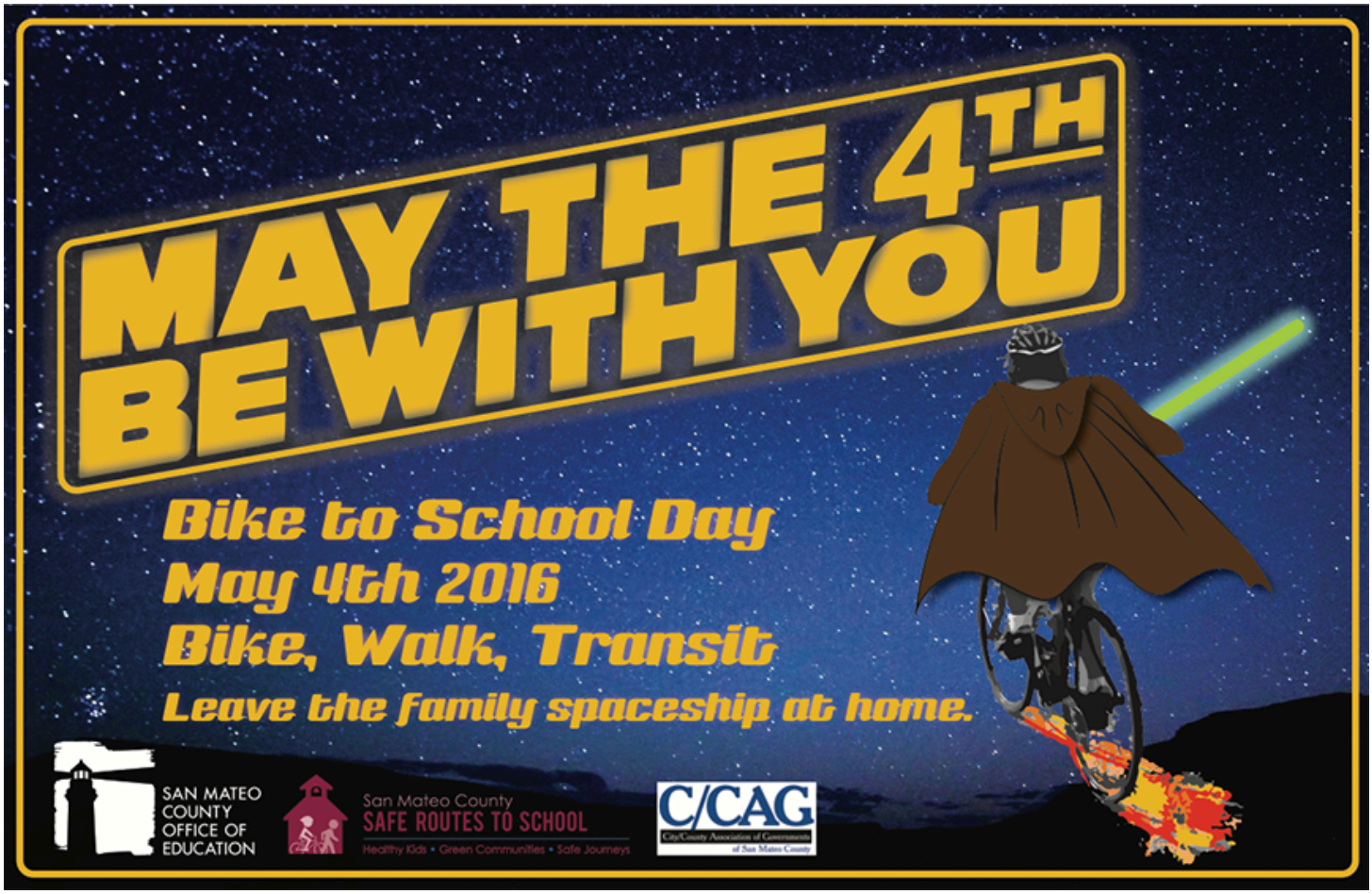


San Mateo County
SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL
Healthy Kids • Green Communities • Safe Journeys

2015-2016 Annual Report

C/CAG
City/County Association of Governments
of San Mateo County

SAN MATEO COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION

BACKGROUND

According to the Safe Routes to School National Partnership, only 13% of students in the United States walk or bicycle to school and approximately 30% of traffic congestion around schools is caused by children being driven to school. San Mateo County residents are not strangers to school-related traffic congestion. With more than 70,000 school-aged children living in the county, traffic congestion around schools is dramatically reduced by Safe Routes to School initiatives such as walking school buses, walk to school days and pedestrian and bicycle education.

