



SOLANO SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL ANNUAL REPORT

JULY 2022 - JUNE 2023

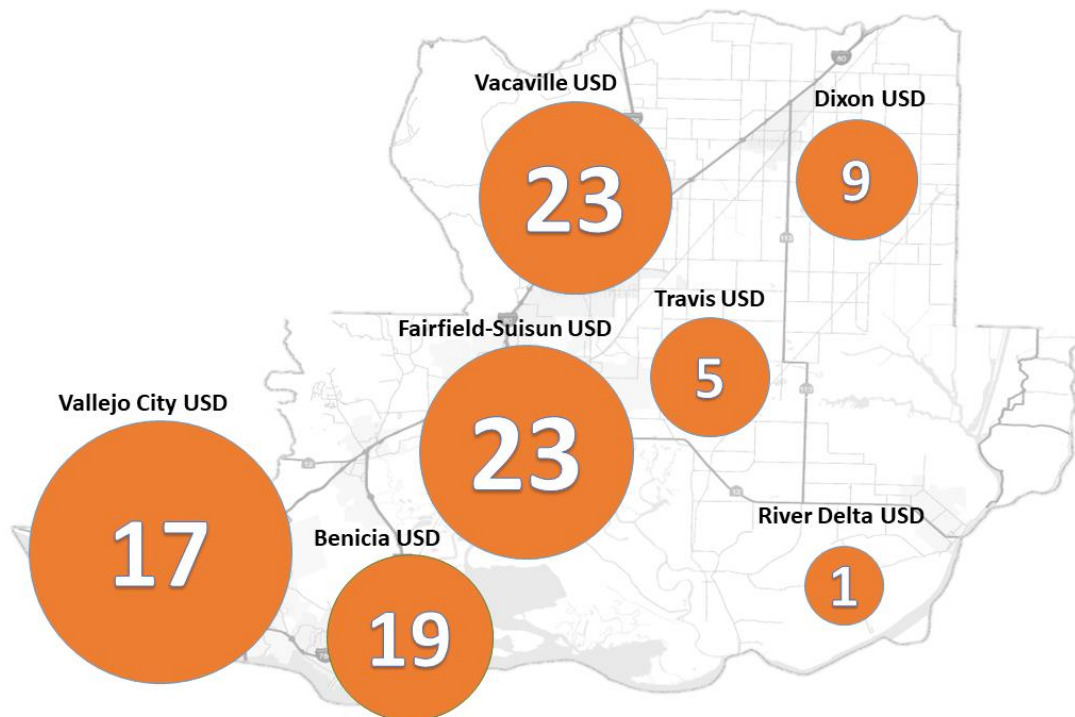


SOLANO TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY 423 Main Street, Suisun City, CA 94585

Solano Safe Routes to School

The objective of the Solano Safe Routes to School (SR2S) Program is to increase the number of students walking and biking to school by focusing on safety, while making the journey a fun and healthy one. Using a comprehensive approach, the program includes 6 “E’s”: **Education, Encouragement, Enforcement, Engineering, Engagement and Evaluation**. Solano SR2S offers all Solano County schools activities and programs to educate students about walking and biking safety and health awareness. The program also identifies safety improvements within our communities to enhance active student travel.

In 2008, the Solano Transportation Authority (STA) Board adopted Solano County’s first Safe Routes to School Plan and authorized staff to create a Safe Routes to School Program. This plan provided the direction for the SR2S program through 2012 and led to the adoption of a second plan in 2013 which continues to guide the program today.



Map shows number of events per school district for the 2022-2023 fiscal year.

Solano SR2S Program Updates

Since 2009, the SR2S Program has consistently engaged schools and the community through annual events, weekly walk and bike programs, and educational activities. Unfortunately, COVID protocols during the 2021-2022 school year made outreach challenging for staff. This fiscal year, the SR2S staff focused acclimating to the new normal of school and completing the SR2S microgrant capital projects, re-establishing relationships with school districts and continuing to provide SR2S education and incentives whenever possible.



