



TRIPS to SCHOOL

Encouraging students to walk, bike, carpool and ride the bus to school.



In the Fall of 2005, the City of Bellevue's Transportation Department launched a two-year pilot program designed to increase the number of children who walk, bike, carpool or ride the school bus to school. These transportation alternatives give children an opportunity to be more physically active, to practice safe pedestrian and bicyclist skills, and to learn more about their neighborhoods while reducing traffic congestion near elementary schools.

Based on the success of the pilot program, this page will help you create and implement a similar program for your school. We've included the resources you will need to get your program up and running; whether it is a one-day walking event or a year-long effort.

Planning a Walk to School Program

Organizing a Walk to School program can be fun and rewarding for everyone. Follow these three steps to develop a successful Walk to School program for your school.

1. Plan your program

- Choose your events:** A walk to school program can range from a one-day event to a program that lasts the entire school year and includes several different events. Below is a list of different event activities that you could plan at your school:

Informational Campaign. Develop and distribute educational materials to inform students and parents about school travel options and safety skills. Possible materials include newsletter articles, informational flyers in the back-to-school orientation packets, flyers in the weekly student packets, and a school access map that highlights crosswalks and pedestrian access to the school. This campaign is an excellent way to get the school year off to a safe start.



Walking School Buses (WSB). A WSB is a parent-guided walking route with specific stops at specific times. It is a great way to engage neighborhood-based students and grow the walking population. To start a WSB you will need to define a route with stops, recruit parent leaders and distribute flyers to promote the WSB and to provide a map of the route. [Click here](#) for more information, including step-by-step instructions for starting a WSB, courtesy of International Walk to School in the USA.

Help parents and students facilitate a WSB by providing them with a route map. Templates are available for the following schools: [Ardmore](#), [Lake Hills](#), [Phantom Lake](#) and [Sherwood Forest](#). If your school is not listed, please contact the Bellevue School District for your school's walking zone boundaries or use a mapping program, such as [Google Maps](#), to create a walking map for your school.

Please note: In the Bellevue School District (BSD), students who are eligible to ride the bus should be encouraged to walk to their bus stop and not to the school. In general, the walking zone for elementary schools is a 1-mile radius that originates at the school. However, the BSD adjusts school walking zones to avoid major roadway crossings and intersections.

Regular Walking Program. Schools can schedule a reoccurring Walk to School day on a weekly or monthly basis. Some schools have implemented **Walking Wednesdays** during the fall and the spring, which could also be a great day to run a walking school bus. Flyers can be distributed to promote the days.

Incentive-Based Programs. Develop an incentive-based program to encourage students to walk, bike, carpool or ride the bus. Students can track their own trips and receive small accomplishment prizes for completing a minimum number of trips within a specified period of time. The City of Bellevue has some promotional items that schools could use for their accomplishment prizes. Please contact Neighborhood Services at (425) 452-6160 to determine the availability of these items.

Assemblies and Presentations. Create customized assemblies to inform students about your school's Walk to School program and general safety awareness for pedestrian, bicyclists, carpoolers and bus riders. The City of Bellevue has developed a Safe Trips Education Packet as a resource guide for teachers. This packet includes a DVD with a karaoke video and a series of interactive questions, a CD with an activity workbook, and a hardcopy of the workbook. If you would like copies of this packet please contact Transportation Neighborhood Services at (425) 452-6160. There are also other organizations that may be available to help with assemblies and presentations.

- Choose a focus.** There are many great reasons to have a Walk to School event: Promote healthy exercise, learn safe pedestrian and bicycling skills, reduce traffic congestion near schools, show concern for the environment, and it is FUN!
- Select a date.** Walk to School Events can last anywhere from one day to one week to a full year. When determining the length of the event, it is important to consider the time and effort it will take to implement the event.

When selecting event dates, check the school and district wide calendars to choose dates



that coincide well with other school activities, and do not conflict with religious or cultural holidays. October is the International Walk to School month and is an excellent month to kick-off a Walk to School program.

Please visit the [International Walk to School in the USA](#) website for more information.

2. Partner

When proposing a Walk to School program, be sure to talk to your school's principal and get the event(s) on your school's calendar. Then try to enlist the help of other school and community members including the PTSA, P.E. teachers and law enforcement officers.

Outside community organizations and businesses can also provide additional support, guidance and promotional materials. Potential community groups to contact include Cascade Bike Alliance and Feet First.

3. Promote

There are many different and effective ways to publicize your Walk to School event:

Flyers. Create a flyer to include in the weekly student packets. This flyer could be included in the packets the two weeks before the event. You can create your own flyer, use either one of our [templates](#) or visit the International Walk to School in the USA's [Resource Room](#).

Posters. Have students create posters announcing the event and hang them up around the school.

Announcements. Write a few promotional sentences to be read over the loud speaker during morning announcements. This announcement could be read as a reminder each morning for the few days prior to the event.

School newspaper/website. Include an article in your school newsletter and/or on your school's website.

For additional information, please contact:

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