

PRESS RELEASE: Monticello School District receives Safe Routes to School grant

Monticello, Minn. – The Monticello School District has been awarded a Safe Routes to School funding grant from the Minnesota Department of Transportation.

Safe Routes to School is an international program to increase physical activity, improve health and reduce traffic congestion around schools by making it safer and easier for students to walk and bicycle to school. Planning assistance grants provide communities the resources to convene a team, prioritize strategies and identify solutions. Monticello's grant, worth an approximate \$40,000, sets up a partnership between ISD 882 and Alta Planning and Design.

“Student safety is our greatest priority as a school district, so receiving a grant of this nature is of pivotal importance,” said Assistant Superintendent Joe Dockendorf. “It allows us to utilize expert consultants to help us create and promote safe walking and biking routes for our students.”

The Monticello School District worked hand-in-hand with the City of Monticello, CentraCare Monticello, CentraCare BLEND [Better Living Exercise and Nutrition Daily], and Wright County Public Health SHIP [Statewide Health Improvement Partnership] to put together the grant application.

“It's wonderful to see the collaboration from all of those different entities,” said Gabe Hackett, the Little Mountain Elementary Principal who helped initiate the process. “It's just amazing what everyone was able to get done.”

MnDOT has awarded nearly \$20 million in federal funds to communities to support Safe Routes to School since 2005.

“Thousands of school children now have more opportunities to walk and bike to schools because of the Safe Routes to School program,” said MnDOT Commissioner Charlie Zelle. “More students walking and biking means less traffic on the road and near schools, improving safety and promoting healthier kids.”

Monticello was one of 12 districts to receive a Safe Routes to School grant from MnDOT this year. The agency received applications for more than 63 schools and awarded grants that will benefit a total of 40 schools.

“We are very appreciative of MnDOT for selecting Monticello to receive this grant and we want to thank our partners for working side by side with us through this process,” said Dockendorf.

More information on Safe Routes to School is available at www.mndot.gov/saferoutes.



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