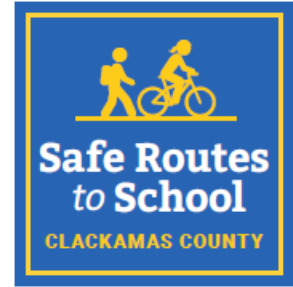

School Action Plan for Rex Putnam High School



Principal: Lajena Welch
Enrollment: 1030
First bell: 8:35 a.m.
Last bell: 3:10 p.m.

Grades: K-12
Address: 4950 SE Roethe Road
Milwaukie, OR 97267

This report summarizes existing conditions, observations, and recommended improvements and programs for Rex Putnam High School resulting from the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) walk audit conducted on February 22, 2024. Maps on pages 12-13 illustrate the school location, area characteristics, and locations of infrastructure recommendations. This action plan supports the county-wide SRTS efforts of Clackamas County. For more information on the program, visit: www.clackamas.us/engineering/srts.html.

What is Safe Routes to School (SRTS)?

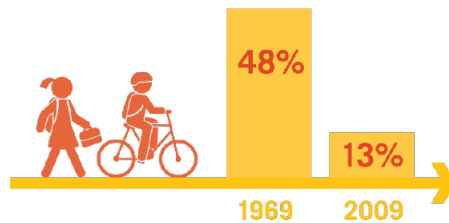
SRTS is a comprehensive program to make school communities safer by combining engineering tools and enforcement with education about safety and activities to enable and encourage students to walk and bicycle to school. SRTS programs typically involve partnerships among municipalities, school districts, community members, parent volunteers, and law enforcement.

Although most students in the United States walked or biked to school before the 1980s, the number of students walking or bicycling to school since has sharply declined in both urban and suburban areas. The benefits of implementing a SRTS plan are far-reaching and include improving safety, encouraging physical activity, and reducing traffic congestion and motor vehicle emissions near schools. Implementing SRTS programs and projects benefit adjacent neighborhoods as well as students and their families.

Clackamas County SRTS has a Program Handbook that outlines activities and local resources that school and community members can use to encourage walking and biking and promote traffic safety in school areas. See www.clackamas.us/engineering/srts.html for more information.

Why Safe Routes to School for Clackamas County?

Within the span of one generation, the percentage of children walking or bicycling to school has dropped to 13%.



Fewer students walking & biking to school

More parents driving children to school

Rising concerns about safety of walking & biking

Increased traffic at and around school




This movement away from active transportation is a self-perpetuating cycle.



SRTS education & encouragement programs can result in a **25%** increase in walking and biking over 5 years.

A comprehensive SRTS program addresses reductions in walking and biking through a multi-pronged approach that uses education, encouragement, engineering and enforcement efforts to develop attitudes, behaviors, and physical infrastructure that improve the walking and biking environment.

SRTS programs provide many benefits for communities!

 <p>Healthy Living</p>	 <p>Less Traffic</p>
 <p>Better Educational Achievement</p>	 <p>Increased Social Interactions</p>
 <p>Cleaner Air and Water</p>	 <p>Cost-Effective</p>

