Walking School Bus Initiative
Final Evaluation Report

Florida Department of Health
Bureau of Chronic Disease Prevention
September 30, 2012
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ACRONYMS

CDC  Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
CTST  Community Traffic Safety Teams
CPPW  Communities Putting Prevention to Work
FADSS  Florida Association of District School Superintendents
FDOE  Florida Department of Education
FDOH  Florida Department of Health
FDOT  Florida Department of Transportation
HCHP  Healthy Communities Healthy People Program
PTA  Parent Teacher Association
SHAC  School Health Advisory Council
SRTS  Safe Routes to School
WSB  Walking School Bus
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INITIATIVE OVERVIEW

The physical activity goal of the Florida Department of Health’s Communities Putting Prevention to Work (CPPW) Initiative, Component I, was to increase the number of schools participating in the Safe Routes to School (SRTS), Walking School Bus (WSB) Program. The objectives for the initiative follow.

- By January 2012, increase and sustain the number of schools participating in the Safe Routes to School, Walking School Bus Programs by 10%.
- By January 2012, increase the number of children walking to school in participating schools by 10%.
- By July 3, 2012, increase the number of policies supporting walking and/or bicycling by five.

The target population for the WSB initiative was elementary school children; the targeted settings were public elementary schools.

In order to achieve the physical activity goal of increasing the number of elementary schools that implement the WSB program, a two-fold strategy was developed: 1) place regional coordinators throughout the state to work directly with local schools districts and partners in order to implement the WSB program, and 2) establish a statewide network of partners to develop and share implementation strategies.

The success of both strategies relied on building strong partnerships and utilizing stakeholders in all areas of program planning, implementation and evaluation. Key stakeholders included the Florida Department of Transportation, Florida Department of Education, Florida Association of District School Superintendents, Safe Routes to School Statewide Partnership Network, and the Healthy Communities, Healthy People Program. Regional coordinators partnered with many local organizations including school district staff, transportation planning organizations, traffic safety teams, county health departments and parent teacher organizations.

EVALUATION DESIGN SUMMARY

Monitoring and evaluation were essential components of the WSB initiative and were used throughout the grant in program planning, implementation and improvement. The CPPW steering committee, along with stakeholders, identified five evaluation questions as the basis for the design of the project’s evaluation plan.

1. Were stakeholders engaged?
2. How did Florida CPPW implement the initiative?
3. In what ways did the initiative make a difference in state level policy and environmental change?
4. Is the environmental change sustainable?
5. How could the initiative be improved?
The CPPW evaluation team used a mixed methods approach to evaluate this initiative. This approach incorporated a combination of quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques including: regional coordinator logs, milestone reports, SRTS tally sheets, focus groups, and success stories.

**KEY FINDINGS**

**Objective 1:** By January 2012, increase and sustain the number of schools participating in the Safe Routes to School Walking School Bus program by 10%.

This objective was exceeded. At baseline, 16 elementary schools had a WSB program. At the end of the grant period, an additional 38 schools had an active WSB program. Reach data are presented in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schools with WSB Programs</th>
<th>Target Population</th>
<th>Total Size of Target Population</th>
<th># People Reached</th>
<th>Total Possible # Units</th>
<th># Units Reached</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Short-Term Reach</strong></td>
<td>Elementary school students</td>
<td>1.2 million</td>
<td>34,144</td>
<td>1,952</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Long-Term Reach</strong></td>
<td>Elementary school students</td>
<td>1.2 million</td>
<td>38,568</td>
<td>1,952</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Objective 2:** By January 2012, increase the number of children walking to school in participating schools by 10%.

CPPW evaluators were unable to assess this objective because of data collection problems with the *SRTS Student Arrival and Departure Tally Sheets*. Reach data related to the number of children that walk or bike to school in participating schools was collected through the WSB logs and is presented in the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students Walking and/or Bicycling</th>
<th>Target Population</th>
<th>Total Size of Target Population</th>
<th>Total Possible # Units</th>
<th># Units Reached</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Short-Term Reach</strong></td>
<td>Elementary students</td>
<td>120,000</td>
<td>1,980</td>
<td>1,952</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Long-Term Reach</strong></td>
<td>Elementary students</td>
<td>120,000</td>
<td>2,232</td>
<td>1,952</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adult volunteers operating the WSB were identified as the secondary reach population. The WSB reached 318 adults during the grant period and 366 adults in the long-term.

**Objective 3:** By July 3, 2012, increase the number of policies supporting walking and/or bicycling by 5.

This objective was met with five additional policies that support walking/biking being adopted. Reach data are presented in the table below.
### District and School Policies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Target Population</th>
<th>Total Size of Target Population</th>
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<th>Total Possible # Units</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Short-Term Reach</strong></td>
<td>Elementary students</td>
<td>1.2 million</td>
<td>387,199</td>
<td>56 school districts</td>
<td>14 school districts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Long-Term Reach</strong></td>
<td>Elementary students</td>
<td>1.2 million</td>
<td>389,757</td>
<td>56 school districts</td>
<td>15 school districts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Although the FDOH is not continuing to lead the WSB initiative, committed partners will sustain the momentum. Four walking coordinators working in 12 counties have been hired through money obtained from SRTS non-infrastructure grants, transportation planning organizations and school districts. These coordinators will work to expand the WSB program in the 12 counties.

The strategies presented below are considered essential to the successful adoption of the WSB program.

- **KEY STAKEHOLDERS:** Key stakeholders must be involved in all stages of the initiative from planning to evaluation. Stakeholders assist with training, introductions, decision making, promotion and sustainability.

- **PARTNERSHIPS:** Strong partnerships at the state and local level are critical to the success of the WSB initiative. Partners are not only instrumental in helping to achieve the WSB objectives but are committed to sustaining the programs.

