



# Washington Elementary School SRTS Action Plan

Merrill Area Public School District  
Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program

2020

## School Demographics:

Enrollment: 278

Grades: K-5th grade

Start Time: 7:50 a.m.

End Time: 3:20 p.m.

Principal: Trisha Detert

1900 E. 6th St.  
Merrill, WI

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## Safe Routes to School Background Information

The purpose of the SRTS program is to provide safe pedestrian and bicycle facilities that encourage healthier lifestyles. Programs can be established to educate students, parents, and the community on the benefits of walking and bicycling to school and provide tips to do so safely. Major SRTS goals are:

- To enable and encourage children, including those with disabilities, to walk and bike to school.
- To make bicycling and walking to school a safer and more appealing transportation alternative, thereby encouraging a healthy and active lifestyle from an early age.
- To facilitate the planning, development, and implementation of projects and activities that will improve safety and reduce traffic, fuel consumption, and air pollution in the vicinity of schools.

SRTS Planning efforts assess the facilities and conditions near school, examine how students are currently traveling to /from school, and identify safety concerns/issues raised by parents and the community. Infrastructure and non-infrastructure recommendations are then created and implemented, sometimes with grant funding assistance, by the SRTS Task Force and other community members. SRTS Plans focus on projects within two miles of an elementary or middle school (Kindergarten-8th grade) and address the 5 E's:

- ⇒ **Engineering**
- ⇒ **Enforcement**
- ⇒ **Education**
- ⇒ **Encouragement**
- ⇒ **Evaluation**



*The main goal of SRTS programs is to get children safely walking and biking to school.*

## Washington Elementary School Background Information

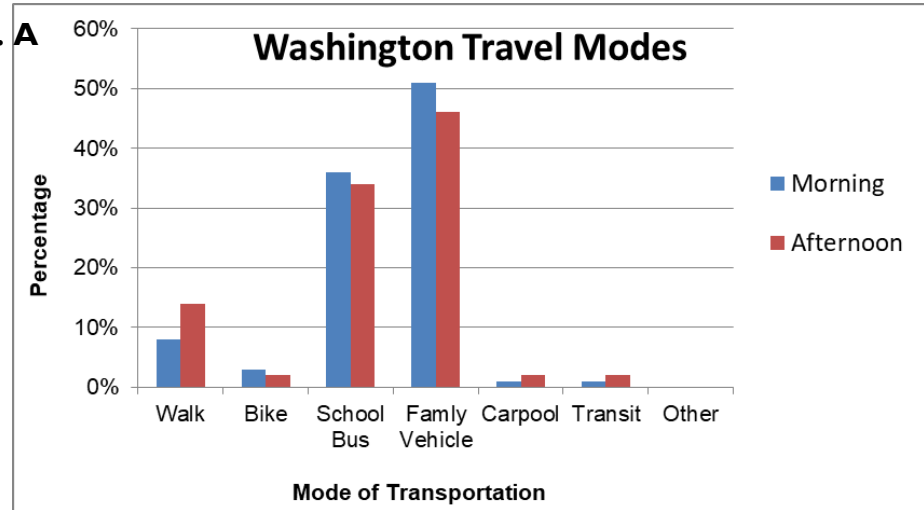
Washington Elementary serves the eastern portion of the School District and includes a diverse population of nearly 300 students. The majority of students travel to and from school in the family vehicle (51 & 46%) or on the school bus (36 & 34%); compared with walkers (8 & 14%), and a few bikers (3 & 2%). The top three concerns of parents who do not allow their

children to walk or bike to school are weather, amount of traffic along route, and safety of intersections and crossings. The school borders two relatively busy streets. In 2019, there were 1,500 AADT on E. 6th St. between N. Kyes St. and N. Sales St., and there were 1,500 AADT on N. Sales St. between E. 6th St. and E. 8th St.



The vast majority of students arrive and depart in the family vehicle (51 & 46%, Fig. A), followed by the school bus (36 & 34%) compared with walkers (8 & 14%), and few bikers (3 & 2%).

