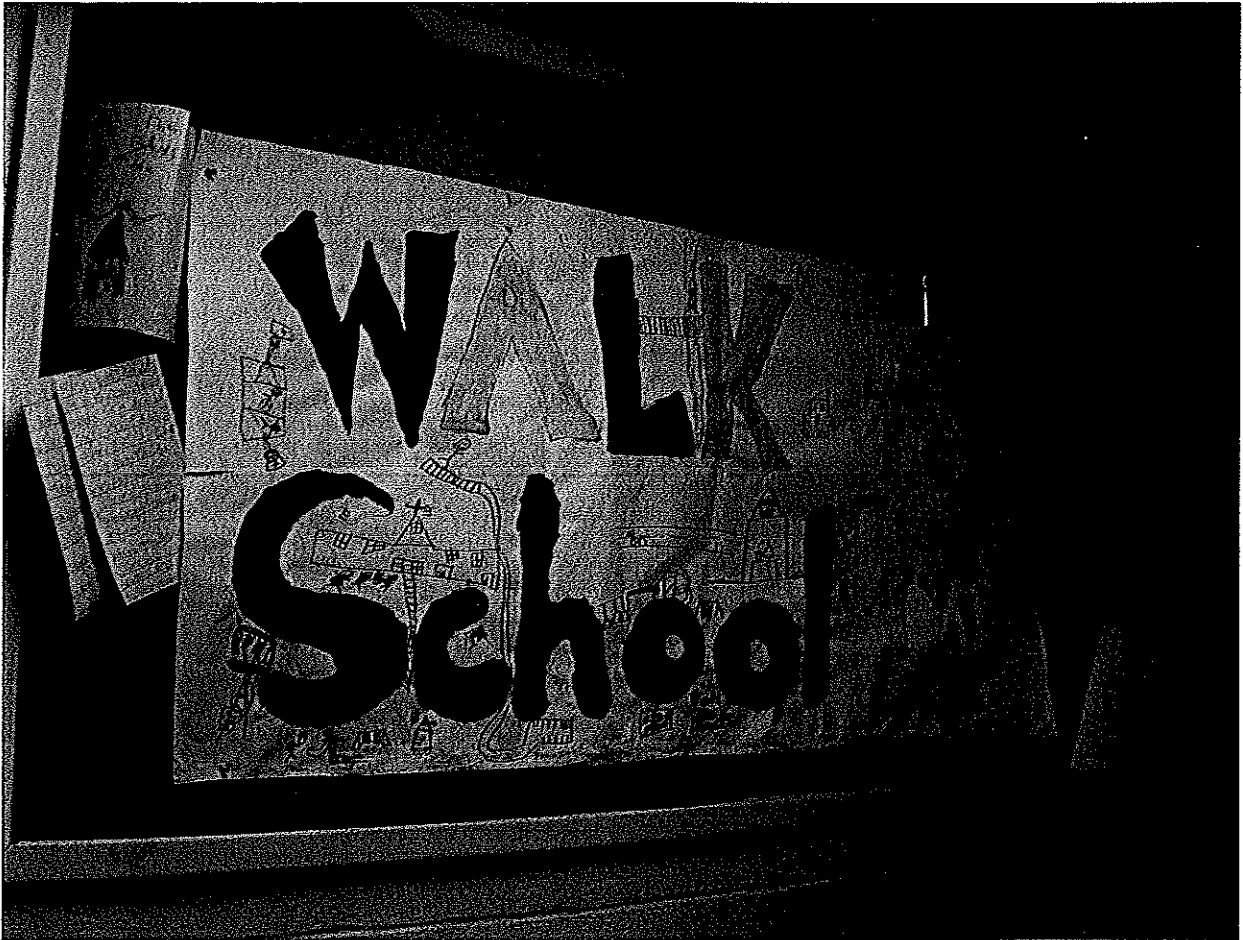


Saxtons River Elementary School

Safe Routes to School

Travel Plan



September, 2009

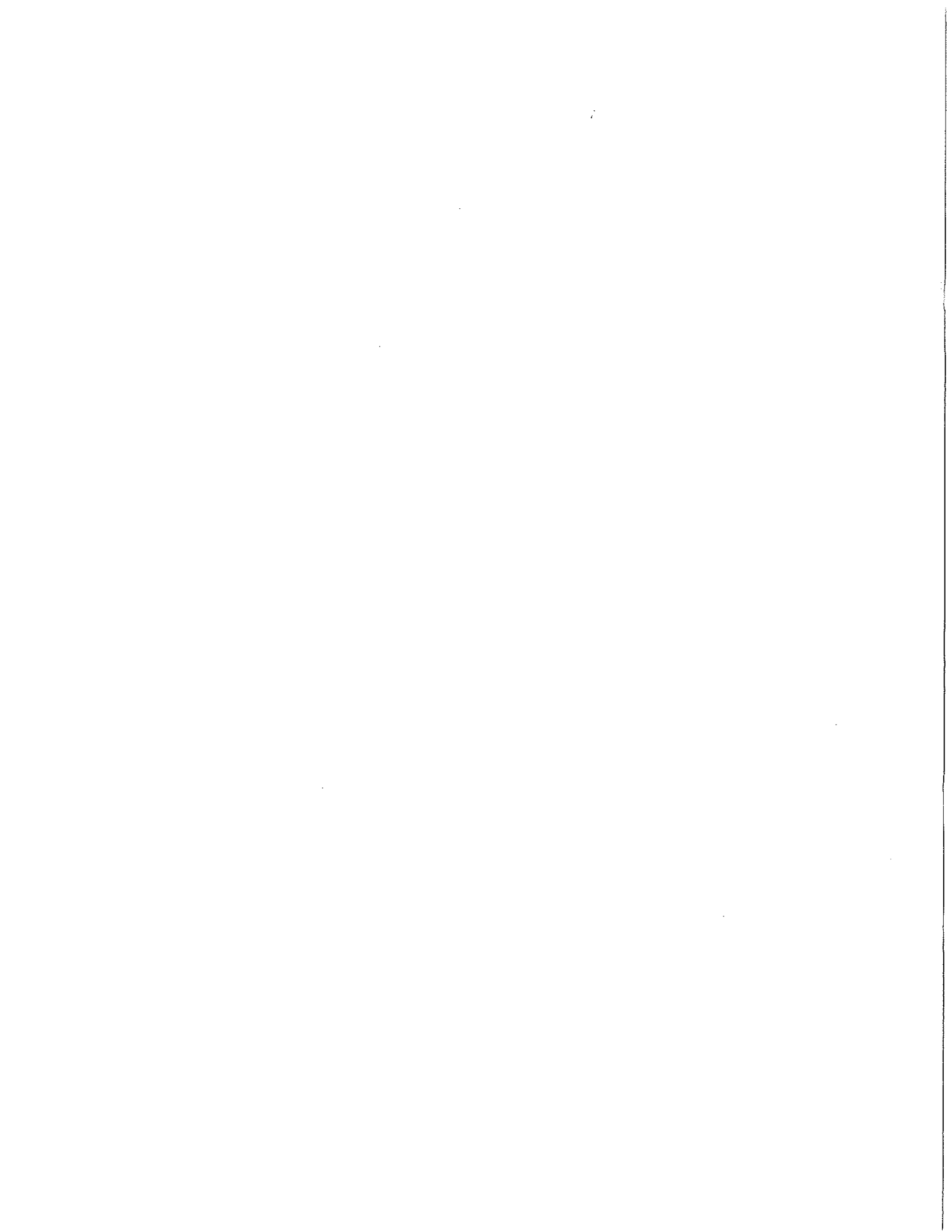
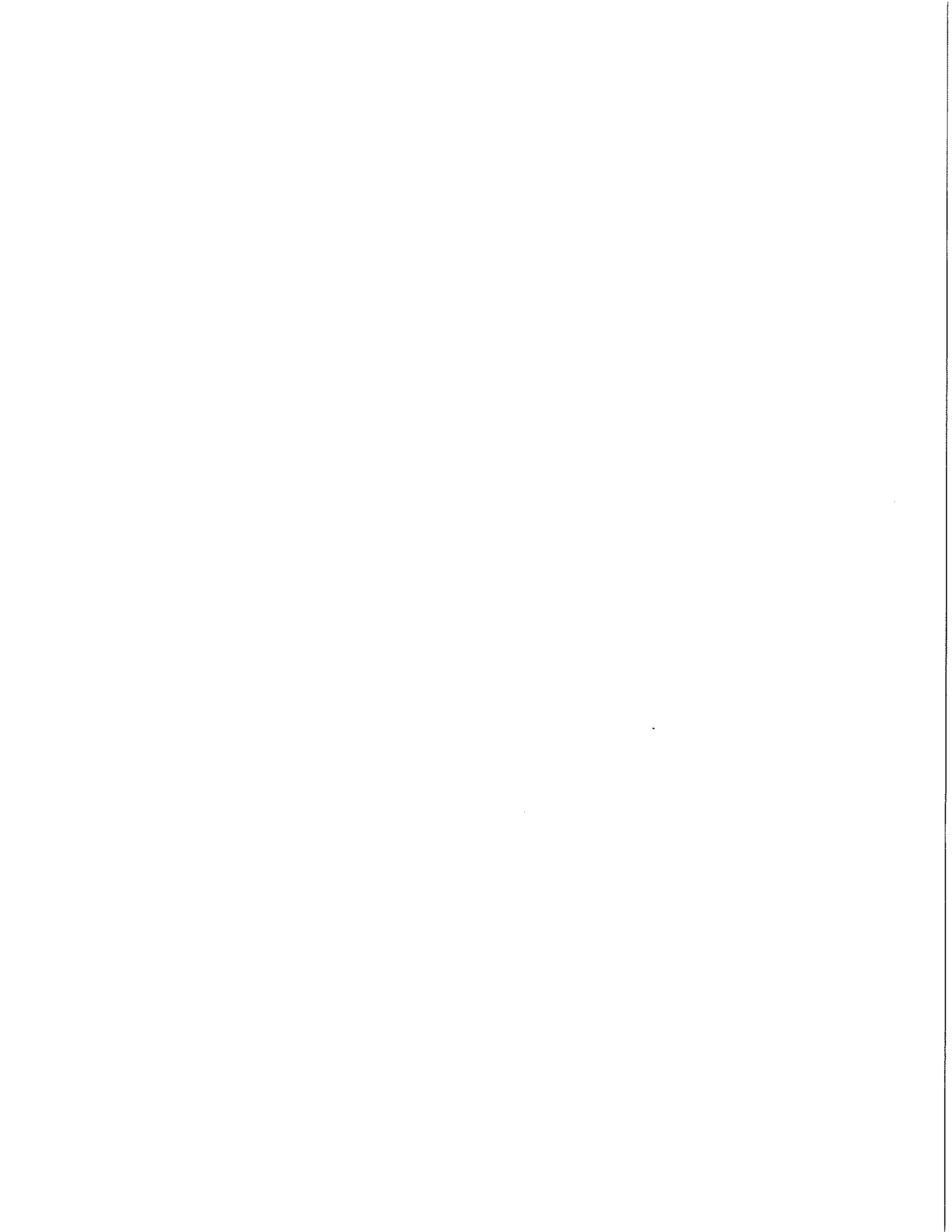


