

Chapter Three: Education



“Walk safe, drive safe”

Education

Introduction

The Safe Routes to School education emphasis focuses efforts among students to teach bicycle, pedestrian, and traffic safety as well as healthy and active lifestyles. While student education might be a large part of the education scope, it must go beyond that and reach parents, drivers, and the community at large. Efforts should be made to teach all motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists their responsibilities while utilizing the transportation network.

Some education tools employed should be to teach bicycle and pedestrian safety as part of classroom or physical education curriculum, developing safety campaigns for the community, organizing community bicycle rodeos, providing safety materials for bicyclists and pedestrians, and how to properly use safety products, such as helmets.

Current Education Activities

Below is a list of activities that are undertaken by the Sergeant Bluff-Luton Community School District, the Sergeant Bluff Police Department, the Woodbury County Sheriff's Department, Mercy Medical Center, St. Luke's Regional Medical Center, and Albrecht Cycle Shop.

Pamphlets Available at Parent-Teacher Conferences

The Woodbury County Sheriff's Department is available to provide educational material on bicycle safety at the Sergeant Bluff-Luton Community School District Parent-Teacher Conferences.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Presentations

The Sergeant Bluff Police Department provides a bicycle and pedestrian safety presentation to students or groups when requested.

"Stranger Danger" Presentations

Sergeant Bluff Police Department officers have done presentations on "stranger danger" with the School Resource Officers and other officers with preschools.

The Woodbury County Sheriff's Department has stated that they are available to give a presentation on "stranger danger" upon request by a school or a group. On average, they give 2-3 presentations county-wide a year.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Program

The Woodbury County Sheriff's Department partners with Mercy Medical Center and visits smaller communities in the county during the summer months to put on a bicycle and pedestrian safety program for children in the community. The Sheriff's Department and Mercy hold a bicycle rodeo, fit

and provide helmets, and teach participants about bicycle and pedestrian safety. On average, 120-150 kids county-wide are reached annually through this program.

Walk to School Day

The school district and Mercy Medical Center have organized a Walk to School Day event for the past few years. This year's event took place on October 5, 2011 and had excellent participation. Students walking to school were given t-shirts, granola bars, and coloring books that outlined safety tips. Along with the event, a curriculum was taught to students about the benefits of using active modes of transportation, as well as how to do so safely. On the day of the event, students are encouraged to walk to school to apply what they are taught, and for a hands-on learning experience.



Annual Kids Safety Fair

Mercy Medical Center and St. Luke's Regional Medical Center holds a Kids Safety Fair annually in May. Organizations are invited to house a booth at the Longlines Recreation Center in downtown Sioux City and pass along safety information to attendees. Topics on bicycle and pedestrian safety are covered during the fair.

News Articles

The Sergeant Bluff Police Chief has put together an article on bicycle and pedestrian safety that was published in the local paper.

Albrecht's Cycle Shop

Upon request from companies or organizations, Albrecht's Cycle Shop will visit different locations and help with fitting children's helmets properly and inspecting children's bicycles to alert parents of a potentially unsafe issue with the bicycle to have corrected.

Obstacles and Deficiencies

Below is a list of obstacles and deficiencies regarding education in the schools and in the community.

Educating the Community

Disseminating information community-wide and reaching motorists that travel near schools is difficult. There are many issues to cover including bicycle and pedestrian safety, traffic safety, health and environmental benefits, etc. Efforts should be made to reach the traveling public in various formats.

Classroom Time

Teachers have limited time and resources to devote ample time to educating students on bicycle and pedestrian safety.

Funding

While there are programs available for funds to assist in education programs, there is a lot of demand for those funds.

Crossing Guard Education

Currently, the Sergeant Bluff-Luton Community School District does not have a formal crossing guard education program. All of the crossing guards are trusted staff from the schools.

Recommended Education Projects

Based on current activities being done within the schools and community and the obstacles and deficiencies noted above, a list of recommended projects has been developed.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Education Event (Spring)

Between 2006 and 2010, all bicycle and pedestrian accidents occurred between the end of March and the beginning of October. When the weather starts to warm up and kids are getting their bicycles out, this would be an opportune time to teach children about traffic safety rules and how to safely bicycle and walk to school or throughout the community. Ideally, this event could take place during Physical Education class by teaching children proper maintenance to their bicycle and how to correctly wear safety equipment. An event could coincide with Bike to Work Week in May.

Bicycle Rodeo

Again, it's vital to educate children and adults on the importance of bicycle safety, particularly in the spring months when bicycling becomes more prominent. A good time to do a bicycle rodeo is during the annual Kids Safety Fair. Opportunities Unlimited - an organization that provides residential rehabilitation services for individuals who have sustained a traumatic brain injury, a spinal cord injury, or other physical disability - expressed an interest in potentially putting together a bicycle rodeo for the Safety Fair. Having many organizations involved in a bicycle rodeo would make the event well rounded and give both children and adults plenty of information on how to keep kids safe while bicycling.

