



MASSACHUSETTS **SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL** ANNUAL REPORT

JULY 1, 2023 - JUNE 30, 2024

EVENT DATES

JULY-SEPTEMBER 2023:	SUMMER PROGRAMMING WITH SCHOOLS, DAY CAMPS, & COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS
AUGUST 23, 2023:	SIGNS & LINES AND INFRASTRUCTURE GRANTS LAUNCH INFORMATIONAL WEBINAR
AUGUST 24, 2023:	SAFE STREETS SMART TRIPS (SSST) HIGH SCHOOL VIDEO CONTEST LAUNCH AND WEBINAR
OCTOBER 4, 2023:	INTERNATIONAL WALK, BIKE, & ROLL TO SCHOOL DAY (iWALK)
OCTOBER 4, 2023:	SSST VIDEO CONTEST WINNERS ANNOUNCED AT MOVING TOGETHER CONFERENCE
DECEMBER 1, 2023:	ANNUAL PARTNER SURVEY LAUNCH
DECEMBER 6, 2023:	PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WEBINAR
JANUARY 8, 2024:	YARD SIGN DESIGN CONTEST LAUNCH
JANUARY 24, 2024:	WEBINAR FOR MUNICIPALITIES—ACCESSIBILITY & MOBILITY IN A DIGITAL AND PHYSICAL WORLD
FEBRUARY 7, 2024:	MASSACHUSETTS WINTER WALK, BIKE, & ROLL TO SCHOOL DAY
MARCH 1, 2024:	CROSSING GUARD APPRECIATION CAMPAIGN LAUNCH
MARCH 20, 2024:	CROSSING GUARD APPRECIATION DAY & LAST DAY TO SUBMIT NOMINATIONS FOR CROSSING GUARD OF THE YEAR AWARDS
APRIL 23, 2024:	SPRING WEBINAR—NEW TOOLS FOR SCHOOLS
MAY 1, 2024:	MASSACHUSETTS WALK, BIKE, & ROLL TO SCHOOL DAY
JUNE 6, 2024:	ANNUAL AWARDS CEREMONY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

MassDOT encourages the youth of the Commonwealth to approach the challenges of today with focused minds and active bodies. Through our Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program, we create lasting strategies to promote the health and well-being of students and their families—encouraging them to walk, bike, and roll to school and into the future. Our SRTS team envisions safe, healthy, and accessible options for getting to and from school for all students; each year we are reaching more students and building and executing more Program assets to make that vision a reality. As we continue to add Partner Schools, our statewide initiative is expanding and enhancing safety while encouraging active transportation for our students.

During the 2023-2024 project year, MassDOT's SRTS Program served **590,709 students** across the Commonwealth—**nearly 50,000 students more than the previous year**—with outreach programs, bike and pedestrian safety sessions, educational webinars, outreach materials, incentives, events, contests, and more.

Supporting our school-aged children is support for our future. These are among our most vulnerable road users, making our dedication to SRTS even more vital as we prioritize student safety by promoting active modes of transportation and improving our infrastructure. We advanced safe infrastructure around eight schools by awarding nearly **\$10 million in Infrastructure and Signs & Lines grants**. For High School students, we added new outreach materials based on lessons learned from the High School focus groups held during the 2023-2024 school year, and we innovated technologically with a new Listserv and Technical Assistance Program.

This report summarizes our efforts and achievements throughout the year. It highlights sustainable activities, resources, and events that benefit students, schools, parents/guardians, and the diverse communities of Massachusetts, both now and in the years ahead.

Sincerely,

Monica Tibbits-Nutt
Secretary and Chief Executive Officer, MassDOT



DIRECTOR LETTER

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Dear Friends,

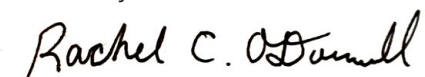
On behalf of MassDOT, we are pleased to share this Annual Impact Report for 2023-2024. As we venture deeper into a future of automation, electronics, technology, and screen time, we strive to instill in our youth the importance of keeping their bodies and minds active by biking, walking, and rolling (not scrolling). Thanks to their participation in the SRTS Program, our students develop confidence, life skills, and awareness, ultimately leading to a safer, healthier, and more equitable future for all. Our team made it a priority to personally visit hundreds of schools and assertively encourage and empower students and their families to incorporate safe and active commuting into their daily routines, and to share this message among their peers. As a result, we continued to expand our reach—growing again in all areas—with increased participation in the Program across the Commonwealth.

I present to you some accomplishments from our significant and successful year:

- Our total engagement this year included **2,000+ unique events, meetings, presentations, and trainings with partners.**
- We underscored the importance of how to stay safe around school buses and developed a new **backpack flyer resource** in ten languages.
- We increased our **partnerships with high schools** and added exciting new outreach materials and programming activities.
- We engineered constructive improvements for the future by awarding **five more Signs and Lines grants and four Infrastructure Grants.**
- We launched a series of **case studies in rural areas** documenting achievements and lessons learned in forming Park, Walk, & Rolls and Bike Trains.
- We launched our **Bike Rack Grant Pilot Program** to encourage more students to bicycle to school by increasing the number of bicycle parking spaces.
- We redeveloped the **Family Travel Survey** tool. We added an option that allows students to complete the survey instead of a parent/guardian and developed a mobile-friendly version of the tool.
- We leveraged online tools to boost community engagement; we developed and launched the new **MA SRTS Listserv platform** through which SRTS partners across Massachusetts can connect, exchange ideas, and share resources.
- We developed a **new Technical Assistance Program** for eligible communities that apply for SRTS infrastructure funding to help set communities up for success.

I would like to extend the Massachusetts Safe Routes to School team's sincere appreciation to our extraordinary **1,436** School and Alliance Partners for supporting and adopting our Program and whose willing collaboration helps us create activities and resources to make Massachusetts safer and more engaging for our students. Together, with conscientious planning, persistence, and passion, we will continue to create strong, long-term Safe Routes to School programs, making our communities safer and healthier for generations to come.

Sincerely,



Rachel O'Donnell, Program Director

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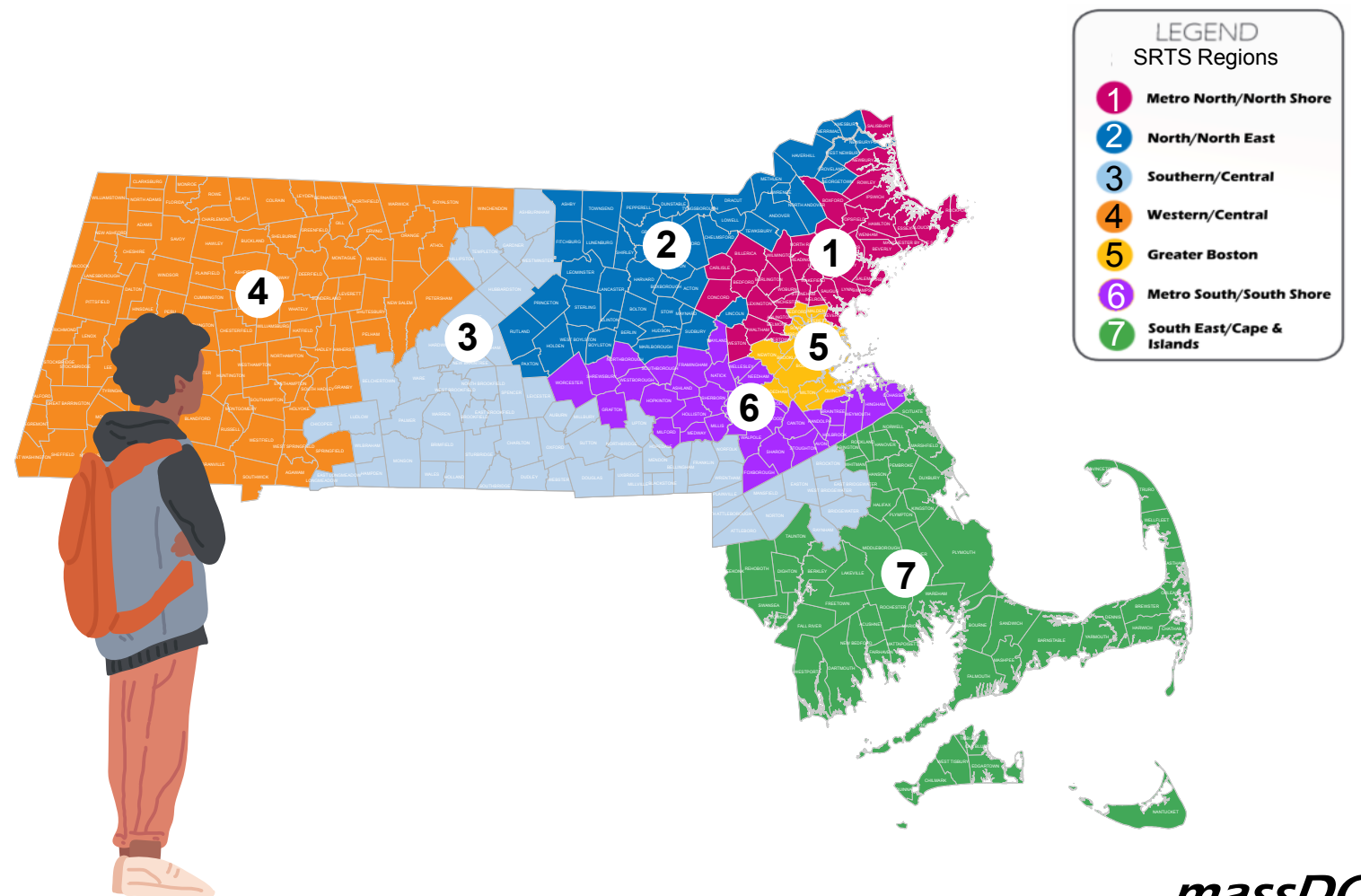
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SUBCONSULTANT ACTIVITY

BACKGROUND & REACH

SRTS Partners with 64% of eligible Massachusetts Public & Charter K-12 Schools!