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MAPS

Students Enrolled in Rockingham's Elementary and Middle
Schools Town of Rockingham, VT.....2A

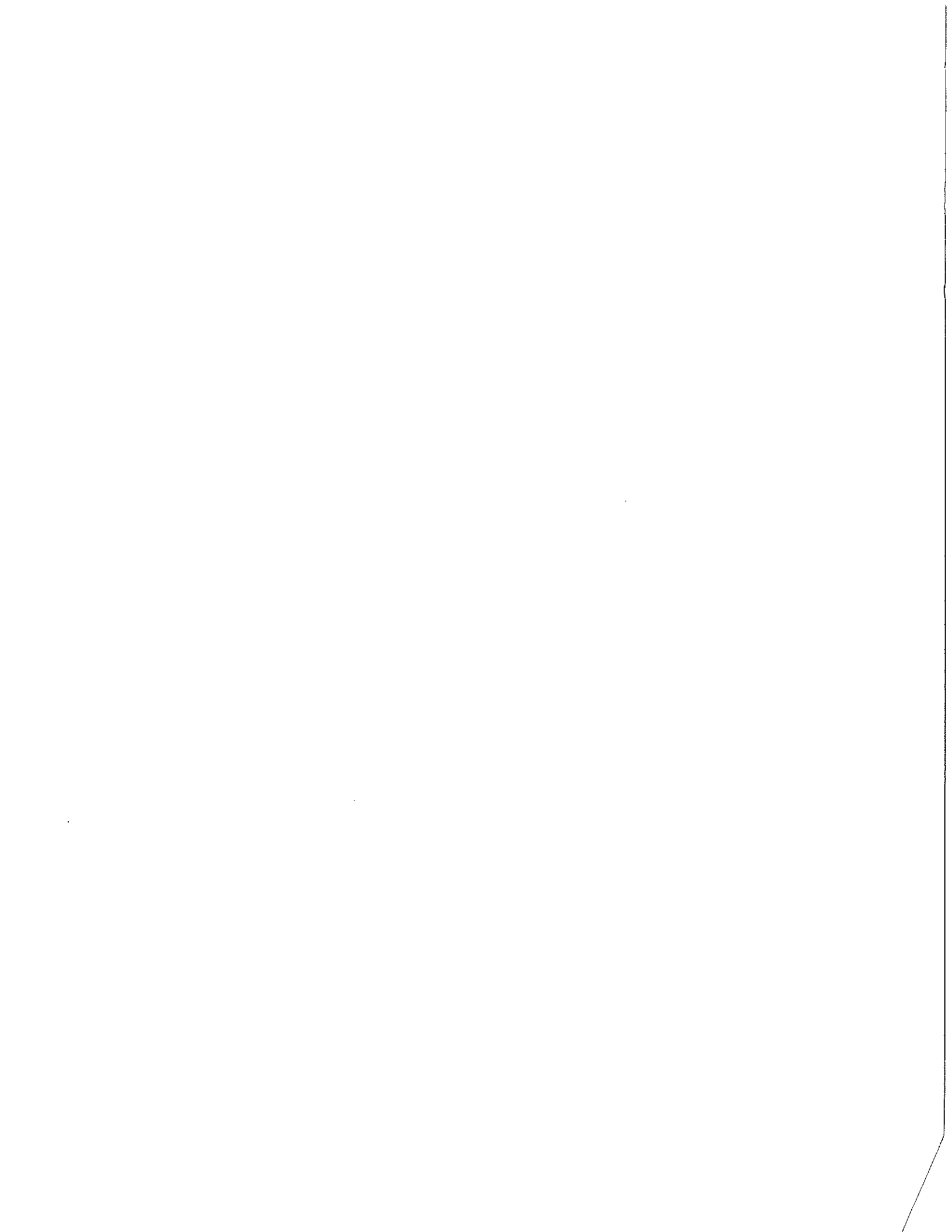
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24C



