

# Walk to School Day Report



Baltimore, Maryland



Palm Bay, Florida

On many fronts, 2003 Walk to School Day was a great success. Thousands of schools from all 50 states

participated. Four governors and dozens of mayors took part. Ribbons were cut for new sidewalks. Police officers taught about pedestrian safety and ticketed speeders near schools. Traffic was reduced for the day. Sixteen million people were exposed to the event in newspapers, plus

countless more through local television coverage. And, most importantly, hundreds of thousands of children walked to school safely.

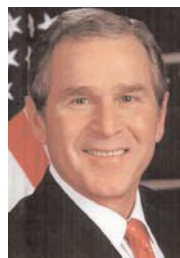
**'I kept waiting for the normal rush of cars in front of the school and they never came!'**

Franklin Elementary Parent  
Alameda, California

## President Bush Sends Letter of Support

*"I commend the Partnership for a Walkable America and all organizations involved in today's events for your dedication to helping improve the health and safety of our Nation's young people. Your efforts contribute to a stronger America."*

— GEORGE W. BUSH,  
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



## HIGHLIGHTS

- Four governors and dozens of mayors participate.
- EPA releases study showing that school siting can affect traffic congestion, air pollution, and children's health and obesity.
- An estimated 3,000 schools participate in Walk to School Day in the U.S.
- At least 167 newspapers, with a combined circulation of 16 million people publish articles and/or photos about Walk to School Day.
- 42 percent of news articles and photos appear on Section Front pages.
- The first International Walk to School Award is created to recognize outstanding programs across the globe.
- Partnership for a Walkable America works with President's Task Force on Environmental Health Risks and Safety Risks to Children to move the program forward.
- Top officials from the U.S. EPA and the Federal Highway Administration take part in Walk to School Day.
- Walk to School Day is signature event for Child Health Month.
- Several states initiated state-level coordination of Walk to School programs.
- Safe Routes to School Programs continue to grow.

Walk to School Day brings together critical community coalitions that work toward safety improvements for pedestrians and increased physical activity. Here are some highlights of good things that are happening across the country.

### Physical Activity & Nutrition

Organizers use Walk-to-School Day as kick-off event of a school program “committed to developing habits that promote optimal health, better food and lifestyle choices for children and preventing obesity.”

*Marston School  
Hampton, NH*

Walk to School Day is part of a year-round program to improve fitness and nutrition. Others components include a health fair, after-school healthy-snack cooking class, and on-going walking fitness activities.

*Towanda School District  
Towanda, Pennsylvania*

Developed a walking school bus for students, linking younger children with older students and adults.

*O'Neill Elementary  
O'Neill, Nebraska*

Walk to School Day was the kick-off for a fit-for-life program that purchased pedometers for students.

*West View Elementary  
Spartanburg, S.C.*



Bethlehem, Pennsylvania

Developed an “Outdoor Walk and Learn Trail.”

*North Iowa Schools  
Thompson, Iowa*

Started a Walk Around the World Club for students during recess and in the morning.

*Lone Oak Elementary  
Spartanburg, S.C.*

Encourage at least 30 minutes of physical activity each day, with the ultimate goal for the school being to accumulate “One Million Minutes of Motion.”

*AC Moore Elementary  
Columbia, S.C.*

Since the majority of students cannot walk to school, we use Walk to School Day to kick-off a year-round walking-at-recess program.

*Orchard Hollow Elementary  
Mentor, Ohio*

### Safer sidewalks & roadways

Crosswalks and appropriately timed traffic lights have been installed. City budget has tripled budget for sidewalk improvements, with the priority being school walking routes.

*Garfield Elementary  
Olympia, Washington*

Modernized crosswalk signals and repainted crosswalk.