Data collected from parent surveys and student travel tallies in fall 2015 indicates that 40% of students in the San Mateo County Safe Routes to School program live one mile or less from school and more than one third of students take an active mode of transportation to school. The most pressing concerns from parents continue to be with regard to speeding, traffic and unsafe intersections. These concerns are barriers to increased numbers of students walking and suggest that more effort be made to address parental fears.

San Mateo County parents are more likely to allow their children to bike or walk to school if infrastructure such as sidewalks, bike lanes and crosswalks, provide safe passage. Many parents express concern about the amount and speed of traffic along the route to school as well as safety at intersections. Since its inception in 2011, San Mateo County Safe Routes to School has brought stakeholders together to address these issues and raise community awareness.

The San Mateo County Safe Routes to School program teaches children the skills needed to get to school safely through active modes of transportation. It gets kids outside and exercising! Additionally, Safe Routes to School supports the age-old childhood rite of passage…walking or biking to school, leading to growth in independence and self-reliance.

VISION

The efforts of Safe Routes to School in San Mateo County result in less traffic congestion around schools, improved air quality, a greener, healthier community and an increase in self-reliance among San Mateo County children who walk and bike to school. Safe Routes to School is the catalyst for teaching children traffic safety skills and encouraging them to take an active mode of transportation to school. San Mateo County communities support this initiative with infrastructure that provides safe passage for children.

MISSION

San Mateo County Safe Routes to School encourages and enables school children to walk and bicycle to school by implementing projects and activities that improve the health, well-being, and safety of children, resulting in less traffic congestion and vehicle emissions caused by school-related travel.

GOAL

Funding for the San Mateo County Office of Education's Safe Routes to School (SMCOE SRTS) program is made possible through the City/County Association of Governments of San Mateo County (C/CAG). The overall goal of the program is to encourage children and their parents to carpool or to take an active mode of transportation to school. This is achieved through education on pedestrian and bicycle safety as well as awareness around human impact on the environment.

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, driving is the number one pollution causing activity that most Americans engage in on a daily basis. Vehicle emissions contribute not only to global warming but can cause local-scale pollution. Poor air quality can lead to significant health problems.

A student checks in on a walk to school day.

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

San Mateo County Safe Routes to School is a collaborative effort between City/County Association of Governments and the San Mateo County Office of Education. During the 2015 – 2016 school year, other partners and collaborators included: San Mateo County Health System, Sequoia Healthcare District, Peninsula Health Care District, Spare the Air Youth Technical Advisory Committee, Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC)

Additional active partners include the following school districts and organizations in San Mateo County:

Belmont-Redwood Shores Elementary
Brisbane Elementary
Burlingame Elementary
Cabrillo Unified
Jefferson Elementary
Menlo Park City Elementary
Millbrae Elementary
Pacifica
Portola Valley Elementary
Ravenswood City Elementary
Redwood City 20/20
San Carlos Elementary
San Mateo Foster City
Sequoia Union High School District
South San Francisco Parks & Recreation

Specific support to participants includes a grant award program, professional development and training, connection to various Safe Routes to School resources, customized outreach and consultation, and countywide event coordination. The San Mateo County Office of Education's Safe Routes to School coordinator collaborates with district administration, wellness coordinators, teachers, parents and community partners to encourage young people to improve the environmental health of the community by choosing an active mode of transportation.

Partner Organizations

Recycle Works
Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition
Peninsula YMCA – YBikes
Wheel Kids
Safe Moves
Spare the Air Youth Technical Advisory Committee
Bay Area Bike Mobile
SamTrans – Art Takes a Bus Ride

FRAMEWORK FOR SUCCESS

The 2015-2016 program was based on the comprehensive 5 E's model: Education, Encouragement, Engineering, Enforcement, and Evaluation.

