



Starting a Program

Mini
saferoutes.vermont.gov
Guide

WHAT'S IN THIS MINIGUIDE?

Welcome to Safe Routes to School! This guide will help you start a SRTS program and get your students walking and rolling to school.

This VT SRTS MiniGuide explains the initial steps to starting a SRTS program in your community.

In this MiniGuide, you will find:

- Basic Steps
- Partner Program Overview
- Progress Reports
- Resources

Click this icon  to access the listed resource.

What is it?

Starting a program consists of identifying your SRTS Champion, announcing the program, and planning your first event.

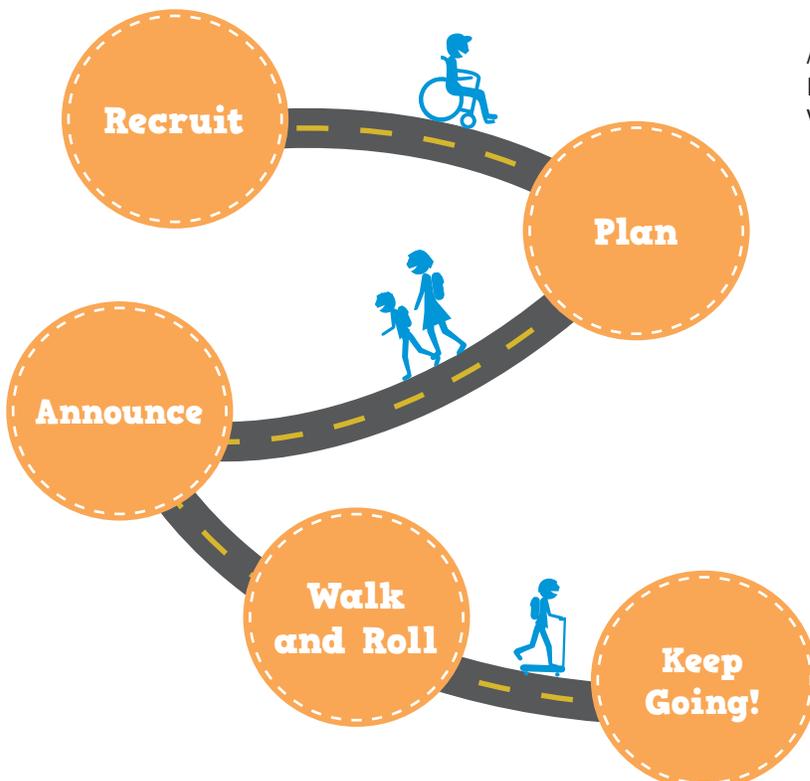
Why is it important?

A strong start builds momentum for a successful program. Having a dynamic team with an understanding of the SRTS Partner Program is the cornerstone of implementing walking and biking programs and events.

What is the level of effort involved?

Moderate: Identifying a Champion and SRTS Team, coordinating with school and school community.

WHAT TO EXPECT



RESOURCES PREVIEW

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

- **Announcement Letter** : Editable letter to announce and explain the program to parents and the school community.
- **SRTS Presentation** : Editable presentation to introduce SRTS to the school community, PTO or other group.
- **Regional Experts** : Local staff and experienced SRTS volunteers who can help you with guidance and troubleshooting.
- **MiniGuides** : Short guides to walk schools through activities to implement as part of your SRTS program.
- **10 Tips for SRTS Programs and Liability** : Tip sheet for schools about liability and SRTS programming.

Basic Steps

Launching a SRTS program doesn't have to be daunting! You can break it into small, manageable bits and take it at your own pace. Start by planning your approach, gathering a team, announcing your program to the community, and hosting a kick off event.

FOLLOW THESE STEPS

1. Recruit

Recruit school staff and community members to your SRTS Team. Members may include the principal, teachers, Parent/Teacher Organization members, nurse liaisons, local government staff, law enforcement officers, or other interested community members. Hold a kick-off meeting to identify the goals of your SRTS program, review the Partner Program guide, and decide what each team member can do to support the program. A key role to fill is the School Champion, described below, who serves as a point person for the program.

2. Plan

Review the **Partner Program guide** on the following page. The Partner Program is a way to track a school's progress on creating a culture of walking and biking through conducting SRTS programs and activities. Schools often begin with holding one walking and/or biking event and then add other activities, such as **Walking and Biking Curriculum, Walk Audits, Contests, and Enforcement Campaigns**.

3. Announce

Announce the program through your school's website, social media, backpack mailings, press releases, and word-of-mouth.

4. Walk and Roll

Plan and host your first event! Most schools will hold a Walk and Roll Event as their first program activity (see **Walk and Roll to School Days MiniGuide** [↗](#)).

5. Keep Going!

Continue to conduct activities outlined in the **Partner Program guide**, earning Bronze, Silver, Gold, and Platinum status as you advance. Keep your Regional Expert (Technical) updated to be recognized for your achievements.

