

THE MISSION

Get more students walking or biking to school to reduce air pollution and improve the health and safety of students.

TALKING POINTS

I. TRAVEL POLL

Survey: How did you get to school today? Raise your hand if you

- # _____ Drove / got dropped off by a car
- # _____ Carpooled with another student (from another family)
- # _____ Took a bus
- # _____ Walked
- # _____ Biked
- # _____ Skated / Rode a scooter

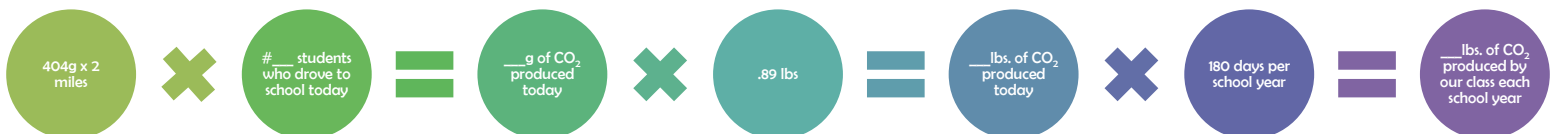
II. CO₂ EMISSIONS

Typical gas powered cars generate approximately 404 grams of CO₂ per mile.

➤ Math!

Q: How many pounds of CO₂ does **our class** generate per school year by driving to school?

- 404 grams = .89 pounds
- Assume the average student's round trip to school is 2 miles



Example:

404g x 2 miles x 20 students x .89 lbs. x 180 school days = 2,588,832 lbs. of CO₂ per school year

SO WHAT?

CO₂ is a major greenhouse gas. An overabundance of greenhouse gases traps heat in the atmosphere, negatively impacting the environment and human health in many ways. Who can name some of these impacts?

- *Melting ice caps, rising ocean levels and flooding*
- *Extreme weather: heatwaves, drought, wild fires and hurricanes*
- *Disruptions to farming and the food supply*
- *Destruction of coral reefs*
- *Changes in habitat for wildlife, plants, and ecosystems*

III. WHAT CAN A MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENT DO TO HELP?

- Transportation choices can make a big difference!
- “Active Transportation” (walking, biking, skating) creates ZERO EMISSIONS
- Does anyone in class already walk or bike to school? Or to other locations?
 - Do you like it, why or why not?

IV. WHY ELSE IS BIKING AND WALKING A GOOD IDEA?

- **EXERCISE** Get fit and toned, stay healthy and strong.
- **FRESH AIR** Spending time outside reduces stress, anxiety and depression.
- **BETTER GRADES** Studies show that concentration improves after exercise.
- **INDEPENDENCE** Walking to school builds street smarts, self-reliance, and nurtures a student's sense of independence.
- **SAVE MONEY** Parents save money on gasoline (ask for a raise in your allowance?)

Still reluctant to switch?

What other parts of your daily routine are **annoying, but worth it?**

HINT: Laundry, Washing Dishes, Taking out the Garbage...

What would happen if you said “nope” to those chores?

Planet Earth is a much larger version of your home.

V. HOW TO START

- Take baby steps: start by walking at least once a week.
- Live too far away from school? You can still help improve air quality around campus: try getting dropped off several blocks from school and walking the rest of the way.
- Physically unable to walk/bike; or parents won't allow you to walk/bike? Start a carpool with neighbors to eliminate a vehicle trip.
- Want friends to join you? Start a bike/walk campaign at school:
 - Write a newsletter article
 - Start "Walking Wednesdays" as a weekly Spirit Day
 - Ask the PTA to sponsor prizes
 - Make posters and announcements in the bulletin
 - Get creative – what other steps could you take...?

VI. SAFETY MATTERS

Has anyone been in a dangerous situation while walking or biking? What happened? How could you avoid this in the future or react in a safe way?

Name ways to be safe when biking and walking:

- Make eye contact with drivers at intersections & driveways
- Bike on the RIGHT side of the road (go in the same direction as the cars)
- Wear helmets
- Stop at red lights & stop signs
- Walk on sidewalks
- Cross in crosswalks and/or intersections (walk bikes in crosswalks)
- Be aware of your surroundings: Don't look at your phone while walking
- Only wear ONE ear bud when biking
- Plan a safe route with your parents, and stick to it
- Walk with a buddy
- What else?

