

# Walking School Bus

CASE STUDY

## Framingham

EDUCATION **ENCOURAGEMENT** ENGAGEMENT EVALUATION ENGINEERING EQUITY | URBAN RURAL **SUBURBAN**

### Background

MassDOT's Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program helps School Partners establish Walking School Buses and provides support to sustain these fun, active commutes for students. We create maps to plan the best routes based on student origin/destination and offer tips on structure, safety, staffing, and supervision. Check out our [Walking School Bus and Bike Train Guide](#) for step-by-step instructions to set up a Walking School Bus!

### Overview

One of the Harmony Grove Elementary School PE teachers was interested in starting a Walking School Bus (WSB) in a specific neighborhood where chronically absent and tardy students reside. Stakeholders, school staff, and Framingham police officers joined SRTS on a walk audit of the neighborhood to determine the best routes based on the density of students and the conditions of the existing infrastructure.

### The Story

- ✓ The new WSB routes and maps were presented at an event at the start of the school year
- ✓ The PE teacher greeted students with the map and told them, "If you live here, look for me outside. I will be there to walk you to school."
- ✓ Rain or shine, this teacher led the WSB in her reflective vest while carrying a "Walking School Bus" sign and a backpack filled with extra gear for all weather conditions
- ✓ Students—some of them non-English speakers—waited on street corners or in front of their homes to join the WSB
- ✓ After the PE teacher left the school, the WSB did not continue—emphasizing the importance of having multiple champions for a WSB



### Impacts



Students gained a sense of security and started their days on a positive note



News spread quickly, garnering the attention of news outlets around the Commonwealth, including WGBH



Organizations donated umbrellas, hats, and gloves so that WSB students were prepared to walk in any weather



Families in need of assistance felt more comfortable coming forward



Students who never met one another began walking to and from school together every day and playing after school