



Creating a Safe Routes to School Committee for Your School



The concept of “Safe Routes To School” covers many different areas of travelling to and from school. This includes:

- **Walking safety**
- **Biking safety**
- **Signage**
- **Pick-up/Drop-off**
- **School Site Safety**

After recently completing 20 years as the School Safety Coordinator for the City of Phoenix Street Transportation Department, I found that one of the best ways to help schools review these issues and come up with the best solutions is by forming a Safe Routes to School Committee.

A Safe Routes To School committee is usually made up school staff, parents, a couple of students, city staff, and other health and community officials. These members will work together to complete an overall Safe Routes To School plan. This could include the following items:

A Walking Plan - The plan will be created by the committee to review the walking boundary for a school and identify the safest areas to walk. The information is usually gathered by dividing the group into small teams to review quadrants of the walking area and make notes. The teams will come back together to share the information they collected. The committee will use this information to create





the walking plan. The plan will have the walking routes identified as well as the crossing areas. The plan will be displayed on a map that each family at the school will get a copy of. The plan will promote walking and help to lessen the number of cars being driven to school. Any issues found along the right of way (R-O-W) including broken or buckled sidewalks, missing sidewalks, sidewalks blocked by bushes or trees, missing ADA ramps at crosswalks and visible obstructions at corners would be reported to the jurisdiction to review and repair.



A Biking Plan - Like the walking plan, the committee would be divided into small groups to ride and review bike paths to school. The plan would call out the best bike routes and areas to cross streets where needed. The committee could also review where bikes are parked on the campus and look at ways to make storage safer and more convenient. If any roadway repair work is needed, they could report this to their jurisdiction.



Signage updates - Signage updates could include additional no parking signs, no left or right turn signs (often with time restrictions), speed limit signs, school ahead warning signs, stop signs or loading signs. All sign changes requested in the R-O-W would be reported to the jurisdiction to review and complete. Any sign changes for the school parking lot would be completed by the school or school district.



Pick-up/Drop-off Changes - These changes are usually displayed on a map. They could include ingress/egress location changes, student staging location changes and areas open or closed to parent traffic. The school could have a parent meeting to discuss the changes or just notify parents with a newsletter.

School Site Safety Changes - These could include adding additional crosswalks or signage in the parking lot, adding or changing ADA parking locations, adding or relocating ADA ramps, updating walking paths or gated areas and adding additional shade covering for the student staging areas.

Studies have shown that school age pedestrians and bicyclists are at a greater risk while in traffic. Emphasizing safe routes to school will offer students and their families a greater comfort level when they walk or bike to school. Creating a Safe Routes To School committee brings people together dedicated to this task. When a Safe Routes To School committee creates safety plans, there is often better buy-in from parents and school staff because it came from a committee of diverse voices within their community. A safer school leads to a safer community.



For more information about *Creating a Safe Route to School Committee* at your school contact:

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