Safe Routes to School Checklist Description

**Evaluation**

**Parent Survey:** these surveys help to understand what if parents are interested in having their children walk and/or bike to school, and what barriers or concerns might keep them from letting their children do this. The school district has surveyed parents several times since 2014 (including 2020) using a standardized survey developed by the National Safe Routes to School center, but school-specific surveys could also be developed, implemented, and analyzed.

**Travel Tally:** tallies are performed by the school district each semester to record each student’s method of transportation taken to and from school on a particular day. The goal is to perform travel tallies involving every elementary school and middle school student.

**Walking Audits:** walking audits involve walking on school grounds and routes on the way to school by volunteer teams. Through a simple walk, teams do an informal assessment of the area’s walkability including safety concerns and ideas to improve conditions.

**Other Observations:** there are a variety of other assessments that can be used to better understand how easy and safe it is for students to walk or bike to school. This could involve observing crossing safety, monitoring neighborhood conditions like air quality, or studying traffic movement around schools.

**Education**

**Physical Education (PE) Curriculum:** walking and biking safety can be integrated into the PE curriculum in many ways, such as teaching students about traffic rules for cars and pedestrians, proper use of sidewalks and crosswalks, bike lanes, paths, etc. Lawrence has a district-wide program teaching on-bike safety to fourth and fifth-grade students which also includes learning about equipment and other safety skills

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**Bike/Ped Education:** bicycle and pedestrian safety can also be integrated into classroom learning outside of PE.

**Bike Rodeo:** a bicycle rodeo is an interactive, and non-competitive event and usually utilizes a skills course. It is used to help kids improve their bike safety skills and create interest and excitement around biking.

**SRTS class for parents:** schools can sponsor or partner with community organizations to offer educational offerings for parents about pedestrian and bike safety. Classes also provide information about local efforts to make walking and biking safe for everyone in the community including specific efforts focused on school-aged children.

**Parent communication:** In addition to formal educational offerings, schools can provide ongoing information to parents through organized, informative communications that keep parents informed about ways work is being done to increase safety for kids walking and biking to school. Information can be provided through websites, emails, robo-calls, take-home materials, and events.

**Encouragement**

**Route maps:** each elementary and middle school in Lawrence has several maps developed by the school district and city planners. These maps can be disseminated to families to help them better understand the pedestrian/bike environment around schools and where schools encourage children to walk and/or bike to school

**Route Marking:** route marking can be done through multiple means, one of the most common being using paint on routes to guide/encourage children and walkers.

**Route amenities:** adding “points of interest and delight” along a route can encourage students to walk to school by making the journey more interesting. One possibility is placement of little libraries along a route (stocked with children’s books). Another example is a “story walk” that tells a story using a sequence of “yard signs” that eventually tell a full story as kids walk along the routes.

**Walk/Bike to School Days:** national walk-to-school (fall) and bike-to-school (spring) days have been held in the United States for many years. Schools often develop special activities on these days to encourage large numbers of kids to walk and bike to school those days (and consider walking and/or biking more routinely). Schools can also schedule other walk/bike days like “Walking Wednesday.”

**Bike/Walking/Running Club:** clubs are usually before-achool and/or after-school programs that encourage students to get active and give students another opportunity to learn about pedestrian and/or bike safety.

**Incentive Program:** incentive programs can be used to encourage students to participate and use the routes designated for the SRTS program by offering awards/prizes when students participate in Safe Routes to School activities.

**Safe Routes for Staff:** Safe routes for staff is a program in which school staff who live nearby to the school are encouraged to walk and/or bike to school. This can encourage students because teachers and staff are leading by example. Parents may also feel safer allowing their children to walk or bike if they know there will be adults on the route. There is a formal “Bicycle Friendly Business” program sponsored by the League of American Bicyclists that can be used as a model.

**Walking School Bus:** A walking school bus is a group of children who walk to school with one or more adults. It can be structured with a big group of children or as simple as neighbors taking turns walking their children to school. This encourages children to walk to school because is becomes a shared, social experience. It also creates safer conditions because groups of pedestrians are more visible to motorists than a single walker.

**Bike Train:** Similar to a walking school bus, a bike train is a group of children and adults who bike to school together. This encourages children to practice their bike safety skills, promotes activity, and helps kids get to school safety.

**School Policies:** there are policies that can be enacted by schools to encourage walking/biking and create safer conditions for kids walking or biking. An example is “staggered release” where walkers/cyclists are dismissed five minutes earlier than other students to allow them to leave school grounds to lessen conflict with the cars of parents coming to pick up students.

**Engineering**

Engineering is the process of building and improving routes themselves. It is usually the responsibility of the city for street crossings and assurance of sidewalk and bike route safety. Safe Routes to school advocates at schools can study school routes and provide input to government planners.

**Equity**

We encourage schools to integrate another E, equity, into their efforts. Some examples include:

* Safe Routes information in non-English languages
* Earn-a-bike programs that provide low-income students that opportunity to get a bike (this could also include distribution of equipment like helmets, bike locks, etc.)
* Ensuring programs can meet the needs of all students (example: adaptive bikes, for bike education to make sure students of all abilities are involved)