Coordinator’s Corner
February is the heart of winter, a time when fewer people walk and bike because of the lack of daylight and often harsh conditions outdoors. February is also a time when we observe and celebrate many things, such as Black History Month, National Children’s Dental Health Month, American Heart Month, National Wise Health Consumer Month, Parent Leadership Month, and Valentine’s Day -- many of which are compatible with the objectives of safe routes to school. Please consider including physical activity as you look for ways to observe these holidays (what child doesn’t love walking in a parade?). It may also be helpful to consider this - as the northeast digs itself out of the several feet of snow that fell last week, many children in those areas will refuse to let that ruin their walk to school!

This is also the perfect time to start planning your spring activities. Please considering applying for a VDOT SRTS $1,000 mini-grant for your spring SRTS event. More information is available below.

Thank you to everyone who responded to the poll regarding the workshops. We are lining up locations and specific dates and will send out information very shortly.

The Friends and Faces column of this issue of our Virginia SRTS newsletter profiles David A. Hudson, principal at Linwood Holton Elementary School in Richmond.

Read on!

-Rob Williams
VDOT Safe Routes to School Coordinator

Friends and Faces
David Hudson is Principal at Linwood Holton Elementary School in Richmond. As principal, he supports several programs to promote healthy and active lifestyles among the student body.

Why is walking and biking important to you? As a principal, how do you promote healthy lifestyle and well-being at school?
Being active helps keep you healthy all around. Before I

IN THIS ISSUE
• Coordinator’s Corner
• Friends and Faces
• SRTS Infrastructure Project is a Big Hit in Alexandria
• Workshops Can Help with Grant Applications
• Keep Your SRTS Program Going Strong in the Winter
• Walk to School Day Around the State
• Calendar
• Ever Wonder...
• Poster Contest
• QuickStart Mini-grants Gallery

CALENDAR
March 2013
5: Last day to apply for TDMI scholarship
6: SRTS Workshop, Norfolk (Norview Community Center)
14: Last day to submit QuickStart Mini-grant Application
14: SRTS Workshop, Vienna (Flint Hill Elementary)
20: SRTS Workshop, Richmond (Richmond Technical Center)
26: Bike to School Day even webinar (National Center for SRTS)

April 2013
1: Last day to submit Bikes Make Life Better poster
10: SRTS Workshop, Front Royal (Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission)
11 - 12: Weight of the State Conference, Richmond
17: SRTS Workshop, Radford (New River Valley PDC)
24: SRTS Workshop, Fisherville (Virginia Regional Transit Center)

May 2013
8: Bike to School Day
How has your school tackled two of the important ‘other Es’ -- education and encouragement?
We require students to be physically active in some way for at least 30 minutes out of the day. Along with the physical fitness assessments that students have to take, we encourage programming that demonstrates how being active is fun! Fourth grade students participate in Minds in Motion is a local program with the Richmond Ballet that introduces students to the joy of dance while having fun. These fun activities make walking and biking to school second nature. Students in second grade receive swim lessons. Since many of our students are walking with parents, we encourage parents and heighten their awareness so that students know the correct way to walk and bike.

What do you think is the key to your successful health and wellness program at LHE?
Teachers, parents, local community, school division have been very supportive and that’s the key to a physical and healthy school! I feel that it’s really about getting those folks involved and having a role for everyone. If you don’t want to run, you can walk, volunteer or support. So for our Annual 5K - there’s an outpouring of support with volunteers at every phase to plan, implement, and execute. We expect to continue our efforts to keep the physical fitness component going among students, teachers, and parents.

What advice would you give to a school interested in starting similar programs like those at LHE?
Start by finding something that’s fun and will energize students. Initially, everyone may not be on board, however one successful program may change that. Offer multiple levels of participation and really try to be consistent.

Tell us about Linwood Holton Elementary (LHE) programs that encourage walking and biking to school and being active at an early age.
A lot of our students walk and bike to school each day, giving us a jump start. We also participate in Walk to School Day and held an event for the first ever National Bike to School Day last May. In addition to these events, each fall and spring, the boys and girls may participate in a before-school program sponsored by our PTA, “Jump Start”. Participating students get some physical activity before school starts, such as running, walking, and playing basketball. We also have an annual Linwood Holton 5K Run/Walk Race which encourages physical activity among students and the local community. The Richmond Road Runners assist with the event and it’s been a huge success. The March 3 event marks our 13th year! Thanks to a program sponsored by school superintendent Dr. Brandon, we grow healthy food in our school garden. An outdoor classroom next to the garden is a great place for learning, too. Last year we were awarded the Most Physical Fit Elementary School in Richmond Public Schools for the first semester.

