WALK & ROLL TO SCHOOL TOOLKIT 2022

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO HOLD A GREAT EVENT FOR YOUR SCHOOL
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Introduction
This Walk and Roll to School Toolkit is a resource designed to give school administrators, Parent-Teacher Organizations/Associations and student groups the information they need to create fun, safe events for their school communities that celebrate walking and biking to school. It also contains ideas on how to encourage walking and biking as a year-round means of traveling to school and home again.

The Toolkit is based on the Capital District Transportation Committee (CDTC)’s Capital Coexist bicycle and pedestrian safety campaign and was largely adapted from materials found at www.walkbiketoschool.org and www.bikearlington.com. It is intended to be a living document that will be updated regularly to address program changes, local trends and identified needs.

The CDTC is the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Albany-Schenectady-Troy and Saratoga Springs metropolitan areas. For more information about CDTC, explore a brief brochure or contact us.

How to Execute a Walk & Roll to School Event
The following steps will take your event from an idea to a reality. This guide is intended for event organizers who like having a to-do list so that they know everything is covered. Seasoned event organizers or those who feel comfortable with a more relaxed approach may want to simply skim this information.

Step 1: Form a Team
The most impactful events come from different voices and experiences joining together to achieve a shared goal. The event organizer doesn’t need to have all the answers. Forming a strong, inclusive core advisory team can make for a lighter workload and more impactful event. Including people with a wide range of lived experiences and knowledge of the event planning process can add tremendous value to the event and create broad community buy-in – different perspectives can help shape the goals of an event, point out problem areas that a single organizer might not be aware of, and foster a spirit of communication and collaboration that can build communities up in a deeply meaningful way. A strong team will help see the plan from start to finish, bring a variety of exciting ideas to the table, and help ensure that all members of the school community are engaged on the day of the event.

When thinking about whom to approach, consider:

- School administrators/principals
- Teachers
- Parents
- PTA/PTO
- Community organizers or leaders
- Crossing guards or school district transportation coordinators
- School champions
- Businesses
- Public officials and local government
- Youth leadership groups
- County Public Health Department, health or safety advocacy groups
- Local bike rescue, bicycling clubs, bicycle shop owners and bicycling advocates
Step 2: Envision the Event

Having a theme for the event can help other planning decisions fall into place. What motivates the community? Is there interest in promoting physical activity? Was there a tragedy involving a walker or bicyclist? Is there a way to strengthen the connection between families and the school? Understanding what inspires you, other partners, the school, and broader community should help guide event planning. Think about whether it makes sense to include walking, biking, or both. There are several ways to celebrate walking and bicycling, even for students who don’t live nearby. For example, a Walk and Roll at School Day event might be right, rather than a Walk or Bike to School Day event, or a combination of the two that maximizes the ability for all students to participate.

Event Ideas

**EXAMPLE #1: WALKING SCHOOL BUSES**

Publicize the locations of Walking School Bus stops throughout the neighborhood, and designate Walk Leaders to lead each group starting at a designated time. Teachers and the principal are there to greet the groups once they arrive at school. The principal gives a short speech to the students and parents in an outdoor assembly to explain the benefits of biking and walking, rather than driving to school.

**EXAMPLE #2: “PARK AND WALK” PARADE**

A nearby church or other location with a large parking lot is identified as a “Park and Walk” location. Parents arrive at the church at the designated time and park their cars. Buses drop off students there as well. With the help of local safety advocacy groups, the school-bound team forms a parade, walking to school carrying signs and banners with the year’s theme. At school, the mayor or community leader can hold a brief press conference to talk about the need for safe walking and biking routes throughout the town. Keep in mind that a large group walking to school together might require traffic control. The community advisory team should consider different safety groups that could support the event in this way.

**EXAMPLE #3: BIKE TRAIN EVENT**

Students and families meet at a nearby location to participate in a bike ride to school. The principal joins them, along with several dignitaries and a local athlete. Prior to the ride, helmets are checked for a proper fit and extra helmets are available for students who don’t have them. The group rides to school where they are greeted by cheering volunteers.

