



N.O. schools' streets flunk 'walkability' test

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New Orleans public school students still face unsafe walking conditions along streets and sidewalks near schools despite recent road improvement projects across the city, according to a new report from the [KidsWalk Coalition](#), a program of the [Tulane Prevention Research Center \(PRC\)](#).

The 2014 KidsWalk [Stepping to School Report](#) evaluated the infrastructure surrounding 50 public elementary, middle and high schools in New Orleans for walkability and rated more than 60 percent as "hazardous" due to damaged or broken sidewalks, curb ramps, traffic signage and pavement markings, including pedestrian crosswalks.

The report, which is an update of a similar audit from 2011, was created because many schools have moved, closed or opened in the last three years and street and sidewalk conditions have changed around some existing schools.

KidsWalk found that pedestrian infrastructure has improved in some cases. The number of schools earning a "good" walkability score grew to 8 percent in 2014 from 1 percent in 2011.

The KidsWalk report recommends increased coordination of sidewalk and street construction between school and government offices so that students, teachers, parents and residents can walk to and from schools and neighborhood destinations with greater ease.

"We hope this report will help school administrators, government officials and parents prioritize road safety projects around schools so that it becomes easier for kids and families to be more physically active before and after the school day," said Isobel Healy, program manager with the Tulane PRC.

"Studies show providing safe, walkable and bikeable urban environments are effective ways to improve health by encouraging residents to be physically active," said Carolyn Johnson, PRC director. "And, unfortunately, only about one in three Louisiana children get their recommended 60 minutes of daily physical activity."