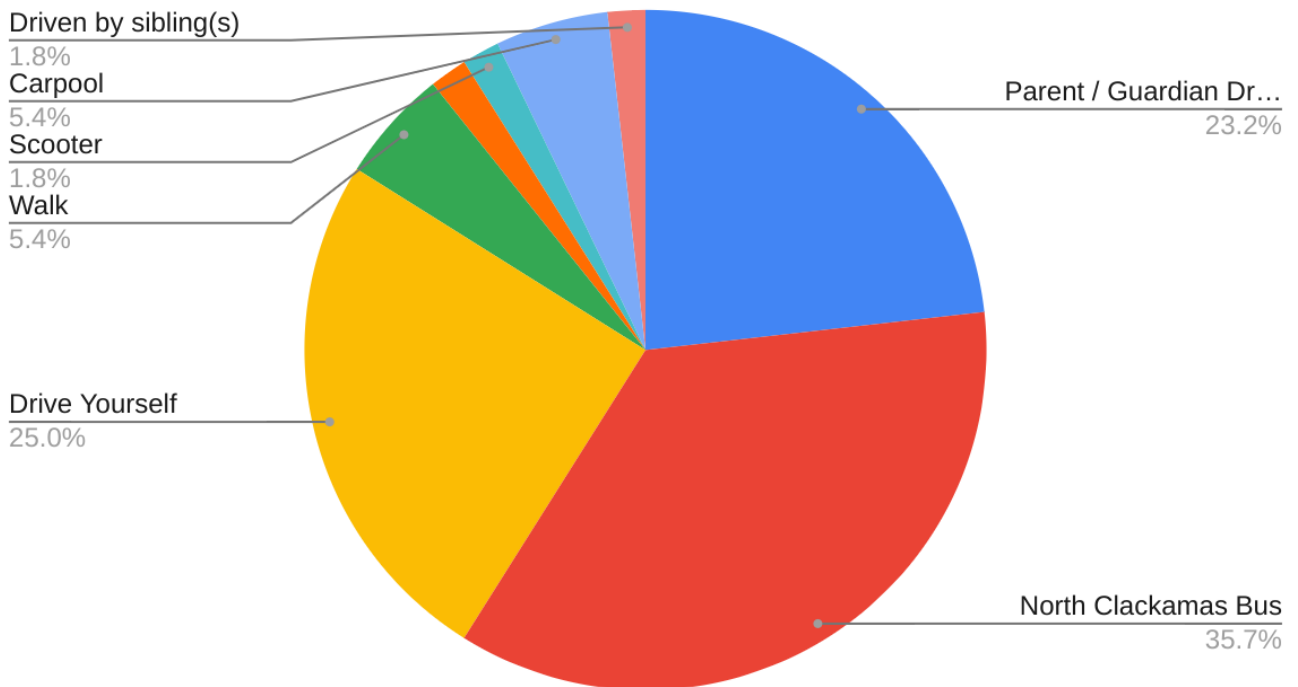
How Do Students Get to School Now?

As part of the Action Plan, Rex Putnam students participated in a survey in spring 2024.

Student Tallies

Hand tallies are a standard way of tracking the different ways (modes) students used to get to school. Students were asked how they typically traveled to school. The following graph shows the results of a survey distributed to all students.

Count of How do you travel to school in the morning?



Resources and best practice programs for conducting hand tallies include:

- ◆ The Oregon SRTS website provides [evaluation resources](#).

Caregiver Surveys

Parent/caregiver surveys ask families about the barriers to walking or biking to/from school, health information, how children travel to and from school, and perception of crime and other social behaviors.

REXPUTNAM HIGH SCHOOLREPORT

For the Action Plan, Clackamas SRTS program collected 51 parent surveys in March 2024 and all grades were represented. The majority of respondents live more than one mile from the school. Figure 1 shows the issues parents and caregivers who responded to the survey have that affects their decision to allow their students to travel to school on foot or wheels.

Figure 1. Issues reported to affect the decision to allow (or not) a student to walk to school

Issue	Child does not walk/bike to school	Child walks/bikes to school
Speed of Traffic Along Route	70%	67%
Distance	68%	100%
Amount of Traffic Along Route	62%	67%
Safety of Intersections and Crossings	62%	67%
Sidewalks or Pathways	57%	33%
Violence or Crime	43%	67%
Weather or climate	41%	67%
Time	32%	67%
Child's Participation in After School Programs	30%	67%
Convenience of Driving	19%	67%
Crossing Guards	19%	33%
Adults to Bike/Walk With	14%	33%
Number of Respondents per Category	37	3

Walk Audit Summary

Date: February 22, 2024

Meeting Time: 8-9:30am

Day of Week: Thursday

Weather: Mostly Sunny, 44° F

Attendees:

