

ALAMEDA COUNTY

# Safe Routes to Schools

## 2019 Program Evaluation



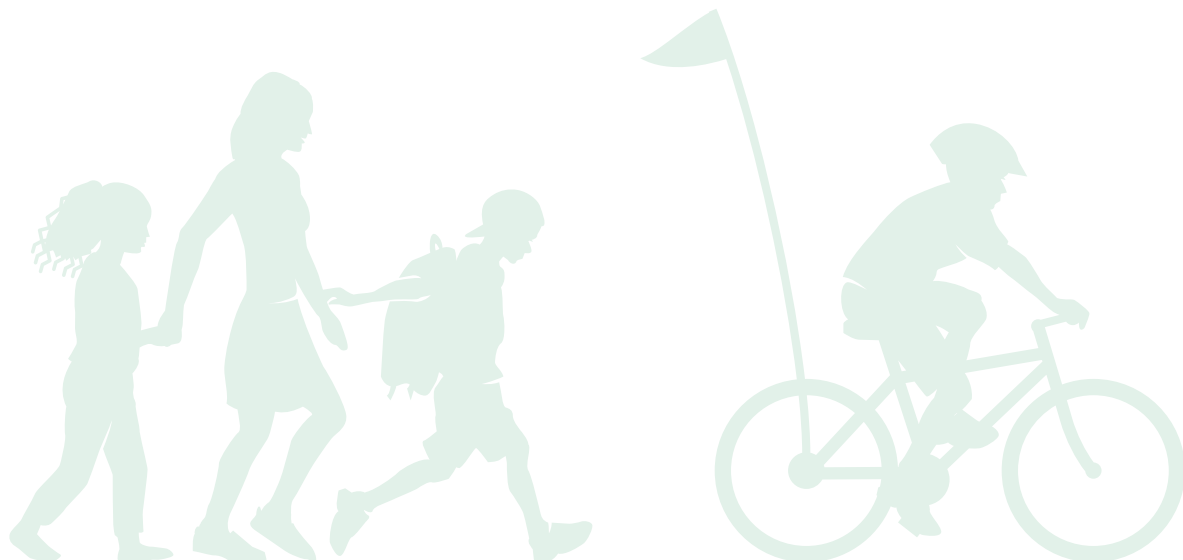
Healthy Kids



Safer Streets



Strong Communities



Alameda County  
Transportation Commission



METROPOLITAN  
TRANSPORTATION  
COMMISSION

## ALAMEDA COUNTY SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOLS PROGRAM

*This page intentionally left blank.*

## Table of Contents

Executive Summary .....	i
Chapter 1 — Introduction.....	1
Program Background .....	1
Key Findings .....	14
Report Organization .....	16
Chapter 2 — Data Sources and Methods .....	17
Survey Instruments.....	17
Additional Data.....	18
Data Considerations .....	19
Chapter 3 — Mode Shift .....	20
How Students Get to School.....	20
Shift in Transportation Modes.....	24
Lessons Learned .....	29
Chapter 4 — Safety .....	30
School Safety Assessments.....	30
Parent Perceptions of Safety .....	32
Incidence of Collisions.....	36
Lessons Learned .....	37
Chapter 5 — Program Elements .....	39
Education Activities .....	39
Encouragement Events.....	42
Program Implementation Feedback.....	43
Lessons Learned .....	44
Chapter 6 — Program Participation.....	46
Enrollment in the Alameda County SR2S Program .....	46
Distribution of Program Resources .....	50
Program Element Participation by School .....	52
Lessons Learned .....	53
Chapter 7 — The Road Ahead .....	55
2019–20 School Year Updates .....	55
Recommendations for the Future .....	55

## Table of Maps

Map 1. Schools Enrolled in the Alameda County SR2S Program in 2018–19 .....	7
Map 2. Percent of parents who allow their children to travel to school via different modes.....	36

## List of Tables

Table 1. Alameda County Safe Routes to Schools Professional Services Contracts .....	3
Table 2. Alameda County SR2S Program Goals and Accomplishments .....	4
Table 3. 2018–19 SR2S Program Elements.....	8
Table 4. Allocation of Program Elements.....	13
Table 5. Summary of Surveys and Responses .....	17
Table 6. Characteristics of Schools with the Most Active, Shared, or Drive Alone Use .....	22
Table 7. Incidence of Bicycle and Pedestrian Involved Collisions near All SR2S Schools and Access Schools.....	37
Table 8. Safety Training Learning Objectives Findings.....	41
Table 9. Distribution of Program Resources for 2018–19 .....	51

## Table of Figures

Figure 1. Growth of the Alameda County SR2S Program .....	1
Figure 2. Alameda County Safe Routes to Schools Program Structure .....	3
Figure 3. Breakdown of Schools Enrolled in the Alameda County Safe Routes to Schools Program in 2018–19 .....	6
Figure 4. Countywide Average Mode Split for School Travel .....	20
Figure 5. Mode Split by Planning Area .....	21
Figure 6. Mode Split by School Type .....	22
Figure 7. Mode Split by Distance from School .....	23
Figure 8. FIVE-Year Change in How Students Get to School at schools with data in both periods 25	
Figure 9. Five-Year Change in Mode Split by Planning Area .....	25
Figure 10. Reasons Parents/Caregivers Would Walk/Bike with Their Families .....	27
Figure 11. Parent/Caregiver Perception of Mode Shift after Program Element Participation .....	28
Figure 12. Summary of Alameda County SSAs by Planning Area .....	31
Figure 13. Parent Perceptions of Walking and Biking to School .....	33
Figure 14. Parent Concerns with Walking or Biking to School .....	34
Figure 15. Permission to Walk, Bike, and Take Public Transit By AGE .....	35
Figure 16. Student Enjoyment of Safety Trainings .....	40
Figure 17. Students' Ability to Repair their Own Bicycles .....	41
Figure 18. Obstacles to Program Element Implementation .....	43
Figure 19. Active and inactive schools enrolled in the alameda county SR2S Program .....	46
Figure 20. School Enrollment by Grade Level, 2018–19 School Year .....	47
Figure 21. School Enrollment by Planning Area, 2018–19 School Year .....	48
Figure 22. Historic School Enrollment by Planning Area .....	48
Figure 23. School Enrollment by District, 2018–19 School Year .....	49
Figure 24. Number of Activities Per School .....	52
Figure 25. School Participation in Countywide Events .....	53

## ALAMEDA COUNTY SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOLS PROGRAM

*This page intentionally left blank.*

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Alameda County Safe Routes to Schools (SR2S) Program promotes safe active and shared transportation choices as fun and easy options for parents and students to travel to and from school. The program offers direct support and various program elements<sup>1</sup> to public elementary, middle, and high schools in Alameda County, and fosters partnerships and collaborates with school communities across the county to promote active (walking and rolling) and shared (carpooling and transit) transportation options while emphasizing and teaching safety. As part of a revamping of the SR2S Program in 2016, Alameda CTC committed to conducting a comprehensive evaluation of the program to inform program direction. This biennial report is the first output of that effort.

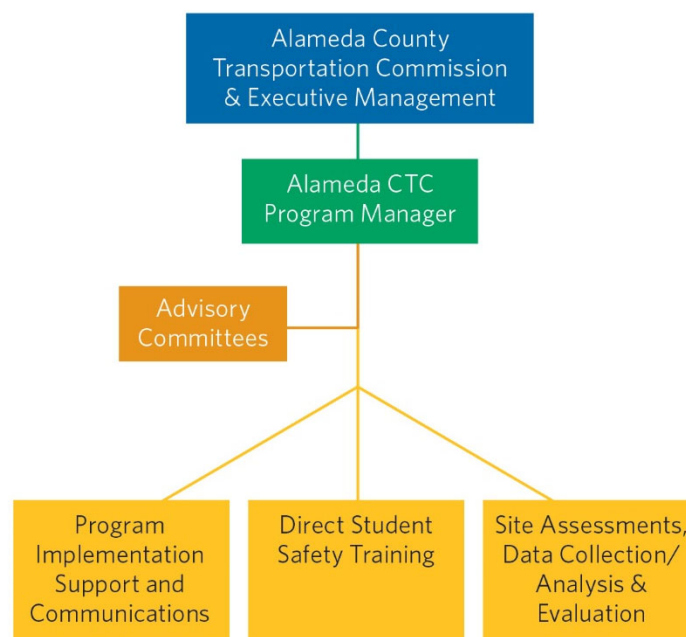
The biennial program evaluation is intended to guide the program team in:

Identifying efficiencies and the most successful program elements for different contexts, and

Identifying the more and less successful program elements and recommending future improvements.

This report includes a robust analysis of the SR2S Program's growth, impact, and plans for the future—with the goal of continuously improving program elements and program effectiveness, and allocating resources most effectively and efficiently.

## Program Structure



---

<sup>1</sup> **Program elements** refers to the wide array of educational **activities**, encouragement **events** and **technical assistance** offered by the Alameda County Safe Routes to Schools Program.

## Desired Program Outcomes and Implementation Goals

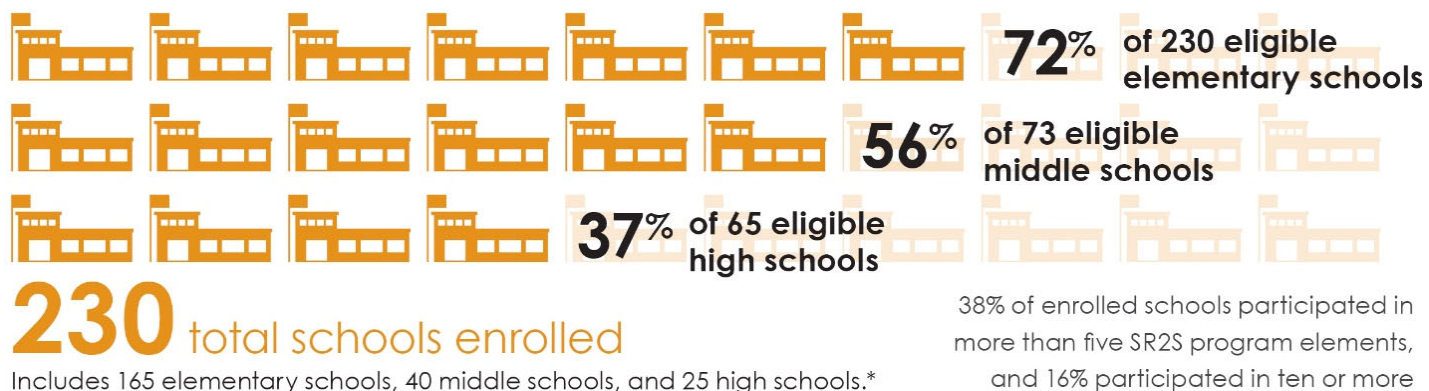
Adopted by the Alameda CTC Commission in January 2017, the following desired program outcomes guide the Alameda County SR2S Program:

- » **Mode shift:** Increase use of active and shared transportation modes (rolling, walking, taking transit, and carpooling) to access schools and promote these as viable, everyday transportation options, and
- » **Safety:** Increase safe pedestrian and bicycling behaviors, decrease incidence of collisions, and increase student and parent confidence in safe walking, bicycling and/or transit riding abilities.

## Alameda County Safe Routes to Schools Professional Services Contracts

Program Implementation Support and Communications	Direct Student Safety Training	Site Assessments, Data Collection/Analysis & Evaluation
School Site Support Recruitment Encouragement Events Outreach Communications Walking School Buses and Bike Trains	Pedestrian Education Bicyclist Education BikeMobile Walk and Roll Assemblies Walking School Bus and Bike Train Technical Support Educational Videos	School Safety Assessments Program Evaluation Data Collection Data Analysis Technical Support Mapping

## Program Participation — 2018–19 School Year



\*Elementary schools include one Combination - All Grades school (K through 12th grade) and 14 Combination - Lower Grade (Kindergarten through 6th grade) schools. Middle schools include 15 Combination - Upper Grade (7th through 12th grade) schools.



## Data Considerations

This report considers quantitative and qualitative data from nine survey instruments, multiple focus groups, school safety assessments, and general feedback from stakeholders. Some notable considerations include:

- » The Alameda County SR2S project team provided data collection instruments and guidance, but schools and individual teachers have to opt-in and agree to collect data.
- » Parent/caregiver survey data is self-reported and may over-report parents who are favorable toward active transportation modes.
- » Historic data did not always exist for all schools in the analysis. Additionally, some data did not identify the city or district; therefore, data for schools that share a name with another school in the county is not useable for historic comparison.
- » Because individual teachers must opt-in to collect data, student travel tally data is not collected for the entire school, meaning that the distribution of responses by grade level is not consistent within schools, between schools or over time.
- » Non-transportation factors such as weather or crime near a school have a significant impact on mode choice, which can impact mode choice data from year-to-year.

## Key Findings

The following themes emerged from the analysis:

1. **Administrators, SR2S Champions, local jurisdiction staff, parents and students value and support the SR2S Program and see it as an asset for their schools.** In general, participants find the SR2S Program elements to be rewarding, educational, engaging, and fun. Overwhelmingly, SR2S Champions—who are instrumental for program implementation at schools—feel proud of their accomplishments, positive toward the SR2S Program, and are committed to continuing to support the program in the future.
2. **Driver behavior and a lack of safe walking and bicycling facilities near schools are major barriers to families using active modes.** SR2S staff repeatedly heard parents' concerns about speeding cars, rude/illegal driver behavior, inattentive drivers, and insufficient sidewalks or bicycle facilities near schools. The program aims to address safety issues through school safety assessments (SSAs), which identify needed improvements around schools. However, it is up to the local jurisdiction or school district to implement any recommended improvements.
3. **In order to continue impacting mode shift, the Alameda County SR2S Program could help address other barriers to walking, rolling and shared travel by building partnerships.** Increasingly, non-transportation barriers come up as issues that impact families' school travel decisions, e.g. personal safety concerns due to crime or homeless encampments near schools; land use decisions that lead to unfriendly walking environments or long trips to school; and housing affordability that displaces families and forces mid-year

school changes or longer commutes.<sup>2</sup> During the 2018–19 school year, poor air quality due to wildfires (schools canceled activities due to air pollution and were unable to reschedule) and labor disputes at school districts had a negative impact on participation in program activities and events (OUSD teachers were on strike during the Golden Sneaker Contest) and on data collection (principals declined to participate in the student travel tallies due to labor disputes). The SR2S Program currently has few tools to address most of these barriers, but they can be addressed by building partnerships with agencies and organizations that work to tackle these barriers.

4. **A one-size-fits-all approach may result in under-participation by schools with less parent engagement, limited funding resources, or high staff turnover.** Schools with active parent groups, high levels of parent engagement, and access to funding for extra-curricular activities can more easily participate in SR2S Program elements, while schools with limited resources may benefit more from face-to-face support. The Access Safe Routes Pilot Program evaluation shows that, especially at historically disadvantaged schools, this challenge can be overcome with additional face-to-face support from site coordinators.
5. **A one-size-fits-all approach may also result in a mismatch of program resources with individual school needs and priorities.** Because schools have competing priorities that change from year-to-year, and sometimes month-to-month, this one-size-fits-all approach makes it difficult to respond to schools' individual challenges and needs. Tailoring services to individual schools' priorities can address this challenge.

---

<sup>2</sup> State officials have found that chronic absenteeism might have risen because of rising student homelessness and natural disasters, such as fire and resulting air pollution. See [Disaster Days: How megafires, guns and other 21st century crises are disrupting California schools](#).

### MODE SHIFT LESSONS LEARNED

- » In total, 47% of school travel is either shared or active transportation.
- » On average, 31 percent of students at enrolled schools use active transportation options, while 13 percent use shared modes. In addition, 57 percent of families living within a quarter-mile of their school currently use active modes.
- » Schools that have participated in the Alameda County SR2S Program over the last five years have increased active and shared modes, while decreasing driving alone.
- » Mode shift is hard to achieve due to the complexity of the decisions families must make. However, the data indicate a need for safe walking and rolling infrastructure to access schools.
- » Other non-transportation factors appear to have a large impact on families' transportation choices, such as distance, convenience, and personal safety concerns.
- » Because the SR2S Program provides a variety of program elements to each school and data sources are limited, it is difficult to determine which specific individual SR2S program elements have the greatest potential to impact transportation mode choice.

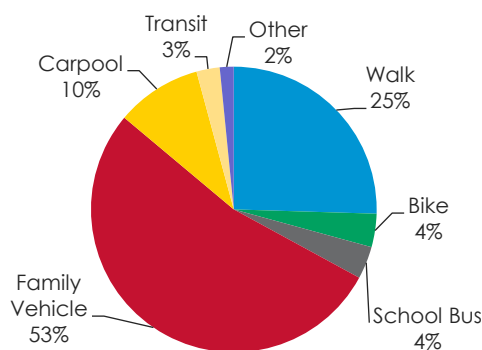
Schools that have participated in the Alameda County SR2S Program over the last five years have

Increased  
active  
modes  
**3%**

Increased  
shared  
modes  
**4%**

Decreased  
driving  
alone  
**3%**

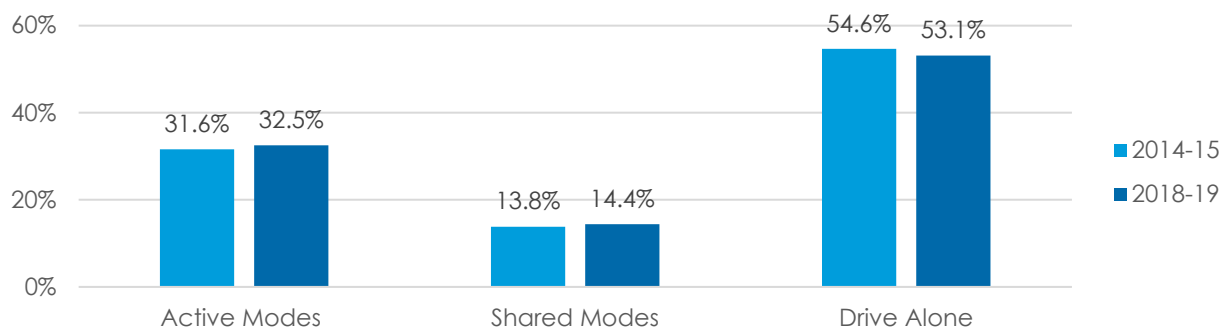
### 2018–19 SCHOOL YEAR MODE SPLIT



Source: 2018–19 Hand Tally Data

Note: This only includes the 78 out of 230 schools enrolled in the program that participated in the 2018-19 hand tallies.

### FIVE-YEAR CHANGE IN HOW STUDENTS GET TO SCHOOL



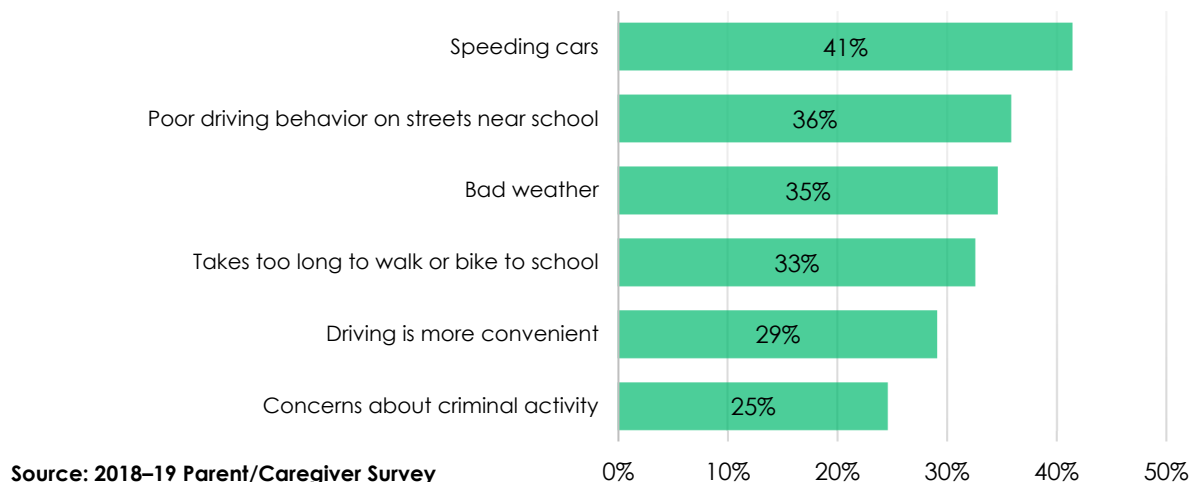
Source: 2014–15 and 2018–19 Hand Tally Data for Schools with Data in Both Periods

Note: this includes only the 44 schools with data available in both time periods.

### SAFETY LESSONS LEARNED

- » Parents and caregivers already feel generally positive toward walking and rolling to school.
- » Driver behavior near schools is the key concern keeping families from walking or rolling to school.
- » The absence of safe walking and biking infrastructure can prevent students from using active modes to get to school.
- » Crime and personal safety concerns are significant barriers for students walking and rolling to school.
- » A significant proportion of parents/caregivers of elementary and middle school students report having concerns about letting their child walk, roll, or take transit, even with a trusted adult.

### PARENT CONCERNS WITH WALKING OR BIKING TO SCHOOL



### PROGRAM ELEMENT LESSONS LEARNED

- » Active SR2S Champions and supportive school administrators are essential to program success and program element implementation; however, Champion and school staff availability and turnover are major ongoing challenges.
- » According to our SR2S Champions survey, lack of parent support or interest is the biggest barrier for organizing SR2S program elements in school.
- » The extent to which students learn the intended lessons from specific program elements is unclear without further analysis.
- » Evaluation of messaging and communications strategies is needed to gauge their impact and effectiveness.

