

# Safe Routes to School: Why Policy Matters



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Technical Assistance Director





# Who is in the room?



- 
- State
  - District
  - City
  - County
  - Nonprofit
  - Community member

- 
- Planners
  - Transportation personnel
  - Public health
  - Lawyers
  - Parents

# Poll



**How familiar are you  
with Safe Routes to School?**

- A. Safe Routes to *What*?**
- B. I understand the basic concept**
- C. I've participated in Safe Routes to School programs in my community**
- D. I'm deeply involved in putting Safe Routes to School in action**

# **Intro to the National Partnership**





Safe Routes  
to School  
**National  
Partnership**

## About the National Partnership

We are a nonprofit organization that improves the quality of life for kids and communities by promoting **active, healthy lifestyles, equity,** and safe infrastructure that **supports bicycling and walking.**

# What We Do



- Improve quality of life for kids, families, and communities
- Advance policy change
- Create support for safe, healthy, active communities
- Share our deep expertise





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# Sharing Our Deep Expertise



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## Shared Use

Increasing Access to Physical Activity Opportunities

Childhood obesity has more than tripled in children and adolescents in the past 30 years.<sup>1</sup> Low-income communities and communities of color tend to be adversely affected by obesity and have fewer adequate places for children and families to be physically active.<sup>2</sup> In many communities, schools are centrally located and have gymnasiums, playgrounds, athletic fields,

SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP

## A Primer for Safe Routes to School and Active Transportation Advocacy in the Denver Region



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KAISER PERMANENTE. thrive



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GREATER WASHINGTON DC

## Case Study

### Bicycling and Walking to School as a Community: Takoma Park, MD

The City of Takoma Park Safe Routes to School program won special recognition from the National Center Safe Routes to School James L. Oberstar

schools to request Safe Routes to School activities and keeps in regular contact with the schools. Regular communication establishes the relationship and allows Lucy to learn how best to fit Safe Routes to School programming into existing school



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## Technical Assistance To Get Kids Walking and Bicycling Through Community Scale Policy Strategies

### Utilize Our Expertise!

The Safe Routes to School National Partnership provides Technical Assistance based upon the specific needs of each city, county and/or school district seeking assistance.

For more than a decade Safe Routes to School programs have flourished across the country using the power of quality programming to raise awareness and change habits. Now, communities are boosting walking and bicycling to school and in daily life through sustainable, long-term policy change. The Safe Routes to School National Partnership can help your community or school district to build local leadership, partnerships and community support, establish walking and bicycling policies and programs that advance healthy, active lifestyles, and institutionalize ongoing funding and policy changes that support active transportation as a permanent part of your community's healthy future.

### Individualized Technical Assistance

Each community is unique. Through our individualized technical assistance we provide strategic support to local program and policy leaders via telephone calls and email correspondence on an as needed basis. We will listen to your needs, and our expert staff can help guide your policy change efforts. We can conduct webinars and conference presentations, provide best practices and case studies from around the country and the world, create model policies, assist with developing materials and action plans for grant applications, and help your community leverage additional funding for programs and infrastructure.

### Workshops

We can help you to produce and lead inspiring and effective Safe Routes to School and active transportation policy workshops, designed to get critical stakeholders thinking

about and invested in the big policy picture and community-wide Safe Routes to School efforts. These workshops can be combined with local site visits, customized presentations, participating in and/or leading stakeholder meetings, and/or conducting walkabouts at schools to assess infrastructure needs. We can also follow up with you by phone and email via individualized technical assistance to build upon the meetings with stakeholders, and to develop materials and action plans.

### Keynote Addresses

Sometimes community leaders need to be inspired by national experts. Our prominent and inspiring speakers bring best practices from around the country and the world, and an energy and charisma that will inspire positive change. The Safe Routes to School National Partnership can help turbo charge your community into action.

### Who We Are:

Our team has helped communities and school districts throughout the country to develop community-scale Safe Routes to School programs, partnerships and action plans that have resulted in new policies that support healthy and active communities.

