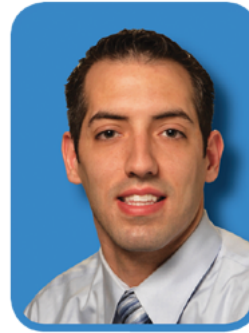




September 2016

**Coordinator's Corner**

Welcome back to school! September is an important month for getting your school's Safe Routes to School program set for the year. Use this month to set the stage for education, events, and other programs focused on walking and biking safety throughout the year. Whether you are a parent, teacher or administrator, or someone who is involved in your school community, this is the time to start encouraging healthy habits among students, including walking or biking to school, to carry through the whole school year.



Establishing good habits at the start of the academic year among all people (driving, bicycling, and walking) will help keep the school zone safe. During arrival and dismissal periods, the school campus and surrounding streets fill with families and buses picking up or dropping off students. School zones can become chaotic during these periods and all drivers must be on special alert for children and pedestrians in the zone. This newsletter also includes some inspiring articles about how you can make summer an active and memorable time for students in your community. These articles were written by local SRTS coordinators, who are doing interesting things within their programs.

With our spring launch of the Zone In, Not Out (ZINO) campaign, we offered an initial set of materials to address school zone safety. School zone safety will serve as our theme for this year's newsletters and we'll continue to offer new resources. We will include tips and ideas for school zone safety in our newsletters, eblasts, and trainings to help you implement the campaign. Please let us know if you have ideas about how to keep your school zone safe. We would be happy to share your thoughts.

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](mailto:Info@VirginiaSRTS.org).

Regards,  
Rob Williams  
Virginia SRTS Coordinator



**IN THIS ISSUE**

- Coordinator's Corner
- Calendar
- Friends & Faces: Chad Triolet
- 10 Ways to Jump-start Your SRTS Program
- International Walk to School Day 2016
- 2016-2017 SRTS Calendar
- Student Travel Tally Week
- Zone In, Not Out Resources
- QuickStart Mini-grants
- Mobile Phone Safety

**CALENDAR**

**SEPTEMBER**

- 8: QuickStart Mini-grants due
- 8: Walkabout Mini-grants due
- ALL MONTH: Student Travel Tally Week

**OCTOBER**

- 5: International Walk to School Day
- 13: QuickStart Mini-grants due
- ALL MONTH: Student Travel Tally Week

**NOVEMBER**

- 1: TA Set-Aside Applications Due

### **Friends & Faces: Chad Triolet**

*Chad Triolet is the former SRTS Coordinator for the Chesapeake Public Schools. He will be serving as Vice Principal for the Sparrow Road Intermediate School in Chesapeake school this fall.*

#### **1. What motivated you to become a SRTS coordinator?**

I had been teaching bicycle safety for about 7 years, which I really enjoyed, and being a coordinator was a chance to continue to do something I loved while taking on the challenge of building a school division wide SRTS program at the same time.

#### **2. In your time as a coordinator, you nearly tripled the number of schools in Chesapeake that participated in Walk to School Day. What are some tips for bringing schools and administrators on board to SRTS?**

The signature events are an easy sell. If you're trying to introduce a school to SRTS, it's great to start by encouraging them to participate in one of the big events. It's a relatively low commitment on the part of the school but helps build awareness of the program. I let schools know that they can participate in International Walk to School Day at the level that they feel comfortable with. I give them a "menu of options" from simply announcing Walk to School Day on the morning announcements to organizing walking school buses and bike trains. I've seen schools that begin with a walk at the school organize more regular events after seeing how refreshed the students and staff are post-walk.

Build a strong program over time by starting small and finding what works for each school. If you try to tell a school there is only one way to participate in SRTS and it's something they're not ready for, you've lost an opportunity to bring them on board.



Remember that schools may not understand the importance of SRTS and we need to deliver that message. Even starting with a very small activity, like making morning announcements about bike safety is a way to plant the seed at the school and with the students. I also encourage ideas from school staff. I send out a survey each year to get ideas from teachers and administrators which I can use for future events.

#### **3. You've done a lot of work with bike rodeos. In your experience, what have been the major benefits and challenges of holding a rodeo?**

There are many benefits to holding a bike rodeo. It brings the community together to educate both children and adults on basic riding skills. It's a great opportunity to promote the importance of wearing a helmet. It's also a way for the school to organize a fun activity that encourages public safety at the same time.

The biggest challenges are timing, weather, and staffing. Most schools hold bike rodeos after school during the week, avoiding the many weekend athletic events that compete for a student's and

parents' time. Spring is ideal to capture longer daylight hours. Recruiting and coordinating volunteers at the school can also take time and effort. I've found that PTAs can help with volunteers and we're partnering with the Chesapeake Parks and Recreation Department next year to host a rodeo to take some of the pressure off individual schools.

