can be especially dangerous to navigate in the age of drivers texting or talking on cell phones, fear of letting children walk alone and speeding.

The effort to make school zones safer through enforcement activities can make a big difference in increasing safety for both traffic safety and people. The key to remember to creating a safer school zone is the role that each person plays in enforcement; students, parents, teachers, administrators, law enforcement officers, crossing guards and the community - all have a role to play to make our streets safer.

Student Patrols

Other ideas that have helped to secure the school zone include partnering with parents and older students help younger students cross. Older student volunteers can help assist younger students by helping to model good behavior and can assist adult parents or staff with arrival procedures or walking students across the street.

Speed Reminders

You may want to implement increased posters, metal or even electronic message signs that remind those driving near schools to slow their speed. It can be helpful to remind drivers to lower their speed in the school zone, remind them to watch for children and avoid texting. You and your school can get creative with the signs to remind drivers to stay alert and responsive in school zones.

Painted Crosswalks

You will need to work with your local city government to obtain permission to paint, brighten or change the crosswalk near your school but doing so have proven to be effective and a fun way to liven up the streets around your school.



ENFORCEMENT & SAFETY ISSUES

Bicycle Safety in Mississippi

Bike Walk Mississippi wants to make sure that everyone knows the rules of the road when it comes to **bicycle safety**. In 2010, Mississippi passed the John Paul Frerer Bicycle Safety Act, which requires that a motor vehicle pass a bicyclist while maintaining a minimum of 3 feet passing space. This law, known simply as the “3 foot law” also includes punishments for harassment of bicyclists by those in vehicles when passing a bicyclist.



In Mississippi, it is legal to pass in a non-passing zone (like a double line) to safely pass a bicyclist, after the driver has determined they can make the pass safely.

The “**Change Lanes to Pass**” campaign was created in 2015 to draw attention to this issue and now includes free downloadable safety posters, shareable videos and free resources including safety brochures, pocket guides and other materials to help spread the word.

Visit www.changelanestopass.com to download your free bicycle safety information today.

Safe School Zones & Crossing Guards

It is important that adult crossing guards are trained properly and are located at key locations for increased safety in school zones. In Mississippi, the design and implementation of an adult crossing guard program is largely the decision of the local law enforcement agencies and/or local County Board of Supervisors. The Mississippi Department of Education’s Office of Healthy Schools partnered with the Mississippi Department of Transportation’s Safe Routes to Schools program to develop a Mississippi Crossing Guard Training Program. The Mississippi Department of Education offers free Crossing Guard Trainings through MDE’s Safe and Orderly Schools program.

Visit <http://mdot.ms.gov/safetyeducation/programs/safe-routes-to-school> to download your copy of the Mississippi Crossing Guard training Program.



PRINTABLE POSTERS

In order to make this toolkit as easy to use as possible, Bike Walk Mississippi created several ready-to-print posters that you can use to help promote your walking and bicycling programs.

On the following pages you will find ready-to-print posters for:

- Bicycle Safety
- Bike To School Day
- Walking Safety Tips and
- Watch for Pedestrian posters

You may print these from this toolkit and use as needed. The blank space at the bottom of each poster is to be used to write your own specific program's details.

You may also visit www.bikewalkmississippi.org, Toolkits, Safe Routes to Schools or www.changelanestopass.com/downloads where you can download and print as many copies of these posters as you need.

We hope these printable posters help you get started today to encourage children to bike and walk to school safely!



Sample Poster with added details at bottom.



**WE ARE
FAMILY.**

**WE RIDE
BIKES.**



EVERYONE IS SOMEONE'S EVERYTHING.