- **REGIONAL COORDINATORS:** Placing regional coordinators throughout the state is an effective way of promoting awareness and change in all counties; however, supervising coordinators in 13 regions presents unique challenges related to training and monitoring.

- **SRTS STUDENT ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE TALLY SHEETS:** Tally sheets can be an effective tool for an individual school to use when evaluating changes in the percent of students walking or biking to school over a period of time. Completing the tally forms accurately can be a challenge and requires training and monitoring for CPPW and school district staff.

- **STUDENT HEALTH ADVISORY COUNCIL (SHAC):** SHAC is an effective partner when working toward the adoption of a policy supporting SRTS. Many districts are receptive to placing language supporting SRTS in their wellness policy; SHAC is often responsible for recommending changes to the district wellness policy.

- **WALKING SCHOOL BUS LOGS:** An interactive log on a shared drive allows regional staff to report accurate and timely data, and it is an effective tool for state staff to use when monitoring and evaluating the WSB initiative.
As part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, the US Department of Health and Human Services provided funding for the Communities Putting Prevention to Work (CPPW) Initiative. This initiative supports community public health efforts to improve nutrition, increase physical activity, and decrease tobacco use, three critical actions to combat chronic disease and promote health. The Florida Department of Health (FDOH) was awarded a $2.1 million grant to implement policy and systems interventions in all three areas.

This report describes the outcomes of the Florida CPPW Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Walking School Bus (WSB) initiative, which fulfilled the physical activity component of the grant by encouraging elementary school students to walk to and from school.

**INTENDED USE AND USERS**

The intended purpose of the WSB evaluation report is for accountability and knowledge generation or transferability. As part of the evaluation plan, FDOH and stakeholders set measurable outcome objectives to be assessed and reported to the funder, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The bulk of the evaluation report will report strategies, including best practices and lessons learned, that will assist stakeholders or primary users in implementing interventions resulting in the adoption and strengthening of programs and policies that support active commuting to school.

Key stakeholders played varying roles in this initiative. Some stakeholders played a direct role in developing the evaluation plan and carrying out the initiative, while others will use the best practices and lessons learned in order to promote program implementation and policy adoption. Stakeholders and/or intended users include:

- Healthy Communities Healthy People Program (HCHP)
- Florida Association of District School Superintendents (FADSS)
- Florida Department of Education (FDOE)
- Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
- Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Statewide Partnership Network
- Local Metropolitan/Transportation Planning Organizations
• School districts
• Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs)
• School Health Advisory Councils (SHACs)

The FDOH and stakeholders will use press releases and the CPPW website http://floridacppw.org/ to disseminate these evaluation findings in the form of program success stories (See Appendix A), newsletter briefs, and the evaluation report itself. The hope is that by sharing best practices and lessons learned, this initiative will be adapted, improved and enacted in other settings.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The goal of the Walking School Bus initiative was to increase the number of schools participating in the Safe Routes to School Walking School Bus Program. The initiative’s objectives follow.

The Walking School Bus – Objectives

Objective 1: By January 2012, increase and sustain the number of schools participating in Safe Routes to School (SRTS), Walking School Bus (WSB) programs by 10%.

Objective 2: By January 2012, increase the number of children walking to school in participating schools by 10%.

Objective 3: By July 3, 2012, increase the number of policies supporting walking and/or bicycling by 5.

* Objective 3 was added after the CPPW initiative began.

Project Narrative

In 1969, 48% of students aged 5 to 14 usually walked or biked to school; in 2009, that percentage dropped to 13%.\(^1\) Meanwhile, childhood obesity in the United States has reached epidemic proportions with 1 in 3 children overweight or obese.\(^2\) Children who walk or ride their bicycles to and from school enjoy benefits such as exercise, the opportunity to socialize, and improved academic performance. However, children of ages five to nine lack the skills necessary to walk or ride bicycles unsupervised. For these reasons, elementary schools and the students attending these schools were the target setting and population for the WSB initiative.


Prior to the start of the CPPW grant, the SRTS program was in place at FDOT, providing funds and other resources to assist communities with infrastructure and non-infrastructure projects to improve walking and bicycling conditions. CPPW chose to promote the WSB model as means of addressing the childhood obesity problem, but it also served as an effective solution to other challenges such as loss of courtesy busing, heavy traffic congestion in and around schools, and inadequate safety education. A WSB program is designed to make walking and bicycling to school a practical and fun mode of transportation for children and parents.

Upon funding, the CPPW WSB initiative was in the planning stage of development. At this stage, only a handful of WSB programs existed in Florida and were fairly localized. In order to meet the objectives of the WSB initiative, 13 regional coordinators were placed throughout the state of Florida to work with and alongside local school districts, schools, and partner organizations. The responsibilities of the regional coordinators included, 1) raise awareness of the WSB model through media and community events, 2) garner support from local officials and key decision makers, 3) provide technical assistance to schools interested in launching WSB programs, 4) develop policy language for school district wellness committees, 5) organize and promote walking and bicycling events in their communities, and 6) collect data for program evaluation.

The original intent of the WSB initiative was to target low-income elementary schools. Later in the grant period, this scope was widened to allow for greater flexibility, reach potential, and likelihood of program sustainability.

Figure 1 presents the CPPW logic model depicting the linkages between program inputs, activities, outputs, and outcomes.
EVALUATION FOCUS

The goal of the physical activity initiative was to increase the number of schools participating in the SRTS WSB Program. The evaluation team used this goal when identifying criteria for prioritizing evaluation questions. The evaluation team also took into consideration the early stage of development of the initiative and the necessity of continuous evaluation with a strong emphasis on using the results for refining program strategies and achieving sustainability when identifying questions. Five evaluation questions were identified:
1. Were stakeholders engaged?
2. How did Florida CPPW implement the initiative?
3. In what ways did the initiative make a difference in state level policy and environmental change?
4. Is the environmental change sustainable?
5. How could the initiative be improved?

