



August 2017



Coordinator's Corner

Ready to start the school year on the right (or left) foot? While the beginning of the school year can be hectic, the weeks prior to the school year start are some of the most important ones for Safe Routes to School. It is the perfect time to begin establishing healthy, fun, and safe habits for the year.



This edition of the newsletter provides information on how to engage students in each of the fall Safe Routes to School events and tips for improving the safety of arrival and dismissal processes. You'll also learn more about the October Youth Bike Summit.

With Walk to School Day and Student Travel Tally week approaching, tips are provided for how to make the most of these events. Advice on how to evaluate your arrival and dismissal process and how to incorporate Safety Patrollers into Safe Routes to School education is also provided.

The Youth Bike Summit, which will be hosted in Arlington County this year, brings together youths from throughout the country. We spoke with members from the Youth Bike Summit's Youth Advisory Council to learn more about what this event means to them.

If you have questions or would like more information on any of the topics included here, please call the Virginia SRTS Hotline at **1-855-601-7787** or send an email to info@virginiasrts.org.

Regards,
Rob Williams
Virginia SRTS Coordinator

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CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER

- 14: QuickStart Mini-grant due date
- 28: Walkabout Mini-grant due date
- ALL MONTH: Student Travel Tally Week

OCTOBER

- 4: International Walk to School Day
- 6-8: Youth Bike Summit
- 14: QuickStart Mini-grant due date
- ALL MONTH: Student Travel Tally Week

NOVEMBER

- 1: TA Set-Aside Applications Due

Friends & Faces: Phoenix Bikes Youth Advisory Council

This month's Friends and Faces covers the members of the Youth Advisory Council for this year's Youth Bike Summit. Samara (age 14) and Noe (age 19) attended previous summits in Seattle and Minneapolis, and are excited for what is to come. For Robel (age 13), this summit will be his first time. All three council members are from Arlington. Hear what they have to say!

Hi, I'm Samara -

This summit will stand out from the rest as this area relies on biking for transportation. We have so many bike-friendly amenities, such as work stands on the trails and easily accessible bike paths. You can bike just about anywhere comfortably in the metro region.

I like hearing other people's perspectives on bike related topics, and incorporating that into how I view biking.



Hi, I'm Noe -

Seeing youth present in front of a huge audience is very inspiring. Each workshop shows powerful ideas that could solve tough community problems.

The youth bike summit has boosted my confidence level. It showed me that no matter what age you are, anybody can make a big difference and do an amazing job.



Youth Bike Summit

The Youth Bike Summit (YBS), held this year in Arlington, is an annual three-day national conference that brings together advocates, educators, students, policy makers, and community leaders to focus on important issues relating to bicycling. The first YBS held in New York City was planned by two high school students inspired by the National Bike Summit to create an event where diverse groups of young people could talk and share ideas relating to bicycling advocacy. In the six years since then, a different city has hosted the YBS each year. The host city committee, consisting of youths and adults, helps plan and organize YBS workshops, presentations, keynote speakers, and networking to understand how bicycling can promote social change.

Because schools in Washington D.C. and Arlington have begun offering bicycle education as part of their elementary school curriculum, Arlington was asked to host the 2017 YBS, which will be held on October 6-8. A sampling of sessions titles includes "Using the Bike as a Time Machine," "Taking It To the Next Level: Starting my Own Bike Repair Business," and "Decriminalization of Youth on Bikes."

Interested in participating and contributing to Youth Bike Summit's national dialogue? Follow this link to register!

Zone In, Not Out

Looking to improve school zone safety for all travelers, especially children? Consider using the Zone in, Not out materials, which were developed by Virginia Safe Routes to School local coordinators. They are part of a comprehensive approach to school zone safety with branding, messaging, and materials. The resources include yard signs, a safe driver pledge kit, and more!

The ZINO resources are available for download on the [Virginia SRTS program website](#). The materials offer both 'how to' information and resources for school communities to access for expanded or more in-depth information. Some of the materials are customizable, so you can add your school name!

Hi, I'm Robel -

I've learned everything to do with working on bikes and how to use tools, even more specialized ones. I can now actually race bikes and be a better rider.

Cycling has given me independence, and it's enjoyable. I look forward to meeting people at the summit who are just like me.



