Education and Encouragement: 
for youth & children

Assignment 3: Safe Routes to School Case Studies

Assignment Description for Instructors
Case studies of locations who have implemented an Education or Encouragement program are provided by the National Safe Routes to School Clearinghouse. In small groups, have students read their selected case study and discuss.

Discussion Questions
1. What problem was the program attempting to address?
2. What resources were needed to solve the problem?
3. Is this a sustainable solution?
4. How does the program include encouragement or educational components?
5. Could it work in your community?
6. What are the measures for success?
7. What do you see as the main factors for the program’s success?
8. How would you modify the program for better results in your community?

Prep Work
- Review the case studies
  - More available at www.saferoutesinfo.org
- Choose one case study or all to be discussed by groups
- Add additional discussion questions as desired.
- Print copies of the case studies for students.

Time Required
- 5 minutes to read case studies
- 10 minutes to discuss in small groups
- 5 minutes for each group to present
- 10 minute large group discussion

Assignment Come back and present the case study and your main discussion points to the group.
Assignment 3: Safe Routes to School Case Studies

Assignment Description for Students
Case studies of locations who have implemented an Education or Encouragement program are provided by the National Safe Routes to School Clearinghouse (www.saferoutesinfo.org). In small groups, read your selected case study and discuss.

Discussion Questions
1. What problem was the program attempting to address?
2. What resources were needed to solve the problem?
3. Is this a sustainable solution?
4. How does the program include encouragement or educational components?
5. Could it work in your community?
6. What are the measures for success?
7. What do you see as the main factors for the program’s success?
8. How would you modify the program for better results in your community?

Time Required
- 5 minutes to read case studies
- 10 minutes to discuss in small groups
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Assignment
Come back and present the case study and your main discussion points to the group.
Case Study 1: Walking School Bus

C.P. Smith Elementary School, Burlington, VT

C.P. Smith Elementary School’s walking school bus has operated every Wednesday since March 2005, as part of a Safe Routes to School program.

While the neighborhood bordering the school has a fairly complete sidewalk system, some families were concerned about their children walking to school with the considerable traffic congestion along the route. In winter 2005, parents organized a meeting with other interested families to discuss their concerns and develop guidelines for a walking school bus. The group determined the bus’s route, time of departure, meeting points and other details.

Now, every Wednesday morning the bus departs from a walk leader’s house with a small group of children. For late arriving students, a closed garage door indicates that the bus has left the station. The group continues along a major roadway picking up children along the way. Some parents join in the walk while others escort their children to the stop and leave when the bus arrives. There is no written schedule; however organizers plan to install signs along the route indicating stops and schedule.

Before the walking school bus began, approximately six children walked this route to school. Now on Walking Wednesdays there are between 25 and 40 children and the traffic congestion along the route has all but disappeared.
Case Study 2: Parent Safety Drive Initiative

Dorset County Council, Dorset County, England

Dorset County Council's innovative Parent Safety Drive was piloted at Sherborne's Abbey Primary School in 2003. It aims to reduce the county's high number of child passenger injuries and to cut down on unnecessary trip to school by motor vehicle by helping and encouraging parents to become better, safer and more sensible drivers. Linked to the development of school community supported travel plans, this scheme aims to change parent attitudes to motor vehicle use in a practical, non-threatening way. The initiative is promoted in partnership with the local National Health Service Primary Care Trust, which provides a range of health services for local people and is eager to work in partnership with the local highway authority to reduce the number of child transportation-related injuries and improve driving standards.

The focus of the program is to:

- Improve parents' driving standards
- Reduce the number of child road casualties
- Encourage more sensible use of the motor vehicle
- Reduce the number of parent vehicles within the immediate environment of the school

Parents spend an hour with an experienced driving instructor who shares useful defensive driving and hazard awareness advice and tips using familiar local streets. There is no test or assessment involved. Parents drive on a range of roads, including congested urban environments and quieter but faster rural roads. Safer parking and reversing techniques are included in the session together with an opportunity to discuss in-car safety issues and suggestions for locations to park and walk the remainder of the trip to school. Highway code knowledge is revisited as well. It is promoted as a rare chance to refresh driving skills, perhaps for the first time since taking a driving test. There is a fee for the drive of $18 per hour, but a subsidy is planned. Evaluation from parents who have participated was reported as encouraging.

This initiative requires schools to recruit volunteers and to promote the concept of parent driver improvement as a fundamental objective in the school travel planning process. It also requires persuading some parents that you never stop learning as a driver and that 100 percent concentration is required.