These questions allowed for an in-depth analysis of key markers of success and the areas upon which to improve when replicating the initiative.

**DATA SOURCES AND METHODS**

Evaluation was part of the ongoing cycle of program planning, implementation and improvement. FDOH used a mixed methods approach to evaluate the WSB initiative. This approach combined collection and evaluation of both quantitative and qualitative data. Combining these two approaches provides the “numbers” to justify conclusions supported by the richness and deeper understanding of “why” and “how.”

The evaluation team conducted process evaluation throughout the course of the two and a half year initiative. The process evaluation served to hold FDOH accountable to the CDC for the implementation of the agreed upon CPPW initiative. It provided direction for improving strategies and key activities by giving ongoing feedback on how the different components of the initiative were working. It also served as a monitoring system to track the implementation of program activities and to help answer evaluation questions and track barriers to implementation. This level of evaluation was used as a foundation for decision-making regarding modifications and enhancements to the initiative as it was implemented. Lastly, it was used to assess programmatic changes over time.

The evaluation team included impact/outcome measures to determine the immediate and/or direct effect(s) of the CPPW initiative on the number of WSB programs in elementary schools across the state, the number of children walking and bicycling in participating schools, and the number of policies implemented.

**Performance Measures and Data Sources**

Indicators or performance measures were identified for each of the WSB evaluation questions. Data sources were selected in order to answer the evaluation questions, measure the achievement of objectives, and project the long-term reach of the initiatives. A variety of methods for collecting data were used in order to increase the reliability and validity of the WSB initiative’s successes, limitations, and recommendations. For each evaluation question, performance measures and data sources were identified and are presented in Table 1.
### Table 1: Performance Measures and Data Sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EVALUATION QUESTIONS</th>
<th>PERFORMANCE MEASURES</th>
<th>DATA SOURCES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Were stakeholders engaged?</td>
<td>• # of partners that support initiative</td>
<td>• Regional coordinator milestone reports</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| How did Florida CPPW implement the initiative? | • # of Regional Coordinators hired and trained to carry out work plan activities  
• # of established state and local level partnerships with key stakeholders  
• # of CPPW milestones completed  
• # of success stories from the field | • Regional coordinator milestone reports  
• Regional coordinator focus groups  
• Success stories |
| Has a policy change occurred? | • # of school districts and state agencies that drafted or enacted a policy that supports WSB/walking to school | • Wellness policy log  
• School and district level policy log |
| Is the environmental change sustainable? | • # of school districts and state agencies that continue initiative | • Regional coordinator interim and final sustainability narratives  
• Regional coordinator milestone reports |
| How could the initiative be improved? | • # of lessons learned  
• # of success stories from the field | • Regional coordinator focus groups  
• Regional coordinator milestone reports  
• Steering committee semi-annual review |

### Description of Data Sources

Data sources were selected in order to answer the evaluation questions, measure the achievement of objectives, and project the long-term reach of the initiatives. A variety of methods for collecting data were used in order to increase the reliability and validity of the information collected. A description of each data source follows; credibility or validity issues, if appropriate, are identified.

**Regional Coordinator Milestone Reports:**
Regional coordinators completed a monthly milestone report. The method for reporting changed as the grant matured. Originally, milestones were reported as a written monthly activity report, then compiled and entered into a spreadsheet. As more regional coordinators were hired, this became an increasingly difficult process. The result was an electronic milestone survey sent to the regional coordinators every month.

**Data Limitation:** Collecting data from the regional coordinators was more difficult than first anticipated. The problems identified in reporting were related to quantifying data. For example,
regional coordinators were asked to identify the number of partners they worked with on the initiative. Two regional coordinators may have worked with the same partner and thus the person would have been reported twice. Limitations with data specific to the electronic survey were identified. For example, each milestone survey was specific to the milestones for the month. Reporting this way worked well for staff that were on track with milestones; however, some regional coordinators were hired later in the grant and might have met the milestone at a later date and had nowhere to report it.

While the milestone reports provided limited quantifiable data, they provided excellent process data useful in monitoring program implementation and progress.

Regional Coordinator Logs:
Interactive WSB logs on the CPPW shared network were created so that regional coordinators could access the logs at any time in order to record program outcomes as they happened. CPPW evaluation staff utilized the logs when compiling monthly progress reports and monitoring the initiative’s progress toward meeting objectives and reach. The data collected through these logs was used to assess the achievement of program objectives and to complete the CPPW reach table. The logs are included as Appendix B.

SRTS Students Arrival and Departure Tally Sheets:
Key stakeholders chose the tally sheets as the method for measuring the overall percent increase in the number of students walking and biking to school. (See Appendix C for a copy of the tally sheet.) Schools participating in the WSB program were instructed to collect data on how their students arrived at and departed from school. Evaluators summarized the data and planned to use it in order to assess one objective and related reach.

Data Limitations: A number of problems arose with the tally sheets and thus were not able to be used to evaluate the outcome objective related to assessing the number of students walking and biking to school. The data limitations are twofold and include problems with design and inaccurate data.

• Design: The SRTS tally sheets are designed to be used to assess changes in the numbers or percent of students walking or biking to school within a single school. At the start of the initiative, the evaluation team and stakeholders planned to use the tally sheets to assess a change in walkers and bikers for the state rather than an individual school. Regional coordinators were asked to complete the tally sheets during specified weeks at the start and the end of the school year. As the WSB program evolved, it became clear that not all WSB programs started in the fall of the year; thus, data was missing for any WSB that started after the initial data collection period. This problem was addressed in the second year of the grant and was changed to a pre and post data collection method.