**EXAMPLE #4: WALK AT SCHOOL EVENT**

The event kicks off in the gymnasium with an assembly. The principal makes a pledge to walk and bike and challenges the students to do the same by logging all of their walking and biking activities. The principal introduces a contest between classrooms. Each class will log the number of walking and biking trips they make in a month. Students are encouraged to walk (or run) around the track or the playground during recess, and teachers reward good behavior by giving students extra walking time. The winning class receives the Golden Shoe Award.
There are many ways to plan a successful event. Remember that none of the ideas above are required – they’re just options to get your planning group’s creative juices flowing.

Consider whether you want to incorporate any of the following ideas:

- **Stickers, wristbands and other incentive items**: When students arrive at the school, some schools find that a small reward can reinforce their efforts to get to school under their own power.

- **Pre-event pedestrian and bicyclist safety**: If teachers are willing, safety can be integrated to fit academic learning standards. Walk and Roll to School Day events can be a great way to cap off pedestrian and bicycle safety education. Take it a step further and organize a Bike Rodeo at school a few weeks before your Walk & Roll to School event. There, volunteers can provide bike tune-ups, check helmet fittings and help kids practice their bicycle and road safety skills before the big day. See the Resources section of this Toolkit for information about CDTC’s [Capital Coexist Mini-Grant program](#) and funding opportunities to support Bike Rodeos and Youth Bike Safety Trainings.

- **Guests**: Invited guests might walk with students or speak to them when they arrive. They can serve two purposes: inspiring students and getting buy-in from local leaders. For instance, students might be excited to see members of the high school football team. A local politician might enjoy the opportunity to show support for pedestrian or bicycle improvements.

- **Find more resources on events on [www.walkbiketoschool.org](http://www.walkbiketoschool.org)'s Event Ideas and Downloadable Materials pages.**

**Step 3: Get Buy-in From the School**

School principals are key partners. It is important to get their buy-in before publicizing details and logistics of the event. Principals can be involved in many ways and can really make your event shine.

Principals have busy schedules. Here are some tips for engaging school principals:

- If you don’t already have a relationship with the principal, consider making your first contact with a staff person with whom you do have a relationship or someone who has worked on health promotions before. Examples might include the physical education teacher, school nurse or guidance counselor. PTA presidents or other active parents can also be helpful in getting an introduction to the principal.

- Try to approach the principal well in advance of the date that you want to host the event. The principal may need some convincing about the merits of the idea. When principals feel rushed, they may be less likely to endorse something new.

- Review the benefits of walking and biking to school – particularly studies that show that students who are active do better on standardized tests and these talking points.

- Have an outline and basic plan for your event so that the principal knows that details have been thought out and potential challenges have been considered. Describe plans for safety and be ready to talk about how all students can participate. For example, how will students with health or mobility needs be included? What about bus riders? Children and families who speak languages other than English? Principals will have their own concerns, so be flexible.
• It may be tough for a principal to help lead or plan an event, but they may be available to give a short motivational speech on the day of the event or to give safety tips during the morning announcements. Offer to outline talking points for a principal to present on the day of the event.
• Ask about any rules regarding photo and video.
• Identify other schools in the school district that have already registered or have registered in the past. Your principal may want to talk to other principals who have hosted events before.

Step 4: Recruit Volunteers

Volunteers can help with event preparation and on the event date itself. You can recruit volunteers in many ways: through PTA meetings, via email or on the listserv of groups who regularly volunteer for student activities. Remember to take advantage of your local school and community newsletters. Also consider those who do not regularly volunteer. Is there another way that you can get their input so they feel welcome at the event?

It helps to be specific about the tasks that require assistance. This allows potential volunteers to envision themselves getting involved based on their own strengths. Some people have great skills designing or translating marketing materials. Others might love the idea of offering stickers to students and families as they arrive at the school.

