SRTS Program Building Blocks

Moving forward, the Virginia SRTS Program's framework consists of five Program Building Blocks, including a foundation—Equitable and Sustainable Program—and four pillars—Safe Streets, Welcoming Campuses, Safe Behaviors, and Supportive Culture. The relationship of these building blocks is shown in Figure 1 below. Summary descriptions of the building blocks and tables with example activities are provided in the sections that follow.

Figure 1: Program Building Blocks

Summary Descriptions

- **Equitable and Sustainable Program:** This building block is the foundation upon which a Safe Routes to School Program is built. It includes activities aimed at evaluating, institutionalizing, and building support for the program so it can continue from year to year. It also includes efforts to ensure that the program is equitable and takes proactive steps to reach out to and benefit students who are Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC), students with disabilities, students who come from households with lower incomes, and other disadvantaged groups in the community.

- **Safe Streets:** This building block is the most important pillar of Safe Routes to School. It includes efforts to improve the physical infrastructure of streets within 1-2 miles of schools, so they are safer places to walk and bike to school, e.g., by reducing motor vehicle speeds, encouraging motor vehicle yielding at pedestrian crossing locations, providing pedestrian and bicycle facilities that can be used by children of all abilities and are physically separated from motor vehicle traffic, or improving lighting to improve traffic safety and/or personal security. The Non-Infrastructure Grant Program covers walk audits, coordination, and advocacy related to Safe Streets. The design and construction aspects of Safe Streets are covered under the Transportation Alternatives Program.

- **Welcoming Campuses:** This building block is an important pillar of Safe Routes to School and one that school divisions and schools can control, which makes it a good place to start after establishing the basic structures needed for a Sustainable and Equitable Program. It includes crossing guards, arrival and dismissal procedures that support safe walking and bicycling, and on-campus amenities that serve pedestrians and bicyclists and make walking and bicycling to school feasible, such as bicycle parking.

- **Safe Behaviors:** This building block is another important pillar of Safe Routes to School. It includes driver safety education, driver pledge programs, pedestrian and bicycle safety/skills education, and other context-appropriate non-infrastructure methods for encouraging safe behaviors, such as progressive ticketing. It also includes non-infrastructure efforts to address harassment, bullying, and other personal security concerns that are barriers to walking and bicycling to school.

- **Supportive Culture:** This building block is the final pillar of Safe Routes to School and one that is dependent, to a large extent, on Safe Streets, Welcoming Campuses, and Safe Behaviors. It includes efforts to encourage students to walk and bicycle more frequently to school, including Walk and Bike to School Days, frequent walker programs, and similar efforts.

Example Activities

Equitable and Sustainable Program

Activity Short Name	Activity Description
Division walking/biking policy	Establish a school division policy that explicitly encourages students to walking and bicycle to school
Division Wellness policy	Amend the school division wellness policy to encourage walking and bicycling to school as a form of physical activity
Equity assessment	Conduct a division-wide equity assessment
SRTS steering committee	Establishing a division-wide SRTS steering committee
SRTS coordinator	Hire a SRTS division coordinator
Equity plan	Develop a plan for improving equity
Ped/bike safety education requirement	Establish a requirement at the school division-level that students receive pedestrian and bicycle safety education/skills training
Division parental decision policy	Establish a school division policy stating that the decision to allow or not allow students to walk and bicycle to school is a parental decision
Presentation on SRTS to school PTA/PTO groups	Deliver presentations on SRTS to school PTA/PTO groups
Parent outreach	Provide parents with an informational flyer or email about the SRTS program and what they can do to support it
School division calendar	Include SRTS activities in the school division calendar
Social media	Establish and maintain social media accounts for distributing information on school division SRTS activities
SRTS web page	Create a SRTS web page the school division website and keep it populated with timely and relevant SRTS content
E-newsletter	Distribute an e-newsletter on school division SRTS activities
Local government resolutions	Pursue local resolutions to promote important SRTS initiatives
Publicize successful activities	Publicize successful SRTS activities. Collaborate with local media to get the word out
Student travel tallies	Provide support/resources for annual student travel tallies
Parent Surveys	Provide support/resources for annual parent surveys
Goals and performance targets	Establish goals and performance targets and regularly assess progress toward meeting them
Community partners	Develop a list of potential partners within the community, reach out to them, and cultivate relationships
Bike camp for students with disabilities	Provide support/resources/coordination for a division-wide bike camp for students with disabilities
Funding	Work to identify additional sources of funding to support the Safe Routes to School program

