



SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOLS: MARIN COUNTY



Kentfield Task Force

Meeting Notes

July 20, 2011

Present (9)

Wendi Kallins – Program Director for Safe Routes to School; Laura Kelly –Volunteer Liaison for Safe Routes to School; Billy Cameron – Vice Principal at Bacich Elementary School; Peter Zingg – Technology Director for Kentfield School District; Chris Reardon – California Highway Patrol; Katie Rice – Aide to County Supervisor Hal Brown; Amy Jones – Parent Leader at Bacich; Marnie Ganong –Parent Leader at Bacich; Heather McPhail – Parent Leader at Bacich.

Local construction project updates

Katie shared that the Ross Valley Sanitary District construction project will cause the Corte Madera creek side path to be closed through November, but there is hope that it will finish earlier. A detour is in place. Questions and comments should go to Randall Ishii- Engineer, Ross Valley Sanitary District at (415) 259-2949 ext 212.

It was also noted that the Doherty Drive construction project would still be in progress when school is back in session. Both construction projects are expected to impact the flow of Kentfield and Corte Madera traffic during the first two months of the school.

Bacich neighborhood map routes

Peter completed maps for the 6 neighborhood zones surrounding Bacich School. The maps will be placed on the Bacich School web site after the neighborhood captains

review and approve them. A link to the maps will also be placed on the Safe Routes to Schools Marin County website in the Bacich School section.

Billy shared that he prepared and sent out an email to parents on June 30th about the neighborhood divisions and data gathering process needed for families to connect in order to travel to school together. It was noted that incoming Kindergarten parents (new families to Bacich for 2011-2012) did not receive the e-mail. Billy will re-send the email in August and include new incoming Kindergarten families. Below is the content of the email that was sent on June 30, 2011:

Dear Kentfield Parent,

The Kentfield School District is excited to launch a new program to address traffic congestion and safety at our schools. The new Kentfield Safe Routes to School Plan will connect you with resources such as safe routes maps, schedules for walking and cycling and carpooling options customized by neighborhood.

Each Neighborhood will receive suggested route maps and have assigned at least one parent captain who will assist you in finding other parents to walk, bike or carpool together.

To select your neighborhood and/or to opt out of the program, log in to the PowerSchool Parent Portal using the following link and follow the 4 easy steps below:

<https://ps.kentfieldschools.org>

1. After logging in, click the "Registration" icon at the top of the page.
2. On the main Registration page, click the "Safe Routes to School" link.
3. Select or confirm your neighborhood in the drop-down menu
4. Click the Submit button.

Your neighborhood captain will be in touch later this summer to assist you in finding economical, green, fun and safe ways to travel to and from school.

Thank you for supporting & participating in our New Safe Routes to School Program!

Sincerely,



Mary Jo Pettegrew
Superintendent

William Cameron
Assistant Principal, Bacich

Jenny Walsh
Assistant Principal, Kent

Neighborhood captain(s) for the six neighborhood zones

The first step in contacting the neighborhood captains for the six Bacich neighborhoods (before school starts) is to distribute their neighborhood map for captains to review the suggested routes to and from Bacich. The goal is to confirm that each captain feels comfortable with the recommended biking/walking routes for their neighborhood, and that the routes are safe.

The next step is to extract contact information from the newly compiled database of families who live in their neighborhood zone. Each neighborhood captain will receive a list for their neighborhood which will include: 1) the name of the student attending Bacich and their grade level, 2) parent names, 3) e-mails, 4) phone number(s), and 5) home address.

A suggested date of August 20th to start distributing maps and family contact information to the neighborhood captains. Wendi added that having the captains recruit parents in their neighborhood who are willing to lead children to and from school is an important part of the neighborhood captain's job. The goal is to create green travel groups of walkers, bikers and carpools in each neighborhood.

Distribution of Back to School materials for Safe Routes to Schools:

Billy suggested three very important dates to tie-in the dissemination of Back to School materials at Bacich:

8/22 – Bacich hosts a potluck dinner for all new families at Bacich

8/23 – Back to School Night for Kindergarten and First Grade families

8/31 – Back to School Night for 2nd to 4th grades

Green and Blue parking lot assignments

A new strategy this year to help calm school traffic is to assign families to drop off and pick up their child at one of the two Bacich parking lots throughout the year. The Task Force has decided to name the two parking areas: The GREEN Lot and the BLUE Lot. The BLUE Lot is currently the main parking lot.

Families will be assigned one of the two lots based on which neighborhood they live. Signage will be developed for each lot. Parents will drop off their child and pick up at their designated lot every day. The new parking lot assignments are designed to decrease traffic congestion. The random drop off locations (in past years) to either lot has caused a constant back up of autos, which is stressful for parents.

Staggered dismissal was discussed as a potential problem in implementing the new green and blue lot assignments after school.

A total of 8 parents will be needed to staff each parking lot in the afternoon. Amy said she is concerned about a lack of volunteer parents needed to staff the two lots. Parents are needed to direct students, and sometimes caution drivers. Heather suggested recruiting parents to help out on Back to School night and publicize the fact that the new parking lot assignments will mean shorter wait lines for parents, and less car backup.

Wendi suggested engaging 4th grade students to serve as a Safety Patrol for the parking lots. Billy believes the 4th graders would be excited about the job and honored to have the position. This idea will be explored with the 4th grade teachers.

California Highway Patrol letter and the promotion of safe driving

Heather and Chris shared a copy of the CHP letter that will be distributed to all Kentfield parents in early August supporting the Safe Routes to Schools program, and encouraging parents to exercise due caution when driving in the Bacich School zone. A copy of the letter is attached (see CHP-letter.Aug.1.2011) which supports our Back to School education initiative. Efforts to have the Sherriff's department prepare a similar letter of support are being explored.

The Task Force talked about creating a ***Do's and Don'ts list*** regarding the promotion of good driver etiquette. This list could be publicized in many ways – emails, back-to-school night, student assemblies and posting a vinyl sign on campus which could be rotated to different locations/events. Katie mentioned that the list could also be posted in the Kent Woodlands newsletter, as well as in the Greenbrae neighborhood association newsletter too.

Katie mentioned that Supervisor Hal Brown's office would like to make a donation towards publicity efforts – signage, safety tips and a mailing regarding the Back to School push to educate safe driving and encourage green travel. A donation amount of \$1000 - \$1500 was suggested for marketing/communications.

Billy suggested discussing driving tips, neighborhood zones and parking lot assignments at the first day of school assembly with all the students. Wendi added that the children will help to reinforce key messages to their parents. Posting a master map of the neighborhoods would also be helpful on Back to School night in a central place for parents and children to learn their new neighborhood zone.

Promoting the neighborhood maps in the School Handbook was also mentioned as a task to be completed. The deadline for when the maps would need to be submitted for publication needs to be researched.

Task assignments were assigned at the end of the Task Force meeting:

Heather (and Wendi) -- will serve as the communications coordinator for the six neighborhood captains and provide them with guidance regarding getting started on our new program

Billy – will send out an email to all parents on August 15th and keep working on compiling the new database

Amy – will continue to serve as the SR2S Team Leader. However, Amy did mention that she might be accepting a full-time job offer and that if this does happen then her availability and involvement will be limited. Amy will let Laura know if this shift does happen.

Marnie – will work on the neighborhood program development

Wendi also distributed a School Pool network document that she would appreciate if the Task Force members could review and get back to her with comments.

Our next Task Force meeting is scheduled for September 20th at 9:00 am at the Kentfield District Office.