



SOLANO SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL ANNUAL REPORT

2019-2020 SCHOOL YEAR

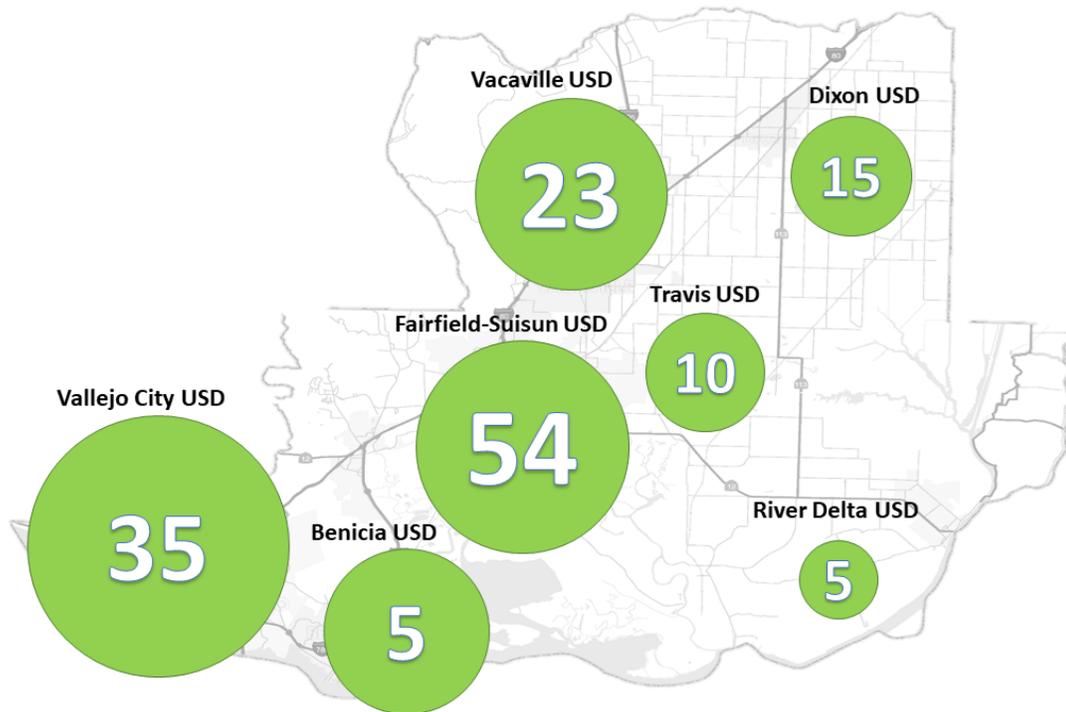


Solano Safe Routes to School

The Solano Safe Routes to School (SR2S) Program works to increase the number of students walking and bicycling to school by helping to make the journey safe, fun and healthy. Using a comprehensive approach, the program includes 6 "E's": **Education, Encouragement, Enforcement, Engineering, Engagement and Evaluation**. The program is available to all schools countywide and focuses on activities and programs that educate students on safety and health awareness and identifies improvements within communities countywide to enhance active student travel safety.

In 2008, the STA Board adopted Solano County's first Safe Routes to School Plan (Plan) and authorized STA staff to create a Safe Routes to School Program. This Plan provided the direction for the SR2S Program through 2012 when the STA, SR2S Community Task Forces, and the SR2S Advisory Committee began the process of updating the 2008 Plan. The updated Plan was adopted by the STA Board in October 2013 and the SR2S Program has continued to grow with increasing school participation each year. STA staff, along with partner agency, Solano Public Health, are currently engaging the Safe Routes to School Community Task Forces in each city including school districts to update the 2013 Plan and engage with them on the Program's 5-year vision. One of the Program's primary goals is to work with pilot schools to invest in changing the culture to a more walkable and bikeable school.

