

## FAQ about Safe Routes to School in Hunterdon County



### **What is Safe Routes to School?**

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) is a federal, state and local effort to enable and encourage children to walk and bicycle to school - and to make walking and bicycling to school safe and appealing. The goals of "Safe Routes" are simple - **where it is safe, get kids walking or cycling; where it is not safe, make it safe.**

### **How is Safe Routes to School promoted locally?**

HART Commuter Information Services (HART), the nonprofit transportation management association serving Hunterdon County, coordinates the program by working with local elementary schools (K-8) to facilitate activities and programs that fit each school's situation and priorities. HART has been coordinating Safe Routes to School in Hunterdon County since 2004.

### **Which schools are currently participating?**

Currently: Barley Sheaf Elementary School, Califon Public School, Clinton Public School, Frenchtown Elementary, Lambertville Public School, High Bridge Middle School, Lebanon Borough School, Milford Public School, Reading Fleming Intermediate School, Stockton Borough School.

### **How do most local schools participate?**

The cornerstone of most Safe Routes to School Programs is the walking school bus, a group of chaperoned students who walk to school together on a set route. The chaperone helps reduce the safety concerns some parents may have. It also provides opportunities to teach children how to be safe and alert pedestrians. Walking school buses can run daily, weekly, or a few times per year. Clinton Public School has involved bus riders by dropping off interested students 1 mile from school with chaperones and incorporating them into walking school bus days.

### **What other activities could we incorporate at our school?**

Each school can determine what may work best. For example, homeroom classes at Lambertville Public School compete for the "Golden Sneaker" every two weeks to see which class has the largest percentage of students walking. Califon Public School has given students shoelace charms for walking regularly during lunchtime/recess. Reading-Fleming Intermediate School incorporates pedometers into math and geography classes with a mapping exercise. Tracking the air pollution avoided by walking is incorporated into various environmental class efforts. HART staff is available to provide age-appropriate pedestrian safety presentations and organize bicycle safety rodeos.

### **Why should we promote walking or biking to school?**

- Walking and biking are healthy and environmentally-friendly transportation options for short distances.
- 31.7% of American children are overweight or obese. 29% of NJ children don't get the recommended amount of daily exercise, one hour.
- Obese children tend to become obese adults.
- Walking to school provides regular moderate-intensity exercise.

### **How can I get sidewalks or other improvements near my school?**

HART can guide students, school representatives and others through a "Walkability Audit" to identify key concerns or opportunities near the school. We can then provide guidance on solutions, funding sources and support for grant applications.

Safe Routes to School offers grants for improving the bicycle and pedestrian environment near schools. These grants are awarded through a competitive process and reviewed at the State level. Participation in Safe Routes to School education and encouragement programs, such as those outlined above, increase the competitiveness of grant applications.

**For further information and resources about Safe Routes to School in Hunterdon County, visit: [www.harttma.com/community](http://www.harttma.com/community) or contact John Stevenson (908) 788-5553 ext. 15 [john@harttma.com](mailto:john@harttma.com)**