



Conn Magnet Elementary School
Raleigh, NC

More Communities Than Ever Celebrate Walk to School Day in North Carolina

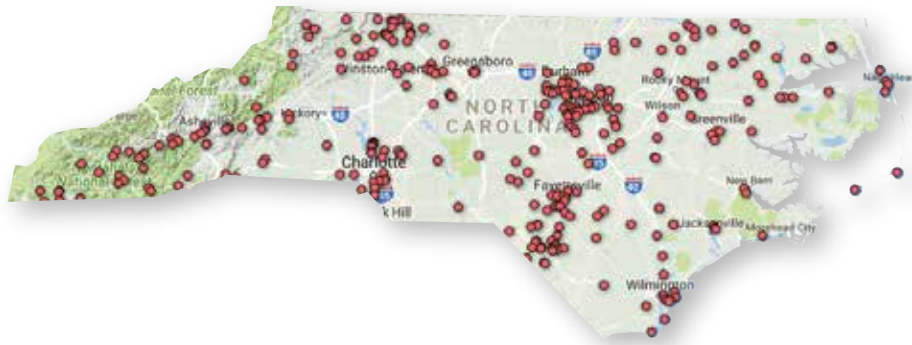
This year marked twenty years of Walk to School Day and North Carolina communities celebrated the big day with the largest turn-out ever! More students, families and community leaders statewide got to their feet in celebration of Walk to School Day in 2016 than ever before.

North Carolina communities joined schools nationwide in celebrating the 20th Walk to School Day by holding pep rallies, hosting walk at school activities, and inviting local leaders for the trip to school. Eighty-three North Carolina counties held

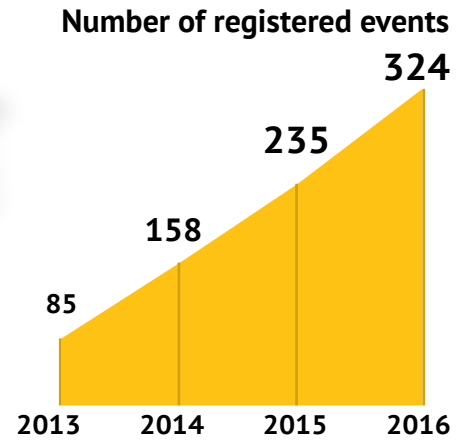
events and in all, 324 schools registered events in North Carolina – a nearly 40% increase from 2015. Just two years ago North Carolina ranked 27th in Walk to School Day registrations among states and in 2016 North Carolina rose to third place!*

This year, Conn Magnet Elementary School of Entrepreneurial Design in Raleigh, NC hosted the state's featured Walk to School Day event. More than one hundred students gathered with NC Department of Transportation Secretary Nick Tennyson, NC Department of Health and Human

* Every year, a Walk to School Day participation rate is calculated to compare state participation. For each state, the total number of events is divided by the total number of public and private elementary and middle schools, where the vast majority of events take place. The number of schools in a state comes from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) including "schools beginning with grade 6 or below and having no grade higher than 8." The number of public schools derives from the Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey (current as of the 2014-2015 school year) and the number of private schools derives from the Private School Universe Survey (current as of the 2014-2015 school year). Go to <http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/elsi/> for more information.



2016 Walk to School Day events in North Carolina



Services State Health Director Dr. Randall Williams, city officials, police officers, advocates, parents and community members to show support for the benefits of walking to school.

“Walk to School Day helps reinforce the importance of physical activity and safe transportation environments for walking and bicycling, and provides an opportunity for families to connect with their neighborhood and community,” said Secretary Tennyson. “NCDOT is proud to support Walk to School Day in North Carolina and committed to encouraging walking and bicycling for all ages.”

The growing popularity of Walk to School Day in North Carolina is due in large part to Active Routes to School, a partnership project between the North Carolina Department of Transportation and the North Carolina Division of Public Health.



NCDOT Secretary Nick Tennyson with students

Celebrating Walk to School Day When Walking From Home Isn't an Option

North Carolina communities use great creativity in how they celebrate Walk to School Day. For schools lacking safe walking and biking routes for students, many participate with Walk at School events. For example, Courtney Elementary in Yadkinville and Robbinsville Elementary in Robbinsville took advantage of their school campuses to be part of the event and promote the benefits of walking. Schools hold events before or after school or as

part of the school day. First Flight Elementary School in Kill Devil Hills held a Walk at School Day where students had an opportunity to walk around the school campus during their Arts classes. Community members and parents came out to show their support and joined students for their walk around the school.

