



MY SCHOOL IN MOTION

Program Manual



Table of Contents

My School in Motion Program Overview	3
Parent/Guardian Survey	4-5
Events	6
My School in Motion Club	7
Bicycle Friendly Designation	8
Club Activities	9
Student Activities	10
Website Development	11

My School in Motion



Created in 1990, GVF, a not-for-profit organization, is dedicated to inspiring mobility choices for ALL. Through our 30+ years of expertise, GVF develops programs and initiatives that help educate and provide alternatives to driving alone, ultimately improving the quality of life for all.

The My School in Motion program was developed by GVF to promote safety in walking and biking to school and educate the next generation of commuters on the benefits of walking and biking as an alternate mode of travel.

Biking and walking allow students to travel safely, emitting zero CO2 emissions while enhancing physical and mental well-being.

"Valley Forge Middle School is excited to participate with GVF on My School In Motion. We are looking forward to further educating our students on the benefits of safe walking and biking and providing opportunities for students to make meaningful differences in their community through civic engagement,"
Dr. Jacquelyn Hickey Rothera, Assistant Principal, Valley Forge Middle School.

Components of the program include:

- Parental/Guardian survey
- National recognition for the school through The League of American Bicyclists' Bicycle Friendly America Program
- Club member participation in walking and biking audits
- Communications
- Education and Marketing
- Events

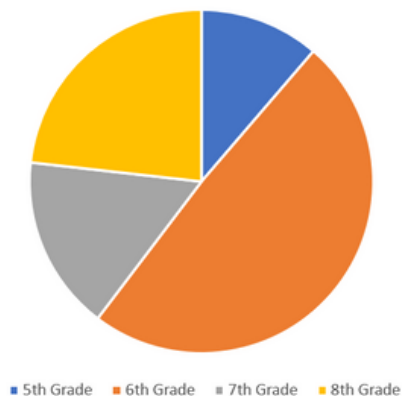
GVF can continue to assist Valley Forge Middle School to strengthen the My School in Motion program and components outlined in this manual.

Contact us at: sweiss@gvftma.com.



Parent/Guardian Survey

Parent Responses by Middle School Grade



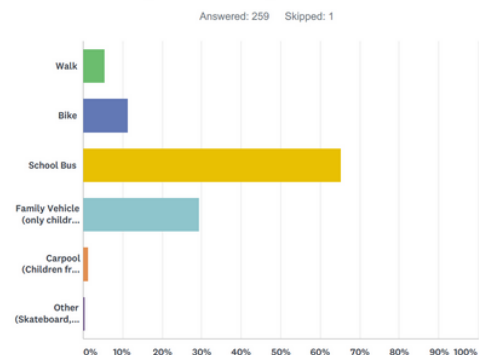
Assessing initial parent and guardian perceptions of walking and biking to school is critical to establishing what barriers prevent families from fully embracing this transportation mode. While the program's goal is to increase awareness and enthusiasm for walking and biking, the program also focuses on the importance of investing in the infrastructure that will allow students to walk or bike safely to and from school.

GVF suggests conducting a survey every August (before the start of the school year) to gauge parents' interest in allowing their children to bike or walk and their perception of safely biking and walking to school. GVF has ample experience with survey development and can create a summary of results for the school.

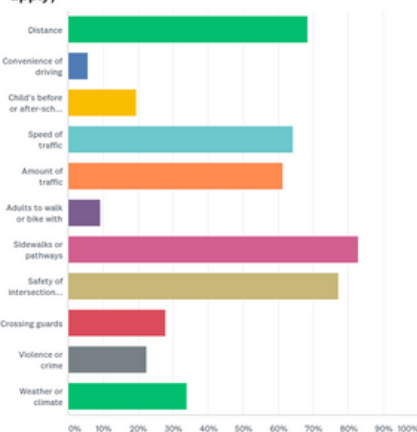
Below are sample survey questions:

1. What are the grades of your middle school children?
2. How many children do you have in Kindergarten through 8th grade?
3. What is the street intersection nearest your home?
(Provide the names of two intersection streets.)
4. How far does your child live from school?
5. On most days, how does your child arrive at school?
(Walk, Bike, School Bus, Family Vehicle, Carpool, Other)
6. On most days, how does your child leave school?
(Walk, Bike, School Bus, Family Vehicle, Carpool, Other)
7. How long does it normally take your child to get to school?
(Less than 5 minutes, 5-10 minutes, 11-20 minutes, Don't know/Not sure)

Q5 On most days, how does your child arrive for school?



