



Safe Routes
to School
National
Partnership

Making Strides: 2016 State Report Cards Understanding the Scores and Grading



Making Strides: State Report Cards on Walking, Bicycling, and Active Kids and Communities

The full report, [Making Strides: State Report Cards on Walking, Bicycling, and Active Kids and Communities](#), provides a detailed explanation of how the states were graded; an overview of the research that supports walking, bicycling, and physical activity as ways to improve health; a discussion of the rationale for state-level report cards; and reflections on the state of physical activity in different regions and our country as a whole.

The 2016 Making Strides state report cards evaluate each state on 24 indicators spanning four core topic areas that focus on key areas for state action to promote and support physical activity.

This sheet provides a quick summary of the report cards' scoring structure, including the indicators and possible points in each of the core topic areas and an example report card showing the different components.

Core Topic Areas

The report cards focused on four core topic areas:

- Complete Streets and Active Transportation – state policies that support safe streets for walking and biking
- Safe Routes to School and Active Transportation Funding – state policies and practices related to funding for walking, bicycling, and Safe Routes to School
- Active Neighborhoods and Schools – state policies supporting physical education and use of school grounds for physical activity, as well as assessment of neighborhood supportiveness for physical activity
- State Physical Activity Planning – state plans for physical activity, state councils on physical activity, and dedicated staff resources to support physical activity

In the next section, we explain the significance of these topic areas, describe the specific indicators we used under each topic area, and set out our scoring criteria.

1 Complete Streets and Active Transportation (55 points)

The Complete Streets and Active Transportation core topic area explores state policies, goals, and guidance that promote walking, bicycling, and building streets that are safe for everyone, which play a crucial role in encouraging and enabling safe walking and bicycling.

Complete Streets Policies: Policies that commit government to providing for walking and bicycling along with driving in every road project.

Indicators:

- Has strong core state Complete Streets commitment (0 to 15 points)
- Addresses additional jurisdictions in state Complete Streets policy (0 to 5 points)
- Addresses implementation in state Complete Streets policy (0 to 10 points)

Design for Active Transportation: State adoption or endorsement of the NACTO guides, which include best practices for accommodating people walking and bicycling in street design.

Indicator:

- Adopted/endorsed NACTO guidelines (0 to 10 points)

Active Transportation Goals: Published state goals to improve safety for people walking and bicycling and increase the percentage of people walking and bicycling statewide.

Indicators:

- Adopted goals to lower walking and bicycling fatalities (0 to 10 points)
- Adopted goals to increase walking and bicycling mode share (0 to 5 points)



2 Safe Routes to School and Active Transportation Funding (70 points)

This core topic area looks at practices related to federal and state funding for walking, bicycling, and Safe Routes to School. Because federal dollars available for bicycling and walking improvements are limited and the need is great, it is crucial that they be used effectively. Choices that state departments of transportation make – how to staff and implement the federal programs for active transportation, which projects they fund, and how quickly they get the funding out the door – are all essential parts of enabling communities to have more opportunities for physical activity through transportation.

Active Transportation Funding: State use of the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) funds – the primary federal funding that supports walking, bicycling, and Safe Routes to School.

Indicators:

- Level of funds transferred out of the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP), reducing funding available for active transportation infrastructure (-10 to 10 points)

- Held TAP competition (-10 to 10 points)
- Obligated state-controlled TAP funds (-5 to 5 points)
- Provides special consideration for high-need communities (0 to 5 points)
- Provides matching funds for high-need communities (0 to 5 points)

Safe Routes to School Funding: Availability of funding specifically for Safe Routes to School efforts.

Indicators:

- Provides special consideration for Safe Routes to School projects using TAP funds (0 to 10 points)
- Obligated previous federal Safe Routes to School funds (-10 to 10 points)
- Dedicates state funding for Safe Routes to School (0 to 5 points)

Safe Routes to School Supportive Practices: Non-financial support for Safe Routes to School.

Indicators:

- Has state Safe Routes to School coordinator (0 to 5 points)
- Provides technical or application assistance to Safe Routes to School initiatives (0 to 5 points)



3 Active Schools and Neighborhoods (45 points)

The third core topic area assesses how supportive a state is of creating neighborhoods and schools that encourage physical activity. Living in a neighborhood that has safe places to be physically active and attending a school that provides regular opportunities for physical activity supports youth and adults in meeting daily physical activity guidelines.



Shared Use of School Facilities: Opening up school playgrounds, fields, and facilities for recreational use by community members outside of school hours.

Indicators:

- Adopted state policy supporting shared use of school facilities (0 to 10 points)
- Provides funding/incentives in support of shared use of school facilities (0 to 5 points)

Physical Education: State adopted standards for physical education.

Indicators:

- Adopted national physical education standards (0 to 10 points)

Supportive Neighborhoods for Physical Activity: Assessment of on-the-ground opportunities for physical activity.

Indicators:

- Level of access to sidewalks, parks, and community centers for youth (0 to 10 points)
- Level of access to parks (0 to 10 points)



4 State Physical Activity Planning and Support (30 points)

The fourth core topic area involves how a state plans for and supports programs, initiatives, and activities that promote physical activity. This topic area encompasses a state's support for physical activity overall. This includes physical activity in all settings – from schools, to workplaces, and in the community—and for all age groups from youth to older adults.

Indicators:

- Adopted a state physical activity plan (0 to 10 points)
- Hosts governor's council on physical activity (0 to 10 points)
- Dedicates state staff to physical activity (0 to 10 points)



How Does the Grading Work?

The report cards show the number of points earned for each indicator, and then the numerical sum and the grading category for each of the four core topic areas. The report cards also reflect an overall grade for each state, derived from the cumulative score based on the total number of points earned. The total possible number of points that could be obtained is 200. The grading categories are:

- **Lacing Up:** The state may be taking some initial steps to supporting walking, bicycling, and physical activity, but the efforts are still getting off the ground. (0-50 points)

- **Warming Up:** The state has established some policies or initiatives, and may have taken some strong steps that support walking, bicycling and physical activity, but the state has not used many of the tools and techniques available. (51-100 points)

- **Making Strides:** The state has established multiple policies and initiatives that are moving the state in the right direction, but may still be missing some key strategies. (101-150 points)

- **Building Speed:** The state has made a significant commitment to support walking, bicycling, and physical activity and is providing support in multiple ways. (151-200 points)

