



PTA Newsletter Article – March

March to School With Your Own Walking School Bus

If your neighborhood hasn't tried a Walking School Bus yet, March is the perfect month to begin. A Walking School Bus is a group of children walking to and from school with one or more adults. It's like a carpool — without the car — and with the added benefits of exercise and the company of friends and neighbors.

A Walking School Bus helps to:

- Increase daily physical activity for children and adults.
- Increase safety for pedestrians in the neighborhood.
- Reduce traffic in and around the neighborhood and school.
- Increase community cohesion by helping neighbors get to know one another.

Studies show that fewer children are walking and biking to school now compared to 20 years ago. Safety is often the main reason parents are hesitant to let their children walk to school. Encouraging students to walk to school requires creative solutions that are safe and fun — a Walking School Bus can be both.

How do you start a Walking School Bus?

1. Send a letter to parents in your neighborhood.
2. Go door-to-door, inviting families to participate.
3. Recruit a few trusted parent volunteers to rotate walking days.
4. Determine safest route based on your school's SNAP Map.
5. Inform school administrators and encourage them to organize a program (optional).
6. Mobilize parents and volunteers and start walking.

Can students who ride the bus or live outside school boundaries still participate?

Yes. If you live too far to walk to school, your children can still participate in a Walking School Bus. Simply designate a route that begins at an approved drop-off location a mile or less from school. Invite other parents to serve as chaperones on those routes, and designate a drop-off and pick-up time each day.

Where can you find a copy of your school's SNAP Map?

A SNAP Map is a map that shows the safest way to walk and bike to school. Contact your principal to get a copy of your school's SNAP Map, and let him/her know if updates are needed to the routes.

More ideas from the UDOT Student Neighborhood Access Program (SNAP)[™] to encourage your child to walk and bike to school safely are available at www.udot.utah.gov/snap.