Saxtons River Elementary School

Safe Routes to School Travel Plan

October 2009

Mission Statement:

The Saxtons River Elementary School will provide education and training opportunities in order to develop students' skills for safely walking and bicycling to and from school. The school will strive to encourage children to adopt lifestyle habits and transportation choices that promote wellness in their lives, school and community. Vehicle access, parking areas and bike/pedestrian facilities will be designed to provide a safe, welcoming and aesthetically pleasing environment for staff, parents, students and visitors.

1. Stakeholders- SRTS Team

The stakeholder representatives consisted of:

Marylou Smith, Physical Educator
David Lesser, School Principal
Jeanne Hodsdon, School Nurse
Janet Brennan, School Administrator
John Edwards, Parent/ Engineering Consultant
Ellen Howard, Town Planning Staff
Everett Hammond, Town Public Works
Julie Moir Messervy, Landscape Architect
School PTO Members
Steven Ovenden, Project Coordinator

2. Existing Conditions

Student Locations

During the 2008-2009 SRTS program year, 118 children in grades Kindergarten through 5th grade attended the school as shown below.

Kindergarten	17	3 rd grade	18
1 st grade	23	4 th grade	23
2 nd grade	19	5 th grade	18

The School serves the village of Saxtons River and rural parts of northern and western Rockingham. Bellows Falls also sends a substantial number of children to the school, primarily via school bus, under an equity agreement between the schools managed by the Windham Northeast Supervisory Union. The locations of households

with students attending SRES were collected from enrollment data at the beginning of the school year. Although these numbers would be expected to fluctuate each year, they provide a fairly good representation of student residence locations and the corresponding commute distances. The geographic distribution was:

Saxtons River	55	(47%)
Bellows Falls	38	(32%)
Rockingham	25	(21%)

Figure 1 shows the actual locations of student residences at the beginning of the school year. The rural nature of Rockingham and the general lack of sidewalks or bike lanes extending beyond Saxtons River village severely limit the ability of younger children beyond one-half mile to safely walk or bike to school.

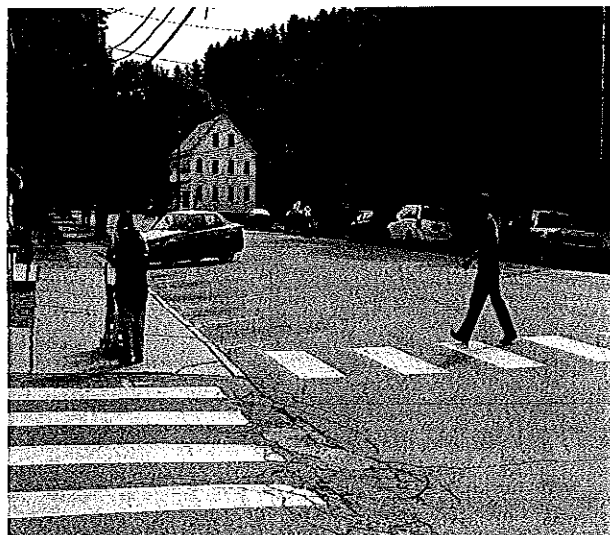
Figure 2 shows the students within the village area of Saxtons River. Some of the households that listed their address as Saxtons River actually live outside of the village and beyond the reach of sidewalks. The number that could have safely walked was probably closer to about 42 children.

Walkability Audit

A walking survey of neighborhood connectivity, sidewalks, crosswalks and potential barriers was conducted with parents during the Walking Wednesday events in October and November 2008. **Figure 3** shows the household locations, sidewalks and crosswalks within the village. Twenty-two household were recorded, with a total student population of thirty-two (32). Saxtons River has 5-foot sidewalks on both sides of Main Street (Route 121). On the north side they extend from Pleasant Valley Road to just past the bridge across the Saxtons River. On the south side of Main Street, the sidewalks extend from the Tenney Bridge eastward to Maple Street. A sidewalk adjoins the east side of Westminster Street south to Vancor Drive. The principal side streets of Academy Avenue and Pleasant Street each have a sidewalk along one side.



West Main Street looking toward the east.



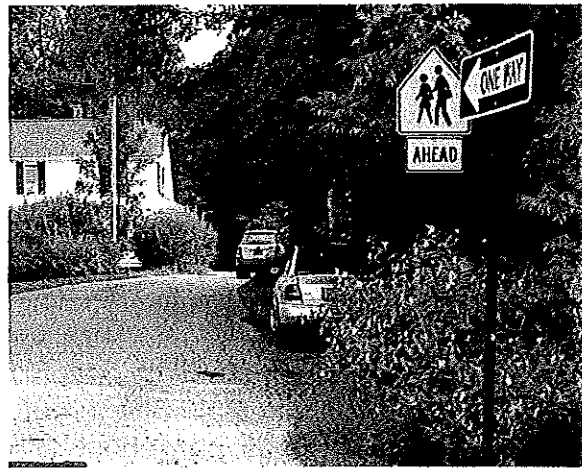
Crosswalks on Academy and Main Streets looking east.

The remaining streets in the village are lacking any sidewalks. Most teenagers and adult residents are comfortable walking along the road shoulder and in the roadway due to the extremely low volume of traffic and the slow speeds usually observed in the densely settled neighborhoods. Many elementary-age children are routinely observed walking in the village alone or in groups in the afternoon and on weekends. Due to the heavier traffic in the morning, most parents walk with their children part-way, especially those who live south of Main Street or beyond one-quarter mile. Main Street has crosswalks by the post office, entrance to School Street and by the village market.

School Street is one-way north from Main Street and contains a "School Ahead" caution sign at about 150 feet. Children usually walk along the right edge of the road and try to avoid the shoulder because it is uneven and narrow, with parked cars, a large oak tree and vegetation next to the road.



Low and eroded shoulders on School St. by the school.



Parked cars and vegetation along the School St. entrance.

Across from the school, a large gravel parking lot for staff and visitors has no defined access points or parking places. During morning and afternoon, parents' cars often cue up along the right shoulder, constraining pedestrian access. There is no crosswalk in front and parents using the gravel lot usually escort their children across the street. During the winter, snow often piles up along the right side, further reducing the amount of walking space for both students and parents.



Students walk in front of the school on School Street.



Gravel parking lot across from the school entrance.