Specific tasks might include:
• Design, print, and distribute fliers for the event
• Contact potential speakers and help the speakers prepare for the event
• Organize student activities
• Help test walking and biking routes
• Lead walking and biking groups
• Coordinate logistics for a park-and-walk event

Step 5: Finalize Event Plans

This is when you put the pieces together and move from brainstorming to concrete action. Now is the time to follow up on tasks that were delegated in Step 5. For example, a park-and-walk event or a bicycle parade will need pre-determined walking and bicycling routes and may need considerations for traffic control. If you are offering rewards for participants, now is the time to follow up on any ordered materials.

Tips on Finalizing Event Plans

• Decide what students and families will do when they arrive at school. Are students supposed to report to their classrooms? Are students meeting outside together? Are they meeting in one central location in the building? Where will helmets and bicycles be stored?
• If your event requires a temporary road closing, make sure to publicize the closure multiple ways so that the community is not only aware of when/where/how long it will last, but also why the event is special. Provide background about what the event means for students. Use local news media, listservs, signs, banners, etc. If the closure requires law enforcement presence,
discuss with the planning team whether any families may feel uncomfortable with this presence and brainstorm solutions.

- For any group walk or bike ride, review a short list of ground rules with the participants. This is the time to explain basic safety measures. Remind students to stay behind group leaders, along with other safety messages about the route.
- It may be helpful to have a megaphone or other amplifier handy if there are plans to speak to a large crowd of students and their parents. Make sure at least one adult chaperone has a first aid kit.

**Step 6: Promote the Event**

A few weeks before the event, parents, students, and the greater community should all be aware that the event is going to take place. Consider translating the materials into languages used in your community – all children should have the opportunity to share in the fun! Here’s an example of how promotion could be done:

- One to two weeks before the event: Post an announcement in the school and community newsletter. If roads will be closed temporarily for a group walk or group ride, it may be helpful to get this information out in a local news source. You can also use banners and signs along the walking/biking route to keep the community informed. Explain why your school is organizing the event and why the event is important nationwide.
- One week before the event: Send home fliers that outline event logistics. If you have multiple walking routes, show a map of the routes with meeting times along with contact information for adult walking leaders. If possible, include safety reminders such as “wear bright clothing” or “wear a helmet.” Designate a spokesperson to speak to the media. Send a media advisory to newspapers, radio, and television stations that you hope will attend.
- Send home educational materials for parents to review with their children.
- Day before the event: Send a reminder home with the students. This can be a sticker, a half-sheet flier, or a postcard. Intercom announcements are a nice way to remind students and get them excited. Send out a press release to local media contacts.

For more information on promoting your event look through the resources in Get Media Attention.

**Step 7: Celebrate Walk & Roll to School Day**

Best wishes for a great event! A few day-of suggestions from fellow coordinators include:

- Arrive at the meeting location 15 minutes early.
- Have a designated spokesperson to talk with media.
- Before a park-and-walk, a parade or anything else where there’s a remote group start location, give a brief overview of the event, the theme and/or why the day is special. Review any ground rules which depend on the event, but might include things like staying on the sidewalk or obeying safety instructions.
- Congratulate walkers and bicyclists.
- Thank dignitaries, sponsors, volunteers, participants, and your community advisory team in a public announcement.
- Record the number of participants.
• Take photos and video (in accordance with principal, school or district policy).
• Have fun!

