



**Michelle Lujan Grisham**  
Governor

**Michael R. Sandoval**  
Cabinet Secretary

September 30, 2019

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Marisa Maez

[Marisa.maez@state.nm.us](mailto:Marisa.maez@state.nm.us)

(505)469-8243

## **NMDOT Supports Walk and Roll to School Day 2019**

SANTA FE – Thousands of students, parents, teachers and community leaders across New Mexico will walk, bike, scoot, or skate to school on October 2, in celebration of the 23rd Annual National Walk to School Day.

This year, 38 elementary and middle schools in New Mexico have registered Walk to School Day events on [walkbiketoschool.org](http://walkbiketoschool.org). The total number of schools and events is expected to grow as celebrations continue throughout October, National Walk to School Month.

The New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT) and local law enforcement encourage drivers, pedestrians and cyclists to remember to “Look for Me” as they navigate the public roadways, bikeways and sidewalks.

National Walk to School Month is an opportunity to remind us all to use extreme caution when driving through school zones, residential neighborhoods, parks, downtowns and wherever else children may be walking or biking.

“As community leaders and parents, it is our responsibility to keep our kids safe and that extends to when we are behind the wheel,” said NMDOT Secretary Michael Sandoval. “When our streets are safe and comfortable for kids walking and biking to school, everyone wins.”

In Las Cruces, 25 local elementary schools will hold events, said Safe Routes to School program coordinator Ashleigh Curry. She expects 3,500 participants.

“These celebrations highlight what our schools do every week,” Curry said. “Las Cruces supports Safe Routes to School and values active transportation. We look forward to walking with our elected officials and New Mexico State University athletes.”

Santa Fe, buoyed by deep community support, recently received nearly \$300,000 in federal funds to develop a Safe Routes to School Program. At the annual “Back to School Bash” on Sept. 14, the Santa Fe School District partnered with the Brain Injury Advisory Council to fit free bike helmets for 331 students.

The Safe Routes to School program “is a triple win: reducing air pollution around our schools, improving students’ health and wellness by reducing childhood obesity and diabetes and instilling lifelong habits that build community with people outdoors having fun,” said Elena Kayak, Santa Fe Public Schools Sustainability Program Specialist.

Walk to School Day events raise awareness of the need to create safer routes for walking and bicycling and emphasize the importance of a broad range of issues such as increasing physical activity among children, pedestrian safety, traffic congestion and concerns for the environment. The events build connections between families, schools and the broader community.

To learn more about the events and locations of registered NM schools participating in Walk to School Day 2019, visit [walkbiketoschool.org/registration/whoswalking.php?sid=NM](http://walkbiketoschool.org/registration/whoswalking.php?sid=NM).

For more information on Safe Routes to School and the Active Transportation Program contact:

- Maggie Moore, NMDOT at 505-470-4705, [Maggie.moore@state.nm.us](mailto:Maggie.moore@state.nm.us)
- Ashleigh Curry, Las Cruces Public Schools Safe Routes to School coordinator, [acurry@lcps.net](mailto:acurry@lcps.net),
- Elena Kayak, Santa Fe Public Schools Sustainability Program specialist, [ekayak@sfps.k12.nm.us](mailto:ekayak@sfps.k12.nm.us), 505-467-3411

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