## PARTICIPATION LESSONS LEARNED

- » As shown in the Program Participation graphic on page 1, a similar percentage of elementary schools and middle schools countywide participate in the program. A smaller percentage of high schools participate in the program.
- » All areas of the county are served by the Alameda County SR2S Program, although some discrepancies in active program participation still exist.
- » The majority of schools enrolled in the Alameda County SR2S Program (84 percent) are active participants in SR2S program elements, meaning they participate in at least one activity or event per year.
- » Further evaluation is needed to better gauge the balance between program element cost and reach with the relative impact on travel behavior.

*The biggest hurdle in our district is infrastructure. Sidewalks... will have more of an impact on the number of students walking to school than any SR2S program.*

---

CHAMPION SURVEY RESPONSE FROM  
THE CENTRAL PLANNING AREA

## Recommendations

Based on lessons learned during this evaluation period, the following recommendations should be considered for future program implementation. The timeframe for the recommendations considered activities that were already in progress (short-term) or that are achievable with existing resources and work plans (medium-term). Long-term recommendations may require additional resources.

### SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS (2019–20 SCHOOL YEAR)

- » Continue focusing resources on direct student safety training, school safety assessments that identify infrastructure improvements near schools, and ongoing events that sustain behavior change, such as weekly or monthly Walk to School Days and Walking School Buses.
- » Dedicate resources to address driver behavior near schools through development of new program elements or strategies, such as targeted age- and culturally-appropriate outreach campaigns (banners, yard signs, and posters) and messaging, and/or coordinated enforcement efforts (partnering with local law enforcement for coordinated enforcement campaigns).
- » Dedicate resources to understand the barriers to participation for inactive schools already enrolled in the program and identify solutions to reduce those barriers.
- » Prioritize engaging parents as the transportation decision-makers by addressing parents' attitudes toward and concerns about walking, rolling, and transit use through program communications, educational materials, and parent meetings.
- » Track local investments in infrastructure near schools, particularly projects that were identified in the school safety assessments (SSAs), to better evaluate the impact of SSAs.

### **MEDIUM-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS (2020–21 SCHOOL YEAR)**

- » Increase targeted face-to-face outreach to schools in under-represented areas of the county, especially at districts with program enrollment below the countywide average.
- » Provide more tailored messaging to Champions and school administrators about the benefits of the SR2S Program and individual program elements through outreach toolkits or other communications collateral.
- » Advocate for funding for infrastructure improvements near schools that reduce driving speeds (traffic calming) and provide separation between people walking, rolling, and driving.
- » Explore, develop and pilot program elements that could address the non-transportation barriers that impact families' transportation decisions, including building partnerships with other agencies/organizations around the county that work to address these barriers.

### **LONG-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS**

- » Research best practices to identify high-reach, low-cost program elements that are most likely to sustain travel behavior change, such as an anti-speeding campaigns near schools.
- » Give priority to program offerings that are most effective at sustaining behavior change and impacting safety based on further analysis.
- » Identify opportunities to increase targeted face-to-face support for Champions and school administrators to facilitate their organizing and publicizing of SR2S events and activities.
- » Work with local jurisdiction partners to prioritize traffic calming and complete streets near schools.

# CHAPTER 1 — INTRODUCTION

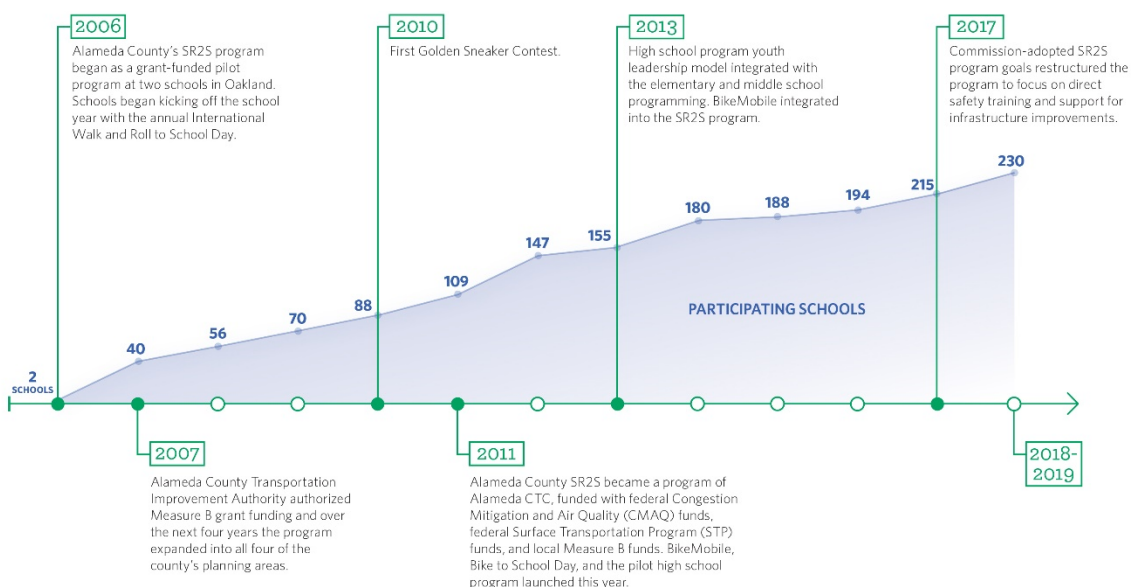
## Program Background

The Alameda County Safe Routes to Schools (SR2S) Program promotes active and shared transportation choices as healthy and preferred options for families to travel to and from school. The program was established in 2006 through a Caltrans grant-funded pilot program. The following year, the Alameda County Transportation Improvement Authority (ACTIA) authorized \$1.3 million in Measure B funds to continue the program. The program is now administered and managed by the Alameda County Transportation Commission (Alameda CTC) and is funded through a combination of federal, state and local Measure B funds.

The program has changed and grown significantly over time. Initially, resources focused on building program elements and encouraging walking and rolling to school through three major encouragement events held throughout the school year (International Walk and Roll to School Day, the Golden Sneaker Contest, and Bike to School Day). As the program grew, additional innovative program elements were introduced (such as the Alameda County BikeMobile); however, the program resources continued to focus on the encouragement events.

In 2016, staff assessed the long-term viability and structure of the program.<sup>3</sup> The findings from this assessment pointed to the need to re-balance the program among the Six E's framework of Safe Routes to Schools (Education, Encouragement, Engineering, Enforcement, Evaluation, and Equity), rather than focusing nearly exclusively on encouragement, in order to ensure program success and sustainability.

**FIGURE 1. GROWTH OF THE ALAMEDA COUNTY SR2S PROGRAM**



<sup>3</sup> See Chapter 7 of the 2015-16 Year-End Report, available at: [https://alamedacountysr2s.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/2015-2016-ACTC-SR2S-year-end-report\\_FINAL.pdf](https://alamedacountysr2s.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/2015-2016-ACTC-SR2S-year-end-report_FINAL.pdf)

In early 2017, the Commission adopted a new policy and program framework with the goals of 1) re-balancing the program to increase the focus on program elements that influence and sustain behavior change, and 2) renewing the focus on safety via infrastructure improvements. The program framework led to the Commission's adoption of new program implementation goals, among which was a prioritization of evaluation efforts at the school level to ensure that the program strives for continuous improvement and actively monitors program impact.

This report is the first effort to evaluate the Alameda County Safe Routes to Schools Program on an ongoing basis. The biennial program evaluation is intended to guide Alameda CTC staff and the SR2S consultant team in:

1. Identifying efficiencies and the most successful program elements for different contexts, and
2. Identifying more or less successful program elements and recommending future improvements.

This report includes a robust analysis of the SR2S Program's growth, impact, and plans for the future, with the goal of continuously improving program offerings, resource allocation, and program effectiveness.

### **THE SIX E'S**

Alameda County's SR2S Program is modeled after the Six E's framework that is the hallmark of successful Safe Routes to School (SRTS) programs. The Six E's include:

- **Education** activities, such as walk and roll assemblies and bike rodeos, teach key messages about safe pedestrian and bicyclist behaviors, health, and the benefits of active and shared transportation. Classroom activities teach students how to navigate busy streets and make the connection between active transportation, health, and the environment.
- **Encouragement** events, such as annual 'big events' or recurring Walk and Roll to School Days, provide incentives and support to help children and their parents try walking, rolling, or taking transit instead of driving.
- **Engineering** activities aim to address physical barriers to shared and active travel. The Alameda County SR2S Program conducts school safety assessments to identify and prioritize infrastructure improvements that could help families walk or bike to school safely.
- **Enforcement** activities reinforce legal, safe, and respectful walking, bicycling, and driving behaviors.
- **Evaluation** activities help schools measure their success at encouraging active and shared modes of transportation. The Alameda County SR2S Program collects student travel data annually, conducts several participant surveys, and tracks resource allocation to continually improve the program.
- **Equity** activities aim to reach the school communities that need the program the most due to safety and health concerns, as well as lack of resources to participate. The Alameda County SR2S Program works to ensure that program resources and activities are equitably distributed throughout the county.

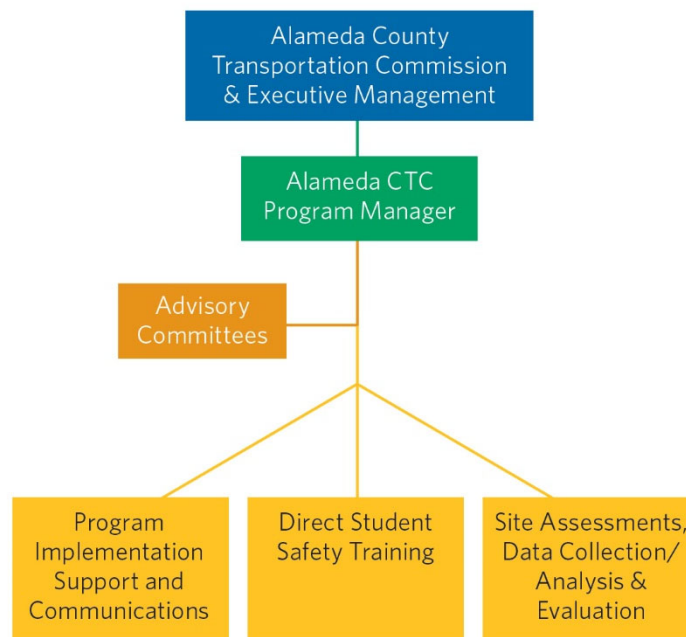


## PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION CHANGES

During the 2017–18 school year, program staff switched to a new implementation structure with the goal of re-balancing the program among the Six E's by focusing additional resources on direct student safety education and training, as well as implementing a renewed focus on safety and infrastructure improvements through school safety assessments. Under the new program structure, Alameda CTC brought management of the program in-house by hiring, for the first time in program history, a program manager dedicated to oversight and administration of the program, as well as providing strategic direction and cultivating partnerships.

**Figure 2** illustrates the new implementation structure. **Table 1** outlines the three professional services contracts that support the delivery of the program and outlines the responsibilities of each professional services contract.

**FIGURE 2. ALAMEDA COUNTY SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOLS PROGRAM STRUCTURE**



**Table 1. Alameda County Safe Routes to Schools Professional Services Contracts**

Program Implementation Support and Communications	Direct Student Safety Training	Site Assessments, Data Collection/Analysis & Evaluation
School Site Support Recruitment Encouragement Events Outreach Communications Walking School Buses and Bike Trains	Pedestrian Education Bicyclist Education BikeMobile Walk and Roll Assemblies Walking School Bus and Bike Train Technical Support Educational Videos	School Safety Assessments Program Evaluation Data Collection Data Analysis Technical Support Mapping

The program also shifted to a more data-driven implementation approach that focuses on program elements that affect behavior change and address safety. As such, the program's key desired outcomes are to increase mode shift to active and shared transportation modes and increase safety around schools.

Since this shift, staff have been making changes to achieve the program's goals, including developing and implementing new program elements, increasing the focus on ongoing events, direct student education and training activities, and increasing program-wide coordination. This robust evaluation is one of the new program efforts, which will continue to gauge effectiveness and allow staff to continuously improve the program. A separate Year-End Report summarizes the specific program elements delivered each school year.

### DESIRED PROGRAM OUTCOMES AND IMPLEMENTATION GOALS

Adopted by the Alameda CTC Commission in January 2017, the following desired program outcomes guide the Alameda County SR2S Program:

- » **Mode shift:** Increase use of active and shared transportation modes (rolling, walking, taking transit, and carpooling) to access schools and promote these as viable, everyday transportation options, and
- » **Safety:** Increase safe pedestrian and bicycling behaviors, decrease incidence of collisions, and increase student and parent confidence in safe walking, bicycling and/or transit riding abilities.

The Commission also adopted seven goals to guide program implementation. **Table 2** highlights how the SR2S Program has been working to address the Commission-adopted goals.

**TABLE 2. ALAMEDA COUNTY SR2S PROGRAM GOALS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

Goal	Summary of Work Towards Goal
1. Provide a <b>comprehensive, equitable</b> program in a fiscally responsible manner.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implemented an online Schools Database that allows for improved tracking of activities at schools and more effective coordination among the SR2S team.</li> <li>• Launched the Access Safe Routes Pilot Program to encourage greater participation by under-resourced schools.</li> <li>• Implemented scheduling guidelines for all program elements to ensure effective and geographically equitable distribution of resources.</li> <li>• Re-balanced the program among the Six E's to ensure delivery of a comprehensive program that increased focus on safety and elements that sustain behavior change.</li> </ul>
2. Develop a core program where <b>every student</b> has access to age-appropriate bicycle and pedestrian safety training.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developed School Activity Plans to support schools in strategically planning their SR2S efforts.</li> <li>• Launched new program elements to increase access to age-appropriate programming, including ACT Safely (the rail safety program element), Travel Training, and Drive Your Bike 102.</li> <li>• Launched the Access Safe Routes Pilot Program to understand how to build sustainable programs and deepen our understanding of effective</li> </ul>

Goal	Summary of Work Towards Goal
	methods and strategies to implement SR2S programming at under-resourced schools.
3. Establish and maintain <b>strong, effective partnerships</b> to foster program sustainability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultivated a robust network of school-based Champions (parent volunteers and school staff) who support program implementation at the school level.</li> <li>• Supported eight local SR2S Task Forces to increase coordination and support effective program implementation at the school level.</li> <li>• Convened local partner meetings to identify opportunities for coordination and to leverage existing resources.</li> <li>• Fostered partnerships with various relevant groups throughout the county, including the Alameda County SafeKids Coalition, the Child Injury Prevention Network — Bay Area, the Union City Family Center, the Eden Area Traffic Safety Committee, the Livable Streets Bucket in Ashland, and the Southern Alameda County Spare the Air Resource Team, to tap into existing structures and expand the impact of the program, and cross-leverage resources.</li> </ul>
4. Support <b>improvements to the built environment</b> near schools to improve access and increase safety.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Convened local jurisdiction staff to identify their needs in the SSA process and produce SSA reports that respond to those needs in order to increase the likelihood of implementation.</li> <li>• Strengthened partnerships and coordination with local jurisdiction staff to conduct and participate in SSAs, thereby increasing the possibility of implementation of the improvement recommendations.</li> <li>• Enhanced the SSA process to include more robust data collection to support grant applications with the goal of implementing SSA recommendations.</li> <li>• Developed an SSA Toolkit in response to local jurisdictions staff's needs in order to increase the likelihood of implementation.</li> </ul>
5. Encourage adoption of Safe Routes to Schools <b>policies and curriculum</b> within schools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conducted research to identify best practices and model programs from across the region and the country.</li> <li>• Inventoried existing SR2S-supportive policies at the city and school district level throughout Alameda County.</li> </ul>
6. <b>Evaluate</b> the SR2S Program at the school level so that it is context-sensitive and allows the program to adjust.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This report kicks off the first in an ongoing series of biennial comprehensive program evaluations.</li> <li>• The SR2S Program surveys students, parents, school administrators, SR2S Champions, and education activity participants to gauge program effectiveness and better understand school-level challenges and successes.</li> <li>• This report makes specific recommendations related to program participation, program elements, mode shift, and safety findings.</li> </ul>
7. <b>Engage parents</b> as transportation "decision makers."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developed a new and more strategic and comprehensive Communications Plan, which outlines the most effective communication tools to reach different audiences, with a particular focus on how to reach parents and the best messages to resonate with parents.</li> </ul>

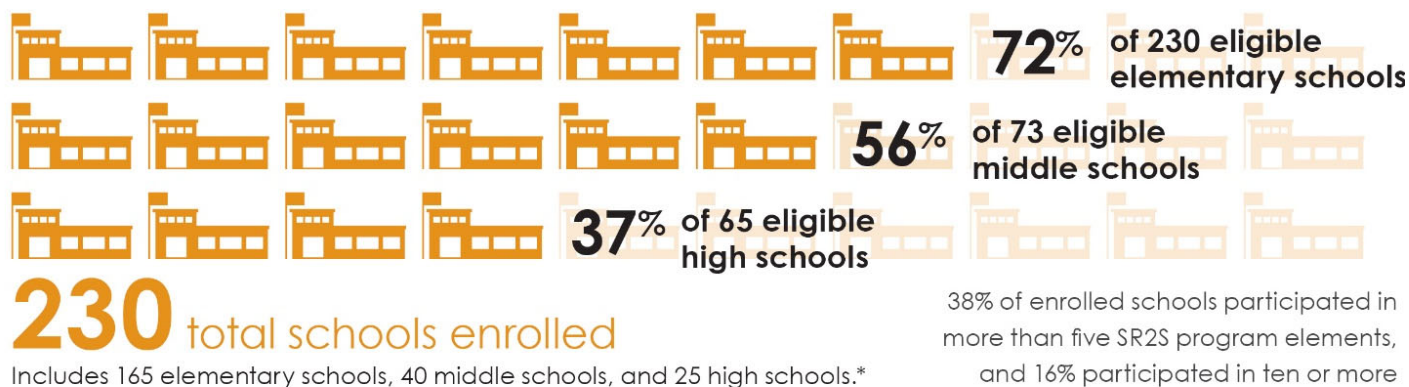
## SCHOOL ENROLLMENT IN THE ALAMEDA COUNTY SR2S PROGRAM

All public K–12 schools in Alameda County with a physical campus whose students travel to and from school are eligible to enroll in the Alameda County SR2S Program via a simple online form. By this definition, there were 367 schools eligible to participate in the program during the 2018–19 school year out of 424 total schools.<sup>4</sup> Once a school is enrolled, it is considered a part of the program and it does not have to re-enroll in the program from school year to school year. Additionally, there is no cap on the number of schools that can participate per year.

Once enrolled, schools are eligible to receive all program offerings free of charge, including support from a site coordinator who will work with the school to develop an activity plan, cultivate a SR2S Champion (if one has not been identified), and provide technical support related to implementation of all program elements. Enrolled schools are also eligible to receive all safety training activities and other program offerings, including school safety assessments.

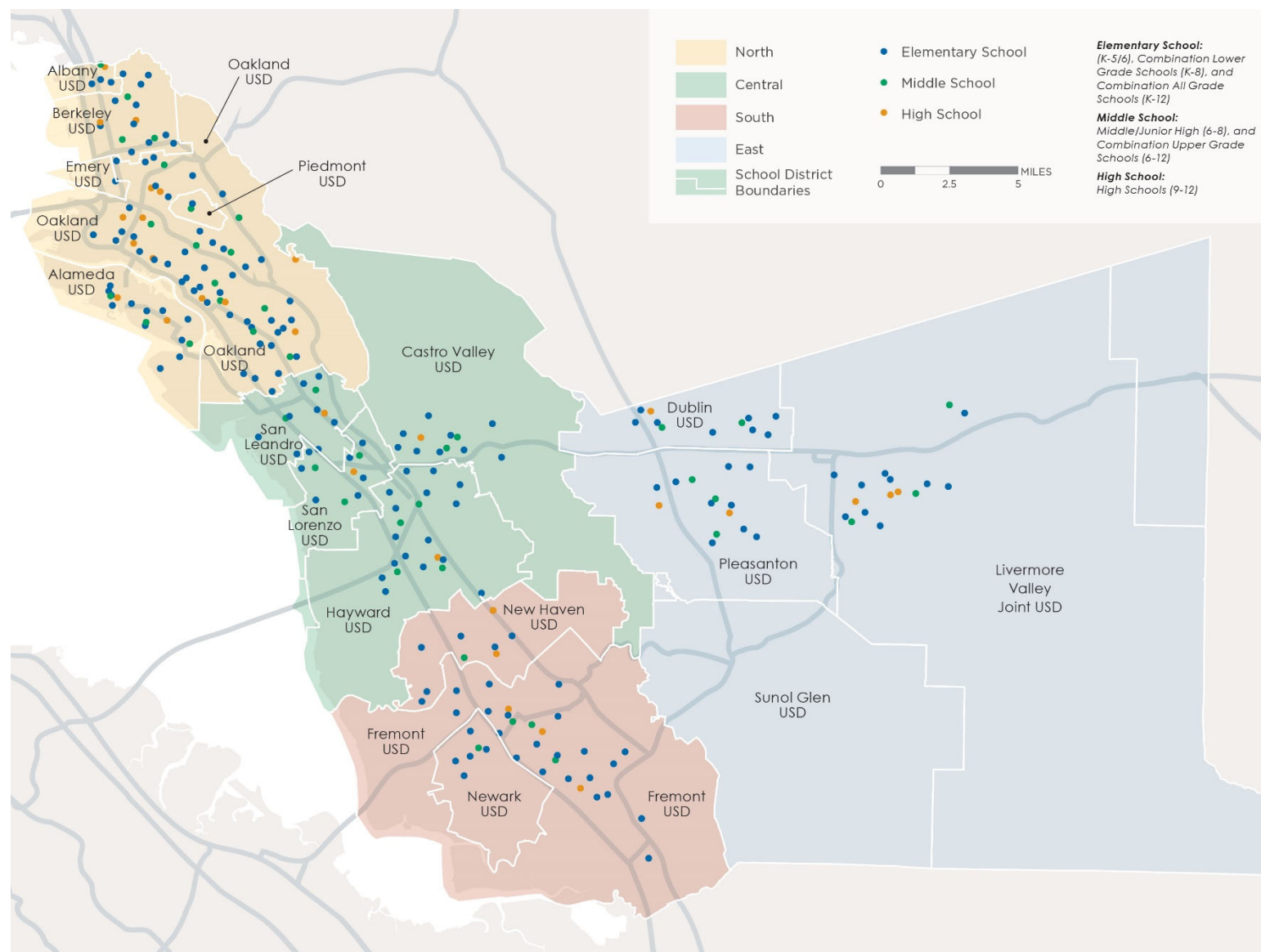
During the 2018–19 school year, 230 schools were enrolled in the program, which represents 62 percent of the 367 eligible schools in the county. This represents a seven percent increase from the 215 schools enrolled in the 2017–18 school year. The enrollment breakdown by school level is shown in **Figure 3** and **Map 1** shows the locations of participating schools across the county.