Step 8: Event Follow-up

• To streamline planning for the next event you may want to save materials and keep track of contacts. Be sure to save electronic files of fliers, sticker templates, etc. in one place that is easy to find. If you plan to pass along event leadership to someone else, organizing this type of information can be particularly valuable.
• Keep track of photos and press coverage, archiving them somewhere safe and accessible.
• Celebrate your successes! Send thank you notes or emails to your community advisors, volunteers, and partners. You may even have the resources to plan for other incentives, such as certificates.
• Share photos with the school to keep the enthusiasm going.
• With your team or partners at the school, this may be a time to explore how students could walk or bike to school regularly by starting up ongoing program.
• Gather feedback from the advisory group, volunteers, and school staff. How many people participated? What media coverage did the event receive? What worked well? What would you like to do differently next time?
• Now is also the time to keep the creativity going – who do you wish had been involved that wasn’t involved in this event? How could you include them in the next one? Who could support the advisory team’s efforts to facilitate that involvement? Walk and Bike to School day events wouldn’t be the same without the value added by vibrant communities where every child has the opportunity for a safe walk or roll to school, no matter where they live, work, or play.
Sample Timeline

- **2 months before**
  - Form a team
  - Envision the event
  - Approach the Principal

- **1 month before**
  - Recruit volunteers, identify routes, create fliers, organize student activities

- **2 weeks before**
  - Announce event

- **1 week before**
  - Send home reminder
  - Send home backpack materials

- **1 day before**
  - Celebrate Walk & Roll to School Day!

- **Event follow up**
  - Debrief with volunteers and organizing team on what worked, what didn’t
Tips for First-Time Organizers

Seasoned event organizers have offered 8 tips that cover all steps of the planning process.

**Tip 1. It’s Okay to Start Small**

It’s okay to start small. You can always build on your successes with more components next year. Or, if the school’s enthusiastic and partners are ready to help, aim high; start with an initial flier that you follow with other promotional materials and planned activities.

**Tip 2. Plan Early, If You Can**

Plan as early as you can. Depending on how your school operates, it might be a good idea to get the ball rolling two months before your event date. Many organizers get approval from the school in the previous school year (or the organizer is the school principal). Often times they don’t take any other steps at that point besides getting the date on the school calendar.

**Tip 3. Get the Principal On Board**

Get the principal’s approval before moving forward on tasks. Approach the principal with an outline of your ideas for the event as early as possible. While at minimum the principal’s approval is needed, he or she can also be what makes the event really shine.

**Tip 4. Recruit Help**

There’s no need to go it alone. Don’t try to plan and carry out the event all by yourself. Recruit other adults and students to help.

**Tip 5. Include All Students**

Include everyone at the school. Explore ways to participate and learn about how to provide access for all students. Make sure everyone at school know about the event and feels welcome to participate, even if they don’t have a bike or live too far to walk. Intercom announcements are a good way to get the word out and reinforce safety tips.

**Tip 6. Consider Giveaways, or not**

Some schools find that offering small giveaways such as stickers, bike lights or coloring books that teach traffic safety are great ways to get their student body excited and motivated to turn out for the event. Other schools find them a distraction. Do what works for your school. If you are interested in exploring giveaway ideas, check out CDTC’s [Transportation Safety & Education Materials Order Form](#) for access to free materials, or find some materials to download and hand out as incentives on [www.walkbiketoschool.org’s Downloadable Materials](#) page.

**Tip 7. Communicate with Parents**

Communicate with parents early and often about the event. Distribute fliers two weeks before the event, and send out reminders the week and day before the event. Include your contact information in
the promotional materials in case parents have questions or concerns. Check out these flier templates for you to use and adapt.

Tip 8. Get the Word Out to Your Community

Get the word out beyond the school. Promote the event to the community, elected officials as well as students. Think strategically. For example, if speeding is a problem, you may want to involve local law enforcement. If sidewalks are missing or in bad repair, you may want to invite your local public works department. Browse ideas for promoting your event.
Outreach Tools

Because we want to make it as easy as possible for everyone to participate in Bike and Walk to School Day, we’ve created templates you can use to promote the event and communicate with your school community and your neighborhood. Below are a set of templates for a variety of outreach modes, including a backpack letter, an email, a school communication, and a newsletter article. Also included are materials that can be handed out to students either at school or as part of a backpack packet that is sent home: 1) Safety Tips for Walk and Roll to School Day and 2) Top 5 Reasons to Walk or Bike to School. Finally, a list of talking points are included to help organizers and volunteers communicate about your Walk and Roll to School event, and about the Walk and Roll to School and Safe Routes to School movements in general.