*Rozelle Elementary  
Cleveland, Ohio*

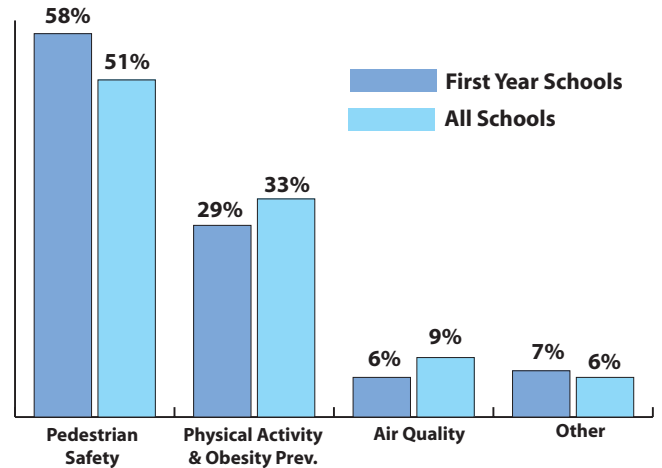
New student drop off area marked with a white curb and orange cones, and a repainted crosswalk at one intersection.

*Washington Elementary  
Santa Ana, California*

Parents successfully lobbied for a sidewalk to school.

*Clemson Elementary  
Clemson, S.C.*

### Why do Schools Participate?



City held ribbon-cutting on Walk to School Day to celebrate the completion of a new sidewalk connecting the elementary school with adjacent neighborhoods, part of the city's new sidewalk program to provide connectivity and safe walking routes to schools.

*Root Elementary  
Fayetteville, Arkansas*

Parents' walkability checklist to be used to advocate for traffic signal improvements, including a photo-enforced light in front of school.

*La Colima Elementary  
Whittier, California*

City has asked state to reduce speed limit in front of school as a result of parents bringing issue to attention.

*Markham Elementary  
Portland, Oregon*

Because of participation in Walk to School Day in 2002, the school received a Safe Communities grant, which was used for pedestrian traffic signals.

*Tice Elementary  
Lee County, Florida*

County Recreation and Parks department resurfaced and widened one of the walking paths used by children walking to the school.

*Centennial Lane Elementary  
Ellicott City, Maryland*

School administration and parent group is working with civil engineering firm to make the parking lot safer.

*Sherman Oaks Charter School  
San Jose, California*

Sixth graders made recommendations to the City Council which have since resulted in pedestrian improvements near the school.

These recommendations resulted from a service project that turned Walk to School Day into a weekly event using the Walkability Checklist.

*Topa Topa Elementary  
Ojai, California*

### Policy Changes

Colorado health department announced several new initiatives to increase physical activity in schools, of which Walk to School Colorado is a cornerstone.

*State of Colorado*

Schools participating in Alabama School Walk have received \$8 million in school zone safety funds since 1999. Expenditures are based, in part, on parents walkability checklists that are forwarded to local traffic engineers and law enforcement.

*State of Alabama*

On Walk to School day, the New Jersey governor announced \$13 million in grants to improve street safety around schools and to build bike paths. Of this, \$6 million is designated to protect children on their way to and from school.

*State of New Jersey*

City requires new neighborhoods to be designed for pedestrians and is retrofitting old streets and sidewalks.

*Garfield Elementary  
Olympia, Washington*



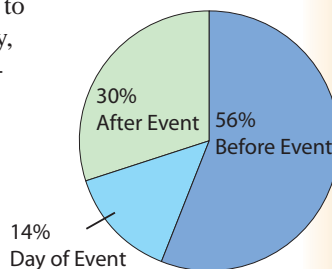
Charlottesville, Virginia



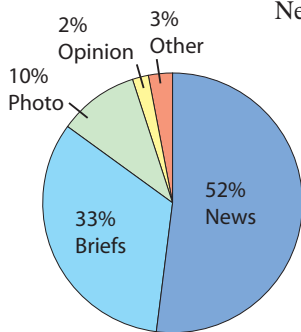
Petaluma, California

## Media Summary

Media coverage of Walk to School Day was outstanding, with newspapers and local television stations demonstrating a willingness to commit staff and news space/time to Walk to School Day, both in promoting the event before it happens and covering the events of the day. Media coverage of events is important because it brings pedestrian safety and access issues to the attention of a broader community, which can create broader support for pedestrian-friendly planning policies and sidewalk and roadway improvements.



**Total: 167 Items**



Newspapers alone reached a total circulation of at least 16 million, according to a review of newspapers in Lexis-Nexis Database. A search of all the general interest daily newspapers in the database showed 167 articles in 80 newspapers. Of those items, 31 percent were placed on newspaper section front pages, and after eliminating briefs and opinion pieces, which rarely are placed on section fronts, the percentage of front-page articles (including stand-alone photos) increases to an amazing 47 percent. It is worth noting that only one of the section front stories did not include a photo.