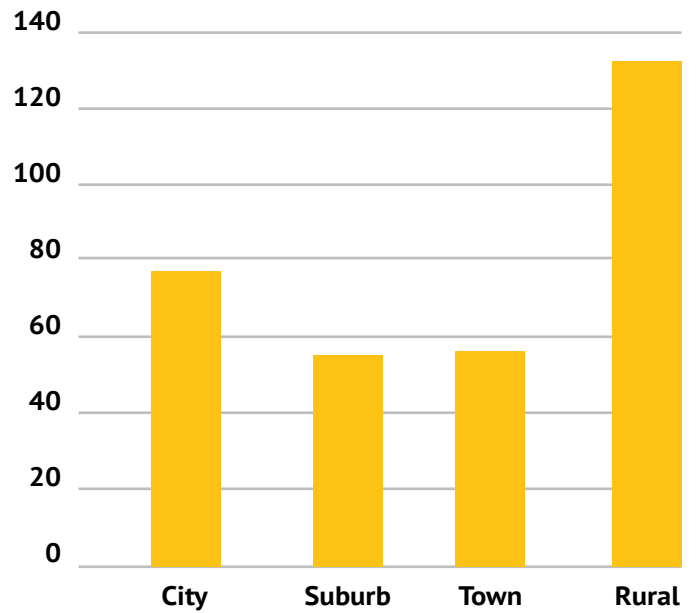
Many communities have walkable routes leading up to the school, but a lot of families live too far

away. These schools can use a remote drop-off or designated starting point where families and community leaders meet and walk the remainder of the route together. Fairview Elementary School in Sylva, NC had a remote drop off location for their Walk to School Day event. Students met at an adjacent park and walked to school along a wilderness trail. The mayor, superintendent, local sheriff, police officers, and members of the Western Carolina soccer and track teams all cheered for students during their trip to school.

Walking school buses are another great way for parents and community members to participate in the event without starting from home. Some “buses” pick up kids along a walking route just like a school bus, while others have a central meeting point from which everyone walks together.

Finally, sometimes student aftercare providers will get involved by walking or bicycling from school to the after-school facility. All of these events can foster a lifelong appreciation for walking and bicycling, develop important safety skills and make it possible to include all students, regardless of abilities, parent participation and road conditions.

Rural areas lead the way on Walk to School Day



- * Based on the following definitions from the National Center for Education Statistics' Common Core of Data
- City: Place within a census-defined principal city
 - Suburb: Place within an urbanized area and outside a principal city
 - Town: Place of population between 2,500 and 50,000 not within an urbanized area
 - Rural: Census-defined rural territory outside both urbanized areas and towns



Harris Road Middle School
Concord, NC

Mayor Support

As part of the 20th celebration, mayors across the country were encouraged to join a Walk to School Day event and show their commitment to safe walking and biking for children and youth in their communities. And community leaders across North Carolina took up the call to action.

Mayors in 23 communities, from Hayesville to Columbia, showed their support for safe walking to school by participating in local events. An event in New Bern, led by Mayor Dana Outlaw and other dignitaries, included over 850 students and staff who walked to school cheered on by parents and neighbors who lined the streets. And in Concord, over 1,000 students carrying signs displaying pedestrian safety messages were joined in their walk to school by Mayor Scott Padgett and Police Chief Gary Gacek on his patrol bicycle.

Our mayor has attended every year we have had a Walk to School Day.

– Event Organizer in Rutherfordton

Mayor York and his wife accompanied us on our walk around the neighborhood and spoke to students about the importance of safety when walking and biking.

– Event Organizer in Thomasville

Mayor Little came and participated with our students!

He walked with them to school and spoke about getting out more in nature. He even taught a couple students how to make a cup out of leaves that were in our area!

– Event Organizer in Marion

The Mayor of Fremont attended the assembly and offered a Mayoral Proclamation.

– Event Organizer in Fremont



GW Bulluck Elementary
Rocky Mount, NC

Leading to Long-Term Change

Walk to School events can help encourage communities to implement policy or engineering changes that make it safer to walk and bike to school.

Based on 69 post-event survey responses, nearly one-half of event organizers in North Carolina indicated that their 2016 event led to planned, or already completed, policy or engineering changes.

Top Policy or Engineering Changes in North Carolina

19% of events led to the addition of walking/bicycling promotion to existing school policies

17% of events led to the addition of safety education

The North Carolina Active Routes to School Project

Walk to School Day events happen with the help of volunteers and professionals around the state who care about safety and getting kids and families up and on their feet. Regional Active Routes to School Coordinators supported Walk to School events this year.

Active Routes to School is supported by a partnership between the NC Department of Transportation and the NC Division of Public Health. Ten Regional Active Routes to School Project Coordinators across North Carolina work to increase safe, daily walking and bicycling to school by facilitating walking and bicycling programming, awareness-raising events, and opportunities for policy and physical environment changes that improve safety for students of all abilities. The Coordinators have helped schools and communities take action, often including holding a Walk to School Day event as one of several strategies.



Fairview Elementary School
Fairview, NC

Background on Walk to School Day

Walk to School Day began in 1997 as a one-day event in the US to build awareness for the need for communities to be safe and walkable. Over time, this event has become part of a movement for year-round safe routes to school and a celebration – with record breaking participation – each October. Today, thousands of schools across America – from all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico – participate every October.

Save the Date

International Walk to School Day 2017 will be held on October 4. Don't want to wait that long? This spring, celebrate National Bike to School Day on May 10, 2017. For more information about the events, visit walkbiketoschool.org or reach out to your Regional Active Routes to School Coordinator at <http://tinyurl.com/activeroutes>.

