



Introduction to the Active Routes to School Project

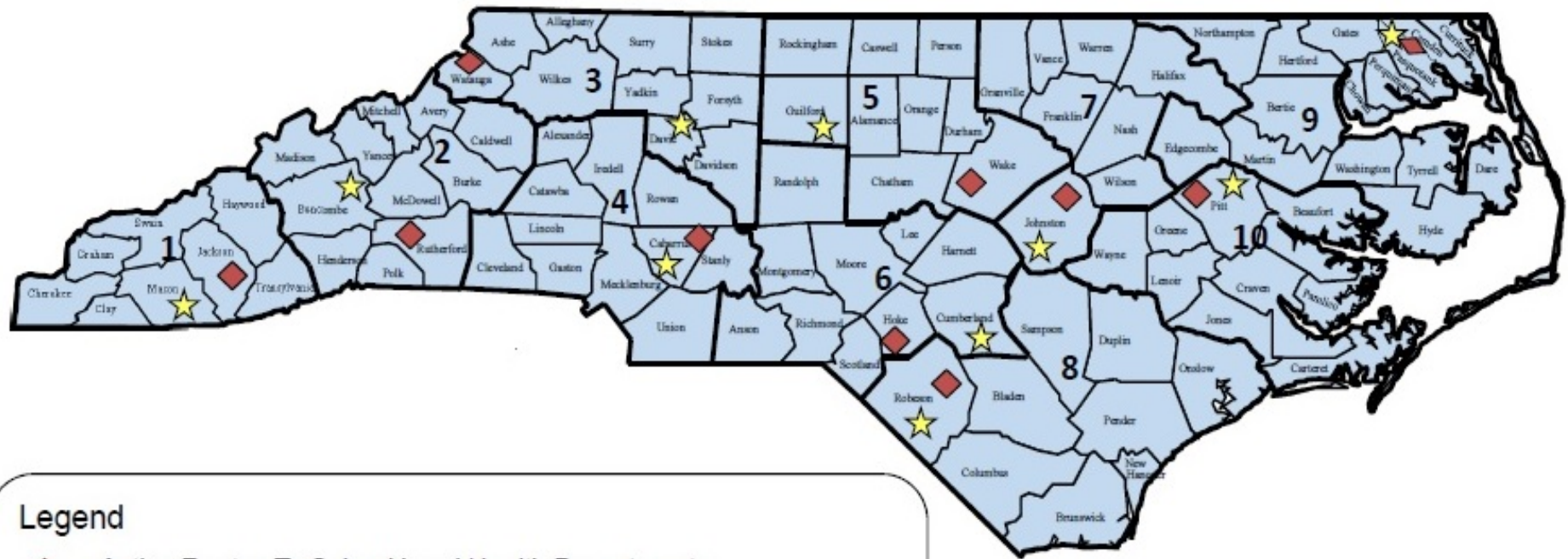
Jennifer Delcourt,
Region 5 Coordinator



ARTS – A Unique Partnership



Active Routes to School Regions



Legend

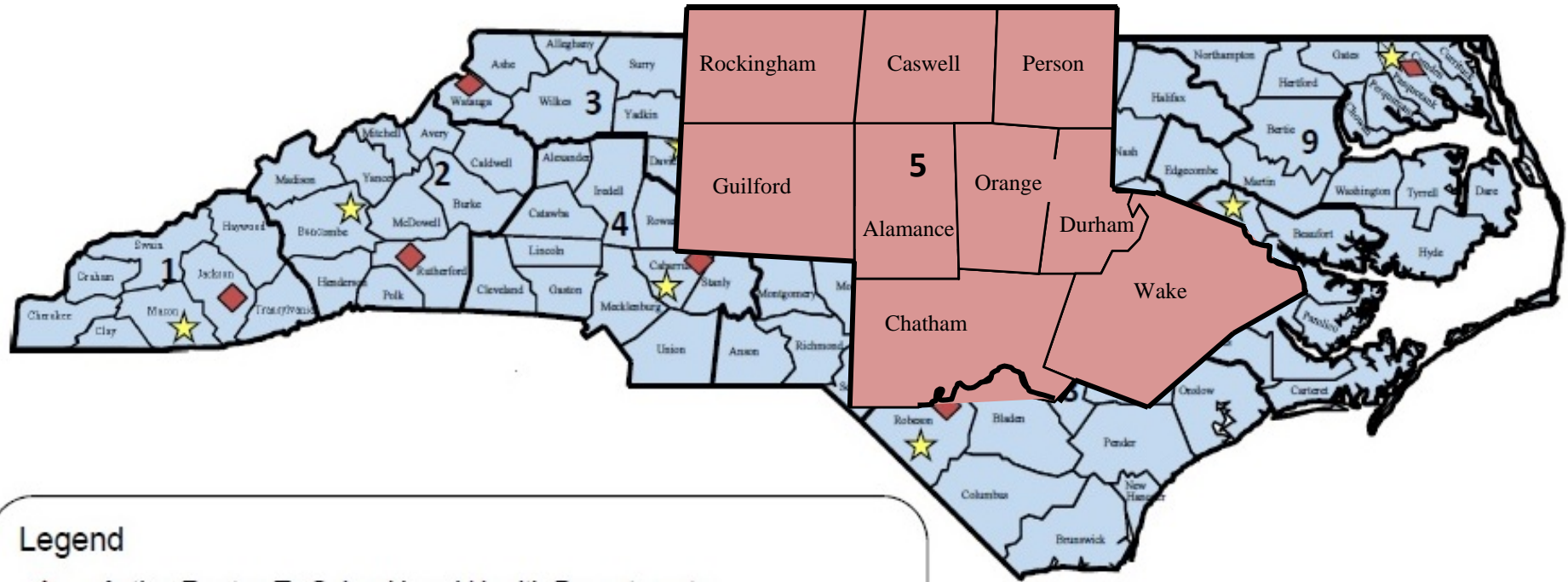
- Active Routes To School Lead Health Departments
- Community Transformation Grant Project Lead Health Departments
- Counties
- Regions

Last updated: 04/21/14



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Active Routes to School Regions



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What is Active Routes to School?