WWW.CHANGLANESTOPASS.COM



BIKE TO SCHOOL DAY

BICYCLE SAFETY

**WEAR BRIGHT
COLORS**

**ALWAYS BIKE
WITH
TRAFFIC!**

**DON'T RIDE
MORE THAN 2
BIKES SIDE BY
SIDE.**

**USE FRONT
AND REAR
LIGHTS**

**ALWAYS WEAR
A HELMET!**



BICYCLE SAFETY

ALWAYS:

WEAR A HELMET

**BIKE IN THE SAME
DIRECTION AS CARS.**

**WEAR
BRIGHT COLORS**

**USE LIGHTS ON
FRONT AND BACK**

**STOP AT RAILROAD
TRACKS**

CROSS SLOWLY



BICYCLE SAFETY IN MISSISSIPPI

EVERYONE HAS A RIGHT TO RIDE SAFELY NO MATTER HOW THEY CHOOSE TO TRAVEL.

BICYCLES IN MISSISSIPPI HAVE THE SAME RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES AS A VEHICLE ON THE ROAD.

ALWAYS WEAR A HELMET AND RIDE ON THE RIGHT - WITH TRAFFIC!

1. ABC QUICK CHECK

AIR: Squeeze your tires, fill with air until firm to the touch.

BRAKES: Check your brakes before riding. Replace brake pads if they are wearing down.

CHAIN, CRANK, CASSETTE: Spin your chain backwards and check for rust or debris. Check to

2. RIDING AT NIGHT

Wear bright, reflective clothing.

Use a bright headlight AND rear light

Use Caution.

3. USE TURN SIGNALS

Use turn signals when turning right or left.

You may point in the direction you are turning or use traditional signals as illustrated.

4. FITTING A HELMET

When you shake your head from side to side, a correctly fitted helmet will stay in place.

The League of American Bicyclists recommends two-fingers width between your eyebrows and helmet; Side straps making a "Y" below the ear and recommends less than 1/2" between your chin and the strap.

5. TRAIL ETIQUETTE

Ride on the right side (just like you would on the road) unless indicated otherwise.

Be courteous and try not to surprise other users.

Give a clear signal when passing a bicyclist or pedestrian. Use your bell or voice. A typical warning used when approaching is "on your left".

1. ABC QUICK CHECK



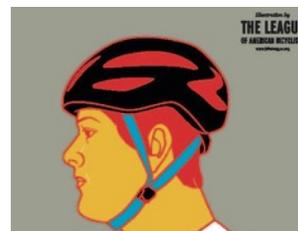
3. USE TURN SIGNALS

Signals from left to right:

1. Turning left
2. Turning right (traditional)
3. Stopping
4. Turning right



4. FITTING A HELMET



2. RIDING AT NIGHT



5. TRAIL ETIQUETTE



This poster made possible by: Bike Walk Mississippi, Illustrations provided courtesy of the League of America Bicyclists

WWW.CHANGLANESTOPASS.COM

WATCH FOR PEDESTRIANS





WALKING SAFETY TIPS

**Be Visible!
WEAR BRIGHT
COLORS**

**Have a Buddy
System**

**Cross together
at intersections!**

**Walk on
Sidewalk!**

**Obey Crossing
Guards,
Parents & Vol-
unteers**

**ALWAYS walk
against traffic!**



**WALK
SAFE!**

**WEAR
BRIGHT
COLORS**

**CROSS AT
CORNERS**

**ALWAYS WALK
FACING TRAFFIC**

**DON'T WALK
DISTRACTED**

**LOOK BOTH
WAYS BEFORE
CROSSING**



JOIN US ON
WEDNESDAY
OCTOBER 4TH!