The 2019-2020 school year successfully engaged with 57 schools, supporting 154 total events reaching 15,212 students through education and encouragement programs, school, and community events. In mid-March, the SR2S Program adjusted to the COVID 19 shutdown of schools in Solano County by researching and sharing "at home" resources on the SR2S website and through social media. Videos, activity pages, and tip sheets were shared with parents, schools, and the community to encourage safe physical activity, as well as provide pedestrian and bike safety resources.



Map shows number of Safe Routes to School participation events and programs per district

Safe Routes to School 2019-2020 Highlights

EDUCATION AND ENCOURAGEMENT

Annual Walking and Biking Events

On October 2, 2019, 48 schools (9,261 students) across Solano County participated in **International Walk to School Day**.

For the 2019-20 school year, Solano Middle School and Widenmann Elementary, both active in the SR2S Program, were combined to form a new K-8th grade school. The newly named Solano-Widenmann K-8 participated in this annual event, with 300 students in all grades walking together.

Students at the newly formed Solano-Widenmann K-8 celebrate International Walk to School Day



Suisun Elementary (Suisun City) Champions lead the way for their students



Parents and students at Mary Farmer Elementary (Benicia) get ready to walk to school from the 9th Street Park

National Bike to School Day was scheduled for May 6, 2020 but was cancelled locally due to school closures on March 16, 2020 because of the Coronavirus. After Solano County Public Health issued a shelter at home order for Solano County residents, and because of concern for the health and safety of students and families, SR2S decided to cancel the event for this year.

During May (National Bike Month), the SR2S Program in alignment with Solano Public Health guidelines for outdoor activity, shared bike safety tips and the **STA Top 10 Solano County Bike Rides** to encourage families to stay active during school closures.

Walking and Biking Programs



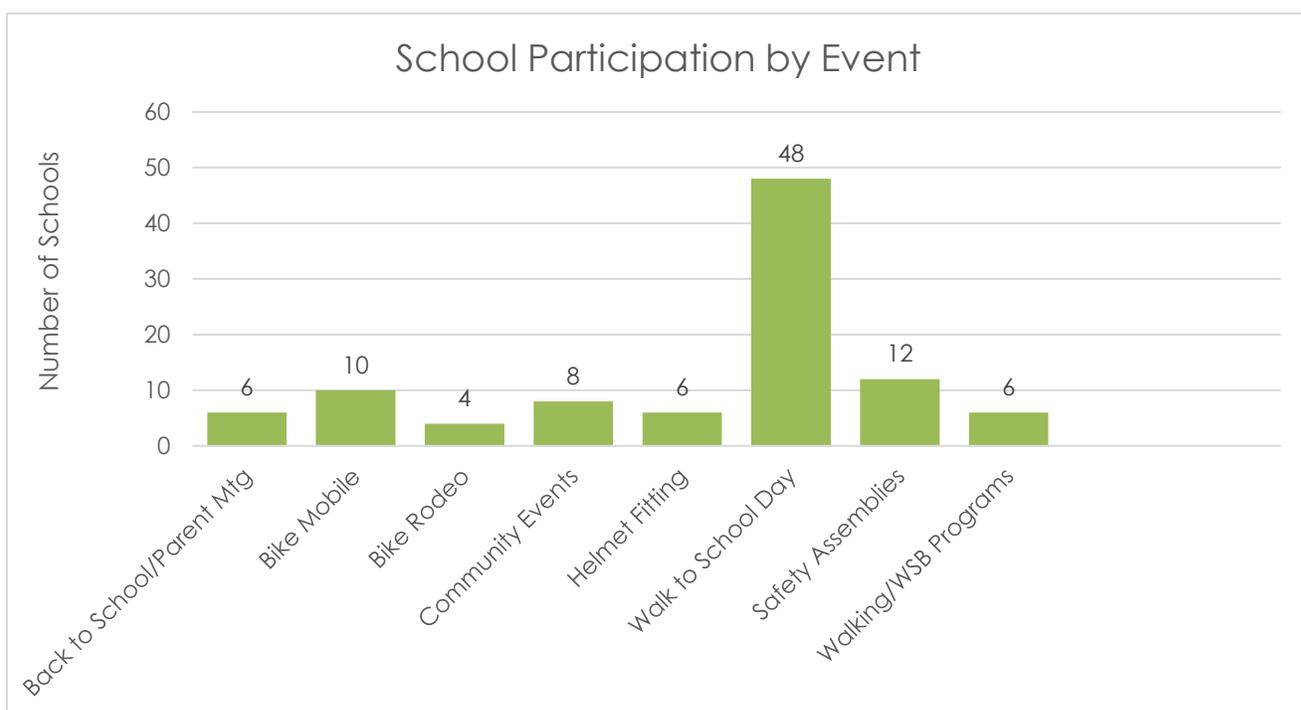
Fairmont Charter School launched their WOW Wednesday program in Fall 2019.