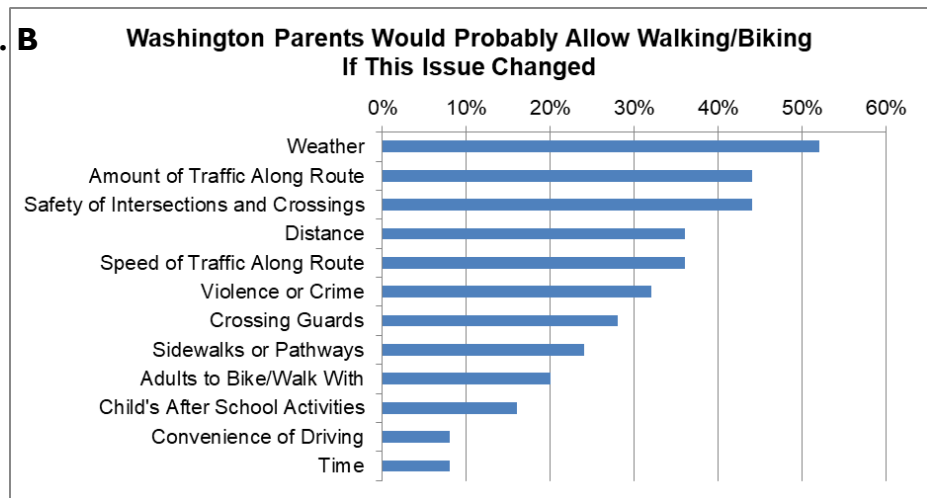
Fig. A



Student Tallies, October 2019

“Washington Travel Modes” bar chart (Fig. A) shows that 5% more parents are driving their kids to school in the morning (and 2% more travel by school bus), but those 7% of kids get home by walking (6%) and Merrill-Go-Round (1%).

Fig. B

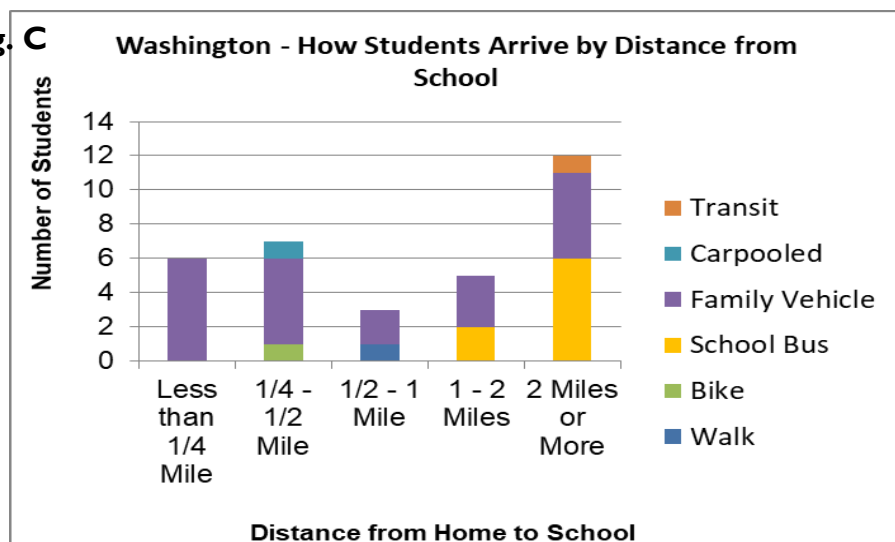


Parent Surveys, October 2019

“Weather” is the most commonly cited barrier by parents (Fig. B).

Fig. C shows 48% living within a mile of school and only one (3%) walker & one biker (3%); therefore the potential to increase walking & biking is 42%.

