



Contests and Incentives


Mini
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Guide

WHAT'S IN THIS MINIGUIDE?

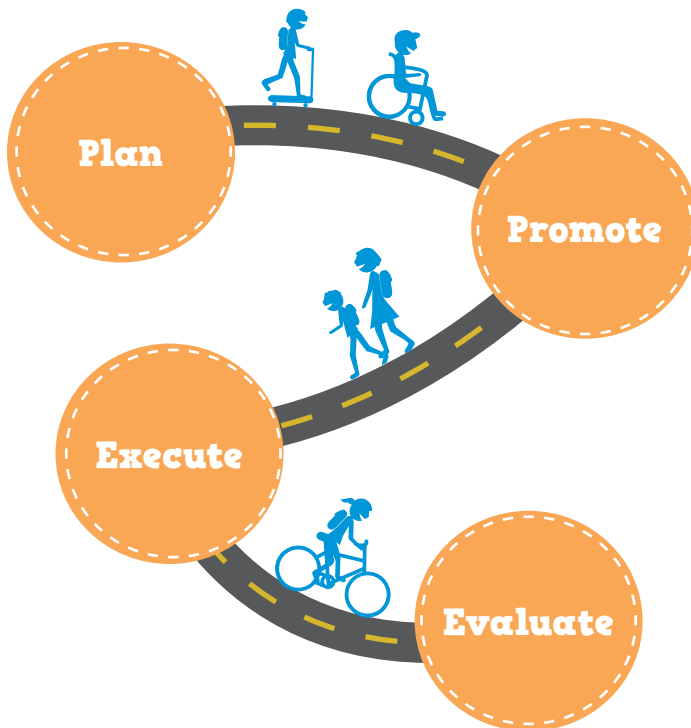
This VT Safe Routes to School MiniGuide highlights fun and rewarding contests and incentives that encourage students to walk or bike to school.

In this MiniGuide, you will find:

- Basic Steps
- Example Contests
- Real World Examples







Click this icon  to access the listed resource.

WHAT TO EXPECT



RESOURCES PREVIEW

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

- **Frequent Walker Punch Card** : Punch card for students to track their progress.
- **Walk Across America**  and **Walk the Long Trail Posters**  and **Tracker** : Posters to track schoolwide walking or biking miles across major trails.
- **VT SRTS Logo** : To promote and unify your program by applying it to materials.
- **Sticker Templates** : Print your own stickers using our VT SRTS Sticker Template.



Basic Steps

CONTESTS

Contests are a fun and rewarding way to motivate children to participate in SRTS activities. Contests work best when paired with incentive items and rewards, for example, stickers, certificates, or special privileges, like early dismissal.

- 1. Plan**
 - Choose your contest. See **Example Contests** on the next page for ideas. Consider team member availability; contests rely on record keeping.
 - Designate a feasible timeframe given the contest requirements.
 - Include incentive items or rewards to increase participation. See **Awards and Incentives** below for examples.
- 2. Promote**
 - Coordinate contest schoolwide or with multiple classrooms.
 - Display contest materials and posters to show progress. Use the intercom system to provide daily or weekly updates to the entire school.
- 3. Execute**
 - Allow students who cannot participate an alternative method of joining the contest (e.g., earning points by walking at recess or at home).
 - Announce the winner(s) using the intercom system.
- 4. Evaluate**
 - Analyze participation rates and level of effort, and ask team members to provide feedback. Adjust the contest logistics as needed to encourage greater participation and/or streamline the process.
 - Schedule your next contest.

KEY POINTS

FREQUENCY

Once per month or several times per year

TIME COMMITMENT


Varies by contest

TEAM MEMBERS

School Champion + teachers, parents, volunteers

AWARDS AND INCENTIVES

Small prizes or rewards can encourage participation in contests. Below are some ideas for rewards.

Note that individual schools may choose to order prizes from a local or online retailer, while school districts or schools buying in bulk (typically over 500 items) may order through a specialty vendor for discounted prices. Bulk items are often available through printing companies, safety-focused companies, or promotional items companies. Using local vendors can reduce shipping costs. Ask other participating schools or SRTS partner organizations for vendor recommendations. You can add the **VT SRTS logo** , your school's name, or other information on bulk items.

