



Educators & Safe Routes to School

Talking Points

Principals and teachers are one of the first groups to reach out to when getting a Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program started. While many educators may be familiar with the program, some may not be. It's important to explain the purpose of Safe Routes to School, the role teachers and principals can play, and what they will gain by participating. Here are some brief talking points for an initial conversation as well as some basic resources to share.

Introduce Yourself and the Statewide Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP)

Whether your first contact is by phone, email or in person, it will be important to introduce yourself and give some background information. SHIP is a Minnesota Department of Health program that works with schools, businesses, faith groups, farmers and many others to create healthier communities across the state by expanding opportunities for active living, healthy eating and tobacco-free living.

Give an Overview of the Minnesota Safe Routes to School Program and its Benefits

Minnesota SRTS is an effort to improve walking and bicycling conditions for our youth and support active living for the whole community. The Minnesota Department of Transportation, SHIP, and many other partners across the state are working together to help schools and communities develop SRTS programs.

SRTS is more than just a program. A comprehensive SRTS strategy is where partners work together on education, engineering, enforcement, evaluation, encouragement and equity. An effective SRTS initiative can help create a healthier community for generations to come by instilling life-long physical activity habits.

Some of the many benefits of the program for participants and the community include:

- Kids and families are more active
- Students arrive ready to learn
- Communities become more connected and safer for all
- Reduced congestion and traffic at schools and on local streets

What can principals and teachers bring to the program?

- Provide an understanding of the big picture regarding infrastructure and programming that might be impacted by SRTS efforts
- Create interest and enthusiasm for the program among teachers, students and parents
- Integrate SRTS into the school curriculum and programming

What can principals and teachers gain from the program?

- Increased health, safety, and academic performance
- More balanced transportation choices
- Improved student behavior
- Positive school messaging and community activity

Resources

Program website: <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/mnsaferoutes/>

Email updates and newsletters: <https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/MNDOT/subscriber/new>