

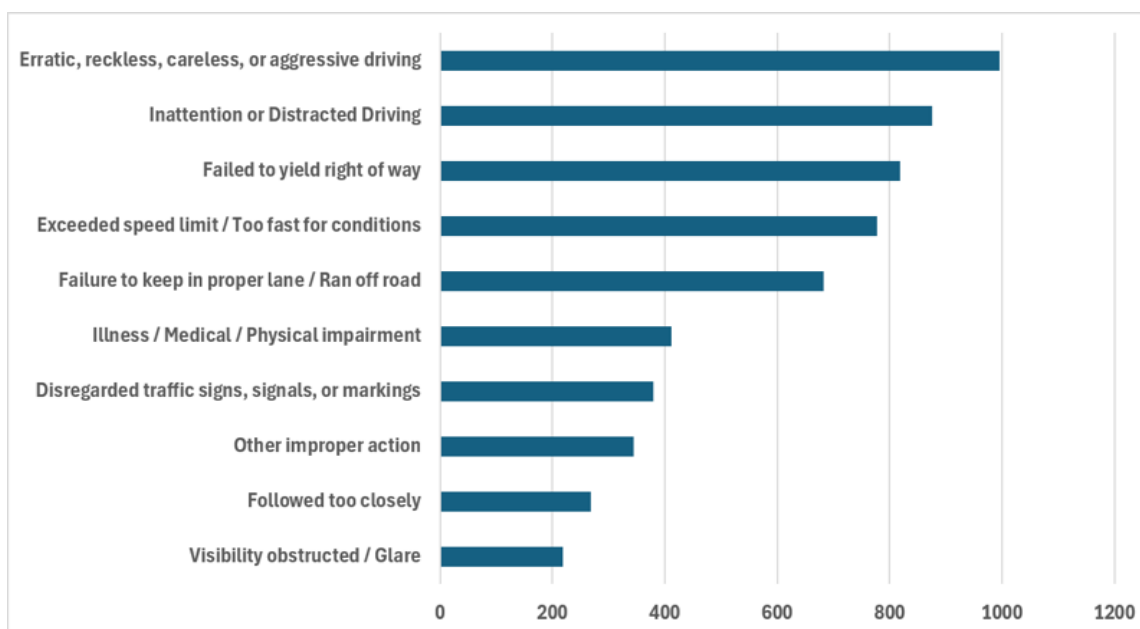
# Boston Region Vision Zero

## Engagement: Distracted Driving Education

As part of the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization's (MPO) commitment to developing and testing localized strategies for roadway safety, the MPO partnered with the Safe Roads Alliance to present the "Kids Speaking Up for Road Safety" curriculum in three communities. This curriculum is designed to bring road safety education directly into classrooms in some of the municipalities that have the highest number of crashes and to provide elementary school kids with the awareness and tools needed to influence positive driving behavior among adults.

A focus of the curriculum is distracted driving. Analysis in the Boston MPO's Vision Zero Action Plan found that the number of fatal and serious injury crashes related to distracted driving increased by 36 percent from 2018 to 2022. Figure 1 highlights updated data (through 2025) that shows that among injury crashes in the region where driver error was a factor, driver inattention or distraction is the second leading behavioral cause.

**Figure 1**  
**Boston Region Injury Crashes by Contributing Driver Behavior (2018–25)**



Source: Massachusetts Department of Transportation.

Developed by the [Safe Roads Alliance](#) and [End Distracted Driving](#), the interactive curriculum teaches students in grades 2–5 to recognize the dangers of distracted driving.

The lessons empower children and equip them with positive communication tools, such as respectful "I" statements, allowing them to confidently advocate for focused driving from the back seat.

## **Vision Zero Alignment**

This distracted driving education strategy advances the Safe System Approach through a focus on the behavior and vulnerability of road users, and by establishing a mandate for the Boston Region MPO and its municipalities to increase public awareness of Vision Zero through targeted campaigns and expanded partnerships with safety-focused youth initiatives.

The MPO's work with the Safe Roads Alliance actively fosters a culture of safety by targeting driver distraction, which is one of the key behaviors that raise the risk of crashes as highlighted by crash data as well as by community stakeholders during public engagement. Additionally, this effort will help the MPO operationalize traffic safety education regionally by engaging with young people about the risks and impacts of distracted driving and the role they can play as passengers to reinforce safe driving behaviors.

## **Scope and Reach**

The Boston Region MPO's partnership with Safe Roads Alliance targeted elementary school students in second through fourth grades. Additionally, a focus group with sixth graders was conducted to deliver the curriculum and gather feedback on how the materials could be adapted for middle school students.

The Safe Roads Alliance and the Boston Region MPO delivered the interactive classroom sessions to more than 650 students, in three communities and at five elementary schools during the spring of 2026:

- Braintree – Ross Elementary School (March 18): Taught 43 fourth-grade students.
- Somerville – West Somerville Neighborhood School (March 25 and June 11): Engaged two second-grade classrooms, totaling 40 students. Engaged two sixth-grade classes, totaling 50 students, to deliver curriculum and get feedback on the suitability of materials for middle school students.
- Foxborough – Taylor School (April 16): Delivered the curriculum program-wide to all second, third, and fourth graders, reaching 175 students. Igo School (May 1): Reached 237 students across the second, third, and fourth grades. Burrell School (May 22): Delivered instruction to 120 third and fourth graders.

## Results and Next Steps

In addition to building new relationships with municipalities and school leadership and reaching more than 650 kids with the “Kids Speaking Up for Road Safety” curriculum, this education program resulted in safety messaging created by kids who synthesized their road safety learning to help influence teen and adult drivers in their families and communities (Figure 2).

**Figure 2**  
**Distracted Driving Messaging Created by Kids**



This strategy will contribute to building a foundation for expanding and sustaining youth-led road safety advocacy across the region. Moving forward, the MPO, in coordination with the Safe Roads Alliance, can support municipal partners with implementing the program at elementary schools in the Boston region. The MPO can also help amplify the student-generated safety messages through municipal engagement efforts and presentations to municipal staff and leadership, including departments of public works, city councils, and school committees, to inform and strengthen local traffic safety campaigns. Generating this type of support among municipal staff can encourage the development of a local safety culture in our municipalities.