



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**National Highway
Traffic Safety
Administration**

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

August 8, 2015

Benjamin J. Matthews, Ph.D.
Deputy Chief Financial Officer for Operations
Department of Public Instruction
6319 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699

RE: North Carolina Driver Education Assessment Report

Dear Dr. Matthews:

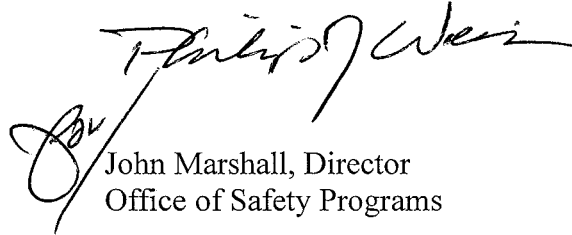
Thank you for participating in the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA) Driver Education Program Assessment process. It was a pleasure to work with your staff and other North Carolina officials involved in the assessment process held on May 4 – 8, 2015 in Raleigh, North Carolina.

North Carolina has demonstrated its commitment to the driver education program by allowing a panel of experts to review the processes and procedures used in the State to carry out the program. The purpose of this program assessment was to provide you with a snapshot of the current condition of driver education in your state. The individuals interviewed were helpful, cooperative and extremely willing to discuss the current condition of the program. Thanks to you and your staff for taking the time to provide excellent briefing materials which served as additional support materials for the team.

In addition to being able to provide guidance to the State, each of the team members felt that they gained a great deal from this valuable experience and appreciated the opportunity to both contribute and learn throughout the week. We greatly appreciate their efforts. The assessment team was able to identify both strengths and limitations in your driver education program. Enclosed is a report of the findings the team compiled during the assessment. Priority recommendations have been identified for your convenience.

We appreciate the opportunity to work with you and your staff on this very important program. If NHTSA can be of any further assistance with this matter, please feel free to contact me or Michelle Atwell with the Enforcement and Justice Services staff, or Dr. Elizabeth Baker, Region 3 Administrator.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Marshall". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping "J" and "M".

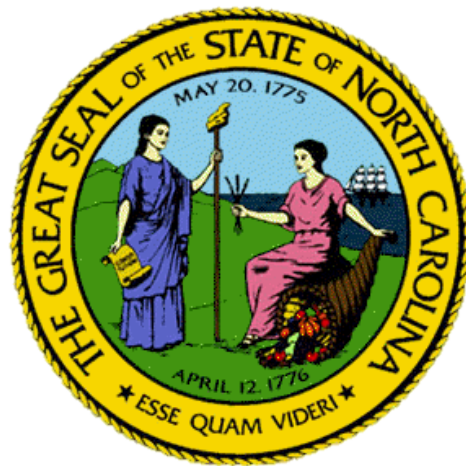
John Marshall, Director
Office of Safety Programs

Enclosure

cc: Dr Elizabeth Baker, Regional Administrator

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

TECHNICAL ASSESSMENT of the DRIVER EDUCATION PROGRAM



May 5 – 8, 2015

**National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
Technical Assistance Team**

Richard Hanson, MS
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	3
INTRODUCTION	4
ASSESSMENT BACKGROUND	14
PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS	16
ASSESSMENT FINDINGS	18
1.0 Program Administration	18
Advisory	18
Status	20
Recommendations	21
2.0 Education/Training	37
Advisory	37
Status	38
Recommendations	39
3.0 Instructor Qualifications	44
Advisory	44
Status	45
Recommendations	47
4.0 Parent Involvement	53
Advisory	53
Status	54
Recommendations	56
5.0 Coordination with Driver Licensing	57
Advisory	57
Status	58
Recommendations	59
APPENDIX 1 – Team Credentials	69
APPENDIX 2 – Assessment Agenda	76

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Technical Assistance Team (the Team) acknowledges and thanks the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) and the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) for their support and able assistance in making this review possible.

The Team acknowledges and thanks Dr. Benjamin Matthews, Chief Financial Officer for Operations, NCDPI; Mr. Reginald A. Flythe, Driver Education Consultant, NCDPI; and Ms. Teri V. Williams, Administrative Assistant, NCDPI. They played major roles in this assessment, coordinating speakers and presentations, compiling briefing materials, and assisting with travel coordination and meeting facilitation during the course of the week and the extensive planning period.