Q13: Which of the following issues affected your decision to allow, or not allow, your child to walk or bike to/from school? (Select ALL that apply)



8. How long does it normally take your child to return home from school?
(Less than 5 minutes, 5-10 minutes, 11-20 minutes, do not know/not sure)
9. Has your child asked for permission to walk or bike to school in the last year?
10. At what age would you allow your child to walk or bike to school without an adult?
11. Would you allow your child to walk to a friend's house after school without an adult?
12. Would you allow your child to walk to Gateway Shopping Center after school without an adult?
13. Which of the following issues affected your decision to allow or not allow your child to walk or bike to school? (Select all that apply)
(Distance, Convenience of driving, child's before or after school activities, speed of traffic, amount of traffic, adults to walk or bike with, sidewalks or pathways, safety of intersections or crossings, crossing guards, violence or crime, weather or climate)
14. Would you allow your child to walk or bike to school if the items selected above were changed or improved? (Select all that apply)
(Distance, the convenience of driving, child's before or after school activities, speed of traffic, amount of traffic, adults to walk or bike with, sidewalks or pathways, safety of intersections or crossings, crossing guards, violence or crime, weather or climate)
15. In your opinion, how much does your child's school encourage or discourage walking or biking to school?
(Strongly encourages, encourages, neither, discourages, strongly discourages)
16. How healthy is walking or biking to school for your child?
(Very healthy, healthy, neutral, unhealthy, very unhealthy)

Events



Keep the program momentum going by hosting annual biking and walking events. The school and club can work with GVF to organize and run annual events.

Kick-off Events

Hosting a kick-off event at the beginning of the school year is a great way to encourage and educate students on biking and walking to school. It is also an opportunity to encourage students to set goals for biking or walking to school, even if it is one day per week.

End of School Year Event

An end-of-school-year event is a great way to celebrate and recognize students who biked and walked to school throughout the year.

International Bike and Walk to School Day

International Walk to School Day is a global event held every October and involves communities from more than 40 countries walking and biking to school on the same day.

National Bike to School Day

National Bike to School Day takes place every May. This event can also be coupled with walking to school.

Resources:

- www.walkbiketoschool.org
- www.saferoutesinfo.org
- www.schoolinmotion.com

My School in Motion Club



A **My School in Motion Club** is an opportunity to get students involved in physical activity, educate them on transportation options, and develop the confidence to vocalize their experiences about their community's connectivity.

Below are some suggestions to help your school continue to build engagement in the club:

Organize and Plan

- Review the club mission annually
- A teacher or staff member must assist with overseeing the club
- Be consistent with when and how often the club meets
- Advertise the club to students
 - Add a notice to the school newsletter and website
 - Collaborate with physical education teachers and the school nurse on healthy initiatives/challenges to further engagement
 - Talk about it on the morning announcements

Set Club Goals

Club members, with assistance, should identify annual goals they would like to achieve.

Suggested Goals:

- Assist with school bike and walk events
- Complete and maintain the Bicycle Friendly Designation through the League of American Bicyclists
- Complete a walking and biking audit of streets within a 2-mile radius of the school to rate safety for walking and biking
- Educate the school community on the benefits of biking and walking
- Organize school bike and walking challenges

Create an Activities Calendar

- Stay on track to complete club goals throughout by using a club calendar with due dates for activity completion.

Partner with GVF

- GVF looks forward to continuing to assist Valley Forge Middle School with the program.



Bicycle Friendly Program



Through The League of American Bicyclists, schools are eligible to apply for The Bicycle Friendly America Program. The program provides recognition and guidance for schools, states, communities, universities, and businesses to showcase and enhance their bicycle-friendliness. In addition, the program provides a practical blueprint, hands-on assistance, and resources to help make places better for bicycling.

Deserving schools are recognized at the Bronze, Silver, Gold, and Platinum levels, and all applicants receive valuable feedback and assistance in becoming more welcoming to bicycling.

