

Ottawa Walking School Bus Pilot Project

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Presenters

- ▶ Wallace Beaton, ASRTS Coordinator - Ottawa, Green Communities Canada
- ▶ Robin Ray, Family Health Specialist, Ottawa Public Health
- ▶ Vicky Kyriaco, GM, Ottawa Student Transportation Authority
- ▶ Kathleen Cameron, Director of Programs & Policy, Ottawa Safety Council



Presentation Overview

- ▶ Background
- ▶ Barriers to WSBs
- ▶ Goals & Objectives
- ▶ Partners & Funding
- ▶ Operations
- ▶ Results
- ▶ Evaluation: Ottawa Public Health
- ▶ From Pilot to Program: Ottawa Student Transportation Authority
- ▶ Questions

Background

- ▶ Ottawa School Active Transportation (SAT) Network
- ▶ Ottawa School Travel Planning Project
- ▶ WSB at Viscount Alexander PS



Viscount Alexander's Walking School Bus: A Program Model & Best Practices Resource



WSB Barriers

- ▶ Over-reliance on parent volunteers
- ▶ Coordination and support
- ▶ Risk management



Project Goals

- ▶ Introduce a daily WSB at select schools in 2014-15
- ▶ One screened, trained, insured, supervised & paid leader per WSB
- ▶ Measure participation rates & attitudes
- ▶ Increase AT rates
- ▶ Make the case to stakeholders
- ▶ Identify future operational & financial considerations

Project Objectives

- ▶ Introduce a daily WSB at 8 schools for 12 weeks
 - ▶ Mornings only
- ▶ Recruit schools & families
- ▶ Identify walking routes & schedules
- ▶ Recruit, train & manage WSB leaders
- ▶ Evaluation tools to track participation, parental attitudes, demand
- ▶ Case study & webinar

Partners



Funding

- ▶ \$45,000.00
 - ▶ Ottawa Public Health - \$25K
 - ▶ Ottawa Student Transportation Authority - \$15K
 - ▶ City of Ottawa (TDM) - \$5K
- ▶ Leader costs = 75%
- ▶ Service agreement: GCC & OSC
- ▶ In-kind

Promo video



Operations: School Recruitment

- ▶ STP schools (GCC) & AT intervention schools (OPH)
- ▶ Urban/suburban mix
- ▶ Proportional representation of Public & Catholic

School / Week	Profile	Location	STP or AT intervention school
Convent Glen CS	K-6	suburban	AT Intervention (OPH)
Corpus Christi CS	K-6	urban	School Travel Planning (GCC)
Henry Larsen PS	K-8	suburban	School Travel Planning (GCC)
Hilson Ave. PS	K-6	urban	AT Intervention (OPH)
Robert Bateman PS	K-6	suburban	School Travel Planning (GCC)
St. Gabriel CS	K-6	suburban	AT Intervention (OPH)
Steve Maclean PS	K-8	suburban	School Travel Planning (GCC)
Woodroffe Ave. PS	K-6	urban	School Travel Planning (GCC)

Operations: Routes

- ▶ Drafted by OSTA using internal mapping software & school registration data
 - ▶ Maximize potential catchment
 - ▶ Within walk zone; sidewalks when possible
 - ▶ Respect hazard policy
 - ▶ < 30 mins travel time & arrive > 5 min before bell
- ▶ Route review
- ▶ Final maps & schedules

Operations: Maps & Schedules

Woodroffe Ave - Walking School Bus



Operations: Promotion

- ▶ Flyers: paper, e-mail, website, Synervoice
- ▶ Direct parents to www.ottawaschoolbus.ca/resources/safe-routes
- ▶ Outreach by OPH and GCC staff
- ▶ Media launch during iWALK Week
- ▶ Social media
- ▶ Reflective snap bands



Operations: Registration

- ▶ 3-step process: www.ottawaschoolbus.ca/resources/safe-routes

Step 1

- Parent or caregiver visits the OSTA website: www.ottawaschoolbus.ca/resources/safe-routes
- Reads the Q&A for parents, WSB Pilot Procedure & OSTA Code of Conduct

Step 2

- Completes the online registration form & submits by email

Step 3

- Prints, signs and forwards the registration form to the office administrator at their child's school for forwarding to OSTA.