Partnership

- NC Department of Transportation and NC Division of Public Health
- Administered through local NC health departments in 10 regions

Alignment

- NC Safe Routes to School initiatives
- Community Transformation Grant Project partnerships
- Local, regional and state community safety and health initiatives

Timing

- Three year project, 2013-2016



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Goal of Active Routes to School

Increase the number of elementary and middle school students who **safely** walk and/or bike to school.



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Why focus on Walking and Biking to School?



Image: Provided by Joel Cranford

- Fewer kids walk or bike to school

<u>1969</u>	<u>2009</u>
48% walked or biked	13% walked or biked
12% driven	44% driven

(U.S. DOT, 2009)

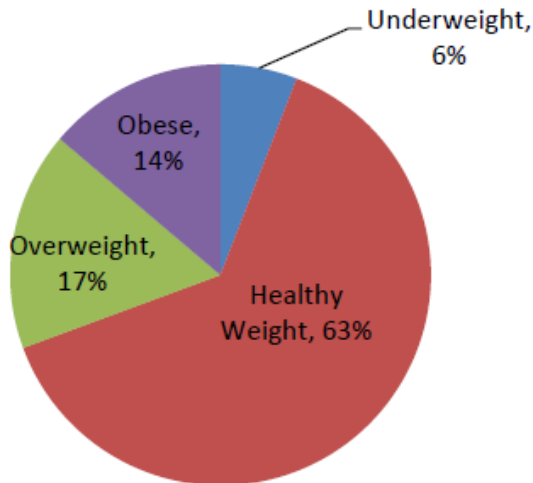
- 15% of NC children ages 5-17 live within 1 mile of their school
- 34% live within 2 miles, however...
- Only 4%** walk or bike to school. (*CHAMP, 2011*)
- Parents driving their children to school account for up to 25% of morning rush hour traffic. (*Parisi Associates, 2003; Morris, 2001*)



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NC Child Health Statistics

North Carolina Children ages 10-17, •
by Weight Status ²



Weight status based on BMI-for-age percentile

Childhood obesity is putting today's youth on a course to potentially be the first generation to live shorter, less healthy lives than their parents.

- North Carolina has the **23rd highest** childhood obesity rate in the nation.¹
- Nearly **one out of three** (31%) children ages 10-17 in North Carolina is overweight or obese.²
- Nearly **one out of three** (32%) children ages 2-4 who participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) in North Carolina is overweight or obese.³



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Wake County Child Injury: Leading Causes

1. MVC Traffic-Occupant
2. Assault
3. MVC Traffic-Pedestrian
4. MVC Traffic-Pedestrian
5. Falls
6. Unintentional
7. Suffocation
8. Burns
9. Struck By or Against
10. Natural/Environmental
11. Factors
12. Bicycle Injury/Crashes



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Benefits of Walking and Biking to School

Children

- Improves health – decreased obesity and asthma-related events
- Teaches fundamental safety skills
- Increases sense of freedom and responsibility

School / Community

- Improves the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists
- Provides cost savings by reducing need for “hazard” busing
- Benefits the local economy by funding construction projects

Environment

- Improves air quality by reducing vehicle emissions
- Reduces traffic congestion near schools



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Active Routes to School Activities

We work with partners in our communities to increase:

1) Awareness about the importance of Safe Routes to School

Possible Activities:

- Bike to School Day (May 7)
- Walk to School Day (Oct 8)
- School presentations



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Active Routes to School Activities

We work with partners in our communities to increase:

2) Programs that encourage walking and biking to school

Possible Activities:

- Walking School Bus
- Bicycle Trains
- Walk-at-School Programs
- Park and Walk
- Classroom activities and curriculum (Let's Go NC!)



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Active Routes to School Activities

We work with partners in our communities to increase:

3) The amount of trainings on how to implement Safe Routes to School

Possible Activities:

- SRTS Program and Five E's trainings
- Crossing Guard trainings
- Bike rodeos and other youth-focused safety trainings



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Active Routes to School Activities

We work with partners in our communities to increase:

4) The number of local policies that support biking and walking to school and increased physical activity

Possible Activities:

- *School walking and biking policies*
- *School early arrival and departure policies*
- *Shared use of facilities*



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Active Routes to School Activities

We work with partners in our communities to increase:

5) The number of changes to sidewalks, cross walks and safety features near schools

Possible Activities:

- *Identify opportunities for infrastructure improvements*



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What You Can Do

- Ask/talk to your schools about Safe Routes to School
- Help plan Bike/Walk to School Day events
- Document the need for infrastructure improvements
- Volunteer as a crossing guard
- Coordinate a bike rodeo or teach a safety workshop
- Advocate for Safe Routes to School in your community
- Celebrate existing programs and successes



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Thank you!

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A lifetime of being active can begin on the way to school.