Economic Investment and Program Implementation in Low-Resource Communities: Safe Routes to School

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Policy Analysis: Safe Routes to School

▸ Federal Safe Routes to School Program

▸ Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act- A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU)

  ▸ Enacted August 2005 – initially through 2009

▸ $612 million in Federal transportation funds initially authorized to Safe Routes to School

▸ Via states' Departments of Transportation

  ▸ States develop program administration structure and process

  ▸ State Safe Routes to School Program Coordinator

▸

Policy Analysis: Safe Routes to School

▸ Broadened the federal transportation role

▸ To enable and encourage children, including those with disabilities, to walk and bicycle 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; and

▸ 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.

SAFETEA-LU, P.L. 109-59, Sec. 1404 (b)

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Policy Analysis: Safe Routes to School: Objectives for State Program Development

▸ Objective 1: Ability to distribute projects across levels (local, county, state)

▸ Objective 2: Making funding available to diverse participants (social and economic factors, urban/rural)

▸ Objective 3: Promote comprehensive programs and activities (mix both infrastructure and non-infrastructure)

▸ Objective 4: Maximize impact with complementary funding

  ▸ FHWA, 2006

▸

Policy Analysis: Safe Routes to School Study Objectives

▶ Identify potential state-level policy and programmatic factors that can foster strong SRTS programs within states

▶ Examine social and demographic factors associated with SRTS program success

▶ Identify policy recommendations for state and federal programs

Policy Analysis: Safe Routes to School Program Methods

- Obligations data from Federal Highway Administration Fiscal Management Information Systems (FMIS) for SRTS program (2005-2009)

- Student enrollment in grades K-8, from the Common Core of Data & Private School Survey, National Center for Education Statistics (2003-2005)

- Summarize funding obligations in total, by state/county, reported activity category and by social and economic indicators

- All 50 States

Policy Analysis: Safe Routes to School: Results

<table>
<tr><th colspan="3" style="text-align:center">Federal funding for Safe Routes to School, descriptive statistics among States (N=50), FY2005-2009</th></tr>
<tr><th>Federal Funding Outcomes in States</th><th>Mean (SD)</th><th>Median</th></tr>
<tr><td>Total funds obligated (millions)</td><td>$4.4 ($5.1)</td><td>$3.1</td></tr>
<tr><td>% of available funds that were obligated</td><td>44.2 (27.3)</td><td>37.7</td></tr>
<tr><td>Total per student funds available</td><td>$23.02 ($16.64)</td><td>$15.02</td></tr>
<tr><td>Total per student funds obligated</td><td>$11.07 ($13.71)</td><td>$6.41</td></tr>
<tr><td>% of funds obligated to non-infrastructure projects</td><td>21.9 (16.4)</td><td>17.7</td></tr>
<tr><td># of years funding was obligated</td><td>3.2 (0.8)</td><td>3</td></tr>
</table>

Policy Analysis: Safe Routes to School: Results

Proportion (%) of available SRTS funds obligated, by state, FY2005-2009
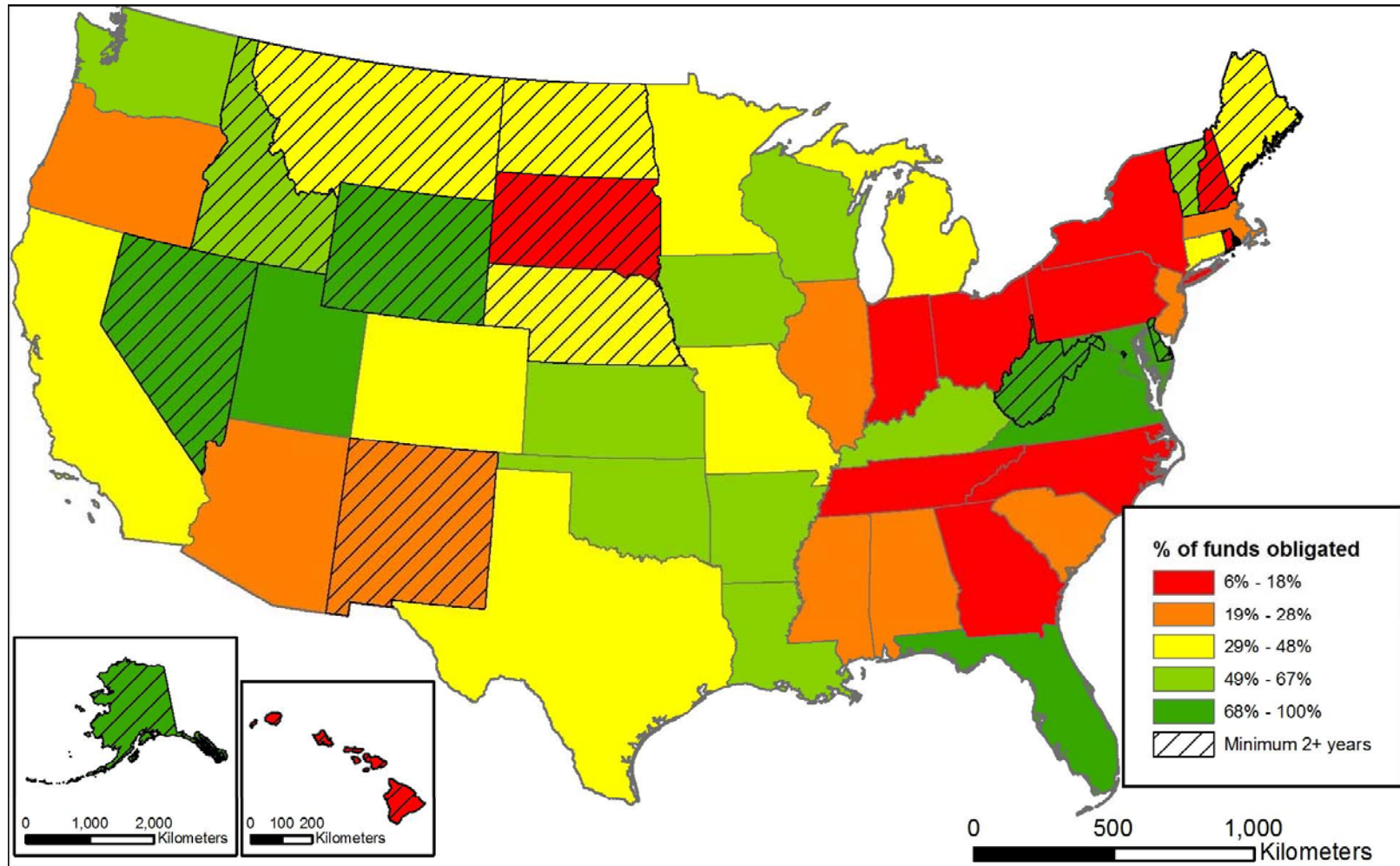
Policy Analysis: Safe Routes to School: Results

