

# WALK & ROLL TO SCHOOL DAY 2023

Communities and schools embraced 2023 Walk & Roll to School Day to bring attention to the joy of walking and rolling, and barriers that might be getting in the way of more students enjoying safe, active travel on a regular basis. In fact, one-half of events are part of ongoing activities to support daily walking and rolling to school. School mascots, chalk, signs, marching bands, elected officials, law enforcement officers and crossing guards made the morning energizing and impactful at more than **3,475 EVENTS** in 47 states and Washington, DC. This is the highest amount of participation since the COVID-19 pandemic closed in-person schools across the country. Speaking of recent trends, **MORE THAN 90 HIGH SCHOOLS** held events this year, hosting bike “buses,” seeking partnerships with lower grades, and promoting physical activity. High school participation shows that the value of active travel and that the need for safe routes continues with older students.

## NATIONAL EVENT

The National Center for Safe Routes to School joined with U.S. Department of Transportation, the Council of District of Columbia, the FIA Foundation and other local and national road safety, education and health groups at the National Walk & Roll to School Day event at Lincoln Park in Washington, DC hosted by the Ward 6 Public Schools Parent Organization. Students, families and staff from more than 15 schools headed to school “walking school bus style” after a brief program and performances by a dance team and marching band.

## ROLLING WITH IT

Not all events go as planned; the weather doesn’t cooperate, there’s resistance from school or community decision makers, or participation is less than envisioned. Congratulations to those wonderful events that serve as energizers for more active travel and congratulations to those working to build momentum for safe, active travel. Your time and commitment matter!



WASHINGTON, DC (Image: AB Corson)



WASHINGTON, DC (Image: AB Corson)

“ This was a wonderful experience for our school community! We saw a 36% reduction in tardies and a 10% reduction in vehicular traffic on our Walk & Roll Day. We’re now encouraging weekly walk & roll days and movement days.  
- TEMECULA, CA ”

# WHAT'S THE INSPIRATION FOR PARTICIPATION?

Holding Walk & Roll to School Day events takes planning by a thoughtful group of committed people and partners. This year, some places held their first-ever events and other places celebrated as part of a long-standing tradition. Either way, there are meaningful reasons why communities put time and effort into Walk & Roll to School Day. In our post-event survey, Walk & Roll to School Day organizers shared what motivated their communities to participate in this year's event. The top three motivations were **PHYSICAL ACTIVITY, ACTIVE TRAVEL SAFETY** and **BUILDING A SENSE OF NEIGHBORHOOD**. Check out two events that illustrated how these motivations look at the "street level."

“It helped build community at the beginning of the school year, creating feelings of joy and a sense of belonging.”  
- WEST ROXBURY, MA

## OPEN STREETS BUILD A SENSE OF NEIGHBORHOOD WHILE PROMOTING SAFE, ACTIVE TRAVEL



SAN JOSE, CA (Image: Walk n' Roll San Jose)

In California, the Viva Escuela SJ open streets event conducted in conjunction with Walk & Roll to School Day embraced all three of the top motivations. The San Jose Walk n' Roll program, part of the San Jose Department of Transportation, worked with partners and the school for permission to close the street in front of a school for a morning to focus on walking and biking to school. That process required the city Department of Transportation, Office of Cultural Affairs and Police Department to work together.

The event brought together community, students and families along with information and resources from partners, a "Pledge to Walk n' Roll," and folklorico dancing. In addition, Councilmember Pam Foley (chair of the Vision Zero San Jose Task Force) issued a proclamation declaring October 4 as National Walk n' Roll Day.

This annual event has been increasingly requested by schools. Many parents noted "parking somewhere nearby and then walking their kids to school was quicker and more pleasant than fighting the driveway loop traffic." Several parents planned to continue parking a short distance away and walking the remainder of the route.

## BRINGING ATTENTION TO MISSING INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDED FOR SAFE, ACTIVE TRAVEL

Walnut Grove Elementary, according to Bike Walk Franklin (TN), is not walking and biking friendly "because of the lack of sidewalks and car-centric design of surrounding roads," even for those living very close to the school. The group wanted to bring visibility to the missed opportunity for active travel to school posed by the lack of safety on the route.

For National Walk & Roll to School Day, the group engaged dozens of parent volunteers and the Williamson County Sheriff's deputies to create a safer environment for students to walk and bike to school. As the Walnut Grove Community Alliance for Road Safety noted on their Facebook page, "this is the wake-up call to improve our community's multimodal transportation and improve safety." The county is now applying for a state Transportation Alternatives Program grant to build sidewalks in the right-of-way on the busiest road.