**FIGURE 3. BREAKDOWN OF SCHOOLS ENROLLED IN THE ALAMEDA COUNTY SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOLS PROGRAM IN 2018–19**



\*Elementary schools include one Combination - All Grades school (K through 12th grade) and 14 Combination - Lower Grade (Kindergarten through 6th grade) schools. Middle schools include 15 Combination - Upper Grade (7th through 12th grade) schools.

<sup>4</sup> Note: schools that are not eligible to participate include pre-kindergarten, Regional Occupational Programs, independent study programs, adult schools, as well as the California School for the Blind and the California School for the Deaf.

**MAP 1. SCHOOLS ENROLLED IN THE ALAMEDA COUNTY SR2S PROGRAM IN 2018–19**

## PROGRAM ELEMENTS

As previously noted, once schools are enrolled in the program, they are eligible to receive a wide variety of program activities, events, and technical assistance, which as a whole are referred to as **program elements**. Alameda County SR2S Program staff work with each school's administration and SR2S Champions to coordinate implementation of the program elements. In middle schools, students increasingly help plan and implement SR2S events and activities at their schools, while high school students are often active SR2S Champions.

**Table 3** shows all the program elements available to participating schools. While most program elements were evaluated for this report, several were not, including the Bike Blender, Bike Trivia Wheel, Educators' Guide, Go Green Curriculum, and the Online Resource Center. These elements were not evaluated because they are either a small part of a larger event, or an independent resource that teachers have to access independent of staff support.

**TABLE 3. 2018–19 SR2S PROGRAM ELEMENTS**

Program Element	Description	Age Level E=Elementary M=Middle H=High
<b>Education Activities</b> <i>SR2S education activities teach students how to safely and comfortably walk, bike, and take transit to get to school. Activities are both hands-on and educational, often taking students from the classroom to the streets.</i>		
<b>Pedestrian Safety</b>		
Pedestrian Rodeos	Students interact with a simulated street course to learn about walking safely, school pedestrian policies, and relevant local laws. The rodeos may involve school and public bus safety, as well as rail safety.	E M
Walk and Roll Assemblies	Rock the Block: A Walk and Roll Musical (Elementary) and Step Up Crew: A Street Smart Concert (Middle) are musical theater productions that focus on street safety concepts and safe behaviors, and that encourage active transportation as well as the use of transit for middle school students.	E M
<b>Bicycle Training &amp; Safety</b>		
Bicycle Rodeos	A bike rodeo uses a mock city for students to practice navigating different challenges on a bicycle. Cycling instructors teach students bike handling techniques, how to use hand signals, read traffic signs, and maneuver through intersections, as well as how to perform a bike safety check and properly fit a bike helmet.	E



Program Element	Description	Age Level E=Elementary M=Middle H=High
Drive Your Bike	Drive Your Bike is a week-long (middle schools) or four-day (high schools) in-class bike safety education program that teaches students in P.E. class bike handling skills and safety principles. After in-class training, students move to the gym or blacktop to learn basic bike handling skills, culminating with biking practice with instructors on neighborhood streets.	M H
Alameda County BikeMobile	The BikeMobile is a mobile bike repair shop that travels to schools and community events throughout Alameda County to provide free bicycle repair services and training on basic bicycle repair and mechanics.	E M H
Transit Training & Safety		
Travel Training	Travel training empowers students to use public transit. It provides students with the skills to safely and confidently use public transit, and teaches them to combine their trips with walking/rolling to promote active transportation.	M
Rail Safety		
ACT Safely	This program element was developed through a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety and offers classes and educational materials aimed at raising awareness about trespassing and teaching safe behaviors when walking or bicycling near railroads.	E M H
Additional Education Activities		
Bike Trivia Wheel	Bike Trivia Wheel is a quick, easy-to-implement activity to teach students about bike safety. Students spin the trivia wheel, answer the question, and win fun prizes. Schools use the Bike Trivia Wheel at encouragement events, such as Walk and Roll to School Day, and other community events.	E M
Educators' Guide	The Alameda County SR2S Program's K-5 Educators' Guide offers grade-specific SR2S curricula to create safe and healthy communities and is available on the program website as a resource for educators.	E
Go Green Curriculum	The "Go Green" classroom curriculum teaches students about the benefits of changing their transportation mode. Lessons cover ecology, recycling, leadership, and "green" lessons to motivate students.	M
Online Resource Center	The Online Resource Center ( <a href="http://alamedacountysr2s.org">alamedacountysr2s.org</a> ) is a hub of information and materials for parents, teachers, school administrators, and SR2S Program Champions to build and sustain SR2S programs in their schools and communities.	E M H

## ALAMEDA COUNTY SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOLS PROGRAM

Program Element	Description	Age Level E=Elementary M=Middle H=High
<b>Encouragement Events</b>		
<i>One-time or ongoing weekly/monthly events promote active and shared transportation, encourage families to try new modes for the first time, and celebrate their ongoing commitment to these modes. The Alameda County SR2S Program provides tools to support outreach and event promotion, as well as technical assistance for SR2S Champions to implement these events.</i>		
<b>Countywide Encouragement Events</b>		
International Walk and Roll to School Day	Each October, students from over 40 countries walk or bike to school during International Walk and Roll to School Day. Schools may organize additional activities for students on the same day to promote using active modes to get to school.	E M H
Golden Sneaker Contest	The Golden Sneaker Contest encourages students, parents, teachers, and administrators to travel to school by walking, rolling, carpooling, and taking transit as many days as they can during the two-week contest.	E M H
Bike to School Day	Bike to School Day celebrates bicycling to school concurrently with Bay Area Bike to Work Day. Some schools host "Energizer Stations" in coordination with Bike to Work Day to hand out gift bags, refreshments, and local bicycling information. Alameda County SR2S Program collaborates with a variety of community partners to provide giveaways such as pedal-powered smoothies, helmets, locks, and lights.	E M H
Cocoa for Carpools	From November to February, high school students lead and implement this event that promotes sharing the trip to school.	H
<b>Ongoing Events</b>		
Regularly Scheduled Walk and Roll to School Days	Regular Walk and Roll to School Days promote active and shared transportation throughout the school year and help sustain new travel behavior. Site coordinators support these events by providing outreach materials, sample text for school newsletters and email announcements, and suggested activities and themes for each month in English and Spanish.	E M H
Walking School Bus	A walking school bus is an organized group of students who walk to school together with adults. The walking school bus program element provides a toolkit, accompanying materials, volunteer recruitment, route assessment and selection, suggested route maps, and training to interested schools.	E
Bike Train	A bike train is an organized group of students who bike to school together with adult leaders. The bike train program element provides a toolkit, accompanying materials, volunteer recruitment, route assessment and selection, suggested route maps, and training to interested schools.	E M H



Program Element	Description	Age Level E=Elementary M=Middle H=High
Task Forces	SR2S site coordinators, staff, parents, teachers, district and city staff, and students convene quarterly in district Task Forces to discuss strategies for promoting Safe Routes to Schools and implementing successful programs. Participants share information about planned activities, partner on events, and brainstorm solutions to common challenges.	E M
Youth Task Force	The Youth Task Force provides a forum for high school students to learn how to lead Safe Routes programs, to discuss current transportation issues and activities at their schools, and to build a community of youth leaders.	H
Other Encouragement Tools		
Bike Blender	The Bike Blender uses bike pedal power to make smoothies and can be a great tool to teach students about health and wellness. It can also help to enhance SR2S events and activities, such as Bike to School Day.	E M H
<b>Engineering Activities</b>		
<i>Improving families' access to schools and their safety as they get to school helps overcome barriers to walking and rolling. While local jurisdictions are responsible for implementing safety recommendations and maintaining and improving transportation facilities, the Alameda County SR2S Program supports this by identifying potential improvements near schools.</i>		
School Safety Assessments	School safety assessments connect schools, parents and neighbors with cities and other partners to collaboratively identify gaps in infrastructure and improvements that can make it safer for students to walk and bike to school.	E M H
Safe Routes to Schools Maps	SR2S Maps identify preferred routes to school for walking, bicycling and transit, based on existing infrastructure like sidewalks and bike lanes, or traffic controls/crossing guards for crossing streets.	E M H
Technical Assistance	Alameda County SR2S Program staff provide route maps, rolling drop-off assistance, walking school bus/bike train route maps, base maps, and school safety assessment follow-up meetings.	E M H
<b>Evaluation Activities</b>		
<i>Evaluation activities help schools measure their success at encouraging active and shared modes of transportation. Alameda County SR2S collects student travel data annually, conducts several surveys, and tracks resource allocation to continually improve the program.</i>		
Year-End Report	The Alameda County SR2S Program Year-End Report summarizes the school year's accomplishments and presents progress toward program goals.	E M H
Biennial Evaluation	The biennial Alameda County Safe Routes to Schools Program Evaluation provides a robust analysis of the SR2S Program's growth, impact, and plans for the future, with the aim of continuously improving program offerings, resource allocation, and effectiveness.	E M H

Program Element	Description	Age Level E=Elementary M=Middle H=High
School Snapshots	Each school year, School Snapshots highlight demographics, program participation, and mode split data for each school enrolled in the Alameda County SR2S Program.	E M H
School District Snapshots	Each school year, District Snapshots highlight demographics, program participation, and mode split data for each school enrolled in the Alameda County SR2S Program.	E M H
<b>Enforcement Activities</b>		
<i>Enforcement activities reinforce legal, safe, and respectful walking, bicycling, and driving behaviors. Partnerships with law enforcement officials improve traffic safety around schools.</i>		
Bike Helmet Distribution and Fittings	Site coordinators fit and distributed bike helmets to students at participating schools.	E M H
<b>Equity Activities</b>		
<i>Equity activities aim to reach the school communities that need the program the most due to safety and health concerns. See complete description in the next section.</i>		
Access Safe Routes	The Access Safe Routes Pilot Program was launched to increase program participation by historically disadvantaged schools and to learn about what activities work best to engage these schools and sustain their participation.	E M H

### Access Safe Routes Pilot Program

During the 2017–18 school year, program staff launched the Access Safe Routes Pilot Program, which aimed to increase program participation in historically under-resourced schools. The pilot provided highly-tailored, face-to-face support to participating schools in order to identify and address the barriers to increased use of active and shared modes. At the same time, site coordinators worked with the schools to build internal leadership that would result in a more sustainable program in the long term. Program staff tested strategies to understand and address the needs of under-resourced schools in order to help these, and other under-resourced, schools successfully implement a SR2S program. The analysis and finding of the Access Safe Routes Pilot Program can be found in Appendix H.

### EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF RESOURCES

The Alameda County SR2S Program seeks to balance fair geographic distribution of resources with student enrollment and socioeconomic need. Program elements are allocated to participating schools by type of element, as shown in **Table 4**.

**TABLE 4. ALLOCATION OF PROGRAM ELEMENTS**

Implementation Approach	Program Elements	Allocation Process
Education	Pedestrian Rodeos Bicycle Rodeos Drive Your Bike Alameda County BikeMobile Walk and Roll Assemblies	These activities are allocated based on the number of enrolled students within each of the four planning areas. In addition, a certain number of each activity was reserved for the Access Safe Routes schools.
Education	Travel training	Site coordinators provide travel trainings to middle or junior high schools participating in the Student Transit Pass Program.
Education	Railroad Safety Education	In 2019, Alameda CTC received an Office of Traffic Safety grant to conduct railroad safety education, administered through the SR2S Program. Trainings prioritized schools within one mile of railroad tracks along the San Lorenzo-Hayward corridor of the Niles rail subdivision—where the largest number of trespassing fatalities and injuries occur.
Encouragement	International Walk and Roll to School Day Golden Sneaker Contest Bike to School Day Cocoa for Carpools Youth Task Force	All enrolled schools are eligible to participate in these countywide events. Schools register online to participate, and SR2S Champions can access resources and tools for participation electronically.
Encouragement	Regularly Scheduled Walk and Roll to School Days Walking School Bus and Bike Trains	Any enrolled school can get support for developing ongoing events, walking school buses or bike trains as budget allows.
Engineering	School Safety Assessments (SSAs) Technical Assistance	Allocation was based on the number of enrolled students within each of the four planning areas. Schools were prioritized based on three factors: safety, health, and equity. Access Safe Routes schools were prioritized to receive SSAs, as needed.

### OTHER SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL PROGRAMS IN ALAMEDA COUNTY

Several smaller, geographically-defined Safe Routes to School programs operate throughout the county. Some are funded through the state's Active Transportation Program (ATP) grants and others with local funds. Most schools are only enrolled in the Alameda County SR2S Program; others receive resources from multiple jurisdictions (i.e., Alameda CTC and the local jurisdiction). Each program provides a different balance of infrastructure and non-infrastructure support for their schools. Below is a summary of the other active Safe Routes to School programs in the county.

- » **Alameda County Public Works:** The Alameda County [Public Works Agency \(ACPWA\)](#) operated a Safe Routes to School program for 35 schools in the unincorporated areas of Alameda County. The ACPWA Safe Routes to School Program received a state ATP grant to complete school safety assessments at all schools in the target area and provide pedestrian and bike safety education. Twenty-five schools are enrolled and participate in both the Alameda County SR2S Program and the ACPWA program, while 10 schools are exclusively enrolled with ACPWA Safe Routes to School. The ACPWA's grant ended June 2019.
- » **Alameda County Public Health:** [Alameda County Nutrition Services \(ACNS\)](#) partners with ACPWA, the Oakland Police Department, Oakland Unified School District, and TransForm for the Active Oakland program. ACNS supports a safety patrol program that trains students and parents about pedestrian safety and how they can promote a safe environment for walking at their school. The Active Oakland program reaches 25 schools with site coordinator assistance for countywide encouragement events, in addition to some limited education components.
- » **City of Fremont:** The [City of Fremont](#) Safe Routes to School [Program](#) combines engineering tools with education about safety and encouragement events to increase the number of students using active modes to get to school. The Fremont Police Department oversees the crossing guard program and students receive traffic safety education. The Fremont Safe Routes to School Program includes a robust engineering component, which includes school safety assessments for all 42 public schools in the city.
- » **City of Albany:** The [City of Albany](#) Safe Routes to School [Program](#) delivers bike safety education and partners with the Alameda County SR2S Program to deliver encouragement events. The city program also helps to organize a bike festival each spring, supplies bike blenders for schools to borrow for events, and facilitates a task force. Albany Safe Routes to School is funded through a combination of state and federal Safe Routes to School and ATP funding.
- » **City of Alameda:** The [City of Alameda](#) Safe Routes to School [Program](#) funds bike rodeos at some schools every year, hosts a bike festival, and provides a citywide SRTS map. They coordinate with the Alameda County SR2S Program for most of the City's other Safe Routes efforts.

## Key Findings

The report considers data from nine survey instruments, multiple focus groups, and qualitative data. The following themes emerged from the analysis:

1. **Administrators, SR2S Champions, local jurisdiction staff, parents, and students value and support the SR2S Program and see it as an asset for their schools.** In general, participants find the SR2S Program elements to be rewarding, educational, engaging, and fun. Overwhelmingly, SR2S Champions—who are instrumental for program implementation at schools—feel proud of their accomplishments, positive toward the SR2S Program, and are committed to continuing to support the program in the future.

2. **Driver behavior and a lack of safe walking and bicycling facilities near schools are major barriers to families using active modes.** SR2S staff repeatedly heard parents' concerns about speeding cars, rude/illegal driver behavior, inattentive drivers, and insufficient sidewalks or bicycle facilities near schools. The program aims to address safety issues through school safety assessments (SSAs), which identify needed improvements around schools. However, it is up to the local jurisdiction or school district to implement any recommended improvements.
3. **In order to continue impacting mode shift, the Alameda County SR2S Program could help address other barriers to walking, rolling and shared travel by building partnerships.** Increasingly, non-transportation barriers come up as issues that impact families' school travel decisions, e.g. personal safety concerns due to crime or homeless encampments near schools; land use decisions that lead to unfriendly walking environments or long trips to school; and housing affordability that displaces families and forces mid-year school changes or longer commutes.<sup>5</sup> During the 2018–19 school year, poor air quality due to wildfires (schools canceled activities due to air pollution and were unable to reschedule) and labor disputes at school districts had a negative impact on participation in program activities and events (OUSD teachers were on strike during the Golden Sneaker Contest) and on data collection (principals declined to participate in the student travel tallies due to labor disputes). The SR2S Program currently has few tools to address most of these barriers, but they can be addressed by building partnerships with agencies and organizations that work to tackle these barriers.
4. **A one-size-fits-all approach may result in under-participation by schools with less parent engagement, limited funding resources, or high staff turnover.** Schools with active parent groups, high levels of parent engagement, and access to funding for extra-curricular activities can more easily participate in SR2S Program elements, while schools with limited resources may benefit more from face-to-face support. The Access Safe Routes Pilot Program evaluation shows that, especially at historically disadvantaged schools, this challenge can be overcome with additional face-to-face support from site coordinators.
5. **A one-size-fits-all approach may also result in a mismatch of program resources with individual school needs and priorities.** Because schools have competing priorities that change from year-to-year, and sometimes month-to-month, a one-size-fits-all approach makes it difficult to respond to schools' individual challenges and needs. Tailoring services to individual schools' priorities can address this challenge.

---

<sup>5</sup> State officials have found that chronic absenteeism might have risen because of rising student homelessness and natural disasters, such as fire and resulting air pollution. See [Disaster Days: How megafires, guns and other 21st century crises are disrupting California schools](#).

## Report Organization

The report is organized as follows:

- » **Chapter 2 — Data Sources and Methods** provides an overview of the data collection instruments and methods, and makes recommendations for future data collection.
- » **Chapter 3 — Mode Shift** evaluates the changes to family transportation behaviors for the school commute, analyzing schools with particularly high active or shared mode splits.
- » **Chapter 4 — Safety** looks at the activities that address safety concerns, as well as the change in perceptions of safety and safety impact.
- » **Chapter 5 — Program Elements** addresses how well the SR2S program elements engage students and achieve their stated objectives, and considers both participant surveys and qualitative feedback from stakeholders.
- » **Chapter 6 — Program Participation** addresses which schools received SR2S support during the 2018–19 school year, and identifies gaps in participation over the years.
- » **Chapter 7 — The Road Ahead** outlines key lessons learned and recommendations for the 2019–20 school year and beyond.

Several appendices provide more information on specific topics:

- » **Appendix A — School Participation Matrix** summarizes the programming provided to Alameda County schools enrolled in the program.
- » **Appendix B — Mode Shift Methodology and Analysis Detail** offers a more in-depth review of the process the evaluation team used to analyze the data.
- » **Appendix C — Safety Findings Methodology and Analysis Detail** outlines additional data and analysis related to the safety findings.
- » **Appendix D — Qualitative Feedback** provides all relevant narrative feedback received from the parent/caregiver, Champion, and administrator surveys, focus groups, and other sources.
- » **Appendix E — Evaluation Framework** details the strategy and process for conducting the biennial program evaluation.
- » **Appendix F — Data Collection Instruments** provides all surveys used by the SR2S Program.
- » **Appendix G — Detailed Recommendations** outline specific action steps and recommendations for the 2019–20 school year.
- » **Appendix H — Access Safe Routes Pilot Program Evaluation** details the results of the pilot evaluation.

## CHAPTER 2 — DATA SOURCES AND METHODS

In the fall of 2017, the Alameda County SR2S Program developed a comprehensive Evaluation Framework (see Appendix E) that laid out a robust series of analyses to understand how the program addresses established goals. This evaluation approach is guided by Goal 6 of the Commission-adopted program implementation goals: “Evaluate the SR2S Program at the school level so that it is context-sensitive and allows the program to adjust.”

### Survey Instruments

**Table 5** outlines the various survey instruments (included in Appendix F) used in this analysis. All survey instruments were developed specifically for the Alameda County SR2S Program, with the exception of the student travel tallies, which were based on the National Center for Safe Routes to Schools' student travel hand tally process. Surveys were designed to collect quantitative data on mode, perceptions of safety and modes, and participants' experiences with the SR2S program elements. The surveys also asked open-ended questions, which enable this evaluation to build a more robust and informed understanding of how stakeholders interact with and feel about SR2S program elements. The surveys provide detailed feedback about the outcomes, as well as perceptions of specific program elements.

