

School Travel Planning



Introduction for Principals

The Problem

You've probably noticed...fewer students are walking/wheeling for the school journey

Across Canada, we are facing a modern-day challenge. Car culture is taking over and fewer kids are using active modes of transportation (i.e., walking, cycling, rollerblading, scooting) for their school journey. When students are driven to school instead of walking or wheeling, they miss the opportunity for much-needed physical activity, fresh air and quality interaction with

parents, caregivers and friends; and driving increases school zone congestion, which in turn makes conditions less safe for those who do walk or wheel, and adds to air pollution. Also, school staff frequently waste valuable time dealing with traffic issues and complaints. Sound familiar?

A Solution

School Travel Planning is a proven approach for addressing this problem

School Travel Planning (STP) is a process that involves diverse stakeholders at the school and regional level in the development and implementation of a comprehensive plan to get more students using active transportation. To date, individual STP schools have experienced shifts toward active travel of over 20%!



So Many Benefits!



Healthier Children

- Active school travel helps school-aged children meet the recommendation to accumulate at least 60 minutes per day of moderate to vigorous physical activity, which is associated with improved physical and mental health.



Less Traffic and Pollution

- Reducing the number of children being driven to school reduces greenhouse gas emissions and particulate air pollution around the school; this improves air quality and reduces associated risks of lung and cardiovascular diseases.



Safer School Zones

- Reducing traffic volumes creates safer school zones and saves school staff time. Improving walking and cycling routes to school also enhances the safety, connectivity, and quality of life for the community as a whole.



Better Academic Performance

- Increased physical activity specifically associated with the school journey increases alertness and attention during the school day.
- Physical activity supports healthy brain development, which can lead to improved learning and academic outcomes.

Let's work together to re-ignite a culture of walking and wheeling to school

How it Works

The STP Process

School Travel Planning flows through a six-phase process over an initial period of two to three years. The process is guided and supported by a Facilitator whose role is to bring everyone together, coordinate activities and compile the School Travel Plan. The Facilitator also handles data entry and analysis of all data collected through the STP process, which will be stored securely in accordance with any requirements of the school board. No identifiable information (e.g., names) will be collected.

Principal's Role & Responsibilities

Principals have an important role in creating a culture of walking and wheeling at schools. The Principal is responsible for supporting STP by:

- **Signing the School Agreement** to officially kick-off the STP process.
- **Helping to form a School STP Committee** and attending regular meetings during the school year.
- **Assisting with data collection** by:
 - Providing basic information about the school, e.g., number of students, school bell times.
 - Conducting a Student Travel Survey— Teachers or senior students administer this hands-up survey in the classroom every day over a week-long period, asking students about their travel mode to and from school.
 - Helping administer a Family Survey to collect information from parents and caregivers about travel issues and concerns.
 - Participating in a Walkabout survey to assess the current routes to school.
- **Signing off on the school's Action Plan** and helping to implement its contents, particularly any actions related to education and encouragement about walking and cycling.

Examples of STP Actions Other Schools Have Taken Include:

- Walking and cycling route maps
- New bike racks and cycling skills training
- Improved signage and crosswalks
- Fun walking events
- Classroom learning activities about active transportation

Positive Feedback

"I feel proud of the work we accomplished. Families were eager to change their habits and my students ended the year with a sense of pride and a greater understanding of what it really means to be healthy and environmentally friendly...I have also noticed less traffic out my window this year. I think our message brought positive change to our community."

Elizabeth Kim, grade 4/5 teacher



Get Involved Now

For more information, please contact your assigned STP Facilitator or visit www.ontarioactiveschooltravel.ca/school-travel-planning.