In 2023-2024, its 19th year, MassDOT's free, federally funded program, Safe Routes to School (SRTS), continues to work collaboratively with students, schools, educators, law enforcement, parents/guardians, community-led organizations, and public health departments to positively impact student safety and health by making active commutes equitable, enjoyable, realistic, and sustainable options. Utilizing the proven framework of the six Es of SRTS—**Education, Encouragement, Engagement, Evaluation, Engineering, and, overarching all areas, Equity**—we strive to meet the highest standards and hold ourselves accountable for our commitment. Across Massachusetts, our Outreach Coordinators use a community-focused approach, bridging the gap between health and transportation. Our goal of providing active and safe ways to school for all students in all communities yields additional positive results: healthier students, higher academic achievement, improved air quality, reduced congestion, higher attendance, reduced tardiness and absenteeism, and enhanced social and interpersonal skills.





782

Flagship Days School Registrations

-International Walk, Bike, & Roll to School Day (iWalk) events: **272**

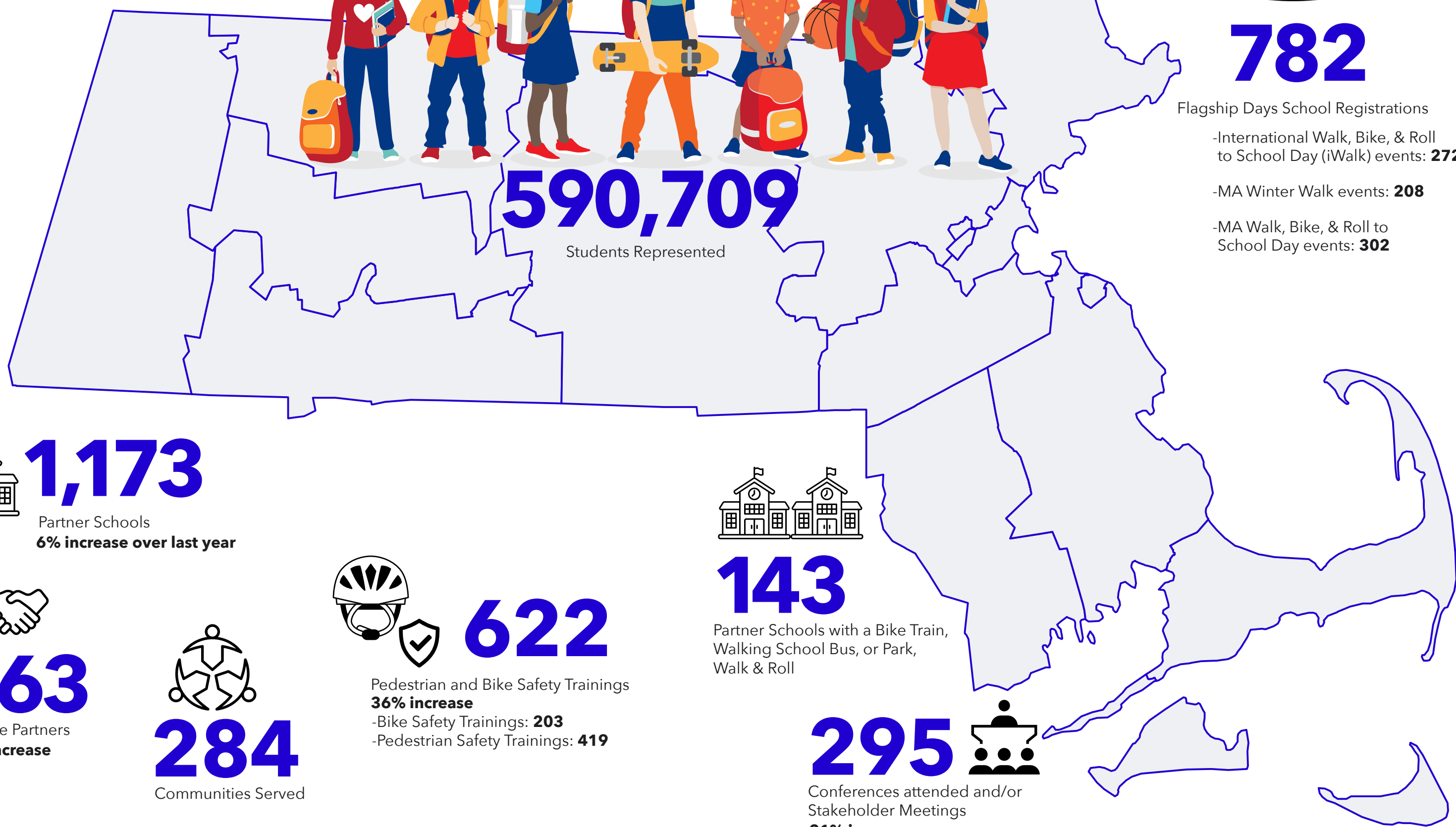
-MA Winter Walk events: **208**

-MA Walk, Bike, & Roll to School Day events: **302**



590,709

Students Represented



1,173

Partner Schools

6% increase over last year



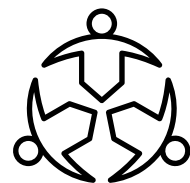
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Partner Schools with a Bike Train, Walking School Bus, or Park, Walk & Roll



263

Alliance Partners
16% increase



284

Communities Served



622

Pedestrian and Bike Safety Trainings

36% increase

-Bike Safety Trainings: **203**

-Pedestrian Safety Trainings: **419**



295

Conferences attended and/or Stakeholder Meetings

21% increase

EDUCATION



“The support we have received from SRTS has been key in our attempt to educate our students and families about alternate ways to get their students to school. Their professional development, student programs (like the pedestrian safety course for our second graders before Halloween and their bike safety program for our fourth graders), webinars, and support staff have been invaluable to us. We could not have implemented our walkers’ program without their assistance. I cannot recommend SRTS more highly.

—Dr. Mark Levine, Dean of Students, Florence Sawyer School, Nashoba School District

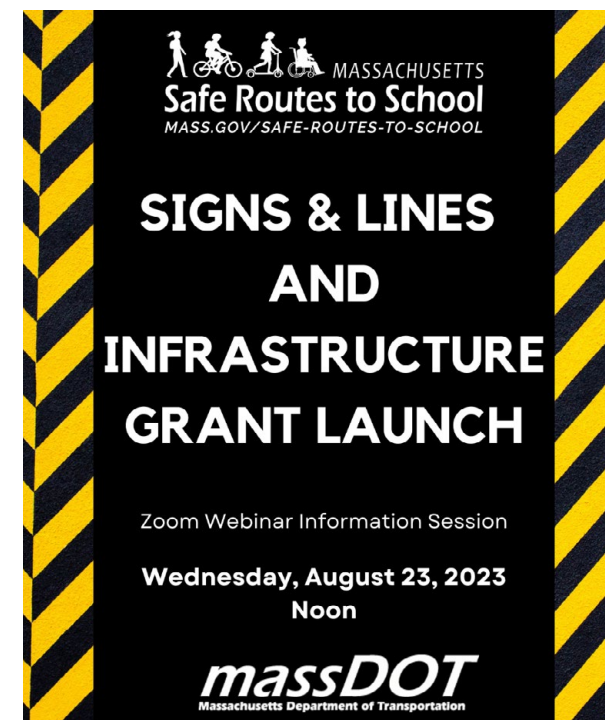


Developing Life Skills

Increasing our partnerships by the end of the project year to **1,173** unique schools in Massachusetts, provides us access to a comprehensive and innovative toolkit of best educational practices. We incorporate multiple proven techniques and materials to make learning enjoyable and effective in our bike and pedestrian safety trainings, videos, and educational resources. Our webinars delivered timely, pertinent information and calls to action to schools, students, educators, and communities, and all contributors are recognized during our Annual Awards Ceremony.

Webinars, Conferences, Surveys, Case Studies, and Demonstrations

The 2023 Signs and Lines and Infrastructure Grant Informational Webinar delivered an overview of the grant programs, eligibility, and application instructions, and gave SRTS partners the tools they needed to consider how these grants could benefit their schools. The webinar also introduced the newly established Technical Assistance Program.



The Safe Streets, Smart Trips (SSST) High School Video Contest Information Session webinar informed viewers with an overview of the contest and explained submission guidelines, eligibility and rules, theme, and how to submit videos. It showcased previous winners and prizes for our 2023 SSST High School Video Contest. Also available for students was a recording of the session and a PDF with submission guidelines.

Our Webinar for Municipalities—Accessibility and Mobility in a Digital and Physical World outlined guidelines for physical, language, and digital accessibility and why it matters to SRTS. Three experts in ADA accessibility, translation, and digital accessibility, respectively, shared background information, including history and laws, and discussed the benefits and solutions to making mobility and materials accessible to all. This information-rich webinar is available on the SRTS website

New Tools for Schools

2023 – 2024 School Year

April 23, 2024

massDOT Massachusetts Department of Transportation

Safe Routes to School

In this year's **Spring Webinar—New Tools for Schools**, our MassDOT SRTS team shared a new and extensive range of educational resources, including website updates, engaging marketing campaigns (print and electronic), informative webinars, insightful surveys, popular contests, and we introduced our Bike Rack Pilot Program.