**TABLE 5. SUMMARY OF SURVEYS AND RESPONSES**

Survey Instrument	Description	Timing and Frequency	Total Responses	No. of Schools Responding
<i>Program-Wide Surveys</i>				
Student Travel Tallies (hand tallies)	Students raise their hands or complete a travel survey to indicate how they got to and from school.	Spring, annual	727 classrooms (ES, MS, HS); 418 individual HS surveys	76
Parent/Caregiver Survey	Parents and caregivers of elementary and middle school students provide feedback on habits and perceptions of different mode options. Surveys were available in English, Spanish, and Chinese.	Spring, biennial	2,292	94
Administrator Survey	Administrators provide feedback on programming.	Spring, annual	46	43
Champion Survey	School Champions provide feedback on programming.	Spring, annual	55	53



Source	Description	Timing and Frequency	Total Responses
<i>Direct Student Safety Training Surveys</i>			
Pedestrian Rodeo Teacher Surveys	Teachers provide feedback on Pedestrian Rodeos.	Immediately after event	91
Pedestrian Rodeo Participant Surveys	Students provide feedback on Pedestrian Rodeos	Immediately after event	2,690
Rock the Block Teacher Surveys	Teachers provide feedback on assemblies.	Immediately after event	68
Drive Your Bike Survey	Students provide feedback on bicycle education and test their recently acquired knowledge.	Immediately after event	872
Bike Rodeo Survey	Students provide feedback on Bike Rodeos and test their recently acquired knowledge.	Immediately after event	311
BikeMobile Participant Surveys	Student provide feedback on BikeMobile visits.	Immediately after event	493

## Additional Data

In addition to the survey instruments, the program also collects data in various other ways.

### PARTICIPATION TRACKING

The Alameda County SR2S Program includes several implementation partners (see **Figure 2** on page 3), who are responsible for planning and delivering the various program elements. Throughout the year, each of these partners tracks the activities they deliver, including the number of students participating in the activity, or the number of students walking or bicycling (in the case of a countywide encouragement event).

### SCHOOL SAFETY ASSESSMENTS

School Safety Assessments (SSAs) work to both identify physical barriers to students walking or bicycling between home and school and identify infrastructure, educational and programmatic recommendations that can further promote active and shared travel to/from school. SSAs are centered around observations from within the “school zone,” which includes the school campus as well as adjacent streets, sidewalks, trails, and crosswalks within a quarter to half-mile of campus. The observations, which are conducted through a robust community engagement process that seeks input from stakeholders who observe and travel through the area regularly, as well as city staff, create a comprehensive picture and understanding of existing conditions around the school where there are safety and/or circulation concerns.



## FOCUS GROUPS

Program staff held focus groups with participants of the Access Safe Routes Pilot Program in May and June 2019. These small discussions covered participants' perceptions of program elements, barriers to walking and rolling to school, and strategies to overcome those barriers. The facilitator asked which program elements were preferred and viewed as most effective. Responses have been interspersed throughout this report, to reinforce and add nuance to the findings from the quantitative data.

Stakeholders provided feedback at the following focus groups:

- » San Leandro High School, students and teacher Champion, 6 participants — May 20, 2019
- » Tyrrell Elementary, Wellness Committee, 3 participants — June 5, 2019

In addition, the program staff provided additional feedback to help contextualize the quantitative data.

## Data Considerations

Appendices provide additional information about the methodologies and analysis, including:

- » **Appendix B — Mode Shift Methodology and Analysis Detail**
- » **Appendix C — Safety Findings Methodology and Analysis Detail**
- » **Appendix E — Evaluation Framework**
- » **Appendix F — Data Collection Instruments**
- » **Appendix H — Access Safe Routes Pilot Program Evaluation**

Some notable data considerations include the following:

- » The student travel tally process is a volunteer effort that schools decide whether or not to participate in. As such, data collected is dependent on a school's ability to participate at the time of the hand tally process;
- » Since schools must opt-in, student travel tallies are not collected consistently from each school every year—and within those schools, different grades and classrooms may provide data;
- » Each school's land use, transportation options, and program engagement vary, so it is difficult to compare mode shift for different groups of schools;
- » Parent/caregiver survey data is self-reported and may over-report parents who are favorable toward active transportation modes;
- » Historic data did not always exist for all schools in the analysis. Additionally, some data did not identify the city or district; therefore, data for schools that share a name with another school in the county is not useable for historic comparison; and
- » Weather has a significant impact on mode choice, which can impact the results from year-to-year.

## CHAPTER 3 — MODE SHIFT

One of the key goals of the Alameda County SR2S Program is to increase the number of students who use active or shared transportation modes to get to and from school. The program collects travel behavior data from two primary sources: student travel tallies and parent/caregiver surveys, both of which are described in Chapter 2 — Data Sources and Methods. More detail on the analysis methods related to mode shift can be found in Appendix B.

### How Students Get to School

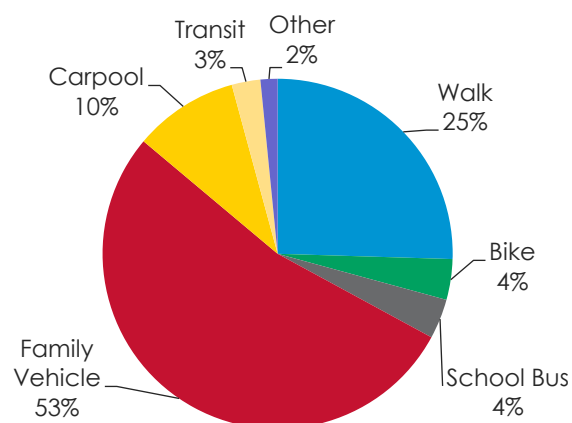
Increasing active and shared trips is known to reduce transportation greenhouse gas emissions, reduce congestion, improve health, and benefit school communities in other ways. Mode split shows how many students use active and shared modes at each school. Active modes include walking and biking (including scooters/skateboards) and shared modes include carpool, transit, and the school bus.

Change in student travel patterns provides some insight into program effectiveness and how successful the program is at promoting walking, biking, carpooling, taking the bus, or taking transit to school. However, it is not a complete picture since the SR2S Program does not address other barriers to active and shared travel that affect schools in Alameda County. Increasingly, non-transportation barriers come up as issues that impact families' school travel decisions, e.g. personal safety concerns due to crime and homeless populations, land use decisions that lead to unfriendly walking environments or long trips to school, and housing affordability that displaces families and forces mid-year school changes or longer commutes.

#### CURRENT MODE SPLIT

**Figure 4** shows the countywide mode split for the 2018–19 school year calculated from the student travel tallies conducted in spring 2019. Overall, use of family vehicles decreased slightly from 56 percent to 53 percent compared to 2017–18, while the number of students using shared modes increased a corresponding amount. For active modes, walking to/from school showed a slight decrease and students biking to/from school increased.

**FIGURE 4. COUNTYWIDE AVERAGE MODE SPLIT FOR SCHOOL TRAVEL**



**Source: 2018-19 Hand Tally Data**

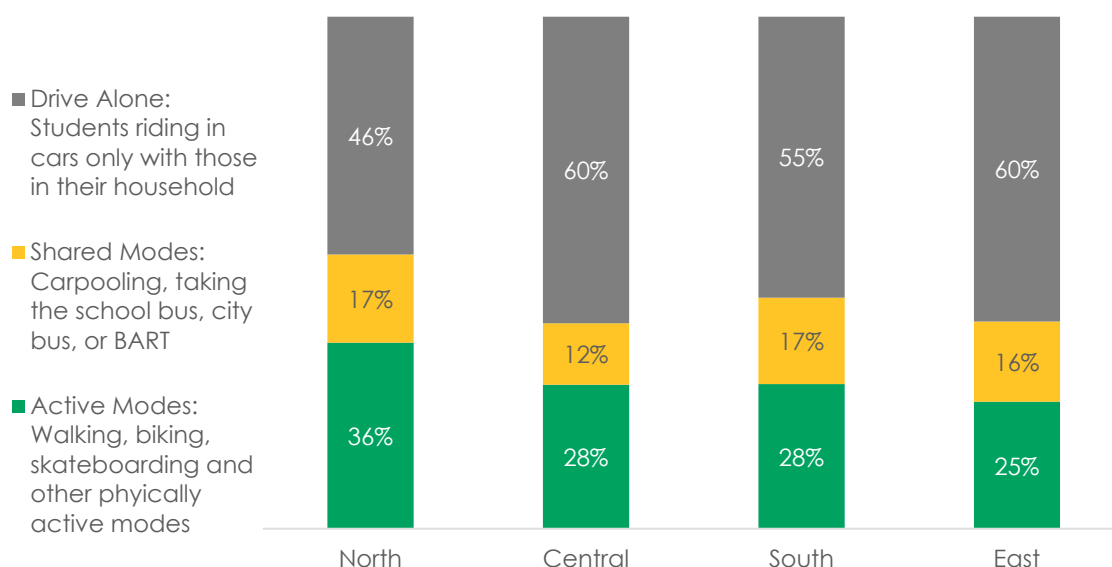
*Note: This only includes the 78 out of 230 schools enrolled in the Alameda County SR2S Program that participated in the 2018-19 hand tallies.*

Alameda CTC divides Alameda County into four planning areas that vary in geographic, population and land use characteristics, as well as school travel patterns (**Figure 5**).

Key mode split findings include the following:

- » In all planning areas, at least 25 percent of students use active modes to get to school.
- » All planning areas have similar rates of shared mode use (12–17 percent).
- » Schools in the North Planning Area have the highest percentage of students who walk, bike, skateboard, or use other active modes (36.3 percent) and are tied for the highest who use shared modes (17 percent).
- » Schools in the Central and South Planning Area have the most students who are driven alone to school (60 percent).

**FIGURE 5. MODE SPLIT BY PLANNING AREA**



**Source:** 2018–19 Hand Tally Data for all Available Schools

*Note:* Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

### FACTORS IMPACTING TRANSPORTATION MODE CHOICE

Analyzing commonalities between schools that have the highest active, shared, and drive-alone mode splits can illuminate what factors may impact transportation choices. This analysis divides schools that submitted hand tallies into quartiles based on their rates of active, shared, and drive alone mode share, with 19 schools in each of the four quartiles.

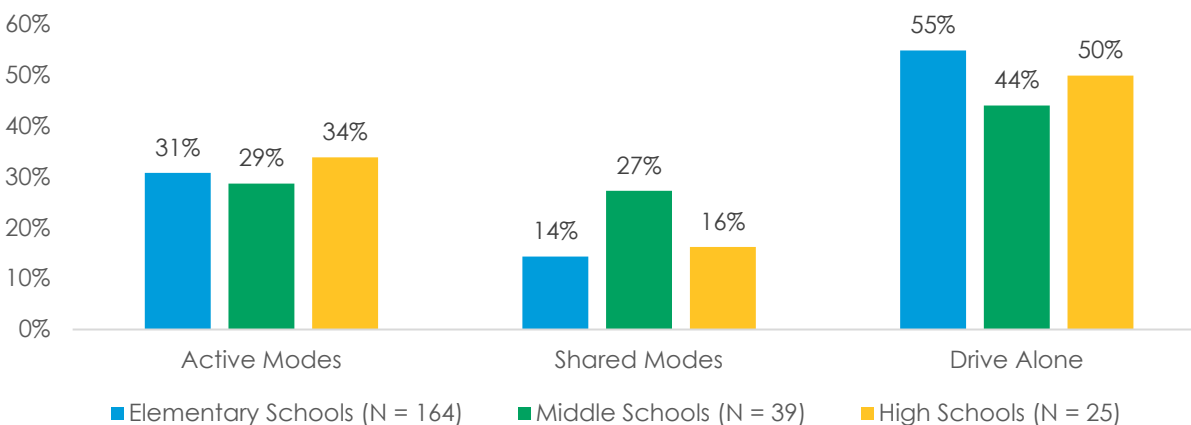
**Table 6** outlines key characteristics of the quartile with the highest use of each transportation mode.

**TABLE 6. CHARACTERISTICS OF SCHOOLS WITH THE MOST ACTIVE, SHARED, OR DRIVE ALONE USE**

Schools with the Highest Active Transportation Split (19 schools)	Schools with the Highest Shared Transportation Split (19 schools)	Schools with the Highest Drive Alone Split (19 schools)
<p>74% of schools are in the North Planning Area, particularly in Alameda USD and Oakland USD</p> <p>84% are elementary schools</p> <p>On average, these schools have a higher proportion of students eligible for the Federal Free and Reduced-Price Meals Program</p>	<p>47% of the schools are middle or high schools</p> <p>9 of the 19 schools with the highest shared mode share are middle and high schools, representing 60 percent of all middle and high schools included in the analysis</p>	<p>89% are elementary schools (17 schools) and none are middle schools</p> <p>On average, these schools have a lower proportion of students eligible for the Federal Free and Reduced-Price Meals Program</p>

### Student Age

It is important to note that this data includes students from kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade, which can differ somewhat in terms of transportation mode split. **Figure 6** shows that mode share is relatively steady between the different age groups, but high schools tend to have slightly higher active modes, while middle schools had the highest shared modes. Elementary schools had the highest proportion of drive alone modes.

**FIGURE 6. MODE SPLIT BY SCHOOL TYPE**

**Source: 2018–19 Hand Tally Data for all Available Schools**

Note: Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Elementary School: (K-5/6), Combination Lower Grade Schools (K-8), and Combination All Grade Schools (K-12)

Middle School: Middle/Junior High (6-8), and Combination Upper Grade Schools (6-12)

High School: High Schools (9-12)

## Demographics

Based on Alameda County SR2S Program hand tallies and demographic data, families with lower incomes are already more likely to use active modes to get to school compared to those in more affluent communities. Schools with higher active mode splits tend to have higher proportions of students who are eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Meals (FRPM) and

conversely schools with lower FRPM eligibility have higher rates of driving alone, supporting the finding that students with lower incomes are already using active modes to get to school in larger numbers compared to those in more affluent communities and need infrastructure and education that ensures those trips are safe. Based on these findings, there is a clear need for equity-focused SR2S programming that makes streets safer and more comfortable for lower-income students who use active modes.



Students who qualify for Free/Reduced Price Lunch have **LOWER drive-alone rates** and **HIGHER use of active modes**

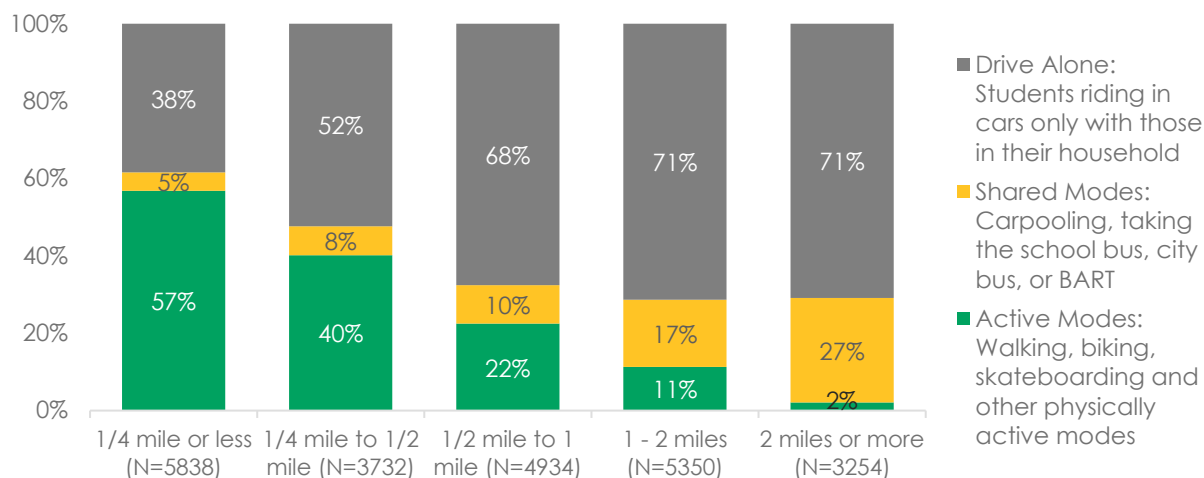
Students who do not qualify for Free/Reduced Price Lunch have **higher drive-alone rates** and **lower use of active modes**

Source: 2018–19 Hand Tally Data and California Department of Education Demographic Data

## Distance from School

As multiple other studies have established, families are more likely to walk to school if they live closer to school. **Figure 7** shows that while more than half of families who live within a quarter-mile of their school walk, only 22 percent who live a half-mile to a mile away from the school walk. **The 38 percent of the families living within a quarter-mile of the school who drive, and the 52 percent of families who live a quarter- to half- a mile from school, represent the best opportunities for the SR2S Program to shift trips to active or shared transportation.** The use of shared modes increases substantially among families living more than a mile from school, although with almost three-quarters of those families driving alone, there is considerable opportunity to continue shifting trips.

**FIGURE 7. MODE SPLIT BY DISTANCE FROM SCHOOL**



Source: 2018–19 Parent/Caregiver Survey

Note: Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

### *Participation in SR2S Program Elements*

The correlation analysis of mode split highlights commonalities between schools that had the top use of active and shared modes, based on 2018–19 hand tally mode split data and program element participation for the 2018–19 school year. The 76 schools that conducted hand tallies during the 2018–19 school year are included in this analysis. Analysis details are provided in Appendix B. **The analysis found that participation in certain program elements was statistically significantly correlated with higher active or shared mode split, or with lower drive alone mode share.**

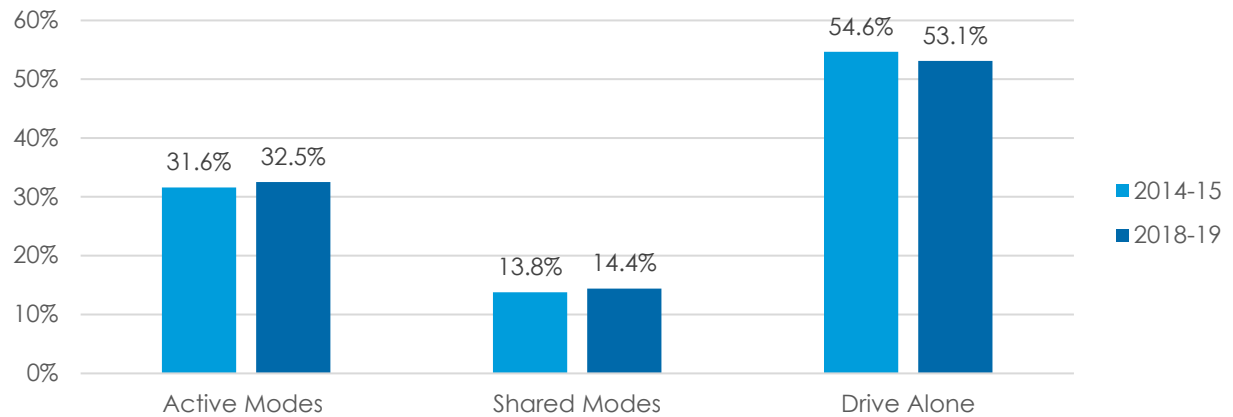
- » Factors that have a statistically significant **positive** correlation with **active mode** split include:
  - The total number of program elements held at the school,
  - The number of different program elements,
  - Participation in the Golden Sneaker contest, and
  - Participation in the Access Safe Routes Pilot Program.
- » Participation in Travel Training was found to have a statistically significant **positive** correlation with **shared mode** split.
- » Participation in the Access Safe Routes Pilot Program was found to have a statistically significant **negative** correlation with **drive alone mode** split.

## Shift in Transportation Modes

Student travel tally data provides invaluable information about how students get to school from year to year, but the data does have limitations as noted in Chapter 2 — Data Sources and Methods.

### **CHANGE IN TRANSPORTATION MODES**

While mode split provides a snapshot of student travel behavior at a specific time, mode shift measures changes in travel behavior over time. Mode shift is calculated by comparing countywide hand tally results collected annually. **Figure 8** highlights mode shift from 2014–15 through 2018–19 **only** for the schools that provided data in both periods. During this time, active modes showed minimal increases, while drive alone trips showed a slight decrease. Overall, these results are inconclusive due to the data limitations outlined in Chapter 2.

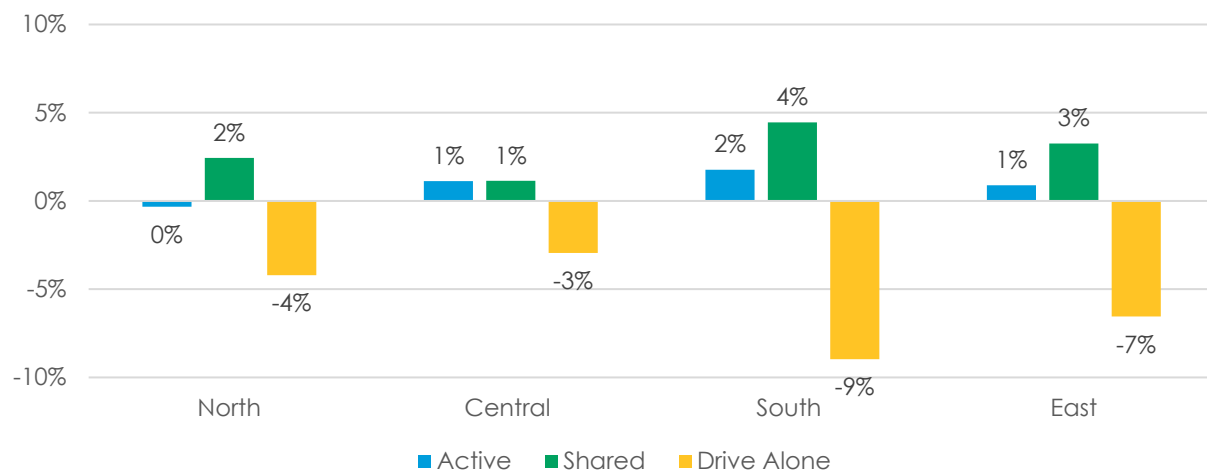
**FIGURE 8. FIVE-YEAR CHANGE IN HOW STUDENTS GET TO SCHOOL AT SCHOOLS WITH DATA IN BOTH PERIODS**

**Source: 2014–15 and 2018–19 Hand Tally Data for Schools with Data in Both Periods**

*Note: This includes only 44 schools with data available in both time periods. Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.*

Mode split between active, shared, and drive alone trips has remained within a few percentage points since the 2014–15 school year. Other studies have indicated that schools experience the greatest percent increase in active transportation in the first few years they participate in a SRTS program, with smaller increases thereafter (see Metropolitan Transportation Commission's 2015 *Regional Safe Routes to School Evaluation*).

