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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Walk to School Day Unites Communities to Celebrate and Envision Safer, Active Transportation

**CHAPEL HILL, NC (October 2, 2019)** — It's National Walk to School Day and hundreds of thousands of students, parents, school officials and local leaders across the United States will join the 23<sup>rd</sup> annual celebration which highlights the importance of safer, more active transportation for youth in their local communities.

"Walk to School Day inspires schools and entire communities to celebrate safety, health and active transportation," said Nancy Pullen-Seufert, Director of the National Center for Safe Routes to School, the coordinating agency for the event. "Participation increases every year, which is quite an impressive legacy of people coming together with the common goal of starting children on the right foot so they can thrive for years to come."

So far in 2019, more than 4,000 schools in all 50 states and Washington, D.C. have registered Walk to School Day events on [walkbiketoschool.org](http://walkbiketoschool.org). The total number of events is expected to grow as celebrations continue throughout October, Walk to School Month. More than half of Walk to School Day events lead to changes in policies and the physical environment that improve safety for walking and bicycling, holding promise for improving safety and transportation options for everyone.

This year's national media event will be held in Philadelphia, PA, and brings together the Vision Zero for Youth initiative and Walk to School Day – both focused on improving safety and quality of life for students, families and the community.

On October 1, Philadelphia Mayor Jim Kenney signed the [Vision Zero for Youth Mayors' Statement on Safe Walking and Biking for Youth](#).

"Philadelphia's children are one of our most valuable and treasured gifts," said Mayor Jim Kenney. "The City, alongside our Vision Zero Task Force and our many partners, are excited to kick off our Vision Zero for Youth campaign to prioritize their safety – now – to ensure a healthy, successful future for each and every child and family."

On National Walk to School Day, October 2, the National Center for Safe Routes to School will join together with the City of Philadelphia's Gideon Elementary School students, families, school officials, representatives from the Philadelphia Office of Transportation, Infrastructure and Sustainability and other national road safety leaders from the Federal Highway Administration,

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, and the FIA Foundation to walk to school together.

Gideon Elementary School is a Community School, a City of Philadelphia Initiative where schools address neighborhoods' unique challenges within public school settings. Beginning this year, Gideon will pilot a walking school bus program to support regular, on-time school attendance.

To learn more about the events and locations of registered U.S. schools participating in Walk to School Day 2019, visit [walkbiketoschool.org/registration/whoswalking.php](http://walkbiketoschool.org/registration/whoswalking.php).

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### **About the National Center for Safe Routes to School**

Established in May 2006, the [National Center for Safe Routes to School](http://www.nationalcenterforsafeschools.org), part of the University of North Carolina (UNC) Highway Safety Research Center, helps support communities in changing their culture to support safe and active travel. The National Center's work uses research-based evidence to highlight what works and why, and translates this research into education, professional development tools and training to provide communities the technical support they need to make community-enhancing decisions.

As the coordinating organization for Walk to School Day held every October and Bike to School Day held each May and the Vision Zero for Youth initiative, the National Center provides technical support; coordinates online registration, develops resources, and facilitates worldwide promotion and participation. The UNC Highway Safety Research Center has served as the coordinator of Walk to School Day since the event's U.S. inception in 1997. For more information, visit [walkbiketoschool.org](http://walkbiketoschool.org).