

NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Lawrence Safe Routes to School community meeting set for Jan. 14

(Lawrence, KS) – The Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department in conjunction with Lawrence Public Schools, the City of Lawrence and the Lawrence-Douglas County Metropolitan Planning Organization will host a community meeting Jan. 14 to discuss the results of Lawrence’s first data collection about walking and biking to and from school.

The meeting will be from 3:30 p.m. to 5 p.m. in the West Middle School cafeteria, 2700 Harvard Road. The Health Department will present the data it collected in fall 2014 in regards to whether children are biking and walking to school, and what factors contribute to parent and student decisions about walking and biking to school. As part of the data collecting process:

- 18 public and private elementary and middle schools participated
- More than 1,600 parent surveys were submitted
- 350 classrooms provided student travel tallies

After the presentation, community members will have the opportunity to provide feedback and ask questions. School teams also will meet to work on the next steps for their Safe Routes to School plans.

“We live in a culture where children walking or biking to school is no longer the norm, but what we are learning is parents and children want the opportunity to walk or bike to school,” said Community Health Director Chris Tilden, of the Health Department. “There are just a lot of perceived barriers, primarily linked to safety and convenience. By launching a Safe Routes to School program, we’re looking to tackle those barriers.”

Denise Johnson, Lawrence School District wellness coordinator, said the Safe Routes to School program is part of the solution to increase physical activity and improve unsafe walking and bicycling conditions. “Helping to set healthy goals for students and staff has been a goal of the district. Walking and biking to school can contribute to lifelong habits and can help to incorporate physical activity into daily routines. Partnering with the community allows us to expand that goal.”

To learn more about the Lawrence Safe Routes to School initiative, visit:
ldhealth.org/safe-routes-school.