Boston Safe Routes to School
A HI-5 case study

December 21, 2016
Boston Public Health Commission Board of Health

Anne McHugh, MS
Director, Chronic Disease Prevention and Control Division, CIB

Mary C Bovenzi, MPH
Associate Director, Chronic Disease Prevention and Control Division, CIB
Project Director, Let’s Get Healthy, Boston!
Boston Partnerships to Improve Community Health (PICH)

- $5.22 million, 3-year grant
- Funded by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Supports voluntary policy and systems (PSE) changes to encourage healthy choices in physical activity, nutrition and tobacco control.

Partnership model

- BPHC, Division of Chronic Disease Prevention and Control
- Boston Alliance for Community Health (BACH)
- Community-based organizations
- City agencies
- Harvard Prevention Research Center (evaluator)
- Consultants (Toole Design for SRTS)
Goal: Increase daily physical activity among children; Decrease obesity and overweight

Create safe, convenient, and fun opportunities for children to walk and bicycle to and from school

Congress approved SRTS funding in all state transportation departments in 2005
Why SRTS?

Walk & bike to school

- 48% in 1969
- 12% in 2009

Driven to school

- 13% in 2009
- 44% in 1969

Join the movement
Program Benefits

For Students:
• More physical activity
• Improved academic performance
• Improved on-time attendance rates
• Better social, emotional and physical health
• Greater independence

For Everyone:
• Improved air quality
• Safer walking and bicycling environment
• Less traffic congestion
• Cost savings

Join the movement
SRTS: Why Now in Boston?

BPS and City of Boston policy changes
- Home-based student assignment policy (2014)
- Middle school MBTA passes (2014)

Boston neighborhood infrastructure
- Dense and mixed land uses
- Robust sidewalk network
- Access to public transit
Fewer students will be bused over the next decade

- What decisions will families make about how students will travel to school?

How can we use this opportunity to achieve a triple win:

- More physically active students...
- ...Who arrive at school ready to learn
- Less traffic, fewer carbon emissions
Summary

- 21% of students report walking or biking to get to/from school each day.
- 29% of students report walking, biking, or using public transit (MBTA) to get to/from school each day.
- Students in grade K2 are most likely to report walking to/from school.
- Students in grades 7 are most likely to report biking to/from school.
- Students in grade 8 are most likely to report taking public transit (MBTA) to/from school.

Breakdown of Student-Reported Transportation By Grade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Classrooms</th>
<th>Walk</th>
<th>Bike</th>
<th>School Bus</th>
<th>Family Vehicle</th>
<th>Carpool</th>
<th>Public Transit</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-K (K0/K1)</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>19.0%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>35.1%</td>
<td>41.1%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K (K2)</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>23.8%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>35.8%</td>
<td>35.9%</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st Grade</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>21.2%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>35.7%</td>
<td>35.5%</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Grade</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>21.7%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>38.5%</td>
<td>32.3%</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Grade</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>17.9%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>39.5%</td>
<td>35.6%</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th Grade</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>19.9%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>41.1%</td>
<td>33.0%</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th Grade</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>23.5%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>42.1%</td>
<td>28.1%</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th Grade</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>22.5%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>34.9%</td>
<td>26.4%</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7th Grade</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>17.7%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
<td>22.5%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>40.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th Grade</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
<td>19.1%</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>45.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- 77 out of 98 BPS schools serving students in grades K-8 responded.
- 881 classrooms containing 17,400 students turned in two days of tallies.
- In participating schools, on average 60% of classrooms turned in two days of tallies.
City Agencies

- **Engineering**
  - DPW: sidewalks
  - Bos311: Repairs
  - BTD: Vision Zero

- **Enforcement**
  - BPD
  - Crossing guards
  - 25 mph speed limit

- **Cross-cutting**
  - Middle school taskforce
District (BPS)

- Encouragement
  “Join the Movement”
- Education
  Pedestrian safety PE curriculum
- Evaluation
  Classroom hand tallies
- Equity
  Priority schools

City Agencies

- Engineering
  DPW: sidewalks
  Bos311: Repairs
  BTD: Vision Zero
- Enforcement
  BPD
  Crossing guards
  25 mph speed limit
- Cross-cutting
  Middle school taskforce
Multi-tiered Approach

Schools

- Encouragement
  - Walk-to-School Days
  - Parent communication
  - Wellness Champions
  - Wellness Councils

- Engineering
  - Walk audits
  - Pilot rapid traffic calming

- Education
  - Walking route maps

District (BPS)

- Encouragement
  - “Join the Movement”

- Education
  - Pedestrian safety PE curriculum

- Evaluation
  - Classroom hand tallies

- Equity
  - Priority schools

City Agencies

- Engineering
  - DPW: sidewalks
  - Bos311: Repairs
  - BTD: Vision Zero

- Enforcement
  - BPD
  - Crossing guards
  - 25 mph speed limit

- Cross-cutting
  - Middle school taskforce
32% of K–8 schools have participated in one or more program elements.
Challenges

- Complex multi-sector coordination
- Infrastructure improvement costs
- Safety concerns – traffic, bullying, crime
- Culture shift – how to change behavior norms
What Comes Next?

LGHB funding ends September 2017

Sustainability plan under development
  ➢ What city department should be lead(s)
  ➢ How to continue momentum
  ➢ Sustainable funding
Questions?

Join the movement