



# SPECIAL EDITION!

International Walk to School Day - October 5, 2011

## Coordinator's Corner

Welcome to the second "Special Edition" Virginia Safe Routes to School newsletter! Our first "Special Edition" included the four-step process to planning a successful Walk to School event from the International Walk to School Day in the USA website: Step 1 - Get Partners, Step 2 - Plan, Step 3 - Register your event, and Step 4 - Promote It. This newsletter provides additional information to help you put the finishing touches on planning and promoting Walk to School Day, including a checklist of things to do in the days before your event.



I encourage you to plan a Walk to School Day event that it fits your school community and takes advantage of your creativity. Our step-by-step directions and other resources are intended to be supportive and helpful, but creativity is always a great ingredient to any walking and biking event. For example, fancy speeches are not a must. The only requirement is that you encourage everyone to walk and bike to school that day!

In the past couple of weeks, even more Virginia schools have registered for Walk to School Day, bringing our current total to 52 schools. If you are planning an event and have not yet registered, please visit [www.walktoschool.org](http://www.walktoschool.org) and register today! If you are unsure how to get started, take advantage of the resources available to you on the Walk to School website and in the "Marketing Toolkit" on the Virginia Safe Routes to School program website. You'll find several things to use in to plan and host a great first event for your school.

Remember: We encourage you to register your event now, but you have until November 30 to do so and be counted for 2011 International Walk to School Day.

Regards,

Rob Williams  
Virginia SRTS Coordinator

## Walk to School Day Reminders

To-do lists are a great way to itemize important planning tasks. They can also help to organize volunteer efforts. We've created a to-do list to help make sure your Walk to School Day event goes off without a hitch. Asterisked items are available on the Virginia SRTS website "Marketing Toolkit" page.

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## CALENDAR

*Dates specific to VDOT SRTS Program are indicated with \**

### SEPTEMBER

- 29: Virginia SRTS Network Webinar Featuring Ashley Johnson
- 30: New Date! SRTS mini-grant applications due to Prevention Connections

### OCTOBER

- 4 & 5: Weight of the State Conference, sponsored by Prevention Connections
- 5: International Walk to School Day
- 19: Mini-grant applications due to the National Center for Safe Routes to School
- 26: 2011 Oberstar Award applications due to the National Center for Safe Routes to School

Let us know about SRTS events in your community! Email [robertj.williams@vdot.virginia.gov](mailto:robertj.williams@vdot.virginia.gov)



**Anytime from now through November 30:**

Register your event on the Walk to School Day website:  
[www.walktoschool.org/register](http://www.walktoschool.org/register)

**1 Week Before:**

- Include a reminder flyer\* in students' backpacks.
- Send home information about any changes to arrival or dismissal on the day of the event.
- Make announcements\* in the classroom and at any school events where parents will attend. Be sure to have information on your Walk to School Day event available for parents.
- Review your event schedule and logistics to make sure your plans reflect current circumstances. If something has changed, make the adjustments now and let everyone know.
- Remind volunteers of their assignments, both those to be done before the event and on the day of the event.
- Confirm invited guests, such as elected or appointed officials, who will speak your at your event. Make sure these guests know when and where to show up and how much time they have to speak. Encourage them to join a walking school bus or bicycle train as a fun way to arrive at the event.
- If you are looking to spice up your event, find unique event ideas at International Walk to School Day in the USA.



**Two Days Before:**

- Issue a media advisory\* and follow-up to see who will attend. Assign one or more of the volunteers to be the point of contact with the media. Let the school principal, invited guests, and others know which media are expected.
- Send home information about any changes to arrival or dismissal on the day of the event. Consider printing it on the back of the reminder flyer.

**Day Before:**

- Make announcements\* in the classroom and at any school events where parents will attend. Be sure to have information about your Walk to School Day event available for parents.
- Issue press release\* and complete any remaining calls to media to confirm attendance.

- Offer students "Walk to school with me tomorrow" stickers to wear home as an extra reminder.
- Send home reminder flyers in students backpacks.
- Send home information at arrival and dismissal about any changes for the day of the event. Consider printing it on the back of the reminder flyer.chools videographer will document the day.

**New Resources on Virginia SRTS Website**

You've heard us say that International Walk to School Day is a great way to get a SRTS program started. We're taking extra steps this year to make sure many Virginia schools participate and have the resources they need for a successful event. Our new "Marketing Toolkit" at [www.virginia.gov/org/saferoutes](http://www.virginia.gov/org/saferoutes) has items to support your event. Most can be downloaded, customized, and printed or distributed electronically. Here's what you'll find:



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| Stickers | Stickers are a cute way to remind parents about a Walk to School Day event. The stickers are designed to be printed on Avery Labels: 22807, 22817.   |
| Flyers   | <p>Flyers to use for the following needs are available for both an October 5 event and one on another day in the fall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask for parent volunteers</li> <li>• Advertise and promote the Walk to School Day event</li> <li>• Reminder about the event (day before)</li> <li>• Request from outside organizations to participate</li> <li>• Blank flyer to use as needed</li> </ul> <p>Flyers are in PDF format. All but the blank flyers are fillable.</p> |

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| Announcements  | Scripts for two types of announcements are included: one for students in the classroom and one for parents during an at-school event. The scripts are Word documents and can be used or modified as needed.  |
| Press Release  | The press release can be used to provide information about your event so that it can be included in a news story, regardless of whether a media outlet comes to the event. The press release template is a Word document that includes the VDOT SRTS logo at the top. This logo can be replaced or supplemented with the school logo. Instructions for customizing the template are provided.                        |
| Media Advisory | The media advisory is different from the press release in that its purpose is to get media outlets to the event. As an invitation, the advisory includes information on the time and place of the event, as well as reasons why the press would want to cover it. The media advisory is a Word document that includes the VDOT SRTS logo at the top. This logo can be replaced or supplemented with the school logo. |

### **Media Event for International Walk to School Day**

This year's October 5 Walk to School Day will be celebrated with a flagship event at Crestview Elementary in Richmond featuring several state officials, including the First Lady, Maureen McDonnell. VDOT and Prevention Connections are working together to plan and promote this event to various media outlets.

The event is taking place in concert with the Weight of the State Conference being held nearby on the same day. Conference attendees are invited to attend but must register in advance. I encourage you to consider attending part or all of this event.

### **Share Your Event**

Our November newsletter will feature photos, videos and other information about Walk to School Day events at Virginia schools. We want to show events from as many schools as possible, which means we need you to capture your event to share! There are several ways to do this:

- Identify three or four adults (parents, teachers, etc.) to serve as official event photographers. Give them a special name badge or hat to wear so participants will be sure to seek them out and be photographed. Still photos and videos are a great way to make sure you can celebrate the event after it's over.
- Use a classroom art project to make a video or photo collage of the event. Children have a great eye for capturing the best parts of any event!

### **Call for Applications: 2011 Oberstar Safe Routes to School Award**

The National Center for Safe Routes to School is now accepting applications for the 2011 James L. Oberstar Safe Routes to School Award. The annual Award recognizes a Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program for outstanding achievement in improving the health and well-being of an entire generation of school children.

This year's Safe Routes to School Award will recognize exemplary achievement by a SRTS program that has greatly improved the safety or increased the number of elementary or middle school students who walk and bicycle to school. Additional consideration will be given to applicants who have made active transportation to/from school an integral part of the school's culture over time.

The application deadline is Wednesday, October 26, 2011. More information and the application form are available at [www.saferoutesinfo.org](http://www.saferoutesinfo.org) under "Opportunities & Announcements."