Fairmont Charter School (Vacaville USD) began a new Walk or Wheel Program during the 2019-20 school year. After seeing the success of the yearly walk and bike to school events at Fairmont and wanting to encourage more students to continue that effort on a regular basis, teacher Lauren Browers, took the initiative to start a weekly program. Anderson Elementary (Dixon USD) also began a WOW Wednesday program in February 2020. Gretchen Higgins Elementary (Dixon USD) was slated to begin a Walk, Bike and Scoot program in March, but it was postponed due to the school closures.

However, continuing their high level of program participation, the following schools worked with SR2S to help support their existing Walking Wednesday and Walk or Wheel (WOW) programs: Mary Farmar Elementary (Benicia USD), Dixon Montessori Charter School (Dixon-Private), Everest Academy (Vallejo City USD), and Rolling Hills Elementary (Fairfield-Suisun USD). These programs encourage students to walk and bike to school or after arriving, reinforce walking and biking safety lessons. Callison Elementary (Vacaville USD) continued its daily staff-led Walking School Bus until the school closed in March. With funding from SR2S, the WSB offers students supervision to and from school on two routes each day.



Families and students Walk and Wheel to Dixon Montessori for WOW Wednesday.



Educational Programs and Events

The SR2S Program began a new partnership with the **Bike City Theatre Company (BCTC)** of Davis for the 2019-2020 school year. The BCTC provided 12 schools with a fun and interactive live theater lesson on bike safety and biking history. "Light the Way: A Bike Safety Musical" featured the story of Annie Londonderry, the first woman to bike around the world and her adventures along the way. This 35- minute presentation set in 1895, featured bike safety tips, songs in Spanish, and several notable historical figures.



The cast of "Light the Way: A Bike Safety Musical" from the Bike City Theatre performs the finale at Suisun Elementary

The **Bay Area Bike Mobile (BAM)** continued to be an invaluable partner and provided 10 free bike repair events at schools and community events across Solano County. Attendees at Vacaville's annual "Night Out on the Rocky Hill Trail" received free bike repairs and helmets. The Fairfield Cordelia, Fairfield Civic Center Library, and the Vacaville Cultural Center Library once again held their communitywide annual bike mobile repair events.

The Bay Area Bike Mobile also attended a student led bike event organized by the Beyond Differences Student Service Organization (BDSSO) at Crystal Middle School (FSUSD – Suisun City). The students collaborated with SR2S staff in planning the event which included Solano Public Health (SPH) and the "smoothie blender" bike which gave students the opportunity to try healthy fruit and vegetable options. The BDSSO students also learned how to properly fit a bike helmet and assisted SPH and SR2S staff to provide helmets to their peers.