Education

Educational activities are designed to promote and provide members of the school community - students, parents, faculty and staff - a common understanding of what the Safe Routes to School program seeks to achieve and the positive impact the program can have on the environment, traffic congestion, and healthy lifestyle. Education is delivered via school assemblies, classroom instruction, bicycle and pedestrian rodeos, bike clubs, green teams, family bike nights and wellness fairs.

Encouragement

Encouragement events take place in conjunction with the educational activities. The school community has an opportunity to practice the walking and biking behaviors they have learned, generate interest, build community and sustain momentum by demonstrating success. Encouragement activities include weekly walk to school days, walking school buses, a bike train/brigade, Golden Sneaker Contests, International Walk to School Day, Earth Day and National Bike to School Day.

2015-2016 Events

International Walk to School Day
October 7, 2015

Golden Sneaker
Dates determined by coordinators

Earth Day
April 22, 2016

National Bike to School Day
May 4, 2016

Walk to School Days
Determined by coordinators

Engineering

Engineering projects can range from capital outlay projects (i.e. parking lot improvements, widening roads on school property, and/or installing traffic signs) to smaller infrastructure projects, which include paint for parking lots to direct traffic flow or to designate pick up and drop off zones.

Walk and Bike Audits are performed to assess the walkability and bikeability of the school and surrounding environment. These audits include analyzing traffic patterns and travel to and from the school. Walk and bike audits allow for direct and indirect feedback for potential positive changes. Walking and biking route maps are also generated in order to provide an effective tool for safe and efficient travel flow to and from the school.

Two engineering firms were available for Walk Audits during the 2015-2016 school year: Parisi Transportation Group and Kimley-Horn. In November 2015, one walk audit was performed at Fernando Rivera School in Daly City and was conducted by Kimley-Horn. The principal at Fernando Rivera received a copy of the audit and recommendations in June 2016.

Enforcement

The main goal of enforcement strategies is to encourage all road users to obey traffic laws. Safe Routes to School coordinators are encouraged to work closely with their school resource officers to address issues regarding traffic safety in and around the school campus. Other effective tools used by schools include: student valet programs, active speed monitors, and community awareness via announcements and parent newsletters. School community education and encouragement activities reinforce the Safe Routes to School message and can truly make a positive impact.