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[www.saferroutespartnership.org](http://www.saferroutespartnership.org) | [Facebook.com/saferroutespartnership](https://facebook.com/saferroutespartnership) | [Twitter @SafeRoutesNW](https://twitter.com/SafeRoutesNW)

**Why Safe Routes to  
School?**



Do your kids (or the kids of friends or family) walk or bike to school? Did you?





Safe Routes  
to School  
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In 1969, nearly **50%** of  
all children walked or  
bicycled to school.

Today, just **13%** walk or  
bicycle.

**All** kids and communities  
deserve access to **safe,**  
**healthy streets** and  
opportunities for  
**physical activity.**





# Safe Routes to School addresses **many** problems

- Children's health and obesity
- Climate change
- Air pollution
- Dangers of street crime and violence
- Traffic injuries when walking & biking
- Economic – school bus costs, increased attendance, health care





## The Evidence Is In: Safe Routes to School Works

- Safe Routes to School programs lead to a **35-45% increase in walking and bicycling** to school
- Safe Routes to School initiatives result in a **45-75% decrease in pedestrian injuries** near school
- Kids who walk and bike are **more physically active, fitter, and have lower BMIs** than kids who don't





children in  
low income communities



**2x** as likely to walk or  
bicycle to school as



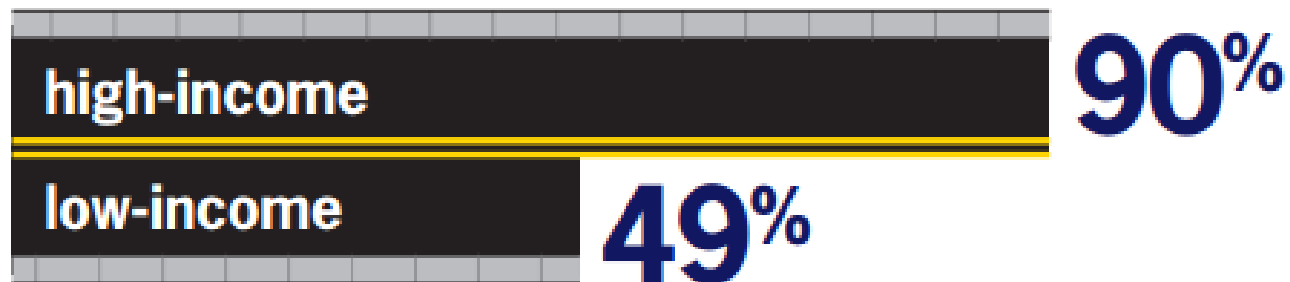
children in  
affluent communities

# Equity



# Disparities in Sidewalks

## Communities with Sidewalks on one or both sides of the street



**Why Policy?**

# Goal: Healthy, Thriving Kids and Communities





How do we change  
people's behavior?



How do we change  
people's behavior?

