



# A Contextual Look at Safe Routes to School Implementation in Texas

Heather Atteberry, MPH

Michael & Susan Dell Center for Healthy Living  
University of Texas School of Public Health



# Project Overview

**Purpose:** To gain a more comprehensive understanding of the implementation of the SRTS program in Texas.

**Sample:** 34 interviews with community-level and state-level SRTS stakeholders

- 31 community-level interviews with stakeholders from 8 communities
- 3 state-level interviews with members the TxDOT Bicycle Advisory Committee

**Design:** Structured phone interviews with open-ended and multiple-choice follow-up questions about:

- Planning
- Implementation
- Sustainability

# Results - Planning

- Why did communities apply?
  - Saw a need to improve safety at their schools, especially in low-income neighborhoods; and/or
  - Wanted to increase opportunities for physical activity by enhancing the built environment around the school.
- SRTS Teams included multiple city/community partners.
- All sought public input and received
  - strong opinions; or
  - very little input.



# Results - Implementation



- Achievements:
  - Improved infrastructure
  - Perceived increased walking to/from school
  - Enhanced neighborhood pride
  - Improved commitment from schools
- Barriers:
  - Lack of communication with granting agency/community
  - Changes in construction design standards
  - Regulatory issues
  - Lack of up-front funding



# Results - Implementation



- Mostly positive reactions from parents, students, and teachers.
- SRTS Plan used through process but seen as a “living document.”
- Multiple outreach strategies:
  - School presentations,
  - Community meetings, and
  - Advertising/PSAs.
- Most did not conduct formal evaluation.
- Believe environment safer for students to walk/bike to/from school.





## Results - Sustainability

- Continue to look for more funds:
  - Sustain safety/education programs, and
  - Create improvements at other campuses.
- Use grant writers or city/district staff to locate and write grants for more funds.
- Believe the program is important and needed in Texas:
  - Need dedicated funding, and
  - Open to more communities.



# Conclusions and Policy Implications



- The SRTS program is needed and valued by communities in Texas
- Challenges with communication and navigation through approval processes and policies caused delays in the completion of the project.
- Implementation without subsequent technical assistance and support is difficult and inefficient.
- Communities that had dedicated grant writers or resources, viable partnerships with local decision-makers, and community support were more likely to report more favorable results.
- Future grants should include at least partial funding up-front, rather than relying totally on cost reimbursement policies, especially in smaller communities with less resources.

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## Project Members:

- *Principal Investigators:* Deanna Hoelscher and Marcia Ory
- *Co-Investigators:* Sandra Evans, Chanam Lee, Lisako McKyer, Suojin Wang
- *Project Director:* Diane Dowdy
- *Project Staff:* Heather Atteberry, Tiffni Menendez, Abi Oluyomi, Carolyn Smith, Christine Tisone
- *Policy Advisors:* Camille Miller, Donna Nichols, Michelle Smith

## Contact Information

*Deanna M. Hoelscher, PhD, RD, LD*

[Deanna.M.Hoelscher@uth.tmc.edu](mailto:Deanna.M.Hoelscher@uth.tmc.edu)

Twitter: @DeannaHoelscher

*Diane Dowdy, PhD*

[Dowdy@sph.tamhsc.edu](mailto:Dowdy@sph.tamhsc.edu)



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