SUPPORTING PROGRAMS

SPOTLIGHT ON: S.T.A.R.S. PROGRAM HOW TO: HOST A CYCLOVIA





S.T.A.R.S. PROGRAM

STARS at a glance:

- Outreach biking and walking program
- Biking-walking safety instructions
- Provides practical, skills-based safety training to reduce car crashes, and increase biking and walking
- In-class and outdoor workshops
- Partners with organizations to provide tools for a comprehensive program
- Presents programs to parents, teachers and community organizations
- Follow-up hands-on skill training:
 - *On-foot street crossing
 - *On-bike safety skills
- School and community outreach events to encourage parent involvement

The Safe Routes STARS (Students Taking Active Routes Safely) Program from the **Mississippi State Department of Health** provides free pedestrian and bicycle safety instruction to 2nd and 5th grade students, parents, schools and community members across Mississippi and promotes safe walking and biking as a fun, healthy way to get to and from school safely.

STARS includes:

- 45 minute pedestrian and bicycle safety education presentations per classroom
- Pedestrian safety instruction for 2nd graders
- Bicycle safety education instruction for 5th graders

The program includes: Classroom instruction, Follow-up hands-on skills training with on-foot street crossing lessons and on-bike safety skills lessons; and, School and community-based outreach events to encourage parent participation in safe, active transportation.

Currently, the program focuses on the Hinds, Rankin and Madison Tri-county area and the Mississippi Delta region school districts. The Safe Routes STARS Program is taught primarily in public and private schools but is also available to community organizations throughout Mississippi.

To request STARS at your school:
www.mdottrafficsafety.com and click **Safe Routes STARS Request Form**, call **Chigozie Udemgba, Safe Routes Program Manager, MS Department of Health: 601-576-7781**, or visit the **Mississippi Department of Health at:**
<http://www.msdh.state.ms.us>

How to make your streets come ALIVE

PLANNING A CYCLOVIA

They go by many names. **Cyclovias**, **Open Streets**, **Play Streets** or **Streets Alive** but, no matter what you call them, they all follow the same general idea - to create an environment where people are encouraged to celebrate and engage with their community in new ways - and are often the focus of an upcoming street project or activity. Open Streets events work by closing the street to vehicle traffic and opening it up to “human-powered transportation”

Started in the 60's and 70's, these types of events are now taking place all around the globe with over 100 initiatives that temporarily close streets to vehicle traffic, so that people may use them for walking, bicycling, dancing and playing. These types of events serve as innovative ways to bring a community together around a particular effort or project and to help achieve goals of public health and engagement.

Open Streets events and Cyclovias can be a fun, easy and affordable way to get people active in your community and to show your city's support for biking and walking. They are a great way to partner with other like-minded groups and to show community demand for biking, walking and other projects that support public health and active play. These events give you citizens a space to be more active and a place to celebrate their community together.

What makes an Open Streets or Streets Alive project different from a block-party? Despite sharing a few basic characteristics—temporary car-free streets, community involvement—open streets should not be confused with block parties or street fairs because the core objectives are fundamentally different. While street fairs and block parties provide positive community benefits, they do not explicitly support physical activity or the broadening of transportation choices. - *Courtesy, Open Streets Guide, Alliance for Biking and Walking*



Develop a Proposal:

Draft a proposal with objectives, timeline, budget, partners and activities. Define a lead organizer and a team of others to help with different parts of the event. Suggestions for areas to include are: Logistics (Traffic, Route, Street Closure) Coordinator, Volunteer Coordinator, Marketing, Activity Coordinator, Sponsorships, Music and/or Food Coordinators.

Putting a Team Together:

These events are most successful when developed in partnership with the city government, private businesses and nonprofits such as those involved in transportation, health, parks, and physical activity.

Decide where you will hold the Event:

Typically, you want to hold your event on a main thoroughfare where it will gain attention for being closed to traffic and opened up for human activity. You may want to choose a main street or a street where a new project (such as re-striping, upcoming bike lane or other construction) is being planned. These events can help bring attention to the upcoming project.

Work with the City to Plan a Date, Time and confirm Street closures:

Events are most successful when they involve local government. Seek support from the Mayor, City Council or other elected officials. Contact your city's planning, public works and special event committees or departments to involve them with logistics for street closures and promotion.