• Inaccurate Data: Some variations within a school are to be expected. For example, the number of students reporting their transportation method may vary from one collection point to another simply because of student movement between schools. When analyzing the tally sheets by school, however, it became clear that the inaccuracies in the data reported were too great to justify using the data for analysis. Many of the schools with a WSB program did not submit pre and post data; for those schools that did have two data
points, the number of teachers reporting data varied greatly when comparing the two collection points. Regional coordinators reported difficulty gaining cooperation with schools in collecting this data, particular in the spring when standardized testing is a priority.

Case Studies:
Evaluators identified four schools with accurate pre and post program tally sheet data. These four schools are presented as case studies. The use of the case study data cannot be used to draw conclusion toward the achievement of objectives. Rather, these schools are being studied in more detail in order to discuss trends in schools with an active WSB program.

Focus Groups:
The CPPW evaluation team conducted annual focus groups with the regional coordinators. The purpose of these focus groups was to better understand the regional coordinator views and opinions regarding program implementation, successes, challenges/barriers, and lessons learned. Focus group sessions were audio recorded, then transcribed in summary format to accurately convey regional coordinators’ opinions. All information was reviewed and analyzed to identify common themes.

Success Stories:
Success stories were used throughout the grant to document activities and lessons learned. They highlighted program achievements and were used to demonstrate impact, progress and value to stakeholders, policy makers, and funders. Examples of success stories are included in Appendix A.

CPPW Steering Committee Semi-Annual Review:
The members of the CPPW Steering Committee and Evaluation Team convened monthly throughout the course of the WSB initiative. The purpose of these meetings was to review milestone completion, address relevant questions, and discuss next steps. On a semi-annual basis, the team reviewed and documented program challenges, successes, barriers, and facilitators.

Data Presentation

Objectives
The WSB objectives were measured using data collected through the WSB logs and the SRTS *Students Arrival and Departure Tally Sheets*. Because of the inaccuracies contained in the data collected through the tally sheets, the CPPW evaluators were not able to measure the percent change in the number of children walking or biking to school at schools with a WSB program. Table 2 summarizes the objectives, baseline data and results.
Table 2: Evaluation of Objectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Baseline</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Objective 1: By January 2012, increase and sustain the number of schools participating in the Safe Routes to School (SRTS), Walking School Bus (WSB) programs by 10%.</td>
<td>16 elementary schools with a WSB program</td>
<td>EXCEEDED OBJECTIVE: 38 additional schools with active WSB programs at end of grant period ⇒ 137.5% increase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective 2: By January 2012, increase the number of children walking to school in participating schools by 10%.</td>
<td>Unable to determine using original performance measure</td>
<td>CANNOT EVALUATE: The original performance measure cannot be used to evaluate the objective. See the trends identified through the case studies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective 3: By July 3, 2012, increase the number of policies supporting walking and/or bicycling BY 5.</td>
<td>9 school district wellness policies include language supporting walking and biking</td>
<td>EXCEEDED OBJECTIVE: • 5 additional wellness policies with walking and biking support • 1 school district letter of support • 8 school level walking policies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In response to the inability to measure the change in the percentage of children walking or biking to school, the CPPW evaluation team developed case studies on four schools, all of which had accurate tally sheets. The use of the case studies is limited and cannot be used to draw conclusions or determine whether the objective has been met. Rather, these schools can be studied in order to identify walking trends in schools with an active WSB program. Each case study contains a brief description of its WSB program as well as summary data from WSB logs and tally sheets.
Case Study 1

Fellsmere Elementary School
School District of Indian River County

The Fellsmere Elementary School WSB operated daily with an after school walk to the Boys & Girls Club. The WSB started in October 2010 and continued through the 2011-2012 school year.

WSB Logs:
The WSB grew to approximately 75 students who walked an estimated 5,625 miles over the course of 2 years.

SRTS Student Arrival and Departure Tally Forms:
At baseline 42 (6.6%) students walked from school, at 6 months 75 (14%) students walked from school and at 14 months, 112 (19.2%) walked from school.

Strategy for Accurate Tally Sheets: The regional coordinator and a local law enforcement officer administered the tally sheets in each classroom.

Case Study 2

Lake Sybelia Elementary School
Orange County Public Schools

Lake Sybelia Elementary School received a SRTS non-infrastructure grant in order to start a WSB program. The WSB, which operated in the morning, began October 2011 and continued throughout the school year.

WSB Logs:
Approximately 40 students walked an estimated 1,008 miles over the course of a school year.

SRTS Student Arrival and Departure Tally Forms:
At baseline 29 (5.7%) students walked to school; at 6 months, 47 (8.7%) walked to school.

Strategy for Accurate Tally Sheets: The regional coordinator completed the background information on each teacher’s tally sheet. She collected the sheets and checked each one for completeness.
Case Study 3

Spirit Elementary School
Volusia County School District

The Spirit Elementary School PTA sponsored the morning WSB program for both years of the CPPW grant. During the 2010-2011 school year, the bus operated one day per week; it operated two days per week the second year. Both years the WSB met at a church parking lot and picked up students at designated stops along the one mile route to school.

WSB Logs:
Approximately 30 students walked an estimated 2,880 miles over the course of two school years.

SRTS Student Arrival and Departure Tally Forms:
At baseline 23 (3.6%) students walked to school, at 6 months 32 (5.5%) walked, and at 18 months 24 (3.5%) walked. At the 18 month data collection point, the WSB coordinator was recovering from knee surgery and was not operating the WSB.

