



National Center for Safe Routes to School

National Review Group Meeting

Grant Hyatt Metro Center

Washington, DC

Tuesday, March 8, 2011

Review Group Members Present:

Barbara Alberson

State and Local Injury Prevention

California Department of Public Health

Kit Keller

Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle

Professionals

Jeffrey Becausen

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Division of Adolescent and School Health

Tina Lankford

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Division of Nutrition and Physical Activity

Pat Childers

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Office of Air and Radiation

Kimberly Light

U.S. Department of Education

Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools

Andy Clarke

League of American Bicyclists

Tracy McMillan, PhD

PPH Partners

Richard Dolesh

National Recreation and Park Association

Chris Metka

Pennsylvania Department of Transportation

Moira Donahue

Safe Kids Worldwide

Sharon Roerty

National Center for Walking and Biking

Martin Gonzalez

California School Boards Association

Sandy Scheffkind

American Occupational Therapy Association

Philip Haberstro

National Association for Health and Fitness

Sabina Vyas

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Division of Adolescent and School Health

David Henderson

Miami-Dade MPO

Arthur Wendel, MD

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

National Center for Environmental Health

Deb Hubsmith

Safe Routes to School National Partnership

Charlie Zegeer

Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center



National Center Partners Present:

Barbara Harsha
Governors Highway Safety Association

Tony Kane
American Association of State Highway and
Transportation Officials

Diane Lambert
Toole Design Group

Steve Olson
American Association of State Highway and
Transportation Officials

Ian Thomas, PhD
America Walks
PedNet Coalition

Jennifer Toole
Toole Design Group

US DOT Representatives Present:

Paula Bawer
National Highway Traffic Safety
Administration

Becky Crowe
Federal Highway Association

Mike Griffith
Federal Highway Administration

Jeff Miller
Federal Highway Administration

Gabe Rousseau
Federal Highway Administration

Diane Wigle
National Highway Traffic Safety
Administration

Invited Guests Present:

Stephanie Marshall
Let's Move! Initiative

Kristen Rosenthal
Safe Kids Worldwide

Erin Rainey for Capt. Stephanie Bryn
U.S. Department of Health and Human
Services
Health Resources and Services
Administration

National Center Staff Present:

Lauren Marchetti, Director

Nancy Pullen-Seufert, Associate Director

Pam Barth, Project Manager

Austin Brown, Program Manager

Seth LaJeunesse, Program Coordinator

Mathew Palmer, Project Coordinator



Welcome and Updates

Welcome and perspectives on transportation reauthorization

The meeting was called to order by Pam Barth, Project Manager for the National Center for Safe Routes to School (National Center). Rebecca Crowe, Program Manager for the Federal Safe Routes to School program, briefly welcomed National Review Group (NRG) members and provided an update on the safe routes to school (SRTS) legislation.

The Federal Transportation bill, SAFETEA-LU, has been extended through September 30, 2011. At the request of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the National Center, whose current contract expires May 1, 2011, has submitted a proposal for an 18-month extension. Ms. Crowe acknowledged invited guest Michael Griffith of the FHWA Office of Safety, and introduced Lauren Marchetti, Director of the National Center, who provided the welcome for the National Center.

Goals of meeting and introductions

Ms. Marchetti, referencing the discussion of the SRTS legislation, added that the National Center is proceeding with optimism about the future of SRTS and the National Center, and that the National Center is continuing to provide support to state and local SRTS programs.

Ms. Marchetti then facilitated member introductions, noting the variety of organizations represented, and briefly reviewed the meeting agenda and packet of information. She made note of a handout in the packet entitled "Working Together to Advance Safe Routes to School: Safe Routes to School Organizations — How We Collaborate," which was developed jointly by the National Center and the SRTS National Partnership and which clarifies the roles of the two organizations.