#### **4. Did you bike and walk to school as a student? Do you still bike and walk for transportation?**

In elementary school, we lived too far to walk or bike to school. We moved when I was in high school and then I regularly walked with my brother (who attended the middle school next to the high school). There were a ton of other kids walking - it was the part of the culture of the neighborhood. Now, I try to ride my bike to work when I can to help promote the message of active transportation. I also ride recreationally.

#### **5. We have some new coordinators starting this fall. Any advice for new coordinators just getting started?**

My biggest piece of advice is to make connections. Find out how to make contact with school administrators to start, as they can help you share information with the school community.

Relationships are key to getting things done. You can't run a SRTS program by yourself - knowing who can help is critical to the success of the program. The PTA can be a great place to find champions, especially when school staff have a full workload or aren't quite on board yet with SRTS. Get to know your local city engineering and planning department whose staff can help with things like crosswalk repainting and design. And don't forget about businesses. We've partnered with local bike shops

who have provided both volunteers and incentive items for events.

Lastly, remember to talk to the other coordinators! They're a rich resource and have helped me in the past. I'm also available to talk - you can reach me at [Chad.Triolet@cpschools.com](mailto:Chad.Triolet@cpschools.com).

#### **6. What have you learned as a coordinator that you will take with you in your new role as Vice Principal at Sparrow Road Intermediate School?**

This program is near to my heart. I'm excited to grow the program at this school, which has been a strong participant in SRTS.

I'm also looking into applying for a Walkabout Mini-grant. The experience of doing a Walkabout as part of the SRTS training made me think it would be the perfect opportunity to improve walking and biking conditions around the school.

#### ***10 Ways to Jump-start Your SRTS Program at the Start of the School Year***

The start of the school year offers a tremendous opportunity to encourage safe walking and bicycling. Parents are most dialed in to information coming from the school and student and family habits and expectations are formed for the rest of the school year. How can you take advantage this opportunity?

Here are our top 10 ideas:

1. Let parents know your school encourages walking and bicycling and tell them why- healthier kids, better test scores, less congestion, cleaner air, and more time with friends and family.



2. Go “multi-modal” in all communications about school transportation. Talk about all the way students travel to and from school - not just the school bus and family vehicles. Update the parent and student handbook, re-write scripts for announcements, make new signs, etc. Be creative and thorough in getting out the message that your school is multi-modal!
3. Get the word out about your school’s arrival and dismissal procedure early and often; then back it up with consistent enforcement. Don’t assume arrival and dismissal messages will get through on the first attempt or that a single communication type will do the trick.
4. Ask parents to sign the [ZINO Driver Pledge](#) to encourage safe driving near the school and raise awareness about walking and biking.
5. Post ZINO “SLOW DOWN!” [yard signs](#) in the school zone and along student walking and bicycling routes.
6. Provide pedestrian safety education to every student. There are lots of great resources to choose from, including the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration’s [Child Pedestrian Safety Curriculum](#), PBIC’s [Pedestrian Safer Journey](#), and pedestrian safety resources from the [National Center for Safe Routes to School](#).
7. Establish a Frequent Walker and Biker Program. Frequent Walker and Biker Programs provide small incentives to students who regularly walk and bike and helps shape student transportation habits. Use our [Frequent-Walker and Bicyclist Punch Card](#) to track student participation!
8. Begin planning Walk to School Day. This year Walk to School Day is October 5, but don’t fret if your school’s schedule conflicts. Walk to School Day events can occur anytime in October and are a great opportunity to showcase the benefits of walking and walking challenges in your community. Don’t forget to [register](#)!
9. Conduct Parent Surveys and Student Travel Tallies. Parent Surveys and Student Tallies provide a snapshot of student travel behaviors and parent concerns, and are a great way to monitor the success of your program over time. Parents may be more willing to fill out Parent Surveys at the beginning of the school year when they are in ‘form filling’ mode, and the Virginia SRTS program encourages collection of Student Travel Tallies during [Student Travel Tally Week](#) every September and October.



- Establish a subcommittee in your PTA or PTO focused on Safe Routes to School or wellness. Task the committee with coordinating activities to encourage walking and biking and thinking about other supportive steps the school can take.

### International Walk to School Day 2016



It is time to start getting ready for International Walk to School Day on October 5. International Walk to School Day (also known as iWalk) is a great way to kick off a year of healthy habits. Last year 282 schools in Virginia participated in iWalk. You can make your event fun by inviting families, holding competitions among classrooms for highest participation, making signs to carry or offering incentive items. Your [LTAC](#) can help you plan for a safe and enjoyable event.