Templates

1. **Sample Backpack Letter**
   Sample text that can be used as backpack mail to send home with students. The letter informs families about Walk and Roll to School Day and opportunities for participation.

2. **Sample Email**
   Email text may be used by the school and/or the PTA to reach the entire school community. You can copy and paste the text directly into your email message.

3. **Sample School Communication**
   Text that can be used in any communications (Newsletter, Listserv, etc.) to share your school’s involvement in Walk and Roll to School Day this year.

4. **Sample Newsletter Article**
   Text for a school newsletter to be disseminated to families, staff and faculty as a fun way to get everyone excited about Walk and Roll to School Day. Make the article eye catching by including photos.

Student Handouts

1. **Safety Tips for Walk and Roll to School Day**
   These safety tips can be sent home along with the backpack letter or handed out and discussed at school.

2. **Top 5 Reasons to Walk or Bike to School**
   This handout can also be sent home along with the backpack letter or handed out and discussed at school to encourage students and their parents to think about why it can be a good idea to walk or bike to school.

Talking Points for Organizers and Volunteers

1. **Key Messages about Walk and Roll to School events**
   Share this document with organizers and volunteers to use as they engage with the school community, the neighborhood and general members of the public.
Sample Backpack Letter

Dear School Families:

Walk and Roll Day is coming up fast and this year [INSERT SCHOOL NAME OR MASCOT] is participating by encouraging students to walk or bike to school on June [INSERT DATE]. Region-wide participation is being supported by the Capital District Transportation Committee (CDTC).

Part of an ongoing effort to encourage students to walk and bike to school, Walk and Roll to School Day will also teach students about the health and environmental benefits of walking and biking. Some of these benefits include keeping young people healthy and strong as well as teaching them how to safely navigate streets in their neighborhood. These active transportation modes help students stay alert in class and provide quality time with parents and friends as they travel to and from school.

By partnering with CDTC, [INSERT SCHOOL NAME] also hopes to raise community awareness about the importance of traffic safety, safe routes to schools, well-maintained walkways, and traffic calming in our neighborhoods and around schools.

Here at [NAME OF SCHOOL], we plan to [DESCRIBE PLANS, VOLUNTEER NEEDS, OTHER SPECIFICS]. Of course, many of our students already walk and bike every day, so Walk and Roll to School Day will be a celebration of your year-round efforts as well as an opportunity to encourage more [NAME OF SCHOOL/MASCOT] students to give biking and walking a try!

To help your family get ready for Walk and Roll to School Day, we’ve provided safety tips and the Top 5 Reasons to Walk and Roll to School (for students).

For more information on our participation in Walk and Roll to School Day and ways to get involved, please contact [SCHOOL CONTACT PERSON] at [EMAIL ADDRESS] or [PHONE NUMBER].

And be sure to mark your calendars!

Thank you.

Sincerely,

[INSERT EVENT ORGANIZERS’ NAMES]

[INSERT ORGANIZING SCHOOL AND PARTNERS]
Sample Email

Subject: Walk and Roll to School Day on [INSERT DATE]

To: [All Families/PTA Members/School wide]

From: [School Principal/PTA President/Point Person for Walk and Bike to School Day]

Walk and Roll Day is coming up fast and this year and [INSERT SCHOOL NAME OR MASCOT] is participating by encouraging students to walk or bike to school on June [INSERT DATE]. Region-wide participation is being supported by the Capital District Transportation Committee (CDTC).

Part of an ongoing effort to encourage students to walk and bike to school, Walk and Roll to School Day will also teach students about the health and environmental benefits of walking and biking. Some of these benefits include keeping young people healthy and strong as well as teaching them how to safely navigate streets in their neighborhood. These active transportation modes also help students stay alert in class and provide quality time with parents and friends as they travel to and from school.