**Figure 9** shows how transportation modes have shifted in each planning area, for all schools with data in each time period. This analysis indicates a slight increase in active modes in all areas except the North, with a relatively high increase in use of shared transportation in the South and East Planning Areas, and a commensurate decrease in driving alone.

**Figure 9. Five-Year Change in Mode Split by Planning Area**

**Source: 2014–15 through 2018–19 Hand Tally Data for all Available Schools**

*Note: This chart only includes the 44 schools that reported hand tally data during the 2014-15 and 2018-19 school years.*

## **FACTORS IMPACTING SHIFT TO ACTIVE OR SHARED TRANSPORTATION**

It is difficult to determine specific causes of changing transportation behaviors due to the many factors that impact these choices. Increasingly, non-transportation barriers come up as issues that impact families' school travel decisions, e.g. personal safety concerns due to crime and homeless encampments located near schools, land use decisions that lead to unfriendly walking environments or long trips to school, and housing affordability that displaces families and forces mid-year school changes or longer commutes.<sup>6</sup> Countywide and national trends, such as where people live and work, as well as the cost of gas, also have a great impact on transportation decisions.

### *Participation in SR2S Program Elements*

The mode shift analysis uses a similar methodology, considering student travel tally data for 2018–19 and 2014–15, as well as program element participation for the 2018–19 school year.

**Participation in certain SR2S program elements was statistically significantly correlated with active and shared mode shift and decreases in driving alone.**

- » Participation in the Golden Sneaker Contest had a statistically significant **positive** correlation with **active mode shift**;
- » Program elements that showed a statistically significant **positive** correlation with **shared mode shift** include bike rodeos, Bike to School Day, and Task Force meetings; and
- » Program elements that showed a statistically significant **negative** correlation with **drive mode shift** include bike rodeos and Bike to School Day participation.

While it is not possible to prove that participation in any of these program elements (Golden Sneaker Contest, Bike to School Day, bike rodeos, and Task Force meetings) caused this mode shift, **it does suggest a link between participation and positive mode shift outcomes** at a variety of schools in different planning areas.

### *Stated Reasons Why Families Walk or Bike*

Through the parent/caregiver survey, the main reasons that parents reported walking and biking with their family were that they are part of an active, healthy lifestyle (67 percent) and fun (45 percent), as shown in **Figure 10**. Only seven percent of survey respondents said they are not interested in walking and biking.

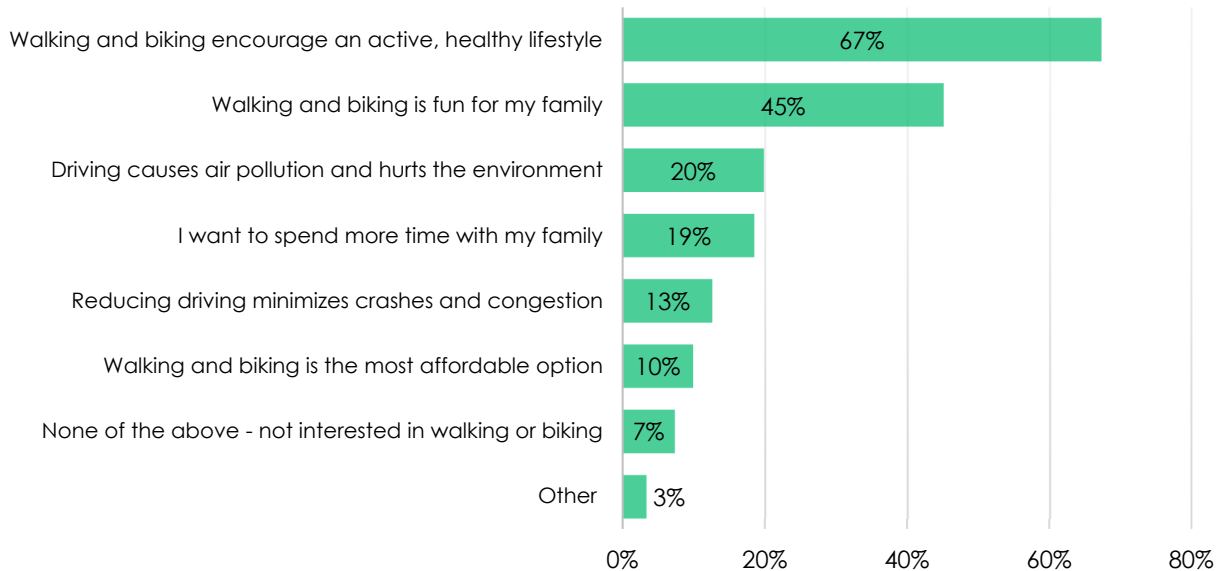
---

<sup>6</sup> State officials think chronic absences might have risen because of rising student homelessness and natural disasters, such as fire and resulting air pollution. More information available at: <https://calmatters.org/projects/school-closures-california-wildfire-outage-flood-water-electricity-guns-snow-days-disaster/>



**FIGURE 10. REASONS PARENTS/CAREGIVERS WOULD WALK/BIKE WITH THEIR FAMILIES**

The survey asked, “What is the top reason why you walk/bike with your family or would consider it?”



Source: 2018–19 Parent/Caregiver Survey

Other reasons parents cited for students walking and biking include:

- » “It’s actually faster than finding parking.” — parent/caregiver survey response
- » “Encourages children’s independence and sense of capability.” — parent/caregiver survey response
- » “More convenient to walk than to drive thru [sic] the neighborhood congestion.” — parent/caregiver survey response
- » “The rule in our house is that our kids will ALWAYS walk or bike to school, regardless of weather, time concerns, etc.” — parent/caregiver survey response

**Many of the barriers parents cited as reasons they cannot allow their children to walk or bike were related to safety concerns**, which are discussed in the following chapter. These include lack of safe infrastructure, poor driving behavior, and crime and personal safety.

Some of the other barriers to walking and biking include issues with time and convenience, students’ inability to walk or bike, and lack of knowledge or access to safe equipment (bikes, locks, helmets, and lights). Specific parent/caregiver, administrator, and Champion concerns about barriers are outlined in Appendix D.

### *Parents’ Perceptions of Program Element Effectiveness at Shifting Modes*

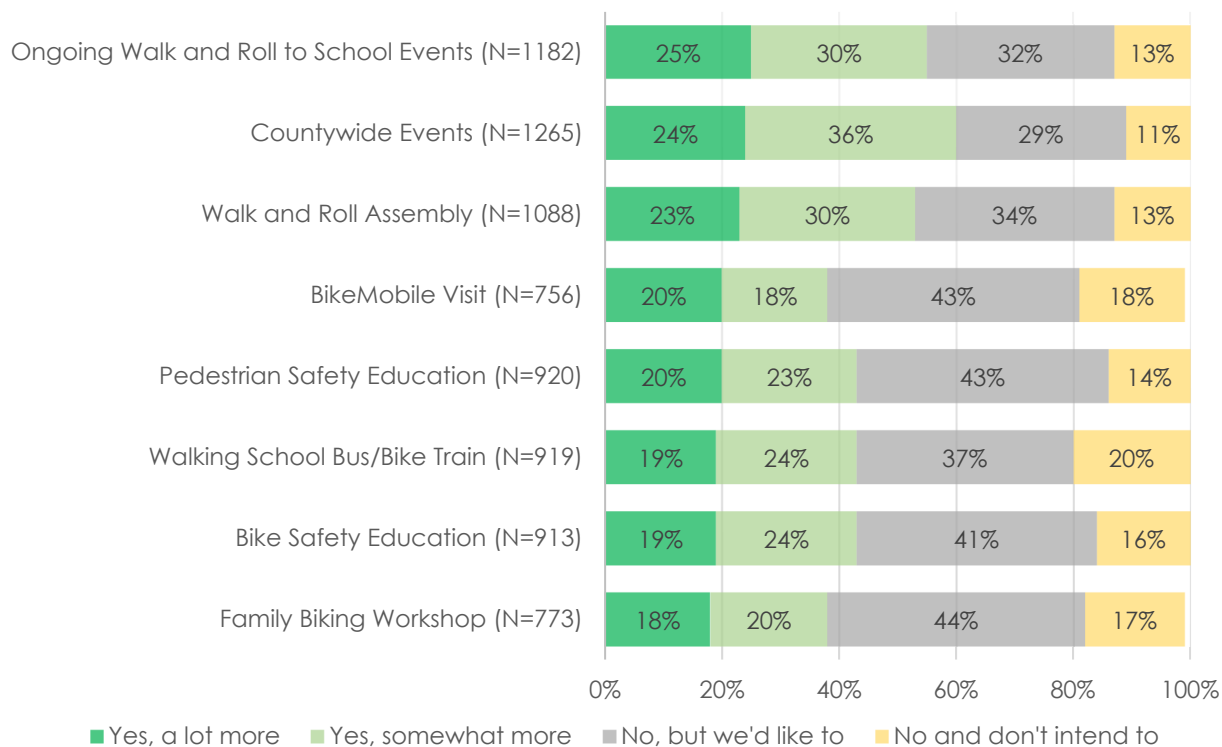
Parents and caregiver feedback can deepen the analysis of how different program elements may impact mode shift, as they are on the ground every day at schools and are responsible for making transportation decisions for their families. Figure 11 highlights the parent/caregiver perceptions of whether their student used active modes to get to school more often after participating in each of the program elements listed below. Note that the survey offers a “We

*didn't participate*" response option, but does not verify whether the parent or student actually participated in the given program element. In addition, the parent/caregiver survey does not include high school students, who often make their own transportation decisions.

Parents considered the countywide encouragement events and ongoing Walk and Roll to School events to be the most effective at **encouraging** their students to walk and bike to school.

**FIGURE 11. PARENT/CAREGIVER PERCEPTION OF MODE SHIFT AFTER PROGRAM ELEMENT PARTICIPATION**

The survey asked, "Did your child walk/bike more often after participating in the following activities or events?"



**Source: 2018–19 Parent/Caregiver Survey**

Note: Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Additionally, qualitative feedback supports the benefits of SR2S program elements:

- » "There are more bikes on the bike rack compared to in the past" — feedback from focus group
- » "We definitely had less traffic today [on International Walk and Roll to School Day] and it was great! We love to see the walkers and bikers!" — feedback from Champion
- » "I am particularly impressed by how many students participated [in the Golden Sneaker Contest] during the rainy weather. We normally have really nasty traffic jams when it rains, so all of those walkers, carpoolers and riders really helped." — feedback from administrator
- » "I have many families whose kids are now going to make it a point to bike every Thursday of the week." — feedback from administrator

## Lessons Learned

The mode shift analysis shows that 31 percent of students at enrolled schools use active transportation options on average, while 13 percent use shared modes. In addition, 57 percent of families living within a quarter-mile of their school currently use active modes. Schools that have participated in the Alameda County SR2S Program over the last five years have increased active modes by 3 percent and increased shared modes by 4 percent, while decreasing driving alone by 3 percent.

Additional lessons learned from the mode shift analysis include:

- » **One of the biggest barriers to mode shift are the lack of safe walking and rolling infrastructure to access schools.** Parents cited speeding cars, followed by poor driving behavior near schools as their primary concerns with walking or biking to school (see Chapter 4). In addition, feedback from school safety assessments highlighted families' concerns about transportation safety as a primary barrier.
- » **Other non-transportation factors have an impact on families' transportation choices, such as distance, convenience, and personal safety concerns.** Even where parents view walking and biking as desirable activities, families may not be able to use these modes due to land uses that result in long distances to school, transportation safety and personal safety concerns, and entrenched transportation habits that remain impediments to walking and biking.
- » **It is difficult to determine which individual SR2S program elements have the greatest potential to impact transportation mode choice and shift.** Additional data collection and analysis is required to better understand the impact each program element has on mode choice and shift.

The Alameda County SR2S Program will take the following actions to address these findings:

- » Explore program elements that address the myriad factors that impact families' transportation decisions, such as building partnerships with other agencies around the county that address these concerns.
- » Refine data collection instruments and methods to improve the analysis of how SR2S program elements impact transportation decisions and shift trips to active and shared modes.

The complete mode shift analysis details and additional findings are included in Appendix B.

## CHAPTER 4 — SAFETY

Improving safety for all students in Alameda County, whether walking, rolling, taking transit, or driving to school, is a fundamental focus and key goal of the Alameda County SR2S Program. Specifically, there are three elements of the Alameda County SR2S Program Safety goal:

1. Increase safe pedestrian and bicycling behaviors;
2. Decrease the incidence of collisions; and
3. Increase student and parent confidence in safe walking, bicycling and transit riding abilities.

The 2017–18 SR2S Program restructure (see Program Implementation Changes on page 3) renewed the focus on addressing the safety concerns and infrastructure barriers that prevent students and families from walking, rolling, carpooling or using transit to travel to schools. Safety activities include direct student safety training, which teach students how to walk and bike safely, as well as the school safety assessments (SSAs), which identify improvements that can increase safety for students who travel to/from school using active and shared modes.

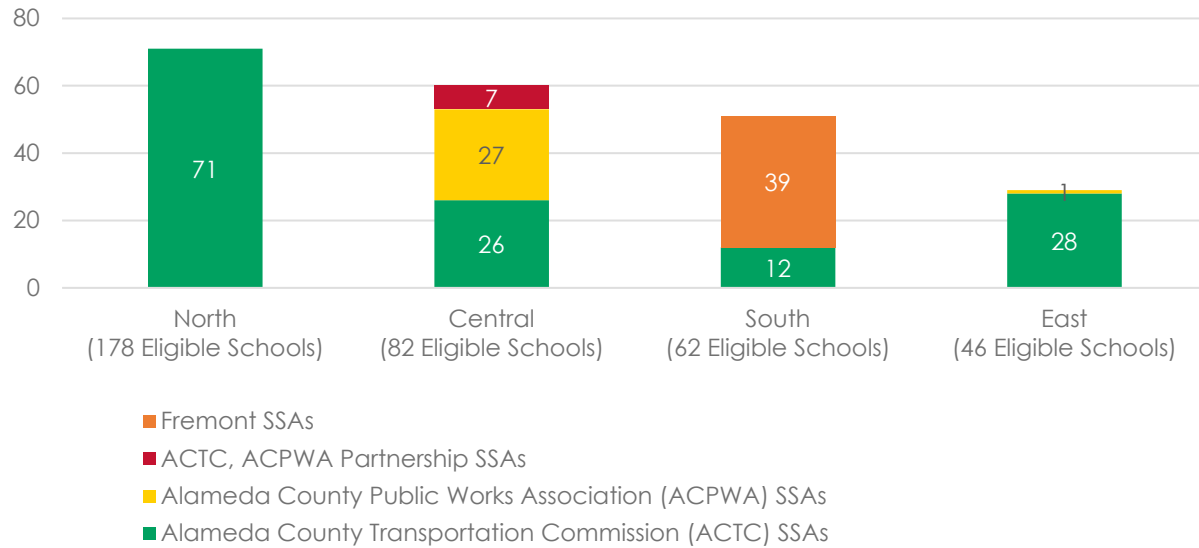
This chapter outlines key findings from the school safety assessments, as well as parent perceptions of safety from the Parent/Caregiver Survey and the SSAs.

### School Safety Assessments

Focusing on physical infrastructure near schools, school safety assessments (SSAs, also known as walk audits or site assessments) are an opportunity for SR2S program staff, local partners and the school community to identify physical barriers and safety concerns around schools and recommend safety improvements for cities and schools districts to implement. Since 2015, 211 SSAs have been conducted across the county. Increased cooperation and partnerships with local jurisdictions are key to implementing safety improvements near schools, and program staff will continue to build those partnerships into the future.

While Alameda CTC has been the primary funder of SSAs in the county, Alameda County Public Works Agency and the City of Fremont have also funded their own efforts. In the 2018–19 school year, Alameda CTC focused on reinforcing partnerships with local jurisdiction staff and revised the SSAs process to increase the quality, usefulness and likelihood of implementation of the resulting reports.

All planning areas have participated in SSAs. **Figure 12** shows the total number of SSAs completed in each Planning Area.

**FIGURE 12. SUMMARY OF ALAMEDA COUNTY SSAS BY PLANNING AREA**

**Source: Alameda County School Safety Assessments**

*Note: SSAs that included two schools on the same campus are counted as one SSA for these numbers. Chart includes all schools that received SSAs, including those not enrolled in the SR2S Program during the 2018-19 school year.*

The best way to evaluate the effectiveness of the SSAs would be to consider the level of investment in infrastructure improvements near schools that have completed SSAs.

Unfortunately, this data is not currently available. **The Alameda County SR2S Program will pursue collecting data about the implementation of SSA recommendations and capital investments made by local jurisdictions in order to conduct this analysis in the future.**

## KEY FINDINGS FROM SSAs

While each SSA is done specifically for each school, consistent themes do emerge:

- » **Poor driving behavior is a frequently-cited barrier to walking and biking to school.** Parents and focus group participants cited challenges with drivers blocking crosswalks, aggressive reactions from parents who are asked to behave differently/respectfully, and the general chaos caused by people driving during drop-off and pick-up. Students at a focus group described feeling unsafe walking on roads near their school because of speeding cars.
- » **Streetscape improvements would encourage more families to walk and bike to school.** Parents participating in school safety assessments cited issues such as illegal dumping and the lack of streetscape amenities as a barrier for using active modes.
- » **Inadequate infrastructure around schools is a barrier for walking school buses and bike trains.** Parents participating in school safety assessments cited that they were interested in starting walking school buses and bike trains, but were concerned about adequate infrastructure for walking and biking to school with students.
- » **Crossing guards are an essential tactic to enable students to cross major streets and get to school.** Parents frequently cite the need for crossing guards near schools.

## FEEDBACK FROM CITIES

Alameda County SR2S staff held a focus group with local jurisdiction staff to discuss the SSAs and to recommend improvements to the process and deliverables.

Local jurisdiction staff generally value SSAs, but provided a variety of recommended improvements with the goal of making the SSAs more useful for possible grant applications and/or implementation. Feedback included:

- » Add justification for all recommendations in the reports;
- » Specify long- and short-term recommendations, potentially via one map of easy-to-implement improvements and one showing more capital-intensive recommendations;
- » For recommendations that require performing operational and traffic analysis, such as the installation of a stop sign or restrictions on right turns, state that this recommendation depends on further engineering analysis;
- » Add a statement that plans are developed under the supervision of a licensed professional;
- » Add feasibility to the SSAs by including additional information about the site where improvements are proposed;
- » Provide additional information about the implementation process, such as incorporating recommendations into Bike and Ped Master Plans, to help communities complete the recommendations;
- » Set the report up to feed into a grant application: capture comments from parents and summarize what was discussed at the pre- and post-meetings;
- » Create a toolkit of what can be recommended in SSAs, with consistent terminology and graphics, standardized legends, etc.; and
- » Recognize that funding is a huge challenge, and the SR2S mini-grant program could be helpful to implement recommendations.

Based on these recommendations, the process of conducting SSAs and the resulting reports have been improved in response to staff feedback. Additionally, a School Safety Assessment Toolkit and Glossary was created that describes the process and the types of recommendations that can be made. Other recommendations will be implemented as feasible.

## Parent Perceptions of Safety

For parents, the perception that active and shared travel are dangerous often deters families from walking or biking to school.

## PERCEPTIONS OF WALKING AND BIKING

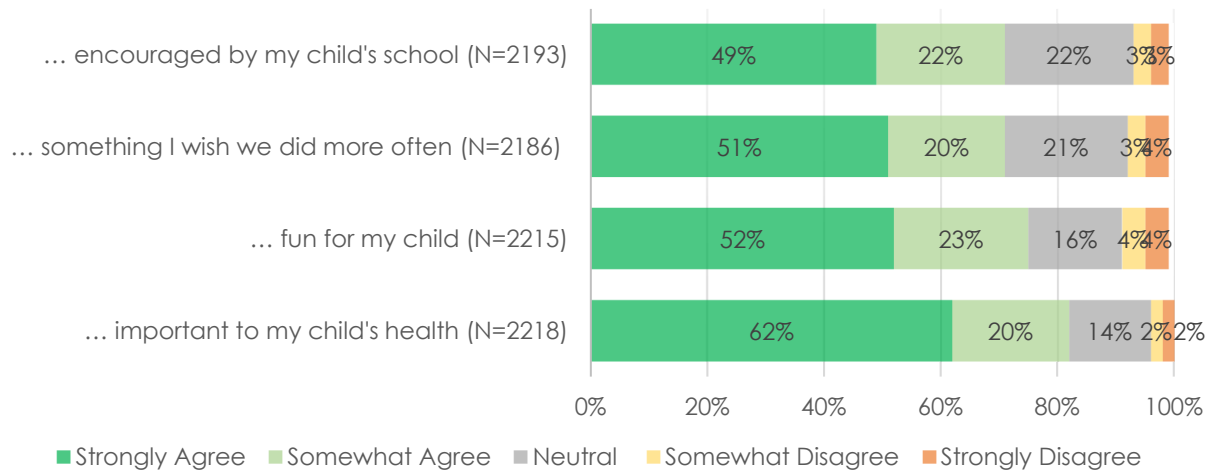
Perceptions of walking and biking are important because parents and caregivers generally make the decisions about how their children get to school, particularly for younger students. Our findings show that parents and caregivers feel that walking and biking are important to their children's health, are fun, and are something they wish they did more often (see Figure 14). Most

parents also feel that their children's school encourages walking and biking. These positive feelings towards active transportation options are important groundwork for behavior change. By better communicating with parents about safety tips, as well as providing the direct student safety trainings, the SR2S Program can support parents' positive attitudes toward active transportation.

