

Active and Safe Routes to School: Three Sectors Come Together



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Halton Region, Ontario, Canada

- ◆ 42 km West of Toronto, ON
- ◆ Made up of 4 Municipalities
- ◆ Regional Government
- ◆ Population: 439,000 residents
- ◆ Fastest growing community in Canada
- ◆ Mix of rural and suburban
- ◆ Education supported by 4 publicly funded School Boards

Halton District School Board

- ◆ 78 elementary schools: 35,622 students
- ◆ 22,240 are eligible to walk to school
- ◆ parental traffic issues equal to any urban city in the USA
- ◆ Student safety a significant issue for Trustees
- ◆ Students eligible for Transportation if walk distance greater than 1.6 km (1 mile)
- ◆ Transportation Consortium runs bussing



Challenge Bringing Together the Sectors



- ◆ Regional Corporate Strategic Plan
- ◆ Regional Health Department assembled Steering Committee
- ◆ Membership included:
 - Education sector (principals, teachers, Trustees, transportation)
 - Regional Police
 - Municipal Traffic Engineers
 - Regional and Municipal Councillors
 - Region and Board Communication Offices
 - Region Epidemiologist

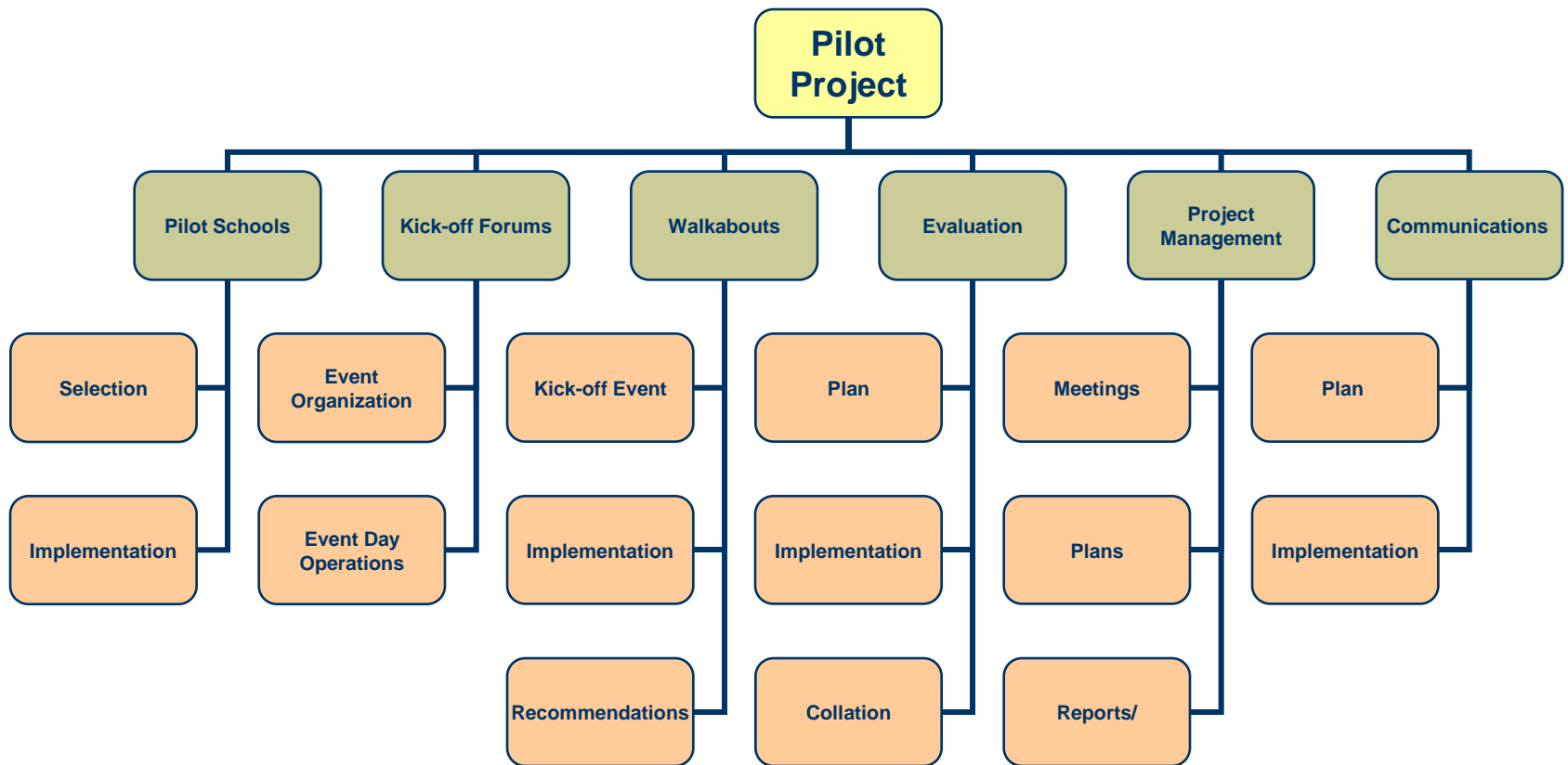
Creation of Champions

- ◆ All sectors had strategic initiatives that focused on;
 - community, health and safety of students and environment
- ◆ Regional Councillors
- ◆ Champion of Board – Chair
- ◆ Champion of Region – Health Department, Police Services
- ◆ Champion of Municipalities – Traffic Engineers
- ◆ Champion of Schools – Principal/Teacher/Students/Parents

Project Management

- ◆ Implementation plan was developed identifying
 - Vision, Goals, Objectives
- ◆ Vision **HELD BY ALL CHAMPIONS**
- ◆ Project Scope, Organizational Structure, Budget, Deliverables and Milestones, and Monitoring system developed
- ◆ Overall ASRTS plan is available on the Halton Region website at www.Halton.ca/ASRTS

Work Breakdown Structure



Execution, Monitoring And Controlling

- ◆ Work started in January 2008;
- ◆ Criteria for pilot schools developed- January
- ◆ Board approved funding for project- February
- ◆ 8 pilot schools chosen- February
- ◆ Kick-off Forum- March
- ◆ Walkabouts with action plans- April/May

Execution Monitoring and Controlling

- ◆ Student survey development and baseline data- June
- ◆ Infrastructure changes- July/August
- ◆ Fall communication plan development- July/August
- ◆ Parent survey development- July/August
- ◆ Status report to Senior Administration and Board of Trustees
- June

* Note: Project did not include control group which would have allowed for more comprehensive review of results.

Execution Monitoring and Controlling

- ◆ School level implementation- Sept – Dec
