



Measuring Success

Mini
saferoutes.vermont.gov
Guide

WHAT'S IN THIS MINIGUIDE?

This VT Safe Routes to School (SRTS) MiniGuide explains why data collection is important and how to collect, process, and evaluate data. It describes the two survey types: the **Student Travel Tally** and the **Parent Survey**.

In this MiniGuide, you will find:

- Basic Steps: Student Travel Tally
- Basic Steps: Parent Survey
- Optional Data Collection Strategies
- Real World Examples

Click this icon  to access the listed resource.

What is it?

Regularly gathering data to evaluate your program's success by administering surveys to find out:

1. How students are getting to and from school, and
2. What parents think about their children walking and biking to school.

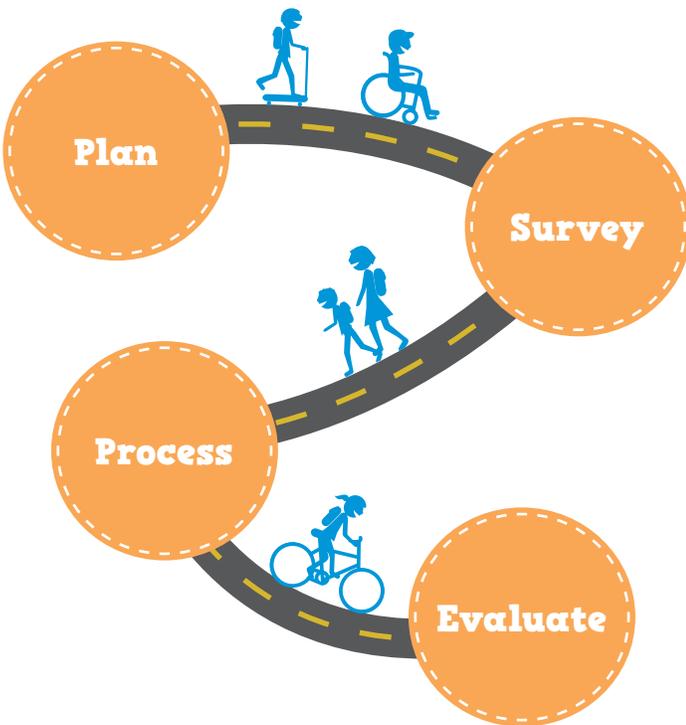
Why is it important?

Regular data collection not only helps you see the impact of your school's program, but is also vital to the state and national level programs to measure progress and understand trends.

What is the level of effort involved?

Moderate: Printing survey forms, passing them out, collecting them, and sending them to the National Center for analysis.

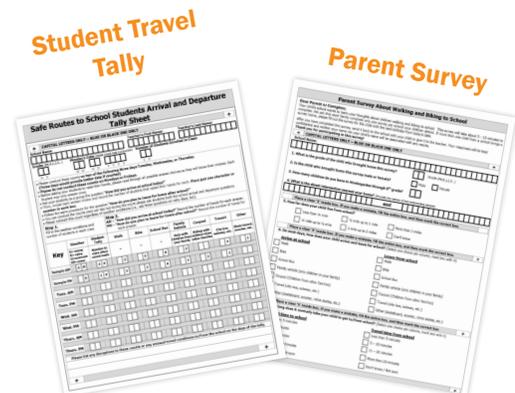
WHAT TO EXPECT



RESOURCES PREVIEW

Additional resources from VT SRTS and the National SRTS Resource Center are linked here and available for download on the VT SRTS website:

- **Data Collection Forms** : Standard forms used to collect data and submit to the National Center for Safe Routes to School to summarize.
- **Parent Survey Letter** : Editable letter to invite parents to take the Parent Survey.



Basic Steps: Student Travel Tally

The **Student Travel Tally** records how children get to and from school. When gathered routinely, this information helps measure the effectiveness of local and statewide SRTS programs, activities, and projects. Download the tally form and detailed instructions on submission to the National Center for processing here: <http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/data-central/data-collection-forms> 

FOLLOW THESE STEPS

1. Plan

- Choose a strategy that will get the most responses. Keep the process simple, accessible, and repeatable. Polling the classroom is the most direct data collection strategy. See optional data collection strategies below.
- Ensure that the data collection process is consistent so that comparisons to previous years yield meaningful conclusions.

2. Survey

- Always follow instructions on the Student Travel Tally form.
- Print one Student Travel Tally form per classroom. Use white paper and dark ink to help the National Center process the data.
- Collect data for at least two days in the same week to improve accuracy.
- Avoid Mondays and Fridays, which may have irregular travel patterns.

3. Process

- Mail paper forms and a cover sheet to the National Center (see **Key Points** to the right for the address and website), or manually enter your tally data directly onto the **National Center website** . Visit the National Center website to download forms and for instructions on submitting data.
- Choose a strategy that will get the most responses. Keep the process simple, accessible, and repeatable.
- You will receive a data summary report in approximately four weeks.