Recruit Sponsors:

These events often need financial support from the municipality as well as private funding. In some cases, partnering with the city could mean an in-kind donation such as waived fees or help with permitting and liability issues. Private sponsorships and in-kind support can help provide food, entertainment and cover the cost of any program supplies.

Work with Local Businesses:

If your route includes businesses, you will want to work with the businesses to involve them as much as possible. Remind them of the increase in businesses due to the event and work with them to offer specials or discounts for event attendees. For businesses not located on the event route, work with them to sponsor an activity or give away promotional items for participation in certain activities.

Marketing Materials:

- Create a logo and poster design.
- Create a Facebook Event Page to start generating interest.
- List the event on all local event calendars.

Volunteers:

Create a list of places and times where you need volunteer assistance. Ask someone on your team to serve as the Volunteer Coordinator and assign slots for volunteer to sign up to serve (Usually 2 hour slots). Offer t-shirts or other incentives to volunteers for participating. Make sure to include the contact information for the Volunteer Coordinator and when and where to go when they arrive.

Activity Partners:

Find creative ways to add activity partners to your event.

To recruit for classes: Contact Yoga Teachers, Local Gyms, Pilates Instructors, Zumba Teachers and others who regularly teach fitness classes in your area. Let them know this is an opportunity for people to try these activities that might not normally join their classes. Allow class teachers of promote their business to participants and ask them to advertise about the event to their networks.

To recruit for other activities or performances: Contact Dance Studios, Health Centers, YMCA's, Boys & Girls Club, Drama Classes, Cycling and Running Clubs, Skateboard organizations, Roller Derby Teams, Step Teams, Marching Bands, Basketball Teams, Tennis Clubs and other fitness based organizations in your area.

Activity Examples:

Bicycling
Rollerblading
Skateboarding
Corn-hole
Obstacle Courses
Yoga Classes
Pilates
Face Painting
Kick-boxing Class
Salsa Dancing
Jump Rope Contest
Hopscotch
Food Trucks
Relay Races
Four-Square
Hula-hoop contest
Basketball
Organized walks
Dance performances
Step Teams
Twister Tournaments
Human Tictactoe
Volleyball
Tae Kwon Do
Salsa Dancing
Marching bands
2nd Lines
Break-dancing
Street Tennis
Zumba Class
Bounce Castle
Live Music
Scavenger Hunt
Bike Repair
Health Screenings

Possible Budget Items:

Liability Insurance
Street Permits
Sidewalk Chalk
Hula Hoops/Jump-ropes
Poster/Promotion Cost
Staff Time
Food/Drink Costs

A note on getting started: Bike Walk Mississippi is statewide bicycle and pedestrian advocacy nonprofit in Mississippi. They have helped put together multiple "Streets Alive" events and are happy to partner with any city or town in Mississippi to help develop your plans to develop an event of this nature. You can also look at Open Streets initiatives across the globe at www.openstreetsproject.org



In 2013, Bike Walk Mississippi received funding from People for Bikes to hold Mississippi's First Cyclovia, "Jackson Streets Alive".

2013

Location: Downtown Jackson

Streets Closed: Amite, Yazoo, Congress + Smith Park

Over 700 people attended Jackson Streets Alive in Downtown Jackson. The event was held from 10am-4pm with fitness classes held every hour, along with a bike polo tournament, two local food trucks, street tennis, roller-derby, corn-hole, face-painting, bubbles and a bicycle obstacle course. Volunteers also lined the streets with physical challenge signs stating "Hop on one foot", "Jump 10 times" and used sidewalk chalk to welcome attendees, thank sponsors and create sidewalk games like four-square. Local bands played on street corners throughout the day to facilitate the natural atmosphere.