- **Golden Shoe or Golden Tire trophy:** Make your own trophy, using an old shoe or piece of a bike tire, gold spray paint, glue, and a wooden plaque, available at most craft stores. Add glitter or other embellishments if desired.
- **Reflective gear (blinking lights, glow in the dark zipper pulls, reflective tape, etc.):** Purchase from a safety product or promotional item vendor.
- **Stickers:** Purchase from a printing company, or print your own, using our **Sticker Templates**, which are sized for Avery 5294 labels. Office supply stores will carry Avery 5294 white labels, or you can purchase colored stickers from a specialty label store that use the Avery 5294 sticker template. Specialty colored labels should be around the same price as white labels.
- **Pencils, temporary tattoos, Toe Tokens, or other novelty items:** Purchase from a promotional item vendor.
- **Bicycle gear (lights, spoke reflectors, etc.):** Purchase from a local bike shop or online retailer.
- **Healthy snacks:** Purchase from a local company or ask for donations from a bakery or local store.
- **Non-material prizes, such as the privilege of reading morning announcements, getting their name on "Wall of Champions," choosing story at storytime, etc.**

Example Contests

The following is a list of example contests that you can hold at your school. This list is not comprehensive. Create your own contests or modify contests from this list.

Golden Shoe Competition

- Track number of walking and bicycling trips among classrooms. A tally may be displayed at the school entrance or hallway to encourage participation.
- Classroom with highest number of trips wins a rotating Golden Shoe Trophy (typically a spray-painted shoe glued to a plaque) to display in the classroom for a week/month/quarter. To encourage friendly competition, the award is passed between winning classrooms.
- Schools can use [Frequent Walking/Bicycling Punch Cards](#) to track trips. Teachers punch a hole in a student's card for each day the student participates.
- Tying this award to [Student Travel Tallies](#) helps collect data to measure program results (see the [Measuring Success MiniGuide](#)).

Mileage Clubs

- Similar to the Golden Shoe competition, track miles traveled among classrooms or individual students, over a specific period of time or until a classroom or student reaches a mileage goal. VT SRTS has a "Walk Across America" poster available for download [here](#).
- Mileage can be tracked by estimating distance to school, calculating time spent walking, or pedometers. Children generally walk a mile in about 20-25 minutes, or in about 2,000 steps.
- Schools can mark progress on a map or chart at the school entrance or hallway.

Earth Week Challenges

- Reward classrooms that reduce greenhouse gas emissions by walking or bicycling to school. Teachers multiply each student's distance to school by the [Environmental Protection Agency's per-mile vehicle emissions rates](#).

Family Walk and Roll Challenge

- Challenge both students and their families to walk or bicycle instead of driving. This can be a weekly, monthly, or single challenge. Students, classrooms, or grades can compete against each other in this challenge.

Poster Contest

- Students make posters about walking and bicycling to school. Posters may have a theme, such as health or environmental benefits.

Video or Storytelling Contest

- Similar to a poster contest, challenge students to make videos, poems, stories, or come up with other creations on topics related to SRTS. Creations may follow a theme such as distracted driving, safe crosswalk behavior, bike maintenance, or subject matter addressed in walking and biking curricula.

Way to Go! Week

- Annual challenge for schools, communities, and businesses to reduce their carbon footprint by switching from driving to walking, biking, carpooling, or taking the bus. Learn more on the [Way to Go! website](#).



Real World Examples

1 **Central Elementary School** encourages walking and biking to school by tracking participation in Walking Wednesdays and by organizing the “Vermont 100 Challenge.” In this challenge, students log mileage walking to and at school. For both Walking Wednesdays and the Vermont Challenge, students with high participation rates are entered in a raffle to win small prizes. Staff participate in these events as well!



2 **C. P. Smith Elementary School** recognizes regular walkers and bikers at the school’s End of the Year Celebration. The school records student trips by punching student punchcards every Wednesday and Friday, when Walking School Buses and Bike Trains are organized. The school gives special recognition to students who walk or bike through the winter months.

3 Your school can participate in external contests as well as internal ones. **Waitsfield Elementary School** participates in Way to Go! Week each year. The school won the Carbon Cup (the award for most greenhouse gas emissions saved among participating schools) in both 2013 and 2014. Waitsfield also participates in the regional Walk and Roll week, where students and adults are encouraged to walk or bike to school and work. Students keep track of how often they walk and receive a small prize after 50 trips.