Strategy for Accurate Tally Sheets: The principal committed to the school completing the tally sheets prior to the start of the WSB program. A teacher was assigned to make sure the tally sheets were complete.

Case Study 4

Eagles Nest Elementary School
Orange County Public Schools

This WSB was run by the Soldiers to Scholars Program. It operated four times per week with a 1.3 mile walk to school. The WSB began operation in October 2011 and continue through the school year.

WSB Logs:
Between 18 and 25 students walked an estimated 3,276 miles over the course of the 2011-2012 school year.

SRTS Student Arrival and Departure Tally Forms:
At baseline 130 (21.5%) students walked to school. At 6 months the number decreased to 127; however because the student population fell, the percent of students walking increased to 22.3%.

Strategy for Accurate Tally Sheets: The regional coordinator completed the background information on each teacher’s tally sheet. She collected the sheets and checked each one for completeness.
Reach

In policy, systems, and environmental change (PSE) assessments, there is an additional level of reach associated with project implementation that does not exist with traditional programs. Short-term reach is the number of individuals who were affected by the initiative during the funding period. Potential impact or long-term reach is the number of individuals who will be affected by the initiative after the funding period, and it is a strong indicator of program sustainability.

The following tables (Tables 3 – 5) identify the reach numbers for each of the three objectives. A complete copy of the reach table is included as Appendix F.

### Table 3: Evaluation of Reach and Secondary Reach for WSB Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCHOOLS WITH WSB PROGRAMS</th>
<th>Target Population</th>
<th>Total Size of Target Population</th>
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<tr>
<td>Short-Term Reach</td>
<td>Elementary school students</td>
<td>1.2 million</td>
<td>34,144</td>
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<td>Long-Term Reach</td>
<td>Elementary school students</td>
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<td>44 schools</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SECONDARY REACH</th>
<th>Secondary Population</th>
<th># People Reached</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Short-Term Reach</td>
<td>Adult volunteers operating WSB</td>
<td>318</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-Term Reach</td>
<td>Adult volunteers operating WSB</td>
<td>366</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 4: Evaluation of Reach for Policies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DISTRICT AND SCHOOL POLICIES</th>
<th>Target Population</th>
<th>Total Size of Target Population</th>
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</tbody>
</table>
Table 5: Evaluation of Reach for Students Walking and Biking

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STUDENTS WALKING AND/OR BICYCLING</th>
<th>Target Population</th>
<th>Total Size of Target Population</th>
<th># People Reached</th>
<th>Total Possible # Units</th>
<th># Units Reached</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Short-Term Reach</td>
<td>Elementary school students</td>
<td>120,000</td>
<td>1,980</td>
<td>1,952 elementary schools</td>
<td>47 elementary schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-Term Reach</td>
<td>Elementary school students</td>
<td>120,000</td>
<td>2,232</td>
<td>1,952 elementary schools</td>
<td>53 elementary schools</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Evaluation Questions

Data from the milestone reports was used when analyzing four evaluation questions. Table 6 summarizes key findings from the milestone reports as they pertain to each evaluation question.

Table 6: Key Findings – Milestone Reports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EVALUATION QUESTIONS</th>
<th>MILESTONE REPORTS – KEY FINDINGS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Were stakeholders engaged? | • All regional coordinators developed local partnerships with the FDOT District SRTS Coordinators, local HCHP coordinators, and local school districts.  
  • Many regional coordinators developed additional partnerships including: CTSTs, crossing guard supervisors, PTAs, school wellness committees, school principals, and regional transportation organizations.  
  • State CPPW staff and regional coordinators participated in monthly SRTS Partnership Network conference calls.  
  • The FDOT SRTS Coordinator participated in all aspects of the WSB initiative. |
| How did Florida CPPW implement the initiative? | • Thirteen regional coordinators received quarterly training on initiative content, policy implementation, and partnership building.  
  • Regional coordinators drafted plans of action for promoting WSB and identified potential schools to target.  
  • Regional coordinators planned and International Walk to School Day events.  
  • State office staff developed support materials including: 1) WSB flyer, 2) a volunteer training booklet, 3) banners, and 4) WSB starter kit. These were disseminated by regional staff. See Appendix D for copies of the materials. |
Focus Groups

The CPPW evaluation team conducted annual focus groups with the regional coordinators. The purpose of these focus groups was to better understand the regional coordinators’ views and opinions regarding program implementation, successes, challenges/barriers and lessons learned. Focus group sessions were audio recorded, then transcribed in summary format to accurately convey regional coordinators’ opinions. All information was reviewed and analyzed to identify common themes.

The results of the focus group sessions are presented below. Each lead question is listed along with common themes and participant quotes.

1. What factors facilitated success during this initiative?

**Partnerships were central to the success of events, programs, and policy implementation.**

- “The chaperones in the Indian River County Walking School Buses are employed by the Boys & Girls Club. The pedestrian safety training is built in, so they assume any potential liability.”
- “Collaborating with my HCHP contact expedited the policy drafting and review process.”
- “The district DOT partnerships were so helpful. My DOT SRTS coordinator not only provided incentives, but money for a walking coordinator.”

**Regional coordinators expressed pride when their communities asked for technical assistance related to walking programs and pedestrian safety.**
• “After the 17 student-related car accidents in Volusia County, I was contacted and asked to give some suggestions on pedestrian safety curricula and other resources to help them launch a safety campaign in the district.”

• “I couldn’t get programs going in Marion County this school year, but the school district recently contacted me because they’re losing courtesy busing next year and want to get Walking School Bus programs launched in response to the new need.”

• “When we started the CPPW initiative, no one had heard of a walking school bus. I don’t even need to explain them anymore.”

