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***Editors: A list of communities holding walk and bike to school events appears below this media release and as an attachment.***

### **Children across Maine Walk and Bike to School on October 5**

Thousands of Maine children will walk or bike to school with family members, school staff and volunteers in celebration of International Walk to School Day on Wednesday, October 5. Organized events are planned at schools across the state throughout October, which is International Walk and Bike to School Month, and some schools will continue holding events throughout the fall.

Parents, teachers and volunteers have organized events throughout the state such as “walking school buses” (children walking in groups under adult supervision) and “bike trains” (groups bicycling under adult supervision). Participating schools are located from York to Northeast Harbor and Camden to Greenville, as well as many points in between.

“Each year, more and more schools are getting involved in encouraging children to begin the habit of walking and biking safely to school,” said Nancy Grant, executive director of the Bicycle Coalition of Maine.

Maine’s federally funded Safe Routes to School Program - a program of the Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT), the Bicycle Coalition of Maine and communities throughout the state - supports local efforts to improve safety and increase walking and bicycling to school. In addition, many schools participate in presentations from the Maine Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Education Program. These presentations, available at no cost to interested schools, have been recognized as national models for keeping children safe from traffic dangers while walking and bicycling to school.

Since Maine’s Safe Routes to School Program began, more than 150 schools have become involved.

Using federal funds, more than 50 communities have been approved for infrastructure improvements to make walking and biking safer near schools.

“These federally funded safety improvements have been extremely helpful in creating safer pedestrian and bicycle travel around schools in communities throughout the state,” said Dan Stewart, MaineDOT’s bicycle and pedestrian program manager.

Two of the major goals of the Safe Routes to School Program are improved safety and increased physical activity to fight childhood obesity. In addition, Walk and Bike to School programs help to ease

traffic congestion, boost academic performance, improve classroom behavior, improve air quality and save school districts money on busing costs.

The program has three regional encouragement and planning coordinators: Darcy Whittemore ([saferoutes@BikeMaine.org](mailto:saferoutes@BikeMaine.org) <<mailto:darcy@BikeMaine.org>> ) in the central part of the state, Sarah Cushman ([sarah@sarahcushman.com](mailto:sarah@sarahcushman.com)) in southern Maine, and Jim Fisher ([jfisher@hcpcme.org](mailto:jfisher@hcpcme.org)) in eastern Maine. For more information or details about the October 5th events, please e-mail them or call [207-623-4511](tel:207-623-4511).

*The Bicycle Coalition of Maine has been working since 1992 to make Maine a better place to bicycle. The coalition advocates for Maine cyclists at the Legislature and in Washington, D.C., teaches bicycle and pedestrian safety to thousands of Maine schoolchildren each year, partners with state agencies on a Share the Road media campaign and serves as a resource on local bicycling issues.*

### **Documented Maine Schools Participating in Safe Routes to School Activities - Fall 2011**

- **Auburn**, The Walton School- Walk & Bike to School Day, Oct. 5
- **Belgrade**, Williams Elementary School - Walk at School Day, during October
- **Biddeford:**
  - o Biddeford Intermediate School - Bike to School Day on Oct. 5 & intermittent Wednesdays all fall
  - o Biddeford Middle School – Bike to School Day on Oct. 5 & intermittent Wednesdays all fall
- **Camden**, Camden-Rockport Middle School - Walk & Bike to School Day, Oct. 19
- **China** Primary & China Middle Schools - Walk at School Day, Sept. 23
- **Gardiner**, Laura E Richards School - Weekly Walking School Bus on Mondays into November
- **Greenville**, Nickerson Elementary School – Walk & Bike to School Week, Oct. 3 - 7
- **Hallowell**, Hall-Dale Elementary School - Monthly Walking Wednesdays, all year
- **Norridgewock**, Mill Stream Elementary School – Weekly Walking Wednesdays all fall
- **Northeast Harbor**, Mount Desert Elementary School - Walk to School Day, Oct. 5
- **Oakland:**
  - o Atwood Elementary School - “Motor Fridays” Walk at School Day, September
  - o Williams Elementary School - Walk at School Day, October
- **Pittsfield**, Vickery School – Weekly Walk & Bike to School Days for three weeks in September
- **Pittston** Consolidated School - Weekly Walk at School on Tuesdays into November
- **Portland:**

- o Ocean Avenue Elementary School - Daily Neighborhood Walking School Bus
- o Fred P Hall School - Monthly Walk & Bike to School Days starting Oct. 5
- **Randolph**, TC Hamlin School - Weekly Walking School Bus on Wednesdays into November
- **Scarborough**:
  - o Blue Point School – Weekly Walk & Bike to School Days in October
  - o Pleasant Hill School – Weekly Walking/Wheeling Wednesdays, year-round
- **Sidney**, James H. Bean School - Walk at School Day, Oct. 5
- **South Berwick**:
  - o Central School – Once a month Walk & Bike to School Days through the school year
  - o Marshwood Great Works School – Once a month Walk & Bike to School Days through the school year
- **South Gardiner**, River View Community School – Weekly Walking School Bus on Thursdays into November
- **South Portland**:
  - o Mahoney Middle School - Walk to School Day, October
  - o Skillin Elementary School - Walk to School Day, October 5
- **Topsham**, Mt. Ararat Middle School - Weekly After-School Bike Club, September - October
- **West Gardiner**, Helen Thompson School - Weekly Walk at School Fridays into November
- **Westbrook**:
  - o Canal School - Weekly Walk to School Fridays in October
  - o Saccarappa School - Weekly Walk to School Fridays in October
- **York**:
  - o Coastal Ridge Elementary School – Multiple Walk & Bike to School Days, Sep– Oct, including Oct 6
  - o Village Elementary School - Weekly Walk to School Fridays in fall