4. Evaluate

- If this is your first year collecting data, use these results to establish goals and priorities for your program. Otherwise, compare the summary report to previous years' data.
- Review the collection strategy and adjust the process for future tallies.
- Schedule your next Student Travel Tally. Administer at least once per school year, ideally in the same month and under similar conditions, to best observe trends during over the years.

OPTIONAL DATA COLLECTION STRATEGIES

- **Teach** students about data by assigning them to tally students in other classrooms. Students can learn to draw conclusions by comparing their data to previous years.
- **Assign** data collection responsibilities to student leaders, like the student council or a student safety patrol. This allows them an opportunity to build leadership, communication, and math skills.
- **Assign** volunteers to school access points before arrival and dismissal periods to collect data. Volunteers, especially if non-staff volunteers, should have identification.
- **Announce** during home room that all walkers and bicyclists should report to the front office to record their travel. Repeat in the afternoon; consider dismissing your walkers and bicyclists first.

KEY POINTS

FREQUENCY

Once per year

IMPLEMENTATION

< 2 hours + 4 weeks to receive summary report

TEAM MEMBERS

Champion, teachers, volunteers

SEND COVER SHEET AND COMPLETED FORMS TO

National Center for SRTS
Attn: SRTS Data Entry
730 MLK, Jr. Blvd.,
Suite 300
Chapel Hill, NC 27599
<http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/data-central/data-collection-forms> 

REQUIREMENT FOR



Remember to update your **Partner Progress Report** once you've completed this activity to advance to the next level! 

Basic Steps: Parent Survey

The **Parent Survey** records the mode of travel, distance, and time it takes students to get to school. It also records parents' perceptions of walking and bicycling. This information helps SRTS partners refine programs and outreach activities to better respond to walking and bicycling barriers and encourage program participation. Download the survey form and detailed instructions on submission to the National Center for processing here: <http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/data-central/data-collection-forms>.

FOLLOW THESE STEPS

1. Plan

- Choose a paper or online survey, but never both for the same collection period. Both are available on the National Center website.
- Choose a strategy that will get the most responses. Keep the process simple, accessible, and repeatable. See optional data collection strategies below.
- Ensure that the data collection process is consistent so that comparisons to previous years yield meaningful conclusions.

2. Survey

- Print one Parent Survey form per family. Use white paper and remind parents to use dark ink to help the National Center process the data. Always follow instructions on the Parent Survey form.
- For the online method, coordinate with National Center staff to distribute links to an online Parent Survey.

3. Process

- Mail paper forms and a cover sheet to the National Center (see **Key Points** to the right for the address and website), or manually enter your survey data directly into the **National Center website** [↗](#). Visit their website to download forms and for instructions on submitting data.
- You will receive a data summary report in approximately four weeks.

4. Evaluate

- If this is your first year collecting data, use these results to establish goals and priorities. Otherwise, compare the summary report to previous years' data.
- Analyze the collection strategy and adjust the process for future tallies.
- Schedule your next Parent Survey. Administer at least once per school year, ideally in the same month and under similar conditions, to best observe trends during over the years.

OPTIONAL DATA COLLECTION STRATEGIES

- **Ask** parents the survey questions directly during parent-teacher conferences and fill in the form together.
- **Introduce** and distribute surveys at Parent Teacher Organization meetings.
- **Include** surveys in 'welcome back' materials at the beginning of each school year.
- **Place** survey in students' backpacks with a concise letter to explain the survey and encourage participation. See our sample letter here.
- **Incentivize** participation by rewarding the class with the highest return rate, or by entering participating students (or parents) into a raffle.
- **Teach** students about data and how to analyze it. Assign survey collection as homework. Students can analyze data and compare to previous years to draw conclusions.

KEY POINTS

FREQUENCY

Once per year

IMPLEMENTATION

0.5 to 4 hours + 4 weeks to receive summary report

TEAM MEMBERS

Champion,
parents, students

SEND COVER SHEET AND COMPLETED FORMS TO

National Center for SRTS
Attn: SRTS Data Entry
730 MLK, Jr. Blvd.,
Suite 300
Chapel Hill, NC 27599
<http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/data-central/data-collection-forms> [↗](#)

REQUIREMENT FOR



Remember to update your Partner Progress Report once you've completed this activity to advance to the next level! [↗](#)

Real World Examples

1

St. Albans City School empowers 7th and 8th grade students to collect data of student travel modes using the Student Travel Tally form. Students analyze the data to see how travel patterns are changing over time.



2

By administering the Parent Survey, **Saxtons River Elementary School** found that the lack of sidewalks near the school were the parents' primary concern. To help alleviate this concern and improve conditions for walking to school, the school worked with the Village of Saxtons River to apply for—and win—a grant to install a sidewalk connection to the school.

3

Swanton Elementary School used the Parent Survey to not only identify the biggest barriers to walking to school, but also help prioritize strategies in their Travel Plan to address these barriers.