MASSACHUSETTS SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL PROGRAM GUIDE

massDOT Massachusetts Department of Transportation

MASSACHUSETTS Safe Routes to School

Updated 2024

The **Massachusetts Safe Routes to School Program Guide** is an essential resource for anyone engaged in the Massachusetts SRTS Program, whether they are exploring the Program as a recent partner or a seasoned collaborator. The Program Guide offers a comprehensive overview of the Program's core initiatives and resources, designed to help school representatives navigate and utilize the extensive range of available support for effectively planning and implementing their annual SRTS initiatives.



Our new **Bus-Friendly-Driver Backpack Flyer**, available in ten languages, including Haitian Creole, French, Khmer, Mandarin, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Arabic, and Vietnamese, helps educate students on how to stay safe around buses. It includes safety tip guidelines for driving around all buses, school buses and the law, school bus safety distinctions, and how to stay safe by avoiding the "danger zones." The flyer's succinct language and clear graphics make bus safety accessible for students of all ages.

ACTIVE BODIES, FOCUSED MINDS.

We all seek moments of tranquility and a breath of fresh air. What if those moments were not just for weekends, but woven into every school day? The Massachusetts Safe Routes to School Program has worked with educators and students for more than two decades to make good on this vision, transforming daily travel to and from school into a source of health for you and your students.

A CHANGE IN ROUTINE CAN CHANGE EVERYTHING

My son actually got that pedestrian safety class from Safe Routes to School last year in 2nd grade! We don't change their pace of descent from about school but that stood out, so he made sure to mention it!"

—Aimee Sargent, Parent

SMART MOVES FOR THE CLASSROOM

Studies show that just 20 minutes of walking can result in up to a 20% increase in student concentration.

Scan the QR code to learn more and schedule your SRTS consultation.

massDOT Massachusetts Department of Transportation

Safe Routes to School

Our new **Breakroom Poster—Active Bodies, Focused Minds**, developed for educators, is both eye-catching and informative and stresses the connection between movement and improved focus. The poster informs readers that encouraging students to embrace physical activity can improve their productivity in the classroom. The QR code brings educators to a site where they can learn more and schedule a SRTS consultation.



We held a **SRTS Professional Development (PD) Information Session** to answer the questions: *Why?* (Safety first); *What?* (Meeting local needs); and *How?* (The Six Es), to encourage educators to want to learn more and develop their skills and understanding through the various modules of our PD training opportunities supported by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). This PD training is recommended for teaching professionals and staff, school administrators, advocates, and community partners; the modules offer:

1. General Safe Routes to Schools Materials
2. SRTS Bicycle Safety and Pedestrian Safety Materials
3. Bicycle and Pedestrian Life Skills

Case Studies for Rural Communities and Bike Trains illustrate and evaluate the support the SRTS Program offers to School Partners to develop and sustain fun social bicycling, walking, and rolling opportunities promoting safe trips to and from school. Case Studies for Rural Communities inspire other rural schools to participate in the Program regardless of the size of their school or the existing (or lack of) infrastructure. For example, one study revealed that in school settings where the infrastructure is lacking, it is possible to find creative solutions, like taking laps around the school or gym on Flagship Days, to support and encourage healthy activity for all students. These case studies help the SRTS Program team assess their impacts and garner lessons learned to guide future planning.

BRIGHTEN YOUR WALK TO SCHOOL

Follow these walking safety tips. Add color to your journey along the way!

- 1 Walk on the sidewalk. If there are no sidewalks, walk on the side of the road facing traffic.
- 2 Share the sidewalk with others—don't run.
- 3 Cross the street using crosswalks and at intersections. Never cross mid-block or between cars.
- 4 Before crossing, remember to look **LEFT-RIGHT-LEFT-ALL AROUND** for driveway and street traffic.
- 5 Make eye contact with drivers and wait for them to signal before crossing.
- 6 Wear bright clothes and reflective gear to be seen.
- 7 Don't be distracted—remove headphones and don't use your phone.
- 8 Be aware of your surroundings.
- 9 Rain or shine, enjoy a safe walk to school each day!

Our new **Walk Safety Tips Bookmark** invites young students to "take a walk" along a path with tips that support safety on their commutes to and from school. The bookmark includes vignettes that the students can color and add to, to make the journey their own, customizing the bookmark for a more personal keepsake.

ANNUAL AWARDS CEREMONY



Our highly anticipated Annual Awards Ceremony once again brought together SRTS champions from all corners of Massachusetts to recognize and celebrate the Program’s School Partners, community champions, stakeholders, and Crossing Guards who have made significant contributions within their communities by strengthening, promoting, and improving safety for students who actively commute to and from school. At this year’s ceremony, **MassDOT Federal Programs Coordinator Miranda Briseño** opened with a “Year in Review” of the Program’s accomplishments and highlights. **MassDOT Highway Administrator Jonathan Gulliver** also spoke on behalf of the department.

As **Keynote Speaker, MassDOT Transportation Secretary and CEO Monica Tibbits-Nutt** emphasized the Program’s continued and increasing successes in improving students’ safety, focus, socialization, and health. As students grow along with the Program, it will be a positive influence on them for years to come.

“We are thankful to all the school communities and the advocates whose input through the Safe Routes to School Program helps us identify the specific strategies, resources, and tools needed to better protect our school children. Their dedication makes a meaningful difference, and these awards are a token of our appreciation not just for the winners whom we congratulate, but for everyone who has contributed to the important mission of keeping all road users safe.”

—Monica Tibbits-Nutt, Transportation Secretary and CEO

We awarded Partner-Level Certificates to **273** school partners across Massachusetts who completed SRTS activities and events, qualifying them for Basic, Bronze, Silver, and Gold partner-level awards. We also welcomed **70** new school partners and **39** new alliance partners, awarded the Community Collaboration Award, celebrated exemplary Programs by region, and honored the winners of our Crossing Guard of the Year award.

We heard from SRTS supporters including Caitlin Kelly, District Wellness Coordinator, Somerville Public Schools who offered School Partner remarks, and Community Partner, Jeffrey Tatro, New Bedford Transportation Director, Massachusetts Association of Pupil Transportation Board President.



Exemplary Program Winners by Region

Awarded to schools that set a notable example by crafting a new or existing Safe Routes to School Program through innovation, creativity, and engagement:

- **Winner**—Silvio O. Conte Community School, Pittsfield (Western)
- **Honorable Mention**—William G. Morgan School, Holyoke (Western)
- **Winner**—Somerville High School, Somerville (Central)
- **Winner**—Patrick Lyndon Pilot School, Boston (Northeast)
- **Honorable Mention**—High Plain Elementary School, Andover (Northeast)
- **Winner**—West Tisbury School, Martha’s Vineyard (Southeast)
- **Honorable Mention**—Joseph R. Dawe, Jr. Elementary School, Stoughton (Southeast)

Community Collaboration Winners

Awarded to an Alliance Partner organization that strongly demonstrated the importance of collaborating among schools and community stakeholders and furthered the mission of Safe Routes to School:

- **Winner:** Berkshire Bike Path Council works across Berkshire County to expand shared-use paths and increase safety on roads, paths, trails, and tracks for cyclists of all ages and abilities. The Council generously collaborates with schools, local businesses, and other community organizations and volunteers to lead bike events, including community bike rides and Bike Rodeos. It supports school-led Bike Trains and Walk, Bike, and Roll to School flagship events and helps coordinate bike helmet donations and bike helmet fittings.
- **Honorable Mention:** Brookline Safe Routes to School Task Force



Nikki Tishler Memorial Award

Awarded to an individual who served as a true champion of SRTS over the past year, making the extra effort to ensure a successful Program in their community, this eponymous SRTS award is dedicated to the memory of Nikki Tishler, SRTS's great "Superhero."

Jenn Martin, Newton Safe Routes to School Task Force

Jenn's dedication to improving the health of our children and our planet is what the Nikki Tishler Memorial Award recognizes. Jenn researched anti-idling efforts and collaborated with the community to get buy-in on the campaign she designed and launched, "Idle Free Newton." Her ability to describe travel-related concerns to schools throughout Newton is a testament to her commitment to lessen the number of students traveling to/from school by family vehicle. She has worked with the Newton Parks and Recreation Department, Bike Newton, and our SRTS Program to host a city-wide bike rodeo.

Jenn attends every webinar or event that our SRTS team hosts; she reaches out to other active transportation coordinators, parent champions, and has joined the City of Newton as their Transportation Planner. Jenn Martin does not talk the talk; she walks the walk.

ENCOURAGEMENT

A FEW INSPIRATIONS FROM MONTHLY TALES FROM THE FIELD

“ I love all the safety and community access aspects of Safe Routes to School and we always have so much fun riding bikes together. But on a deeper level, this initiative gives agency to the young riders. It empowers our riders to have a little more control over how they get to and from school. Finally, it is a morale and community booster and has become a source of school pride. I look forward to many more years as a SRTS partner.

—Matt Behnke, Special Education Teacher,
Silvio O. Conte Community School,
Pittsfield School District



- **July 2023:** Judy Crocker, MA SRTS Outreach Supervisor and Statewide Lead, joined the **MA School Administrators Association's Summer Institute** to discuss strategies and case studies on how to best bridge the gap between health and student transportation. The session focused on programming, planning, and education.
- **September 2023:** Accessibility and inclusion take many forms. During the **District-wide family engagement Tu Voz (Your Voice) meeting**, Lawrence's administration introduced the SRTS Program and launched roundtable conversations for family members. Topics included the roll-out of maps at their 17 K-8 schools used to encourage **Walking School Buses**.
- **November 2023:** SRTS hosted a **Bike Rodeo at Greenfield Middle School** and partnered with two local bike shops—Bicycle World and Outer Limits, and the Greenfield Police Dept.
- **December 2023:** SRTS Outreach Coordinator Colleen Pekrul joined the **Wood School Bike Bus** for the last ride of 2023. Nearly 20 students joined in below-freezing temperatures; in fair weather, 50+ students participated.
- **March 2024:** The City of Fall River established a **Walking School Bus** program at nine out of ten of its district elementary schools—"a positive way to start the day," said Dan Fitzgerald, Fall River District Director of Health and P.E.
- **April 2024:** SRTS Sr. Outreach Coordinator and Bike Education Lead, Vivian Ortiz, hosted a **bike education session** at the Mattapan Library. Originally, a mini **Bike Rodeo** was planned at the library parking lot, but due to rain, attendees were able to bring their bikes inside for the session.
- **May 2024:** Our Safe Routes to School team attended the **2024 Healthy Kids, Healthy Programs Summit** for school nutrition professionals and wellness committee members to discuss the Wellness Policy and its impact on our students.



