

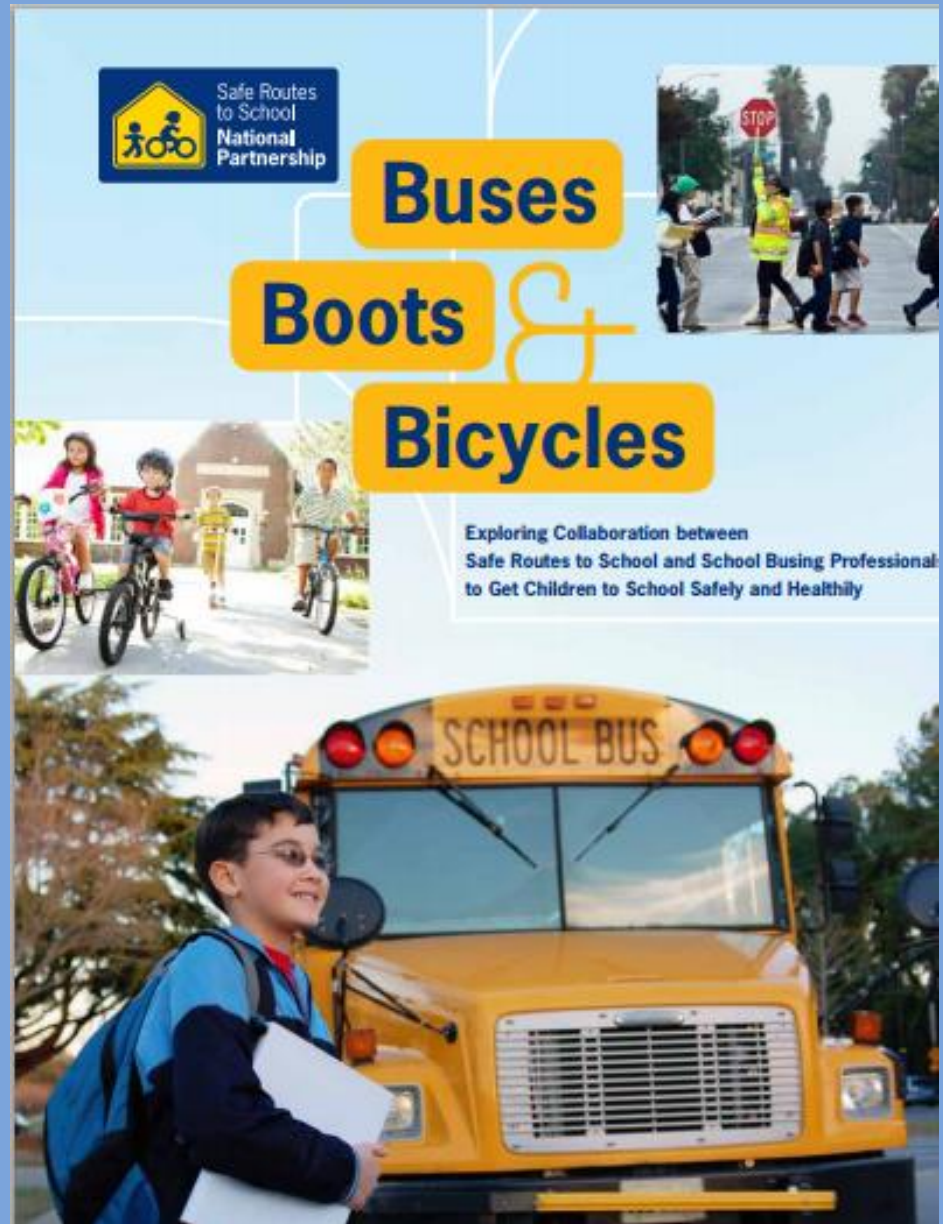
# Buses, Boots, and Bicycles: Safe Routes to School and Student Transportation Departments