Indicators of progress towards Safe Routes to School program objectives among states (N=50), FY2005-2009

Objective 1: Enable Participation on a Variety of Levels	Yes	No	N/A*
Mixed Level Program: State obligated 25-75% of funds in counties	16 (32%)	34 (68%)	
Geographic Mix: State obligated funding to 50% or more of counties	10 (20%)	36 (72%)	4 (8%)
State did either of above 2 indicators	*21 (42%)*	*29 (58%)*	

*4 states obligated no funds to counties.

▶

Policy Analysis: Safe Routes to School: Results

Indicators of progress towards Safe Routes to School program objectives among states (N=50), FY2005-2009

Objective 2: Make the Program Accessible to Diverse Participants	Yes	No	N/A*
Urban/Rural Funding Mix: no more than 3 times the amount of per student funds in urban vs. rural counties[a]	22 (44%)	20 (40%)	8 (16%)
High-Child Poverty Area Funding: State obligated 50% or more of funds in high-child poverty area counties[a]	12 (24%)	34 (68%)	4 (8%)
State did either of above 2 indicators	27 (54%)	23 (46%)	

*4 states obligated no funds in counties. 4 states contain no rural (non-core) counties.
[a] associated with percent of available funding obligated by the state ($p < 0.1$)

▶

Policy Analysis: Safe Routes to School: Results

Indicators of progress towards Safe Routes to School program objectives among states (N=50), FY2005-2009

| Objective 3: Promote Comprehensive SRTS Programs and Activities	Yes	No	N/A*
State Program Mix: State obligated 10-30% of funds to non-infrastructure activities[a]	23 (46%)	27 (54%)	
Local Program Mix: 50% or more of counties implementing projects include infrastructure and non-infrastructure activities	17 (34%)	29 (58%)	4 (8%)
State did either of above 2 indicators	*33 (66%)*	*17 (34%)*	

*4 states obligated no funds in counties, so county-level indicators are not applicable.
[a] < 30% non-infrastructure also associated with percent of available funding obligated by the state (p<0.05).