- Scott Hoelscher, Clackamas County
- Christian Snuffin, Clackamas County
- Anthony De Simone, Clackamas County
- Jerardo Marquez, Putnam Assistant Principal
- Samantha Swearingen, North Clackamas School District
- Nicole Perry, The Street Trust
- Lindsay Huber, The Street Trust
- Joyce Johnson, Community Member
- Jim Bong, Community Member
- James Prichard, North Clackamas School District

Existing Conditions

School Layout

Rex Putnam High School is located on SE Roethe Rd, between SE McLoughlin Blvd. and SE Oatfield Rd in the Oak Grove area of urban, unincorporated Clackamas County. Buses utilize a driveway in front of the main entrance and private vehicles use two separate parking lots to the north of the school. One is a continuous loop of unloading in a clear space while the other serves as the main parking lot for staff and visitors.

SITE CIRCULATION

Vehicles: Student drop-off occurs in the parking lot of the school. Vehicles enter the driveway off of Roethe Rd for drop-off where staff persons are located to guide students toward building. After the student departs, the vehicle continues to the parking lot exit, the same driveway used as the entrance.

For student pick-up, vehicles follow the same routine of looping through the existing lot to retrieve students.

School Buses: Buses load and unload students in a portion of the driveway designated for bus service that is located on a driveway toward Roethe via Gordon.

Pedestrians: Students and families coming from the surrounding neighborhood access the school campus primarily from SE Austin St, which has sidewalks on one side of the street. From the north there is an informal pedestrian access off of Oatfield Rd. This is a path between private property lines that leads from Rex Putnam

school property up a hill to Oatfield Rd. The path is not owned or maintained by the school district, but is utilized by a small number of students.

Bicyclists: There is ample bicycle parking on the building wall located north of the central plaza near the school entrance. The wall mounted hooks allow for secure, covered bike parking.

Walk Audit Observations and Infrastructure Recommendations

Key locations are described below, including issues identified during audit observations and discussions. Recommended projects are listed in Table 1 and shown on the Improvement Maps on pages 12-13. Table 1 includes priority level and party responsible for implementing each recommendation (i.e., Clackamas County or North Clackamas School District).

1. School Parking Lot and Grounds

Student drop-off and pick-up operate in a fair manner. Vehicles enter the main entrance parking lot via Austin St. Drivers drop off students near the building entrance in a shorter circle-through and then continue out the same way they came in. Buses utilize the same route into the school property via Austin and they continue past the building to a designated bus exit via Gordon St.

2. SE Roethe Road

SE Roethe Rd is a collector street that is adjacent to the Rex Putnam property. Walk audit participants observed high speeds with vehicles routinely exceeding the posted speed limit. Vehicle speeds were consistently higher than the posted 20 mph school zone. The roadway's slope as well as drivers' desire to "make the light" at Oatfield appear to both contribute to increased speeds. The current school speed limit signs (20 mph) are in effect on school days between 7:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Students were observed having to "dart across the street" between traffic. There are narrow, substandard sidewalks on SE Roethe Rd. Obstructions such as mailboxes and lack of ADA compliant curb ramps limit access for mobility impaired and strollers. County is planning to implement some short-term signing improvements on Roethe Rd that enhance the visibility of the crosswalks and call attention to the main high school entrance at Austin St.

4. SE Austin St

SE Austin St. serves as the primary access to the campus. A poorly marked crosswalk serves as the main way students access the school from the west. There is also a crosswalk at Gordon St. Observations indicated that the crosswalk at Austin is more heavily used than the one at Gordon St. Many students wishing to cross had to wait for gaps in traffic because most drivers did not stop at the crosswalks. There are sidewalks on one side of SE Austin St leading to the school, although they are narrow and do not meet today's standards. A Rex Putnam High School sign is located at the

intersection of SE Austin St and SE Roethe Rd, however, it is not easily visible and visitors not familiar with the area often miss the school entrance.