Sara Zimmerman, JD  
Technical Assistance Director



# New report on interactions and collaboration between Safe Routes to School and student transportation industry

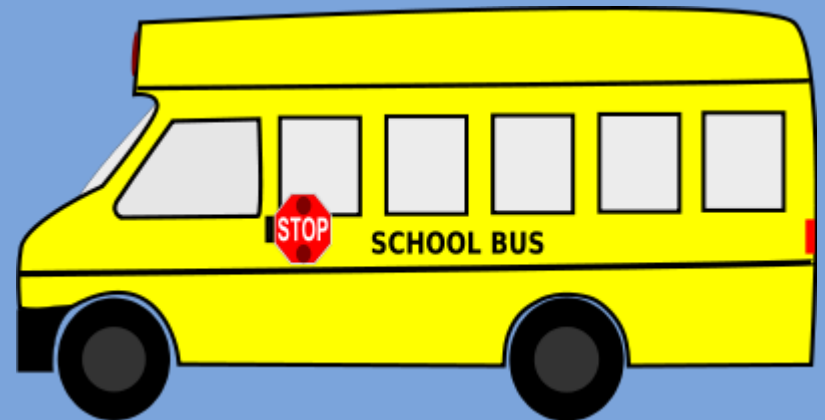


# Potential for Tension

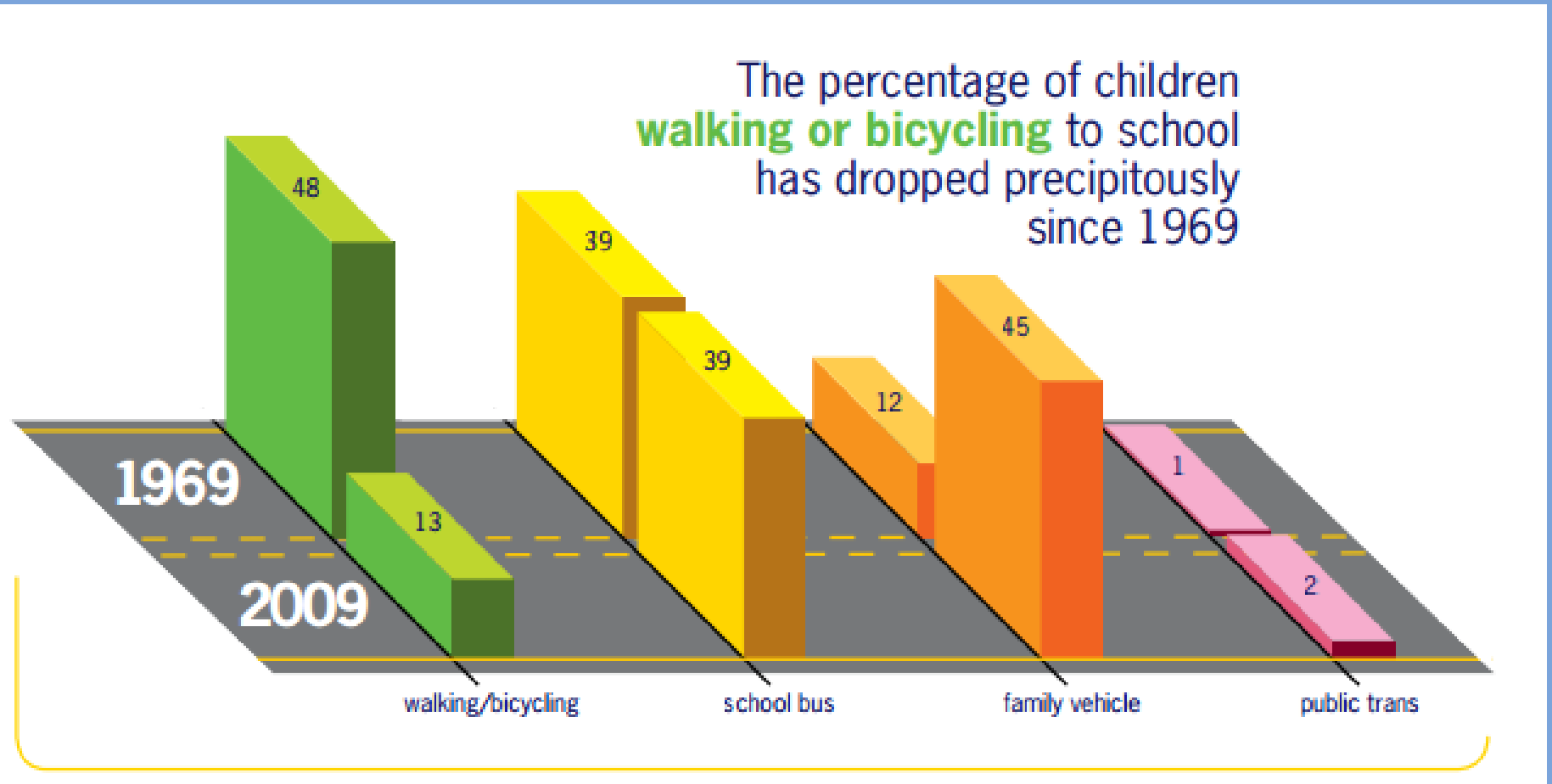
Every kid should walk or bike!