*Steer their decisions  
in the right direction*



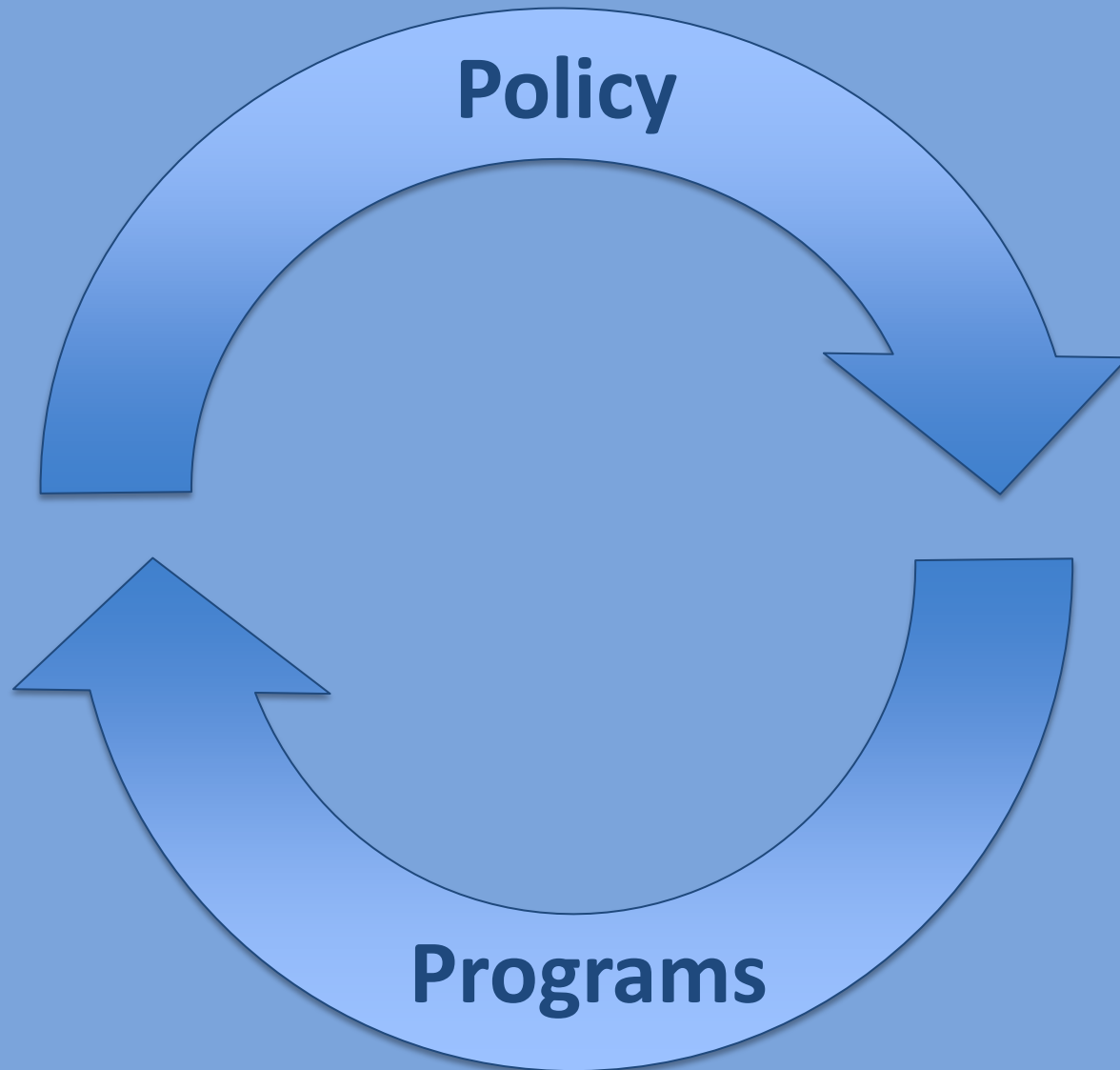
# What is a policy?

- a statement in writing
- binding
- sets out a general approach to be applied broadly

## Some examples

- School board policies
- Local or state laws
- Resolutions
- Zoning language
- Contracts

# Policy and Programs





# Let's play program or policy!

How can we increase/improve the bike racks at local schools through:

- Program?
- Policy?