Volunteers and students from Nelda Mundy Elementary School (Fairfield) handing out incentives for IW2SD.

The Solano SR2S Program has continued to grow and has increased the number of participating schools each year. From 2017-2023, the program supported 78 schools with 1,741 SR2S events, activities, and meetings, engaging a total of 117,067 students.

This fiscal year, after COVID restrictions were lifted, SR2S was able to reinstate annual events such as International Walk to

School Day (October) and National Bike to School Day (May). As the 2023-2024 school year approaches, SR2S staff are preparing to engage new schools, offer support and activities, and reengage with administration and community members.

More details regarding 2022-2023 event statistics are included in the *Safe Routes to School 2022-2023 Highlights* section below.

Safe Routes to School 2022-2023 Highlights

Annual Events and Programs

Education – Engagement – Encouragement

On October 5, 2022, 31 schools across Solano County participated in **International Walk and Roll to School Day (IW2SD)**. IW2SD continues to be the most participated SR2S event with over 8,800 students participating this past school year.



A Kairos Elementary School (Vacaville) student ready and excited to bike to school.

On May 3, 2023 - despite the cold temperatures - 24 schools signed up through SR2S for **National Bike and Roll to School Day (B2SD)**, with a total of 2,541 students participating by biking to school.

To help advertise B2SD, SR2S staff partnered with Solano Public Health (SPH) to launch a pilot project working with Fairfield High School's video production class. SR2S and SPH staff acted as clients for the FHS students, who demonstrated their skills and creativity in producing three B2SD commercial-type videos to help encourage Solano County residents' participation in B2SD.



A Nelda Mundy Elementary School (Fairfield) student happy to receive his IW2SD prize for participating.

In acknowledgment of their hard work, the students prepared a brief presentation. This was presented at the SR2S Advisory Committee, STA board, and Bicycle Advisory Committee meetings, where they shared their experience during the collaborative project and the invaluable lessons they learned through the experience. Three videos were shared on the County's website, VibeSolano's Facebook and Instagram pages, and SR2S' Facebook page.

"We are incredibly proud of our students and the dedication they have shown in producing these commercials. This project has provided them with a unique opportunity to apply the skills they have learned in class to real-world scenarios and the work they have produced is promoting a great cause."

- Mr. Fee, FHS Video Production
Class teacher



Video production students from Fairfield High School whose videos were showcased by VibeSolano (Solano Public Health) and SR2S. Picture taken and provided by Lindsey Michels, FSUSD Communications Manager.



[B2SD commercial created by FHS student, Ashley Avery.](#)