5. SE Oatfield Rd

SE Oatfield Rd is an arterial roadway generally running north-south between the cities of Gladstone and Milwaukie. SE Oatfield Rd is posted at 35 mph in the vicinity of the school. There are substandard shoulder bike lanes, which are poorly signed and the street lacks sidewalks, which forces any pedestrian traveling SE Oatfield to walk in the bike lanes. There is an informal pedestrian access (some referred to it as a 'goat path') to the campus from Oatfield Rd near McNary Rd. New sidewalks on Oatfield Rd would improve walkability and access to the Rex Putnam campus.

6. SE Harold Ave

SE Harold Ave, one block south of SE Austin St, provides a local roadway connection between SE Roethe Rd and SE Concord Rd. Shared Street treatments would provide a low-stress route to the Rex Putnam campus as well as providing a connection to the Concord Community Center, less than one mile to the north. Shared Street treatments may include lowering posted speed to 20 mph, pavement markings, signage and other "traffic calming" elements suitable for the context.

7. SE Gordon St

SE Gordon St is intended to provide one-way exit access for school buses leaving the northeast corner of the campus. However, the street has become an informal drop-off area despite signage stating no school access and posted parking/drop-off restrictions. As a countermeasure to passenger vehicles entering the school grounds in a wrong-way/contra-circulation direction, school bus drivers have taken to parking in a location that blocks vehicles from entering the exit gate. The drop-offs on Gordon St have clearly become a frustration for neighbors, some of whom have posted their own signs reminding drivers not to use the street for drop-offs.

Cost Estimates

Table 1 summarizes recommendations for Rex Putnam High School, provides order-of-magnitude cost estimates, and places the projects in priority tiers.

Table 1. Rex Putnam High School Recommended Improvements

RECOMMENDATIONS	LEAD AGENCY	PLANNING – LEVEL COST	PRIORITY
1. School Parking Lot and Grounds			
a. Update bus loop signage	Rex Putnam High School	\$	Low
2. SE Roethe Rd			
a. Install flashing beacons at both ends of the school zone.	Clackamas County	\$\$	Medium
a. Replace school zone speed limit signs with 20 mph “when flashing” signs.	Clackamas County	\$	High
b. Reconstruct existing substandard sidewalks with ADA compliant pedestrian facilities on both sides of the street between Oatfield and OR 99E.	Clackamas County	\$\$\$	Low
c. Upgrade school zone signage (larger signs, better retro reflectivity, additional signs).	Clackamas County	\$	Medium
d. Adjust locations of existing speed limit signs to improve visibility and prominence.	Clackamas County	\$	High
e. Relocate a bank of mailboxes near intersection with Austin St to open sight lines.	Home Owners Association	\$	High
f. Install signage at Austin St to call attention to the main high school entrance.	Clackamas County	\$	High
3. SE Austin St			
a. Upgrade crosswalk at SE Roethe Rd with rectangular rapid flashing beacon (RRFB).	Clackamas County	\$\$	High
b. Install ADA compliant curb ramps on both sides of Roethe at SE Austin St crosswalk.	Clackamas County	\$\$\$	High
4. SE Gordon St			
a. Update, relocate, or otherwise improve visibility for NO PARKING and NO SCHOOL ACCESS signs on Gordon St and include consistent times. Trim overgrown shrubbery to improve sight distance.	Clackamas County	\$	High
b. Upgrade crosswalk with RRFB flashers.	Clackamas County	\$\$	Medium
5. SE Oatfield Rd			

a) Construct sidewalks between SE Concord Rd and SE Jennings Ave.	Clackamas County	\$\$\$	Medium
b. Analyze feasibility of constructing protected bikeway between SE Concord Rd and SE Jennings Ave.	Clackamas County	\$	Low
6. SE Harold Ave			
a) Lower speed and install shared street between Roethe Rd and Concord Ave to connect Rex Putnam with Concord Community Center.	Clackamas County	\$	Medium