2014

Location: Old Canton Road

Streets Closed: Old Canton Road from Avondale to Oak Ridge

In 2014, Jackson Streets Alive kicked off with an all-ages bike ride called a "Kidical Mass" through the streets of Jackson and returned to start the cyclovia at 10:00am. Food was provided by local food truck Lurny'D's Grill and a beer truck was available from New Belgium Brewing. Organizers utilized a google-form to crowd-source activity partners which included the Boys and Girls Club, Roller-derby Teams, Girl Scouts, Jxn Bike Polo Teams, My Brother's Keeper, local running teams, and the Mississippi Chapter of the American Heart Association.

Tips from Jackson Streets Alive

- Used a Google Form to solicit activity partners through open applications
- Required all businesses & nonprofits to host an activity (instead of a typical "booth").
- Partnered with the local neighborhood association to determine route and alert neighbors.
- Sent letters to residents along the route months in advance explaining the event and clearly stating the times the road would be blocked.
- Created a Music Budget to pay local bands to play music throughout the day
- Partnered with local food and beer trucks



PRINT AND USE RESOURCES:

HOW TO: CONDUCT A WALKING AUDIT

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES:

WALKING BINGO

BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN SAFETY QUIZ

WALK TO SCHOOL DAY STICKERS

WALK TO SCHOOL PUNCH CARDS

TEMPLATES:

WALK TO SCHOOL DAY - PRESS RELEASE

WALK TO SCHOOL DAY - LETTER TO PARENTS



HOW TO CONDUCT A WALKING AUDIT:

Going on a Walk Audit is a great way to assess the walkability of your neighborhood. Walk audit assessments can be done by parents, school administrators, neighborhood associations or interested individuals in a community. Typically they are conducted in a 1/2 mile to 1 mile radius surrounding a school or they can be centered in downtown areas or areas of interest for increasing walkability.

Walking Audit forms themselves can also look different depending on what type of audit you undertake.

In the online version of this toolkit, we offer several walkability and bike ability assessments forms for you to choose from.

Just remember: No matter the size or type of Walking Audit you conduct, try to focus on the observations made by your attendees and be sure to take photos and notes of your walk! Make a list of action items when you return to keep it fresh on your mind.



Preparing for your walk:

1. First, decide who will walk with you on the day of the Audit

Try to find a diverse group that includes those with disabilities or walking challenges as well as different ages and professions.

2. When you have your team together, you want to identify your route.

Decide together on a walkable area within 1 mile of your school or common destinations.

3. Make sure you record your walk!

Bring notepads or paper and clipboards along with pens, camera (or smartphone camera) and comfortable shoes!

4. Decide how long you think your walk will take, then schedule a day and time to go walking!

On your walk:

For each street you walk, you will stop several times - at the end of the street or at each intersection. This is where you can have guided discussion about each street and write down your observations. Typically, you will use a new assessment sheet for every street you observe. Take note of any infrastructure failures as well as any positive assets that are unique to your community. Encourage discussion between each of the participants and have them each tell you what they observe.

Facilitator Tips:

Assign Roles for Observations: Before you start your Walk Audit, assign roles to each of the walkers in your group. It can be helpful to ask different people in the group to make observations through the eyes of people who aren't present, for example, ask different people to make observations through the eyes of a child, a bicyclist or a wheelchair user as they walk.

Designate a Photographer: You'll want to have at least one person taking photos, if not more. Make sure they record where on the map they took a photo. This makes recording your information much easier when you return from your walk.



DURING THE WALK: QUESTIONS TO GET PEOPLE TALKING

- Is this street busy with people?
- Are green spaces, parks, playgrounds, churches or activities?
- Is the space welcoming?
- Are sidewalks present?
- Are there gaps in the sidewalk?
- Are the sidewalks wide enough for 2 people to walk side by side?
- Are goat-trails present?
- Are street lights available?
- Does the area feel safe for pedestrians? What about at night?
- Do you feel that the area is safe for children?
- Are vehicles going above the posted speed limit?
- Do you feel safe crossing the street?
- Are crosswalks and pedestrian signals available?
- Do drivers yield to pedestrians?
- Do the streets need to be widened or re-striped?