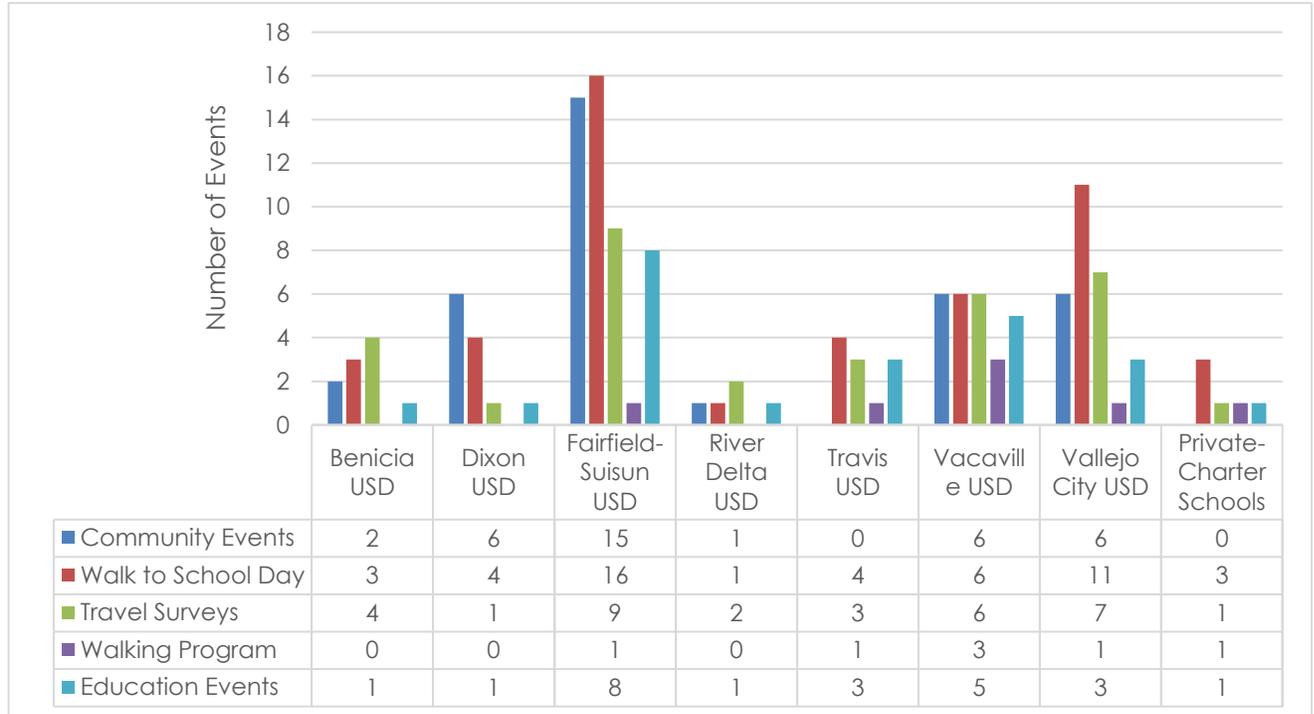
Left photo: Bay Area Bike Mobile technician shows a student at Franklin Middle School (VCUSD – Vallejo) how to fix a bike tire. *Middle photo:* Students at Crystal Middle School (FSUSD-Suisun City) wait for a turn on the "smoothie blender bike." *Right photo:* Crystal Middle School (FSUSD-Suisun City) BDSSO student fits a bike helmet for another student at their bike repair and safety event.

Solano Public Health staff and SR2S staff provided **Helmet Fitting and Education** events to students at schools and at several community outreach events. Dan O Root Health and Wellness Academy (FSUSD-Suisun City) contacted SR2S to provide helmets for students that bike, skate, and scooter to school. Over 50 students received a free helmet, learned the importance of wearing a helmet and how to wear it properly while riding.

In September, in conjunction with California Pedestrian Safety Month and in response to discussions from the Pedestrian Safety workshops across the County, the SR2S program developed and launched a Pedestrian Safety Month Education and Outreach campaign.

The campaign included a social media messaging toolkit with safety information for pedestrians and drivers and was distributed to local law enforcement agencies, school districts, schools, city agencies, and Solano Public Health. Several Public Service Announcements (PSAs) aired on local radio station KUIK to help educate the public about walking safety and safe driving in neighborhoods and around schools.