SRTS SAFETY INCENTIVES DISTRIBUTED OVER THE 2023-2024 PROGRAM YEAR



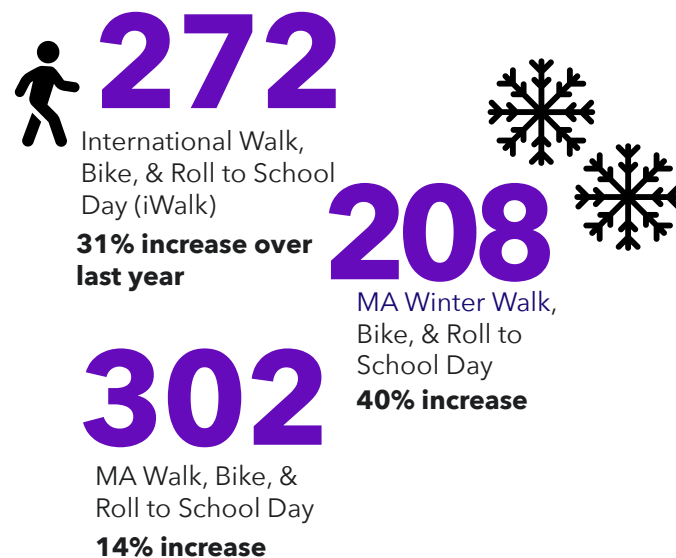
“Nothing is impossible. The word itself says ‘I’m possible!’”

– Audrey Hepburn

Encouragement opens the door to endless possibilities, allowing students to discover their inner strength and creativity. We organize events and contests with serious core messages, encouraging students to actively participate in fun, and meaningful ways—and they continue to deliver with fresh ideas and enthusiasm.

more than last year. These events can also bring families, champions, community members, elected officials, and law enforcement together to commit to addressing urgent safety needs and reinforce the value of choosing to walk or ride.

Flagship Days: Number of Schools Registered



Flagship Days

Massachusetts students assembled for three statewide Flagship Day events to demonstrate what they have learned about walking, biking, and rolling to school. Flyers, geared toward family participation rather than event registration, in English, Haitian Creole, Spanish, and Portuguese, helped get the word out before the events. In addition, three principal-focused flyers encouraged educators to register their schools. Participation continued to grow this year with **782** schools registering for the events—**24%**

Safety Incentives	Quantity
Biking Stickers (17,774); Walking Stickers (56,066)	73,840
Bookmarks; Walk, Hand Signals, Arrival/Dismissal	115,953
Helmets	201
Velcro Reflective Bands	3,996
Lights: Backpack and Bicycle Duo	85
Bicycle U-Locks	45
Posters—Bike (1); Helmet Fit (1)	2
Tip cards for Safety: Riding Night and Winter	590
SRTS Safety Vests	4
Survey Incentive Kits	3
Maps—Walk Across: America (1); Massachusetts (1)	2
Walking School Bus Kits	18
Yard Signs	142
Total Incentives Distributed:	194,881

Thank you to our generous partner, the law firm of Breakstone, White, & Gluck's **Project KidSafe Campaign**, for again donating bike helmets for distribution to students.

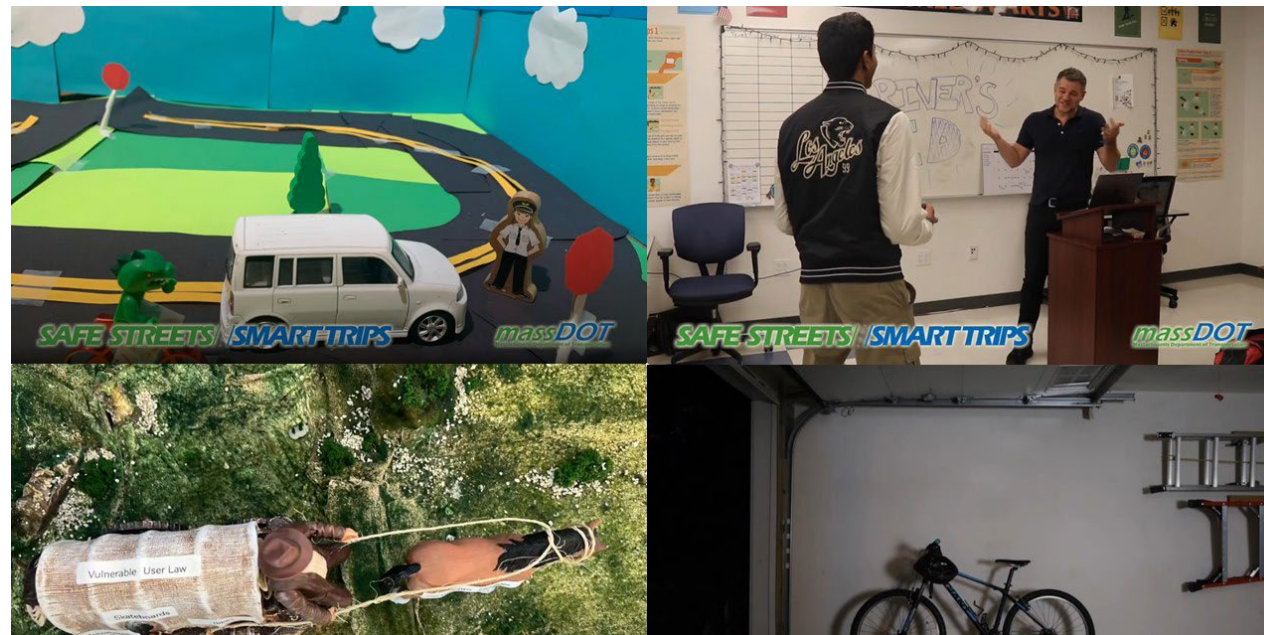


Bike Rack Grant Pilot Program

SRTS encourages students to bicycle to school—but, if there is nowhere to park a bicycle once student bicyclists arrive, it can be discouraging. To remedy this, we launched our Bike Rack Pilot Program to grant eligible schools new bike racks for their students. Safe, simple, and sufficient bicycle parking at schools is essential; it can set the foundation for a successful SRTS Program by providing adequate end-of-trip facilities, which support students and their parents/guardians bicycling to school. We reached out to schools that have voiced a need for bike racks in the past and selected three schools:

- Ashfield Middle School, Brockton
- East Middle School, Brockton
- Andrews Middle School, Medford

Fifteen bike racks (five racks per school) were purchased and installed in the three schools, providing **30 new bike spaces per school** (90 spaces total). Schools also received helmets, bike locks, and bike lights to accompany the bike racks and bike safety training. Continuance of this program will benefit students and their families by improving safety, increasing access, encouraging physical activity, reducing traffic congestion, and improving environmental health near schools.



Safe Streets Smart Trips (SSST) High School Video Contest

We asked High School students from across the state to use their SRTS-inspired knowledge and creative technical skills to illustrate how we must put safety first throughout all travel modes and do our part to decrease pedestrian and bicyclist injuries and tragedies on our roadways.

Students were asked to write and produce a 30-to 60-second video informing friends, family, and the local community about **who is a vulnerable road user and the new laws protecting them.**

We received **19** entries from **six** different schools.

“The Safe Streets Smart Trips High School Video Contest is a creative and innovative program aimed at supporting young people to teach each other about road safety. The new vulnerable user law is a topic that impacts everyone in the Commonwealth, and I am excited that we have six winning videos that remind drivers about new laws, including one requiring specific passing distances when approaching pedestrians, bicyclists, and other vulnerable users.”

—Transportation Secretary and CEO Monica Tibbits-Nutt

For our **tenth annual contest**, we created a retrospective video celebrating ten years of SSST, highlighting winning videos submitted from 2014 through 2022. The video may be found on the [MassDOT website](#). We announced the 2023-2024 contest winners at the MassDOT *Moving Together Active Transportation Conference* on October 4, 2023.

