

Beaverton Safe Routes to School 2024–25 Program Report

History and Background

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) is a nationwide initiative that encourages students and families to walk, bike or use buses for school commutes, thereby reducing single-car trips. The 6 E's form the foundation of our program, which encapsulate the essential components of our comprehensive and integrated approach: Education, Encouragement, Equity, Engagement, Engineering, and Evaluation. Our goals are to:

- Reduce the number of cars commuting to and from school
- Enhance student safety, health, and wellness
- Improve the environmental health of our communities and the planet

The Beaverton SRTS program promotes safe travel to school through education, walking and biking initiatives, and infrastructure advocacy. By encouraging students to use school buses or walk/bike, the program aims to reduce the carbon footprint and improve students' well-being. Currently, 30–40% of students travel via a single-car trip, contributing to carbon emissions and creating traffic hazards for those walking or biking.

Students who walk or bike to school achieve on average two-thirds of the recommended 60 minutes of daily physical activity and perform 20% better academically. Active transportation enhances mood, mental health, and focus. The Beaverton School District faces congestion from about 12,000 cars daily, contributing to 23,500 pounds of carbon emissions and pollution from idling vehicles, impacting student health. Encouraging walking and biking can reduce traffic, create a safer environment, and strengthen community ties.

The SRTS program produces an annual report highlighting our program activities and data collection. For more on our accomplishments for the 2023-2024 school year, please visit: [Safe Routes to School Annual Report 2023-2024](#).

Primary Focus Areas

Pedestrian and Bicycle Education

In 2019, Beaverton SRTS introduced pedestrian and bicycle safety education for all elementary students. Our innovative “Scooter Town” program, integrated into physical education classes on a three-year rotation, allows students to practice roadway safety in a mini town set up in their gym. We shared this popular program across the state and East Gresham and Eugene have added Scooter Town to their SRTS programs. Additionally, we provide on-bike education during after-school bicycle rodeos, with at least four free events each year. These events offer bike mechanics, helmets and fittings, and safety and skills courses.

Belong. Believe. Achieve.

Walking/Biking Programs

To support busy families, we organize walking and biking school buses throughout the district. These initiatives involve groups of students walking or biking together under the supervision of adult volunteers. Last year, twelve schools participated in this program. Currently, we are collaborating with counselors and social workers to develop Walking School Bus routes specifically for chronically absent students. This effort aims to provide reliable transportation for those who lack access to traditional school buses.

Encouragement

Each year, we organize a range of encouragement events, including the popular International Walk + Roll to School Day in October. During this event, thousands of students celebrate walking, biking and busing to school. These activities not only promote alternative travel methods but also inspire families to continue these practices after experiencing their fun and convenience.

Infrastructure Advocacy

Our program convenes a monthly multi-agency coordination team, including members from city and county transportation, enforcement agencies, THPRD, and various BSD departments such as Risk Management, Facilities, Transportation, and Public Safety. This team addresses parking lot procedures, travel safety concerns, and projects like sidewalks and school crossings to enhance safety on school routes. Additionally, the SRTS team actively participates in city and county committees to ensure student safety is a top priority in project decision-making.

Funding

Before 2022, funding for the Beaverton Safe Routes to School program came from grants and operated with just 1.5 full-time equivalent staff, serving a limited number of schools. Over the past five years, the program expanded to include all 54 schools in the Beaverton School District, tripling participation rates and necessitating increased staffing. Craig Beaver has been a steadfast advocate for SRTS and student safety, establishing a full-time coordinator position within the transportation department to ensure the program's continuity. This investment underscores the district's commitment to student safety, regardless of their mode of travel. The program continues to receive grant funding from ODOT, Metro and the City of Beaverton, supporting three part-time assistants and essential materials.

Future Plans

Our mission is to establish a sustainable program that integrates Scooter Town into the PE curriculum, providing students with essential pedestrian safety skills taught by knowledgeable staff. Additionally, we plan to introduce on-bike education during school hours, featuring a rotating fleet of bicycles across schools and a learn-to-ride program for our youngest students. We are confident that Walking School Bus programs can significantly reduce single-car trips to school. We envision a route at every elementary school, ensuring equal access to resources, safety and transportation options for all students.