Visit Dorset County Council's road safety web pages to find out more about driver improvement schemes. Visit www.dorsetcc.gov.uk/rsafe.
Case Study 3: Comprehensive Encouragement Campaign

Morton Way Public School, Brampton, Ontario, Canada

For six years, Morton Way Public School has actively and successfully promoted walking to school through a variety of program elements: weekly Walking Wednesdays; “Walking Weeks” including International Walk to School Week, Earth Week and Environment Week; parent-led walking school buses along designated routes; “IWALK Club” cards students use each time they walk and a “25 or Less” campaign. With 96 percent of the students living within walking distance of the school, their Green Communities Active and Safe Routes to School (ASRTS) program is focused on increasing daily physical activity and reducing the number of vehicles in the school zone at drop-off time. For the school’s 870 students, the goal is to make every day Walk to School Day!

On Walking Wednesdays, parents and one teacher act as walking school bus leaders, meeting students at various locations in the school community and walking safely and happily to school as a group. Along one route, the number of participants has risen from four to over thirty. (Some leaders walk with their “buses” on other days of the week, too.) On Wednesdays, students hold up a banner outside the school stating, “Peel Students Walk” (purchased by the Police Services Board). Permanent banners (provided by Go for Green) proudly announce, “Morton Way Walks” and “Morton Way Celebrates Walking Wednesdays.” As students arrive at the school, songs about walking are played outside on the stereo. Once a month, parents and grandparents are invited into the library for tea and to hear guest speakers. These “meet and greet” sessions, sponsored by the school administration, help build a sense of community.

To promote walking every day, each student has an “IWALK Club” card to track the number of times they walk to school. Students receive small rewards after reaching ten walks and then again after fifty. Completed cards are posted on a bulletin board. As an added incentive, students can become “Walking Winners” in the monthly Walk to School Draw and classes with 100 percent participation can win the use of a bag of playground equipment for a week.

Started in 2005, the “25 or Less” campaign aims to further reduce the number of cars dropping off children in front of the school. Stickers saying “25 or Less” and “We are counting...on you!” are posted throughout the school. To promote participation, reminders are included in the school newsletter, and the number of cars is announced daily. An enthusiastic Morton Way teacher even wrote a poem describing the goals.

The Walk to School Program has now been in place for six years. “Walking Wednesday” is practically considered a day of the week, even by kindergarten students. Morton Way staff members are committed to the program, and they are determined to continue it, led by a five teacher “Active Schools Committee.” Much of the weekly responsibilities are conducted by dedicated students who make up the “Walk to School Committee.” They conduct weekly surveys, then calculate, post and announce the Walk to School results, including the classes with 100 percent participation. In 1999 surveys showed that almost half of students were driven to school regularly. In 2000 “Walking Wednesdays” began and ever since, between 80 percent and 95 percent of students walk, cycle, scooter or blade to school on Wednesdays. More students are using active means of transportation on other days, too, as indicated by the reduction in the number of cars dropping off students from an average of 75 to 55.
Case Study 4: Comprehensive Encouragement Campaign
Maurice Cody Public School, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

On Wednesday, June 8, 2005, Canada’s Clean Air Day, families and staff at Maurice Cody Public School in Toronto celebrated their 200th Walking Wednesday! The celebration involved many VIPs who accompanied students, parents and staff in a community parade led by a Scottish piper.

Maurice Cody, a Junior Kindergarten through Grade 6 public school with approximately 500 students, has participated in the Green Communities | Active & Safe Routes to School since 1997. They have successfully combined daily physical activity with environmental protection and classroom learning into their Walking Wednesday activity. They are also one of four Toronto schools participating in Green Communities School Walking Routes pilot project.

Maurice Cody was one of the first three schools to participate in Green Communities Active & Safe Routes to School program and the very first Toronto school to implement Walking School Buses. Almost all of the students at Maurice Cody live within walking distance of the school and about 86 percent of the school’s students walk to school on Wednesdays.

Maurice Cody inspired the first weekly Walking Wednesday activity in Canada in 1999 following on the heels of International Walk to School Day and then went on to initiate a Cross Canada Walking Tour. Not content to stay in Canada they then set off across North America and by the end of the 2003 school year they had ‘walked’ to the Panama Canal!

The program relies heavily on parent volunteers with support from staff and students. Every Wednesday morning volunteers greet students at tables set up in the school yard or inside the school during inclement weather. Walking Wednesday banners hang on the fence around the school. As walkers arrive, they are greeted with a compilation of walking-themed music. They receive a ‘Cody Coyote’ hand stamp and ‘sign in’ on large shoes made from poster board which are then displayed in the school hall. For families who are unable to walk all the way to school on Wednesdays, they are urged to ‘walk a block’ — actually a minimum of two blocks.

To track participation and encourage continued participation, each Wednesday classroom teachers count the number of students who arrive at school ‘actively’. During the Tuesday morning announcements the participation numbers from the previous Walking Wednesday are given, along with a reminder to "W-A-L-K: Walk to School on Wednesday!" At the end of each school year a Recognition Assembly is held and the much coveted "Golden Shoe" award is presented to the class with the highest participation in Walking Wednesdays throughout the year.