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Grant targets safety, child activity

[Anna Kurth](#) The Daily Telegram
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The Superior school district received a grant from the Wisconsin Department of Transportation for its Bicycle Education Program.

WisDOT is offering a \$50,000 federal Safe Routes to School grant to implement bicycle and pedestrian curriculum in its elementary and middle school physical education programs. Superintendent Jay Mitchell said district staff will discuss plans for the grant when teachers return to work later this summer.

Safe Routes to School is a nationwide program developed to make biking and walking to school a safe activity, as it was in past decades. The program's other benefits include an easing of traffic congestion and increased activity to curb childhood obesity, according to the Federal Highway Administration Web site.

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In August 2005, the Federal Transportation Bill included \$480,000 in federal funding for Superior to implement its Safe Routes to School plans. The city is matching the federal funds with \$120,000 for its projects and plans to begin development on the project next summer, said Jason Serck, port and planning director.

The highest priority is focusing on a crossing designation in the area of North 58th Street on Tower Avenue, but will include development of additional sidewalks, he said.

The Superior Bicycle Education Program grant is separate from the infrastructure grant. The education grant is completely federally funded. The district also applied for \$10,000 to install bicycle racks, but that portion of the grant was denied.

The district will use the bicycle education grant to develop a safety program for its elementary and middle school students. Pedestrian and bicycle curriculum will be incorporated in physical education classes, special bicycle education programs, and biking and walking to school promotional campaign, said Holly Butcher, Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council senior planner. At the third- to fifth-grade level, the program includes a bike rodeo event conducted by physical education teachers, she said.

Sixth- to eighth-grade students will learn bicycle safety through a clinic that will offer maintenance checks, helmet safety and bike map reading — taught by certified bicycle-safety instructors. The middle school education would culminate with a ride in the city, Butcher said.

Following the bicycle and pedestrian safety education, the district plans to sponsor a bike and walk to school campaign, which includes community awareness components, Butcher said.

The district has until 2009 to use the money.

Anna Kurth covers education. Call her at (715) 395-5019 or e-mail akurth@superiortelegram.com.

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