

MY SCHOOL IN MOTION



My School in Motion Program Guidebook



Table of Contents

My School in Motion Program Overview	3
Parent/Guardian Survey	4-5
School-Wide Events	6
Student Activities	7
My School in Motion Club	8
Club Activities	9
Bicycle Friendly Program	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 34 years of expertise, GVF develops programs and initiatives that help educate and provide choices 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 instruct the next generation of commuters on the value of walking and biking as an alternate mode of travel.

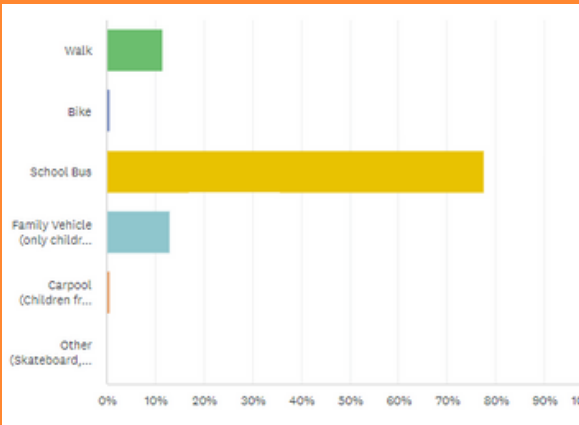
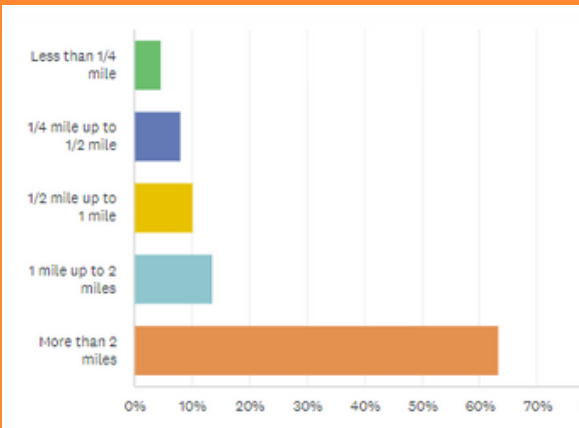
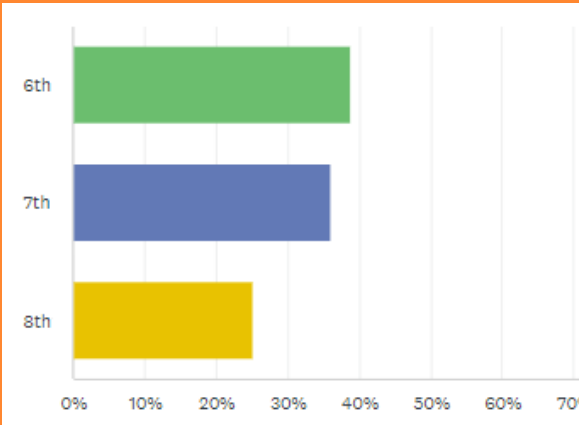
Biking and walking allow students to travel safely, emitting zero CO2 emissions while enhancing physical and mental wellbeing.

Components of the program can vary to meet the needs and interests of the school and students. Below are components that GVF thinks provide a well rounded program:

- Parental/Guardian survey on the perceptions of walking and biking to School
- The formation of a student "My School in Motion Club."
- National recognition for the school through The Bicycle Friendly America Program
- Club members and/or interested students participation in walkability audits of routes close to school and the engineering/planning aspects of developing how best to make connections conducive to allowing safe walking routes to school
- Webpage development and maintenance to track student themes explored, the "My School in Motion" club activities, and school challenges, as well as resources for parents
- International and National Bike and Walk to School Day events
- Kick-Off and End-of-School year events



Parent/Guardian Survey



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 should also lay the groundwork for the serious conversations about investing in the infrastructure that will allow for the safety of students as they walk and bike to or from school. Below are sample survey questions:

1. Please share your name and email address.
2. Please indicate which grade your child is in:
If you have more than one child, please check the grades they are in (select all that apply.)
3. How far does your child live from school?
4. Which municipality do you live in?
5. What is your zip code?
6. What is the street intersection nearest your home?
(Provide the names of two intersection streets. For example Susquehanna Rd and Twining Rd.)
7. Does your child own their own bike?
8. Does your child bike or walk to their friend's house?
9. As a family, do you ride and/or walk anywhere within your neighborhood?
10. How far does your child live from school?

11. On most days, how does your child arrive for school?
12. On most days, how does your child leave school?
13. How long does it normally take your child to get to school?
14. How long does it normally take your child to get home from school?
15. At what age would you allow your child to walk or bike to/from school without an adult?
16. Do you currently allow your child to walk or bike to school?
17. If you do NOT allow your child to walk/bike to school, please check the relevant reasons:
(Distance, the convenience of driving, time, child's before or after school activities, speed of traffic, and amount of traffic is a concern, no adult supervision when walking/biking to school, sidewalks or pathways are unsafe or uneven, the safety of intersections or crossings are unsafe, there are no crossing guards, N/A, other.)
18. Would you be interested in volunteering as a lead bike or walk pool supervisor?
19. If yes, Please provide your email address
20. Please share any additional thoughts you have regarding biking and walking to school.

