August 20, 2012

MEMORANDUM

TO:     City and County Superintendents of Education

FROM:   Thomas R. Bice
        State Superintendent of Education

SUBJECT: Safe Routes to School Program

The Alabama State Department of Education (SDE), the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT), and the Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) are continuing a program entitled “Safe Routes to School (SRTS).” The purpose of SRTS is to enable and encourage students in Grades K-8, including those with disabilities, to walk and bicycle to school; to make walking and bicycling to school safer and more appealing; and to facilitate the planning, development, and implementation of projects that will improve highway safety and reduce traffic fuel consumption and also reduce air pollution in the vicinity of schools. This effort, coupled with growing health and obesity concerns, makes walking and biking to school a low-cost, attractive alternative. Federal funds will make it possible to create an environment where K-8 students can travel to school much like their grandparents did.

ALDOT administers the program with help from both the SDE and the ADPH. Funds are available on a reimbursement basis for approved projects or activities. An application process is established to determine the most worthwhile projects. View www.dot.alabama.gov for ALDOT’s webpage, which will make the 2013 application available and also be the site where ALDOT will post current guidelines, important dates, and relevant contact information. ALDOT will be accepting applications from January 1 through March 31 and will announce project awards in June.

Local education agencies, school principals, local transportation officials, and metropolitan planning organizations are encouraged to work together to explore ways to promote bicycling and walking. For example, what improvements can be constructed or installed to make it safer for kindergarten through 8th grade students to walk to a public school? How many children now bike or walk to school? What policies discourage or prohibit children from walking or biking to school, etc.?

To find out more about the national Safe Routes to School Program you can access information at http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/saferoutes/. If additional information is needed about the Alabama Safe Routes to School Program, you may contact Mr. Michael Bassett at 334-242-8220 or by email at mbassett@alsde.edu.

TRB/MB/EH

Enclosure

cc: Dr. Warren Craig Pouncey
    Mr. Dennis Coe
    Mr. Joe Lightsey
    Elementary School Principals
    Middle School Principals
    Junior High School Principals

FV12-3066
SRTS ELIGIBLE ITEMS

Preliminary engineering costs
Traffic calming and speed reduction improvements
Pedestrian and bicycle crossing improvements
On-street bicycle facilities pavement markings, signs
Off-street bicycle and pedestrian facilities (connectivity)
Secure bicycle parking facilities
Traffic diversion improvements in the vicinity of schools
Alternate drop-off sites in conjunction with sidewalk development
Parking if there is a direct relationship to a project and it is within two (2) miles of school
Signs if there is a direct relationship to the project
Drainage incidental to sidewalk when approved on a case-by-case basis where it is required for the construction of the project
Fencing when approved on a case-by-case basis where it is needed for safety purposes only
Alternative routing or traffic control devices during construction is required
New sidewalks
Training and Encouragement Activities (available upon request from the Departments of Education and Public Health)

Funds spent for infrastructure projects must be within the public right-of-way

ITEMS WHICH CANNOT NORMALLY BE FUNDED WITH SRTS FUNDS

Roadway improvements
Enhancements, such as sidewalks on school property
Pedestrian (decorative) lighting
Curb and gutter (unless an incidental of sidewalk construction)
Curb and gutter islands
Replacement of deteriorated sidewalks
Legal fees
Architectural and professional landscaping fees
Utility relocation
Operations or maintenance
Highway and bridge construction (examples: resurfacing, milling, concrete islands, etc.)
Crossing guard salaries
Any reoccurring costs
Development of pick-up and drop-off zones primarily for drivers
Education programs primarily focused on bus safety
Improvements to bus stops