By partnering with CDTC, [INSERT SCHOOL NAME] also hopes to raise community awareness about the importance of pedestrian safety, safe routes to schools, well-maintained walkways, and traffic calming in our neighborhoods and around schools.

Here at [NAME OF SCHOOL], we plan to [DESCRIBE PLANS, VOLUNTEER NEEDS, OTHER SPECIFICS]. Of course, many of our students already walk and bike every day, so Walk and Roll to School Day will be a celebration of your year-round efforts as well as an opportunity to encourage more [NAME OF SCHOOL OR MASCOT] students to give biking and walking a try!

For more information on our participation in Walk and Roll to School Day and ways to get involved, please contact [SCHOOL CONTACT POINT] at [EMAIL ADDRESS] or [PHONE NUMBER].

We encourage you and your family to review our school’s plans and consider taking part in Walk and Roll to School Day.

For more on Walk and Roll to School Day around the nation and here in the Capital Region, visit www.walkbiketoschool.org and www.cdtcmpo.org.

Thank you,

[NAME AND TITLE OF SENDER]
Sample School Communication

To promote the great health, safety, environmental and social benefits of walking and biking to school, [SCHOOL NAME] is taking part in the Capital Region’s Walk and Roll to School Day celebration on June [INSERT DATE]. Students at schools across the region are being encouraged to walk or bike on [INSERT DATE].

Here at [NAME OF SCHOOL], we plan to [DESCRIBE PLANS, VOLUNTEER NEEDS, OTHER SPECIFICS] on [INSERT DATE]. Of course, many of our students already walk and bike every day, so we’ll also be celebrating your year-round efforts on Walk and Roll to School Day while we encourage more [NAME OF SCHOOL/MASCOT] students to give walking and biking a try!

For more information and resources, visit www.cdtcmpo.org and www.walkbiketoschool.org.

A little foot and pedal power can go a long way!
Sample Newsletter Article

School Crossing Zone Ahead: Walk and Bike to School Day Coming Up on June [INSERT DATE]

How did you get to school when you were a kid?

Today, fewer than 15 percent of all school trips are made by walking or biking. And more families are driving their kids to school instead of walking, biking, or taking the bus. These trends affect everything from childhood obesity to traffic congestion to air quality.

Enter the Capital District Transportation Committee’s (CDTC) Walk and Roll to School Day program.

On June [INSERT DATE], CDTC and [INSERT SCHOOL NAME AND OTHER PARTNERS] join forces to coordinate participation in this national event. Walk and Roll to School Day, which has been held every year since 1999, encourages students to walk, bike or otherwise power their own way to school (such as on a skateboard or scooter) while teaching the health and environmental benefits of walking and biking. Walk and Roll to School Day also raises community awareness about the importance of pedestrian and bike safety, safe routes to schools, well-maintained walkways, and traffic calming in neighborhoods and around schools.

Walk and Roll to School Day takes place in the Capital Region on the morning of Wednesday, June 1. Here at [NAME OF SCHOOL], we plan to [DESCRIBE PLANS, VOLUNTEER NEEDS, OTHER SPECIFICS]. Of course, many of our students already walk and bike every day, so we’ll also be celebrating their year-round efforts on Walk and Roll to School Day while we encourage more [NAME OF SCHOOL] students to give walking and biking a try! For more information on our participation in Walk and Roll to School Day and ways to get involved, please contact [SCHOOL CONTACT POINT] at [EMAIL ADDRESS] and [PHONE NUMBER].

We encourage you and your family to review our school’s plans and consider taking part in Walk and Roll to School Day!

For more information and resources, visit www.cdtcmpo.org and www.walkbiketoschool.org.

