



House Select Committee on Education
Strategy and Practices | April 13, 2016

*2015 Report on NC Drivers
Education Program*

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Technical Assessment of the Driver Education Program

- Assessment was conducted at the request of the NC Department of Public Instruction (DPI) and the NC Governor's Highway Safety Program (GHSP)
- GHSP funded the Assessment with federal funding
- Dates of the Assessment were May 5-8, 2015
- Technical Assessment Team was assembled by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)



Technical Assessment Team

- **Richard Hanson**
 - 32 years of classroom teaching experience
 - Past-president of Oregon Driver and Traffic Safety Education Association
- **Andrew Krajewski**
 - Retired from Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration as the Director of Driver Safety
 - Taught driver education and instructor preparation
- **Thomas Liberatore**
 - Director of the Office of Driver Programs for Maryland MVA
- **Dr. James L. Nichols**
 - Former Director of the Office of Research and Traffic Records, NHTSA
 - Author of a Driver Education Effectiveness Program Report to Congress
- **Vanessa C. Wigand**
 - Principal Specialist for Health Education, Physical Education, Driver Education and Athletics at the Virginia Department of Education
 - Over 38 years of experience in the field of driver education



Why conduct an Assessment?

- To determine what North Carolina's strengths and weaknesses are concerning driver education.
- To gain valuable knowledge from experts in the field on how to improve driver education for North Carolina.
- To provide guidance for the Driver Education Advisory Committee (DEAC) and others interested in providing the best driver education program possible.



Assessment Background

- The assessment tool utilized the format of the Novice Teen Driver Education and Training Administrative Standards.
- The Standards include five major topic areas:
 - Program Administration (1.0)
 - Education/Training (2.0)
 - Instructor Qualifications (3.0)
 - Parent Involvement (4.0)
 - Coordination with Driver Licensing (5.0)



Priority Recommendations/Program Administration

- Standard 1.1.2
 - Carefully choose a State agency that is best suited and ideally not a direct provider of driver education to administer a statewide education and training program that can provide needed and appropriate regulatory environment, oversight, monitoring, evaluation, review and approval processes, professional development, and all other administrative actions that make available a quality driver education and training program to all age-eligible residents.



Priority Recommendations/Program Administration

- Status 1.1.2
 - It appears the state is not providing adequate oversight to ensure uniform quality of instruction.
- Recommendation 1.1.2
 - Establish an effective and comprehensive process for providing oversight for the teen driver education program.



Priority Recommendations/Program Administration

- Standard 1.1.7
 - Approve driver education and training programs that conform to applicable State and national standards.
- Status 1.1.7
 - DPI has an approved standardized driver education curriculum.
 - LEAs supplement as they see fit.
 - No action is taken against schools that do not use the curriculum.
 - Students indicate materials are outdated and there is considerable differences in behind the wheel (BTW) training.



Priority Recommendations/Program Administration

- Recommendation 1.1.7
 - Establish an effective process for continuously evaluating the standardized driver education curriculum to ensure it meets the needs of the North Carolina teen drivers and supports the goals of the State's driver safety efforts.



Priority Recommendations/Education/Training

- Standard 2.1.1
 - Have driver education and training that meets or exceeds current nationally accepted standards and benchmarks.
- Standard 2.1.2
 - Approve curricula that are based on nationally recognized standards such as ADTSEA (American Driver and Traffic Safety Education Association) and DSAA (Driving School Association of the Americas). Each State retains authority in determining what curricula meet its State standards.



Priority Recommendations/Education/Training

- Status 2.1.1 and 2.1.2
 - DPI worked collaboratively with many agencies to develop the NC Standard Curriculum Guide that meets national standards.
 - However, the Guide does not include lesson plans, assessments, suggested video enhancements, effective teaching practices, and a standardized delivery of instruction.
 - The result, LEAs use multiple curricula and textbooks to enhance the guide giving the appearance of a fragmented curriculum and inconsistent delivery of content.



Priority Recommendations/Education/Training

- Recommendation 2.1.1 and 2.1.2
 - Using the North Carolina Standard Curriculum Guide, create lesson plans, assessments, and other suggested teaching tools and resources to assist with instructional planning and delivery.



Priority Recommendations/Education/Training

- Standard 2.1.4
 - Require an approved end-of-course knowledge and skill assessment examination based on the stated goals and objectives to graduate from the driver education and training program.
- Status 2.1.4
 - NC does not require a state-approved end of course exam.
 - No progress of students academic progress throughout the course.
 - No consistent expectation of student mastery.



Priority Recommendations/Education/Training

- Recommendation 2.1.4
 - Provide standardized end-of-course assessments intended to provide students, families, educators, and the public better measures of student proficiency in applying knowledge, processes, and skills to become safe, competent users of the highway transportation system.



