



City of New Bedford  
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## P R E S S   R E L E A S E

### **New Bedford Public Schools Celebrate Walk & Bike to School Day**

**New Bedford, Massachusetts**— Wednesday, May 6<sup>th</sup> students and teachers from throughout New Bedford will participate in the 5th Annual Massachusetts Walk/Bike to School Day. This year's highlighted school is Casimir Pulaski Elementary in the City's North End, where the Principal, along with other supporters, and city officials will gather in front of the school at 7:40am to commence the walk.

Other participating schools include, Roosevelt Middle School, Betsy B. Winslow, Lincoln, Ashley, Carlos Pacheco, Renaissance, John Avery Parker, Casimir Pulaski, Hayden McFadden, and John Hannigan Elementary.

Pulaski will also be kicking off their brand new Walking School Bus which allows students living along a determined route across from the school to walk together to school each morning in a safe, chaperoned environment.

Since initially celebrating Walk/Bike to School Day in 2010, a number of schools have included more wellness activities in their curriculum, increased recess time, discussed pedestrian safety, and continued to encourage physical activity. The installation of more than 160 bike racks this past fall at all New Bedford schools has also increased the number of children biking to school each day.

Participation in these flagship events continues to increase each year. This past month, Parker Elementary School successfully kicked off their walking school bus which currently has 14 participants, and this year Roosevelt Elementary has over 100 students signed up to participate in Walk/Bike to School Day.

Earlier this year, Mass in Motion New Bedford (MiM NB) surveyed all the schools in the district to determine how many students are walking and biking to school and to see if there are specific neighborhoods that would benefit from walking school

buses, or bike clubs. Through these surveys, the support of the New Bedford Public Schools, MiM NB, and Safe Routes to School, a number of schools are hoping to begin walking school buses by next fall. MiM NB is hoping to send out a follow-up survey next year to track changes and improvements, and continue to improve planning.

Walk and Bike to School Day is a collaboration of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health's Mass in Motion Program and the Massachusetts Department of Transportation's Safe Routes to School Program, which is federally funded by the Federal Highway Division. The program is designed to create safer streets, promote physical activity, and build sustainable environments in over 170 communities throughout Massachusetts. Mass in Motion works with communities across the Commonwealth to promote healthy eating and active living for youth and adults.

The Safe Routes to School campaign works with cities and other organizations to build infrastructure such as bike paths and sidewalks, and to deliver education and awareness to drivers about driving without distractions, slowing down, and respecting pedestrians and cyclists.

For additional local information, please contact Julia Kantner 774-271-1314.

**For additional information, please visit these websites:**

Mass in Motion	<a href="http://www.mass.gov/massinmotion">www.mass.gov/massinmotion</a>
Massachusetts Safe Routes to School	<a href="http://www.mass.gov/massdot/saferoutes">www.mass.gov/massdot/saferoutes</a>
Walk to School Day in the USA	<a href="http://www.walkbiketoschool.org">www.walkbiketoschool.org</a>
National Center for Safe Routes to School	<a href="http://www.saferoutesinfo.org">www.saferoutesinfo.org</a>

**About Mass in Motion:**

Mass in Motion is a statewide movement led by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health that helps local communities increase opportunities for residents to eat better and move more in the places they live, learn, work, and play. The Mass in Motion Municipal Wellness and Leadership Program is made up of 33 local programs representing 52 cities and towns. These Mass in Motion communities receive technical assistance and grant funding to make changes that turn the healthy choice into the easy choice for community members.

**About the Massachusetts Safe Routes to School Program:**

The Massachusetts Safe Routes to School program is brought to you by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT), with funds from the Federal Highway Division. Safe Routes to School models of inclusiveness emphasize a collaborative, community-focused approach that fosters mutual partnerships between advocacy groups, law enforcement, education leaders and public health departments which all work together to promote safer routes for children to get to school. The program serves over 600 elementary and middle schools in 170 communities throughout the Commonwealth. School Partners receive year-round pedestrian and bicycle safety education instruction as well as engagement initiatives tailored to meet each school's physical fitness, safety and environmental priorities. For more information, visit [www.mass.gov/massdot/saferoutes](http://www.mass.gov/massdot/saferoutes)

The Safe Routes to School program is a key component of the Healthy Transportation Compact, an initiative of the Patrick-Murray Administration's historic transportation reform law. The Healthy Transportation Compact is a ground-breaking collaboration between the departments of transportation, health and human services, and energy and environmental affairs that is designed to promote best practices, increase efficiency, and achieve positive health outcomes through the coordination of land use, transportation and public health policy.

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