A little foot and pedal power can go a long way!
Safety Tips For Walk and Roll to School Day

Everyone

- Walk or bike with a buddy, or have adult supervision enroute to and from school.
- Never cross the street against a light, even if you don’t see any traffic coming.
- If there are no crossing guards, traffic lights or crosswalks, cross at intersections.
- Before crossing, make eye contact with any drivers in cars approaching the intersection or crosswalk to make sure they see you.
- Never cross in the middle of a block.
- Wear reflective material to make sure you are visible to street traffic. Stay visible after dark and in bad weather with lights, light-colored clothing and reflective gear.
- Take off earbuds and headphones so you can hear what’s going on around you.
- Don’t text or talk on the phone.

Walkers

- Before crossing, look left, right, then left again.
- Stand on the sidewalk when waiting to cross the street.
- Watch for turning vehicles.
- Use pedestrian push buttons when available.
- Begin crossing the street on “WALK.” Do not begin to walk after the upraised hand signal appears. Some intersections also have countdown traffic signals that show how much time you have left to cross.
- When crossing at an intersection without a signal, make your intentions clear to drivers through eye contact or hand signals showing that you plan to cross. Make sure drivers in all lanes can see you before starting to cross.
- When sidewalks are not available, walk against traffic, on the left side of the street.
- Cross behind the bus in a crosswalk when possible. Watch out for vehicles backing out of parking spaces and driveways.
Bicyclists

- Make sure your helmet fits correctly and is the correct size. Maintain your bike in good working order.
- Riding on sidewalks may be allowed for children in your Capital Region community, but you should check with your local municipality to be sure. Although cyclists must yield to pedestrians, try to make room for them to get by. Often there is room for all if everyone acts with consideration.
- If no sidewalk is available, bicyclists should ride with traffic on the right side of the street.
- Choose quiet, low-traffic streets with slow-moving traffic with high visibility for your ride.

For additional resources on pedestrian and bike safety for elementary school students, visit www.walkbiketoschool.org.
Top 5 Reasons To Walk or Bike to School

Did you know walking and biking can be a fun and easy way to get to school? Using your feet or a bicycle can make you stronger and healthier, and give you more independence. It can have a positive effect on your life, your community, and the world. Here are the top 5 reasons to walk or bike to school.

1. **Get come exercise.** Had a long day at school? An activity like walking or biking that gets the blood pumping can help clear the mind. Plus pedaling a bike develops muscles to make you stronger and more coordinated.

2. **Get outdoors.** Get out in the sun and soak up some vitamin D! It supports your immune system, which can help promote good health.

3. **Improve your test scores.** More and more research shows that a little exercise in the morning improves student test scores. No extra studying required!

4. **Breathe easy.** The more people who walk and bike, the better our environment will be for the people who will be there the longest – kids! Fewer cars means better air quality, and better, cleaner air means you’ll lead a longer, healthier and more enjoyable life.

5. **Be a future safe driver.** When you’re old enough to drive, you’ll be ahead of the curve. The more practice you have navigating the rules of the road as a bike rider or a pedestrian, the better prepared you’ll be as a knowledgeable and attentive driver.
Talking Points for Walk & Roll to School Day

Communicating with the parents, media, community leaders or the public about a Walk and Roll to School event is a lot easier with basic facts and figures at your fingertips. Below are a few important reasons communities nationwide support these events as well as a little background on how the events came to be.

Walk and Roll to School Days fuel change

- Walk and Roll to School Day events connect with many issues that communities care about, like creating safer and more walkable routes to school; building a sense of community or school spirit; and inspiring families to use their feet for the school commute more often.
- Events are an easy way for students and families to try walking, bicycling, and rolling to school with little commitment. They might be surprised at how little time it takes and how much everyone enjoys it.
- Half of Walk, Bike & Roll to School Day events nationwide are part of ongoing activities to promote student walking, bicycling, and rolling throughout the school year.
- Walk, Bike & Roll to School Day events can help encourage communities to implement policy or engineering changes that make it safer to walk and bike to school. In 2018, about 60% of Walk, Bike & Roll to School Day event organizers indicated that their event led to planned or already completed policy or engineering changes.
- Each year participation in both Walk & Roll and Bike & Roll to School Days grows. In 2018, more than 5,600 communities registered Walk & Roll to School Day events on walkbiketoschool.org and more than 3,200 communities registered Bike & Roll to School Day events; even more participated but didn’t register online.