3. Traffic Studies

In collaboration with the Windham Regional Commission (WRC), traffic studies were performed along Main Street and School Street between October 14-26, 2008 and again from June 1-11, 2009. On Main Street, both traffic and speed counts were performed. Because the traffic is one-way only on School Street, and there is very little cut-through traffic, speeding hasn't seemed to be a problem there. For that reason, only the number of vehicles per hour was collected on School Street. Burke Hill is a long east-west oriented street that is used occasionally for traveling across the village. Both traffic and speed counts were collected on Burk Hill in June, 2009.

Main Street (Route 121)

The traffic counter was placed at a location just to the west of Grove Street. Both traffic and speed data were collected for 10 days from Thursday, October 16 to Sunday, October 26, 2008. **Attachment 1** contains an hourly summary of the traffic counts for the five weekdays of October 20-24 for both directions combined. The "Class 2" column lists the number of passenger cars, usually the predominant type of vehicle on the road. Class 3 is light trucks and is also prevalent in this area. At the bottom of each table, the AM peak hour/volume and PM peak hour /volume are shown. The traffic exhibits a typical peak traffic period during the morning (7:00- 9:00am) and afternoon (3:00- 5:00pm) times on most days. The afternoon peak was much higher for all vehicle types and also longer sustained than the morning peak.

Attachment 2 contains an hourly summary of the speed counts for both directions combined separated into 5-mph increments for the period of October 20-24. The posted speed limit on Main Street is 25 mph. The data show that throughout the day and night hours overall, only about 25% of the traffic was obeying the speed limit. This is generally true for the peak hours during school commuting as well. The number of speeders drops substantially above 35mph. A breakdown of the traffic exceeding the speed limit is shown below.

Percent Of Traffic	Monday		Tuesday		Wednesday		Thursday		Friday	
	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM
OVERALL										
Exceeding 25 mph	79	75	73	75	64	76	78	78	75	78
Exceeding 35 mph	7	5	5	4	5	5	8	7	8	6
PEAK HOUR										
Exceeding 25 mph	71	80	73	73	61	77	85	76	71	82
Exceeding 35 mph	4	4	4	3	3	6	7	4	8	5

The effect of the peak hour traffic volume and inclement weather on speeding was noticeable in the data. There was a storm that occurred on Tuesday night and Wednesday morning, slightly lowering the amount of speeding. A weather report is included in **Attachment 2**. The hourly summaries for each day also show a slight reduction in speed during both the peak AM and PM hours on most days. Much of this may be caused by the effect that vehicles turning onto School Street have on the Main Street traffic. Vehicles are also exiting the side streets in greater numbers during the morning hours, slowing traffic on Main Street. However, even with this slight calming effect on traffic, the traffic exceeding the speed limit by more than 10 mph still ranges between 3-8 percent during morning rush hour, translating to 8-12 cars going much too fast for an area close to a school zone. When combined with a greater number of vehicles on the road and children walking or biking, this becomes a matter of concern.

School Street

Since traffic is one-way only on School Street, and speeding wasn't perceived to be a problem there, only number of vehicles per hour were collected. In the Fall of 2008, two counters were installed on School Street- one before the parking lot (East) and the other one just west of the parking lot (West). In the spring of 2009, only traffic at the West site was counted. The staff typically arrived between 7:00-8:00AM and parents drop off between 7:50-9:00AM. Since school ends at 3:00PM, parent traffic was the total between 2:00-4:00PM. It was assumed that West site counted mostly parents in the morning and the East counter captured mostly parents in the afternoon. This method enabled the counting of parents and staff separately.

For the 2008 study, counters were installed from Tuesday, October 14 to Tuesday, October 21. The hourly vehicle counts at the East and West sites are provided in **Attachment 3**. The data exhibited the expected morning peak traffic hour between 7:00-8:00AM and an afternoon peak traffic hour between 2:00-3:00PM. A summary table for the AM and PM peak periods is provided below. Parent traffic appeared significantly greater in the morning and several observations confirms this scenario except during bad weather. Many children were often driven to school in the morning and then walked home or joined carpools in the afternoon, reducing traffic.

	Tuesday		Wednesday		Thursday		Friday		Monday		Tuesday.	
	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM
Parents	--	34	50	27	38	26	52	35	41	31	31	38
Staff	--	21	20	26	22	8	27	27	28	22	28	21

Attachment 4 contains a summary of the traffic counts for the period of June 1-9, 2009 at the West site (parent traffic). The summary provided quarter-hour data, which showed the peak traffic more clearly during the times of 7:30-8:30AM and 2:30-3:15PM. Parent traffic during peak periods is shown below. Once again, parent traffic was greater in the morning, except on Wednesday, which was a "Walking First Wednesday"

	Tuesday		Wednesday		Thursday		Friday		Monday		Tuesday	
	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM
Parents	39	51	21	49	60	48	55	49	63	34	74	68

event that showed a noticeable decrease in traffic in the morning compared to the other days. The second Tuesday in the data set (June 9) was quite rainy and the resulting traffic was much higher during both morning and afternoon times.

Burk Hill Road

Burk Hill primarily serves the village residents as an easy east-west alternative to Main Street for accessing Route 121 and some Vermont Academy traffic. Some children from the northeast and northwest parts of the village use a section of Burk Hill to walk or ride to school. The traffic counter was placed 350 feet west of the intersection with Academy Avenue and recorded vehicles going in both directions. **Attachment 5** contains tables of the hourly vehicle numbers for Tuesday-Thursday June 9-11, 2009. The morning peak for cars and light trucks was typically either around 8:00AM or around lunchtime and the PM peak hour varied daily. Peak periods were fairly equal at about 18-24 vehicles recorded during that hour. More than 200 total vehicles were counted each day. **Attachment 6** contains tables of the hourly vehicle speed counts for Tuesday-Thursday June 9-11, 2009. The speed limit on Burk Hill is 25 mph. Traffic is naturally calmed by the narrowness of the road, the density of houses and their proximity to the travel lanes. Page 3 shows the summary data for the speed study. The average speed of all vehicles was 21 mph and about 83% of the traffic was traveling at or below the speed limit. The highest speeds over the three-day study were four vehicles recorded between 31-35 mph.

4. Student In-Class Travel Mode Surveys

Using the Safe Routes to School "Student Arrival and Departure Tally Sheet", classroom teachers asked students for a show of hands regarding their travel method to school and home that day. Surveys were conducted between Tuesday and Thursday once in the Fall and once in the Spring. Inclement weather was noted as a factor. Fall 2008 survey results are shown in **Attachment 7** and the Spring 2009 results are shown in **Attachment 8**. Measurable differences between the two surveys were small and it should be noted that a three-day survey provides only a very brief snapshot of student travel modes. Rain was recorded during the morning and mid-day hours on one day during the 2008 survey.

Looking at the pie-charts of combined morning and afternoon travel over all three days, a picture of the travel habits of the 125 students emerge. Around one-fifth walk (25), two-fifths ride the bus (50) and two-fifths (50) are driven, roughly speaking. Comparing the two surveys, the percent of walking students increased 5% (about 6 students) from 19% to 24% between 2008 and 2009. Students using bicycles increased threefold, from 1% in the fall to 3% in the spring. School bus ridership decreased by 5% and use of the family vehicle decreased by 3%. Carpooling remained constant at 3%.