Who else on your staff is as enthusiastic about encouraging students and their parents to adopt an active lifestyle?
Our Physical Education Teacher, Mr. Watkins, is great at keeping students, parents and staff motivated and physically fit. We have some very active teachers and Mr. Watkins encouraged our staff to enroll in physical activities sponsored by Richmond Public Schools. “Get Fit on Route 66” is a school system online fitness tracking program through Richmond Public Schools. It introduces friendly competition among the teachers, staff and schools. Our Annual Holton 5K is a community wide event with alumni, parents, local organizations, etc. participating. During the week leading up to the 5K, students and teachers participate in daily challenge programs. I use several apps to record my activities and stay motivated, such as Nike Plus.
Workshops Can Help with Grant Applications

The VDOT Safe Routes to School Program is planning to hold six workshops throughout Virginia in March and April. Thanks to those who responded to the poll about these workshops, we have a number of gracious hosts for the workshops. Please keep an eye out for an upcoming announcement about workshop registration.

The workshops are a great way to start a new program, but the main focus will be on helping schools interested in applying for non-infrastructure funding in the fall 2013. A second round of ‘non-infrastructure’ applications will be held in the fall. Since a SRTS Activities and Programs plan is required for the application, these workshops will include a works session to help you get started on the plan. An alternate work session for new programs interested in applying for a QuickStart Mini-grant will help participants think through some fun and effective ways to use the $1,000 grants.

As a bonus, two participants at each workshop will be selected to have a walking or biking event organized by VDOT at their schools!

More QuickStart Mini-grants Available Through March

VDOT is launching another round of QuickStart Mini-grants this spring, just in time for National Bike to School Day on May 8.

All elementary and middle schools in Virginia are eligible to apply, regardless of past participation in a VDOT SRTS grant. If you’re planning an event for this day or have another great way to use these $1,000 grants, you’ll want to apply for one. The on-line application is here. Applications are due by March 14, but will be evaluated in the order they are received (hint: Apply early!).

A list of QuickStart Mini-grants awarded in the fall can be found on the Virginia SRTS website, under Travel Plans and Grants.

Time to Register for Bike to School Day

Planning to participate in National Bike to School Day? Make sure your event is counted by registering it with BikeWalk to School.

Third Annual Weight of the State Conference

Virginia’s third annual Weight of the State conference is set for Thursday, April 11 and Friday, April 12 at the Westin Richmond hotel in Richmond. The Conference will showcase the latest approaches in childhood obesity prevention and control. Conference goals are to

• Strengthen and expand local, regional, and state capacity to achieve policy, environmental, and systems change to promote access to healthy foods and nutrition, opportunities for physical activity, and reduce obesity.
• Engage and network with peers to share knowledge and best practices and strategies to sustain momentum throughout Virginia to change environments to reduce obesity.
• Share emerging trends in health care, school and after-school programs, research, community collaboration, healthy nutrition, and physical activity to promote healthy lifestyles among Virginia youth.

Need some help with planning an event? Attend the National Center for SRTS’s webinar on February 29, Let’s Get Pumped! You can do a Bike to School event.
Please consider attending this conference if you are interested in learning about childhood obesity prevention and encouraging healthy choices. More information is available at http://weightofthestateva.com.

**Poster Contest: Bikes Make Life Better**

Calling all fifth graders with a love of drawing! Trails for Youth is working with Saris Cycling Group to sponsor a poster contest to promote the great things bicycling brings. One poster from each participating school in Virginia (and all 50 states) will be judged to determine first, second and third place winners. The first place state winner will win a bicycle, helmet and bicycle light. The first place national winner will receive a trip to Washington, DC during the 2014 National Bike Summit. The first place winning school will receive bike parking for 20 bikes and The Hub System.

Click here to download a flyer with the contest rules and more information. Posters are due by April 1st to Megan Brooks at TrailsforYouth.org.