LINKS

Vermont Safe Routes to School Regional Experts
www.saferoutes.vermont.gov/regional-experts [↗](#)

National Center for SRTS
www.SafeRoutesInfo.org [↗](#)

International Walk to School Day
www.WalkBikeToSchool.org [↗](#)

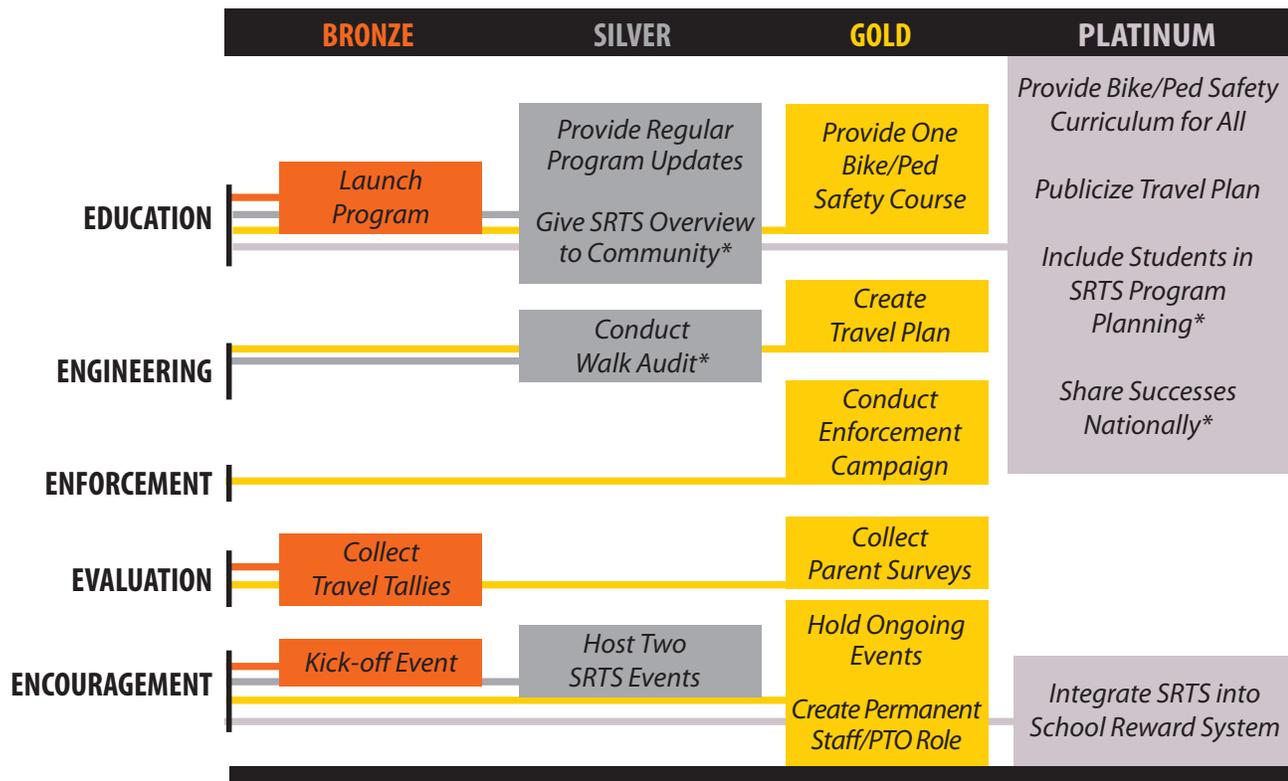
Vermont Agency for Transportation Bicycle and Pedestrian Program
<http://vtransengineering.vermont.gov/bureaus/mab/local-projects/bike-ped> [↗](#)

ROLE OF A SCHOOL CHAMPION

- Leads the program. The founding Champion should serve for a minimum of two years to establish SRTS at the school.
- Organizes regular meetings with the school and the SRTS Team.
- Leads SRTS efforts and activities with support from the SRTS Team.
- Tracks the school's progress through the Partner Program and coordinates with the Regional Expert (Technical).
- Organizes and attends Walk and Roll events.
- Recruits and assigns leaders for SRTS programs and activities.

Partner Program Overview

SRTS is organized around the 5 E's (education, engineering, enforcement, evaluation, encouragement), described below. The Partner Program outlines activities in each of the E's to advance your program through the partner levels and establish walk and biking as a regular part of the school day. Move at your own pace and tailor activities to meet your school's unique context. Fill out progress reports online to track your progress and document your partner level.



* Choose one of these two activities to meet this partner level

THE 5 "E'S"

The cornerstone of SRTS is the acknowledgement that safer walking and biking routes can best be accomplished through a combination of infrastructure and non-infrastructure projects and programs. These are known collectively as the "5 E's": education, engineering, enforcement, evaluation, and encouragement.

Education: Teach students and community members about walking and biking safely. Education can happen through in-school curriculum, bike/ped safety assemblies, newsletter blurbs, tips sheets, and send-home flyers.

Engineering: Improve the physical walking and biking environment through infrastructure. Schools can work with local government agencies to determine how to improve and update infrastructure to support safety.