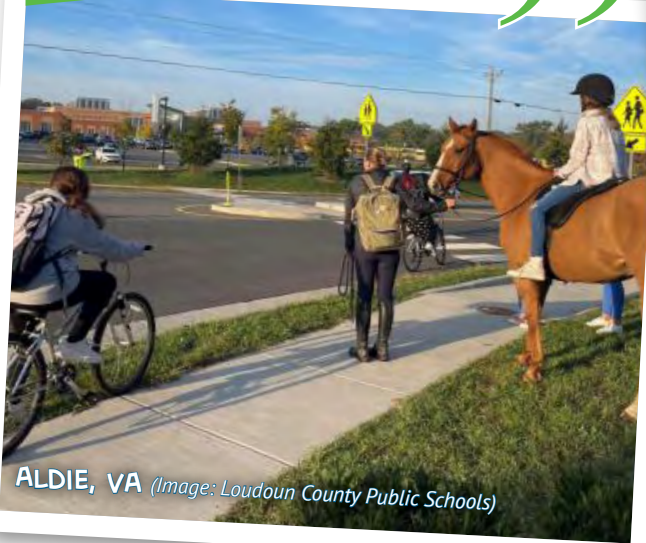


FRANKLIN, TN (Image: Kris Lange)

“ 3 years ago we had 3 schools participate. This year we advertised and had participation (at various levels) from all of our K-8 schools: 14 elementary, 3 middle, and 2 of our charters even participated! Medford School District Walk+Roll even extends to our online schools!

- MEDFORD, OR

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ALDIE, VA (Image: Loudoun County Public Schools)



BRAMBLETON, VA (Image: Loudoun County Public Schools)

## EVENTS TO SPARK CHANGE

Many communities use their events to inspire change that improves active travel in some way. Among the organizers that reported policy or engineering changes, the most common changes were: **ADDING SIGNAGE TO SUPPORT SAFE WALKING OR BICYCLING TO SCHOOL, ADDING WALKING OR BICYCLING PROMOTION TO SCHOOL POLICIES, AND ADDING REQUIRED SAFETY EDUCATION.** Schools also recognize the opportunity to use an event to take action for safety in the school community. For example, schools in Mill Valley, CA and Mahtomedi, MN invited local leaders to witness safety concerns near schools and participate in walk audits and discussions with members of the school community.

### ORGANIZING TO SUPPORT SAFETY AT MULTIPLE SCHOOLS

In Florida, a group called Sidewalk Stompers plans events at several schools in the Tampa area. These events not only offer a day to get out and try an active trip to school, but also help promote specific needs around each of the individual schools involved. At Tampa Heights Elementary Magnet, Sidewalk Stompers highlighted lower speeds and new stop signs as part of a successful safety campaign.

Working with the local PTA, Sidewalk Stompers helped develop a safer street design at Roosevelt Elementary that includes safer crossings. They then used Walk & Roll to School Day to showcase the design and encourage elements from the design to be used at other

schools. The group celebrates success while also taking the opportunity to call out where change is needed, identifying safety concerns and inviting local leaders and staff to walk with the students during the events.

Highlighting safety issues and encouraging change for the better, Sidewalk Stompers uses Walk & Roll to School Day to ensure that students can safely get to and from school every day, not just during the events. This shows in the stories they share. At many of the schools Sidewalk Stompers supports, active travel happens beyond special events, with regular walking Wednesdays, weekly events, remote drop-off, and walking and biking connections from schools to other parts of the community.

# "& ROLL": PROMOTING, CREATING INCLUSIVE EVENTS

This is the second year for the event under the rebranded Walk & Roll to School Day name. We renamed the event and our website to recognize the mix of ways students of all ages and abilities can enjoy an active trip to school. These include traveling on foot, by bike, in a wheelchair, on a scooter, by skateboard, and a number of other ways. With the new name, we included updated materials on making events **ACCESSIBLE FOR ALL STUDENTS** and welcomed stories from communities about how they've promoted accessibility on Walk & Roll to School Day and beyond. In our post-event survey, event organizers shared their efforts to create and promote accessible events.

In many places, organizers adapted the recommended routes to ensure that students of all abilities could participate. This included considerations of routes accessible to wheelchairs and the distance of the trip to school. Some schools ensured that support was provided from school staff or volunteers for students that needed it. Altogether, these schools promoted the event to the entire student body and made special efforts to create more inclusive events.



Collaboration with several community partners was great. Involving local community college football team, mascot from Honkers, superintendent, mayor, county public health, city [active transportation] planner, and more. Good cause that can bring attention to other things that may need to be studied in the walking/biking paths to/from schools.

- ROCHESTER, MN



## SAFE, ACTIVE TRIPS START HERE

Walk & Roll to School Day participants organize events filled with fun that inspire participation year after year and jumpstart ongoing activities promoting safe and active travel to school. Throughout the year, many communities find ways to keep promoting walking, biking, or rolling to school by organizing regularly scheduled bike buses and holding weekly or monthly walk, bike, or roll to school days or something else. Keep up the activity inspired by Walk & Roll to School Day and join us for the next event: Bike & Roll to School Day on **MAY 8, 2024!** Check **[WALKBIKETOSCHOOL.ORG](http://WALKBIKETOSCHOOL.ORG)** for updates and details or follow us on X, Facebook and Instagram.



We had our best turnout ever in my 8 years at this school. We had over 250 participants. When I began we had less than 20!

- SPARTANBURG, SC



THANK YOU TO OUR FUNDING PARTNERS WHO HELPED MAKE THIS IMPORTANT EVENT POSSIBLE.



THANK YOU TO THE FIA FOUNDATION FOR SUPPORTING THIS YEAR'S NATIONAL EVENT IN WASHINGTON, DC.

FIND US ON SOCIAL MEDIA!

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