The Governor's Highway Safety Program (GHSP), NCDOT provided the funding for this assessment. It is with great appreciation that the Team acknowledges Mr. Don Nail, Director, GHSP, NCDOT for the support they have offered throughout the planning process. Special thanks again to Mr. Reginald A. Flythe, Driver Education Consultant, NCDPI for his leadership.

Ms. Michelle Atwell, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) Headquarters, Dr. Beth Baker, NHTSA Regional Administrator Region 3, and Ms. Meg Miller, Regional Program Manager, Region 3 assisted with the facilitation of the assessment process. The Team would like to thank NHTSA for helping to give a national and regional perspective to the assessment.

The Team would also like to recognize Ms. Christie Falgione, Highway Safety Services, LLC (HSS) for her assistance and facilitation during the assessment process. She played a major role during the on-site meeting facilitation.

The Team also thanks each of the participants in the review process for the time and energy invested in preparing and delivering their presentations. The participants' candor and thoroughness in discussing driver education in the State of North Carolina greatly assisted the Team in conducting a comprehensive review.

The Team believes this report will contribute to the State's efforts to enhance the effectiveness of its Driver Education program in preventing injuries, saving lives, and reducing economic costs of young novice driver motor vehicle crashes on North Carolina's roadways.

The Team recognizes the assessment is a review of all driver education activities and commends all who are involved in the day-to-day efforts to improve driver education and highway safety in North Carolina.

INTRODUCTION

Mission

The State Board of Education has the constitutional authority to lead and uphold the system of public education in North Carolina.

The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) is charged with implementing the state's public school laws and the State Board of Education's policies and procedures governing pre-kindergarten through 12th grade public education. The elected State Superintendent of Public Instruction leads the Department and functions under the policy direction of the State Board of Education. The agency provides leadership and service to the 115 local public school districts and 2,500+ traditional public schools, 148 charter schools, and the three residential schools for students with hearing and visual impairments.

Demographics

North Carolina is located in the southeast region of the United States. The state is bordered by Virginia to the north, Tennessee to the west, South Carolina to the south, and Georgia to the southwest. The Atlantic Ocean forms North Carolina's eastern border. North Carolina covers 48,710 square miles and is 503 miles long by 150 miles wide.

The three landforms of North Carolina make up the three major geographic regions of the state: the Coastal Plain, the Piedmont, and the Mountains. The Coastal Plain is low, flat to gently sloping land that extends along the Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico. Much of the Southeast lies within the Coastal Plain. The Piedmont, characterized by hilly, rolling land, borders the Coastal Plain. The Piedmont extends from Virginia to Alabama. The Appalachian Mountains, the largest range in the eastern United States, stretch from Canada to northern Alabama. See Figure 1 for a map of North Carolina.

FIGURE 1



Population

According to 2014 census estimates, North Carolina has a population of about 9,943,964 persons and ranked 10th in the United States. The state's population has increased 3.3% since 2010 and 22% since 2000. North Carolina consists of 100 counties and 9 municipalities with populations of more than 100,000.

North Carolina's largest cities include Charlotte (population 792,862), Raleigh (431,746), Durham (288,133), Greensboro (279,639), Winston-Salem (236,441), Fayetteville (204,408), Cary (151,088), Wilmington (112,067), and High Point (107,741). The median age in North Carolina is 37.4 years. Thirteen percent (13%) of the state's population is age 65 or older; 24% is under age 18. Statewide in 2013, White or Caucasians make up 71 percent of the population, Black or African American make up 22 percent, Hispanic or Latino make up 8.9 percent, Asians make up 2.6 percent, American Indian and Alaska Natives make up 1.6 percent. The median income in North Carolina is \$46,450.

Economy

Some of the key industries that are thriving in North Carolina include advanced manufacturing, aerospace and aviation, defense, automotive, biotechnology and pharmaceuticals, green and sustainable energy, financial services, software and information technology as well as textiles. Over the past 20 years, North Carolina has transitioned from a traditional economy based on tobacco, furniture and textiles—to a global economy that is driven by knowledge-based enterprises.