Working together: successful NRG and National Center Collaborations

Ms. Marchetti highlighted successful collaborations between NRG members and the National Center that have occurred since the last meeting. These include:

- A webinar on joint-use agreements in partnership with Rich Dolesh of the National Recreation and Park Association.
- A SRTS advertising campaign in Miami bus shelters in partnership with David Henderson of Miami-Dade MPO.
- Member participation in an expert panel meeting for the national evaluation plan project. Participating members/organizations included Arthur Wendel of the CDC, Margo Pedroso of the SRTS National Partnership, and Barb Alberson of the California Department of Public Health. Tracy McMillan of PPH Partners played a substantive role in the development of the national evaluation plan, acting as consultant on the project. FHWA has been closely involved in every aspect of the plan's development as well.
- Member participation in the expert panel for the development of the AASHTO guide on noteworthy state SRTS program practices. The Delaware SRTS program, representing state SRTS coordinators, and a representative of the SRTS National Partnership participated in this panel.
- A webinar on SRTS and the environment in partnership with Pat Childers of the Environmental Protection Agency.



- Assistance with selection of the 2010 Oberstar Safe Routes to School Award. Judging members included Ian Thomas with America Walks/PedNet, Kelly Hardy of AASHTO, and Rory Neuner of the SRTS National Partnership.
- Planning for the 2011 SRTS National Conference in collaboration with the SRTS National Partnership. The conference will be held August 16 – 18 in Minneapolis, MN, and the call for proposals is open now.
- Collaborations with the First Lady's Let's Move Campaign included promotion of International Walk to School Day 2010. While the Let's Move! Campaign currently is not part of the NRG, Stephanie Marshall with Let's Move! was invited to join the meeting to explain more about their program and how it interacts with SRTS. Because of scheduling conflicts, she would be joining the meeting in progress.

Ms. Marchetti closed by noting that suggestions for ways to collaborate don't have to come from the National Center. While the National Center does and will continue to reach out to NRG members, members are also encouraged to contact National Center staff with ideas or opportunities to partner.

Connecting people with SRTS information they need

Pam Barth provided an overview of new resources and website features that help to connect state and local programs, SRTS advocates, and others with information they may need.

Interactive map and updates to the National Center website

Ms. Barth explained that while the National Center website (www.saferoutesinfo.org) has always housed success stories from across the country, it was not easy to search for specific strategies or topics. A new feature, "Success Stories Search" has been added to the home page (direct link: successes.saferoutesinfo.org). Users may search by "E" (education, encouragement, enforcement, engineering, evaluation), by state, or by topic. The National Center currently has about 150 success stories and continues to add stories through both state SRTS coordinator input and from SRTS award applications. While the success stories will not focus on outcomes, the National Center is developing separate resources to provide information on outcomes related to specific impact areas, such as traffic safety.

Ms. Barth then demonstrated an online interactive map that displays schools around the country that have benefitted from federally funded SRTS projects. The map is still in final stages of development, but a Beta version has been posted on the National Center website home page (direct link: maps.saferoutesinfo.org). Users may search by states and counties, Congressional districts, addresses, and years awarded. The map displays school name, city, and state, plus the dollar amount and year of the award; and this project-specific information can be shown nationally, by state, county, address or congressional district. The National Center has a number of plans additional information to be added to the map in the future. The map is populated with information from a project database maintained by the National Center. The information in the database is provided voluntarily by state SRTS coordinators – reporting is not required. States generally submit data at a minimum of every six months.



Streamlined, online data entry

Austin Brown, Program Manager for the National Center, described upgrades made to the National Center's online data entry system. In 2006, the National Center developed standardized surveys to collect student travel data (student travel tally) and parent attitudes and perceptions (parent survey). Soon after, the National Center developed an online database and interface that allowed local programs to input data. He also noted that the National Center acknowledges that there is a burden related to data collection, and because data is important to the Federal SRTS program, the National Center provides free data entry and processing services to all local and state programs. Based on customer feedback over the past 2 years, the National Center launched a new, upgraded interface in June 2010. Highlights of the upgrade include:

- A new option to complete the survey online. Eliminates the need for paper and schools can retrieve survey data immediately.
- Re-formatted the webpage so that the navigation bar is always visible to help guide users to needed information.
- A new process that requires users to key their school information directly into the database. Cover sheets are automatically generated, and staff time to enter school information is reduced.

