Parents are doing everything to get kids ready for back to school (new clothes, backpacks etc.) but 73 percent of students don’t feel safe at the intersections near their school! High school students in 22 states across the country recently rated the safety of the intersections near their schools with only a “C” grade.

These results come from an analysis of data collected by students as part of a “Teen Road Safety Assessment” Initiative (Teen RSA) led by Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) that was funded by State Farm™ to empower youth to take an active role in advocating for traffic safety in and around their schools. Working with their local State Farm agents, law enforcement and members of their community, the program helps students learn to “read the road” to understand road safety features and identify the areas of highest risk near their schools.

More than one thousand students in 71 schools conducted Teen RSAs to look at the potential roadway and intersection dangers near their schools. The results show that these youth feel roadway safety measures need to be taken in communities across the nation now:

- 40% of schools reported that their school pedestrian crosswalks were not painted properly (29 out of 71)
- 47% of schools reported that their crosswalk signals did not allow an adequate amount of time to safely cross the street (34 out of 71)
- Only 9% of schools reported to have crossing guards at intersections (7 out of 71)
- Only 19% of areas near schools were properly marked as school zone areas (14 out of 71)

Despite some overall positive trends in highway safety, such as increased seat belt use and advanced safety features in cars, unfortunately many roads and intersections exist that include physical deficiencies that contribute to the devastating number of crashes, injuries and fatalities in our country. The Teen RSA initiative works to educate students about how roadway engineering, design and infrastructure affects the safety of ALL road users – drivers, passengers, pedestrians, bicyclists and motorcyclists as well.

Engaging with youth about road safety is imperative to ensuring that students feel safe as they prepare for the start of the 2017-2018 school year. Now that these students have observed first-hand the potential dangers at these intersections, they are asking their communities to protect them by making the intersections safer.

FCCLA chapter members at Union High School in Big Stone Gap, VA not only conducted the RSA, but took it to the next level and successfully advocated for change within their community. The students’ actions resulted in an infrastructure change – the installation of a roundabout near their school. When completed before the new school year, this safety change will help make them and all who travel that area safer.