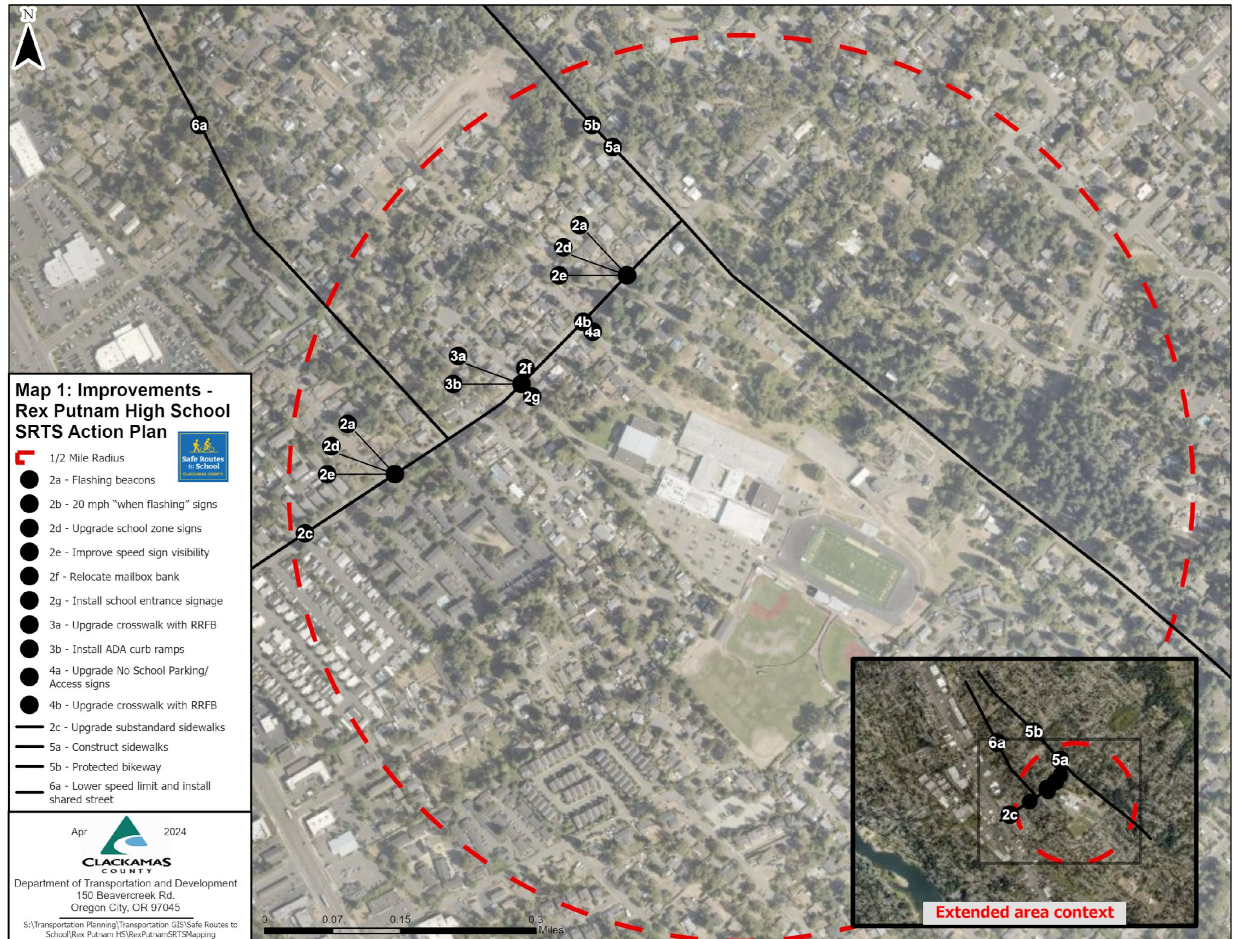
Photo 1: Preparing for the Walk Audit



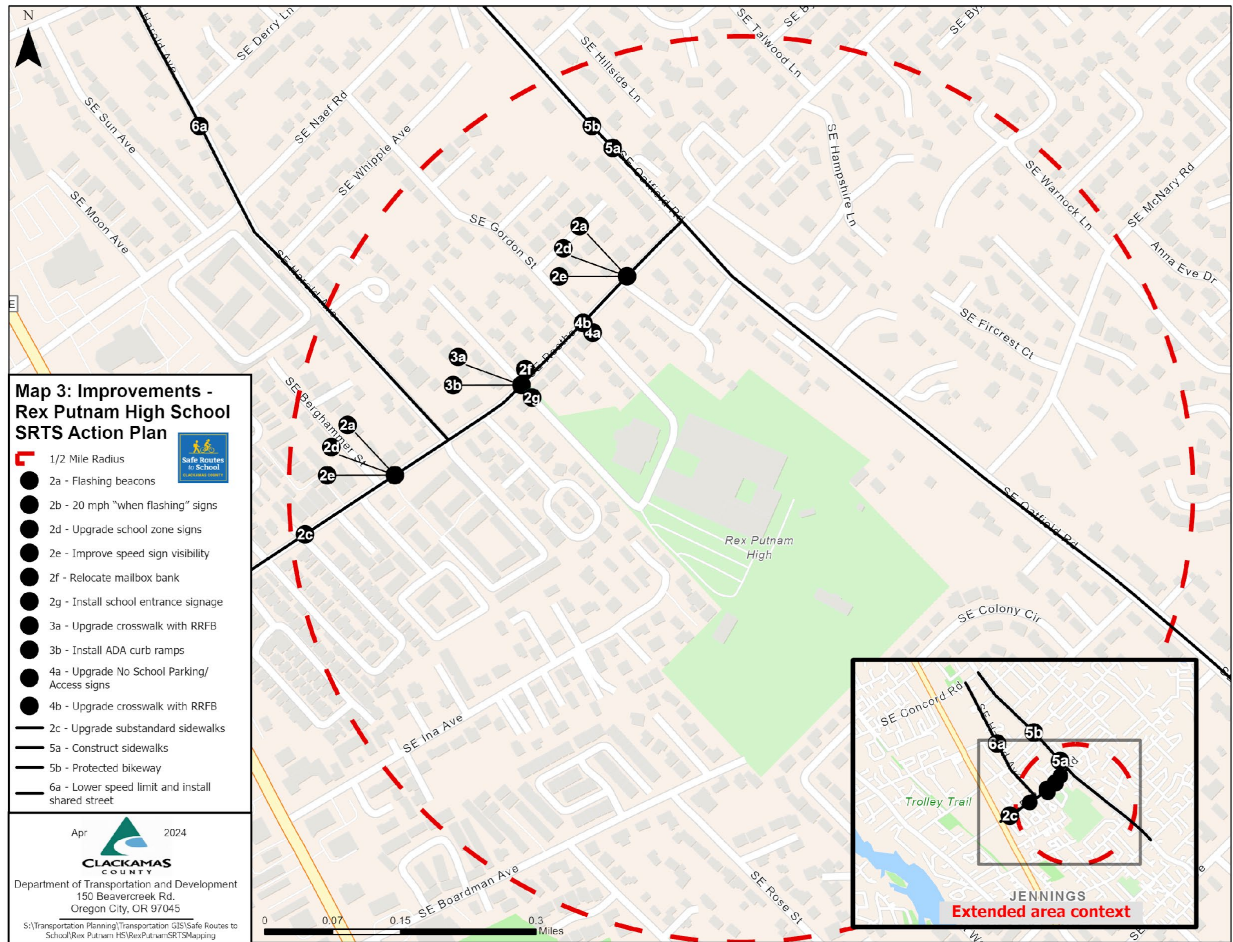
Photo 2: Roethe Road Current Conditions



Map 1: Recommended Infrastructure Improvement Map: Aerial



Map 2: Recommended Infrastructure Improvement Map: Non Aerial



Programmatic Recommendations

Programmatic activities and events complement infrastructure improvements by empowering students and their families to try walking and bicycling, and by making it safer for them to do so.