### FIGURE 13. PARENT PERCEPTIONS OF WALKING AND BIKING TO SCHOOL

The survey asked, "How strongly do you agree with the following statements?"

#### Walking and Biking is...



Source: 2018–19 Parent/Caregiver Survey

Note: Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Moving forward, program staff will prioritize engaging parents as the transportation decision-maker via strategic communications campaigns and targeted education to address these concerns.

“The biggest hurdle in our district is infrastructure. Sidewalks... will have more of an impact on the number of students walking to school than any SR2S program.”

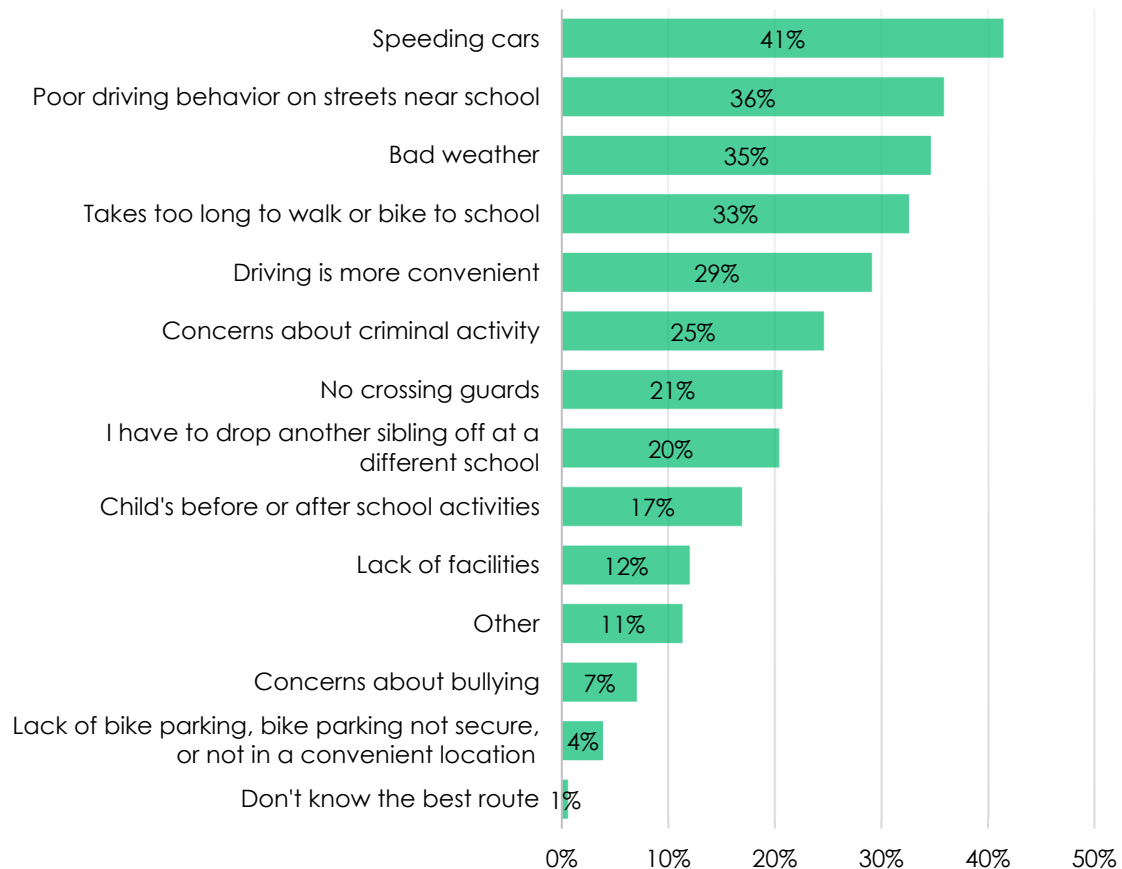
CHAMPION SURVEY RESPONSE

### CONCERNS WITH WALKING AND BIKING TO SCHOOL

Figure 15 ranks parents' concerns that limit their children's ability to walk or bike to or from school. The top two concerns—speeding cars and poor driving behavior on streets near school—can be addressed through infrastructure improvements such as traffic calming, as well as targeted outreach to people driving through the school areas. Poor driver behavior also emerged as a common concern expressed at SSAs as noted above. Several of the other top concerns are harder for the SR2S Program to address, such as bad weather, takes too long to walk or bike to school, driving is more convenient, and concerns about criminal activity.

**FIGURE 14. PARENT CONCERNS WITH WALKING OR BIKING TO SCHOOL**

The survey asked, "What concerns limit your child's ability to walk or bike to/from school?"



Source: 2018–19 Parent/Caregiver Survey

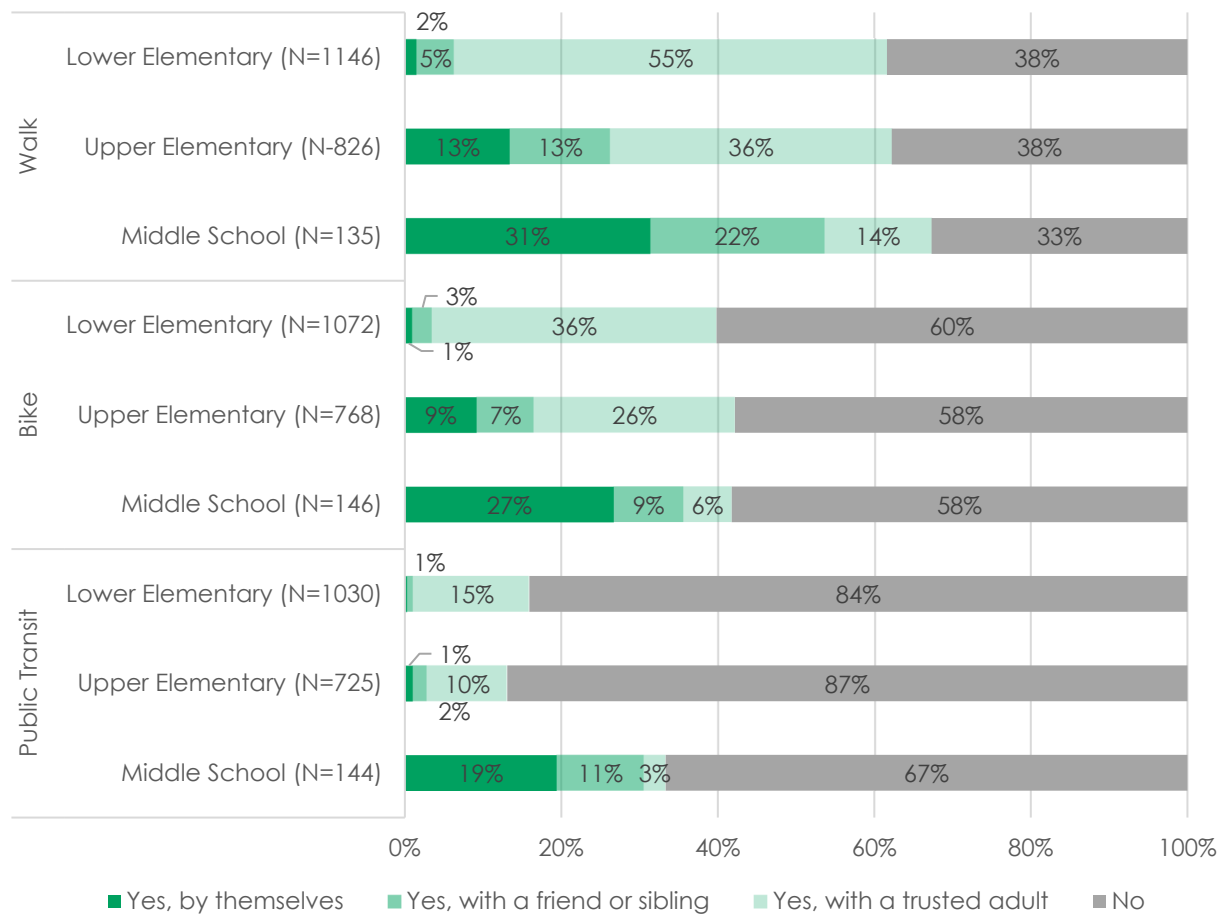
### PERMISSION TO ALLOW WALKING, BIKING, AND TRANSIT USE BY AGE

Unsurprisingly, parents are more willing to allow older children to walk, bike, or take public transit by themselves (see **Figure 15**). For walking, few parents would allow their lower elementary-aged students (kindergarten through second grade) to walk by themselves, although that percentage increases with upper elementary (third through fifth grade) and middle school students. Still, **at least a third of parents of elementary and middle school students stated that they would not allow their child to walk, even with a trusted adult.** The responses about bicycling are similar, although fewer parents would allow their children to bicycle than to walk, among all age groups. Additionally, the finding that more than two-thirds of elementary and middle school parents responding to the survey are not comfortable allowing their child to ride public transit, even with a trusted adult, poses challenges for SR2S transit promotion. **The SR2S Program should look into ways to address parents' concerns about transit use, along with providing the students with travel trainings.**



**FIGURE 15. PERMISSION TO WALK, BIKE, AND TAKE PUBLIC TRANSIT BY AGE**

The survey asked, "Do you allow this student to travel to school in the following ways?"



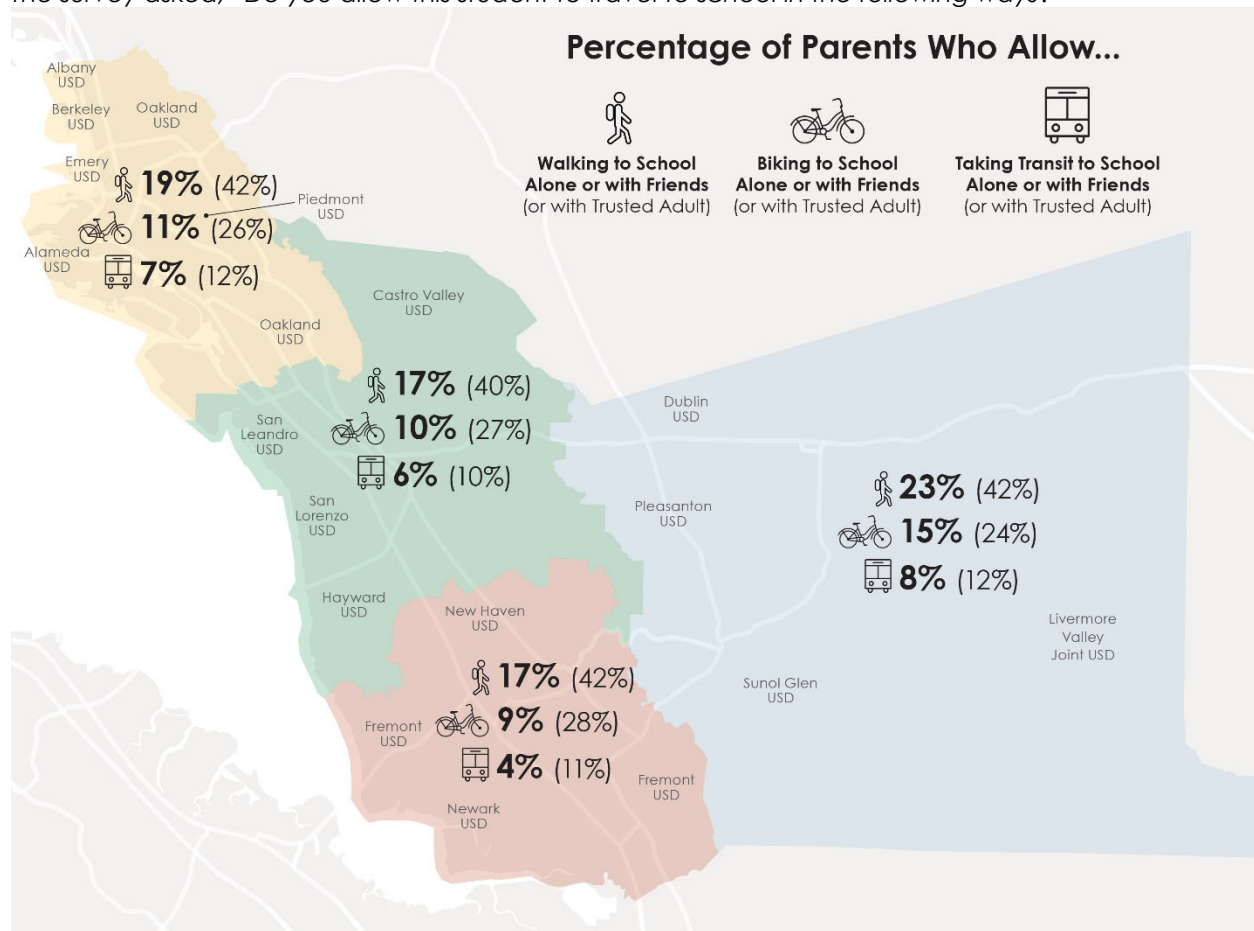
**Source:** 2018–19 Parent/Caregiver Survey

*Note:* Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Considering this data by planning area shows that parent/caregiver attitudes towards the different modes varies by geographic area. Shown in **Map 2**, families in the East Planning Area are more likely to allow their child to walk, bike, or take transit alone or with a friend.

## MAP 2. PERCENT OF PARENTS WHO ALLOW THEIR CHILDREN TO TRAVEL TO SCHOOL VIA DIFFERENT MODES

The survey asked, "Do you allow this student to travel to school in the following ways?"



Source: 2018–19 Parent/Caregiver Survey

## Incidence of Collisions

A direct comparison of the number of crashes involving people walking and biking near schools over time is only partially useful. Collision data considerations include the following:

- » Families tend to avoid streets that they deem unsafe to walk along or across, resulting in fewer crashes due to few people walking in particular locations;
- » Not all crashes involving people walking or bicycles are reported;
- » The low number of crashes near schools yields insufficient data for a statistically-valid analysis; and
- » Crash data are typically not available for several years, and this delay in reporting presents challenges for timely analysis that can guide implementation.

Nevertheless, comparing the frequency of collisions near schools, as well as the proximity of schools to the High-Injury Network (see Appendix I), yields useful information about safety

concerns for schools, which the Alameda County SR2S Program can address through infrastructure funding and program elements that support increased safety.

**Table 7** shows the frequency of collisions near schools enrolled in the SR2S Program. The frequency of collisions near Access schools is slightly higher than that of non-Access schools, but the variation in the data makes this finding not statistically significant.

**TABLE 7. INCIDENCE OF BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN INVOLVED COLLISIONS NEAR ALL SR2S SCHOOLS AND ACCESS SCHOOLS**

	Five-Year Average Collisions per School	Five-Year Average Fatalities per School
All SR2S Schools	10.66	0.20
Access	12.17	0.13
Non-Access	10.48	0.21

Source: 2012–2016 Statewide Integrated Traffic Records System (SWITRS) Collision Data

## Lessons Learned

This analysis lacks sufficient data to determine the SR2S Program's impact on transportation safety. However, a key takeaway is that safety concerns are a critical barrier to families making the decision to walk, bike, or take transit for the school commute. The SR2S Program must address these concerns to be effective. A lessons learned from the safety analysis include:

- » **Parents and caregivers already feel generally positive toward walking and biking to school.** Approximately three-quarters of parents agree or strongly agree that walking and biking is healthy (82 percent), fun (75 percent), and something they wish they did more often (71 percent). These positive feelings towards active transportation options are important groundwork to behavior change; however, parents need to feel that walking and biking are safe and viable activities for them to let their children use these modes.
- » **Driver behavior near schools is the largest concern keeping families from walking or rolling to school.** The top concerns from the parent/caregiver survey include: speeding cars (41 percent) and poor driving behavior on streets near the school (36 percent). The SSA process and write-in survey comments similarly noted specific incidents and near-misses that deterred families from allowing their children to walk or bike.
- » **The absence of safe walking and biking infrastructure can prevent students from using these modes to get to school.** Many parents, Champions, and school administrators mentioned recent crashes and injuries that had taken place near schools or questioned why more is not being done to prevent these incidents. SSAs identified infrastructure recommendations that would improve safety for families accessing school, but the SR2S Program does not currently collect data about whether these projects are constructed.

- » **Crime and personal safety concerns are significant barriers for students walking and rolling to school.** Feedback from surveys, focus groups, and SSA participants all pointed toward the perceptions of increasing homeless populations, gang violence, immigration raids, gun violence, and bicycle theft as deterring families from walking/rolling to school.
- » **A significant proportion of parents/caregivers of elementary and middle school students report having concerns about letting their child walk, bike, or take transit, even with a trusted adult.** At least a third of parents of elementary and middle school students stated that they would not allow their child to walk with a trusted adult. The responses about bicycling are similar, although fewer parents would allow their children to bicycle than to walk, among all age groups reporting. The finding that more than two-thirds of parents do not allow their child to ride public transit, even with a trusted adult, poses challenges for SR2S transit promotion.

The Alameda County SR2S Program will take the following actions to address these findings:

- » Continue focusing resources on direct student safety training, school safety assessments that identify infrastructure improvements near schools, and ongoing events that sustain behavior change, such as weekly or monthly Walk to School Days and Walking School Buses.
- » Dedicate resources to address driver behavior near schools through development of new program elements or strategies, targeted age- and culturally-appropriate outreach campaigns (banners, yard signs, and posters) and messaging, and/or coordinated enforcement efforts (partnering with local law enforcement for coordinated enforcement campaigns).
- » Track local investments in infrastructure near schools, particularly projects that were identified in the SSAs, to better evaluate the impact of these reports.
- » Work with local jurisdiction partners to prioritize traffic calming and complete streets near schools.
- » Prioritize engaging parents as the transportation decision-makers by addressing parents' attitudes toward and concerns about walking, rolling, and transit use through program communications, educational materials, and parent meetings.
- » Advocate for funding for infrastructure improvements near schools that reduce driving speeds (traffic calming) and provide separation between people walking, rolling, and driving.
- » Develop high-impact, low-cost program elements that are likely to reach the most students, such as an anti-speeding campaign near schools.
- » Give priority to the program offerings that are most effective at sustaining behavior change and impacting safety.

The safety analysis details and additional findings are included in Appendix C.

## CHAPTER 5 — PROGRAM ELEMENTS

Transportation behaviors (see Chapter 3) and impact on traffic safety (see Chapter 4) are often the primary methods for measuring how effective each program element is; however, SR2S staff and partners also have valuable perspectives on program element implementation effectiveness and how the different Safe Routes elements work together. This chapter reports on feedback about the various SR2S program elements received from stakeholders through the focus groups, parent/caregiver survey, administrator/Champion survey and the educational activities surveys.

### Education Activities

The direct student safety training activities aim to teach students how to travel to school safely, while at the same time being fun and engaging. Starting in the 2018–19 school year, the Alameda County SR2S Program began surveying participants and teachers of students participating in the program's educational activities. These surveys aim to understand the independent impact of the individual program elements.

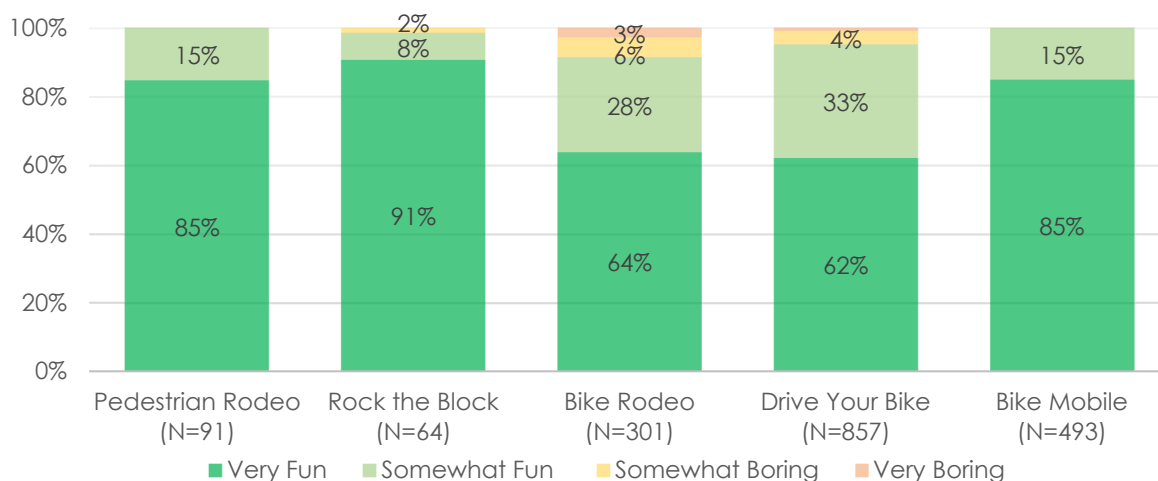
The findings from this analysis are inconclusive and more assessment is needed to determine the impact and effectiveness of the safety trainings provided by the Alameda County SR2S Program; however, a few of the findings illustrate that these activities are fun and beneficial for students. In the future, the evaluation will be refined to better gain an understanding of whether students are learning the educational objectives for each element, thereby contributing to the climate of behavior change the comprehensive SR2S Program is seeking to promote.

#### ACTIVITY ENJOYMENT

Each individual SR2S education activity contributed to students' sense of active transportation as fun, normal, healthy transportation options. **Figure 16** shows that students overwhelmingly felt that the training activities were somewhat or very fun. Note that older students responded for themselves, while teachers provided overall feedback for younger students (see Chapter 2 — Data Sources and Methods).

**FIGURE 16. STUDENT ENJOYMENT OF SAFETY TRAININGS**

The survey asked, "How fun was each activity for students?"



Source: 2018–19 Participant and Teacher Surveys

Note: Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

“ The [BikeMobile] event was a huge success thanks to the guys' hard work and their ability to connect with the community... The families and children are very thankful for all [their] hard work and a number of students learned how to maintain their bikes themselves. We had a lot of smiles as kids head into spring break with a bike they can ride this next week. Thank you for doing this for our families.”