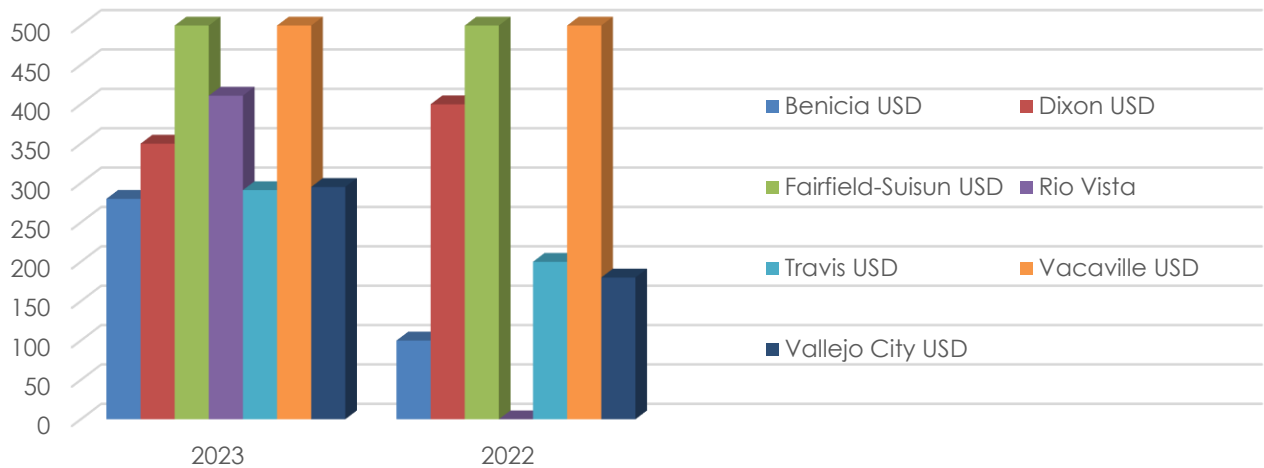


[B2SD commercial created by FHS students, Ivan Oropeza Bernal, Giovanni](#)



[B2SD commercial created by FHS students, Devin Patrick and Angelica Vazquez Castillo.](#)

Bike to School Day Student Participation per District



SR2S Programs and School Events

Education – Engagement – Encouragement

Safe Moves Bike Rodeo

In September, SR2S contracted with a non-profit organization called Safe Moves. The Safe Moves Bike Rodeo program is a comprehensive educational initiative aimed at fostering traffic safety awareness among children. By simulating diverse traffic environments and scenarios found in cities, the program provides problem-solving experiences for each grade level, allowing students to learn safe walking, biking, and riding practices.



Loaner bikes and scooters are available for participants that may not have their own with them at the event.

Each rodeo is set up as a miniature version of a city with elements such as sidewalks, crosswalks, and railroad crossings – all carefully integrated into the educational process. The program is tailored to accommodate different age groups with specialized lesson plans for each grade level. Each rodeo is handled by trained safety instructors that guide and facilitate the learning process. Their expertise and interactive approach contribute to an enhanced learning experience for each participant.

These bike rodeos serve as effective and engaging methods for teaching children essential safety practices through hands-on and interactive learning experiences. Through participation, children learn how to navigate various traffic situations safely, thereby equipping them with valuable life skills.

During the academic year, the SR2S staff successfully coordinated a total of seven bike rodeo events across the County. Among these events, five were held at various elementary schools, while others were held at community events. The school bike rodeo events were hosted by Nelda Mundy Elementary in Fairfield, Lincoln Elementary and Mare Island Health and Fitness Academy in Vallejo, Dixon Montessori Charter School in Dixon, and Markham and Padan Elementary in Vacaville. Each of these events had over 100 enthusiastic students participate.



A Nelda Mundy Elementary (Fairfield) participant demonstrating a full stop at a stop sign.

Walk or Wheel Days

Walk or Wheel Days (WoW) is a recurring event that schools can incorporate into their calendars, either on a weekly or monthly basis, to encourage students to opt for active transportation methods such as walking, biking, or scootering to school. Schools have the flexibility to market their event as either a "Walk or Wheel" day or designate a specific day, like a "Walking Wednesday" or "Fit Friday" to promote active commuting.



Lines of eager students patiently waiting for their turn to ride through the Safe Moves Bike Rodeo mock city.

As part of the SR2S program, a total of 14 schools have actively embraced the WoW Day initiative. Among them, two schools, Dixon Montessori Charter School in Dixon, and Padan Elementary School in Vacaville, have been consistently and proactively holding their WoW Days.