- ◆ Student surveys- Sept – Dec
- ◆ Parent survey-September
- ◆ Data collation and analysis- Nov - March
- ◆ Interim Report to Trustees- March
- ◆ Final Report release- May



Pilot Project Results



The following represents the results of the pilot project:

- 50% of schools increased walking behavior beyond baseline
- 62% maintained a trend over a two month period
- 1 school maintained 100% of their walking population for the 4 months
- 50-60% were still walking in December despite the weather



Pilot Project Results (con't)

- ◆ 3 schools were able to realize 100% of their eligible-to-walk choosing active transport, along with a portion of the eligible-for-bus choosing active transport for a period of the pilot project



Data Limitations

- ◆ A control group was not used
- ◆ Data was limited to grade 3, 5 & 6 students
- ◆ Baseline data with different students than the fall data (except one set of students)
- ◆ Non-uniform implementation of the program



Other Items to Consider

- ◆ Only 4 months of implementation
- ◆ Baseline data taken in the most desirable month of the school year (June)
- ◆ December data taken in a week with back to back major winter weather events
- ◆ All schools different grade make-up
- ◆ One school started in the spring



Overall Conclusion

- ◆ The ASRTS Program may have had a positive impact on active transport behaviors in students

What did the Pilot Teach us?

- ◆ ➤ Parents need to be encouraged to not drive their children to school and instead support their children to use active transport to school (e.g., walking, walking part-way, cycling, skateboarding, etc.)
- ◆ ➤ The more intense the program delivery, the better the results
- ◆ ➤ Removal of the program is associated with a decrease in the number of students arriving by active transport
- ◆ ➤ Sustained program activity results in sustained behavior

Lessons Learned (con't)

- ◆ ➤ School champion is a key ingredient for success
- ◆ ➤ Programming needs to address a variety of weather conditions
- ◆ ➤ Residual effects can be anticipated as students exposed to this program in their earlier years went on to be active in middle school; and
- ◆ ➤ Combining ASRTS with ECO schools sets the project as part of the overall environmental mandate of many HDSB schools



Next Steps



- ◆ Expansion of Pilot to include 25 schools
- ◆ Hiring of a project manager to oversee the expansion
- ◆ Inclusion of control group for the study (statistical twin schools within region)
- ◆ Expansion to include all four Boards (if possible)
- ◆ Expansion as part of ECO initiative of Board
- ◆ Report to Board in fall of 2010 on future of ASRTS

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