

# Walk Across America!



'Walk Across America' is an encouragement activity recommended to Partner schools looking for creative ways to get students excited about walking to school. Schools may choose to implement a 'Walk Across America' activity as part of their **Gold Level** partnership with the South Carolina Safe Routes to School Resource Center.

To 'Walk Across America,' schools simply identify their goal and start tracking students' steps in pursuit of that goal. Goals may be to walk 'from California to Maine,' walk across South Carolina, walk the Palmetto Trail, or walk to any other identifiable location. School teams then use the 'step calculator' to convert the number of steps taken by students into miles walked; cumulative miles are tracked until the goal is achieved. For example, students might track their steps until they have walked 3,300 miles – the equivalent distance of walking across the country.

## 1. Identify a Team Leader

The leader will be responsible for distributing materials, setting goals, tracking the distance covered, charting it on a map, and organizing the final celebratory walk or event.

Potential leaders may include a:

- Gym teacher
- School Nurse
- Guidance Counselor
- Assistant Principal
- Parent volunteer
- Classroom teacher
- Art teacher
- Math coach
- High school or college volunteer
- Senior citizen volunteer

## 2. Plan the Walk

- Seek support from the school principal, parents, and teachers.
- Decide on a goal. Some examples include: Walk Across America (3300 miles), Walk Across South Carolina (270 miles), or Walk the Palmetto Trail (425 miles).

- Decide on a time period: Simply walk until the goal is reached, or impose a deadline date.
- Plan a safe walking route around the school campus, or walk from a safe meeting location near the school.

## 3. Gather Materials

- **Mileage tracker forms:** Track by individual, by classroom, or by school
- **Step calculator form:** Helps convert steps into miles
- Distance can also be calculated by time
- 20 minutes of walking = 1 mile
- **Map:** Create a large map, painted on the wall of the gym or posted in the lobby that depicts the distance your school hopes to travel.
- **Map footsteps:** Create shoe cut-outs or other items to mark progress on the map.
- Pedometers (optional)

## 4. Start Walking!

- Keep a consistent tally of steps/miles traveled.
- Report steps/miles traveled to the designated team leader
- Get creative and utilize the Resource Center's **monthly walking themes** and **flyers** to encourage participation.

## 5. Celebrate Your Progress!

- Rally enthusiasm for the goal at school assemblies and PTA meetings.
- Highlight distance covered in school newsletters, on the school website, and during morning announcements.
- Hold a celebratory school-wide walk or event when the goal is achieved.

## 6. Report Back

- Email your [Resource Center School Outreach Coordinator](#) at the conclusion of the walk with the following information:
- How did it go? Did you achieve your goal?
- What challenges did you encounter?
- Any success stories to share?
- Send pictures!

\*Special thanks to MassRIDES and the Massachusetts Safe Routes to School Program.

This resource was adapted from the Walk Across America Resource developed by MassRIDES

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