

SRTS CASE STUDY: Abernathy, Texas

Potential Engineering Project

SafeRoutes
National Center for Safe Routes to School



CASE STUDY

Background

Abernathy Elementary, Abernathy Middle and Abernathy High School are on the same campus along a busy road in Abernathy, TX. At least half of the students live within walking distance of the schools, but there are no sidewalks to help them reach the school safely.

Details

To first identify safety issues, the schools sent a student questionnaire home to all elementary and middle school students and asked them to identify the potential dangers seen during their walk to school. Most of the returned surveys revealed that the students saw the lack of sidewalks as the largest danger. Currently, a few children, often accompanied by their parents, walk or bicycle to school, but there are no organized events to encourage students to walk to school.

The Abernathy School District and the city of Abernathy both applied for a Safe Routes to School (SRTS) grant through the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT). In October 2007, it was announced that the city would receive \$559,000, and the school district would receive \$10,800, for a total of \$569,000 in SRTS funds. Most of the grant money will be used for the construction of sidewalks around the schools, and the remaining funds will be directed to pedestrian and bicycle safety education. Because half of the students from the elementary, middle and high schools live within walking distance of the schools' complex, the number of students walking to school could increase greatly. Additionally, the middle school and high school students have the option of an open lunch period, at which time they can leave campus and eat lunch at a nearby restaurant or home. Without any sidewalks along the roads, many of the students do not feel comfortable walking the short distance to the downtown area. If the grant is received, a portion of the money will be used to create a sidewalk connecting the schools' campuses to the downtown area, potentially increasing the number of students utilizing the free lunch period.

A portion of the SRTS funds will be used for safety education classes, which a local instructor will teach during physical education class. The school also will organize a bicycle rodeo in spring 2008 to teach the students helmet and bicycle safety, as well as proper bicycle maintenance. The bicycle rodeo will be held in the elementary school parking lot, and it will be for the elementary and middle school students.

Results

Once the school district receives approval, it will begin its 12 week pedestrian safety education program for grades kindergarten through fifth. During this program, the students will learn a safety lesson once a week for 12 weeks.

Contact

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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.