ADMINISTRATOR FEEDBACK

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

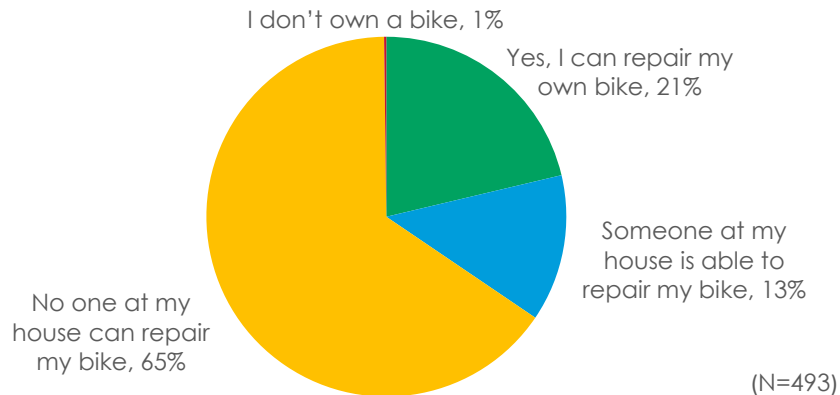
It is difficult to determine how well the safety trainings teach students safe pedestrian and bicyclist behaviors since they are limited in duration and students may begin the training with varied experience and capabilities. **Table 8** summarizes key results from the teacher and participant surveys, which asked teachers for their perceptions of learning outcomes for their students, and asked older students for their own experience of the training.

For pedestrian rodeos, all the teachers surveyed felt that the trainings were beneficial for their students. More than half of older students who participated in the bike trainings felt they improved their bike safety skills after participating in bicycle rodeos, Drive Your Bike, and/or BikeMobile visits.

**One key takeaway is that the Alameda County BikeMobile provides a key resource;** while all the students surveyed own their own bicycles, only 21 percent reported being able to repair them, and 65 percent did not have access to someone who can repair their bicycles (**Figure 17**).

**FIGURE 17. STUDENTS' ABILITY TO REPAIR THEIR OWN BICYCLES**




The survey asked, "Are you able to repair your own bike?"





Source: 2018–19 BikeMobile Participant Survey

Note: Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

TABLE 8. SAFETY TRAINING LEARNING OBJECTIVES FINDINGS

Program Element	Learning Objective Finding
<b>Pedestrian Rodeos</b> Data Sources: Teacher surveys (N=91); Participant surveys (N=2690)	 <p><b>100 percent</b> of teachers reported that their students definitely or somewhat <b>benefited from pedestrian rodeos</b>.</p> <p><b>100 percent</b> of teachers reported that their students definitely or somewhat <b>learned about pedestrian safety</b>.</p> <hr/> <p><b>100 percent</b> of students reported <b>liking the program</b>.</p>
<b>Rock the Block Assembly</b> Data Source: Teacher surveys (N=67)	 <p><b>100 percent</b> of teachers reported that Rock the Block was very or somewhat <b>informative for their students</b>.</p>
<b>Bicycle Rodeos</b> Data Sources: Participant survey (N=307); Post-program quiz (N=310); Focus group feedback	 <p><b>55 percent</b> of participants <b>wanted to bike more often</b> after participating (18 percent already bike every day).</p> <p><b>51 percent</b> of participants <b>knew more about biking safely</b> after participating (34 percent already knew how to bike safely).</p> <hr/> <p><b>78 percent</b> of participants <b>received a B or higher</b> on the Bike Rodeo post-program quiz.</p>

Program Element	Learning Objective Finding
<b>Drive Your Bike</b> <i>Data Sources:</i> <i>Participant survey</i> <i>(N=870); Focus</i> <i>group feedback</i>	 <p><b>60 percent</b> of participants <b>wanted to bike more often</b> after participating (10 percent reported already biking every day).  <b>69 percent</b> of participants <b>know how to bike more safely</b> after participating (21 percent report already knowing how to bike safely).</p>
<b>Alameda County BikeMobile</b> <i>Data Source:</i> <i>Participant survey</i> <i>(N=493)</i>	 <p><b>48 percent</b> of participants <b>would like to bike more often</b> now that their bike is working better (14 percent already bike every day).  <b>65 percent</b> of participants <b>do not live with someone who can repair their bike</b>.</p>

## Encouragement Events

### COUNTYWIDE ENCOURAGEMENT EVENTS

Alameda County SR2S countywide encouragement events include International Walk and Roll to School Day, the Golden Sneaker Contest, Bike to School Day, and Cocoa for Carpools (primarily for high schools). Site coordinators support these events by emailing school Champions and administrators to encourage them to register and participate in the event and to promote active modes on particular days. With less direct hands-on support from site coordinators, these events rely on school Champions to organize and implement each event.

Countywide encouragement events aim to support families that want to try a different mode of transportation for their school commute for the first time and celebrate the efforts of those already doing so. These events focus on a single day or a couple of weeks and emphasize the fun and social aspects of active transportation, familiarize the school community to the Alameda County SR2S Program, and introduce students and families to a new behavior (walking, biking, etc.). However, research indicates that regularly scheduled events, direct training activities, and safer infrastructure are more effective at sustaining behavior change. As such, this research guided the re-balance of the program to a stronger focus on hands-on safety training, ongoing events and safety.

For International Walk and Roll to School Day, in addition to the 137 schools that participated, over 35 elected school officials got involved in school-based celebrations.

“ We had so many students out dancing and celebrating safe routes to school [for International Walk to School Day], half our staff attended, and so many parents and families came. It was really fun! ”

CHAMPION FEEDBACK



As noted in **FIGURE 11** on page 28, more than half of parents and caregivers noted that their child walked/biked a lot more often (24 percent) or somewhat more often (36 percent) after participating in countywide events. In addition, almost a third responded that, while they do not walk/bike more, they would like to (29 percent). These proportions indicate that the countywide encouragement events may have a large impact on getting students and families to try or consider walking or biking to school, which can be a precursor to sustained behavior change.

Additional data about school participation in the countywide events is provided in Chapter 6 — Program Participation.

## Program Implementation Feedback

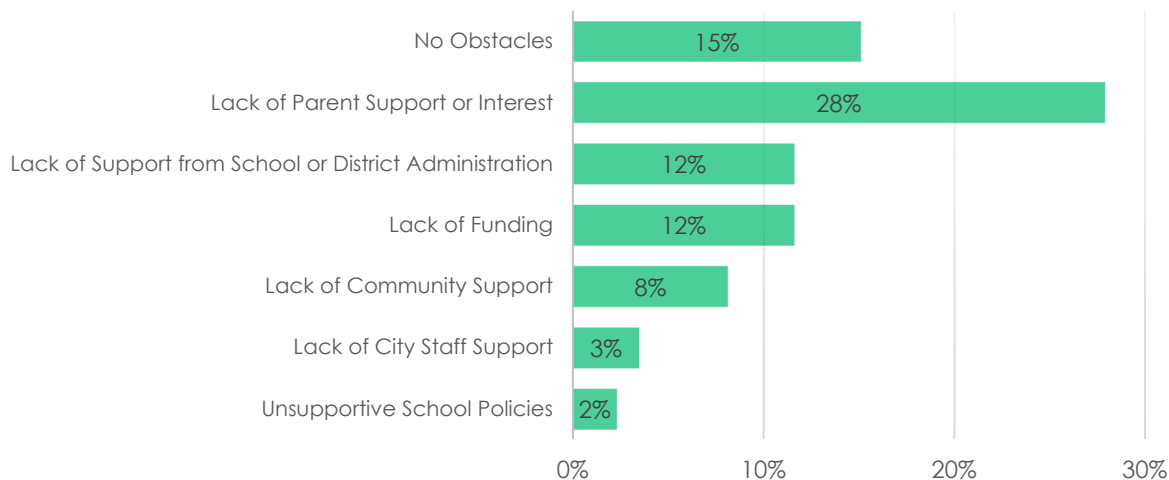
The Alameda County SR2S Program relies on school administration and teachers, as well as parent and other volunteer SR2S Champions, to be successful. The largest obstacle reported for program success is lack of parent support or interest, as shown in **Figure 18**. Lack of support from city staff or unsupportive school policies were the least-commonly cited obstacles.

*“ I have found being involved with SR2S this year was quite rewarding for me, and for my school community. ”*

CHAMPION SURVEY RESPONSE

**FIGURE 18. OBSTACLES TO PROGRAM ELEMENT IMPLEMENTATION**

The survey asked, “What obstacles, if any, have prevented you from organizing SR2S activities at your school?”



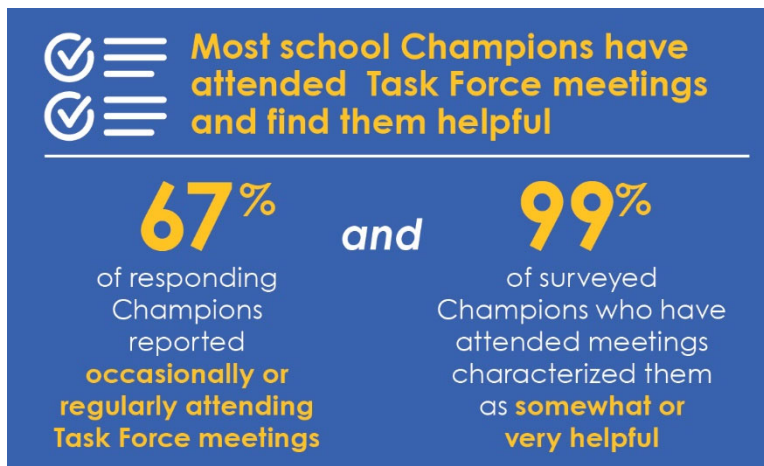
Source: 2018–19 School Champion Survey

*“ The main challenge is helping parents and caregivers see the benefit and importance of alternate forms of transportation—enough so that they are willing to make lifestyle changes. ”*

CHAMPION SURVEY RESPONSE

Write-in feedback from multiple school administrators and Champions provide insights into key challenges for implementation:

- » **Champion and school staff turnover is a continual and key challenge to implementing program elements.** School staff sometimes lacked the capacity or time to effectively promote SR2S events. School staff desire more program support, in addition to assistance from parents, to help organize events and activities and encourage participation.



- » **School teachers and administrators have limited time to organize and publicize Safe Routes activities and events.** Site coordinators reported that the most successful program elements were the ones that did not rely on teacher support to organize, like Bike to School Day and Walk and Roll to School Day. Several Champions noted the difficulty of promoting events and making sure the school community was aware of them.
- » **Participants appreciate incentives for their participation in SR2S events and activities.** Several Champions noted that incentives are a good motivator for students. In addition, the banners provided by the SR2S Program help get the word out.

“ One of the biggest challenges was ... when we had Champion or principal turnover, and it was like starting from scratch. ”

SITE COORDINATOR FEEDBACK

## Lessons Learned

Key lessons learned about the program elements include:

- » **Active SR2S Champions and supportive school administrators are essential to program success and program element implementation; however, Champion and school staff availability and turnover are major ongoing challenges.** School staff felt that they lacked the capacity or time to effectively promote SR2S events and activities. Turnover of a Champion or key school administrator creates a program set-back and a situation where site coordinators have to start over. The program at the school loses all momentum and requires additional support from site coordinators to onboard new Champions.

- » **According to our SR2S Champions survey, lack of parent support or interest is the biggest barrier for organizing SR2S program elements in school.** In the Champion survey, 28 percent of Champions felt that lack of parent support or interest was the largest obstacle to implementation, followed by 15 percent stating that they experienced no obstacles. School administrators require more assistance from parents to help lead and organize activities and events, and encourage participation. A key request from administrators is parent programming to help change parents' minds and behavior.
- » **The extent to which students learn the intended lessons from specific program elements is unclear without further analysis.** In the future, the evaluation will be refined to better gain an understanding of whether students are learning the educational objectives for each element, thereby contributing to the climate of behavior change the comprehensive SR2S Program is seeking to promote.
- » **Evaluation of messaging and communications strategies is needed to gauge their impact and effectiveness.** Several write-in comments indicate that Champions feel proud of their accomplishments, positive toward the SR2S Program, and are committed to continuing to support the program in the future. Several requested additional support with promotional materials and different incentives to encourage participation in events and activities.

**“** *Continue to have good support like [site coordinators] on your SR2S team. They are a great support for the school. Continue to have free things to give out for walk n roll days, Golden Sneaker, etc. Thanks for offering these awesome programs.* **”**

---

CHAMPION SURVEY RESPONSE

The Alameda County SR2S Program will take the following actions to address these findings:

- » Provide more tailored messaging to Champions and school administrators about the benefits of the SR2S Program and individual program elements through outreach toolkits or other communications collateral.
- » Prioritize engaging parents as decision-makers by addressing parents' attitudes toward and concerns about walking, rolling, and transit use.
- » Develop a methodology and collect data in order to analyze the effectiveness of program elements not included in this analysis, including:
  - Educational activities — Rail Safety Education, Bike Trivia Wheel, Educators' Guide, Go Green Curriculum;
  - Encouragement events — regularly-scheduled Walk and Roll to School Days, Walking School Buses/Bike Trains; and
  - Communications — Online Resource Center (i.e., program website), e-Newsletters and e-blasts.

Details of the analysis and additional findings are included in the Appendices.

## CHAPTER 6 — PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

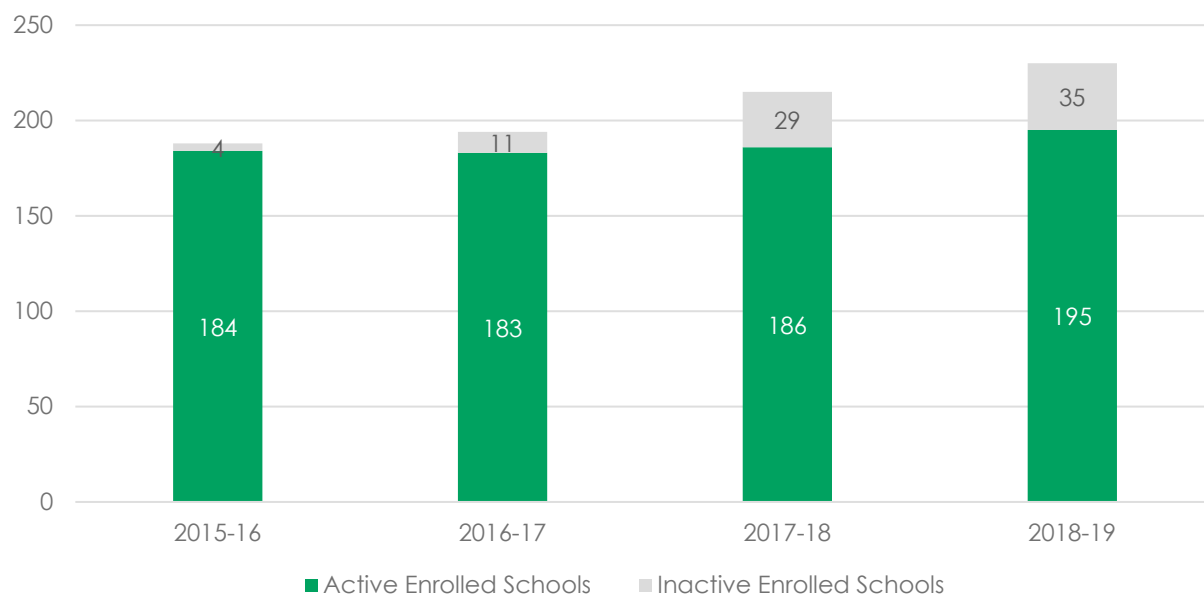
This chapter provides an overview of schools that are enrolled in the Alameda County SR2S Program, as well as their level of participation.

### Enrollment in the Alameda County SR2S Program

Each year, the Alameda County SR2S Program provides services to more and more schools in the county. During the 2018–19 school year, almost two thirds of eligible schools<sup>7</sup> in Alameda County were enrolled in the program, representing 230 of the 386 eligible schools countywide.

Of all schools enrolled in the SR2S Program, only 35 (approximately 15 percent) did not participate in any SR2S program elements. While the ratio of inactive to active schools has increased over time, the total number of active schools enrolled in the SR2S program continues to increase, as shown in **Figure 19** below.

**FIGURE 19. ACTIVE AND INACTIVE SCHOOLS ENROLLED IN THE ALAMEDA COUNTY SR2S PROGRAM**



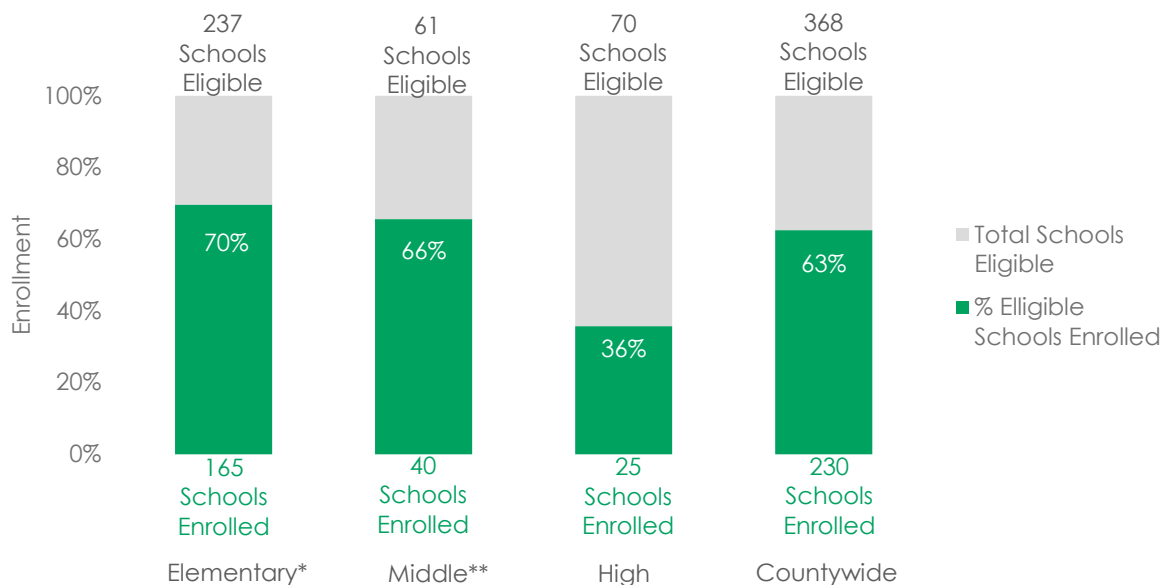
Source: Program enrollment data

<sup>7</sup> School eligibility is defined in the School Enrollment in the Alameda County SR2S Program section in Chapter 1.

## ENROLLMENT BY GRADE LEVEL

A significantly higher proportion of elementary and middle schools are enrolled in the program compared to high schools, as shown in **Figure 20**.

**FIGURE 20. SCHOOL ENROLLMENT BY GRADE LEVEL, 2018–19 SCHOOL YEAR**



**Source: School Site Coordinator Records**

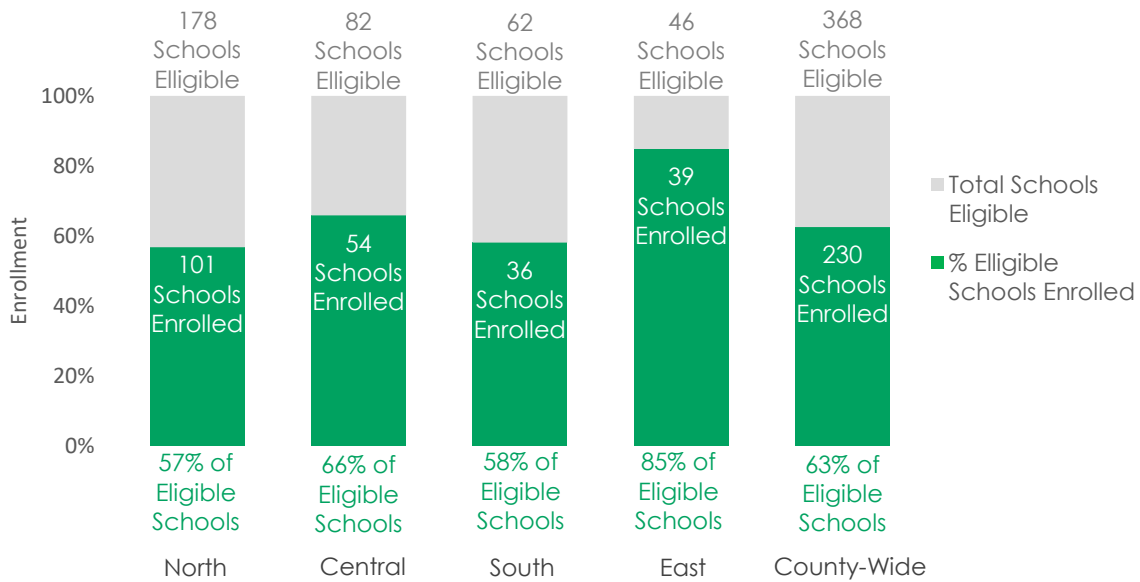
\* Includes Elementary (K-5/6), Combination Lower Grade Schools (K-8), and Combination All Grades Schools (K-12)

\*\* Includes Middle/Jr High (6-8), and Combination Upper Grade Schools (6-12)

## ENROLLMENT BY PLANNING AREA

Enrolled schools are relatively evenly distributed across the county. The lowest proportion of enrolled schools (57 percent) are in the North Planning Area (Alameda, Albany, Berkeley, Emeryville, Oakland, and Piedmont)—which also has the largest number of schools. In the Central Planning Area, which includes Ashland, Castro Valley, Cherryland, Hayward, San Leandro, and San Lorenzo, 66 percent of schools participate. The highest proportion of schools participating (85 percent) is in the East Planning Area (Dublin, Livermore and Pleasanton), which also has the fewest schools. In the South Planning Area (Fremont, Newark, and Union City), 58 percent of schools participate.