International Walk to School Day: It's never too early to start planning

The October 4 International Walk to School Day is a fun way to kick off a year of healthy habits. Last year 311 schools in Virginia registered to walk to school. [Register now](#) to help us reach our goal of 325 participating schools in 2017!

Building fun into your event will encourage participation. You can invite families to walk together; hold competitions among classrooms for highest participation; make signs to carry; or offering incentive items. Make sure everyone has an option to participate by establishing a [remote drop-off](#) for bus riders and those who live too far away to walk. (Hint: You may need to arrange for school buses to stop at this location.)

Your LTAC can help you plan for a safe and fun event or you can review the [How to Plan a Walk or Bike to School Event in 7 Days Learn it. Do it. Live it!](#) Take advice from past QuickStart Mini-grant recipients:

Don't be afraid to try a "Walk to School Day" event at your school. Make sure you promote it well, and have a plan in place to encourage students to continue walking. Get as many teachers, staff, and of course, the administration on board for the event.
- *Teresa Kessler, Lakeside Elementary School*

Think small at first. Incorporate activities that all would be interested in and that come easy to your schedule. Then you can elaborate as you grow. - *Amy Riggio, Sanders Corner Elementary School*

Talk with the Principal as early as possible to get the event on the school calendar, especially in planning assemblies. Consider pairing your Walk to School event with School Breakfast Program promotions. - *Alicia White, Cardinal Forest Elementary School*

Plan ahead! Designate "champions", both within the individual schools BUT also within the school district administration. Use media wisely and include social media. Send a press release in advance of the event to prepare the community AND to get coverage of the event. Work with the school PTA's if you are able.
- *Tami Radecke, Wenonah Elementary, Berkeley Glenn Elementary, Westwood Hills Elementary*

Students look forward to and love participating with the community in this event, especially because of the way staff and parents come together and walk with students. I would advise schools to really engage the community and make parents, community members and staff members aware of the activities and make sure to give them a purpose.
- *Amelia Bartilotti, Bellwood Elementary School*

Do a good job of marketing the event so that there will be wide-spread participation. We found that students most enjoyed the walk itself and didn't really need a give-away or incentive to participate. - *Bethany Spalding, Maybeury Elementary School*

Pre-sorting the lights and handouts makes it easier for the faculty to deliver the content, making it more likely that they'll continue working with the program in the future. - *Tara FitzPatrick, Chimborazo Elementary School, Mary Munford Elementary, JEB Stuart Elementary School*

Student Travel Tally Week

The Student Travel Tally is a quick, in-class survey that provides valuable information on student travel patterns and can help monitor the success of your SRTS program over time. The Virginia SRTS program encourages schools to collect Student Travel Tallies annually during [Student Travel Tally Week](#), which includes any week in September and October.

The [Student Travel Tallies Learn it. Do it. Live it.](#) includes materials to get you started, such as an example letter to school staff from the principal, a morning announcement, and scripts for teachers to explain to students which travel option is most suitable. Follow these easy steps to plan a successful Student Travel Tally Week:

1. Get buy-in from school administrators
2. Identify a coordinator and help them set up an account with the National Data Center so that tallies can be directly entered online
3. Set the dates
4. Inform teachers of the tally dates and process to conduct the tallies
5. Distribute tally form
6. Be a cheerleader for the tally collection process and help make it happen
7. If paper tally forms are used instead of online entry, collect and submit completed tally information only



First-time participating schools will receive Virginia SRTS banner and a sticker for the event by the end of 2017. Schools earn other stickers through continued participation in International Walk to School Day, Crossing Guard Appreciation Day, and Bike to School Day.

The banner is a popular way to promote SRTS events. Students can carry them during a Walk to School Day parade, they are eye-catching when hung from an SRTS event table, and they make a statement about a school's support for the SRTS when posted in a school hallway.

Remember: If you already have a banner that is full of decals, we'll send you a new one with our updated design. Just email a photo of the old banner with your mailing address to wendy@virginiasrts.org.

Safety Patrollers & Safe Routes to School

School safety patrollers are part of a school's overall plan for safe travel to and from school. They are school-sponsored student volunteers from upper elementary grades, middle and junior high schools. They are typically either selected by teachers and administrators or elected.

Patrollers direct children, not traffic; helping improve school-zone safety by monitoring crosswalks, drop-off zones and school buses; and educating their peers on traffic safety.