**SRTS Infrastructure Projects is a Big Hit in Alexandria**

A SRTS infrastructure grant has made a big difference for everyone at Charles Barrett Elementary School in Alexandria. New sidewalks, curb extensions and raised crosswalks completed in August 2012 now offer students and their parents a safe and comfortable way to walk and bike to school. School Principal Seth Kennard says the changes are paying off: about four times as many students now walk or bike to school - regardless of the weather.

Charles Barrett Elementary School is located on Martha Custis Drive in Alexandria’s Park Fairfax community at the point where Valley Drive forms a ‘Y’ just at the school entrance. Over the years, students, parents, as well as others walking, bicycling and driving in the area had hoped for a better way to travel through the area. The Virginia SRTS infrastructure program provided the perfect opportunity. According to Principal Kennard, the project took around 4 years to plan, engineer and approve with the leadership of the City of Alexandria collaborating with the local PTA and the very involved neighbors. Construction took only about eight weeks. School students, staff, parents and the PTA were excited to see the project completed.

In all, the project includes two raised crosswalks, two bulb-outs, wider sidewalks, new sidewalks, and high visibility crosswalks. About three-quarters of the school’s students participated in last fall’s Walk to School Day. The school and neighbors also gained green space to make the street a bit more inviting for pedestrians to use - and this seems to be a great addition according to a few
parents we talked to during a recent morning arrival. Given the increased rate of walking and bicycling, the school now has a Walking Wednesdays program. Adult crossing guards, student safety patrol members, and one police officer are also on hand to keep things safe during arrival and dismissal.

Principal Kennard also mentioned that the project is not yet complete. In the spring, once the weather begins to cooperate, there are plans by the City to install marked shared lanes (commonly known as Sharrows) throughout Martha Custis Drive, to help educate motorists to share the road with bicyclists and to encourage more students and neighbors alike to bike to and from school.

Transportation Project Management Institute Scholarships Now Available
If you work for a local government and are looking to improve your transportation project management skills, consider applying for a scholarship with the Transportation project Management Institute (TPMI). You may be eligible for up to $2,000 (half the tuition cost) for the 9-day intensive residential training program in May 2013. The program has been developed specifically for project management practitioners from VDOT, local government, and private consulting firms. As a transportation project manager, you’ll gain greater knowledge of and skills in project management in order to deliver project on time and on budget. The TPMI is a partnership between VDOT’s Local Assistance Division and the University of Virginia’s Center for Transportation Studies.

Interested? Apply by March 5. Applicants will be notified of scholarship awards in early March 2013. Scholarship evaluation criteria include local government size, locality participation in VDOT-funded programs, and the applicant’s project management responsibilities. More information on the TPMI is at the UVA TPMI website. contact Clark Woods at (804) 692-0565 for more information.

I strongly encourage SRTS project managers to consider this great opportunity!

Ever wonder... how MAP-21 will change our community’s approach to Safe Routes to School?

There are two significant changes for Safe Routes to School under Map-21, the two-year federal transportation bill that began on October 1, 2012.

1) Projects require a 20% local match instead of being 100% reimbursable.

2) SRTS programs and projects must compete with other similar programs funded with the same pot of money called Transportation Alternatives:

- On-road and off-road trail facilities: Construction, planning, and design of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.

- Safe routes for non drivers: Bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure aimed for children, older adults, and individuals with disabilities.
Abandoned railroad corridors for trails -- Conversion of rail corridors for pedestrians and bicyclists, or other non-motorized transportation users.

Turnouts, overlooks, and viewing areas -- Roadside facilities previously included in the scenic byways program

Community improvement activities -- Rights-of-way improvements: billboards, historic and archaeological preservation, and vegetation management and erosion control.

Environmental mitigation -- Stormwater management, wildlife mortality, and “connectivity among terrestrial or aquatic habitats.”

The VDOT SRTS Program is currently working to utilize the existing non-infrastructure funds remaining from SAFETEA-LU, which are still 100% reimbursable, and plan to offer another round of non-infrastructure grants next fall.

Future SRTS infrastructure projects will be selected from those applying for VDOT’s new Transportation Alternative Program grants, under MAP-21 guidelines, starting next winter.

QuickStart Mini-grants Gallery

Robius Elementary School Walking School Bus Encouragement Activity

Rockledge Elementary School Bike Roedeo and BMX Track Event

Rockingham memorial Hospital Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Education