Winners in the Freshman/Sophomore Category

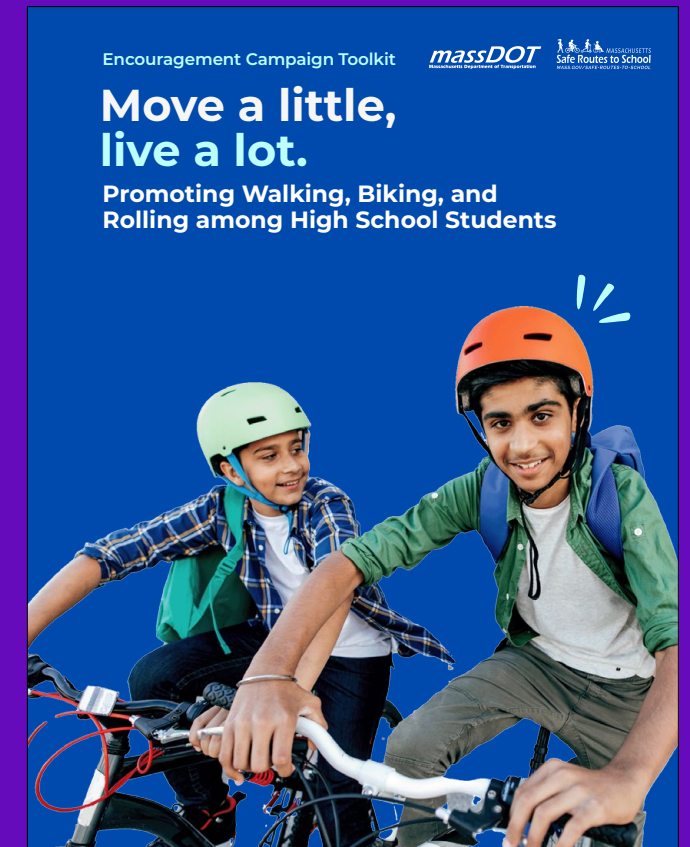
- **First Place:** Newton North High School –“4 Feet”
- **Runner Up:** Millis High School –“Vulnerable Wagon/Can’t Stop Motion”
- **Honorable Mention:** Newton North High School –“Guard the Lives of our Vulnerable Users”

Winners in the Junior/Senior Category

- **First Place:** Barnstable High School –“Vulnerable Users”
- **Runner Up:** Millis High School –“Invisible Biker”
- **Honorable Mention:** Millis High School –“4 Feet 4 Everyone”

High School Marketing Plan

Now in its second year of partnerships with High Schools, the SRTS Program has boosted our development and promotion of engaging educational materials, campaigns, and programs not only to the High School partners but directly to the High School student audience.



MassDOT SRTS High School Focus Groups

How better to find out what High School students think than to ask them the questions directly?

“Student Input Needed: High Schools Needed for Safe Travel Discussion Groups;” we initiated these discussion groups to help the MassDOT SRTS Program gain critical insights into transportation challenges and needs for High School students and their parents/guardians.

After the first year of implementation, the Program conducted seven discussion groups with High School students from various Massachusetts schools, including:

- Argosy Collegiate High School, Fall River
- Beverly High School, Beverly
- Boston Green Academy, Brighton
- Brockton High School, Brockton
- Brookline High School, Brookline
- Frontier Regional High School, Deerfield
- O’Bryant School of Math and Sciences, Boston

SRTS aimed to get a better understanding of the High School student audience to determine opportunities and barriers to school transportation, including walking, biking, rolling, transit, and driving safety.

MassDOT desired to know:

- How well does the current SRTS Program speak to High School students’ interests, lifestyles, and communication preferences?
- What types of messages most resonate with High School students?
- What Program improvements would make High School students more likely to participate in the SRTS Program?

Collaborating with High School students openly will effectively impact the development of meaningful programs and initiatives in the future, tailored with their input on mobility and safety in mind.

The discussion groups were conducted for approximately 40 to 55 minutes in a virtual format with the active participation of the SRTS Outreach Coordinator, who was present alongside the students. The discussion was structured into three key sections that explored the perspectives and preferences of High School students on safe travel initiatives from SRTS and gathered valuable feedback on the Program’s messaging and promotion.

The sections included:

- Questions to understand transportation behaviors and attitudes
- Questions exploring communication preferences
- Questions about the MassDOT SRTS Ambassador Program and messaging

The discussion groups offered valuable insights into the perspectives and priorities of High School students, educators, and the challenges inherent in engaging students in discussions related to school transportation and active commuting. Based on the focus group findings, we will explore the following recommendations to improve marketing activities that target High School students:

- Tailor SRTS campaigns based on school settings to address student barriers and needs
- Involve students in the implementation of marketing campaigns
- Adjust campaign messaging to address students’ personal motivations
- Streamline recruitment for the SRTS Ambassador Program via specialized tracks and internships

Energize the journey for your students.

Use this campaign kit to encourage active travel—walking, biking, and rolling—and to plan educational events and workshops for your school.

In a world where screen time plays a major role in our daily routines, students are seeking experiences that connect them with nature, their communities, and each other. The Massachusetts Safe Routes to School Program, made possible by Massachusetts Department of Transportation, has launched a campaign to motivate high school students to engage in more walking, biking, and rolling activities. This initiative aims to educate and inspire students to incorporate active travel into their daily lives. Whether it's commuting to school, exploring their neighborhoods, or seeking recreation and fitness, the program encourages students to embrace active modes of transportation.

Get Started

- 1 Use the promotional materials and content in this toolkit to begin building awareness of the benefits of walking, biking, and rolling.
- 2 Start the conversation with students in the classroom. You can use the **“Walking, Biking, and Rolling” educational handout** to guide your conversation around ways they can add in more active travel routines.
- 3 Use the **“Walking, Biking, and Rolling” event planning tipsheet** to coordinate an event or training workshop for your students.

According to a study conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), just 24% of high school students achieve the recommended 60 minutes of daily physical activity. However, a considerable number of students show interest in boosting their activity levels, especially in the outdoors.

<https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/physicalactivity/facts.htm>

Encouragement Campaign Toolkit –Move a little, live a lot.

This new resource for school administrators, educators, students, and staff is part of MassDOT’s campaign to motivate High School students to engage in more walking, biking, and rolling activities. It contains suggested school newsletter and website copy, digital graphics, posters, an event planning tip sheet to equip students for active travel, and classroom handouts with tips on how students can plan their active travel to school.

Brightly colored posters, with diverse students spending time outside or actively biking or rolling, include headings such as “That feeling when you’re on a roll! Feel the breeze and arrive energized,” are designed to encourage students to be active, positive, focused, and social.

MassDOT SRTS High School Ambassador Program

Established in the 2022-2023 school year, our High School Ambassador Program aims to recruit High School students and train them as volunteers for biking and pedestrian safety training with elementary and middle school students. With taglines including, “Volunteer to do good in your community,” “Get expert travel training,” “Add real-world experience to your resume,”

Month XX Car-Free Campus Day

Let's Show Our Planet—and Campus—Some Love.

In celebration of Earth Month, our high school will be car-free on [INSERT DATE]. Students, faculty, and staff will walk, bike, or roll to and from school this day. Riding the school bus or public transit on this day counts too! Join in, spread the word, and plan your route with friends and family.

What Your Pledge Means
This campus-wide pledge shows our school's commitment to safe, sustainable transportation choices and collective love for our planet.

- Boost your daily physical activity
- Improve air quality
- Create a safer travel environment for everyone

In partnership with **massDOT** and **Safe Routes to School**

and “Earn community service hours,” we provided High Schools with a marketing toolkit that included posters, flyers, website and newsletter content, and social media graphics and content to increase student interest and participation. By pledging to become SRTS Ambassadors, students receive the benefits promised in the promotional materials and gain confidence, self-esteem, and satisfaction in helping younger students and their families access safe, healthy, and equitable transportation options.

Car-Free Campus Day

In celebration of Earth Month, we encouraged High School students to make one day in April, May, or June car-free with a pledge to show the school’s commitment to safe, sustainable transportation choices and collective love for our planet. Our “Let’s Show Our Planet—and Campus—Some Love” marketing campaigns encouraged students to boost daily activity, improve air quality, and create a safer travel environment for everyone.

The Car-Free Campus Day Promotional Kit for schools included event posters and flyers, in two sizes and with four different photos, one representing each mode: walk, bike, roll, and bus/transit. The posters are customizable and include blank spaces for schools to insert the month and date when their campus will be car-free. The kit also includes suggested school website content, newsletter announcements, and social media content and graphics.

YARD SIGN DESIGN CONTEST

The imaginations of young minds know no bounds; we supply the theme, and our elementary and middle school students run with it—creating innovative responses to our call to promote safe roads for cyclists and pedestrians. The theme of our **8th annual** Yard Sign Design Contest was **“Bus Stop Safety.”** We received **722** entries (+215, or 30% more than last year) from **26** schools. With so many amazing entries, choosing the winners was difficult. For the second year in a row, two winning signs were multi-lingual. We printed the winning yard signs and delivered them to schools statewide which displayed them proudly on campuses and in family yards. We selected winners from:

- Michael Driscoll School, Brookline: “The Bus Should Stop Before You Go”
- Fowler School, Maynard: “Bus Stop, Drive Carefully”
- Fowler School, Maynard: “Stop Means Stop”
- High Plain Elementary School, Andover: “Stop”