Policy Analysis: Safe Routes to School: Results

Average proportion of available Safe Routes to School federal funds that were obligated among states, by proportion of indicators for program objectives met, FMIS FY2005-2009
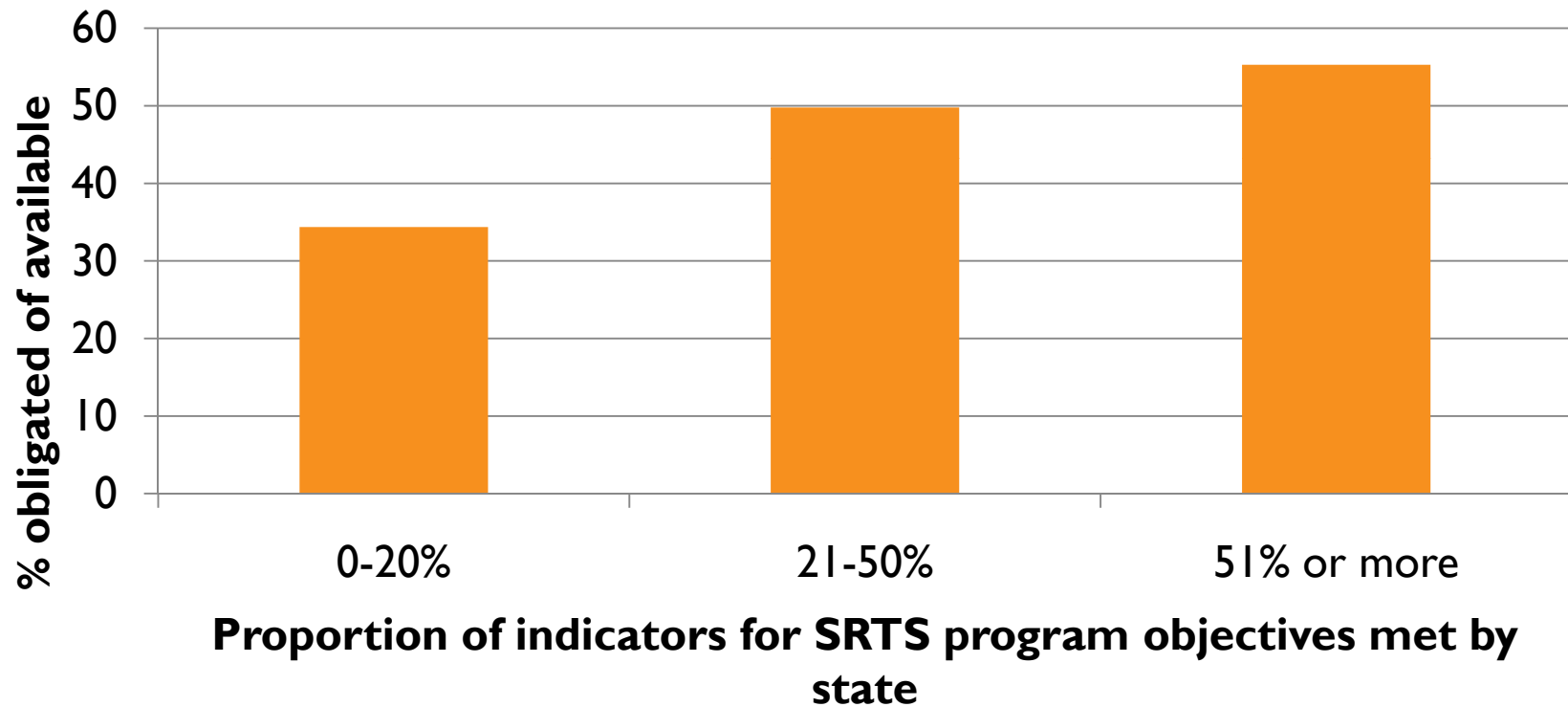
[a] Excluding indicator of obligating between 25-75% in counties, B=0.41 (0.15) p<0.01 R^2=0.13

Policy Analysis: Safe Routes to School: Results

▸ **Program-Level Factors Associated with Program Success**

  ▸ Meeting more administrative guidance objectives

  ▸ Number of years the state obligates funding for projects

  ▸ Lower funding (as a percentage) of non-infrastructure projects

▸ **Demographic Characteristics Associated with Program Success**

  ▸ Lower levels of K-8 Student enrollment

  ▸ Lower levels of child poverty in the state

Policy Analysis: Safe Routes to School: Results

SRTS funding summary in states by child poverty status FY2005-2009 (N=50)

Median Across States	High Child Poverty[a] (N=25)	Not High Child Poverty (N=25)
# projects	34	37
Funds available (millions)	$8.6	$5.9
Funds obligated (millions)	$2.9	$3.5
Per K-8 student funds available	$14.85	$15.26
Per K-8 student funds obligated	$4.48**	$8.27**
% available obligated by state	27**	47**

[a] High child poverty is defined as % of children age 0-17 years above the national median across 50 states (14.4%). ** $p<0.05$ Kruskal-Wallis test for difference in underlying distribution

Policy Analysis: Safe Routes to School: Results

Models predicting state percent of available funds obligated 2005-2009, among States (N=46)

Parameter	Estimate (standard error)
Base Model: Intercept	51.3 (5.3)***
High child poverty state	-15.7 (7.3)*
Model 1: Intercept	47.1 (5.8)***
High child poverty state	-14.2 (7.3)
High child poverty area implementation (50% or more of funding in areas of high child poverty)	13.3 (8.2)

▶ *<0.05;** <0.01; ***<0.001;

Summary of Findings

▸ Across states, variation in program success

▸ Meeting more administrative guidance objectives associated with more successful programs

▸ More successful programs associated with higher per student funding

▸ Policy recommendations

  ▸ Focus on meeting key administrative guidance objectives

  ▸ Tracking and monitoring systems to follow progress

  ▸ Capacity building for communities that have little prior experience in implementing projects, states with higher student enrollment

  ▸ Particular focus on low-resource areas is key

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Contact

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