



WALKING SCHOOL BUS GUIDE

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The Wyandotte County Walking School Bus program was a collaborative effort between Rosedale Development Association & the Unified Government of KCK



INTRODUCTION

Childhood Obesity

- About 1/3 of American children are obese or overweight.
- Obesity among elementary-age children has quintupled since 1965.

Additional Research

- Obesity & overweight lead to heart disease, diabetes, stroke, depression and numerous other life-threatening illnesses.
- Regular exercise helps maintain healthy weight.

WHAT IS A WALKING SCHOOL BUS

A group of kids walk **to** school or walk home **from** school with a supervised adult.

WHY START A WALKING SCHOOL BUS

- Fewer kids are biking and walking.
- More parents are driving.
- Individual barriers to walking and bicycling to school.
- Community conditions make it hard to walk or bike.

HOW TO START A WALKING SCHOOL BUS

1. Find a champion at your school to coordinate program (teacher, staff, nurse, or counselor).
2. Coordinator will recruit volunteers (parents, PTA members, community volunteers) to drive/walk the kids to or from school.
3. Round up kids who are already walking or would like to walk.
4. Pick a route and take a test walk.
5. Decide how often the group will walk.
6. Determine the staging post/bus stops to meet kids to/from walking to school.

WAYS TO INITIATE A WALKING SCHOOL BUS

1. Promote
2. Decide if it is possible at your school or if there are interest
3. Find a school coordinator and parent volunteers
4. Design the walking route & Name the Bus
5. Develop walking school bus rules and procedure
6. Develop training and roles
 - Drivers training

- Roles of volunteer parents
- Road safety
- 7. Have Kickoff
- 8. Sustainability
 - Enhancing and expanding the routes
 - Special events
 - Looking for alternatives to bus and car riders to participate
 - Other alternative initiatives - morning walking club/after school walking club
 - Thinking about long term
 - Budget (low cost of items) - stationary, photocopying, advertising, promotional merchandise, safety vests, etc, training material, etc.
 - Fundraiser
 - Applying for grants
 - Seeking donations
 - Finding sponsors

BACKGROUND CHECKS FOR PARENT VOLUNTEERS OF WALKING SCHOOL BUS

We advise the WSB champions to conduct background checks all parent volunteers. This is to ensure safety of all children. In the event that they do not have background checks completed then they should make certain that the kids are never walking alone with the parent volunteer.

WALKING SCHOOL BUS PROGRAMS DOES NOT HAVE TO BE IN AN AFFLUENT NEIGHBORHOOD.

WSB are usually in low socio-economic urban communities. Most urban kids live within blocks from the schools and are already walking. We encourage them to join the WSB program. The WSB program not only increase physical activities, reduce traffic, improves environment condition, but also increase the safety of children by walking in groups with an adult supervisor.

PARTNERSHIPS HELP TO MAKE WALKING SCHOOL BUS PROGRAMS WORK

We have partnered with community officers to patrol the area while we walk and in some cases they have walked with the WSB. We encourage elders, college students, and older siblings to walk with us to create a community working together to provide safety to the children. The kids also have the chance to see firsthand the community where they live, other than what they hear about their community.

EXPERIENCE AND LESSON LEARNED

We have found it to be a bit of a challenge to connect with the schools at the beginning of the school year. We have learned through discussions with one of Wyandotte County school's Principal that the best time to build relationships and plan for the fall school year Walking School Bus program or any future activity is during the spring and early summer weeks before the school year starts.

Incentives and stipends were written into the grant to be used to encourage and enhance the WSB. In our experience these methods did not work as an incentive. The decision to have a WSB program is really determined by the principal. If the principal is an advocate of wellness and safety education, it is easy to get the school on board with the WSB program.

WALKING SCHOOL BUS REGISTRATION RESOURCE MATERIALS

- Registration
- Permission Form (English and Spanish)
- Parent Letter
- Planning Walking Routes
- Parent Survey
- Volunteer Roster
- Daily Walking Tally/Attendance Sheet

WALKING SCHOOL BUS VOLUNTEER LEADER TRAINING RESOURCE MATERIALS

- Volunteer Leader Application Form
- Policies and Responsibilities for Volunteer Leaders
- Guidelines for Leader
- Safety Information
- Planning for Walking School Bus Kickoff

LIST OF ATTACHMENTS:

- Walking School Bus Overview
- Checklist and Timeline
- Promotional Kickoff Event Flyer
- WSB Interest Introduction Letter & Survey
- WSB Incentive Tracking Card

WSB REGISTRATION RESOURCE MATERIALS

Registration Form (please complete one per family)

Yes! I would like to register my child(ren) for the Walking school Bus program.