EDUCATION AND ENCOURAGEMENT EVENTS BY DISTRICT



ENFORCEMENT (Traffic and Safety)

2018-2020 Law Enforcement Education and Enforcement Grant (Cycle 4)

In June 2018, the SR2S Program awarded the Benicia Police Department \$150,000 for the SR2S Education and Enforcement Grant for FYs 2018-2020. These funds allowed the department to hire a non-sworn Community Service Officer (CSO) and partner with SR2S at Benicia schools.

CSO Elisa Delatorre (Benicia PD) attended crossing guard training provided by the Fairfield Police Department and Fairfield-Suisun Unified School District. She also participated in Mary Farmer Safe Passage Coalition meetings. CSO Delatorre and School Resource Officer Kenyata Nathaniel worked closely with the Safe Passage Coalition to address drop-off/pick-up and safety concerns. Benicia PD staff provided quarterly updates to the SR2S Advisory Committee and attended the Benicia Community Task Force meeting in January 2020.



Suisun City PD SSTO Hafich helps students from Suisun Elementary to cross safely on International Walk to School Day.

In addition to working with Benicia PD, the SR2S Program extended the work with the Suisun City Police Department supporting a part-time non-sworn School Safety Traffic Officer (SSTO). SSTO Don Hafich (Suisun City PD) worked with each of the four Suisun City schools to address parking and traffic safety issues around the schools during high traffic times. SSTO Hafich also worked closely with the school district, school site administrators, SR2S staff, and Suisun City Public Works staff to identify infrastructure improvements around the schools that may be included in the updated SR2S Plan.

ENGAGEMENT

During the 2019-2020 year, Solano SR2S focused on deeper engagement with schools and the school community. SR2S staff met with schools and countywide stakeholders to discuss traffic concerns and to identify potential programs and safety projects that encourage students to walk or bike to school and reconvened each of the local SR2S Community Task Forces. With input from the SR2S Advisory Committee, staff developed and launched the Pilot Micro Grant Program. This program provides funding for small scale projects and programs for schools that address travel safety and encourage an increase in physical activity for students. In September, staff organized a countywide "Let's Keep Solano Kids Street Safe" workshop focused on pedestrian safety.

2018-2019 California Office of Traffic Safety Grant

In October 2018, the Solano SR2S Program received a second OTS grant for \$85,000 to collaborate with Solano Public Health (SPH), the Solano Pedestrian Advisory Committee, schools and school districts, city police and public works departments, California Highway Patrol (CHP) and additional stakeholders, and host five community pedestrian safety workshops during 2018-2019. The countywide Pedestrian Safety Symposium was held in Fairfield, and 3 local workshops were held in Suisun City, Vacaville, and Vallejo between February and June 2019. At each of these events, the SR2S Program engaged the community around pedestrian safety education and addressed student travel safety at nearby schools. STA also provided a safety analysis of the area (based on data from STA's 2018 Safety Plan) and discussed potential infrastructure projects in these areas to increase pedestrian safety.

On September 19, 2019 SR2S held the "Let's Keep Solano Kids Street Safe" pedestrian safety meeting. This final workshop brought together school and district administrators, parents, STA staff, and SR2S stakeholders from across Solano County. This event highlighted best practice examples of school traffic safety programs, collaborations between districts and cities, STA's efforts to address ped safety countywide, and SR2S pedestrian safety outreach and messaging. Participants also identified locations in their communities they considered in need of pedestrian or bike safety improvements.



SR2S stakeholders listen to presentations at the "Let's Keep Solano Kids Street Safe" meeting.

Safe Routes to School Pilot Micro Grant Program

In December 2019, SR2S launched the Pilot Micro Grant Program with \$78,000 available for projects. Funding for the program was made possible by Transportation Development Act (TDA) funds, Yolo-Solano Air Quality Management District (YSAQMD) Clean Air funds and High-Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) fines. Solano County schools, districts, community-based organizations, and cities were encouraged to apply (up to \$30,000 per application) for small scale projects or walk and bike programs at school sites. Sixteen applications were received totaling \$211,466.10. SR2S Advisory Committee members reviewed the applications and recommended 14 projects for funding. These projects included walking/biking program incentives, safety equipment, bike and scooter racks for school sites, and radar feedback signs. Projects will be completed at schools in Benicia, Dixon, Vacaville, and Vallejo.