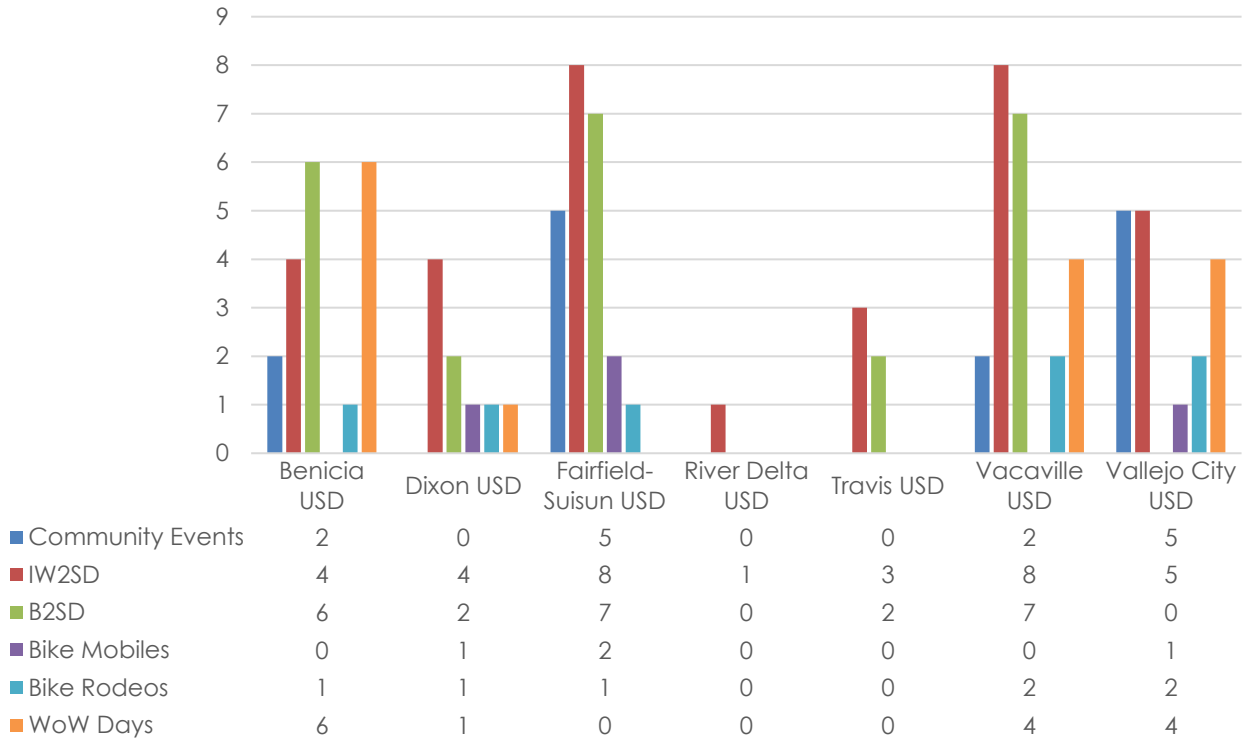
Additionally, 12 other schools, that previously suspended their WoW Days due to the COVID-19 pandemic, have successfully reinstated their events.

The participation of parent volunteers has played a pivotal role in ensuring the smooth implementation of these Walk or Wheel events. Parent volunteers assist in fulfilling crossing guard duties and distributing charms, provided by SR2S, to participants. These charms serve as tokens of encouragement and appreciation.



City of Benicia's Councilmember Trevor Macenski joined Matthew Turner Elementary for their first monthly WoW Wednesday event.

Events per District (2022-2023 Fiscal Year)



ENFORCEMENT

2020-2022 Law Enforcement Education and Enforcement Grant (Cycle 5)

The main goal for SR2S enforcement strategies is to deter unsafe behaviors of drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists, and to encourage all road users to obey traffic laws and share the road safely. Enforcement is one of the complementary strategies that SR2S programs use to enable more children to walk and bicycle to school safely. The SR2S Program has been allocating \$150,000 in a 2-year grant cycle (using Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Program funds (CMAQ)) since the grant program's inception in 2011.

In December 2020, the STA Board awarded an extension to the existing agreement with Suisun City Police Department for \$64,000 for FYs 2020-2022. The STA Board also extended the agreement with Benicia Police Department for 1 year (FY 2021-2022) in the amount of \$75,000.

During this period, the police departments participated in SR2S-related encouragement activities, including Walk and Bike to School Day Events, Walking School Bus/Walking Day Launch, Bike Rodeos, Community Events, Back to School nights, traffic safety presentations, and community stakeholder meetings to address traffic safety around schools.