ENGAGEMENT

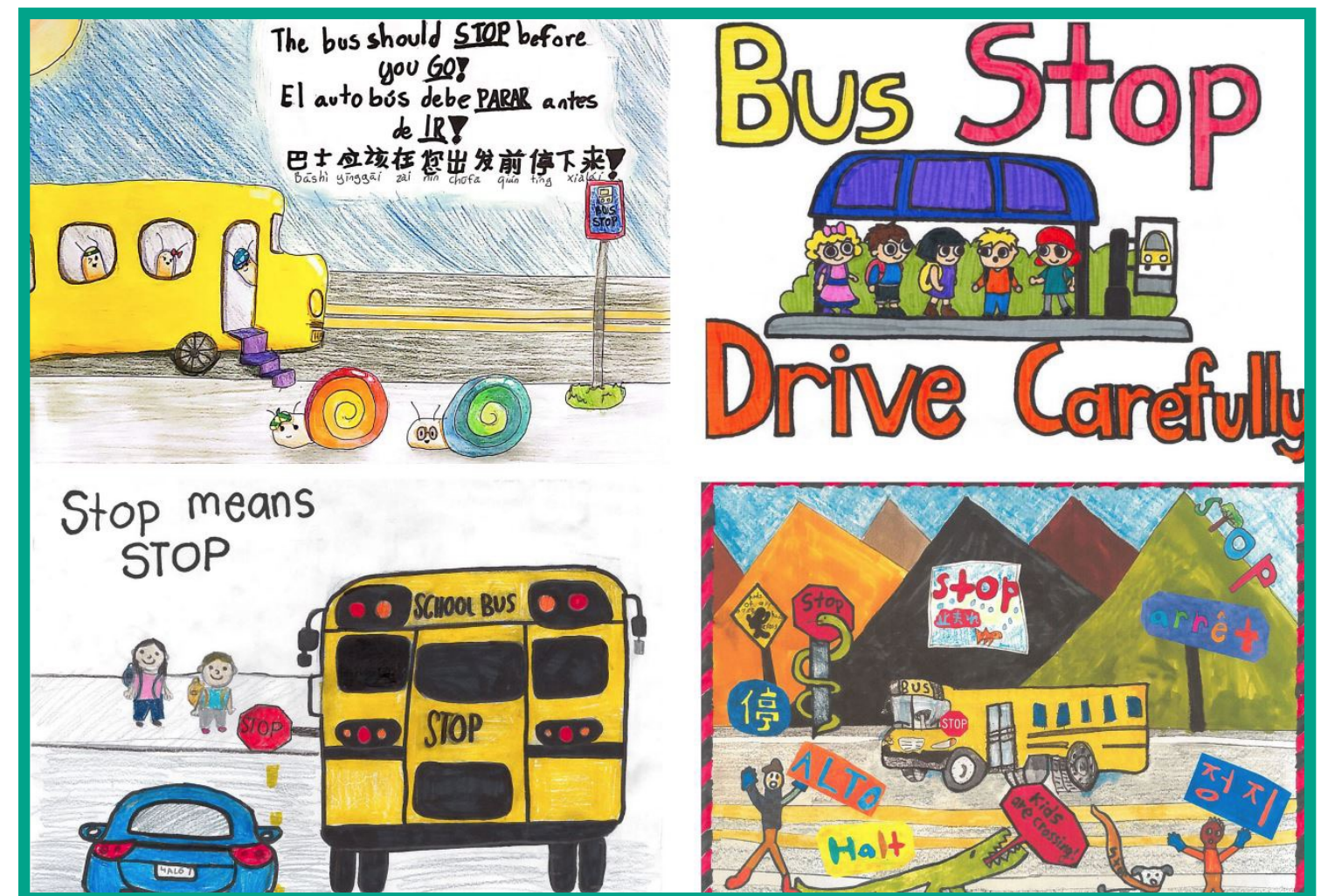
“Our students were really interested in transportation and safety, and this was such a great opportunity for them to engage with professionals who they may not have otherwise been able to meet. I see some transportation planners and engineers in our future!”

—Dennis Geniuch, Director of Wellness K-12,
Brockton Public Schools

Partnering to Achieve
Shared Goals

70
New School
Partners

39
New Alliance
Partners





Crossing Guard Appreciation Day

Increasingly, schools are recognizing the significant role Crossing Guards play with **21** Partner Schools newly adopting our SRTS Crossing Guard materials in 2023-2024 (for a current total of **68**). **Our fourth Annual** Crossing Guard Appreciation Day proved that students, families, and members of the community are recognizing this important role as well; they shared their esteem for this profession by nominating those dedicated champions deserving of our "Crossing Guard of the Year Award." This year we received **544** nominations (67% more than last year) for **90** Crossing Guards from **48** communities. We expressed gratitude to Crossing Guards all over the state on March 20, 2024, and announced the winners at our Annual Awards Ceremony in June 2024. Outreach materials included the development of a promotional flyer (also in Spanish, Portuguese, and Haitian Creole), posters, promotion on social media, and thank-you cards that students could download, sign, and give to their Crossing Guards.

Crossing Guard of the Year Winners

Crossing Guards are our heroes. They play an integral role in school communities throughout the Commonwealth; regardless of the weather and hazardous conditions, they support the safe travel of students and families to and from school, every school day. Our winners were selected based on stories of safety, dedication, and commitment to students and the community within, and outside of, their duties as a Crossing Guard. Finalists were chosen by the Massachusetts SRTS team and MassDOT.

Above and Beyond!

- **Winner:** Kim Brown, Jenkins Elementary School, Scituate—11 years as a Crossing Guard and 176 nominations



- **Honorable Mention:** Peter Nelson, Wood Hill Middle School, Andover
- **Crossing Guard Champions:**
 - Jacqueline Bellos, Midland Street Elementary School, Worcester
 - Roberta "Sue" Minnehan, Vinson-Owen Elementary School, Winchester
 - David Pinkham, Newman Elementary School, Needham



Listserv

The MA SRTS Listserv is a new platform on which SRTS partners across Massachusetts can connect, exchange ideas, and share resources. The goal of the Listserv is to reach communities and stakeholders that have not yet participated in the Program and deepen existing partners' involvement in the Program, ultimately giving them the confidence to elevate their individual SRTS Programs and help their communities become more sustainable. The registration form is on the STRS website where users can subscribe and connect with other SRTS stakeholders. In our first year, we engaged with **100** Listserv members in conversation topics including: SRTS Task Force best practices, Winter Biking, SRTS event promotion, Crossing Guards, School Zone Speed Limit signs & data, Metropolitan Council for Educational Opportunity (METCO) student participation in SRTS activities, and High School engagement during Bike Month.

Safe Routes to School

MASS.GOV/SAFE-ROUTES-TO-SCHOOL

The Massachusetts Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program is excited to launch a Massachusetts-centric SRTS listserv! This is a space for SRTS champions around the Commonwealth to ask each other questions, brainstorm ideas, and share resources. Please fill out the information below and you will be added to the group.

Contact Details

School Name/Organization*

Contact Name*

Phone Number*

Email*

City/Town*

-Please select-

School District*

Submit

EVALUATION

“ I have been incredibly grateful for the efforts of Holliston Select Board Chair, Tina Hein, in partnering with Safe Routes to School, and Parks and Rec’s Mark Frank’s and the Community Preservation Committee’s partnership in envisioning a community space for students and community members that will safely link to the rail trail and the town center.

–David Jordan, Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations, Holliston School District



Discovering the Means with Metrics and Measurements

81

Arrival/
Dismissal
Observations

131

Maps Created
for Walking,
Biking, & More

69

Partner Survey
Responses
representing 50
municipalities

25

↑ Walk
Assessments 36%

37

Partner Schools
Participated
in Parent/Guardian
Travel Surveys

3,855

Students
Represented
in Parent/Guardian
Travel Survey

ENGINEERING

Innovating Solutions; Building for a Better Future

The transportation planning available through the Safe Routes to School Program helps us engage schools and families to envision a safer and healthier future. The Signs and Lines projects and infrastructure funding help us make that vision a reality.

—Brian Pigeon, Senior Transportation Planner,
Worcester Department of Transportation
and Mobility



Our Engineering “E” provides guidance and grants to improve conditions around schools to encourage students to commute using public streets and sidewalks; we are building for safety, access, mobility, sustainability, and longevity. Through our two MassDOT grant programs, we continue to create better, safer infrastructure around our public elementary, middle, and high schools. Our resources, guidance, and observations—based on audits by professional engineers, SRTS team members, and school representatives—help schools and districts identify hazards, safety issues, and areas for improvement that students encounter when walking, bicycling, or using a wheeled mobility device to get to school. We are pleased to be able to provide funding for these important local SRTS projects which will help create safe pathways for students to get to and from their schools.

School Partners can apply for grants through **Signs and Lines**, which provides low-cost design and construction funding for projects such as crosswalk improvements and sign installation around schools. Signs and Lines projects eliminate small barriers students encounter when walking, bicycling, or using a wheeled mobility device to get to and from school. We provide up to **\$10,000** (increased from last year’s \$6,000) in eligible construction funding to selected municipalities, and approximately \$4,000 in additional benefits for assessment and design services. In this sixth year of the grant program, we awarded **five**

Signs and Lines grants. Including these, we have completed **23** Signs and Lines projects since the program’s inception.

Infrastructure projects seek to improve safety, access, and mobility for public K-12 students while also encouraging more students to walk and bicycle to school. Our **Infrastructure Grants** are designed for larger projects like sidewalk improvements, traffic calming measures, and bicycle facilities. Awards range from **\$300,000 to \$2 million** for eligible projects that meet the objectives of the SRTS Program; in this project year, we awarded approximately **nine million dollars** to four Massachusetts municipalities. Since the grant program’s inception, we have completed **39** infrastructure projects. Additionally, **45** projects are currently in progress.

This year, **our SRTS team developed a new service** that would provide technical assistance to eligible communities that applied for SRTS infrastructure funding. Technical assistance was available beginning August 23, 2023, prior to the communities submitting the applications. By providing technical assistance we can more equitably support communities that may not have adequate resources or staff to apply on their own. It also helps set communities up for success if awarded an infrastructure grant because some of the initial work of considering the needs of the community will have already been done.

5 Signs and Lines
Grants awarded

23 Signs & Lines
projects completed
since the Program's
inception

"Invention is the most important
product of a creative mind."