NAME OF CHILD: _____ GRADE/TEACHER: _____

NAME OF CHILD: _____ GRADE/TEACHER: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CLOSEST INTERSECTION: _____ DISTANCE FROM SCHOOL: _____

PARENT'S NAME: _____ CELL PHONE: _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____ HOME PHONE: _____

I give permission for my child(ren) to participate in the Walking School Bus program and I agree to the policies stated in this flyer. I will not hold the Walking School Bus "Volunteer/Driver," the school or any other organization, or its staff responsible for any accidents or injuries.

- I will walk with my child on Walking School Bus day.*
- I would like to be a volunteer of the Walking School Bus day.*
- What size t-shirt does your child wear? Youth small Youth Medium Youth Large*

PARENT'S SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____

Please return by the date specified to your child's classroom teacher or the coordinator _____ by

_____.

WALKING SCHOOL BUS PERMISSION FORM

Child's Name: _____ Age: _____ Grade: _____

School:

I assume all risks and hazards incidental to such participation in the Walking School Bus being sponsored by the Rosedale Development Association and the Unified Government of Wyandotte County and Kansas City Kansas.

I agree to hereby waive, release, absolve and hold harmless the volunteers, and sponsors involved in the Walking School Bus, should the child named above sustain an injury of any sort while participating in this event.

Photos from this program may used in presentations, put online, used in articles in conjunction with the Unified Government of Wyandotte County and Kansas City Kansas and the Rosedale Development Association. Parent's signature below serves as permission for your child's photo to be used in the above ways.

Government of Wyandotte County and

Parent/Guardian Signature

_____ Date: _____

WALKING SCHOOL BUS PERMISSION FORM

Nombre del niño/a: _____ Edad: _____ Grado: _____

Escuela:

Yo asumo todos los riesgos y peligros imprevistos de tal participación en el Autobús Escolar Caminante (Walking School Bus) patrocinado por el Programa de Autobús Escolar Caminante de la Rosedale Development Association y el Gobierno Unificado de Wyandotte County y Kansas City Kansas.

Yo estoy de acuerdo por la presente en mantener indemne, liberar, eximir y exonerar de toda responsabilidad a los voluntarios, instructores y patrocinadores involucrados en el Autobús Escolar Caminante, en caso de que el niño nombrado arriba sufra alguna lesión de algún tipo mientras participa.

Es posible que fotos de este programa estarán utilizados en presentaciones, puestos en Internet y utilizados en artículos de la Rosedale Development Association y el Gobierno Unificado de Wyandotte County y Kansas City Kansas. La firma, abajo, del padre permite que fotos de su niño(s) pueden ser utilizados de la manera descrita anteriormente.

Firma del Padre/ Tutor legal

_____ Fecha: _____

PARENT LETTER

October 18, 2011

Dear Parent(s),

In an effort to ease traffic congestion around our school and improved the safety, health and fitness of students, we would like to establish a Walking School Bus at our school.

A Walking School Bus usually has at least one adult/driver and one parent who walk along an agreed route, who leaves from school and walk each child home or at a designated "bus stop/staging post." This same concept can be done in the mornings.

The Walking School Bus program is free, but is reliant upon teacher and parent volunteers to act as drivers. While there is no limit to the number of children in any bus, there will be an average of six to eight children per adult. Volunteers/drivers will be identified by a brightly colored yellow vest.

You are not required to volunteer, but it is necessary that we have sufficient volunteers for the success of the program. The coordinator of the program is _____. Any questions concerning the program, please direct to her. _____ will be looking for volunteers to assist with the program.

We will begin the program walking at least one day a week. At this time the designated day is on Thursdays after school. Children may use the Walking School Bus on whatever days suit the family. We have registration forms, so that we have permission from parents and also to help us track the number of kids in the program. Routes will be established using those roads most used by our students.

Please complete and sign the Permission/Registration Form attached. We would be grateful if you could complete and return it to school by _____.

You will be notified of the date when the Walking School Bus will begin.