The Community Service Officers patrolled the schools within their districts before and after the school day to reinforce the education provided to students with regards to safe travel to and from school, enforce parking regulations around schools and mandatory helmet law, and to encourage safe walking and biking. Benicia Police

Officers handed out over 24 helmets during the 2022-2023 school year to middle school and high school students biking around the community.

In July 2023, STA released a call for applications for Cycle 6 of the Public Safety Education and Enforcement Grant.

ENGINEERING

In July 2021, the SR2S Micro Grant Cycle 2 began with a total of \$100,000 - \$130,000 from the Transportation Development Act (TDA) Article 3 funds and \$30,000 in Clean Air Funds from the Yolo-Solano Air Quality Management District. At the August 2021 Solano Safe Routes to School Advisory Committee meeting, the Committee voted to accept the funding recommendations for 16 projects as presented by the grant scoring subcommittee and forwarded the recommendation to the STA Board of Directors for approval. The project funding recommendations list includes projects in each of the 7 cities in Solano County and projects in the seven school districts.

Due to schools dealing with the effects of COVID, progress had been slow. Currently, 14 of the 16 programs/projects have been completed with the most recent one being in Benicia. STA staff is continuing to follow up with each grantee to ensure the programs/projects are completed. The larger infrastructure projects with the City of Vallejo have been scheduled and are set to be done within the 2023-2024 fiscal year.



Rapid Flashing Beacon – Denfield Way and Military West, Benicia



Rapid Flashing Beacons at East 2nd Street and Riverhill Drive, Benicia



ENGAGEMENT

2021-2023 California Department of Public Health (CDPH) Kids Plate Grant

On June 22, 2021, STA attended a request for applications information webinar discussing grant details and requirements for the CDPH Kids Plate Grant. From this webinar, STA staff were highly motivated to put together a competitive application for this grant. According to recent statistics from the California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS), Solano County is ranked 12th in pedestrian collisions and 2nd in collisions involving pedestrians under 15 years old across counties statewide. In January 2021, the Safe Routes to School program was awarded \$150,000 in grant funds.



SR2S Staff with the late Mayor Harry Price (Fairfield) at the FSUSD Resource Fair where over 300 helmets were fitted and handed out.

During this grant cycle, SR2S staff were able to purchase 1,100 helmets which have all been distributed at helmet-fitting events throughout Solano County. The grant funds were also used to develop a Pedestrian Safety campaign that aired at the DMV from June 2022 through June 2023.



Screencap of the Pedestrian Safety Campaign that aired in DMVs across the County.

[Click here to view the Pedestrian Safety Campaign video in English.](#)
[Click here to view the Pedestrian Safety Campaign video in Spanish.](#)

Safe Routes to School Advisory Committee (SR2S-AC)

The SR2S program is guided by the SR2S Advisory Committee comprised of community members from cities and various disciplines within Solano County. The committee is responsible for giving recommendations for funding projects and programs to the STA Board.

This year, the SR2S Advisory Committee held quarterly meetings and provided direction for development of the 2023 SR2S Plan Update, which launched in June of 2023. The SR2S Advisory Committee recommended the continuation of providing musical safety assemblies which will kick-off in October of 2023.

Evaluation

2023 Safe Routes to School Plan Update

The Solano SR2S Program is continuing to re-engage with each City/School District's SR2S Community Task Force Committees to review initial improvements from the existing 2013 SR2S Plan, discuss any new schools or areas within each jurisdiction for future safety infrastructure projects, perform walkability assessments and audits at these locations, and prioritize existing or new projects and programs to include in the updated SR2S Plan. SR2S staff is also researching the best methods for evaluating the program's overall effectiveness, especially in relation to how it ties into our Safe Routes to School infrastructure projects. With evaluation as part of our OBAG-3 funding, the program hired a consultant, DKS, in May 2023, to help advise, develop, and implement evaluation and assessment components and strategies for both SR2S infrastructure and non-infrastructure work.

The updated SR2S Plan is set to be completed by March of 2024.