—Nikola Tesla



5 Infrastructure
Grants awarded

39 Infrastructure
projects completed
since the Program's
inception

45 Projects currently
in progress



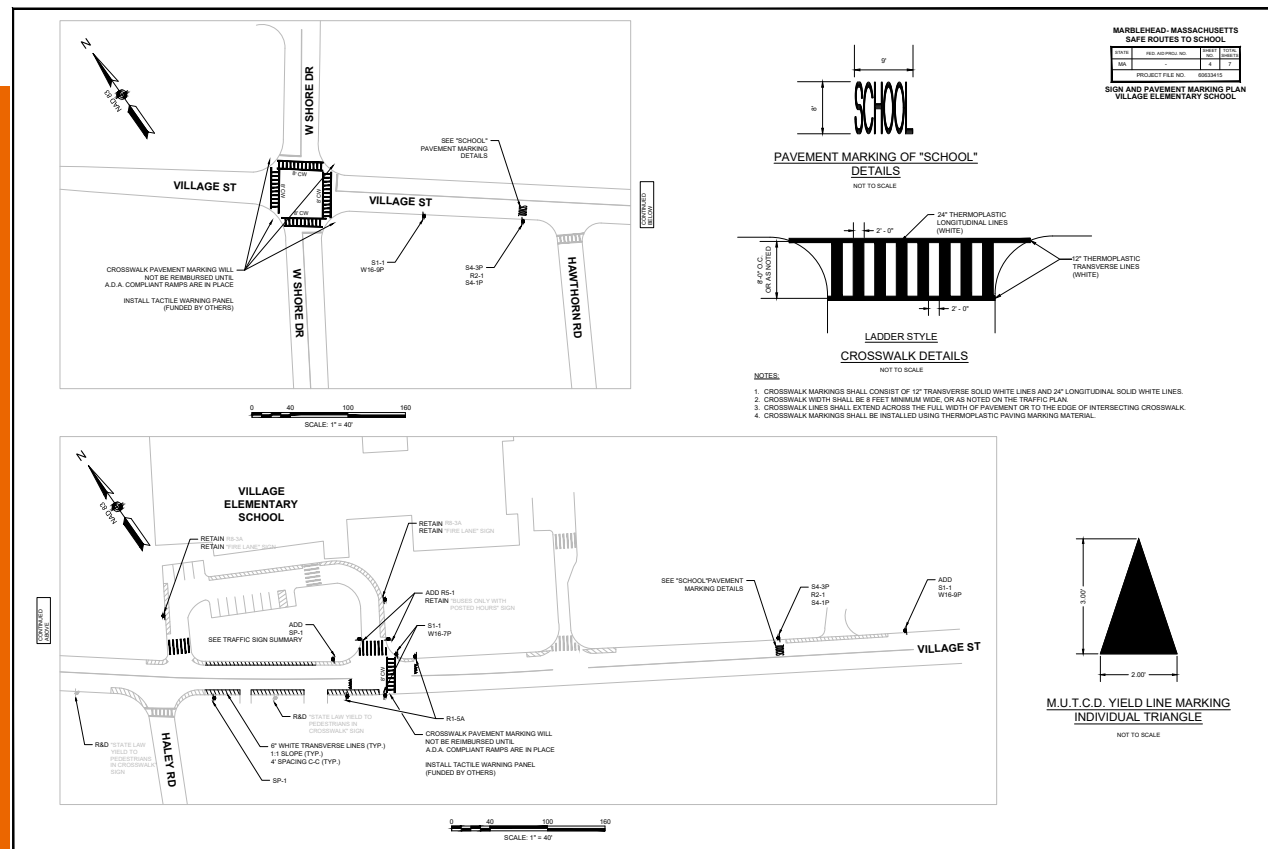
SIGNS AND LINES GRANTS¹

School	Municipality	Project Description - Improved safety, access, and mobility for students by the following:
Village Elementary School, Veterans Middle School, and Glover Elementary School	Marblehead	Install crosswalk pavement markings, white transverse lines on roadways, tactile warning panels, and new signage.
Alma Del Mar Charter School	New Bedford	Install crosswalk pavement markings, white transverse lines on roadways, and new signage.
Belmont Street Community School	Worcester	Install crosswalk pavement markings, white transverse lines on roadways, and new signage.

INFRASTRUCTURE GRANTS

School	Municipality	Project Description - Improved safety, access, and mobility for students by the following:
Barnstable Intermediate Elementary School	Barnstable	The removal of existing crosswalks, and installation of new pedestrian ramps, crosswalks, asphalt shared-use path with grass buffer, traffic signaling, and signage.
Webster Elementary School	Everett	Improvements by creating "NO PARKING" zones, installation of new sidewalks, traffic signalization including rectangular rapid flashing beacons, sign upgrades and replacements, and relocation of utilities.
Stoklosa Middle School	Lowell	Improvements to roadways on the street adjacent to the school, repairs to damaged sidewalks, and relocation of utilities. Installation of rectangular rapid flashing beacon, ADA compliant crosswalks with detectable warning strips, traffic signals with pedestrian crossing signals with post and push buttons at all of the crosswalks, and new signage.
John T. Nichols Jr. Middle School	Middleborough	Installation of a new shared-use path with a two-foot hardscape buffer, sidewalk, and ADA compliant crosswalks with detectable warning strips. Improvements with realignment of Y-intersection and traffic and pedestrian signal reconstruction.

¹ Two additional communities were awarded grants and were provided project designs. They were unable to complete the updates in time, however, the designs will still benefit the schools and communities.



There is a form for partners on the SRTS website by which they can request assistance to identify grant opportunities. The program—open to all SRTS Partner Schools and municipalities and includes rolling applications and support—is open year-round.

To assist with scoring grant applicants, MassDOT:

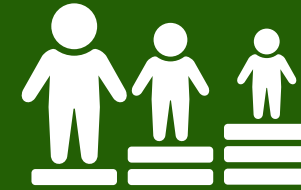
- Utilized a rubric that prioritizes equity through a variety of data points including the percentage of students served that are considered economically disadvantaged and the school's Title I designation.
- Included "Additional Equity Indicators" that identify Environmental Justice communities, average school attendance rate, and students with disabilities.
- Reviewed detailed plans and estimates for proposed work.
- Identified the level of school involvement in SRTS programs.

EQUITY

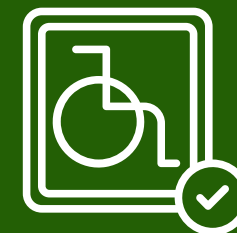
“Our students and families come from diverse cultural backgrounds and speak a variety of languages, so ensuring communication and materials, like the SRTS Family Travel Survey, and resources are publicized in multiple languages is essential for our school community.”

–Shirley Albert-Benedict, Principal,
Brickett Elementary School, Lynn Public Schools

Accessibility for All



Our commitment to equity serves as an overarching principle; we must reach ALL students and provide each with what they need to succeed. We understand that active travel is the only way some students can get to school and that the environment for walking and rolling is not the same everywhere; underserved neighborhoods demand improvement prioritization. It is our goal to collaborate with school leaders, local officials, and law enforcement to create infrastructure, programs, and pathways that are accessible, equitable, and have the latest best practices in place to ensure all students safely reach their destinations. When considering resources for education, encouragement, engagement, evaluation, and engineering, our first consideration is how to incorporate equity opportunities for every student into each of these “Es.”



For SRTS, this means continually improving the accessibility of resources for students, regardless of:

- Where they live—in a city, a rural area, or the suburbs.
- The language they speak—some materials are translated into nine languages, with family-friendly communication.
- Abilities—we use the term “rolling” to encompass bikes and wheeled mobility devices and our online materials are accessible to those with disabilities.
- Race, culture, and socio-economic status.



Since Equity is at the heart of each of the six Es, our team is devoted to developing ways to further equity in the Program. This year we launched our **Technical Assistance Program** when applying for SRTS grant programs so that our municipalities who may be staff-limited can also leverage this funding opportunity to support students in their communities.



“Ethics and equity and the principles of justice do not change with the calendar.”

– D. H. Lawrence

Our annual **Equity Assessment & Analysis** helps us evaluate our impact in delivering equitable programming. Building on the factors incorporated into the State of Massachusetts’ [School and District Profile reports](#), four of the five equity indicators were identified to track how well the MassDOT SRTS programming was distributed during the 2023-2024 school year. One indicator, school enrollment data, was provided by the Massachusetts Department of Education, 2023-2024.