Awarded schools are recognized in a national press release, through the League's social media, and on an interactive awards map.

GVF provided information and encouraged the school to apply for the designation. GVF is excited that Valley Forge Middle School applied in May 2021. Recognition will be announced in September 2021. If awarded, Valley Forge Middle School will be the first Pennsylvania middle school to be recognized. The designation must be renewed every four (4) years.

It is encouraged that the My School in Motion Club be responsible for maintaining the recognition.

The club should review the application annually and create goals for improving biking throughout the school, ultimately increasing the recognition level with each renewal. GVF is also available to review and help the school apply when renewal is due.

For more information visit: bikeleague.org/business



Club Activities



Below are some suggested activities for the My School in Motion Club:

Walking and Biking Audits

Walking and biking audits are a great tool for gathering information about street conditions, engaging club members, and informing communities of infrastructure gaps, such as sidewalk connections and bike amenities.

Encourage club members to complete a walking and biking audit, either individually or within a group, of the streets surrounding the school to assess how safe it is to bike or walk to school. Information collected can be shared with Tredyffrin Township for future infrastructure planning.

Suggested questions:

- Are there sidewalks along the block?
- Does the sidewalk continue along the entire block?
- Is there a crosswalk or a safe place to cross the street?
- Are there bike lanes?
- Are there protected bike lanes?
- Are the sidewalks ADA accessible?

Initiate and Maintain the Bicycle Friendly Designation

Allow the club to be responsible for completing and maintaining the designation on behalf of the school. This will make them aware of the school's facilities and help them identify areas the school could improve in biking and walking.

Guest Speaker Series

Schedule monthly guest speakers from the transportation and planning field to talk about their careers, biking and walking safety, and the importance of multi-modal transportation options.

Education and Marketing

Start an Ambassador's Program where club members educate the school community on the benefits of biking and walking to school.

For more programming ideas or assistance with implementation, contact GVF.



Student Activities



Below are some suggested activity ideas to engage the school community:

Walking Wednesdays

The idea is to designate one (1) day per week (it doesn't have to be Wednesday) or one (1) day per month as a Walk to School Day. These days can begin after Walk and Bike to School Week and either run as short as 6 weeks or run until the end of the school year. For example, walking Wednesdays means families do not need to commit to walking every day, just on the walk to school days, giving them opportunities to break the driving habit and adjust their schedules accordingly.

A Walking School Bus

Sometimes referred to as a Walk Pool, adult volunteers take turns leading a small group of neighborhood children to or from school. The watchful eye can provide a safer environment and allows children to reap the benefits of walking regularly.

Bicycle Trains

Share the same idea as the Walking School Bus. Adult volunteers take turns leading a small group of neighborhood children to or from school by bike. Again, the watchful eye of an adult can provide a safer environment and allows children to reap the benefits of biking regularly.

Poster Challenge

Encourage students to create posters promoting walking and biking to school, safe driving, or safe bicycling and walking messages.

Bicycle Safety Events

Schedule bicycle safety events to educate students on the road rules and how to maintain their bicycles.

For more programming ideas, contact GVF.

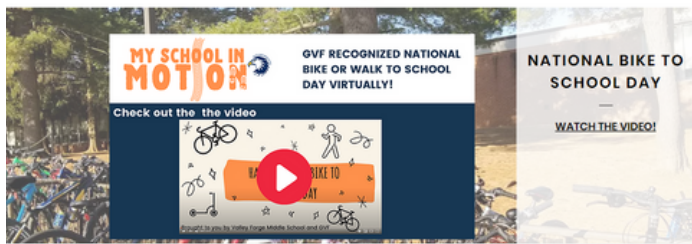
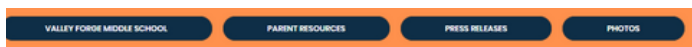
Website Development

Valley Forge Middle School should continue to include the My School in Motion program on the school's website to encourage participation in the program. Information should be easily accessible to students and parents.

The web page should include:

- How students can join the club
- Club mission and goals
- Club activities
- Student activities
- Upcoming events
- Parent resources
- Available biking and walking facilities in and around the school

GVF can assist with maintaining and updating the My School in Motion website page.



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PUBLICATIONS**

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