Rex Putnam High School currently promotes transportation safety by sending information to parents about student drop-off and pick-up patterns, as well as reminders about driving safely through parent newsletters at the beginning and throughout the school year. The activities below are recommended for Rex Putnam High School to improve and promote safe walking and bicycling to and from school and in the community. They can be implemented by school administrators, teachers, parents, students, or even school clubs.

Education Programs

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN SAFETY EDUCATION

Pedestrian and bicycle safety education teaches students basic traffic laws and safety rules.

- ◆ [Educational guides](#) are available from Oregon SRTS that address a variety of modes and safety issues involved with student travel to and from school.
- ◆ Oregon SRTS curriculum [Neighborhood Navigators](#) includes a series of lesson plans grouped for grade levels that can be taught in a variety of settings in school communities.
- ◆ The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration offers [pedestrian safety](#) and [bicycle safety](#) resources.

DRIVER EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

Parents are the primary decision-makers about how their children get to school. Informing parents about their options for walking and bicycling, as well as communicating the benefits of active transportation, can encourage more families to walk and bike. This can occur through school e-news or announcements, and other informational resources. Suggested route maps can show parents the best walking or biking route to the school, overcoming concerns about barriers. Additionally, high school age students ride with peers and drive themselves.



Resources and best practice programs:

- ◆ Clackamas County's SRTS program has a [guidebook, brochure, and safety tip sheets](#), as well as other information about efforts
- ◆ [Oregon SRTS](#) provides materials, handouts, and theme ideas for monthly themes, year-long events, and messages.
- ◆ The [Oregon Friendly Driver Program](#) is a class that teaches drivers of all ages to share the road with walkers and bikers.
- ◆ [Metro's SRTS collaboration page](#) contains a variety of resources and toolkits.

Encouragement Programs

WALK + BIKE TO SCHOOL CHALLENGE

The Oregon Walk + Bike to School Challenge celebrates students walking and bicycling to school. International Walk to School Day is held the first Wednesday in October and Bike to School Day takes place the second week in May. Parents can set up a table on the event day to



provide refreshments and small rewards for families who participate, as well as maps, lights, and safety information to encourage more students and families to join in the fun.

Even families who live too far from school to walk and bike can participate by driving to a designated central location and walking together from there. Coffee and breakfast can be provided, and students can dress up or hold posters to make a fun, parent-supervised parade to school.

Resources and best practices:

- ◆ Schools in Oregon can order incentives to support and promote [Walk + Bike Challenge Day and Month](#).
- ◆ [Walk Bike to School](#) suggests event ideas and planning resources for encouraging active transportation at schools.

STUDENT CLUBS AND YOUTH LEADERSHIP PROGRAMS

Clubs and leadership programs allow students to form groups to support the causes they care about most. Older elementary school student clubs can host Walk + Bike Challenge events, organize a competition, or work with their peers to promote walking and bicycling. Student clubs can offer excellent ideas, and provide exceptional energy and drive to get things done.



Resources and best practice programs:

- ◆ [Eco-school network](#) started as a project of the Center for Earth Leadership and is an organization that aims to promote sustainable practices and raise ecological awareness.
- ◆ [Oregon Green Schools](#) is a nonprofit organization that supports school in establishing and sustaining practices that shape the next generation of environmental leaders, including an active transportation track of certification.

Enforcement Programs

SCHOOL SAFETY PATROL

Safety patrol programs vary by school and district. Older elementary school student volunteers can sign-up to become a certified AAA School Safety Patroller. With support and leadership

REXPOTNAM HIGH SCHOOLREPORT

from school faculty and parents, student patrollers help fellow students develop a better understanding of pedestrian and vehicular traffic hazards.

Resources and best practice programs:

- ◆ The Oregon Department of Education published an [Oregon Traffic Patrol Manual](#) that describes the roles of patrols and operational guidelines.
- ◆ AAA has [School Safety Patrol membership information](#) and descriptions of student, teacher, and parent roles.

