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San Francisco Celebrates Record Number of Students Walking to School on International Walk and Roll to School Day

San Francisco - On International Walk and Roll to School Day, as over one hundred E.R. Taylor elementary school students formed “walking school buses” to wind their way through Portola and reach school before the bell rang, they were also setting themselves up for better grades later in the day.

Earlier this year, a [study](#) in the Netherlands confirms what many parents and educators are well aware of—kids need to be active in order to settle down. More than that, the study found that kids that walk, roll and bike to school increase their concentration by up to four hours, or the majority of the school day.

E.R. Taylor embraced walking and rolling to school with weekly “walking school buses,” and a culture of walking champions at all levels, from 6 years to 60. This commitment to walking has paid off in the classroom. The school was recognized by Supervisor Campos for its many academic achievement awards, including the Title I Academic Achievement Award, National Blue Ribbon School Award, and California Distinguished Schools Award.

"The dedication of our faculty, the focus on the whole child, the support from our families and the relationships we build with our students has contributed to the success of our school's accomplishments," said Principal Marlene Callejas.

“While walking, my son, Liam and I can spend more time together, talking and connecting with each other. That helps prepare my son with the confidence to begin his day, making him ready to learn in school,” says E.R. Taylor parent, Sandy Chow. “Walk to School Day Rocks!”

At E.R. Taylor, 52% of the students live within one mile of school and 38% walk, according to the San Francisco Department of Public Health (SFDPH). Citywide, 42% of all elementary school students live within walking distance of school, but only 26% of students walk. SFDPH works with 15 elementary schools in its Safe Routes to School program to encourage walking and biking, as one important way to increase children’s daily physical activity. As a result of the program’s success, it will expand to 40 schools next school year.

Today, a record 13,000 students walked or rolled to school with their families in San Francisco at 76 schools across the city, nearly a 40% increase from last year. Check here a complete list of schools: <http://bit.ly/WalkandRolltoSchoolDay2013Schools>.

“I’m proud to be here at E.R. Taylor to support walking to school, not just for today, but for every day,” said Supervisor David Campos. “Exercise is not only crucial for physical and mental

health, it also helps young people succeed academically by improving their ability to concentrate.”

“International Walk and Roll to School Day celebrates the hard work that schools and families do all year-round to support walking, rolling, and bicycling to school as part of the Safe Routes to Schools program,” said Nicole Schneider, executive director of Walk San Francisco, which helped develop the recently adopted Pedestrian Strategy. “Walk SF works to ensure that the Pedestrian Strategy complements these efforts by fixing the city’s most dangerous streets, so all families can safely walk and roll to school, muni, the grocery store, and the park.”

“I am pleased to be a part of today’s celebration encouraging students to take the healthiest mode of transportation to school,” said Senator Mark Leno, D-San Francisco. “Walking and rolling is a perfect way to keep the mind and body fit. It is good for our air quality, our communities, and it gives young people the opportunity to experience our wonderful city in a new way, outside the confines of a vehicle. Remember, safety first.”

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Walk San Francisco (WalkSF.org) and its members are making San Francisco a more welcoming place for everyone to walk. Walk SF speaks up for the safety and priority of pedestrians, and works to reclaim streets as shared public space.

International Walk to School Day encourages the creation of safe routes to school, enhances kids’ health by encouraging physical activity, reduces traffic, and protects the environment.

The San Francisco Department of Public Health is the lead agency for the San Francisco Safe Routes to School Partnership and works with organizations to implement the federally funded **Safe Routes to School** program to 15 elementary schools. For more information, visit www.sfsaferoutes.org.