2. What have been the biggest challenges/barriers?

Lack of buy-in from schools, school districts, and volunteers were the most common themes mentioned by regional coordinators.

• “Even when incentives are offered, it is so difficult to secure parent volunteers, especially in lower-income schools.”

• “Schools are overwhelmed with other issues, especially FCAT, and can’t follow through. I had a lot of interest but some things just didn’t stick.”

• “Liability, liability...that’s what we keep hearing (from schools and districts).”

• “My rural counties have a lot of dirt roads or two-lane highways with no sidewalks and high speed limits. The WSB isn’t a feasible option for them.”

3. What steps were taken to overcome these barriers?

Training that focused on liability and pedestrian safety was extremely beneficial for the regional coordinators.

• “I wasn’t comfortable talking to school district staff about liability until we received SRTS materials and state office staff training.”

• “I think the training opportunities offered through the University of Florida and the FDOT were excellent. I was much more comfortable talking to schools about pedestrian safety once I was trained.”

• “Provide as much of the training up front as possible.”

Outside funding allowed the regional coordinators to offer incentives that appealed to schools and walking coordinators.

• “My FDOT district office provided SRTS non-infrastructure grant funding for incentive items that staff, parents, and students appreciated.”

• “Our local health departments were able to apply for mini-grants through the HCHP program. These mini-grants provided teacher and parent stipends based on the frequency of the school’s WSB program. These were my most successful programs.”

Revising program strategy can be beneficial to gaining school district acceptance of the WSB program.

• “We would have missed out on good opportunities if we had limited ourselves to low-income schools alone.”

• “I suggested mileage clubs and other on-campus walking programs for my rural schools. Students and teachers liked the mileage clubs.”
• “Getting that support from the top and working your way down to school level is much easier than trying to work your way up.”

4. What changes could be made to improve this initiative?

Focus on developing individualized walking/biking plans with districts and schools to give them ownership.
• “In each of my schools, I helped set-up a walking committee. They were responsible for deciding the design of the school’s WSB program.”
• “It would have been helpful to use the first three months or so to brainstorm and work with the schools/districts more one-on-one to meet their needs.”
• “The ideal situation is to launch the (WSB) program in brand-new schools or ones under new leadership, so the process is ingrained. The forms could go out in the packet of information on the first day of school.”
• “The SRTS Partnership training specific to starting a SRTS program in Pinellas County was excellent. This type of training would have been excellent in other interested districts.”

The tally forms were difficult for the schools to complete and the regional coordinators to collect.
• “My schools kept putting off completing the tally forms because they were so focused on getting the students ready for the FCAT.”
• “I made sure I told my schools they were required to do the tally forms prior to program implementation and at the end of the school year. They were very good about getting them done.”
• “One of my schools assigned an assistant to make sure every teacher submitted a tally form. This system worked great.”

Success Stories

CPPW regional coordinators submitted success stories in order to document best practices and to promote the CPPW initiatives with stakeholders and community partners. Highlights from the success stories are organized into three categories: savings, safety and promotion. Highlights from each category follow.

Savings
• A WSB in Indian River County eliminated the need for a bus to transport students to the Boys and Girls Club, saving the school district more than $4,500 per year.

• A group of 20 students participating in a WSB just once per week, one mile to and from school, saves 69 gallons of fuel, 1354.7 pounds of carbon emissions, and 89.7 pounds of other pollutants. This amounts to a dollar savings of almost $7,000. (Calculations based on the Missouri Bicycle and Pedestrian Federation’s Pedestrian Savings Calculator.)
Safety

- The timing of a crosswalk light on the WSB route from an Vero Beach Elementary School to a Boys and Girls Club was extended to allow all walkers to safely cross the street together.

- The Northwest Florida Alliance for Safety Education and Research was founded through the CPPW WSB initiative. Their first workshop drew 20 guests and stakeholders were informed of plans currently underway to improve infrastructure and education for protecting walkers and bicyclists.

- More than 40 students participated in Pride Elementary School’s Bicycle Train during its first full year. During that time, 22 new and used bicycles were awarded to students through a token incentive system rewarding safe walking and biking behavior.

Promotion

- A 30-minute piece was produced for the Spanish newsmagazine television show Enfoque Comunitario. It emphasized the importance of physical activity and the benefits of walking to school, featuring a WSB demonstration at a Highlands Elementary School.

- Spirit Elementary School’s WSB was featured in a WSB focused film developed by the Volusia County Transportation Organization to air on the Bright House television network.

- The Lake Sybelia Elementary School WSB was invited to participate in the annual City of Winter Park Holiday Parade.

Success stories can be viewed at the CPPW site website below. A sample success story is included in Appendix A. [http://floridacppw.org/Success_Stories/cppw_success_booklet.pdf](http://floridacppw.org/Success_Stories/cppw_success_booklet.pdf)

CONCLUSIONS AND INTERPRETATIONS

The data collected through the WSB initiative was shared with CPPW staff and stakeholders. The conclusions presented below are based on the discussion of the data presented. Strategies and lessons learned are noted, if appropriate.

1. **Key stakeholders must be involved in all stages of the initiative from planning to evaluation.**

   Stakeholders assist with training, introductions, decision making, promotion, evaluation and sustainability. The stakeholder who was most involved with the WSB initiative was the SRTS Coordinator for the FDOT. Not only was the SRTS Coordinator instrumental in training regional coordinators on the SRTS program and pedestrian safety, she paved
the way for local partnerships with the district FDOT offices and the Community Traffic Safety Teams.

**KEY STRATEGY:** Utilize the resources available through the SRTS program and the National SRTS Partnership. Numerous opportunities for technical assistance and training on pedestrian safety, starting and maintaining SRTS programs, community planning, and policy adoption are available at the national, state and district levels.

