

SRTS CASE STUDY: Wichita, Kansas

Education and Encouragement Activities

SafeRoutes
National Center for Safe Routes to School



CASE STUDY

Background

The Wichita Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (WAMPO) region encompasses 10 different school districts within Wichita, Kansas, and several smaller surrounding communities. Many of the outlying towns have good infrastructure implementations to allow children to walk or bicycle to school, but with limited encouragement activities, few children take advantage of the situation.

Details

In 2006, the Kansas Department of Transportation awarded WAMPO \$15,000 in federal Safe Routes to School funds to create a regional SRTS plan focusing on education and encouragement. This money was used to administer two surveys to 10 schools in the region. The surveys asked parents of kindergarten through eighth grade students how their child travels to school and about their attitudes toward their child's journey to school. Students in the third and sixth grade were asked how they traveled to and from school on several different days of the week. The surveys were completed in May 2007, and each school administration distributed, conducted and collected the surveys for WAMPO to analyze. The survey results identified which schools most likely will benefit from various SRTS activities. The surveys will be conducted again in December 2008 to evaluate progress within the region.

WAMPO also joined with the local Safe Kids organization to organize a Walk to School event at Irving Elementary School in 2006 to promote SRTS.

During summer 2007, many elementary schools and some middle schools within Wichita began bicycle safety programs. The local Safe Kids organization funds the program, and Wichita law enforcement officers teach them. In the future, WAMPO wants to expand the bicycle safety programs to include the rural communities surrounding Wichita.

Results

After the regional plan is completed, WAMPO will apply to Kansas' DOT for a second phase of funding, which will allow them to implement education and encouragement activities at various schools. The activities will include Walk to School Days, Walking School Buses and pedestrian and bicycle safety education. The money also will help to increase law enforcement in school zones and to notify schools of neighborhoods with sex offenders, so safe routes can be designed to avoid these areas.

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For more resources and information on Safe Routes to School, please visit the National Center for Safe Routes to School Web site at www.saferoutesinfo.org.