Fig. C



Parent Surveys, October 2019

Community/Task Force

**BACKGROUND**

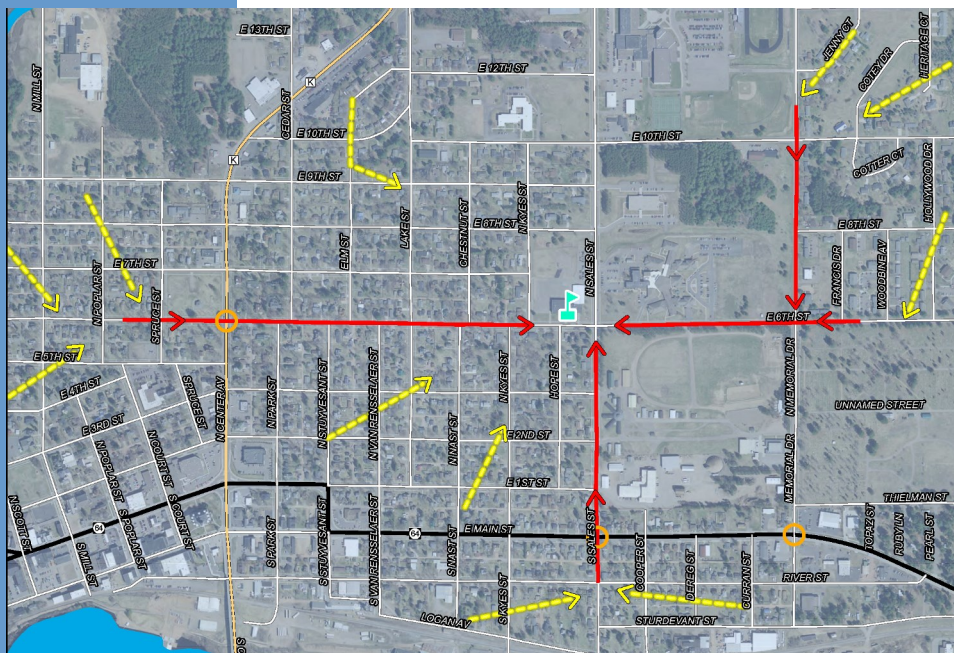
Many positive attributes make Merrill a great place to walk or bike for daily trips and for recreation. Historic downtown buildings and houses in some neighborhoods, surrounded by rivers and towering white pines provide scenic beauty to travel through. Distances are short to walk or bike. Many destinations are within a 3.5-mile, 20-minute, bicycling distance of most residents. Topography in Merrill is generally flat with gradual hills that are convenient to climb on a bike or to walk. All of these reasons make Merrill a good place to walk and bike.

Bicycling education in Merrill is multifaceted. The police department has been providing bicycle education in 3rd and 4th grades. The Merrill Optimist Club along with Merrill Park and Recreation Department and the Merrill Police Department provides bicycle safety training at the annual Children’s Festival, which targets toddlers up to 5th grade.

**TASK FORCE**

The Merrill SRTS Tasks Force began meeting in the fall of 2019. An overarching issue was identified as the limiting factor to getting more walkers and bikers – parental convenience. Additional issues were reviewed at each school as basic air photo audits were conducted of each school.

School Route Maps: The City of Merrill and NCWRPC created school route maps (Maps 5A-5E) to show the major and minor feeder routes that children use to get to school. As part of the school route map development, recommendations were created.



Map 5D  
**School Routes**  
Washington  
Elementary School

**Legend**

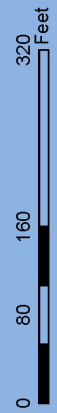
- Washington Elementary
- Feeder Route
- Main Route
- Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacon Crosswalk
- Minor Civil Division
- State Highway
- County Highway
- Local Roads
- Water