Operations: Leaders (i)

- ▶ Recruitment: websites, school newsletters
- ▶ Hiring: criminal reference check
- ▶ Job description & employee handbook
 - ▶ Ped safety, dress & footwear, student discipline, behaviour mgt, emergencies, incident reporting
 - ▶ confidentiality agreement
- ▶ Mandatory training:
 - ▶ Occupational Health & Safety
 - ▶ First Aid/CPR (Level C)
 - ▶ In-class
 - ▶ Route orientation

Operations: Leaders (ii)

- ▶ Equipment: vest, cleats & backpack
 - ▶ ID card
 - ▶ First Aid Kit
 - ▶ Route map & schedule
 - ▶ Emergency contacts
 - ▶ Passenger list
 - ▶ WSB info flyer
- ▶ Leader/student ratios:
 - ▶ 1:1-10 registrations
 - ▶ 2:11-20 registrations



Operations: Cancellations

- ▶ Two permanent cancellations
- ▶ Weather: protocol
 - ▶ freezing rain makes sidewalks unwalkable
 - ▶ Snow: + 10 cm and sidewalks not ploughed
 - ▶ severe winds, severe storms or tornado warnings



Results

► Participation:

School / Week	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Convent Glen	6	7	7	7	9.6	11	9.6	10	9	10	8	8
Corpus Christi	1	.5	1	1	1	1	1	1	[Redacted]			
Henry Larsen	0	0	0	0	0	0	[Redacted]					
Hilson Ave.	3	3	3	3	3	2.6	3	3	3	3	2	3
Bateman	6	6	6	6.4	7.4	6.8	5.6	6	7	6	7	5
St. Gabriel	4	3	4	4	3.6	4	4	2	3	3	2.5	2
Steve Maclean	1	1	1	1	.2	1	2	?	1	1	1	1
Woodroffe	6	?	?	5	4	6	6	6	4	5	?	4

► Modal shift: 39% did not walk prior to WSB

Evaluation

- ▶ Process Evaluation
- ▶ Purpose: Determine if pilot was implemented as expected, what worked well, what needed to be improved for future implementation
- ▶ Methods:
 - ▶ Electronic survey (fluid surveys) - parents
 - ▶ Focus groups - WSB leaders and PHNs
 - ▶ Semi-structured interviews - Principals, VPs and Stakeholders

Evaluation: Successes

- ▶ 100% of parents would like child to participate again; recommend that others participate
- ▶ Perceived benefits to children - improved safety skills, PA, social interaction
- ▶ Schools happy to have program
- ▶ Paid leader model; had engaged leaders
- ▶ Multidisciplinary approach of partners



Evaluation: Improvements (i)

- ▶ Increase promotion of WSB
 - ▶ Start promotion in spring for following school year
- ▶ Improve communication with schools/parents
 - ▶ Engage parents earlier in the planning
- ▶ Maintain & improve steering committee
- ▶ Simplify registration process
- ▶ Tailor program to individual schools

Evaluation: Improvements (ii)

- ▶ Improve WSB leader back-up system and child-leader ratio
- ▶ More WSB routes
 - ▶ Help shift parental perceptions and attitudes
- ▶ Consider minimum student participation rate for maintaining WSB routes
- ▶ Sustainable funding

From Pilot to Program

- ▶ Dec 2014: pilot extended to June 2015
- ▶ March 2015: program to June 2016
- ▶ New routes in September
- ▶ Improved registration process
- ▶ New promotional tools & activities

Sign up for the Ottawa Student Transportation Authority's

Walking School Bus

Students walking to school together with a trained leader



Your school is participating in a Walking School Bus program!

If your child walks to school, they can now join up with some friends and a trained leader to make sure they get to school safely.

The Walking School Bus (WSB) is designed to promote active transportation and healthy living. Students walk to school with a group of peers and a professional leader, following a specific route and schedule. Our leaders are trained by the Ottawa Safety Council to make sure your child has a safe and educational walk to school.

Visit our website to view the maps showing the route and stop locations.



So many benefits for your child

Make new friends	Gain independence
Reduce stress	Decrease traffic
Improve health	Become road-aware
Boost confidence	Get fresh air!

Leaders are paid staff. Just like a bus driver. They are certified in first aid, and have undergone a police records check. They know road safety.

Register at ottawaschoolbus.ca/wsb

Participation is free!



OSTA
Ottawa Student
Transportation
Authority



Public Health
Santé publique



Green
Communities
CARRON



Concluding Observations

- ▶ Most goals & objectives achieved
- ▶ Raised profile of active school travel
- ▶ Addressed liability barrier
- ▶ Partnership model
- ▶ STP and AT interventions provide foundation
- ▶ School board engagement



For more info

- ▶ www.ottawaschoolbus.ca/resources/safe-routes
 - ▶ Case Study (coming soon)
 - ▶ Latest information & resources
- ▶ Contact
 - ▶ wbeaton@greencommunitiescanada.org (pilot)
 - ▶ rmasterson@ottawaschoolbus.ca (program)
- ▶ Your Questions?