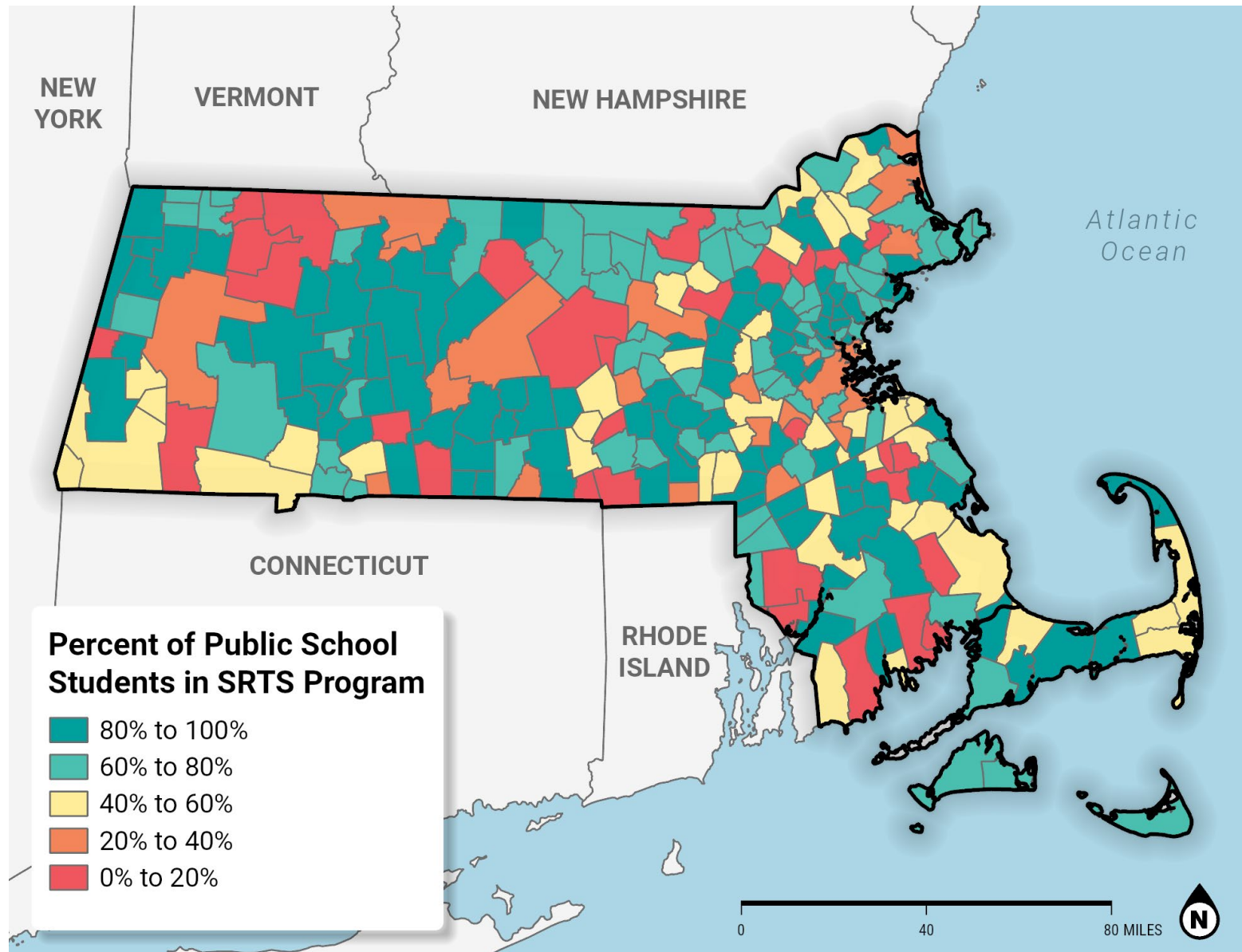
Equity indicator	All MA Students*	K-12 Schools		K-8 Schools		
		SRTS Program Partners Schools 2023-2024	SRTS Program Partners Schools 2022-2023	SRTS Program Partners Schools 2021-2022	SRTS Program Partners Schools 2020-2021	SRTS Program Partners Schools 2019-2020
Students in non-urban environments+	9.2%	10.8%	7.0%	10.8%	8.9%	8.9%
Low income students	41.4%	42.0%	42.3%	43.6%	37.3%*	32.7%*
Students with disability	18.9%	19.1%	18.3%	17.9%	17.6%	17.5%
Students indentifying as non-White or Hispanic	46.3%	46.9%	45.7%	43.9%	43.7%	42.6%
Students with limited English proficiency	13.1%	14.5%	13.9%	12.8%	12.2%	12.8%

+ Urban designations are based on U.S. Census data. For the 2020-2021 and 2019-2020 school years, 2010 Census data was used, while all subsequent years use 2020 Census data. This applies to public schools in Massachusetts that reported student enrollment statistics to the state for the specified school year.

*Percentage represents economically disadvantaged which is a narrower definition than low income.

The chart above illustrates how the MassDOT SRTS Program performs against five equity indicators in comparison to the overall youth population in Massachusetts and historical performance trends.

Several changes over the years make historical numbers not directly comparable. In the 2022-2023 school year, high schools became eligible for SRTS funding, expanding the data from public K-8 schools to all public K-12 schools in Massachusetts. Additionally, the number of low-income students is not directly comparable to previous years because the Department of Education reported the number of “low income” students in 2022 instead of “economically disadvantaged” students, as in previous years. The new “low income” definition is broader, which explains the significant increase in the percentage of students in this category.



The map above shows the proportion of students in each district attending schools that have partnered with the SRTS Program. It highlights that the Program’s reach is well-distributed across the state, not only in terms of the number of students served but also their geographic location, including suburban, urban, and rural areas.

The 2023-2024 MassDOT SRTS Program served a higher proportion of rural students compared to the overall youth population in Massachusetts. For equity indicators—such as students with disabilities, non-White or Hispanic students, and students with limited English proficiency—the Program served a greater number of students than the average of all schools (Partner and non-partner). Overall, the results indicate that the SRTS Program is well-representative of the general youth population in Massachusetts, regardless of school location, family income, ability, race, or English language proficiency.



MassDOT SRTS Program Equity Indicators Among Participating Schools 2023-2024



11%
of students at rural schools



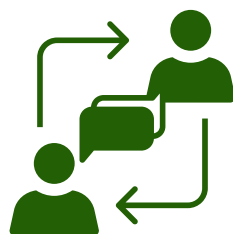
42%
low income students



19%
students with a disability



47%
students of color



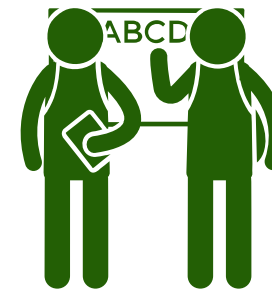
15%
students with limited English proficiency

85% of Environmental Justice Communities represented through the SRTS Partnership



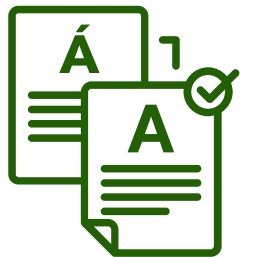
289
bicycle/
pedestrian
trainings
with Priority schools

17,071



non-English
resources
distributed

75



materials
translated
&/or tagged
for accessibility

COMMUNICATIONS

21 

Email Blasts

50% 

Open Rate in June 2024

(Overall open rate 46.1)

(Typical open rates for government sector emails in 2023 average 30%.²)



6,487

Subscribers

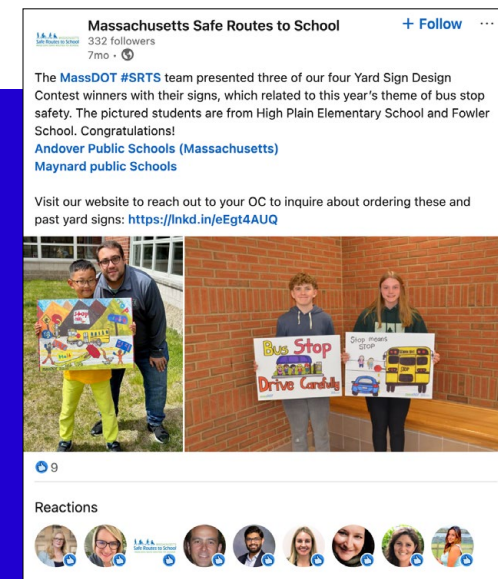
² Median open rate for state and local government accounts, reported from Granicus: <https://granicus.com/resource/2022-public-sector-digital-communications-benchmark-report/> is 30% (page 5 of report)



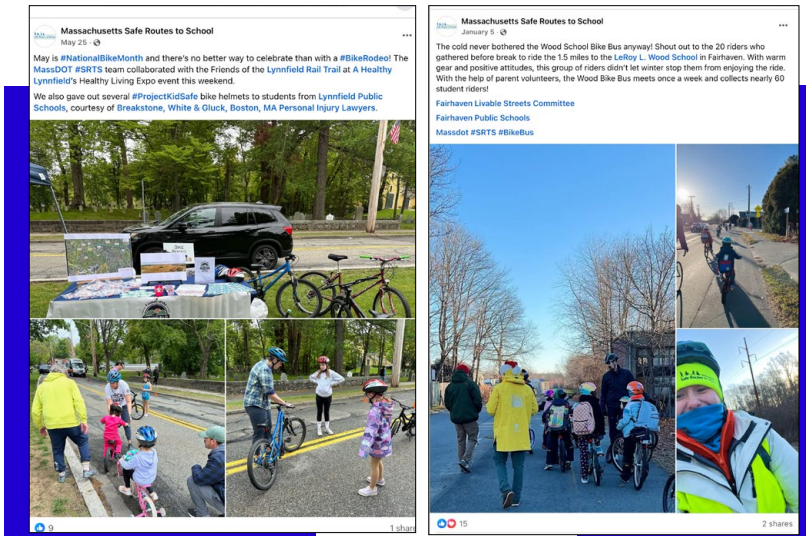
 509 followers



 274 followers



 1,204 followers



 2,172 followers



SUBCONSULTANT ACTIVITY

What's Next

The 2024-2025 school year will mark 20 years of MassDOT's Safe Routes to School Program!

A twentieth anniversary is often symbolized by emeralds or platinum—precious assets of great worth—and we consider our SRTS Program to be just that. We anticipate celebrating this significant milestone by continuing to deliver valuable programs and messages to benefit our students, their families, schools, communities, and their futures. Harnessing our combined knowledge and expertise will be the powerhouse guiding our approach for the 2024-2025 project year.

We anticipate, with enthusiasm, all we have planned to keep the MassDOT SRTS Program fresh and engaging. Next year we will continue to build on the foundation of this precious and growing Program:

- We will begin the development of a robust Five-Year Strategic Plan.
- We will continue to award Signs and Lines and Infrastructure Grants.
- We will continue our popular annual contests for Yard Sign Design, SSST High School Videos, and Crossing Guard of the Year Award.
- We will institute the Bike Rack Grant Program, piloted this year.
- We will develop and print an informative and attractive SRTS calendar for schools to display.
- And we will continue to develop our new Traffic Gardens Pilot Program in the Commonwealth.



OUR WORKING PARTNERS

At MassDOT, we collaborate with trusted industry experts and specialized providers to deliver excellence to Massachusetts schools, students, and communities. MassDOT would like to thank **AECOM** for providing comprehensive Program management and diligent outreach efforts that will carry us confidently into our twentieth year. In addition, **Alta Planning + Design** contributed their expertise to survey analysis, equity analysis, our Program Guide, webinar content, and other engaging materials. We partnered with **MassBike** on bicycle safety education, Bike Rodeos, and other events.





MASSACHUSETTS
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

10 PARK PLAZA, SUITE 4150
BOSTON, MA 02116

mass.gov/safe-routes-to-school