Safe Passage Coalition – Mary Farmar Elementary, Benicia

During the 2019-20 school year SR2S staff worked with Principal Mellissa Harley and teacher Britney Mager to continue the “Safe Passage Coalition” to address the traffic situation at Mary Farmar Elementary, and improve the safety of students getting to and from school.

This collaboration is the only one of its kind in the county and brings together school stakeholders, parents, city staff and elected officials to meet and bring awareness to the school community’s safety concerns. With support from SR2S staff, the team’s mission is to provide options for students to walk and bike to school, reduce traffic around the school during drop-off and pick-up, encourage more community participation, and find solutions and ways to do so. The coalition developed a drop-off and pick-up traffic plan for the main school entrance and applied for and was awarded funding from the SR2S Pilot Micro Grant to support this effort. In addition to the new drop-off and pick-up plan, Ms. Mager and Mrs. Harley with assistance from the Benicia Police Department, escorted an average of 50 students and their parents for weekly Walking Wednesday events.

At the September pedestrian safety workshop, Ms. Harley spoke about the development and work of the “Safe Passage Coalition.” She explained how the coalition was formed and how the various stakeholders work together to address the challenges of the school’s traffic situation. The success of this unique team earned Mary Farmar Elementary and the “Safe Passage Coalition” the 2019 Safe Routes to School Award at the STA Annual Awards.



Mary Farmar Principal Mellissa Harley speaks about the school's "Safe Passage Coalition" at the "Let's Keep Solano Kids Street Safe" workshop.

SR2S Community Task Force (CTF)

SR2S staff also re-engaged the local Community Task Force (CTF) in each city and for each school district countywide and attended regular meetings with the Vacaville Traffic Advisory Committee and the Fairfield 3Es Committee. SR2S updated each task force/committee on school participation and provided walk audit project lists for

discussion and potential inclusion in the SR2S Plan update. Task force members were given the opportunity to provide input on the STA Countywide Active Transportation Plan (ATP). These meetings resulted in comprehensive project lists for bike and pedestrian improvements around schools in each city. These lists will help STA, SR2S and the cities to readily apply for grants and funding.

Safe Routes to School Advisory Committee (SR2S AC)

The SR2S program is guided by the SR2S Advisory Committee (SR2S AC) comprised of community members from cities and disciplines within Solano County. The committee meets quarterly and gives recommendations for funding projects and programs to the Solano Transportation Authority (STA) Board. In 2019-20 the SR2S AC held regular quarterly meetings except the May meeting that was cancelled due to COVID 19. The SR2S AC provided input for the development of the Pilot Micro Grant Program and a subgroup reviewed the applications and recommended projects for funding.

ENGINEERING

Since 2008, the SR2S Program (working with city public works departments) has completed 30 pedestrian infrastructure projects across the county (see attachment A). In July 2020, 7 additional projects will begin construction as part of the Active Transportation Program (ATP) Cycle 2 award for improvements at schools in Benicia (Benicia Middle School, Joe Henderson, Mary Farmar, Robert Semple and St. Dominic School), and at Cooper and Lincoln Elementary schools in Vallejo. These improvements include high visibility crosswalks, Pedestrian Activated Beacons, school crossing signage, and sidewalk installation or widening. The projects are expected to be completed by December 2020.

