

Safe Routes to School Travel Plan Task Force – Meeting Minutes: 18 September 2012 (Page1)

In attendance: Emilie Carter (JMES), Katie Cleasby (JMES), Bill Cummings, Rick Greenier (JMUES), Principal Marsha McGill, Matt Waitkins (NRPC)

1. Introductions: welcome to new members Katie Cleasby and Emilie Carter. For the benefit of the new members of the committee Matt gave a brief overview of the Safe Routes to School Program:
 - He noted that SRTS is a federally-funded program administered by the New Hampshire Department of Transportation.
 - The Nashua Regional Planning Commission (NRPC) helps administer the program at the regional level.
 - The Merrimack SRTS committee has successfully applied for funding that will be used to develop a SRTS Travel Plan. The Travel Plan development process will result in a blue print for how the Safe Routes program will proceed in Merrimack. (Matt noted that the Merrimack School System, SAU 26, had actually been the applicant).
 - The committee is waiting for final notification as to when the funding will become available.
2. Matt reviewed minutes from May 29 meeting. He noted that he had a couple of minor revisions. There were no other comments and the minutes were approved, as amended, unanimously.
3. Matt updated the committee regarding the status of the travel plan grant. He noted that the application had been approved by the SRTS Statewide Advisory Committee and the NH Executive Council. The SAU (26) has received the “Local Agreement” document. The next step in the process is for NHDOT to schedule a project scoping meeting with the project sponsor (SAU 26). Most likely Tracy Bull and someone from the SAU will participate in the scoping meeting. The purpose of the scoping meeting is to make sure that NHDOT and Merrimack are on the same page regarding the Travel Plan process. There will be several additional steps after the scoping meeting before the funding becomes available. Matt will keep the committee informed regarding progress of the grant.
4. Matt reviewed the data outcomes of parent and student surveys:
 - National Center for Safe Routes to School surveys were administered to students (in class) and parents (take home) of JMES and JMUES in April 2012.
 - Survey results are attached to these minutes.
 - JMES student surveys:
 - School enrollment = 400,
 - 18 classes were surveyed,
 - Grades K-4
 - Approximately 98% of all students travel to school in a motorized vehicle of some sort(60%/school bus, 36%/family vehicle, 2%/carpool),
 - Approximately 1% of students walk or bike to school.
 - JMES Parent surveys:
 - 148 parents responded to survey,

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- 33% said their child has asked for permission to walk or bike to school,
- The top 5 reasons for not allowing child to walk are traffic volume, conditions of sidewalks, speed of traffic, safety of crosswalks and distance to school,
- 37% of students live < 1 mile from school.

- JMUES student surveys:
 - School enrollment = 640,
 - 26 classes were surveyed,
 - Grades 5-6
 - Approximately 98% of all students travel to school in a motorized vehicle of some sort(70%/school bus, 26%/family vehicle, 2%/carpool),
 - Approximately 1.6% of students walk or bike to school.
- JMUES Parent surveys:
 - 200 parents responded to survey,
 - 28% said their child has asked for permission to walk or bike to school,
 - The top 5 reasons for not allowing child to walk are traffic volume, speed of traffic, distance to school, condition of sidewalks, and safety of crosswalks.

- 5. National Walk to School Day – October 3rd, 2012
 - Rick said that JMUES has been participating in walk to school day for 8 years.
 - Students are dropped off at SAU building and then walk the rest of the way.
 - 60 students participated last year.
 - Merrimack Police assist.
 - Katie said that JMES does a fun run in the spring

- 6. Next meeting date was set for October 16th @ 3:30.**
- 7. Meeting adjourned at 3:30.

**Please note: October meeting was subsequently rescheduled to November 20th @ 3:30pm.