District-wide Crossing Guard Education Program

The Iowa Bicycle Coalition has developed a Crossing Guard Training Program based on the Florida Crossing Guard Training.¹ The Iowa Bicycle Coalition travels around to state providing the training, which is geared toward adult crossing guards and school officials. The training covers topics such as, how to recognize and deal with hazards, law and traffic control devices, what to do in case of an

¹ Iowa Safe Routes to School: Crossing Guard Training http://guide.saferoutesinfo.org/case_studies/education.cfm

emergency, and others. The training is a one-day event that begins at 9 AM and ends at 4 PM. More information can be found at: <http://iowasaferoutes.org/crossingguard>.

Regular News Articles and Other PSAs

The news article on pedestrian and bicycle safety should continue to be published regularly to remind drivers of safe driving techniques. Other PSAs, such as flyers, signs, or newsletters can reach additional drivers in the Sergeant Bluff-Luton School District area.

Development of Safe Routes Maps

Developing Safe Routes maps so that children are aware of the safest and most efficient route to school is necessary. Based on the parent survey results, the top concerns that kept parents from allowing their children to walk and bike to school amount of traffic along route. The Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) along with the community should develop a map of the safest routes to school for the children based on the following criteria:

- Sidewalk on at least one side of the street if it's a through street and not a dead-end;
- Sidewalk conditions – use sidewalks that meet city code;
- Crosswalks that are clearly painted and visible to motorists;
- Traffic signals; and
- Low Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT).

The above criteria along with local knowledge of potential dangers should be used to identify the safest routes to school for students.

Safe Routes to School Link on Sergeant Bluff-Luton Community School District Webpage

While there is a plethora of Safe Routes to School information readily available on the internet, it would be beneficial for the Safe Routes to School Plan to be linked to the Sergeant Bluff-Luton Community School District website. Additional links and information should be on the website as well so that Safe Routes to School information is easily accessible for parents who are utilizing the school district's website.

Safe Routes to School Assembly

As noted above in the current education activities section, there are many organizations that are presenting information on bicycle and pedestrian safety as well as various other safety topics. Most of these programs are done on a request basis. Schools should take advantage of these opportunities and set a goal to hold two assemblies per year. These could be done in September/October, before Walk to School Day, and in May in conjunction with Bike to Work Week.

Driver's Education

Drivers are instructed to share the road with bicycles and pedestrians during driver's education.² In general, drivers should give enough room to bicycles and yield to both pedestrians and bicyclists when

² Iowa DOT: Driver's License Manual <http://www.iowadot.gov/mvd/ods/dlmanual/section3.pdf#page=13>

in doubt. Yet, the behavior of bicyclists and pedestrians is often very different. Under Iowa law, bicycles have the same rights and responsibilities as motor vehicles on the road, so experienced bicyclists will often ride in the street with traffic.³ However, child bicyclists are not likely to be as predictable as experienced riders. Child bicyclists are more likely to behave like a pedestrian by riding on the sidewalk and crossing the road at crosswalks. Child pedestrians are also much less likely to exhibit predictable behavior than adults. Therefore, drivers should be better educated about how to drive near locations where children are present (schools, playgrounds, etc.). One such program occurred in Dorset County, England, where parents are encouraged to spend an hour with an experienced driving instructor that gives defensive driving suggestions with consideration to child pedestrians and bicyclists.⁴

Got a Brain? Get a Helmet!

Opportunities Unlimited in Sioux City, with permission, has tailored this Alberta, Canada program for the Sioux City Schools. It is a grant funded program that does receive private donations as well. The curriculum is given to the school counselor who in turn presents it to the second graders at the school. After the program has been presented, the students are asked to do an essay about bike safety and maintenance from which winners are chosen to receive a new helmet. On average, Opportunities Unlimited provides four helmets per class. During the spring of 2011, 250 helmets were passed out. The program is followed up by an assembly to review the curriculum where the winners are announced and students learn a bicycle safety song. The program is to help prevent brain injuries and to dismantle the stigma that wearing a helmet “isn’t cool.” The program teaches kids how to properly wear their helmets and encourages them to personalize their helmets with stickers. Opportunities Unlimited provides information and activities to other programs such as Beyond the Bell and Girls Inc. Currently the program is only in Sioux City but Opportunities Unlimited is hoping to expand it to a Tri-State level in the next couple of years. Funding is an issue since helmets can be costly.

³ Iowa Bicycle Coalition: Iowa Bicycle Laws <http://www.iowabicyclecoalition.org/bikelaws>

⁴ Safe Routes to School Guide: Education http://guide.saferoutesinfo.org/case_studies/education.cfm