**KEY STRATEGY:** Involve a respected educational organization as a key stakeholder. The Florida Association of District School Superintendents (FADSS) was involved in all stages of the WSB initiative. The association provided the regional coordinators with a letter of introduction to take to the school district superintendents. The letter not only assisted the regional coordinators in getting appointments within a school district, it endorsed the CPPW initiatives which gave credibility to WSB program.

2. **Local partnerships are critical in starting and sustaining WSB programs.**

Partners gave the regional coordinators credibility when approaching local school districts. They provided leadership, man power, funding, incentive items, and additional local contacts. In terms of sustainability, partners funded four walking coordinator positions covering 12 counties in Florida. Key partners included: District FDOT offices, Community Traffic Safety Teams, local Parent Teacher Associations (PTA), principals, crossing guard supervisors, School Health Advisory Councils, county Healthy Communities, Healthy People programs, and transportation planning organizations.

**KEY STRATEGY:**
- Utilize local partners when seeking outside funding for WSB programs. CPPW staff was not able to directly apply for additional funding from outside sources. Rather, they worked through partners in order to receive grants from Fuel Up to Play 60, SRTS, transportation planning organizations and Healthy People, Healthy Communities.

3. **Placing coordinators in 13 regions throughout Florida was a key factor in allowing Florida to exceed its objective of increasing the percent of WSB programs by 10 percent.**

Staff located throughout the state allowed the diverse needs and values of a region to be heard. Regional coordinators were able to easily identify local partners and to focus their approach on a region’s common interests. Regional coordinators knew the progress of the WSB program within a region and school district, and they were able to share this information effectively.

**KEY STRATEGY:**
- Hiring, training and retaining 13 coordinators presented a challenge to CPPW state office staff. A regional coordinator training plan for use with all new staff, regardless of when they were hired, is essential and should include background material on
SRTS and pedestrian safety, partnership development and policy adoption, review of milestones and reporting data.

4. The SRTS Students Arrival and Departure Tally Sheets are an appropriate data source when assessing changes in the number of students walking or biking within a school but are more difficult to use when assessing statewide change.

The tally sheets were not able to be used when determining a statewide change in the number of students walking or biking to school. As the CPPW evaluation staff began to analyze data from the tally sheets, problems with the data became evident and included incomplete tally sheets, missing classrooms of data, and omitted schools. As the grant matured, the tally sheet data became more accurate and usable.

**KEY STRATEGIES:**
- All regional staff should receive in-depth training on how to administer tally sheets, their purpose, and how they fit into the overall evaluation plan.
- School districts should be required to commit to completing the tally sheets prior to the implementation of the WSB. Specifically, they must agree to administer the tally sheets prior to the start of the program and again at the end of each school year or at the completion of the WSB program. The agreement must specify that the school is responsible for collecting a tally sheet from every teacher.
- The results of the tally sheets should be shared with the school and, if possible, submitted to the National Center for SRTS.

5. A school district’s School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) is an effective partner when working toward the adoption of a SRTS policy.

School districts are often more receptive to placing language supporting SRTS in the district wellness policy rather than a stand alone policy. In many school districts, SHAC is responsible for revising the district wellness policy.

**KEY STRATEGY:**
- A representative(s) of the WSB program should become a member of SHAC and the wellness policy subcommittee. Providing regular updates on the WSB program to committee members demonstrates the value of the program and increases the likelihood of a positive response to including SRTS in the school’s wellness policy.

6. Interactive logs on a shared drive are an effective system for regional staff to use in reporting milestones.

A critical lesson learned through this initiative was the importance of a good system for regional employees to use in reporting milestones. Throughout the maturation of the grant, a variety of techniques were used for reporting including written reports, electronic reports and interactive logs on a CPPW shared drive. The interactive log was the most effective way for regional staff to input accurate and timely data that was easy for state staff to use for monitoring and evaluation purposes.
APPENDICES

Appendix A: Walking School Bus Success Stories

Appendix B: Walking School Bus Logs

Appendix C: SRTS Students Arrival and Departure Tally Sheets

Appendix D: Walking School Bus Communication Materials

Appendix E: School District Model Policy
APPENDIX A: WALKING SCHOOL BUS SUCCESS STORIES

Veterans Pursuing Degrees Pound the Pavement with Local Kids

“We should contribute maximum energy to direct children away from the penitentiary and toward the universities. The Walking School Bus project provides guidance from a young generation of veterans to children who may otherwise be led into a darker life of crime.” —Dr. Alzo Reddick, Soldiers to Scholars founder

Project Action
Helping children safely travel to and from school on foot or bicycle was a core focus of the two-year Florida Communities Putting Prevention to Work (CPPW) project, funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. One partnership to emerge from this involved CPPW, the Orange County Health Department, and the University of Central Florida’s Soldiers to Scholars program. Soldiers to Scholars is comprised of former military men and women who are receiving financial aid toward higher education courses in recognition of community service, namely, in mentoring young people. The program founder and director, Dr. Alzo Reddick, decided to adopt CPPW’s Walking School Bus (WSB) model to provide a volunteer opportunity and to assist the children of an inner-city apartment complex with a challenging situation—no school bus to transport them to and from Eagle’s Nest Elementary.

On International Walk to School Day in October 2011, an Orlando Police Safety Officer gave volunteers and parents a basic pedestrian safety training. CPPW provided safety vests, signs and other educational materials.

Before long the WSB was a self-sufficient program. The kids are given a wholesome breakfast each Wednesday morning before heading to school, and they receive incentive items for every five walks taken. A coordinator delegates responsibilities, logs participation and keeps track of materials. Standard Operating Procedures were written for others to follow in the event that usual volunteers are absent. Dr. Reddick views this project as an opportunity to teach a vulnerable population of children and encourage them to be safe, smart, upstanding citizens. He refers to the men and women who volunteer every week as “mentors” in the journey to reach this goal.

