

# WALK TO SCHOOL DAY

# 2013

## ANOTHER YEAR, AND YES! ANOTHER RECORD

From all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, 4,447 schools registered for Walk to School Day this year, making it another record-breaking year for participation.

Schools and communities are bringing a level of excitement and commitment to the event that founders could have only dreamed of back in 1997 when the event began with a single school. Walk to School Day started in the US to build awareness for the need for communities to be safe and walkable. In 2000, the event became International Walk to School Day when the UK, Canada and the US joined together for the first time. Today, thousands of schools across America and more than 40 countries celebrate walking to school every October.

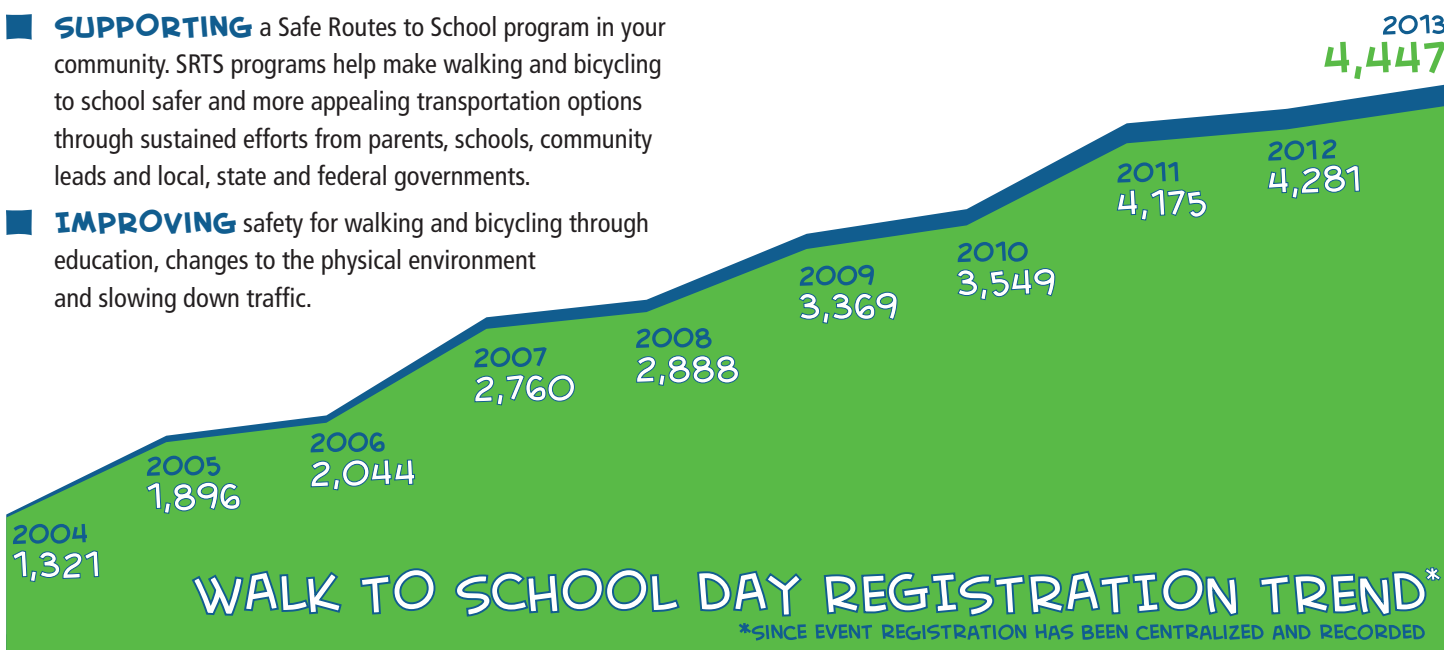
The continued support for Walk to School Day proves that this celebration has evolved into an important tradition for schools and communities around the country. At the same time, the support continues to grow, with new events making up 44% of this year's count.

Communities have many reasons why they celebrate Walk to School Day. Three reasons rise to the top:

- **INCREASING** physical activity. Walking and bicycling are great ways to foster a healthy lifestyle for students and families.
- **SUPPORTING** a Safe Routes to School program in your community. SRTS programs help make walking and bicycling to school safer and more appealing transportation options through sustained efforts from parents, schools, community leads and local, state and federal governments.
- **IMPROVING** safety for walking and bicycling through education, changes to the physical environment and slowing down traffic.



