

# Instructions for Using the Student Travel Tally Sheet and Parent Survey and Options for Entering the Data Collected



This document provides specific instructions on how to administer each data collection tool. The table of contents below can help you identify where to find specific information.

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*If you have any questions, please contact the National Center for Safe Routes to School staff at [data@saferoutesinfo.org](mailto:data@saferoutesinfo.org)*

## Student Travel Tally Form Administration

### ***What is the Student Travel Tally form and who uses It?***

The Student Travel Tally Form is a one-page sheet used to count the number of students arriving to and departing from school by various travel modes (walk, bicycle, bus, car etc.)

The form is designed to be administered by teachers or volunteers and takes approximately five minutes each morning for two days. One Student Travel Tally Form per classroom should be used for all K-8 classrooms in the school.

The information collected has many applications, including learning travel patterns and estimating traffic congestion and environmental effects. Additionally, when gathered before and after the SRTS activity or project, the count information can help local SRTS programs measure any changes in walking, biking, and other forms of travel to and from school.

### ***Downloading and printing the Tally Form***

The Tally Sheet form can be downloaded from

[http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/resources/evaluation\\_student-in-class-travel-talley.cfm](http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/resources/evaluation_student-in-class-travel-talley.cfm)

Forms should be printed at the highest resolution possible. A minimum resolution of 400 dots per inch should be used; most laser and inkjet printers meet this standard.

Resolution under 300 dots per inch may prevent the forms from being readable by scanning systems. If you are photocopying blank forms, the copy should be the same size and have the same margins as the original—please do not reduce or enlarge the size of the photocopied form.

### ***When is the Student Travel Tally administered?***

1. It is intended to be used on two days in the middle of a single week. By gathering travel information for two days in the middle of the week, an accurate average of student travel can be determined.

Counts should be conducted on any two days from Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday. Counts should not be conducted on Mondays or Fridays. The following combinations of days are acceptable:

- \*Tuesday and Wednesday
- \* Wednesday and Thursday
- \* Tuesday and Thursday

2. Weather conditions: For reporting purposes, counts are needed regardless of weather conditions. For each day's morning and afternoon count, select the weather condition that most closely matches the selection options on the form (Sunny, Rainy, Overcast, Snow.)
3. The Student Travel Tally Sheet should be administered at least twice during the school year unless otherwise instructed by your State's SRTS program:
  - A. First counts should be taken at some point during the second, third, or fourth weeks of the school year. This count establishes the baseline measure for that school.  
  
**\*Please do not conduct counts during weeks with special walking or biking-related events, such as Walk to School Day.** If your SRTS program is conducting any events during the first three weeks of the school year, please attempt to conduct travel counts before the SRTS event.
  - B. Second counts should be conducted during the last three weeks of the school year. This count measures the change in travel behavior during the school year. If a mid-year count (see below) was conducted, this end-of-year count can also be used to evaluate the sustained effect of activities.
  - C. Mid-year counts are not required, but also might be useful.
    1. A count conducted within 2-3 weeks of the completion of educational events or encouragement and enforcement campaigns can be used to measure immediate effects of these activities.
    2. A mid-year count can also be used to understand the seasonal variation in levels of walking and biking to and from school.

## Parent Survey Administration

### ***What is the Parent Survey?***

The Parent Survey is a two-page questionnaire intended to collect information from parents of K-8<sup>th</sup> graders about how their children travel to and from school, what barriers there are to walking or biking to and from school, and their attitudes about walking and biking to school. The questionnaire is available in English and Spanish.

The questionnaire takes 5 to 10 minutes to complete and one questionnaire should be given per student household. If more than one child from the same school takes a questionnaire home, the directions on the survey form ask the parent to fill out the survey for the child with the next birthday from today's date.

Local SRTS programs may be particularly interested in this information because it can be used to help identify issues that need to be addressed to improve their SRTS activities. Information from parents might also identify unexpected opportunities to increase walking and biking to school.

### ***Downloading and printing the Parent Survey Form***

The Parent Survey form can be downloaded from [www.saferoutesinfo.org/resources/evaluation\\_parent-survey.cfm](http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/resources/evaluation_parent-survey.cfm)

### ***Parent Survey administration options***

The Survey can be administered to parents in two ways: using a paper-based questionnaire or via an online questionnaire.

#### **Paper-base surveys**

Printed surveys should be printed at the highest resolution possible. A minimum resolution of 400 dots per inch should be used; most laser and inkjet printers meet this standard. Resolution under 300 dots per inch may prevent the forms from being readable by scanning systems.

- A.** If you are photocopying blank forms, the copy should be the same size and have the same margins as the original—please do not reduce or enlarge the size of the photocopied form.
- B.** You can photocopy the 2-page survey double-sided. Please make sure the text on both sides should be oriented in the same direction, i.e. one side's text is not upside down when you turn the survey over as if it were a page in a book.