School-Wide Events



Schools can build momentum and engagement in their My School in Motion program by hosting biking and walking events throughout the year.

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 that takes place in October and involves communities from more than 40 countries walking and biking to school on the same day.

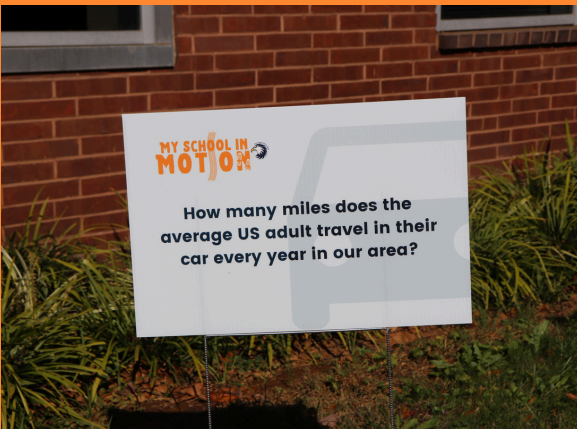
National Bike to School Day

National Bike to School Day takes place in the month of May. This event can also be coupled with walking to school.

Resources:

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

School-Wide Student Activities



In addition to a club (see page 8-9), GVF suggests incorporating some school-wide activities to encourage students to get involved. Below are some suggestions:

Walking Wednesdays

The idea is to designate one day per week (it doesn't have to be Wednesday) or one 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 Walk and Bike to School Week, 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.

My School in Motion Club



A My School in Motion Club is a great and fun opportunity to get students involved in physical activity, educate them on their transportation options, and develop the confidence to speak up about their community's connectivity. The club can be focused solely on biking and walking to school or components of the program can fall under an existing club, such as an Environmental Club.

Below are some tips to help start a My School in Motion Club:

Organize and plan

- Identify which teachers or staff members coordinate and supervise the club
- Figure out when and how often your club will meet.
- Advertise the club to students. For example, talk about it on the morning announcements, add a notice to the school newsletter and website, and encourage physical education teachers and the school nurse to promote the club.

Set club goals

- Identify a mission and purpose for the club with clear goals. It is encouraged that club members participate in this task.
- Example goals:
 - Increase the number of students who walk or bike to school
 - Analyze the surroundings of the school to identify barriers to walking or biking to school
 - Plan and host school-wide events educating students about safe walking and biking behaviors

Club Activities



Walking Audits

Walk audits are a great tool to gather information about street conditions, engage club members, and inform communities of gaps in sidewalk connections.

Encourage club members to complete a walking 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.

Questions may include:

- Are there sidewalks along the block?
- Does the sidewalk continue along the entire block?
- How wide is the sidewalk?
- How would you rate the condition of the block?
- Is there anything blocking the sidewalk?
- Is there a crosswalk or a safe place to cross the street?

The information collected could be shared with the township or municipality to help update sidewalk inventories and plan future improvements.

Initiating and maintaining the Bicycle Friendly Designation (see page 10)

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

Guest Speaker Series

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





Did you know your school could be recognized nationally for its bicycle-friendly efforts?

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.

My School in Motion Clubs are encouraged to apply for the Bicycle Friendly Business Program. Through the Bicycle Friendly Business program, schools are recognized for encouraging a more welcoming atmosphere for bicycling students and employees.

The application allows students to identify their school's biking strengths and weaknesses and plan ways to improve their recognition annually.

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.

**Check out the application at:
bikeleague.org/business**

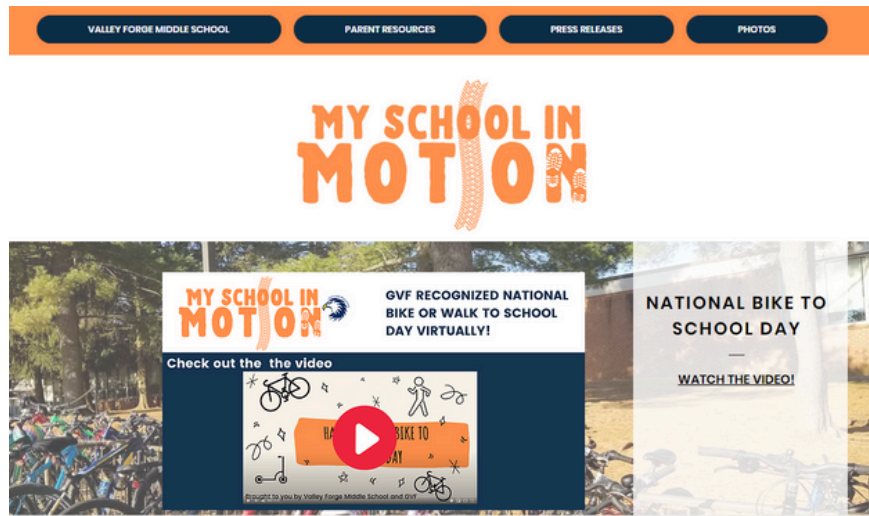
Website Development

To encourage participation in the My School in Motion Program, it must be easily accessible to students and parents. One way to ensure that information and resources are available is to place them on the school website.

Create a specific My School in Motion web page that shares:

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

To see an example visit Schoolinmotion.com.





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