Television coverage of the event is much more difficult to determine with accuracy. National networks tracked through Lexis Nexis did not reveal any articles in their transcripts, but a Google internet search of news sources shows that dozens of local television stations did report on the event.

## Newspapers with 100,000+ circulation that carried items

- Los Angeles Times
- The Boston Globe
- Rocky Mountain News
- Chicago Tribune
- The Houston Chronicle
- Detroit Free Press
- The Dallas Morning News
- The Atlanta Journal and Constitution
- The Arizona Republic
- The Star Tribune (Minneapolis)
- The San Diego Union-Tribune
- Plain Dealer (Cleveland)
- St. Petersburg Times
- The Oregonian
- The Miami Herald
- Orange County Register
- St. Louis Post-Dispatch
- Sacramento Bee
- San Jose Mercury News
- Orlando Sentinel
- Indianapolis Star
- Fort Worth Star Telegram
- Columbus Dispatch
- Charlotte Observer
- Milwaukee Journal Sentinel
- The Seattle Times
- The Tennessean (Nashville)
- The Cincinnati Enquirer
- Daily Oklahoman (Oklahoma City)
- Hartford Courant
- Las Vegas Review-Journal
- Richmond Times Dispatch
- Omaha World Herald
- Austin American-Statesman
- The News & Observer (Raleigh)
- Press Enterprise (Riverside)
- The Record (Bergen County, N.J.)
- Florida Times-Union (Jacksonville)
- Palm Beach Post
- Providence Journal-Bulletin
- Fresno Bee
- Des Moines Register
- Chicago Daily Herald
- Seattle Post-Intelligencier
- The News Tribune (Tacoma)
- The Post-Standard (Syracuse)
- Morning Call (Allentown)
- Albuquerque Journal
- Ventura County Star
- Contra Costa Times



**South America**  
 Argentina  
 Brazil  
 Chile

**North America**  
 Canada  
 Mexico  
 United States

**Australasia**  
 Australia  
 New Zealand

**Europe**  
 Belgium  
 Croatia  
 Cyprus  
 Denmark  
 France  
 Germany  
 Greece  
 Ireland  
 Italy  
 Spain  
 Switzerland  
 United Kingdom

**Asia**  
 India  
 Pakistan  
 Saudi Arabia  
 South Korea

**Africa**  
 Namibia  
 Nigeria  
 South Africa  
 Zambia



Southend, England



Taipei, Taiwan



Madinat, Pakistan

## Int'l Award to recognize innovative programs

The International Walk to School Committee has established an International Walk to School Award to recognize outstanding Walk to School programs around the globe. The purpose of the award is to recognize innovative and successful programs that have the potential to be replicated in other places

More information about the award and the application process can be found at: [www.iwalktoschool.org/award/award\\_intro.htm](http://www.iwalktoschool.org/award/award_intro.htm) This award is open to individuals, schools, local and national groups and agencies. It is not limited to participants in International Walk to School Week, so anyone involved in encouraging children to walk to school and create healthier, more sustainable communities is encouraged to apply.

Applications are due no later than January 31, 2004 and the finalists will be announced on World Health Day, April 7, 2004. The winner will receive the award at the WALK 21 Conference in Copenhagen, Denmark, June 9-11, 2004.

International Walk to School Day gives children, parents, school teachers and community leaders an opportunity to be part of a global event as they celebrate the many benefits of walking. In 2003, more than 3 million walkers from 29 countries walked to school together for various reasons – all hoping to create communities that are safe places to walk.



Prime Minister Pledges Support for UK Walkers  
*“The UK Government is committed to making the journey to and from school safer and healthier for all children. We welcome initiatives such as the National & International Walk To School Weeks. Mr. Blair sends all involved his very best wishes.”*



— TONY BLAIR,  
 UNITED KINGDOM PRIME  
 MINISTER

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**PARTNERSHIP FOR A WALKABLE AMERICA**

[www.walkableamerica.org](http://www.walkableamerica.org)