# Map 3D Site Assessment

Washington  
Elementary School  
Merrill Safe Routes To School

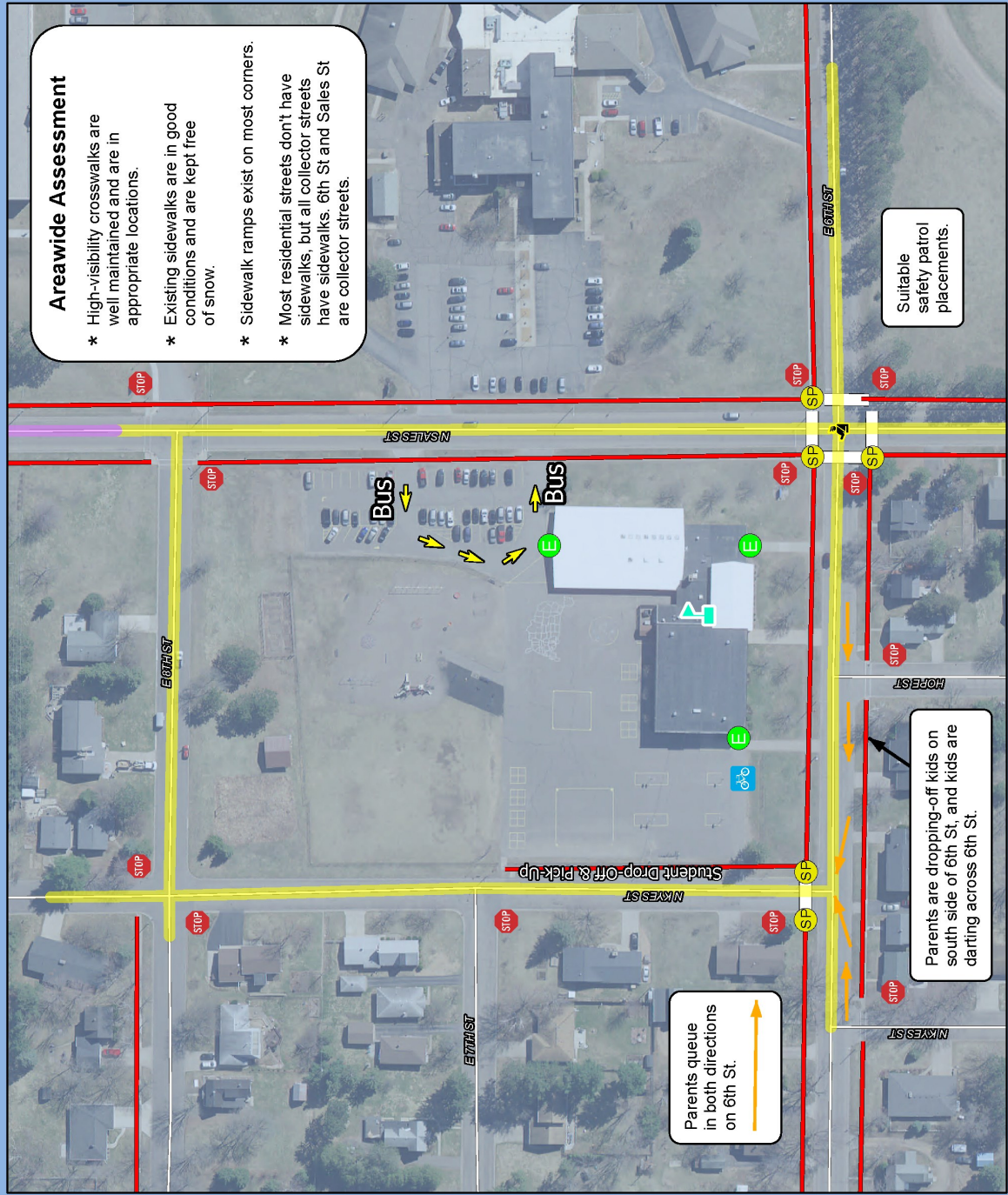
### Legend

- Washington Elementary
- Bike Rack
- Crossing Guard
- Safety Patrol
- School Entrance
- Stop Sign
- 15 MPH School Speed Limit (Includes Higher Fine Zone)
- Higher Fine Zone
- Sidewalks
- High Visibility Crosswalk
- Local Roads
- Water



Source: WIDNR, NCVRPC, City of Merrill  
This map is neither a legally recorded map, nor a survey, and should not be used for legal purposes. It is intended for reference purposes only. NCVRPC is not responsible for any inaccuracies herein contained.

