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NEWS RELEASE
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Lawrence parents can help guide planning for safe walking, biking routes to school

LAWRENCE — Lawrence parents have an opportunity in coming weeks to help a group of community partners identify ways to improve walking and biking routes to school for elementary and middle school students.

The Be Active Safe Routes program has opened its 14-question [online parent survey](#) to give parents the opportunity to share their school transportation experiences. The survey information will be used at a Nov. 14 open house for Safe Routes planning, which is another opportunity to provide input.

“We all want the best for every child, and biking and walking to school is beneficial to personal health, educational outcomes and the environment,” said Sarah Hartsig, Community Health Planner for the Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department. “The survey and the November open house are the chances for parents to share their own experiences with us and help us find solutions to improve the experience and opportunity for all students to be able to walk and bike to school.”

The Douglas County Community Health Plan includes a goal to increase the percent of children who walk or bike to school from 18.4 % to 20% by 2023.

In Lawrence and Douglas County, the Be Active Safe Routes program is a comprehensive approach to make neighborhoods safe and accessible for everyone. In addition to improving safety, Be Active Safe Routes benefits communities by reducing traffic congestion and air pollution, increasing the opportunity to be physically active and building community cohesion. The program includes partners from across Douglas County, including Lawrence, Eudora and Baldwin City.

The survey is available [via this link](#) — in English, Spanish and Arabic — on the [Be Active Safe Routes website](#). Schools will also be distributing information to parents about how to take the survey. Parents are asked to complete the survey by Friday, Oct. 25.

As the second opportunity for engagement in the process, the Be Active Safe Routes open house will be 6 p.m., Thursday, Nov. 14, at the Flory Building of the Douglas County Fairgrounds, 2120 Harper St. in Lawrence. The survey information will guide discussion at the open house and be utilized in the City of Lawrence’s citywide Safe Routes to School Plan to set priorities for implementation.

“To help us form a good plan that works to give every child access to a safe walking and biking route to school and also that helps strengthen our neighborhoods, we need responses and data from as many parents as possible in our community who live this every day,” Hartsig said.