Safe Behaviors

Activity Short Name	Activity Description
Traffic gardens	Provide support/resources for traffic gardens
Safe driver pledge program	Provide support/resources for safe driver pledge programs
Bus driver training	Require school bus drivers to complete a unit on sharing the road with pedestrians and bicyclists as part of their training
Bicycle safety/skills education and bicycle rodeos	Provide support/resources for bicycle safety/skills education (e.g.,, bicycle rodeos)
Pedestrian safety education	Provide support/resources for pedestrian safety/skills education
Neighborhood safety messaging campaign	Provide support/resources for neighborhood safety messaging campaign
Ped/bike safety videos	Develop and distribute videos on ped/bike safety topics
Corner Captains/Safe Havens	Provide support/resources/coordination for establishing a Corner Captians or Safe Havens program to address concerns about personal security for students walking/biking to school
Safe Passages	Provide support/resources/coordination for establishing a Safe Passages program to address concerns about personal security for students walking/biking to school
Anti-bullying/Anti-harrassment	Provide support/resources/coordination for anti-bullying or anti-harrassment training for students who walk/bike to school
Personal security outreach	Work with school communities and partners to better understand personal security concerns related to walking/biking to school and context-appropriate options for addressing them

Safe Streets

Activity Short Name	Activity Description
Local jurisdiction transportation plans	Work with local government to ensure that key walking and biking routes to school are included in its transportation plans, maintenance budgets, and capital projects.
Ped/bike concern reporting system	Establish a system for reporting and addressing infrastructure-related pedestrian and bicycle safety concerns
Walk audits	Provide support/resources/coordination for annual or biannual walk audits to note ped/bike infrastructure deficits near schools
Follow up on infrastructure recommendations	Follow up (or coordinate follow up) on infrastructure recommendations to local governement aimed at improving pedestrian and bicyclist conditions
Vision Zero	Participate in local government Vision Zero efforts and work to highlight school ped/bike safety needs

Supportive Culture

Activity Short Name	Activity Description
Frequent walker/biker program	Provide support/resources for a frequent walker/biker program or mileage club
Walking/biking maps	Develop walking/biking maps for all schools in the division and provide them to parents
Walk to School Day	Provide support/resources for Walk to School Day
Bike to School Day	Provide support/resources for Bike to School Day
Crossing Guard Appreciation Day	Provide support/resources for Crossing Guard Appreciation Day
Walking school buses and bicycle trains	Provide support/resources for walking school buses and bicycle trains
Remote drop-off/park & walk	Provide support/resources for establishing remote drop-off locations and park & walk programs
Walking/biking benefits	Develop and distribute materials on the benefits of walking/biking

Welcoming Campuses

Activity Short Name	Activity Description
Student safety patrol	Provide support/resources for student safety patrol program
Schools that prohibit/discourage walking or biking	Reach out to schools that currently prohibit or discourage walking and/or bicycling to understand local concerns and determine how they can be addressed
Schools survey	Survey school administration to understand school-level policies on walking/biking
Liability education	Educate principals regarding school division liability policies pertaining to school walking and bicycling and SRTS activities
Arrival/dismissal best practices	Develop and distribute arrival and dismissal best practices materials for all modes with strategies to encourage walking/biking and make them more comfortable, convenient, and safe
Bicycle parking	Assess bicycle parking needs and provide support for procuring bike racks
Arrival/dismissal direct assistance	Provide direct assistance on arrival and dismissal procedures to schools that request it
School construction and renovation projects	Work closely with the school division and local government on school construction and renovation projects to ensure that pedestrian and bicycle access is provided