Priority Recommendations/Instructor Qualifications

- Standard 3.1.1
 - Require the following prerequisites for instructors receiving certification and recertification:
 - a) Possession of a valid driver's license, as recognized by the State.
 - b) Have an acceptable driving record as determined by the State.
 - c) Pass a Federal and State criminal background check.
 - d) Meet health or physical requirements as determined by the State.
 - e) Achieve a minimum academic education requirement as determined by the State.
 - f) Meet a minimum age requirement as determined by the State.



Priority Recommendations/Instructor Qualifications

- **Status 3.1.1**
 - It was difficult for the team to determine if NC meets this standard. For the most part yes, but requirements vary throughout the state.
- **Recommendation 3.1.1**
 - Standardize the prerequisites for certification and recertification for all driver education instructors to be consistent with the national standards regardless of the licensing agency and Local Education Agencies (LEAs).



Priority Recommendations/Instructor Qualifications

- Standard 3.1.2
 - Require instructors to complete approved standardized instructor training that applies to instructors and teachers in all public and private driver education and training programs. This preparation should include a course of study that is no less than 120 hours of preparatory time.



Priority Recommendations/Instructor Qualifications

- Status 3.1.2
 - No standardized, evaluated, or consistent delivery of instructor training programs within NC. The instructor training is not based on any State or national standards, is varied and inconsistent.
- Recommendation 3.1.2
 - Adopt a standards based instructor training curriculum that is used by all training programs in North Carolina.



Priority Recommendations/Parent Involvement

- Standard 4.1.1
 - Require the parent of a teen driver education and training student to attend a parent seminar, pre-course, or the initial session of the teen's driver education training course. This session should outline the parent's responsibility and opportunity to reduce his or her teen's crash risk in several ways, including modeling safe driving behavior. Best practices should include the following as a minimum:



Priority Recommendations/Parent Involvement

- Standard 4.1.1 (continued)
 - a) Manage and supervise the teen's driving to determine the teen's readiness to advance to the next stage
 - b) Supervise an extended learner permit period of at least six months and 50 hours of supervised practice driving
 - c) Supervise an extended intermediate license period that restricts unsupervised driving with teen passengers and nighttime hours until GDL requirements are met
 - d) Negotiate and adopt a written agreement between the teen and parent that reflects the expectations and defines restrictions, privileges, rules and consequences



Priority Recommendations/Parent Involvement

- **Status 4.1.1**
 - NC encourages, but does not require driver education providers to conduct a pre-course parent seminar. Interaction with parents is generally limited to materials provided to them, often without explanation.
 - NC does require sign-off of supervised driving during GDL stages 1 and 2.
- **Recommendation 4.1.1**
 - Require parent(s) or qualifying adults to attend a parent seminar, a pre-course session, or the initial session of the driver education program.



Priority Recommendations/Parent Involvement

- Standard 4.1.2
 - Require a parent to complete a debriefing with the driver education teacher to inform the parent of the progress and proficiency of the teen driver. This final session should include a reminder that it is the parent who must ultimately determine the teen's readiness to obtain a license with full driving privileges and of the parent's responsibility and important role in helping the teen to become a safe driver.
- Status 4.1.2
 - NC does not require or encourage a parent to complete a debriefing with the provider.



Priority Recommendations/Parent Involvement

- Recommendations 4.1.2
 - Require a parent to complete an end-of-course debriefing with the driver training instructor that includes:
 - a) Feedback to the parents on their teen's in-car driving skills using a proficiency-based grading system
 - b) The parents role in the remainder of the teen's learning experience, reminding the parent that driver education is only the start of the teen's education
 - c) The importance of GDL restrictions and how these restrictions empower the parent
 - d) Reminder that it is the responsibility of the parent to ultimately determine the teen's readiness



Priority Recommendations/Coordination with Driver Licensing

- Standard 5.1.6
 - Ensure that State licensing tests are empirically based and reflect performance competencies of the standards-based driver education and training program.



Priority Recommendations/Coordination with Driver Licensing

- **Status 5.1.6**
 - NC's skills and knowledge tests reflect the State's Driver Handbook, not what is being taught in the driver education classroom. DMV and DPI are working collaboratively to address this, but differences in program delivery may still prove a challenge in terms of consistency and content.
- **Recommendation 5.1.6**
 - Conduct an independent empirical analysis of both the driver's license knowledge and skills test to evaluate their relationship to driver education performance and highway safety standards.



Priority Recommendations/Coordination with Driver Licensing

- Standard 5.1.7
 - Develop and implement a valid and reliable driver's knowledge and skills test that assesses factors associated with the novice teen driver's ability to reduce driving risks.



Priority Recommendations/Coordination with Driver Licensing

- **Status 5.1.7**
 - The six year failure rate at DMV is 46 percent. DMV and DPI are working together to establish a common testing bank utilized by both DPI and DMV. Tests administered by DPI could then be accepted by DMV with no need for a retest. To date this has not been implemented.
- **Recommendation 5.1.7**
 - Analyze the knowledge and skills examinations to determine their ability to reliably and accurately assess the novice driver's capacity to identify and manage risks.



NOTHING COMPARES