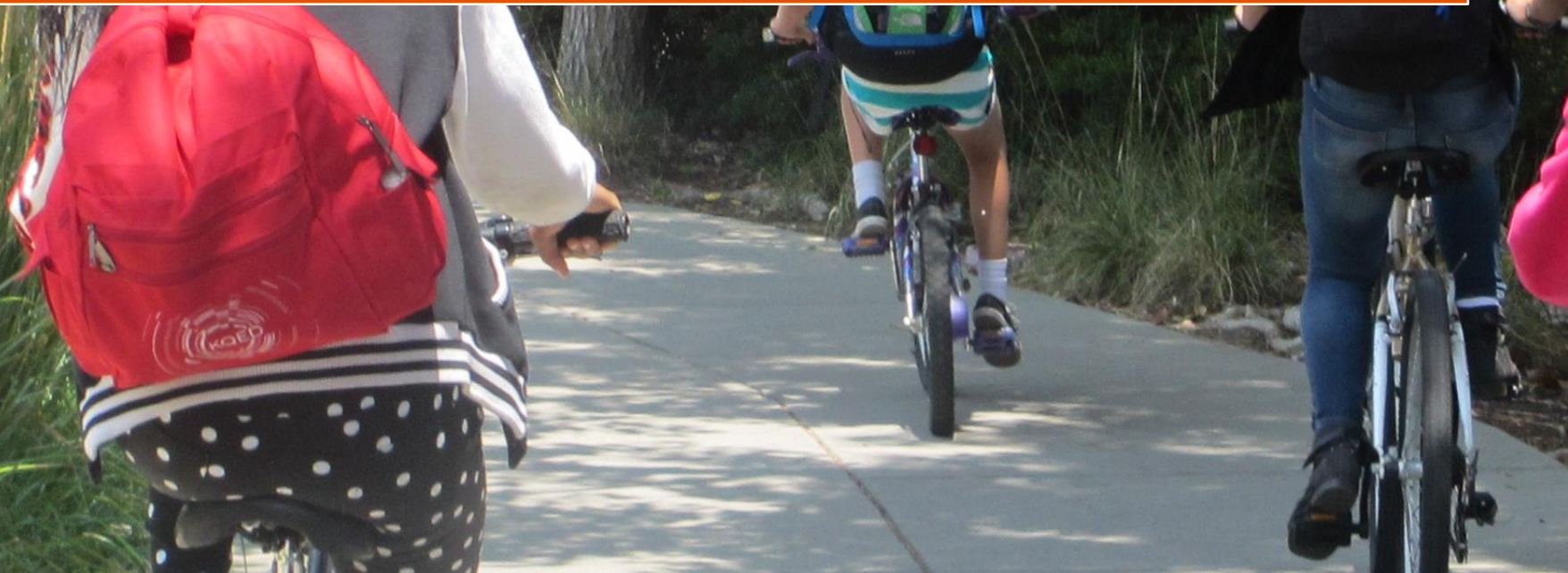
Why focus on policy?  
What are the benefits of  
policy change?



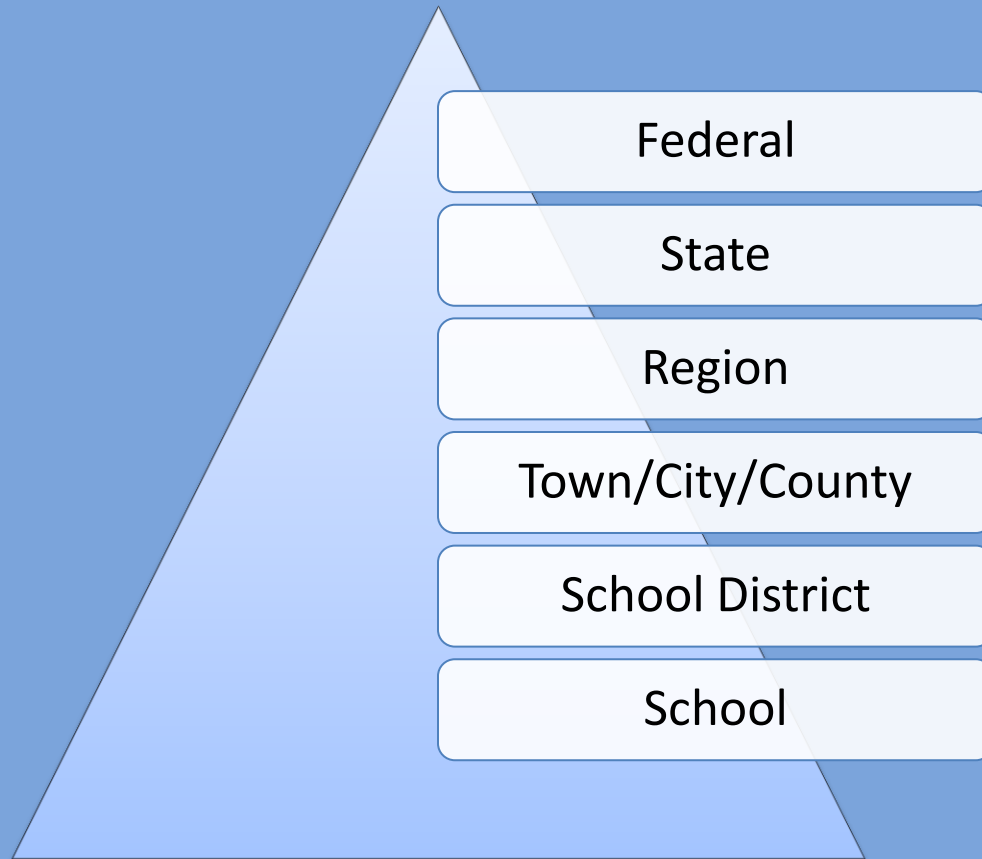
# What Are the Benefits of Policy Change?