Looking more closely at morning and afternoon differences, the percentage of kids walking in the morning increased from 17.3% in 2008 to 27.2% in 2009. (See the "Morning to Afternoon Travel Mode Comparison Chart".) However, afternoon walking home only increased by 1.5%. This 10% increase in morning walking corresponded with a 4% and 8% decrease in bus ridership and family vehicle use, respectively, in 2009. The rainy Wednesday in 2008 caused a noticeable decrease in walkers that day from 21 to 15 in the morning and from 30 to 12 in the afternoon compared to Thursday. The

bicycling increase perhaps was attributed to the BikeSmart training and the popular bicycle rodeo conducted during May 2009.

One of the more telling aspects of the survey results was the graphic illustration of students arriving in the family vehicle and then walking or riding the bus home. Walking numbers are usually higher in the PM and school bus and vehicle modes show a corresponding decrease. This behavior pattern is often attributed to the just-in-time schedules of parents in the morning, children waking up late or not getting ready on time, and parents that drive by the school anyway on their way to work. These kinds of habits or behaviors should be viewed by parents and staff as something that can be adjusted or relearned in order to provide children with the option or capability to be more physically active in the morning and have enough time to walk to school.

5. Parent Surveys about Travel Choices

The Safe Routes to School "Parent Survey about Walking and Biking to School" was distributed to parents with the take-home school newsletter on September 22. A total of forty-nine (49) surveys were returned the survey by October 17. This represented about 40% of the student households. The Parent Survey Summary Report is included as **Attachment 9**.

Sixteen of the respondents lived within $\frac{1}{4}$ - mile of the school and are considered to have good pedestrian access within that distance. Of these 16 respondents, twelve reported that their children walked to school on most days and one rode a bicycle. One additional student walked home in the afternoon.

Five respondents were located between $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ mile from school but none of those children walked to school. In fact, three of them rode the bus and two were driven. In the afternoon, one additional child walked home. No children walked or biked to or from school beyond the distance of $\frac{1}{2}$ mile.

More than half of the respondents (28) lived more than $\frac{1}{2}$ - mile away, which skewed the survey heavily toward the use of school bus and family vehicle. Twelve respondents were from Bellows Falls, three were from Cambridgeport and thirteen from rural Rockingham along Routes 121, 103 and Pleasant Valley Road.

The issues which parents felt most strongly about in making their decision to not allow their child to walk or bike to school were having adults to walk/ bike with and adequate sidewalks or pathways. Distance was a major factor in parents' decision to not allow walking or biking, along with convenience of driving and traffic speed along the route. Unfortunately, the rural highways of Rockingham are narrow, twisting and often have poor or no shoulder. No parent in their right mind would send a child of this age group off walking or biking along these routes, even with an adult. The 3rd or 4th grade were the top choice for ages to start allowing the child to start walking or biking to school within $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ mile.

About a third of the respondents felt that the school encouraged walking and biking and two-thirds were neutral on the question. Most of the neutral responses were from parents who lived too far from the school anyway and the question was not really of importance to them anyway. The same response scenario was observed on the questions about walking and biking being fun and healthy. A number of the parents made the comment that they would be interested in carpooling if they were familiar with the driver and someone else would organize it.

6. Community Meetings

On September 9, 2008 an information meeting was held to solicit input from staff on the issues affecting walking and biking to school and the safety concerns. The school's original SRTS grant application had identified four main issues, shown below. The committee discussed these issues and formulated desired solutions, strategies to achieve results and identified the responsible parties.

<u>Issue or Concern</u>	<u>Desired Solution</u>	<u>Strategy</u>	<u>Responsibility</u>
1) Final approach to school-sidewalks and narrow street	1) Create safe area for walking and riding School St.	1) Acquire permission/ access to add paths	1) School/ town
2) School St. is congested & disorganized during am/ pm and students not safe	2) Traffic calming, access management and pedestrian improvements	2) Parking, street and sidewalk construction with landscaping	2) Residents, parents, students, State funding
3) Need more education	3) Good biking and walking skills	3) Education, training and practice	3) School and parents
4) Students need more exercise before and after school	4) Encourage more students to walk/bike and appreciate the health aspects of exercise	4) Education, incentives and community support	4) School, parents and community

On September 10, 2008 the SRTS coordinator provided several members of the school PTO with copies of the Parent Travel Survey and to brainstorm the best ways to distribute the surveys and encourage timely return. A "Newsflash Bulletin" that introduced the SRTS program and the Parent Survey were sent home with the first school newsletter on September 22, 2008. The flyer (**Figure 4**) described the problem, the need to get more children walking, some activities we needed help with, and introduced the project coordinator, Steve Ovenden, with his picture so that parents and kids might be more familiar with him. SRTS team meetings and activities are listed in **Figure 5**.

On March 26, 2008 the SRTS team along with school staff, the Vermont Department of Health, The Center for Health and Learning, and Blue Cross Blue Shield of Vermont hosted a School Wellness Fair for students and their parents. Students prepared a healthy snack and performed a jump rope demonstration. Exhibitors provided information about walking and fitness habits, bicycle safety, healthy eating habits and the benefits of physical activity.

The SRTS team provided an information booth at the wellness fair. A preliminary design of the parking and drop-off improvement project for the school was on display for review and comment. All the feedback was very positive and people mostly asked how soon it could be completed. About 120 parents and other family members received an overview of the SRTS program, viewed graphs of data gathered from student and parent surveys, and learned about upcoming education and encouragement activities planned during for the upcoming school year. Parents identified walking routes in the village and described their decision process to allow or not allow children to walk or bike to school. Parents provided input on their children's walking and biking skill levels, challenges they are facing while walking and biking to school, and specific details about traffic patterns and pedestrian facilities in the village.

NEWSFLASH

Figure 4

Youth To Revisit Practice of Walking and Bicycling to School

Across the nation, as families deal with rising fuel costs and schools are forced to cut back on bus service, congress enacted legislation in 2005 devoting \$612 million for The National Safe Routes to School Program (SRTS). See WWW.saferoutesinfo.org for lots of information about how this program works. Thanks to the efforts of Rockingham schools and town staff, Saxtons River and Bellows Falls communities received a state grant and will begin their own SRTS programs this Fall, 2008. Throughout the coming school year, we'll be looking for parent volunteers to help with "walking school buses", bike skills training, exercise outings and events, and developing a School Travel Plan that encourages healthy and sustainable travel choices for both parents and students.

Challenges and Opportunities

Not long ago, children routinely moved around their neighborhoods by foot or by bicycle, and that was often how they traveled to and from school. That is no longer the case. In 1969, 42 percent of children 5 to 18 years of age walked or bicycled to school compared to just 16 percent in 2001. The circumstances that have led to a decline in walking and bicycling to school did not happen overnight. As motor vehicle traffic increased, more parents became convinced it was unsafe for their children to walk or bicycle to school and began driving them to school. This in turn added even more traffic to the road and thus created a self-perpetuating cycle of more traffic and less walking and biking.

Understanding the many reasons why so many children do not walk or bicycle to school is the first step in interrupting the cycle. **Please fill out the enclosed Parent Survey and return to the child's Home Room Teacher by this Friday Sept 26!** We need to know how you feel about your children walking and biking to and from Saxtons River Elementary and what factors affect your decision. We will also be collecting information about commute distance, local traffic patterns, and road and sidewalk conditions in order to gain an understanding of what our biggest challenges and opportunities are. The students will also be asked about their school commute using an In-Class survey. After we present our findings to the community, the SRTS Team will begin working on a **School Travel Plan** that describes the challenges and proposes solutions, including funding new projects.