The SR2S Pilot Micro Grant provided funds for small scale projects at or near schools across Solano County. The City of Vacaville Radar Feedback sign installation and the Riverview Middle School (Rio Vista) fenced bike corral projects are scheduled to be completed in August 2020. The Joe Henderson Elementary (Benicia) Pedestrian Activated Beacon is scheduled to be installed by September 2020, along with the ATP Cycle 2 projects at the school. The list of micro grant awards and completed projects can be found online at: <https://solanosr2s.ca.gov/programs/microgrant-program/>

EVALUATION

SR2S Program Evaluation and Intervention Project

In December 2019, the SR2S Program Evaluation and Intervention Project was



Participants observe student arrivals at Lincoln Elementary (Vallejo) during a walk audit.

completed. This two-year project included walk audits at 12 schools, three new pilot programs, parent and school focus groups, and self-evaluation guidance to determine future engineering project and program success. Schools that received walkability assessments were chosen based on bike/ped safety data, SR2S program participation, and those receiving ATP Cycle 2 improvements. Project

recommendation lists were developed for each city from the walkability assessments to be included in the 2013 SR2S Master Plan update. These potential project lists were shared and discussed at SR2S Community Task Force meetings. In addition, the Evaluation Project included a new Ped and Bike Resource Fair program and materials, as well as marketing materials for walking and biking programs.

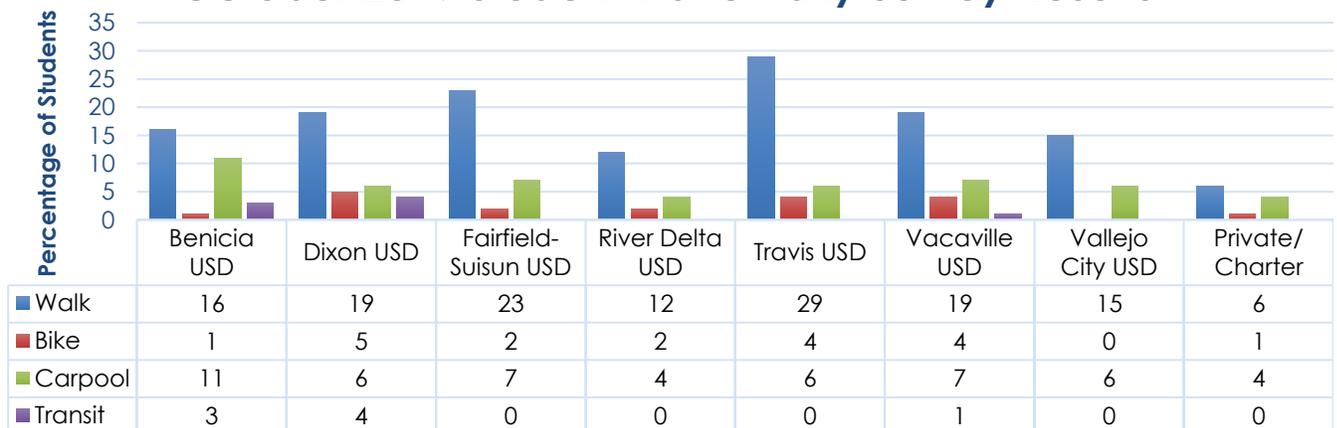
Student Travel Tally Surveys are typically conducted in the fall and spring each school year. Based on the recommendation of the SR2S Evaluation Project consultant, it was decided to conduct the survey once per year. In October 2019, schools surveyed their students and asked how they travelled to and from school over a two-day period. This data is used to help identify potential education and encouragement programs to benefit students at each school, and any travel mode shift.



Walk or Wheel (WOW) Program poster developed for the SR2S Evaluation Project.

For the Fall 2019 data collection period, 36 Solano County schools in each of the seven districts and cities provided survey data from 490 classrooms. This data shows Solano County schools average 20% of students walking and biking to and from school. These numbers continue to be consistent yearly and are higher than the national average of 13% of students walking and biking.

October 2019 Student Travel Tally Survey Results



Left photo: Crystal Middle School (FSUSD-Suisun City) Principal Jay Dowd greets students as they arrive at the BSSO Bike Repair and Safety event. Right Photo: Callison Elementary (VUSD-Vacaville) students walk to school with the Walking School Bus.