Policy can:

- Institutionalize good ideas
- Reach more people
- Lead to more consistent implementation
- Create accountability and enforcement
- Establish relationships and responsibilities



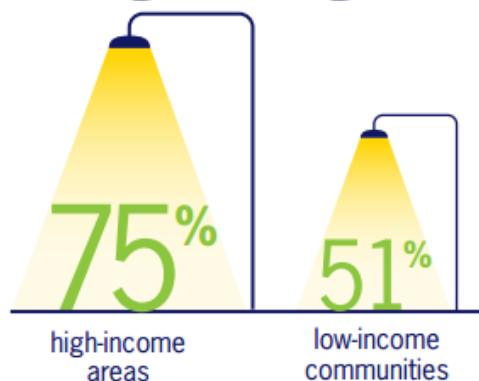
# Safe Routes to School Policies: Levels





# Using data & addressing disparities

## Streets with Lighting



40% fewer girls than boys walk and bicycle to school

The infographic displays 20 icons of people on bicycles arranged in two columns. The left column contains 10 blue icons representing boys, and the right column contains 6 pink icons representing girls. The difference of 4 icons represents the 40% gap.

Gender	Count (Icons)
Boys	10
Girls	6

**Collaboration**

# Safe Routes to School



# Safe Routes to School

- Geographical authority – Each needs to act on those areas of own jurisdiction
- Data – Each has data the other needs (re new developments, new schools, hazardous conditions, etc)
- Different perspectives – Elementary schooler, school release, versus moving vehicles and respecting needs of residents
- Access to different resources – Different \$, volunteers, police officers, expertise, etc.