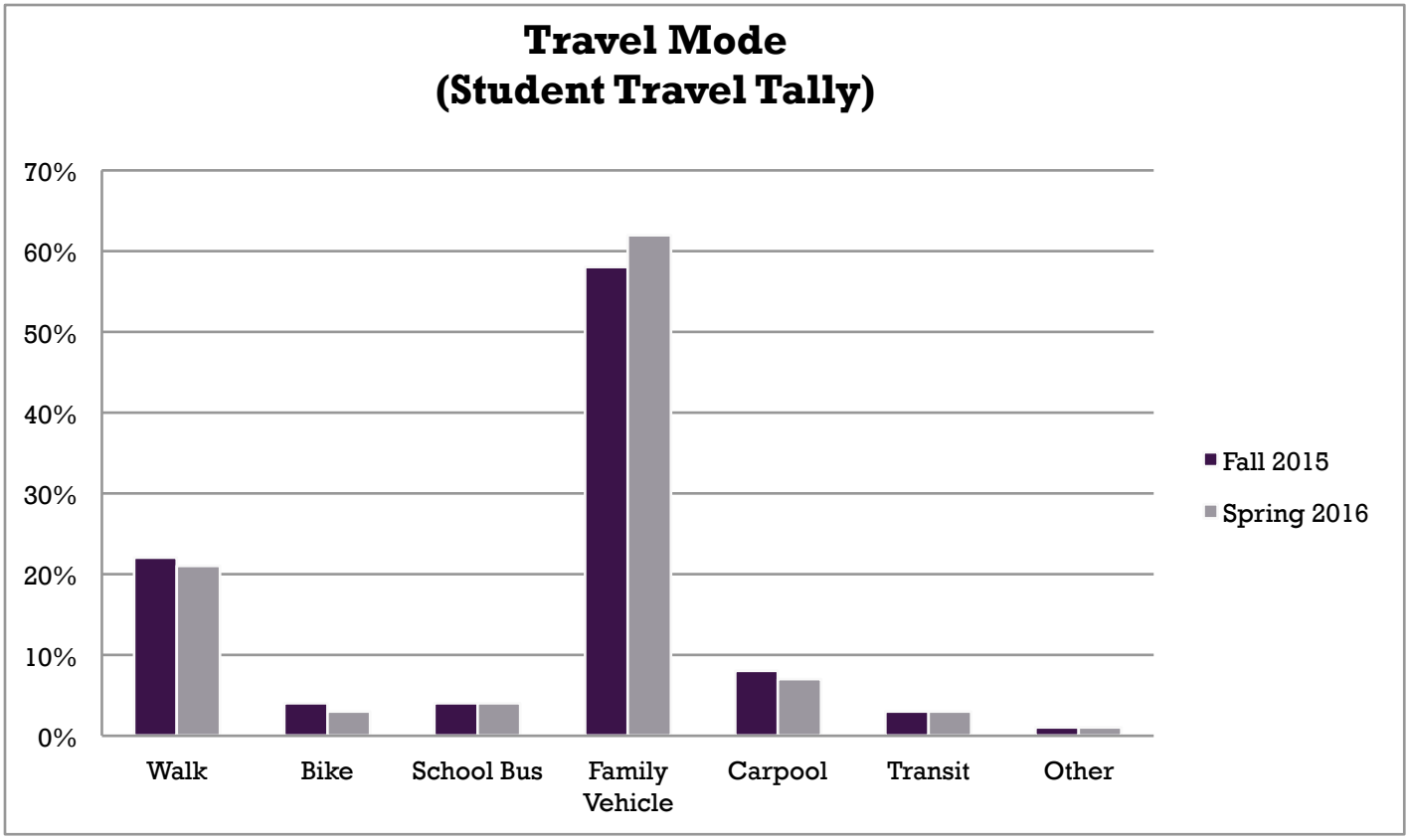
Evaluation

The evaluation component is an important element of any SRTS program and is used to help determine if the most vital needs are being addressed, the appropriate strategies are being used and the desired results are being achieved. Evaluation data also informs decisions about adjusting activities when necessary.

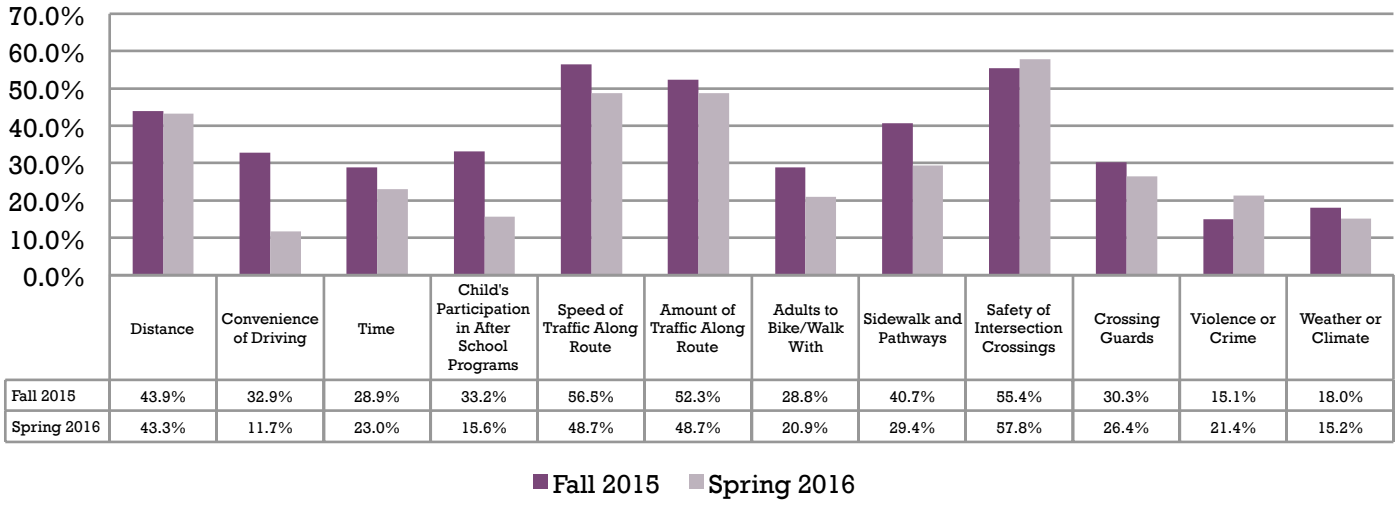
The two main evaluation tools/activities in SRTS programs:

Student Travel Tallies help measure how students get to and from school. This data is collected through the National Safe Routes Student Travel Tally Form and computed with the assistance of the National Safe Routes Data Center.