Sincerely,

Planning Walking Routes

- *Google Maps to route using students' home address*
- *Test the routes*
 - *Walk the route*
 - *Log the distance*
 - *Look for potential strays, danger, uneven sidewalks, high frequency traffic streets)*
- *Hand out route maps to the volunteers*
- *Keep distance to 1 mile or under.*
- *Try to keep the groups of walking bus to 10 children.*
- *One to two volunteers per route.*
- *Kids' safety is paramount at all times.*

Walking School Bus: Parent Survey

Dear Parent or Guardian:

This survey will provide important information in developing a Walking School Bus program for your school. Please take a few minutes to complete this survey. Return it to the school office by _____.

1. Name of School: _____

2. What is the closest intersection to your house? _____

3. How far is your house from the school? Note: $\frac{1}{4}$ = 5 minute walk (check one)

- $\frac{1}{4}$ mile or less $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ mile $\frac{1}{2}$ - 1 mile

4. About your child: If you have more than one student in your house, please fill this out for your oldest student in elementary school.

Gender (circle one) Male Female

Grade (circle one) K 1 2 3 4 5 6

5. How does your child usually get to school in the morning?

	Everyday	3-4 days a week	1-2 days a week	Never
Walks				
Bikes				
Car				
Carpools				
Bus				

6. How does your child usually get home from school in the afternoon?

	Everyday	3-4 days a week	1-2 days a week	Never
Walks				

Bikes				
Car				
Carpools				
Bus				

7. How likely are you to walk or bike for transportation? (circle one)

Likely

Neither Likely or Unlikely

Unlikely

VOLUNTEER ROSTER

DRIVERS	MONDAY	THURSDAY
A – On Duty	John Doe - A	Susan Smith – A
B - Substitute	George Locus - A	George Locus - A
	Adam Apple - B	Tina Shouts - B

STUDENT DAILY WALKING TALLY/ATTENDANCE SHEET

PASSENGERS	MONDAY Oct. 1, 2011	THURSDAY, Oct. 4, 2011
Kellie Graham	X	X
Michael Kates	X	X
Ginger Cookie	X	X

WALKING SCHOOL BUS PROGRAM
VOLUNTEER APPLICATION

Thank you for your interest in becoming a WSB Volunteer. Please complete this form and return to:

Champion/Leader Name: _____

School Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City, State, Zip Code: _____

If you have any questions, please contact _____ at: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

Cell Phone: _____ Email Address _____

Please give a brief summary of your experience (if any) working with children: _____

_____.

Program started on _____ and will continue throughout the 2011 -2012 school year. We meet _____ after school and we depart at _____ pm. We have three different walking school bus routes. Each route has a staging post where the parents will pick up the kids from that spot.

Signing this form indicates your approval of the process. Thank you for your cooperation.

Signature of Applicant

Date

POLICIES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Road Safety

Vests & Caution Signs

Cancellations & Schedule Changes

General Responsibilities:

1. Before the program, you will complete the WSB Leader Training/Orientation and conduct background check on Parent Volunteers.
2. The day before, you will send home reminders, confirm pick up time or drop off time, provide your contact information. (Note: If you have a small bus, note which kids walking, which day). *Also, let parents know time of take off.*
3. On your designated morning or evening, you or your volunteers will walk the designated route at the designated route along with the children to get them either to/from school safely.
4. On the 1st day of the program, and at regular intervals, you will emphasize the importance of road safety to the children.
5. Throughout the program, you and your volunteers will lead the Walking School Bus Team of 5-10 children to/from school according to the WSB Driver rotation.
6. Note: Also see at the end of slide WSB Leader/Champion Guidelines.

Tracking Policies:

Each day, you will:

- Record which kids walked;
- Note any good or bad occurrences.

Each month by the 25th the WSB Champion will:

- Send a report with the number of kids walked weekly and total for the month, number of news kids in the program, report any misbehavior, challenges, and the ways in which they promoted WSB program.
- If a child fails to follow safety rules, Champion would decide ahead of time

how they will handle misbehaviors.

CANCELLATION/ABSENTEEISM POLICIES:

Bad Weather: The Champion (not the volunteers, unless previous communications have been discussed) will cancel the WSB program if:

- ❖ Temperature is below 25 degrees;
- ❖ It is raining hard enough to wet children's clothes;
- ❖ There is a severe weather warning in the area.

