



# Success Story:

## Barnwell Elementary School

### Situation

Metro Atlanta commuters aren't the only ones grappling with choking traffic – schools across the region deal with their own traffic jams every day. At Barnwell Elementary in Alpharetta, the line of vehicles waiting to drop off or pick up students stretches beyond school property onto the main road nearby, contributing to congestion in an area that already experiences a lot of traffic. Not only is this inconvenient for commuters and parents, it is also a safety concern for the school, causes ongoing student tardies, and requires a significant amount of staff time to monitor.

### Solutions

Eager to participate in the Better Air Schools program, Barnwell developed a comprehensive plan with multiple elements. The cornerstone of the school's efforts was the Ride There! for Clean Air component which combined year-round educational efforts and intermittent promotions to encourage and increase bus ridership. Barnwell held a two-week Bus Rider Challenge in the fall and then again in the spring.



In addition to the Ride There! program, Barnwell implemented an anti-idling campaign. Carpool lane drivers and bus drivers signed pledges to turn off their vehicles while waiting on school grounds, signage designated the Barnwell campus as a "No Idling Zone," and parents were educated about the benefits of cutting off their engines and cutting out the pollution through informational fliers, newsletter articles and direct outreach.

Barnwell's Better Air Schools program also extended beyond the standard elements. A group of Barnwell students produced a video to be shown to the entire school on Smog Alert days. In addition, Barnwell asked for The Clean Air Campaign to facilitate a meeting with a large gated community nearby to open a gate and allow for walkers from that neighborhood.

### Results

The first year of Barnwell's program was a success. Thanks to Ride There! for Clean Air, nearly half of Barnwell's classrooms recorded an increase in bus ridership and one classroom more than doubled their ridership from fall to spring. In addition, more than 600 students who rode the bus were rewarded by the SurPrize Patrol, with one lucky student receiving four Falcons tickets. Barnwell has enrolled in Better Air Schools for 2005-06, and has made plans to expand on its previous efforts.

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