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# Map 6D Recommendations

Washington  
Elementary School  
Merrill Safe Routes To School

**Legend**

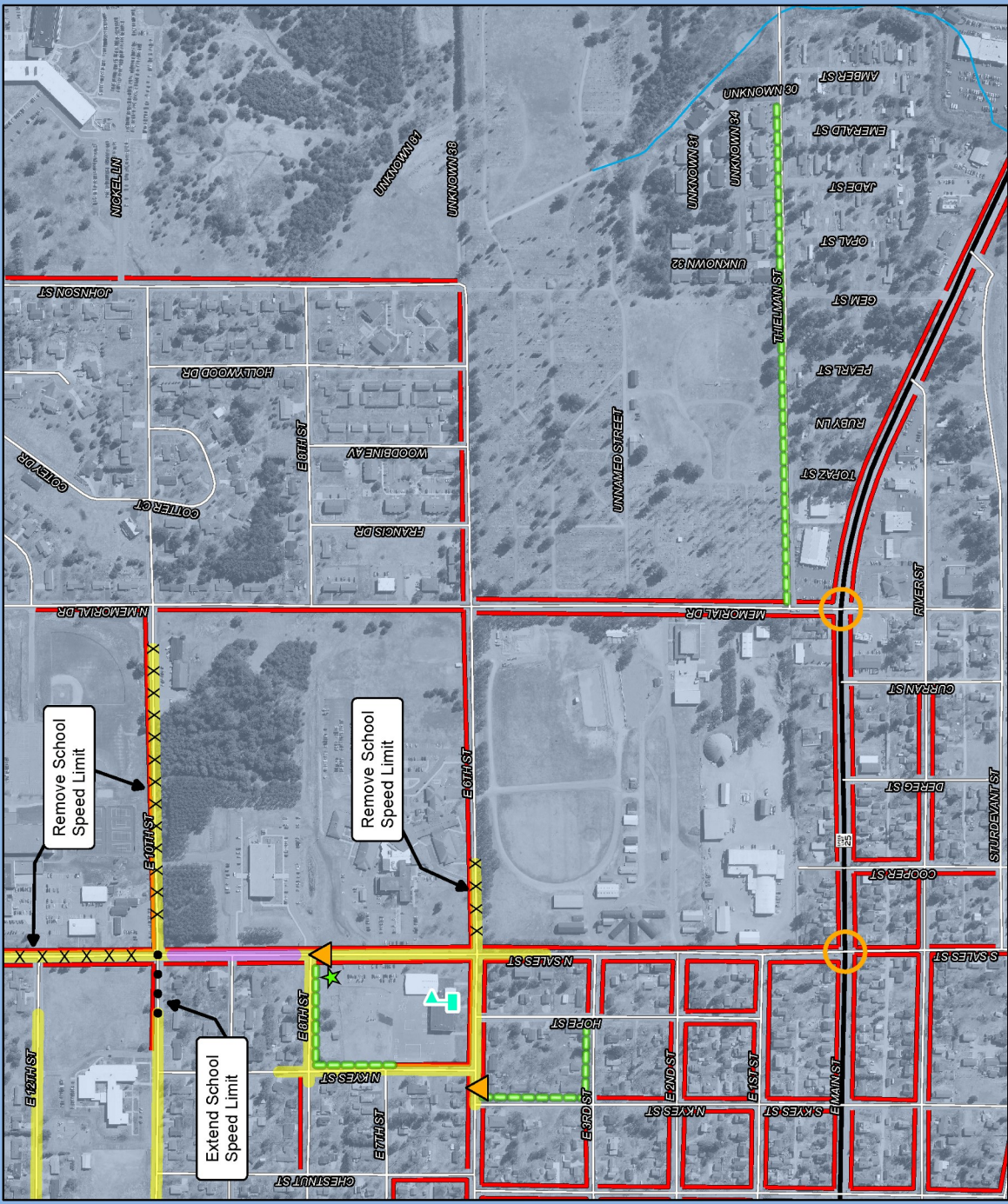
- Washington Elementary
- Sidewalks
- Proposed Sidewalk
- 15 MPH School Speed Limit (Includes Higher Fine Zone)
- Higher Fine Zone
- Rapid Flash Crosswalk
- Extended Parking Lot
- Speed Limit
- In-Street School Crossing Sign
- State Highway
- Local Roads



Source: WIDMR, WEDOT, NCWRFPC, City of Merrill  
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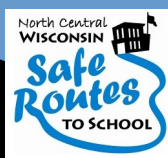
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## RECOMMENDATIONS for Washington Elementary

ACTIVITY	LOCATION	FUNDING	LEAD AGENCY (BOLD)	TIME FRAME
<b>Engineering</b>				
Add sidewalks on at least one side of several streets.	See Map 6B.	WisDOT (Up to 80%), local taxes	<b>City</b>	Medium term (TAP application every other year)
Continue maintaining school zone signs, and painted crosswalks. See: "Enforcement" below.	Existing locations.	Local taxes	<b>City</b>	Ongoing
Replace all bike racks. See Att. C guidance.	North side of school.	Local taxes	<b>School Dist.</b>	Short term
<b>Education</b>				
Provide materials to student's families about how to walk or bike with your kids.	School families	Local taxes	<b>School Dist., Nat'l SRTS, NCWRPC, WI Bike Fed</b>	Annually or as needed
Consider starting an additional bicycle training event.	Community	Local taxes	<b>School Dist., City</b>	Short term
Consider school field trips that integrate safe walking and biking practices into the curriculum.	Washington Elementary	School Dist.	<b>School Dist.</b>	Short term
<b>Encouragement</b>				
Create a "Walk to School Week" every fall.	Communitywide	Current staff	<b>School Dist., Police, City</b>	Annually in fall
Review creating a walking/biking club.	Washington Elementary	Current staff	<b>School Dist., NCWRPC</b>	Short term Ongoing
<b>Enforcement</b>				
Continue to provide crossing guards.	As needed around Washington Elementary.	Local taxes	<b>City, School Dist.</b>	Annually
Continue maintaining school speed limit zones.	See <a href="#">Site Assessment map</a> .	Local taxes	<b>City</b>	Ongoing
<b>Evaluation</b>				
Conduct student tallies to see if walking and biking have increased.	Washington Elementary	Current staff	<b>School Dist., NCWRPC</b>	After initial changes and as new modifications are made
If walking or biking have not increased after all Engineering actions have occurred, then review various educational programming on "Resources" webpage and implement one or more of the resources.	Washington Elementary	Current staff	<b>School Dist.</b>	After student tally information has been collected