Every kid should take the school bus!



# Family vehicles are the problem.



# Family vehicles create dangers: for kids walking and bicycling and for school bus unloading

**6.5 billion** vehicle trips to school

 = **10%** of morning commuter traffic





# Potential for Partnership

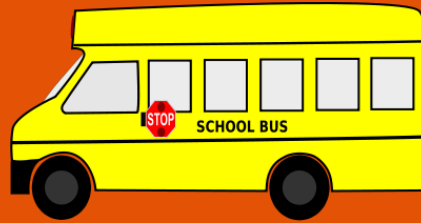


- Getting children safely to school
- Decreasing the number of cars in the school vicinity
- Supporting children's traffic safety skills
- Increasing children's well-being

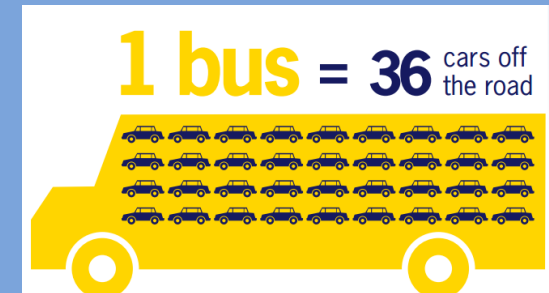
# A Multimodal Student Transportation System



# The Vision

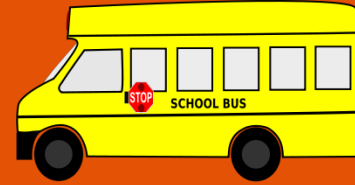


- Kids who live near school: walk or bicycle
- Streets near schools are safe
- Where there are hazards: school and local government collaborate to identify and address
- Kids who live further come by school bus (or public transit where appropriate)
- School buses pick up at centralized places in neighborhoods
- Safe Routes to Bus Stops (programs and infrastructure)
- Schools are sited near where students live





# Realizing the Vision



- **Many elements to the vision** – comprehensive change in policy, land use, institutions, behavior, and more
- One key aspect: **buy in** and partnership of student transportation departments
- **But:** Student transportation departments need **funds and institutional and community support** to take on walking, bicycling, and other modes in addition to busing
- Safe Routes to School folks: **take the initiative** in reaching out – anticipate bumps – work to build trust over time