### **Three ways to use the paper-based survey**

The paper-based survey was designed with three potential means of administration:

**Option 1.** Take-Home Administration. The survey is handed out or placed in backpacks for students to take home. Instructions:

1. Distribute copies of the survey to teachers for each classroom, so that all parents will receive a copy of the survey.
2. Collect forms from teachers weekly for a two-week period after the surveys have been sent home.

**Option 2.** Assign survey as homework or extra credit that involves the student taking home the questionnaire and filled out as part of an interview with the parent. Instructions:

1. Distribute copies of the survey to teachers for each classroom, so that all parents will receive a copy of the survey.
2. Teachers assign the surveys to be completed as part of a homework or extra credit assignment. The students take the survey home and fill it out during an interview with their parent, or along with their parents.
3. Collect forms from teachers weekly for a two-week period after the surveys have been sent home.

Other homework approaches can also be used, as long as the recommended form is used, and the parent provides the answers.

In many instances, curriculum changes or new homework assignments require approval from the principal or a curriculum committee. Local SRTS programs considering the homework approach should check on this potential issue early.

**Option 3.** Deliver to parents during parent-teacher conferences. The survey can be given to parents to complete and returned while they are waiting before parent-teacher conferences. Alternatively, parents could take the survey home and have it returned by their child. Instructions:

1. Identify when parent-teacher conferences will occur and determine whether these times of the year are appropriate to collect baseline information and end-of-year information. (If the times do not seem appropriate, the take-home method might more successful.)
2. Distribute copies of the survey form to teachers for each classroom, so that all households will receive a copy of the survey during (or immediately before) the parent-teacher conference. (Note that teachers will be responsible for distributing and collecting surveys, and then returning the completed surveys to the local SRTS program manager.)

3. Ask teachers to provide forms to parents/caregivers so that they can fill out the forms while they wait for the conference.
  - A. A sign with simple instructions next to the stack of forms may help explain the process.
  - B. Teachers may collect forms during their conference.
  - C. Parents may also complete the survey after their meeting with the teacher.
  - D. Teachers may allow parents to take the surveys home and send them back with the students. If this approach is followed, teachers should request that the forms be returned within a few days, and set a specific date. (Note that this approach will likely reduce the number of surveys that are returned.)
4. Collect forms from teachers weekly for a two-week period after the surveys have been sent home.

### **Online surveys**

For schools that primarily communicate with their students' parents through email, electronic newsletters or other digital media, then that school may be a good candidate for using the online version of the Parent Survey. If the school primarily sends communications to parents on paper, then administering your survey using paper hard copies of the Parent Survey is the better choice.

The online option allows you to send a web link to parents and they go online to complete the questionnaire. For more information about the online survey option and determining if it is right for your SRTS program visit

[www.saferoutesinfo.org/resources/evaluation\\_parent-survey-instructions.cfm](http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/resources/evaluation_parent-survey-instructions.cfm)

### ***When is the Parent Survey administered?***

1. Ideally, the parent survey should be conducted twice during the school year unless otherwise instructed by your State's SRTS program. Time frames are listed below, and these should be followed when the survey is administered using the take-home or online methods. However, when the survey is administered in conjunction with Parent-Teacher Conferences, the local SRTS program manager and teacher(s) should determine the best time to give the survey.
  - A. For first collection, parents should be surveyed during the second, third, or fourth week of school.
  - B. For second collection, parents should be surveyed during the last three weeks of the school year in order to determine how attitudes and beliefs have changed during the year.

**C.** Mid-year counts are not required, but also might be useful.

-- A survey conducted within 2-3 weeks of the completion of educational events or encouragement and enforcement campaigns can be used to measure immediate effects of these activities.

-- A mid-year survey also can be used to understand the progress and early effects of long-term programs, as well as other variation in parental attitudes that affect walking and biking to and from school.

## **Data Entry Options for Student Travel Tally and Parent Survey**

The data collected on the Student Travel Tally forms and Parent Surveys can be converted to useful information in two ways.

**Option 1. Online data system** – Users can use the National Center’s online “DataTools” to enter their data directly into a system that provides immediate access to their data. Users can access and share summary reports of their data and be able to download their data.

1. For instructions on how to access the online data system, please visit [http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/data/materials/SRTS\\_DataTools\\_overview.pdf](http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/data/materials/SRTS_DataTools_overview.pdf)
2. The online data system contains forms that replicate the basic appearance of the paper Student travel Tally and Parent Survey forms to better facilitate data entry.
3. When data entry is complete, user can view and share summary reports and download their data.

**Option 2. Centralized Data Entry** – Users can collect their paper Travel Tallies and Parent Surveys and send them to the National Center for Safe Routes to School for free processing. For instructions on mailing your questionnaires to the National Center including completing the necessary cover sheets, please visit [http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/resources/evaluation\\_cover-sheets.cfm](http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/resources/evaluation_cover-sheets.cfm)

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