CONTACT: Bureau of Chronic Disease Prevention; 850-245-4330; FloridaCPPW@dhhs.state.fl.us

## APPENDIX B: WALKING SCHOOL BUS LOGS

### Example of the Walking School Bus Log

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School and County</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>WSB Start Date</th>
<th>Frequency of WSB</th>
<th># of Students</th>
<th>Length of Route</th>
<th>Number of Routes</th>
<th># of Students in school</th>
<th>Documentati on</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shalimar Elementary-Okaloosa</td>
<td>10/6/10</td>
<td>10/6/10</td>
<td>daily</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>1 mile</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>544</td>
<td>WSB notice on website. WSB announce...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Example of the Walking School Bus Policy Log

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>As of mm/dd/yy (Pre-CPPW)</th>
<th>SRTS Mention</th>
<th>WSB Mention</th>
<th>Walk to School</th>
<th>As of mm/dd/yy (Proposed by CPPW)</th>
<th>SRTS Mention</th>
<th>WSB Mention</th>
<th>Walk to School Mention</th>
<th>As of mm/dd/yy (Approved by School Board)</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>05/10/11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>05/29/12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>05/29/12</td>
<td></td>
<td>Few Wellness Committee meetings and focus is on school nurse services so far</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01/13/09</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>05/29/12</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>12/1/2011: School district legal counsel reviewing proposed language from wellness committee working group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### APPENDIX C: SRTS STUDENTS ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE TALLY SHEETS

#### Safe Routes to School Students Arrival and Departure Tally Sheet

**Capital Letters Only – Blue or Black Ink Only**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Name:</th>
<th>Teacher’s First Name:</th>
<th>Teacher’s Last Name:</th>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade: (PK, K, 1, 2, 3...)</th>
<th>Monday’s Date (Week count was conducted)</th>
<th>Number of Students Enrolled in Class:</th>
</tr>
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<td>M M D D Y Y Y</td>
<td>1 5</td>
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- Please conduct these counts on two of the following three days Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday. (Three days would provide better data if counted).
- Please do not conduct these counts on Mondays or Fridays.
- Before asking your students to raise their hands, please read through all possible answer choices so they will know their choices. Each Student may only answer once.
- Ask your students as a group the question “How did you arrive at school today?”
- Then, reread each answer choice and record the number of students that raised their hands for each. Place just one character or number in each box.
- Follow the same procedure for the question “How do you plan to leave for home after school?”
- You can conduct the counts once per day but during the count please ask students both the school arrival and departure questions.
- Please conduct this count regardless of weather conditions (i.e., ask these questions on rainy days, too).

#### Step 1.
Fill in the weather conditions and number of students in each class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key</th>
<th>Weather</th>
<th>Student Tally</th>
<th>Walk</th>
<th>Bike</th>
<th>School Bus</th>
<th>Family Vehicle</th>
<th>Carpool</th>
<th>Transit</th>
<th>Other</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S = sunny</td>
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<td>R = rainy</td>
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<td>O = overcast</td>
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<td></td>
<td>SN = snow</td>
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<td>S</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>2</td>
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Please list any disruptions to these counts or any unusual travel conditions to/from the school on the days of the tally.
APPENDIX D: WSB EDUCATION MATERIALS

Fact Sheet

Volunteer Training Booklet
APPENDIX E: SCHOOL AND DISTRICT MODEL POLICIES

Model Walking School Bus Policies

These model policies were prepared by the Florida Department of Health for the Communities Putting Prevention to Work Program (CPPW). The identified school and school district are fictional. Do not rely on these policies. Instead, consult with your local school board attorney before rendering a Walking School Bus Policy. A copy of the CPPW guidance booklet for Walking School Buses, “Let’s Get Going” is attached.

School Policy

Jane Doe Elementary School supports the Walking School Bus (WSB) program and encourages parents and students to participate. The WSN program is a safety program for children to walk to school. WSBs operate in partnership with the Florida Department of Health, the Starfish County Health Department, the Florida Safe Routes to School Program, and the Parent Teacher Association.

A walking school bus is a group of children who walk to school with an adult “driver” at the front of the group and an adult “conductor” at the back of the group. The WSB stops along the way to “pick up” children to go to school.

Each WSB should have a designated leader who is responsible for scheduling the drivers and conductors. All drivers and conductors should wear yellow safety vests or bright colored clothing.

Please refer to the Florida Department of Health’s publication, “Let’s Get Going” for information on the Walking School Bus Program or the Safe Routes to School website, at http://www.saferoutesinfo.org.

Jane Doe Elementary School’s WSB meets every Wednesday at 7:45 AM at the Starfish County Little League park.

District Wellness Policy

The Starfish County School District supports the Walking School Bus (WSB) program and encourages schools to implement them. The WSB program is a safety program for children to walk to school. WSBs operate in partnership with the Florida Department of Health, the Starfish County Health Department, the Florida Safe Routes to School Program, and Parent Teacher Association.

WSBS benefit students by increasing their levels of physical activity and teaching pedestrian safety.

A walking school bus is a group of children who walk to school with an adult “driver” at the front of the group and an adult “conductor” at the back of the group. The WSB stops along the way to “pick up” children to go to school. Walking School Buses vary in structure and are tailored to the needs and volunteers of each school.

Individual schools or staff may refer to the Florida Department of Health’s publication, “Let’s Get Going” or the Safe Routes to School website http://www.saferoutesinfo.org for more information on how to develop a WSB program.