“ This was the 9th Walk to School Day event for this school. The students are so practiced... it practically runs itself... The kids look forward to these events in the fall and in the spring.  
 - NAMPA, ID ”





We realized that it was not just about being healthy and safe, it was a day of building school spirit...  
It was a great display of pride.

- HOLYOKE, CO



In ten years, communities held more than

**31,000** EVENTS

nationwide for Walk to School Day. In that same time period, nearly **17,500** different schools in more than **4,500** different cities held Walk to School Day events.



This was our first year participating in the event.

Everyone was enthusiastic and felt a great sense of pride walking together as a team and representing our school in the Walk to School Day event.

- SARASOTA, FL



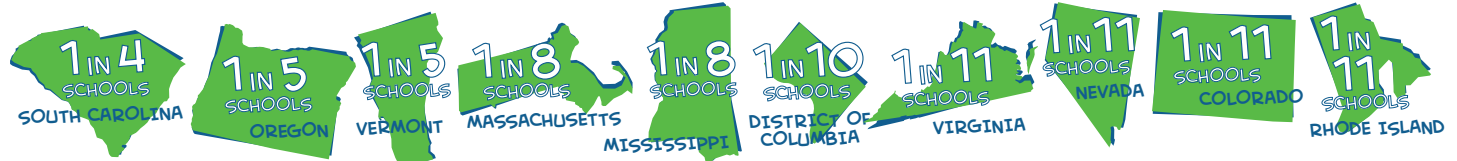
## STATE STAND-OUTS

The fact that every state had at least one registered Walk to School Day event is outstanding. This year marks the 12th consecutive Walk to School Day with a 100-percent participation rate among states. Nationally, an estimated 5% of elementary and middle schools\* registered an event this year. Some states recorded exceptional participation with 27 states beating their registration totals from last year and 17 states setting all time event registration highs.

States with more schools would be expected to have more events. In order to level the playing field between smaller states and bigger states, a Walk to School Day participation rate was calculated to compare states. In other words, for each state, the total number of events is divided by the total number of public and private elementary and middle schools, where the vast majority of events take place.

\*Based on data from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) for "schools beginning with grade 6 or below and having no grade higher than 8." The number of public schools derives from the Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey (current as of the 2011-2012 school year) and the number of private schools derives from the Private School Universe Survey (current as of the 2011-2012 school year). Go to <http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/elsi/> for more information.

## HIGHEST REGISTRATION RATES





# CATALYST FOR CHANGE

Walk to School events have a track record for leading to policy and engineering changes that help make it safer and more convenient to walk to school every day. In 2013, sixty-six percent of event organizers indicated that their event had an impact on making a policy or engineering change.

## TOP THREE POLICY OR ENGINEERING CHANGES

These are the kinds of changes that make walking and bicycling to school possible on a daily basis; not just for an event.

**21%** OF EVENTS LED TO THE ADDITION OF WALKING/BICYCLING PROMOTION TO EXISTING SCHOOL POLICIES (SUCH AS A SCHOOL WELLNESS POLICY)

**20%** LED TO THE ADDITION OF REQUIRED SAFETY EDUCATION

**17%** LED TO THE INCREASED TRAFFIC ENFORCEMENT NEAR THE SCHOOL



**54 PERCENT** of registered events are part of ongoing walking or bicycling to school promotional activities conducted throughout the year.

“Our school is located in a very distressed neighborhood that has the highest crime rates in the city... This Walk to School initiative is not only seen as a way to improve health of students... but is also a community safety initiative. Family and community members feel empowered by being able to create a safe environment for students to walk to school.”

- PITTSBURGH, PA

## WHY WALK IN 2013

For the 10th straight year, event organizers most often said “physical activity/obesity prevention” was the main reason for holding a Walk to School Day event. An active lifestyle continues to be a primary focus for schools and communities. At the same time, it is plain to see there are a variety of reasons that communities care about walking to school.



\*“Other” includes: Air pollution or a concern for the environment; time for families to be together; traffic congestion; international aspect of the event; and other factors

INCREASING SCHOOL SPIRIT  
BUILDING A SENSE OF NEIGHBORHOOD

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, VISIT [WWW.WALKBIKETOSCHOOL.ORG](http://WWW.WALKBIKETOSCHOOL.ORG)

**SafeRoutes**  
National Center for Safe Routes to School



U.S. Department of Transportation  
Federal Highway Administration

Prepared by the National Center for Safe Routes to School with support from the Federal Highway Administration. Sources for this report: Walk to School event registration (<http://www.walkbiketoschool.org/go/register-your-event>), Walk to School organizer surveys and Walk to School organizer photos.