The SRTS program will also be FUN FOR ALL! We will hold a variety of educational and training opportunities to enhance skills and various events to encourage the school community to increase biking and walking, including incentive prizes for attaining individual and group goals. Please stay tuned and involved, you won't want to miss out!

For more information or to get involved, contact the School Office or SRTS coordinator Steve Ovenden at phone 802-365-9103 or email twowheelsvt@yahoo.com.



Hi! My name is Steve Ovenden, your new SRTS local team coordinator. I have lived in Townshend for seven years and was a Transportation Planner with the Windham Regional Commission before founding *Walk This Way* in order to help communities enhance their transportation choices. I look forward to meeting you and working to make Saxtons River more bikeable and walkable for all ages and abilities.

Figure 5
Saxtons River Elementary School
2008-2009 SRTS Meeting and Activity Timeline

2008

- 9/9 Organizational Meeting for all School Teams
- 9/10 Presentation to SRES PTO Meeting
- 9/17 SRTS Coordination Meeting with Town of Rockingham Staff
- 9/22 SRTS Newsflash Flyers and Parent Surveys sent home
- 9/24 International Walk to School Day Team Meeting
- 10/8 International Walk to School Day
- 11/5 Walking First Wednesday Begins
- 11/7 WalkSmart Orientation Meeting with SRES PE teacher
- 11/10 WalkSmart Pedestrian Training
- 12/3 Walking First Wednesday
- 12/16 SRTS Team Coordination Meeting

2009

- 1/07 Walking First Wednesday
- 1/16 Coordination Meeting with WNESU Superintendent
- 1/17 Town of Rockingham Project Coordination Meeting
- 1/23 SRTS Team Meeting
- 1/26 Coordination Meeting with WNESU Health Committee
- 2/04 Walking First Wednesday
- 2/27 Traffic Safety Magic Show
- 3/04 Walking First Wednesday
- 3/11 SRTS Team Meeting and PTO Presentation
- 3/26 SRTS Presentation at School Wellness Fair
- 4/01 Walking First Wednesday
- 5/06 Walking First Wednesday
- 5/13 BikeSmart Bicycle Safety Training 2nd Grade
- 5/15 BikeSmart Bicycle Safety Training Grades 3-4-5
- 5/20 Bike rodeo for 2nd Grade
- 5/22 Bike rodeo for Grades 3-4-5
- 6/03 Walking First Wednesday
- 6/06 Rockingham Community Bicycle Registration, Rodeo and Helmet Give-away
- 6/23 Coordination Meeting with Bellows Falls Police Department
- 7/21 Presentation on Proposed School Infrastructure Project to Rockingham Selectboard
- 9/14 Presentation on Proposed School Infrastructure Project to Saxtons River Village Trustees
- 9/21 Public Meeting on Proposed School Infrastructure Project

7. Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) Meetings

The Safe Routes to School team met with the School PTO at several of its monthly meetings to update the parents about planned SRTS activities and to solicit comments on local safety issues and address concerns related to implementing SRTS events. At the first meeting on September 10, the Parent Travel Survey was handed out for review to make sure parents were familiar with the questions and could serve as advisors about filling it out. Meeting discussion focused on how best to query parents on the central question of: "Why do you drive your children to school?" Many parents responded that this is primarily a function of being short on time, commuting to work and dropping other children at day-care. Parents also feel better knowing the child is being left off safely on school property and saying hello to other teachers and parents in the morning and afternoon.

In order for parents to see children reach school safely and stay connected with school staff and other parents, we decided to build on the October 8 International Walk to School Day to include the "Walking First Wednesdays" in the program in order to involve more parents in walking. Getting just a few parents to stop driving once a week can mitigate some of the traffic problems while increasing physical activity and creating the desired social interactions for parents.

8. Walk to School Days

Eight walk to school days were conducted at Saxtons River beginning with International Walk to School Day on October 8, 2009 and following once each month. **Figure 6** shows the media coverage of the event. Since so many children were usually driven or rode the bus, parents were requested to drop off kids at the village market and school busses also stopped there. Parents and staff then took groups of students on the ¼-mile walk down Main Street and School Street, arriving at regular time.

During the following months, each 1st Wednesday was a Walk to School Day and anywhere from 70-110 students participated. Students were encouraged with a variety of incentives for participating that included hot chocolate and cider, sporting-goods gift cards, toe tokens, water bottles, and healthy-message bracelets. **Figure 7** shows the event flyer for the Walk to School Days. These events were an excellent way for the SRTS team to meet parents, gauge interest and recruit volunteers, and discuss walking routes. Meeting at the market also help to develop interest and promote parent participation in a Walking School Bus program by getting parents talking about their locations, schedules and availability to help coordinate. News and information about walk to school events can be found at: www.walktoschool-usa.org. The website has tools for promoting events and engaging the community and posting news and pictures of events to be shared with other schools around the world.

9. WalkSmart Training

On November 10, 2008, the SRTS coordinator and PE educator provided the WalkSmart training to 59 students in Grades K-1-2. This 45-minute course was designed specifically for this age group by the Center for Health and Learning in Brattleboro, VT and the Vermont State Agency of Transportation. A list of the concepts and skills taught in WalkSmart is attached as **Figure 8**. WalkSmart training should be

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Saxtons River Elementary students meet in front of the village market to participate in Walk to School Day on Oct. 8.

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ROCKINGHAM — Saxtons River Elementary, Bellows Falls Central Elementary and Bellows Falls Middle School will follow up their successful International Walk to School Day on the first Wednesday of the month, weather permitting, through the winter on Dec. 3, Jan 7, Feb. 4 and Mar. 4.

Saxtons River students are asked to meet at 7:40 a.m. at the Village Market.

Central Elementary and BFMS students are asked to meet at 7:25am at one of the three locations:

- Old Supervisory Union Building on Atkinson St.
- Wells Street Playground
- Corner of Blake and Burt streets (Village Sand Shed)

The students will walk with teachers and volunteer parents to the school and arrive at regular time.

Bus routes are also being coordinated to drop off at the market. Parents that normally drop off at school are urged to meet at the market and join the walk.

International Walk to School

Day is celebrated by school children internationally to celebrate the benefits of walking.

Nearly 100 students participated on the previous Walk to School Day event on Oct. 8. These events are sponsored by the National Safe Routes to School Program.

For more information, visit www.saferoutesinfo.org or email the local coordinator at

twowheelsvt@yahoo.com.

Toe Tokens and collector chains will be awarded to all children that participate. Middle school students that walk will have a chance to win MP 3 music players after each event.

For additional information about this event, contact the schools at 802-869-2637 (Saxtons River), 802-463-4346 (Central) or 802-463-4366 (BFMS).



