

Engaging Teachers and School Administrators

Teachers and school administrators each can play important roles in running safe, organized, and successful Bike Buses, as well as spreading excitement to kids and community members alike. Here are some of the parts that teachers and administrators can take in the operation of a Bike Bus, along with suggestions on how to get school staff involved and bought into your Bike Bus initiative.

What Role can Teachers Play?

- **Becoming a Champion for the Initiative:**
The following steps and others reflect what enthusiastic teachers can help get done to run and grow the Bike Bus at their school.
- **Volunteering to organize or ride along:**
Teachers can offer to be directly involved in running the bike bus, by riding along or providing support with docking bikes and making sure all students are accounted for upon arrival at school.
- **Getting kids excited about Bike Bus:**
Teachers can play a big role in spreading the word about the new option for biking to school with friends and get kids excited about it.
- **Using Bike Bus as a teaching tool:**
The Bike Bus provides teachers with a student experience to tie into themes of active living, collaboration, sustainability and reducing personal emissions, and more.
- **Facilitating afternoon Bike Bus (if established):**
When afternoon/pick-up Bike Bus days become an option, teachers can staff the process of checking students into the Bike Bus and/or participating in the afternoon rides themselves.

What Role can Administrators Play?

- **Publicizing the Bike Bus to school parents:**
School administrators who send out regular newsletters, or coordinate with PTA's who do, can include details and updates about Bike Bus activities.
- **Communicating with the school district, city officials:**
School administrators with existing relationships and avenues of communication with school district officials and city officials can make introductions to partners and help publicize needs related to Bike Bus operation. As part of this, administrators can help in the process of securing funding and implementation of helpful infrastructure, such as bike racks.
- **Managing parent concerns or questions:**
School administrators can relay parent questions or concerns related to their child joining the Bike Bus to the organizers or address these concerns directly if possible.
- **Inclusion of disadvantaged students, students with disabilities needing adaptive equipment:**

Children without their own bikes could be enabled to participate with donation of bikes or fundraising for the purchase of bikes. Families with students needing adaptive bikes to participate could be aided in applying for funds for the purchase of the bike.

Tips for Building the Partnership

- **Early Engagement:** Keeping school staff and administration in the know about Bike Bus plans from the onset is the easiest way to ensure the rides go smoothly and are able to continue. This allows for addressing any concerns from administrators worried about school liability or general student safety, as well as getting supportive teachers and administrators on board and contributing. Identification of these teacher/admin champions can go a long way to accomplishing the Bike Bus's goals. A good target to set for this outreach would be at least a month prior to the first full launch of the Bike Bus (i.e. during summer break for a targeted launch in September). **INSERT EMAIL TEMPLATE/ LINK TO CUSTOMIZABLE EMAIL TEMPLATE**
- **Adapt to the Level of Support and Involvement:** Because of concerns surrounding liability or simply because of their already busy schedules, teachers and school administrators may not be able to be actively involved in running the Bike Bus. Despite this, communities at schools around New York have been able to implement safe, fun, and growing Bike Bus programs: in other words, lack of enthusiastic support from school officials should not deter Bike Bus organizers. Organizers have noted that administrators sometimes warm up to the idea once seeing its feasibility and the positive effect biking together has on students. On the flip side, administrators' support in publicizing Bike Bus activities and advocating for needs is a great asset to have, and teacher volunteering and support is equally helpful.
- **Keep Communication Open:** School staff and administration are important stakeholders to keep in the loop and can provide valuable feedback on how the Bike Bus is impacting their side of the commute.

Teacher and administrator buy-in can help in running a safe and fun Bike Bus and can help it continue to operate and grow as children (and their parents) move on to different schools.

Learn More or Get Involved: [info@511nyrideshare.org]