Enforcement: Reduce negative behaviors such as speeding, double parking, or disobeying traffic signals by working with local law enforcement. Officers can attend walking events to monitor speeding activity and to build relationships with school children and neighbors.

Evaluation: Check to see if your strategies are working! Schools and local governments can record walking and biking rates, parent concerns, and traffic data to evaluate the success of a SRTS program. Evaluation activities can help set goals and establish baseline data for planning projects.

Encouragement: Get students and parents excited about walking and biking by hosting special events, Walking School Buses and Bike Trains, holding schoolwide competitions, or celebrating walking and biking with student art or other projects.

Progress Reports

Each school has an online progress report to keep track of their SRTS activities. Progress reports are important for the following reasons:

1. They are used to track your school's advancement through the Partner Program. Schools obtain Bronze, Silver, Gold, and Platinum status by conducting SRTS activities. You can display your SRTS status on your school's website and communication materials, or on printed materials around the school.
2. Progress reports are a good way to document your school's efforts to help during staff or volunteer transitions. New staff or volunteers can read the progress report and quickly know the status of your school's program.

Filling out your progress report is easy! Simply enter the dates of completed activities, such as hosting a Walk to School Day or teaching a pedestrian safety course. You can add additional details to the form which can help you plan your activity in subsequent years.

You can access your report on the [Partner Profiles page](#) on the [VT SRTS website](#). You may choose to update the report after completing an activity or at regular periods, such as at the start or end of an academic year.

**VERMONT SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL
PARTNER PROGRESS REPORT**

This form records your progress through the Safe Routes to School Program and Partnership Levels. It may be viewed by the School Champion, Regional Planning Commission staff and the Vermont Department of Transportation's Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator. Please provide as many details about your activities as you can to assist school and governmental staff with your program. Please provide a description and date of all activities, even if activities fall outside your current partnership level. Please also update this form with contact information for your school's Champion.

School Name
Vermont Elementary School

Address
123 Fake Street

City
Springfield

State
VT

Zip
55555

Phone
802-555-5555

Projected Partner Level

Bronze
 Silver
 Gold
 Platinum

Identify School Champion(s):
Name Champion:
Ms. Ima Walker

Include general information about your school and Champion.

For Bronze Level:

Update this form whenever you perform the activities below, adding completion dates to the form. This way you will have a record of the activities your school has conducted over time.

Student Travel Tallies:
List date of student travel tally exercise.
9/10/2015
Our 4th grade class collected the tallies and made summary charts from the data for math class.

Communicate Safe Routes to School Launch
List Date and details below (Examples: Parent Surveys, School Newsletter, Morning/Afternoon Announcements, Tip Sheets/Backpack Mail)
9/1/2015
Back to school email to parents

Hold a Kick-off Event
List Date and Details below. (Examples: International/Vermont Walk to School Day, Bike Rodeo, Assembly)
10/05/2015
Walk: Planning for monthly walking school buses. Will ask local police to monitor our next event to help with the crosswalk in front of the school.

Include dates and information on SRTS activities from the Partner Program.

Resources

You're not alone! There are many resources to help you grow your program. The VT SRTS website is a great place to start to learn more about the program and steps you can take to make walking and biking a routine and safe part of the school day. You can also take advantage of the [Regional Experts Panel](#) described below.

REGIONAL EXPERTS

The [Regional Experts Panel](#) helps new schools get started with SRTS and helps schools with established programs work through specific challenges or take on new activities. The Panel consists of Program Experts, who focus on education, enforcement, evaluation, and encouragement strategies, and Technical Experts, who focus on engineering strategies. Program Experts can answer questions by phone or email about how to get started, or specific challenges related to starting a program or moving up to the next level. They provide examples of successful programs or activities and help the Champion brainstorm ideas or work through a specific challenge. Technical Experts can assist schools with [Travel Plans](#), [Walk Audits](#), [School Zone Signage](#) or other engineering issues.

HEALTH AND EDUCATION

Safe Routes to School curricula can be provided as part of a school's Physical Education program. See the [Vermont School Wellness Policy Guidelines](#) for more information.

LIABILITY

Generally speaking, SRTS programs are intended to increase safety and should therefore decrease liability. Schools should ensure that they are not being negligent when conducting SRTS activities by evaluating routes to school for hazards, recruiting staff to assist with events, requesting assistance from law enforcement personnel when needed, and many other actions to minimize risk of injury (see [10 Tips for SRTS Programs and Liability](#)). Your school district's legal administrator can provide more specific information on SRTS and liability.

RESOURCES

- [VT SRTS Website](#): Website with program information, frequently asked questions, and links to other resources.
- [MiniGuides](#): Short guides to help you implement SRTS programs and activities.
- [National Center for Safe Routes to School](#): National organization that provides guides, examples, and current information on funding and opportunities for SRTS.
- [Regional Experts Panel](#): Volunteers with experience in VT SRTS who can offer advice and guidance on getting started or troubleshooting issues.
- [Vermont Agency of Transportation \(VTrans\)](#): Agency that manages SRTS. VTrans issues guidance and standards on walking and biking infrastructure and programs.