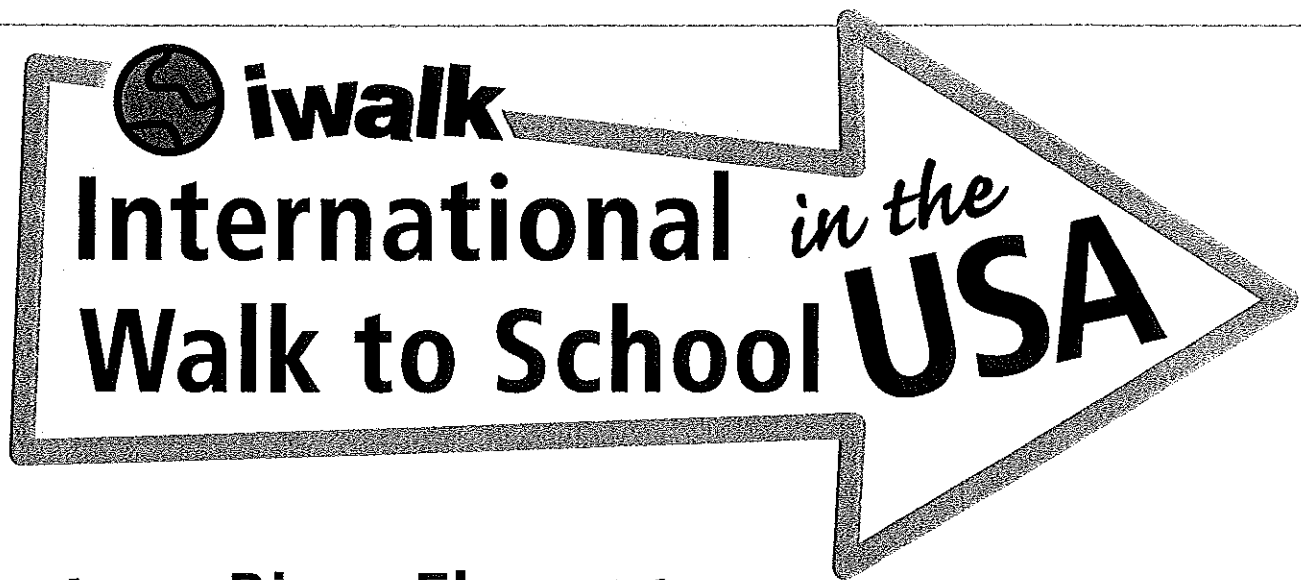
China Buffet

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AMERICAN, JAPANESE, CHINESE

Offers expire 12/31/08.

<p>Take-out Buffet Available</p> <p>\$1.00 off Adult Lunch Buffet Dining Only</p>	<p>Function and Party Room</p> <p>\$1.50 off Adult Dinner Buffet Dining Only</p>
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**Saxtons River Elementary
is participating in Walk to School on
the First Wednesday of Each Month**

Join children and adults around the world to celebrate the benefits of walking.



About our event:

**Dates: April 1
 May 6
 June 3**

Meet at 7:40 am at the Village Market
and walk with teachers and parents.

Find out more about Walk to School events in the USA at www.walktoschool.org

WALKSMART VERMONT! KINDERGARTEN AND GRADES 1-2

Time: 30 minutes Kindergarten, 45 minutes Grades 1-2

Vermont has set a goal to have one *WalkSmart Vermont!* lesson taught to children in kindergarten through second grade in the fall of each year.

Vermont Standards

- 3.5 Students make informed, healthy choices that positively affect the health, safety and well being of themselves and others.
Evidence: Students demonstrate knowledge and skills to make informed choices and decisions about walking safely.
- 3.6 Students demonstrate competency in many and proficiency in a few of the skills and concepts needed for a lifetime of physical activity.
Evidence: Students practice personal and group safety by applying rules, procedures, and practices of pedestrian safety.

Key Concepts and Skills

Table 2: *WalkSmart Vermont!* Key Concepts and Skills

This table summarizes the key concepts and skills covered in the *WalkSmart / BikeSmart Vermont!* curriculum

WALKSMART VERMONT!

Key Concepts & Skills

Walking Safely in Traffic

Use a sidewalk if it exists

Walk facing traffic

Dress light and bright to be seen (Grades 1-2)

Do not use portable electronic devices, headphones or cell phones (Grades 1-2)

Crossing Roads and Driveways Safely

Recognize an edge

Recognize a second edge (Grades 1-2)

Look *Left-Right-Left*

Identify visual barriers (Grades 1-2)

Cross in a straight line and continue to look (Grades 1-2)

Retrieve a ball or other object safely

Cross safely at an intersection

Getting Out of a Car Safely

Get out of a car safely:

...at school or a store

...on a road (Grades 1-2)

...in a parking lot (Grades 1-2)

Getting Off a Bus Safely

Get off a bus safely

Assessment

There are four major concepts taught in this lesson.

Students will be able to explain and demonstrate how to:

1. Walk safely in traffic
2. Cross roads safely
3. Get out of a car safely
4. Get on and off a bus safely

Students will score 80% correct on a ten-item pre-post assessment of knowledge and attitudes about walking safety. The Kindergarten Pre-Post Questions are designed as a whole-group assessment where the teachers read the questions aloud and students respond by raising their hands. The Grades 1-2 Pre-Post Questions can be administered in writing, depending on reading levels.

provided every year to insure skills are learned well and that no child misses out. Good pedestrian skills are the key to walking safely in a village, suburban or urban area and provide a solid foundation for walking as a healthy alternative to driving for the rest of a person's life. Trained WalkSmart educators are often available in the local community, however, the school's PE or health educator should receive the training and incorporate the program directly into the school curriculum. The WalkSmart curriculum and notices about training events are found on the Center's website: www.healthandlearning.org

10. Walking School Bus Program

The SRTS presented the concept of the Walking School Bus program at the March 11 PTO meeting and a letter and sign-up sheet for parents (see **Figure 9**) was drafted by the coordinator for school staff and the WNESU to review. Due to the WNESU's concerns about school liability for the students and parents while not on school property, it was decided that the program would not be pursued in 2009. The parent sign-up sheet was not used but could serve as a template for a future program. The school supported the idea of the WSB but lacked the staff time and resources to manage such a program over the long term.

The success of the walking school bus program depends entirely on parent availability in the morning and/or afternoon and their willingness to spend the extra time to walk both to and from the school. Since most parents work, this is very challenging. The PTO members are the best resource for determining parent availability along each of the routes and coordinating the program. An orientation meeting with all parents along the route should include a walkability audit of the route to identify potential safety challenges, go over safe walking practices and set up places to meet and "hand off" kids from one parent to another along the longer routes.

11. BikeSmart Training

On May 13 and 15, 2009, the SRTS coordinator and PE educator provided the Bike-Smart training to 80 students in Grades 2, 3, 4 and 5. The BikeSmart curriculum has two different courses- one designed for Grades 2-3 and another for Grades 4-6, that are tailored for each age group. The courses were developed by the Center for Health and Learning, Brattleboro, VT and the Vermont State Agency of Transportation.

A list of the concepts and skills taught in BikeSmart is attached as **Figure 10**. A key element of the course is the importance of always using a helmet and knowing its proper fit. BikeSmart also teaches the fundamental principles of safe bicycle operation without actually being on a bicycle, although one is used to demonstrate the concepts. The next level of the BikeSmart training is the "On-Bike" training, which is designed to be taught to children in Grades 4-5-6-7-8 and requires a bicycle and a helmet for each child. An introduction to this training was provided prior to the bike rodeo events.