The Safe Routes to School Parent Survey asks for information about what factors affect whether parents allow their children to walk, roll or bike to school, the presence of key safety-related conditions along various routes to school and related background information. The Parent Survey is available in English, Spanish, Chinese, and Tagalog. There is an online and a printed version.



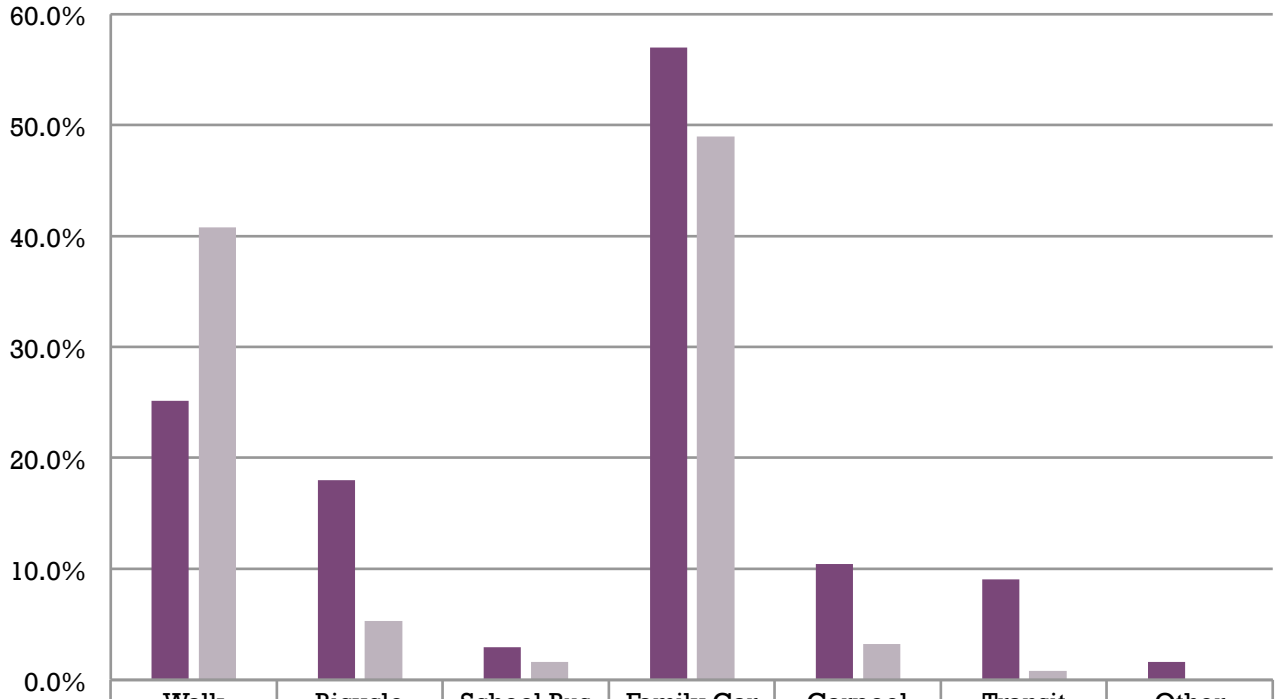
Do any of the following items concern or limit your child's ability to walk or bike to/from school?



	Distance	Convenience of Driving	Time	Child's Participation in After School Programs	Speed of Traffic Along Route	Amount of Traffic Along Route	Adults to Bike/Walk With	Sidewalk and Pathways	Safety of Intersection Crossings	Crossing Guards	Violence or Crime	Weather or Climate
Fall 2015	43.9%	32.9%	28.9%	33.2%	56.5%	52.3%	28.8%	40.7%	55.4%	30.3%	15.1%	18.0%
Spring 2016	43.3%	11.7%	23.0%	15.6%	48.7%	48.7%	20.9%	29.4%	57.8%	26.4%	21.4%	15.2%

Fall 2015 Spring 2016

How does your child usually travel to school?



