**FHWA Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation University Course**

**Module: 17 – School Travel**

**Assignment: School Policy Briefs**

**PROMPT**

While national trends show that school travel patterns have become increasingly car-centric over the last 50 years, policies that influence school travel patterns vary from state to state and even within the same state. This assignment encourages students to explore the policies that may affect school travel behavior, and particularly walking and biking to school, in their own area.

In small groups or individually, students will research policies and standards that may affect school travel in their area. Students may summarize material in a memo format or short oral presentations to the class. **Depending on local context, instructors may assign students to research some or all of the following topics**:

1. **School siting.** What guidelines apply to school siting in your area? Are there minimum acreage requirements? Requirements for roadway infrastructure (e.g., driveways, parking lots, signals)? Who participates in school siting decisions? Consider both local- and state-level policies. Consider asking students to look up the locations of the area’s newest public schools.
   * *Possible sources:* local school district and/or board of education, State DOT, state governing body for K-12 education, local land use ordinance, local news agency
   * Example: School Siting Best Practices <https://www.saferoutespartnership.org/state/bestpractices/schoolsiting>
   * Example: Oregon School Siting Handbook (2005) <https://www.oregon.gov/lcd/Publications/schoolsitinghandbook_2005.pdf>
2. **School area street design.** What engineering and design guidance applies specifically to the transportation network around schools? Are there school zone speed limits? If so, how are they determined? Special signage or pavement markings? Wayfinding elements or paths designed specifically for children? Signal timing adjustments (longer walking phases)? ADA compliance?
   * *Possible sources:* State DOT design guidelines, local design guidelines
   * Note: If students are unable to find specific policy guidance for their area, they may wish to conduct desktop research using a satellite map or street viewing program to review local schools for infrastructure including sidewalks, crosswalks, pedestrian signals, school zone pavement markings, flashing beacons, and bike lanes or paths.
3. **School transportation/busing.** How does your area determine the area for which students qualify for school bus transportation (area without busing may be call the “walk zone” or “no-transport zone”)? How does your area determine whether to provide hazard busing to students within the walk zone? Consider both local- and state-level policies.
   * *Possible sources:* local school district or board of education, state governing body for K-12 education, state legislature.
4. **Safe Routes to School.** Does your state have a Safe Routes to School program? Does your local area participate in the state SRTS program? Does your municipality, school district, or region have a Safe Routes to School Program? Describe participation and programs, if applicable.
   * *Possible sources:* National Center for Safe Routes to School (<http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/>); Safe Routes to School National Partnership (<https://www.saferoutespartnership.org/>); State DOT, Metropolitan Planning Organization; county health department; local departments including planning, engineering, or police.
   * Look up whether area schools participate in Walk/Bike to School Day at <http://www.walkbiketoschool.org/> (click “See Who’s Signed Up”).
   * SRTS State Policy Best Practices: <https://www.saferoutespartnership.org/state/bestpractices>