BikeSmart should be provided every year in order to keep refreshing the concepts and help insure that no child misses the training. Continuous re-enforcement of the importance of wearing a bicycle helmet is critical for this age group. Teaching safe bicycling skills at the time when many children are learning to ride provides a solid foundation for enjoying it as recreation and encouraging cycling as a healthy alternative to driving. While trained BikeSmart educators may be available in the community, the

WALKING SCHOOL BUS ON WEDNESDAYS

We are organizing a **Walking School Bus**, when parents take turns walking groups of students to school, to be held on Wednesdays. The idea is to get more children and parents walking to school. If you are too far to walk the whole way, another parent will meet you part-way and complete the walk. *Are you available in the morning or afternoon? Do you know parents you can organize this with? If you are interested in participating, please complete this form and return it with your child. We will connect you with other parents and discuss routes you can use to meet other walking groups.*

PARENT NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____

Names and Grades of students:

PLEASE CHECK ONE

() *I cannot walk, but my child has permission to join a walking school bus with a pre-approved adult.*

() *I will lead a walking school bus from my neighborhood to the school.*

() *I can lead a walking school bus part of the way:*

FROM (street name) _____

TO (street name) _____

QUESTIONS or CONCERNS

BIKESMART VERMONT!

GRADES 2-6

Time: 45-60 minutes

Vermont's Safe Routes to School program has set a goal to have one *BikeSmart Vermont!* lesson taught to children in grades 2-6 in spring, ideally one lesson for grades 2-3, and one lesson for grades 4-6.

Vermont Standards

3.5 Students make informed, healthy choices that positively affect the health, safety and well being of themselves and others.

Evidence: Students demonstrate knowledge and skills to make informed choices and decisions about biking safely.

3.6 Students demonstrate competency in many and proficiency in a few of the skills and concepts needed for a lifetime of physical activity.

Evidence: Students practice personal and group safety by applying rules, procedures, and practices of bicycle safety.

Key Concepts and Skills

Table 3: *BikeSmart Vermont!* Key Concepts and Skills This table summarizes the key concepts and skills covered in the *BikeSmart Vermont!*

BIKESMART VERMONT!	
Key Concepts & Skills	
<p>Helmet Safety Know when to wear and replace a helmet Know how to properly fit a helmet ...Eyes-Ears-Mouth ...Do not use portable electronic devices, head-phones or cell phones</p> <p>Dress for Safety Dress light and tight Know how to carry loads</p>	<p>ABC Bike Quick Check Check air brakes, chain, and quick releases</p> <p>Rules of the Road Know rights and responsibilities as a vehicle: • Ride right • Recognize and obey road signs • Use signaling Identify road hazards (4-6) Ride single file (4-6)</p>

Assessment

There are four major concepts taught in this lesson.

Students will be able to explain and demonstrate how to:

1. Use a helmet
2. Dress for bicycle safety
3. Conduct a Bike Quick Check
4. Follow the rules of the road

Students will score better than 80% correct on a ten-item pre-post assessment of knowledge and attitudes about bike safety.

PE educator should receive facilitator training when possible and incorporate the program directly into the PE curriculum.

BikeSmart educator training is available each year at a very nominal cost through the Center for Health and Learning. See the Center's website at www.healthandlearning.org or call 802-254-6590. Bike helmets are available at a reduced cost through Vermont Safe Kids (www.safekids.org). Orders may be placed through the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans). A helmet order form is attached (**Figure 11**).

12. Bicycle Rodeo (2009)

On May 20 and 22, 2009 the SRTS coordinator and PE educator set up a bicycle rodeo course in the school outdoor play fields. Children were advised the week before to bring their bikes and helmets to school or make arrangements to share with a friend. The school provided helmets for anyone not owning one and a few extra bikes were available for loan by the SRTS program. The event flyer is attached for use in holding future bike rodeos (**Figure 12**).

The rodeo included two separate skills courses and brief bike repair clinic for all children in Grades 2, 3, 4 and 5. The rodeo course tested skills in riding straight while looking left, dodging road hazards, crossing speed bumps, weaving through cones and riding through a narrow area. A variety of bike repairs including tubes, tires, seats, pedals, chains, brakes and cables were made on student bikes the morning of the events. After completing the rodeo event, several bike helmets were given away and all participants were given a red blinking safety light with the SRTS logo for using when walking or biking at night. Children were advised the week before to bring their bikes and helmets to school or make arrangements to share with a friend. The school provided helmets for anyone not owning one and a few extra bikes were available for loan by the SRTS program.

13. Community Sponsored Bicycle Rodeo

On June 6, 2009 the Bellows Falls Police Department, SRTS and Chittenden Bank combined forces to set up a bike rodeo in the Chittenden Bank parking lot on Atkinson Street in Bellows Falls. The event especially benefitted many of the SRES students who lived in Bellows Falls and were not able to bring a bike to the school rodeos. The BFPD provided 125 free helmets to kids predominantly residing within the village of Bellows Falls and registered bikes. SRTS provided BikeSmart instructions and helmet fitting directions to parents and children. A number of bike repairs were made as kids and parents watched and drawings were held for incentives such as bike gloves, shirts, sunglasses, water bottles, bike locks, tire pumps and wrenches. SRTS provided nine bicycles to kids who had arrived with bikes in unsafe condition.

14. Presentation to Local Boards

The SRTS project coordinator met with the WNESU Superintendent, WNESU Health Committee, town planning and public works staff and the police chief on several occasions during 2008 and 2009 seeking their input on proposed program development



Size	Unisex	Male	Female	Price	Total Qty.	Total \$
Toddler extra-small 19" - 20 3/8"		Not Avail.	Not Avail.	\$8.50		
Toddler regular 20" - 21 "				\$8.50		
Child (5-8 yrs) 21 " - 22"				\$8.50		
Youth (ages 8+) 22 1/8" - 23 1/8"				\$8.50		
Adult sm/med 22 3/8" - 23 1/8"				\$8.50		
Adult med/large 23 " - 24 3/8"				\$8.50		
Total Quantity						

Most helmet models are appropriate for either gender, however certain helmet color/graphics may appeal more to girls (e.g. pink, flowers) or boys (black, flames).

It is not recommended that children under one year of age be carried on bikes or wear helmets because of limited neck strength.

Return check and completed form to:

**Vermont SAFE KIDS
c/o Jon Kaplan
29 Maple Street
Randolph, VT 05060**

Thank you for ordering helmets from VT SAFE KIDS. Your order helps support injury prevention projects of all types for children in Vermont. If you have any questions, call Jon Kaplan at (802) 828-0059.

Safe Routes

National Center for Safe Routes to School



ATTENTION:

PARENTS OF GRADES 2- 3- 4- 5 ONLY

As part of our Safe Routes to School program, students in Grades 2-3-4-5 will be participating in a BICYCLE Skills Workshop next week on _____. If possible, please let your child ride their bike to school or bring it to the school with them.* They should also bring their HELMET if they have one. If not, they can use a school helmet.

*Students may use their scooter if they prefer. We will share bikes with those that cannot bring one, but you're child will be more comfortable on his/her own bike.

Please call the school for more information.