AFTER THE WALK: DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What assets did you find?
- How can you utilize these assets?
- What do you like about the neighborhood?
- What changes can make a larger impact going forward?
- What infrastructure issues did you find?
- What can you do to improve the issues you found?
- What community events can your group organize to help improve our neighborhood's walkability?
- Who can you contact to help resolve these issues?

AFTER THE WALK: IDEAS FOR POSITIVE CHANGE

- Transform an un-used green space into a community garden or dog park
- Uses for empty parking lots: Meet-up place for walks, community events or concerts
- Turn a blank, empty wall into a welcoming community mural
- Partner with your city to paint crosswalks near your school
- Plan walk to school or biking events in your community
- Hold a beautification or community clean up day
- Host a weekly meet-up for people to walk together
- Host a community concert or public art contest
- Set up a community watch or walking patrol

TIP: Use a Walk Audit to Engage Public Officials:

Walk Audits not only help you and your community assess the current condition of your sidewalks and streets but they are also a great way to show public officials specific ways they can help your community improve it's safety, health and conditions.

Consider asking officials to be involved by: Inviting them to lead your walk, present them with the results of your walk audit and ask for their assistance in making identified improvements. Other ideas include: Getting an official Walk to School proclamation from the Mayor, holding a press conference at the start of your walk or at the school when walkers arrive and urging your public officials to make it easier for children to walk to school.

WALKING BINGO

Play with your friends, walk as a class or walk with your parents! Do as many of these walking activities as you can. The first person to score 5 in a row spelling out BINGO wins!

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WALK SIGNAL	CROSSING GUARD	WALKED TO SCHOOL	WALKED HOME FROM SCHOOL	CROSSWALK
WALKED ON A SIDEWALK	SCHOOL BUILDING	PLAYGROUND	WALKED WITH A FRIEND	SCHOOL BUS
REMEMBERED TO WALK ON THE LEFT SIDE OF THE ROAD FACING TRAFFIC	ENCOURAGED A FRIEND TO START WALKING		STOP SIGN	LOOKED BOTH WAYS BEFORE CROSSING STREET
BIRD ON A WIRE	DOG ON A LEASH	TRAFFIC LIGHT	SQUIRREL IN A TREE	OTHER PEOPLE WALKING
SPEED LIMIT SIGN	WATCH FOR CHILDREN SIGN	PUDDLE	MAILBOX	SCHOOL BUS STOP AHEAD

WALKING BINGO

Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Quiz

1. What kind of clothing should you wear when you walk in the dark?

- A. Light or bright colored clothes
- B. Dark-colored clothes
- C. Both of the above

2. When walking on a road with no sidewalk, you should:

- A. Walk on the left side, facing traffic
- B. Walk on the right side, with traffic
- C. Walk down the middle if there is no traffic

3. You should always cross the street:

- A. Between parked cars
- B. At a crosswalk
- C. At the corner of a street
- D. Both B & C

4. What should you do before crossing the street?

- A. Stop completely before crossing
- B. Make eye contact with driver
- C. Look left, right and left again
- D. All of the above

5. Cars will always stop for a pedestrian in a crosswalk.

- TRUE FALSE

6. It's okay to wear sandals, flip-flops or ride a bicycle with bare feet.

- TRUE FALSE

7. When a traffic light is yellow, it means, hurry up before the light turns red!

- TRUE FALSE

8. Should you walk with or against traffic?

- A. With traffic
- B. Against traffic

9. What side of the road should you ride a bicycle?

- A. Ride on the left side, against traffic.
- B. Ride on the right side, with traffic.