Improving safety for all walkers and bicyclists

- Walk, Bike & Roll to School Day events are great ways to promote a broader message of safety and support for safe, active travel in general.
- By starting with children and the trip to school, communities become safe places for everyone to walk, bike, and roll.
- Active travel to school provides children practical experience with respect to road safety.
- Communities rally around making safety improvements that benefit children.
- Safety measures aimed at protecting youth – such as controlling speed, having ample crosswalks, and improving walking and biking facilities on school routes – have broader effects that benefit the entire community.
- Experiencing these safety improvements around schools helps build public support for their use in other areas of the community.
- Strategies for youth – such as Walk & Roll and Bike & Roll to School Day – create opportunities to encourage behaviors and change mindsets that inspire long-lasting, community-wide change. Vision Zero for Youth (visionzeroforyouth.org) integrates the priority for children’s walking and biking safety with the growing number of places committing to eliminating all traffic deaths.

Environmental Benefits of Walking, Biking, and Rolling to School

- Walking, biking, and rolling to school encourages a healthy lifestyle that has the potential to aid in the battle against climate change.
Active travel modes, such as walking and biking, can replace many of the short car trips we make throughout the day – including those to school.

Adopting modes of active travel can simultaneously improve or maintain healthy weights while reducing oil consumption and carbon dioxide emissions which contribute to climate change.

Even when considering rapid population growth in most American cities, bicycling has the potential to reduce carbon emissions more than any other alternate mode of travel.

Accessibility and Supporting Students with Disabilities

- Safe Routes to School programs provide invaluable tools that support healthy lifestyles, bolster physical activity, and promote independence for children of all abilities.
- Creating a Walk, Bike & Roll to School Day event that is inclusive for children with and without disabilities ensures all students can receive the benefits of the program, enjoy each other’s company, and learn safe and healthy habits together.
- Providing early education around bicycling, walking, rolling, and transit is crucial because many disabilities can limit the ability to drive a car.
- Youth with disabilities are at a higher risk for developing health problems from sedentary behavior and are significantly less likely to achieve the recommended amount of daily physical activity than their peers without disabilities. Safe Routes to School events support increased physical activity, help kids develop healthy habits, and decrease the risk of chronic disease and obesity.

About Walk & Roll School Day

- The Capital District Transportation Committee (CDTC, [www.cdtcmpo.org](http://www.cdtcmpo.org)) has sponsored a Bike to School Challenge every May since 2014. In 2022, we rebranded the program as Walk and Roll to School Day in order to create a more inclusive event and to better reflect our longstanding goal of promoting multi-modal transportation.
- The Partnership for a Walkable America founded Walk to School Day in the United States in 1997 and began with events in two cities: Chicago and Los Angeles. Canada and Great Britain already had Walk to School events in place. In 2000, Canada, the United Kingdom and the U.S. joined together to create International Walk to School Day. Over 2.5 million walkers were estimated to have participated.
- Since 2006, the National Center for Safe Routes to School of the University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center (UNC HSRC) has been the coordinator for Walk to School events in the USA. The Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center, also part of UNC HSRC, has filled this role since the event began in 1997.
- International Walk to School Day received the Stockholm Partnership for Sustainable Cities Award in June 2003 from the King of Sweden.
- While there has been no official count in recent years, in 2011 the National Center saw more than 40 countries participating in Walk to School Day.
- The first-ever National Bike to School Day took place on May 9, 2012, in coordination with the League of American Bicyclists' National Bike Month. The event provides an opportunity for schools across the country to join together to celebrate and to build off of the energy of National Bike Month.