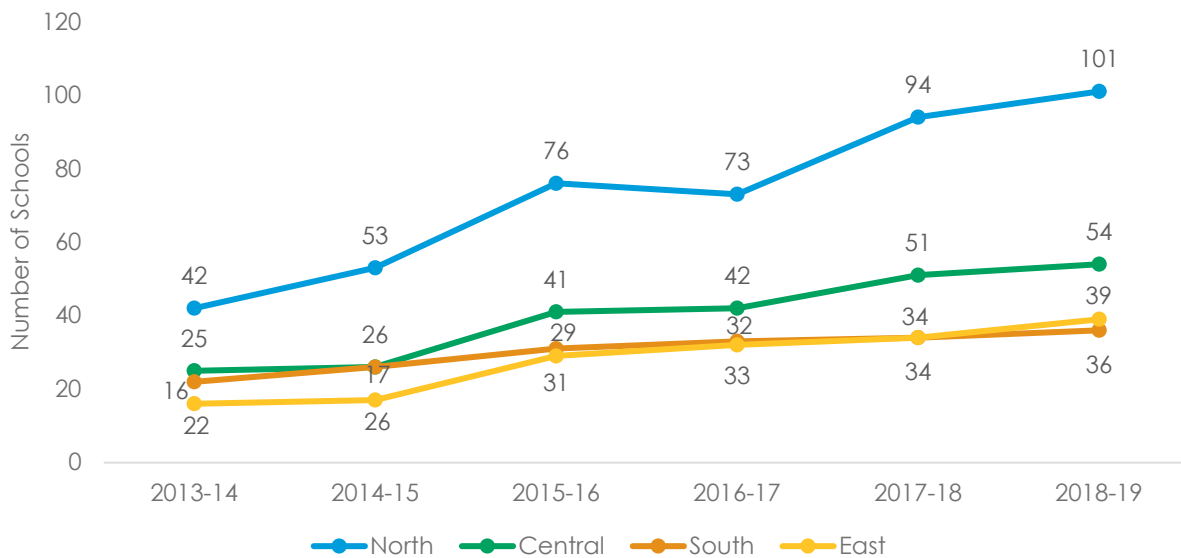
**FIGURE 21. SCHOOL ENROLLMENT BY PLANNING AREA, 2018–19 SCHOOL YEAR**



Source: School enrollment data

The SR2S Program aims to reach all areas of the county. **Figure 22** below shows that as the program has grown, SR2S resources have reached an increasing number of schools in all of the Planning Areas. Overall, the program continues to grow year by year, as shown in **Figure 19** above.

**FIGURE 22. HISTORIC SCHOOL ENROLLMENT BY PLANNING AREA**

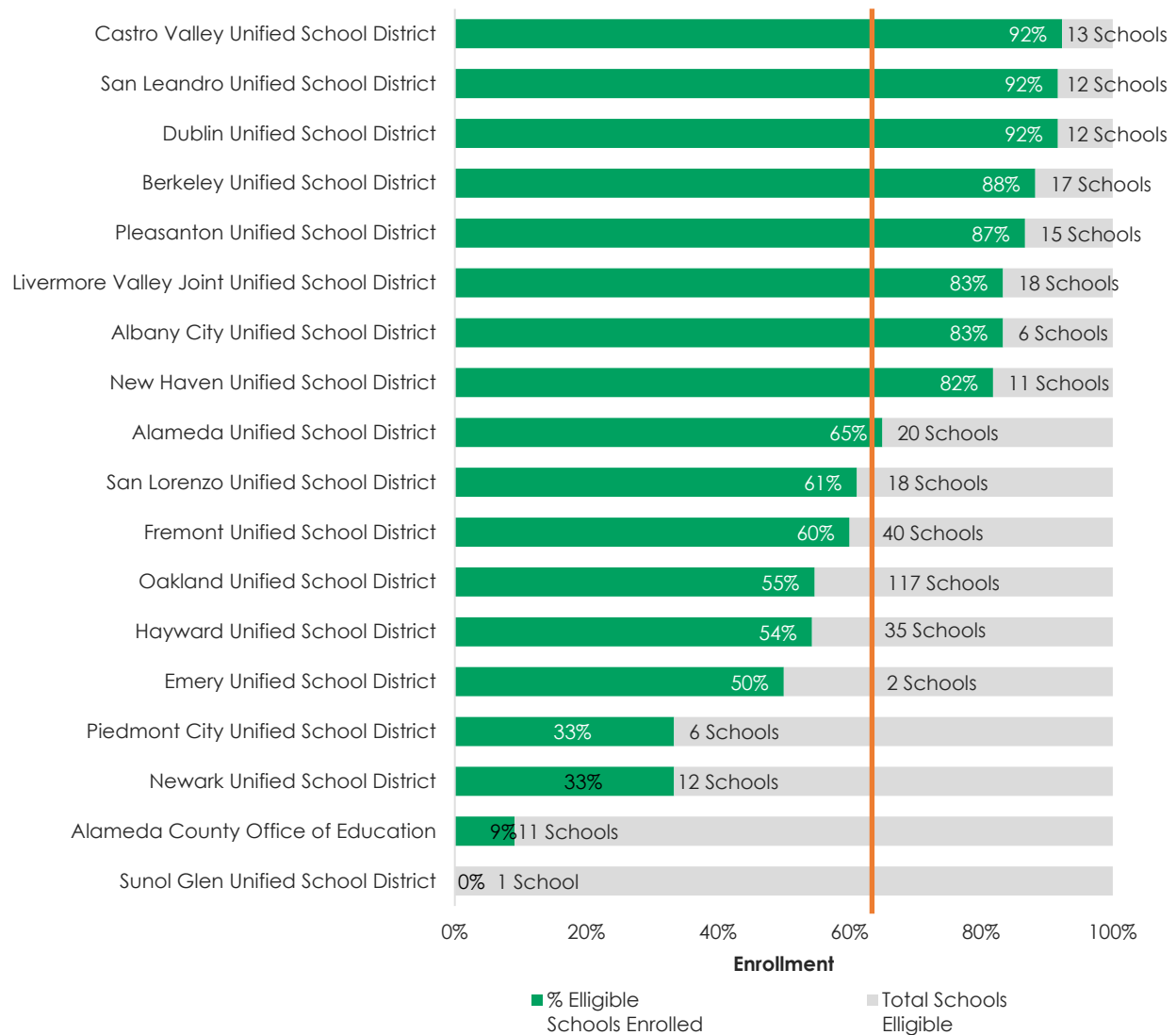


Source: School enrollment data

## ENROLLMENT BY SCHOOL DISTRICT

**Figure 23** shows the percent of schools enrolled in each of Alameda County's school districts, compared to the countywide percentage of schools enrolled (63 percent, orange line). No district has total participation of all eligible schools, while all districts with more than one school have at least one school enrolled in the program.

**FIGURE 23. SCHOOL ENROLLMENT BY DISTRICT, 2018–19 SCHOOL YEAR**



Source: School enrollment data

## Distribution of Program Resources

**As of June 2019, schools enrolled in the program participated in 1,929 SR2S activities and events during the 2018–19 school year.** Most schools enrolled in the program participate in the countywide encouragement events (International Walk and Roll to School Day, the Golden Sneaker Contest, and Bike to School Day), while participation in educational activities varies.

The total number of educational activities available each year is determined by the budget available for the school year. The number of educational activities allocated to each planning area is based on the percentage of student enrollment in each planning area. Schools can book activities on their own by requesting the activity on the SR2S web site; however, the majority of schools book activities with direct support from a site coordinator or the direct student safety training providers. See **Table 4. Allocation of Program Elements** on page 13 for more details.

**Table 9** below reports the total number of education activities and encouragement events held in the 2018–19 school year. The number of events held and schools reached differs because some of the events were held at community events open to the general public and/or the activity/event was booked multiple times at the same school. The rightmost column of this table provides an estimate of the relative cost per student, averaging the total cost for the element across all instances of the activity. It is important to note that the average cost per student was not able to be calculated for all activities due to insufficient data (such as the correct number of total participants); however, all program elements are shown below for context. In all, the table illustrates that all program elements are cost efficient.



**TABLE 9. DISTRIBUTION OF PROGRAM RESOURCES FOR 2018–19**

	Program Element	Events Held	Number of Schools Reached	Est. Total Students Served	Est. Cost Per Event*	Avg. Cost per Student
Education Activities	Pedestrian Rodeos	44	40	8,505	\$1,400	\$6
	Walk and Roll Assemblies	56	42	17,830	\$1,760	\$4
	Bicycle Rodeos†	29	28	3,556	\$1,250	N/A
	Drive Your Bike	28	16	5,569	\$5,850	\$17
	Alameda County BikeMobile†	120	110	3,640	\$1,600	N/A
	Transit Training	4	4	1,765	N/A	N/A
	Rail Safety Education (student presentations only)	25	25	2,826	\$1,300	\$12
Encouragement Events	International Walk and Roll to School Day	137	137	88,710	\$247	\$0.38
	Golden Sneaker‡	89	89	56,104	\$395	\$0.63
	Bike to School Day	106	106	74,691	\$240	\$0.34
	Cocoa for Carpools	10	9	908	\$331	\$3
	Ongoing Encouragement Events	351	32	18,608	N/A	N/A
	Walking School Bus	637	13	N/A	\$79§	N/A
	Bike Train	53	5	N/A	\$255	N/A
	Youth Task Force	4	6	28	N/A	N/A
	Task Forces	24	Varies	N/A	N/A	N/A

**Source:** School participation tracking data

\* Due to travel time to get to schools, number of classrooms participating in the program element, and other factors, each individual event varied in cost. Some elements lack data to calculate an average cost per student/participant.

† Bicycle Rodeos and BikeMobile visits were also provided via community events not held at schools. As such, there is insufficient data to calculate the average cost per student/participant.

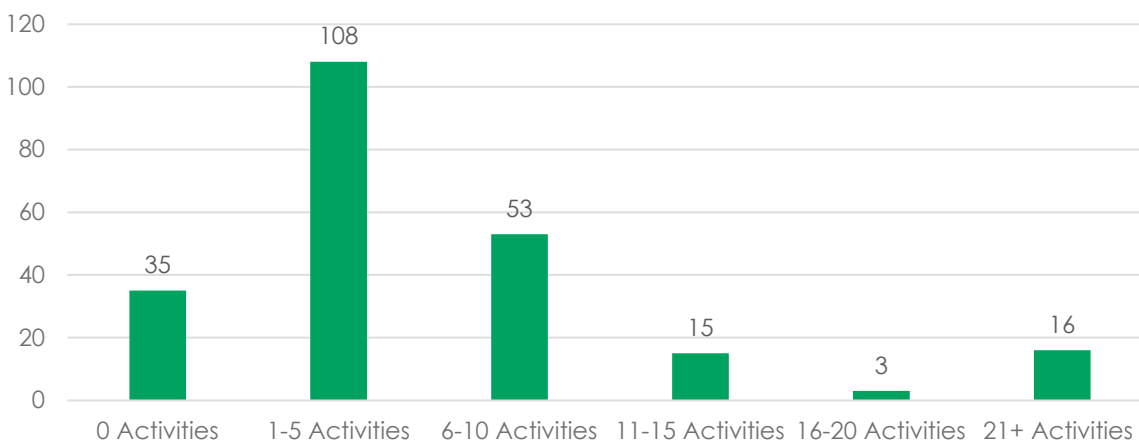
‡ In the 2018-19 school year, teacher strikes impacted participation in the Golden Sneaker contest, which increased the total cost per event and student.

§ Includes \$29,079 for walking school bus and bike train technical assistance.

## Program Element Participation by School

On average, schools enrolled in the SR2S Program participate in an average of 5.5 program elements over the course of the school year. School enrollment in the program is a prerequisite to participation, but it does not require participation. Of the 230 enrolled schools, thirty-five schools ended up not participating in any program elements. Sometimes, schools enrolled in the SR2S Program cannot be active participants due to Champion or school administrator turnover, competing priorities, lack of resources, or lack of support from administrators; however, no data was collected to understand the reasons for lack of participation. The SR2S Program will dedicate resources to understand the barriers to participation at inactive schools already enrolled in the program and identify solutions to reduce those barriers.

**FIGURE 24. NUMBER OF ACTIVITIES PER SCHOOL**



Source: School participation tracking data

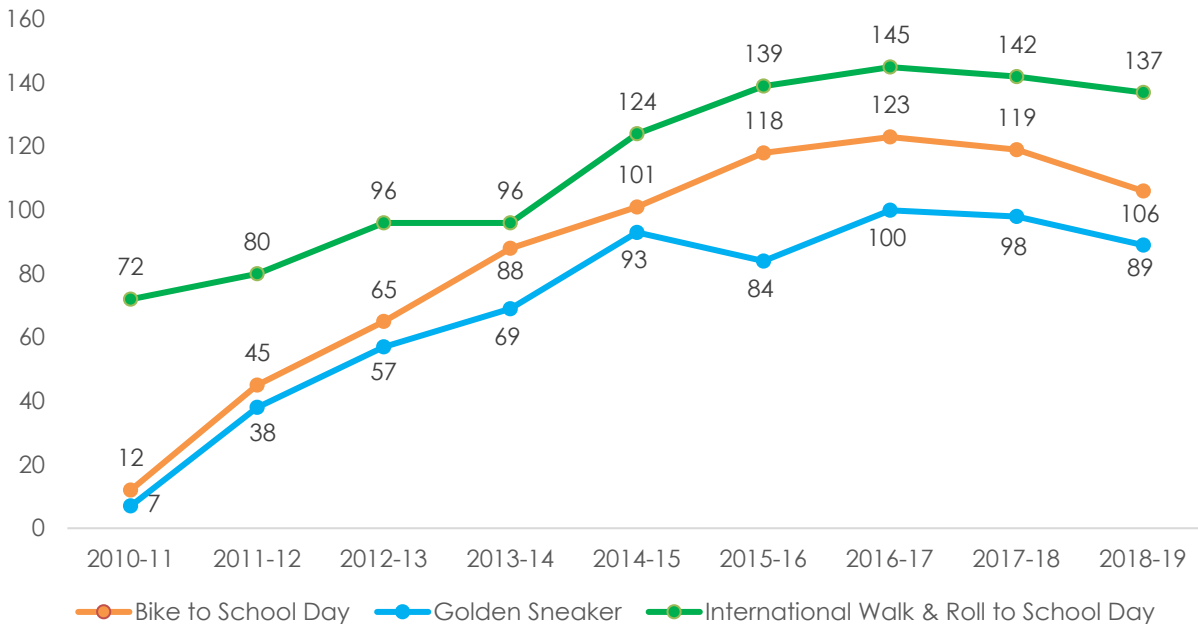
### **PARTICIPATION IN COUNTYWIDE ENCOURAGEMENT EVENTS**

The Alameda County SR2S Program has three major countywide encouragement events that schools can participate in: International Walk and Roll to School Day in October, the Golden Sneaker Contest in February/March, and Bike to School Day in May. **Figure 25** shows how school participation over the years has varied—showing a decrease in school participation in 2017–2018 and 2018–2019. This likely could reflect the program shift to focus on the program elements that effect behavior change (direct student safety training and ongoing events) over one-time encouragement events, which are not proven to effect behavior change.

Under the new program structure, Champions receive less in-person, hands-on support for implementing countywide encouragement events and may be less likely to sign up to participate in the events without that support. Additionally, during the 2018–19 school year, poor air quality due to wildfires and labor disputes at school districts had a negative impact on school

participation in the SR2S Program and on data collection.<sup>8</sup> For example, the OUSD teachers' strike occurred during the Golden Sneaker Contest. The surveys did not offer these two as responses to barriers to participation; however, families wrote about these barriers in the open-ended parent survey questions and program staff and Champions reported similar observations. As such, it is impossible to attribute the decline in countywide event participation to any individual factor based on existing data.

**FIGURE 25. SCHOOL PARTICIPATION IN COUNTYWIDE EVENTS**



Source: School participation tracking data

## Lessons Learned

Key lessons learned from the program participation analysis include:

- » **All areas of the county are served by the Alameda County SR2S Program, although some discrepancies in active program participation still exist.** More than 50 percent of schools in all planning areas are enrolled in the SR2S Program, and every school district has at least one school participating.
- » **The majority of schools enrolled in the Alameda County SR2S Program are active participants in SR2S program elements.** Of the 230 enrolled schools, only 35 (15 percent) did not participate in any of the program elements offered by the program. This may be due to Champion or school administrator turnover, competing priorities, or lack of

<sup>8</sup> State officials think chronic absences might have risen because of rising student homelessness and natural disasters, such as fire and resulting air pollution. More information available at: <https://calmatters.org/projects/school-closures-california-wildfire-outage-flood-water-electricity-guns-snow-days-disaster/>

resources. SR2S Program staff will work to engage with these schools to understand the barriers to participation and identify solutions to reduce those barriers.

- » **Further evaluation is needed to better gauge the balance between program element cost and reach with the relative impact on travel behavior.** With limited resources, program staff have to weigh breadth versus depth of activities. Understanding the relative cost per participating student, as well as the educational benefit and encouragement value, can enable program staff to make educated decisions for allocating resources.

The Alameda County SR2S Program will take the following actions to address these findings:

- » Gain a better understanding of barriers to participation at inactive schools already enrolled in the program.
- » Increase targeted face-to-face outreach to schools in under-represented areas of the county, especially at districts with enrollment below the countywide average (see Figure 23).
- » Identify opportunities to increase targeted face-to-face support for Champions to facilitate their organizing and publicizing of SR2S events and activities.
- » Research best practices to identify high-reach, low-cost program elements that are most likely to sustain travel behavior change, such as an anti-speeding campaigns near schools.
- » Expand the evaluation to collect more specific data about the learning objectives from the safety trainings, as well as the impact of countywide encouragement events, communications methods, Task Forces, and the other SR2S program elements not included in this evaluation period.

## CHAPTER 7 — THE ROAD AHEAD

This first-ever comprehensive evaluation of the Alameda County SR2S Program synthesizes a wide variety of quantitative data and qualitative feedback that captures a more complete understanding of the large, complex program. The SR2S Program is a true partnership that unites and depends on many program staff including direct student safety training providers and site coordinators, as well as volunteer SR2S Champions, school administrators, parents, students, local jurisdiction staff, elected officials and others from across the county in order to encourage active and shared transportation—and increase safety for all travelers. Overall, the Alameda County SR2S is very popular and fun with near universal agreement that the program makes students safer and healthier! This chapter highlights recommendations for the future to make the Alameda County SR2S Program even stronger and more impactful moving forward.

### 2019–20 School Year Updates

The 2019-20 school year is well-underway and the SR2S Program is actively delivering programs to schools and conducting SSAs throughout the county. The Alameda County SR2S Program team will continue seeking new opportunities for partnerships and funding, leveraging existing relationships and program resources to continue expanding and improving the program.

#### **SCHOOL TRAVEL OPPORTUNITIES PROGRAM**

In July 2019, the Alameda County Transportation Commission was awarded a regional Active Transportation Program grant to implement a new program element that aims to address the Equity element of the 6 E's framework. The new School Travel Opportunities Program builds on the lessons learned from the Access Safe Routes Pilot Program to implement a comprehensive school travel program at 70 of the most disadvantaged and high-collision schools in the county. The new integrated program will launch in early 2020, with program staff developing a comprehensive work plan for implementation. At least 15 new schools will be onboarded during the 2019–20 school year, with the full 70 schools enrolled over the four-year grant period.

### Recommendations for the Future

Based on lessons learned during this evaluation period, the following recommendations should be considered for future program implementation. The timeframe for the recommendations considered activities that were already in progress (short-term) or that are achievable with existing resources and work plans (medium-term). Long-term recommendations may require additional resources.

### **SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS (2019–20 SCHOOL YEAR)**

- » Continue focusing resources on direct student safety training, school safety assessments that identify infrastructure improvements near schools, and ongoing events that sustain behavior change, such as weekly or monthly Walk to School Days and Walking School Buses.
- » Dedicate resources to address driver behavior near schools through development of new program elements or strategies, targeted age- and culturally-appropriate outreach campaigns (banners, yard signs, and posters) and messaging, and/or coordinated enforcement efforts (partnering with local law enforcement for coordinated enforcement campaigns).
- » Dedicate resources to understand the barriers to participation for inactive schools already enrolled in the program and identify solutions to reduce those barriers.
- » Prioritize engaging parents as the transportation decision-makers by addressing parents' attitudes toward and concerns about walking, rolling, and transit use through program communications, educational materials, and parent meetings.
- » Track local investments in infrastructure near schools, particularly projects that were identified in the School Safety Assessments (SSAs), to better evaluate the impact of school safety assessments.

### **MEDIUM-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS (2020–21 SCHOOL YEAR)**

- » Increase targeted face-to-face outreach to schools in under-represented areas of the county, especially at districts with program enrollment below the countywide average.
- » Provide more tailored messaging to Champions and school administrators about the benefits of the SR2S Program and individual program elements through outreach toolkits or other communications collateral.
- » Advocate for funding for infrastructure improvements near schools that reduce driving speeds (traffic calming) and provide separation between people walking, rolling, and driving.
- » Explore, develop and pilot program elements that could address the non-transportation barriers that impact families' transportation decisions, including building partnerships with other agencies/organizations around the county that work to address these barriers.

### **LONG-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS**

- » Research best practices to identify high-reach, low-cost program elements that are most likely to sustain travel behavior change, such as an anti-speeding campaigns near schools.
- » Identify opportunities to increase targeted face-to-face support for Champions and school administrators to facilitate their organizing and publicizing of SR2S events and activities.
- » Work with local jurisdiction partners to prioritize traffic calming and complete streets near schools.
- » Give priority to program offerings that are most effective at sustaining behavior change and impacting safety based on further analysis.