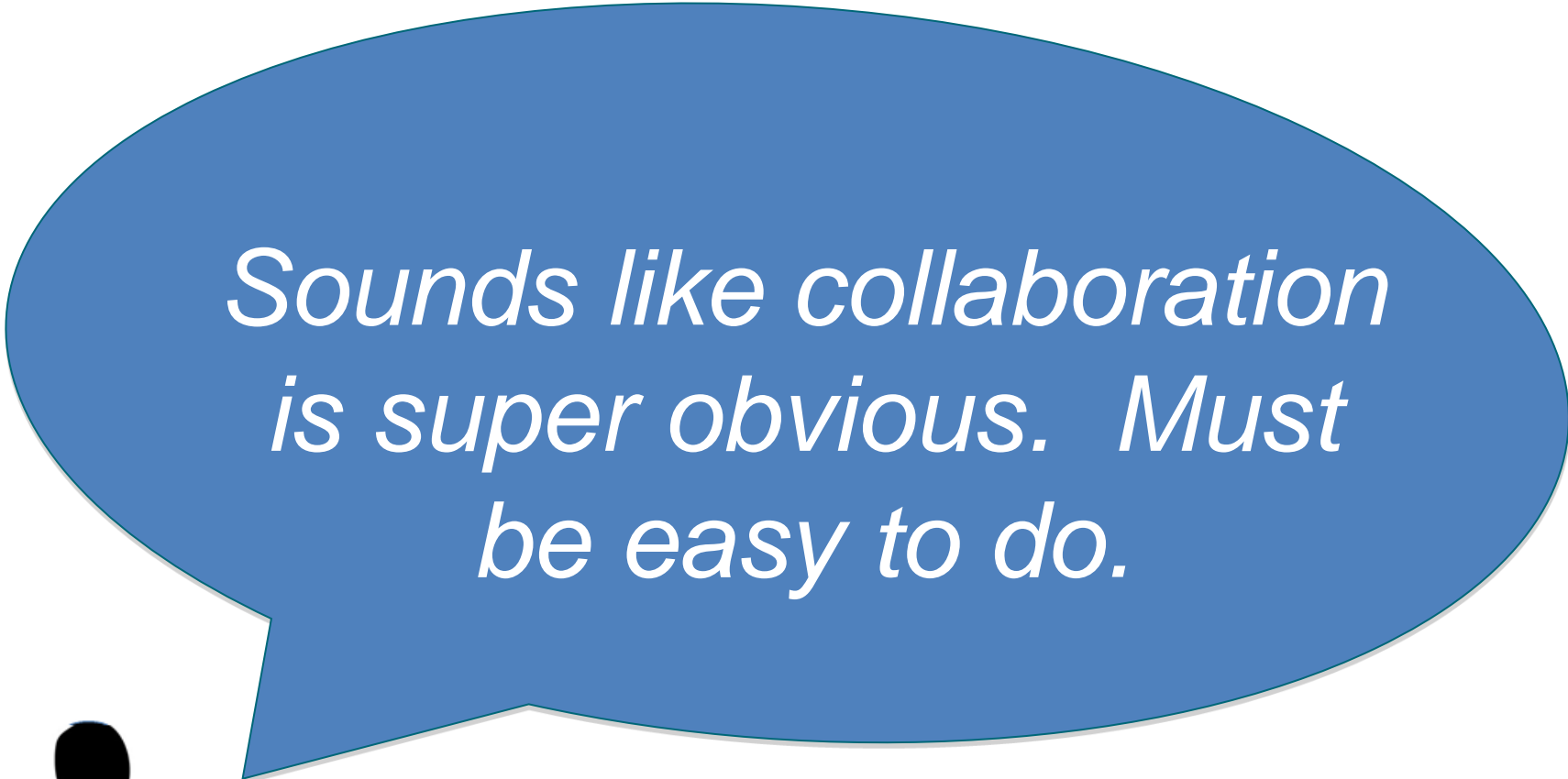
# Questions?



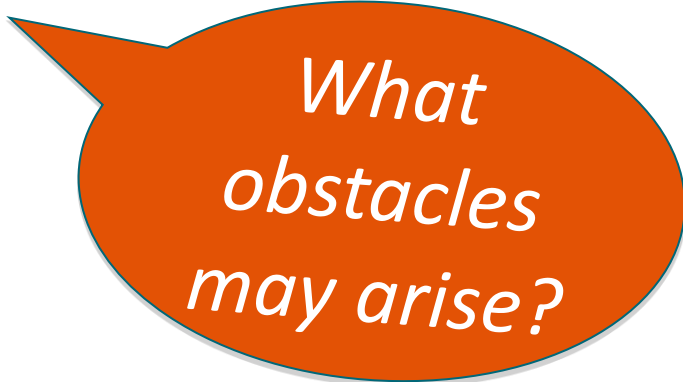


Activity





*Sounds like collaboration  
is super obvious. Must  
be easy to do.*



*What  
obstacles  
may arise?*

## *5 minute activity*

Quickly introduce yourself to people at your table. Then discuss:

- What barriers exist to collaboration between districts and cities or counties
- Ideas for overcoming barriers





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Become a Safe Routes to School National Partnership partner today – it's free and easy.  
[www.saferoutespartnership.org/about/join](http://www.saferoutespartnership.org/about/join)