Mr. Brown noted that while the system currently provides two summary reports, in the next few months the National Center will build capability for the system to generate two new series of reports. The first series aggregates data for multiple schools from the same time period and within the same local SRTS program. The second series will compare a school's results across two time periods.

Mr. Brown mentioned that one of the activities undertaken by the National Center was to review the Center's SRTS case studies and identify schools that were featured in the cases and that had student travel data in the system. The intent is to link the data system's results to the corresponding case studies to provide a richer story.

Ms. Marchetti requested a slight diversion from the agenda to introduce Andy Clark, NRG member and organizer of the National Bike Summit. Ms. Marchetti had asked Mr. Clarke to provide an update on legislative activities from the perspective of advocacy organizations. Mr. Clarke informed the members that there are over 750 people registered for the Bike Summit, and they have great sponsors this year. He noted that the tone of the summit was different this year: because of the current economy and political climate, the key message is that investing in walk/bike programs is smart use of transportation dollars as it can address multiple issues - energy, environment, school transportation issues, traffic congestion. Small businesses and retailers are also here with the advocates, expressing that an investment in pedestrian and bicycle programs, or a reduction in it, impacts their jobs.



Looking back – resources developed since last meeting

Pam Barth explained that the National Center has developed a few key resources since the last meeting that may be of interest to the NRG:

- Jennifer Toole introduced the resource entitled “Involving Children with Disabilities in SRTS.” She explained that while the Federal SRTS legislation very clearly calls on SRTS to include children with disabilities, it is very easy for local programs to unintentionally ignore these students. The National Center resource provides a primer on special education in the U.S., lists strategies for creating an inclusive SRTS program, and highlights case studies of SRTS programs that include students with disabilities.
- Diane Lambert introduced the resource entitled “Personal Security and Safe Routes to School,” which was developed in 2010 in partnership with the Children’s Safety Network (funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services). The resource defines personal security issues as being broader than child abductions and bigger than the trip to school, while also acknowledging and providing support for real concerns and situations some communities face. It includes information and statistics on bullying, gangs, personal violent crime and abductions; suggestions for ways a community can assess their local issues; tips for how a local coordinator can foster a discussion on the topic; a sampling of SRTS strategies that can help to improve student personal security; and highlights of case studies and additional resources.
- Nancy Pullen-Seufert, Associate Director of the National Center, introduced the resource entitled “Safe Routes to School and Health: Understanding the Physical Activity Benefits of Walking and Bicycling to School.” She explained that the National Center is always looking to meet the needs of local programs, and often local programs connect with the health impacts of SRTS as they are interested in helping kids get more physical activity. This resource, developed with input from an expert panel with representatives from CDC and UNC, provides realistic recommendations to local programs on how they can measure the contribution of walking and bicycling to school towards recommended physical activity for children.

Understanding the progress of SRTS today and tomorrow

Nancy Pullen-Seufert provided a brief presentation on two projects currently underway at the National Center: development of a national evaluation plan for the Federal SRTS program and a process evaluation of the Federal SRTS program:

National Evaluation Plan

Ms. Pullen-Seufert acknowledged that it is important to get a better understanding of impacts of SRTS program. She explained that with funding from the first legislation, the National Center has been able to set up systems to begin to collect data. FHWA has also asked the National Center to develop a plan for evaluation that would include process and outcome measurement and development of necessary data collection systems that could be launched with any potential future legislation.



In the summer of 2010, the National Center convened an expert panel to provide input on the development of a national evaluation plan for the federal SRTS program. The panel, which included approximately 30 researchers and practitioners involved in non-motorized transportation and injury prevention discussed what should be measured and how. The National Center has drafted a plan that includes three main activities: (1) documenting state program processes, (2) monitoring overall SRTS trends, and (3) researching program effectiveness. The National Center has drafted the plan and has received comments from expert panel members. Several challenges came to light with panel member comments, including how to move forward given the unknown future of SRTS legislation; how to address the gap between the need for information as soon as possible and the time it will take to see results from SRTS; and how to balance the importance of/need for this information with the burden of data collection and reporting on local and state programs. Ms. Pullen-Seufert also clarified that the evaluation plan will include results of a feasibility study on crash-based evaluation of the federal SRTS program. The final report on a national evaluation plan is expected to be out in spring 2011.