# Michigan

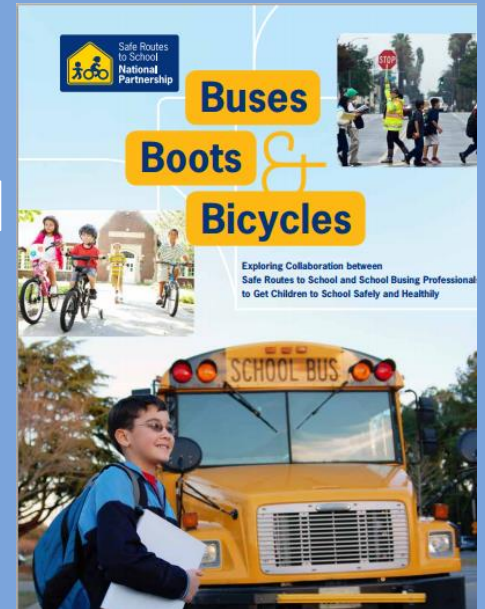


- Michigan Fitness Foundation reached out to Michigan Association of Pupil Transportation
- Presented at their conference on integrating walking school buses into student transportation departments
- Invited to present as part of a training session for transportation supervisors throughout the state
- Districts began reaching out to them
- MDOT working on pilot mini-grants to support districts integrating Safe Routes to School into transportation depts

*Meg Ackerman, [MTAckerman@michiganfitness.org](mailto:MTAckerman@michiganfitness.org)*

# More in the Report

- **Overview** of student transportation industry
- Description of federal, state, and local **policies and trends** affecting school transportation
- Exploration of **multimodal student transportation system**
- Analysis of key policy issues: school bus **funding formulas, hazard busing, and school siting**
- **Recommendations** for collaboration





Safe Routes  
to School  
**National  
Partnership**

**Sara Zimmerman**

Technical Assistance Director

[sara@saferoutespartnership.org](mailto:sara@saferoutespartnership.org)

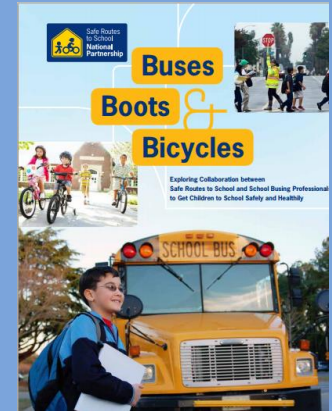


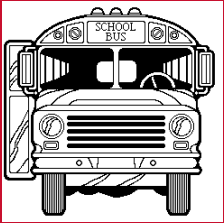
# Why work together?



# Today's presentation

- New report
- Potential for partnership
- Our vision for multimodal student transportation
- A little more on school bus funding formulas
- Recommendations for how to increase collaboration

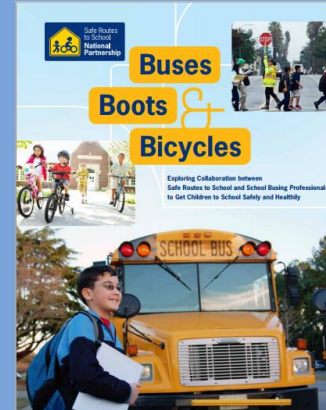




# Recommendations



# Recommendations



- Multimodal student transportation departments
- Emphasize messages that support both groups
- Focus on areas of mutual interest: safe routes to school bus stops; safe traffic skills curriculum
- Create more consistent standards/best practices
- Safe Routes to School folks: take the initiative in reaching out – anticipate bumps – work to build trust over time
- Include Safe Routes to School in school transportation accreditations and trainings
- Use bus route mapping software to assist with recommended routes to school