All school safety patrollers receive traffic safety training to learn how to protect students from road, bus, and vehicular hazards and can supplement existing traffic safety provided by crossing guards



and school staff. School safety patrol programs can also help to strengthen relationships between law enforcement, parents, teachers, and school administrators.

The School Safety Patrol Program is the perfect partner for Safe Routes to School efforts. Below are some ideas on how you can incorporate Safety Patrollers into your Safe Routes to School efforts:

Safety Education & Trainings. As leaders in their school, Safety Patrollers can teach through peer-to-peer learning opportunities. Morning announcements, school sponsored events, and assemblies provide an opportunity to present on pedestrian safety, bicycle safety, car rider safety, and safe loading and unloading procedures.

Walking School Buses & Remote Drop-offs. Safety Patrollers can supplement adult supervision for walking school buses along the route and at designated stops. If schools have a remote-drop off for students who live too far from school but still wish to walk, Safety Patrollers can help monitor these drop-off zones and ensure students safely arrive at school.

Parent Drop-off & Pick-Up. Safety Patrollers can help improve drop-off and pick-up lines in several ways. Patrollers' helping role includes opening car doors so that students can load and unload more quickly, matching students to their appropriate cars, and enforcing school procedures. Some schools even allow Safety Patrollers to write "tickets" to people exhibiting bad behavior or breaking school procedures.

For more information on the School Safety Patrol program, review AAA's [School Safety Patrol Operations Manual](#), which outlines steps to establish, organize, operate, and support school safety patrol programs at your local school.

Consider applying for a QuickStart Mini-grant to fund your Safety Patrol Program. Magruder Elementary Discovery STEM Academy purchased patrol belts, badges, and pins for 20 patrollers using QuickStart Mini-grant funds!

Learn more about the QuickStart Mini-grant Program below.



To date, the [QuickStart Mini-grant program](#) has helped fund Safe Routes to School activities at more than 175 different schools, some of which have benefitted from multiple grants. Schools can receive up to one QuickStart Mini-grant each cycle (fall and spring).

Want to add your school to the list? There is still time to apply for a QuickStart Mini-grant for the Fall of 2017. The \$1,000 awards are a great way to jump start your Safe Routes to School program at the

beginning of the school year. Bookmark the [link to the online application](#) and mark your calendar with the following dates:

- **September 14**
- **October 12**

These are the dates on which we will review applications. Applicants are typically notified of the decision within three weeks of that date. The sooner you apply, the sooner you may have access to the funds!

Arrival & Dismissal Evaluation

A well-designed arrival and dismissal process encourages walking and biking, minimizes vehicular traffic around the school, and addresses parent and community concerns. The new school year is a great time to evaluate arrival and dismissal processes and make any needed adjustments, especially to improve walking and bicycling safety in the school zone.

Not sure if your school’s arrival and dismissal procedure is working well? The [Arrival and Dismissal Observation Field Exercise Guide Learn it. Do it. Live it!](#) is an excellent place to start. The guide includes three main steps to evaluating an arrival and dismissal process. See below for more information on each of these steps:

<p><u>Prepare</u></p>	<p>Review any written arrival and dismissal procedures and determine who will help with observation. Parent representatives, crossing guards, SRTS coordinators, school division transportation directors, school staff, and local law enforcement are common participants. Make sure to involve the school in your planning!</p> <p>Hold a pre-observation meeting with your team to discuss existing concerns and conditions, determine observation points, assign roles, and make you have all needed materials such as cameras, reflective vests, and school maps.</p>
<p><u>Observe and Record</u></p>	<p>After a quick on-site meeting to assign observation locations, use the worksheets provided in the Arrival and Dismissal Observation Field Exercise Guide to take notes. These worksheets allow you to easily track general observations on the process, on-campus behavior, and safety issues and concerns.</p>
<p><u>Act on What You Observe</u></p>	<p>The same day as the observation, hold a debrief meeting with the team to compare notes and gain consensus on the key issues, challenges, and barriers. Prepare a brief summary report with pictures to share with the school principal, PTA, local transportation staff, and others.</p> <p>Circulate widely the new procedures in the parent handbook, a stand-alone document, maps, morning announcements, parent driver pledges, school newsletters, or other methods.</p>