[Register now](#) to help us reach our goal of 300 schools in 2016!

### 2016-2017 SRTS Calendar

The 2016-2017 SRTS Calendar is here! Use the calendar to get SRTS activities and events on your school and school division official calendar so that students, parents, and staff can know what's happening and when. You can add your school's important dates to the calendar, such as parent conferences, school assemblies, or celebrations, and display your customized school on a wall or share with school staff.



These dates include:

- Fall and Spring: QuickStart Mini-grant due dates
- Fall and Spring: Walkabout Mini-grant due dates
- October 5: International Walk to School Day
- September-October: Student Travel Tally Week
- February 8: Crossing Guard Appreciation Day
- May 10: Bike to School Day

Download your copy of the calendar [here](#), and visit the [Resource Library](#) page on our website for more tools to help you plan SRTS activities for the coming year.

## Student Travel Tally Week and Banners for First Time Schools

The Student Travel Tally is a quick, in-class survey that provides information on student travel patterns that help you 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 can be any week in September or October.



Hundreds of Virginia schools participate in Student Travel Tally Week every year.. Schools participating in Student Travel Tally Week for the first time will receive a Virginia SRTS banner, which can be carried during a Walk to School Day parade, hung from an SRTS event table, or posted in a school hallway to demonstrate ongoing support for SRTS.

Schools decorate their Virginia SRTS banners with decals earned by participating in Virginia SRTS events (Student Travel Tally Week, International Walk to School Day, Crossing Guard Appreciation Day, and Bike to School Day).

If you already have a banner that is full of decals, we'll send you a new one with our updated design. Please email a photo of the old banner with your mailing address to [Wendy@VirginiaSRTS.org](mailto:Wendy@VirginiaSRTS.org).

**IMPORTANT: Paper Student Travel Tally Forms Due by November 15**

Are you planning to submit paper Student Tally Forms to the National Center for Safe Routes to School? If so, please be aware that paper forms must be received by the National Center no later than November 15, 2016. After November 15 all Student Travel Tally data must be entered online.

## New Zone In, Not Out Resources

This month, three new [Zone In, Not Out](#) resources will be added to the Virginia SRTS website:

1. [Speed Reduction Guide](#): Strategies to reduce vehicle speeds in your school zone.
2. [Speed Reduction Yard Signs](#): Templates to create yard signs to encourage drivers to drive safely in your school zone.
3. [Safe Driver Pledge](#): Safe Driver Pledge form and supporting materials.

## What is Zone In, Not Out?

Zone In, Not Out is a package of resources that can help make school zones safer for all travelers, especially children. The idea for the program was part of an in-person training for Virginia Safe Routes to School local coordinators in the winter 2015. Charged with the task of coming up with a comprehensive approach to school zone safety with branding, messaging, materials, the local SRTS coordinators worked in small groups to develop an outline of the program.

Materials 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 materials are designed so that you can customize them to your school

community. For example, you can add your school name to the Zone In, Not Out logo.

### **Walkabout Mini-grants**

The Virginia SRTS program offers Walkabout mini-grants to help schools learn about walking and bicycling conditions around their school through a hands-on infrastructure survey. It's a great way for your school community stakeholders to experience pedestrian and bicycle conditions, share perspectives, and build consensus around potential solutions. The Virginia SRTS team documents findings in a report and in some cases, recommends infrastructure improvements if the mini-grant recipient intends to apply for a specific funding opportunity. Learn more about the process on the [VA SRTS website](#).

Apply before **September 8** to be considered for a Walkabout grant. Please be aware that, due to the time it takes to schedule and host a walkabout, develop a final report and complete an application, it is unlikely that information learned from a walkabout this round would be available for use in this year's [TA Set-Aside](#) application.

Reports from all of the Walkabouts completed to date are in the process of being added to the [Virginia SRTS website](#). Check back later this month if you are interested in reviewing them.

### **QuickStart Mini-grants**

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 benefited from multiple grants.

Want to add your school to the list? There are two remaining application due dates for fall 2016. The \$1,000 awards can help 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 8
- October 13

### **Mobile Phone Safety**

Remember to put down that phone when crossing the street!



New research shows that while we can all be distracted by mobile phones, children are much more susceptible and have a harder time than adults crossing the street while using a mobile phone. Researchers at the Ben-Gurion University Virtual Environment Simulation Laboratory, one of the world's most sophisticated traffic research facilities, conducted a study to measure pedestrian reactions to virtual reality scenarios. The study showed that participants using a mobile phone were slower to react to crossing opportunities, chose smaller gaps to cross, and allocated less visual attention to the periphery.

The study has been published in Safety Science. An abstract can be found online [here](#).