	Walk	Bicycle	School Bus	Family Car	Carpool	Transit	Other
Fall 2015	25.1%	18.0%	2.9%	57.0%	10.4%	9.1%	1.6%
Spring 2016	40.8%	5.3%	1.6%	49.0%	3.3%	0.8%	0.0%

Fall 2015 Spring 2016

2015-2016 Program Participants

During the 2015 – 2016 school year, 98 schools and/or organizations from fifteen districts or community organizations participated in the SMCOE SRTS program.

District	Bicycle Rodeos	Assemblies/ Classes	Encouragement Events	Walk Audits	Route Maps
Belmont-Redwood Shores	5	6	72	0	7 (all schools)
Brisbane	1	5	39	0	0
Burlingame	1	72	6	0	6 (all schools)
Cabrillo	4	22	6	0	2
Jefferson	1	16	10	1	0
Menlo Park	1	3	1	0	4 (all schools)
Millbrae	0	1	3	0	0
Pacifica		17	7	0	6
Portola Valley	1	0	8	0	1
Ravenswood	0	39	20	0	0
RWC 2020	6	15	21	0	6
San Carlos	6	15	41	0	3
San Mateo-Foster City	8	6	7	0	20
Sequoia	0	1	4	0	0
City of SSF	6	1	4	0	6
Totals	**40**	**219**	**249**	**1**	**61**

Participation Breakdown	
Elementary	62
K-6th grade	3
K-8th grade	16
Middle	15
High School	2
Total number of schools supported in '15-'16	**98**
Walkability and Bikeability Audits	1
Total Assemblies, Bike Rodeos, Education	508
Total Awarded in '15-'16	$576,326

FUTURE OF SMCOE SRTS

Several goals for the future of Safe Routes to School have been identified. The Safe Routes to School Coordinator will work with the **Safe Routes to School Community Advisory Committee** to achieve these goals. They include:

- Delivering program with an **equity lens**
- Raising the **profile and awareness** of SRTS in San Mateo County
- Focusing on the **sustainability** of the program
- Developing a **more selective grant application** process
- Recruiting **high schools and high school districts** to apply for program funding

Equity Lens: The most recent data from kidsdata.org, indicates 9.5% of children in San Mateo County live in poverty. According to the 2014 National Safe Routes to School Annual Report, children from low-income families are more likely to walk to school and often face busy streets, poor infrastructure and more crime or violence than their wealthier counterparts. San Mateo County Safe Routes to School aims to make walking and biking safe for all children. With this in mind, equity will be taken into consideration during the grant application process with special attention given to assisting districts, schools, and organizations in low-income communities with program planning and applying for funding.

Profile and Awareness of SRTS: Everyone has different preferences for transportation but there is one mode of transportation available to all – walking. Safe Routes to School aims to raise awareness that everyone is a pedestrian. It is critical that the goals of each district and school site grantee align with SMCOE SRTS's goals of reducing school related traffic congestion and car emissions by increasing the number of students who walk and bike to school. Safe Routes to School intends communicate this to all stakeholders and to the general public. During the 2016-2017 program year, a greater emphasis will be placed on raising the profile of Safe Routes to School in San Mateo County.

Sustainability: The SMCOE SRTS Coordinator will continue to work with grantees on embedding the SRTS program and philosophy into everyday practices and culture of the school.

Selective Process for Grant Applications: The Safe Routes to School Community Advisory Committee will revise the grant application for the 2017-2018 school year. A reduction in funding makes selectivity in grantees of paramount importance. The grant application and the scoring of grants will reflect a desire for a more equitable Safe Routes to School program in San Mateo County with a special focus on communities of concern.

High Schools and High School Districts: The SMCOE SRTS Coordinator will continue to make strides in adjusting the program to meet the needs of high school grantees. Currently, there are three high school sites as grantees. In conjunction with Sequoia Union High School District's recent coordination of a transportation task force, an effort will be made to move high school participation to the district level. The transportation task force includes representatives from all SUHSD schools.

Safe Routes to School Community Advisory Committee: This committee is made up of SRTS stakeholders, including community members, students, city engineers and staff, community health planners, C/CAG staff, SMCOE staff and elected officials. The committee provides guidance for Safe Routes to School in San Mateo County.

San Mateo County Office of Education

Safe Routes to School

101 Twin Dolphin Drive

Redwood City, CA 94065