SRTS Process Evaluation

Ms. Pullen-Seufert explained that the SRTS process evaluation will capture achievements of the federal SRTS program to date. The process evaluation aims to describe how legislative requirements were met, what has been the reach of the program to date, how state programs have operated, and how SRTS funds have been obligated. She provided a brief review of some of the information that has been gathered during the evaluation, such as:

- A nationally representative sample of schools announced as receiving SRTS funding awards mirrored income level of overall schools in the US. (For example, 21% of US schools have 75% or more of their student population qualifying for the Federal Reduced Price Meal program (FRPM), and twenty-two percent of sample schools had 75% or more of their student population qualifying for FRPM.
- A nationally representative sample of schools announced as receiving SRTS funding awards also reflected US school student populations by ethnic/racial groups.
- The program has included announcements of funding awards that are projected to reach approximately 4.8 million students.

Ms. Pullen-Seufert closed by stating that the final process evaluation report will be available in Spring 2011.

AASHTO SRTS Noteworthy Practices Guide

Referencing a postcard that was included in the meeting packet, Tony Kane, Director of Engineering and Technical Services at the American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO), provided a brief overview the SRTS Noteworthy Practices guide that is being developed by AASHTO and the Governors Highway Safety Association with funding from the National Center. He explained that the Federal SRTS legislation allowed flexibility in how states set up their programs, and that states have structured and administered key aspects their programs a variety of ways. The guide, assembled with input from state coordinators and oversight from FHWA and the National Center, will highlight a selection of noteworthy state program practices. The guide will be published in spring 2011.



Lauren Marchetti again requested a slight diversion from the agenda to introduce Stephanie Marshall with Let's Move!, an initiative launched by First Lady Michelle Obama and dedicated to ending childhood obesity in a generation. Ms. Marshall provided a brief overview of the five themes of Let's Move! - creating a healthy start for children, empowering parents and caregivers, providing healthy food in schools, improving access to healthy, affordable foods, and increasing physical activity. She stated that safe routes to school programs are a component of their Get Active campaign and messages, and noted that the obesity taskforce report issued to the President in May 2010 called for a 50% increase in the percentage of children taking safe walking or bicycling trips to school by 2015. Ms. Marshall explained that there are several ways to get involved with the Let's Move! initiative, including Let's Move Cities or Towns and Let's Move Outdoors, among others. She also noted that SRTS outcome measures tied to the Let's Move! initiative have been coordinated with the National Center through the U.S. Department of Transportation's involvement in the initiative.

Looking Ahead, Discussion and Wrap up

Lauren Marchetti closed the meeting by re-stating that the National Center has been asked to submit a proposal to continue to serve as the SRTS Clearinghouse, and while the future of the National Center is uncertain, National Center staff remain optimistic. She acknowledged that this NRG meeting contained more reporting out from the National Center than in the last two years, as we are finishing one phase of work and will hopefully be moving on to another phase. Ms. Marchetti informed members that once word of a contract extension is received, the National Center will contact current NRG members regarding continuing to serve on the NRG.

Several topics were discussed during a brief open mike session, including:

- Rich Dolesh of the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) mentioned that resources are limited and local governments are looking for ways to maximize the local dollar. The NRPA is planning to hold another webinar on shared public recreation facilities. He would love to hear about other partnership opportunities. Mr. Dolesh also noted that the America's Great Outdoors report was released last week, and encouraged members to read the executive summary. A lot of themes in the report have direct bearing on SRTS, such as community based destinations. Stephanie Marshall noted that this relates to Let's Move Outside.
- An NRG member commented that she would like to see the issue of school siting addressed by the National Center. It was noted that the EPA developed draft school siting guidelines which were made available to the public for a 90 day comment period. The comment period closed on February 18, 2011. The final guidelines have not yet been published.

Adjourn

Ms. Marchetti thanked the NRG for another productive meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 4:00.