In these cases, the WSB Champion will telephone all Drivers/Volunteers as soon as possible, at the latest an hour before the route begins.

Illness or Other Conflict: If you (the scheduled Champion) are ill or otherwise unavailable:

- Telephone your volunteers/drivers and try to make a trade:
- Telephone the WSB Champion.
- Note: You may want to carry pepper spray for stray dogs.

Walking School Bus

Guidelines for Champion

- Be a Leader of WSB program with assistance from RDA & Unified Government
- Promote the program
- Recruit volunteer staff and parents
- Register kids
- Communicate with parents via newsletters and parent letters
- Map routes to school & test it ahead of time
- Organize a staging post
- Champion (leader) and volunteers walk with parents and their children on WSB days
- Go over basic safety rules with the children
- Select the day(s) of the week to walk
- Participate in International Walk to School Day
- Plan a kickoff with RDA & Unified Government
- Track # of kids that walk per day and per week of WSB
- Offer contest or incentive program
- Have Fun!!!

WALKING SCHOOL BUS SAFETY

- Be Visible
- Walk, Don't Run
- Stay on the Sidewalk
- Walk Together in a Group
- Cross Side Streets as a Group
- Walk toward oncoming traffic
- Use hand-held Stop Signs or Caution Signs
- Have a Volunteer - one at the front and one at the end of the line.
- *Wear Reflective Vests and use Caution Signs*

EMERGENCY PROCEDURE

If a child gets injured, do not move the child from his position. Any kind of movement could worsen the situation. Call 911 and then call the child's parents. If there is more than one volunteer with the WSB have one volunteer stay with injured child until medical help and/or the parents arrive. The other volunteer should continue to walk the other kids to or from school to their drop off spots.

PLANNING FOR WALKING SCHOOL BUS KICKOFF

What you will Need:

A table, tablecloth, & trash can.

You/Champion will provide:

Snacks

Water Cooler or Drinks (cups, if necessary)

Volunteers

Wyandotte Coordinator will bring:

Walking School Bus Play Hut

Caution Signs

Kid Vests

Adult Vests

Who to Invite:

Parents, Teachers, Principal, Community, Volunteers, Community Officer

Who Invites the Above People:

Champion

Wyandotte Coordinator (community officer)

Other Things to Bring:

Camera

Megaphone (optional)

Music (optional)

How to Promote & When:

Start promoting 1-2 weeks:

Send home letters & advertising posters around school

2-3 days before event:

Have your roster ready and call kids or parents to remind them (optional);
Also promote at any school event (day or evening)

1 day before:

Announce over the Intercom to remind all kids and tell them to invite their parents, grandparents, etc to walk on 1st day.

On the Day of the Kickoff:

- Introduce yourself
- Welcome kids, parents, and Principal
- Explain Rules of Walking School Bus
 - Walk, don't run
 - Stay together as a group
 - Walk toward traffic
 - Stay on sidewalk
 - Stop at street crossing

WALKING SCHOOL BUS OVERVIEW

What is a Walking School Bus (WSB)?

A Walking School Bus is a group of children who walk to school together under adult supervision.

How does the program work?

For each Walking School Bus route, a map and schedule will be produced. Each morning or once a week, the volunteers/drivers will meet at a staging post to meet kids. Generally, the meeting location or staging post is ½ mile or less from the school (an approximate 15 minute walk).

How many kids and volunteers do you need to start the program?'

You can start with as little as 2 kids; and 1 adult for up to 6 kids. This program builds as you continue on.

What about road safety and crime?

Walking to school under adult supervision provides an excellent opportunity for children to learn about road safety. In addition, the presence of law-abiding citizens on the streets deters neighborhood crime.

What if we live too far from school?

Families living more than 1 mile from school can be dropped off at a designated staging post. Walking School Bus volunteers/drivers will then lead the walk to school.

Why walk to school?

- Improved health and fitness
- Better behavior and focus in class
- Reduced traffic congestion and air pollution
- Social opportunity for kids, parents, teachers and community volunteers

How do I register my child?

Complete and sign the Permission/Registration Form, and return it to the child's classroom teacher or champion/coordinator of the Walking School Bus program.

How can I get more information?

Contact your child's school, or contact Wyandotte Walking School Bus Coordinator, Yvonne Dorsey @ 913-677-5097, or visit www.walkingschoolbus.org.