10. You are wearing your bike helmet correctly when it:

- A. Is flat on your head
- B. Fits snugly on your forehead with the buckle fastened
- C. Does not obstruct your view
- D. All of the above

11. What is the hand signal you should use to show others you are turning right on a bike?

- A. Right-hand pointing right
- B. Left hand pointed in an "L" shape up
- C. Either A & B signal a right turn

12. You should wear a bike helmet every time you ride a bike.

- TRUE FALSE

13. When riding your bike you must stop at all stop signs and red lights.

- TRUE FALSE

14. Biking and Walking are fun options to get to and from school.

- TRUE FALSE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: (DATE)

Contact:

Your Name, Contact Information, Name of School



School is Celebrating International Walk to School Day on October _____

[City, State], On (Date of Event), _____ School will be holding a Walk and Bike to School Day. People are invited to walk and bike to school with their children on (Date of Event).

Parents and Children can also meet up at _____ (Staging areas) and at the Corner of _____ and _____(Communal Meeting Place)

Walk and Bike to School Day is sponsored by (Name of City and/or School)'s Safe Routes to Schools program. Safe Routes to Schools is an international movement that aims to make everyday walk and bike to school day.

Our School knows that Walking is such an important part of children in Mississippi getting the regular exercise they need to be more successful in their studies and to improve their health! These days, it is more important than ever to model a healthy, active lifestyle for our children! We are excited about getting children from _____ School participating in a national event to show our support for this very important "movement"! Safe Routes to Schools works by organizing "Teams" at each school which organize events and contests, and assist with promotion and facilitation of walking and biking to school.

For more information about this upcoming event, contact: (Your Name, Your Number.)
[END].

School Letterhead

School or Organization
Street Address
City, State, Zip

Date

Re: _____ School is Celebrating International Walk to School Day on [Date].

Dear Parents,

We are writing to invite you to the first ever Walk To School Day event at _____ School on [Date].

At [School Name], we think that walking is such an important part of children getting the regular exercise they need to be more successful in their studies and to improve their health! Some of you may remember when you walked to school as children and we want to help kids today see just how easy it can be to get active!

We have slots available for parents to help us model healthy lifestyles for children!

- Join the organizing committee
- Walk with your child or a friend's child to school
- Volunteer to meet kids being dropped off
- Volunteer to make and serve a snack when kids arrive

Everything is very easy! But, we need your help. Will you join us to Walk to School on [Date of event]? Please contact [Contact person and information] to sign up by [Date of Deadline] and let us know the way you would most like to assist in these efforts.

Sincerely,

Principal & PTA Representative or Walk to School Event Organizer



List of Resources

To access the online version of this toolkit with downloadable copies of each section, visit: www.bikewalkmississippi.org - Toolkits, Safe Routes to Schools

Mississippi Resources

Bike Walk Mississippi

Melody Moody, Executive Director
melody@bikewalkmississippi.org
www.bikewalkmississippi.org

MDOT Safe Routes to Schools

Cookie Leffler, Safe Routes Coordinator
cleffler@mdot.ms.gov
<http://mdot.ms.gov/safetyeducation/programs/safe-routes-to-school/>

Mississippi Department of Health Safe Routes to Schools Program, STARS Program:

Chigozie Udemgba, Safe Routes Program Manager
chigozie.Udemgba@msdh.ms.gov
http://www.msdh.state.ms.us/msdhsite/_static/43,0,98,442.html

Mississippi Bicycle Safety:

www.changelanestopass.com

Mississippi Department of Education K-8 bike/ped lesson plans www.movetolearnms.org

National Resources

Safe Routes to Schools National Partnership
www.saferoutespartnership.org

International Walk & Bike to School
www.walkbiketoschool.org

NHTSA Bicycle Helmet Regulations
www.nhtsa.gov/road-safety/bicyclists

Download these resources and more at:
www.bikewalkmississippi.org
Toolkits, Safe Routes to Schools

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Page 49 - Lily Adams, Winner of the 2014 Saris Bicycle Poster Contest



"Nothing compares to the

simple pleasure

of a bike ride."

-John F. Kennedy