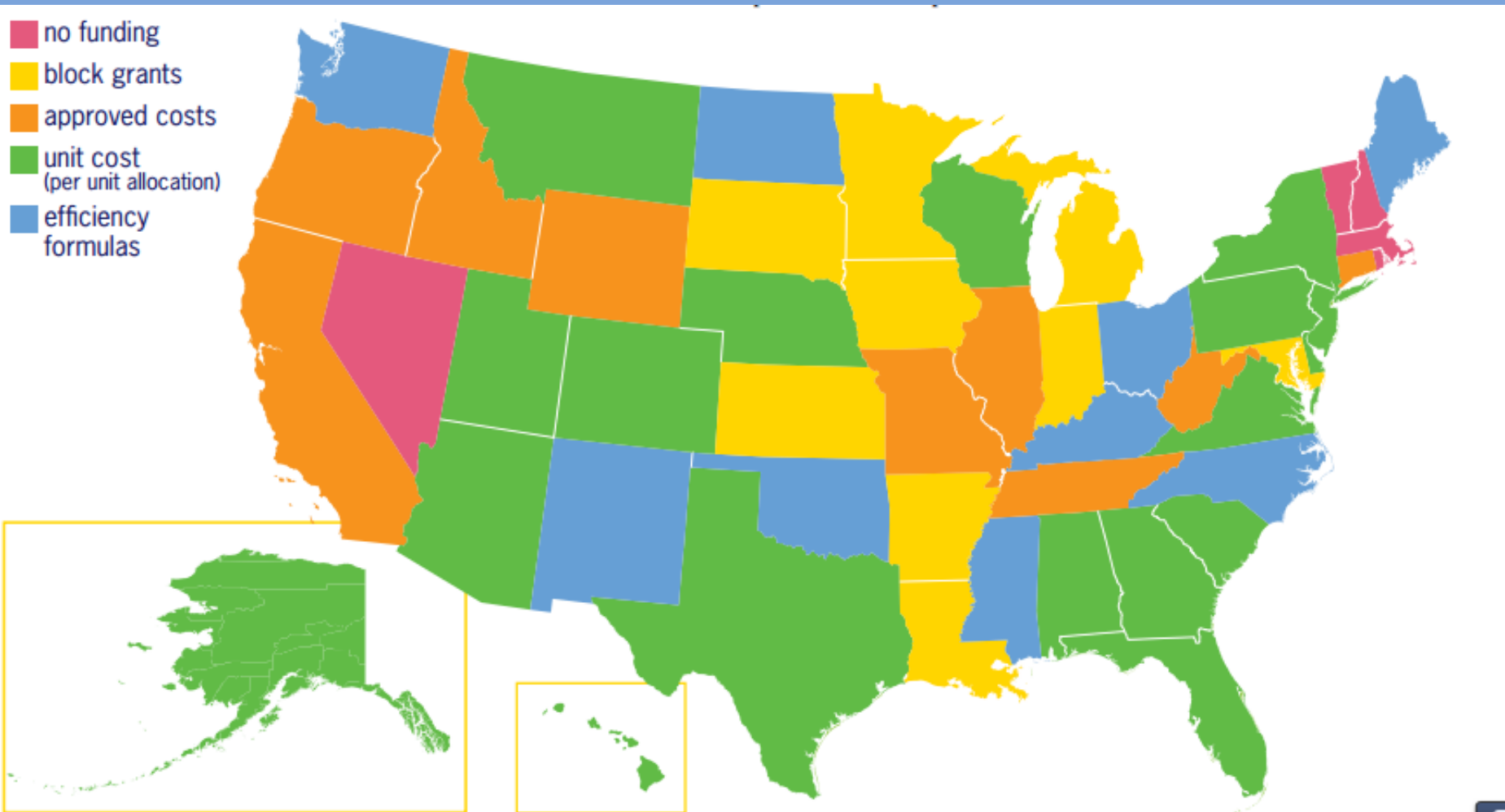


# School Bus Funding Formulas



# Large variation among states

## School bus funding formulas



# More Consistent Standards & Best Practices

A close-up photograph of the side of a yellow school bus. The words "SCHOOL BUS" are written in large, bold, black letters on a yellow background. Several round, amber-colored lights are visible along the top edge of the bus. A large, red, rectangular light is also visible on the right side. The background is a brick building.

- Minimum busing distances/walk zones
- No reimbursement for busing in walk zones
- Standardize hazard busing qualifications