North Carolina has a great labor environment with skilled productive works, a comprehensive workforce development network and exceptional educational opportunities. North Carolina is a right-to-work state and maintains one of the lowest costs of doing business as well as a low cost of living. North Carolina is home to ten military installations with more than 100,000 active duty military personnel.

The State's unemployment rate is 5.3 percent close to the national unemployment rate of 5.5%. North Carolina is the 28th richest state in the United States.

Transportation

North Carolina has the second largest state highway system in the country. The transportation system includes 105,063 miles of roadway, 1,254 miles of interstate highways and 69,450 miles of rural roads. The North Carolina Highway System consists of a vast network of Interstate Highways, U.S. Routes, and state routes, managed by the North Carolina Department of Transportation. Because all roads in North Carolina are maintained by either municipalities or the state, counties do not maintain roads and there is no such thing as a "county road" within the state.

Highway Safety

An examination of the State's Traffic Crash Statistics files reveals the following data for North Carolina:

From 2006 to 2013 there has been a dramatic decrease in the number of fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles traveled (MVMT) over the eight-year period, as presented in Figure 2. The 2013 fatality rate is just under 1.2 fatalities per 100 MVMT. Nationally, the fatality rate has also declined during the same period, although not as sharply as in North Carolina.¹

FIGURE 2

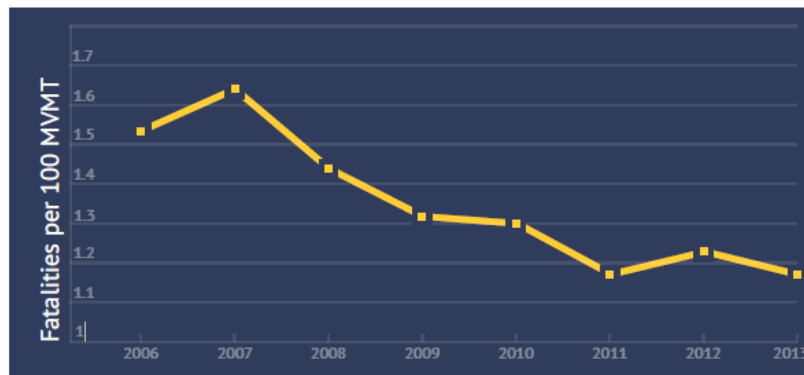


Figure 2: Fatalities per 100 MVMT (2006 – 2013)

The total number of fatalities have also decreased since 2006, as presented in Figure 3.

FIGURE 3

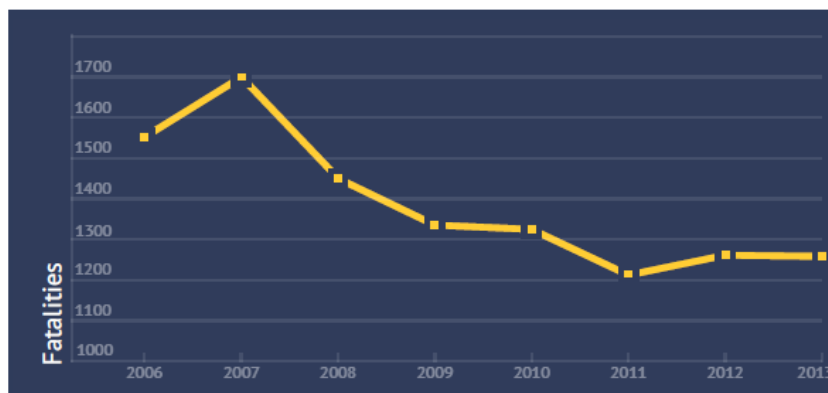


Figure 3: Fatalities Resulting from Crashes (2006 – 2013).

The dramatic decrease in the number of annual fatalities since 2006 is similar to the decrease in serious injuries resulting from crashes on North Carolina's roadways during the same time period, presented in Figure 4.

¹ 2014 North Carolina Strategic Highway Safety Plan

FIGURE 4

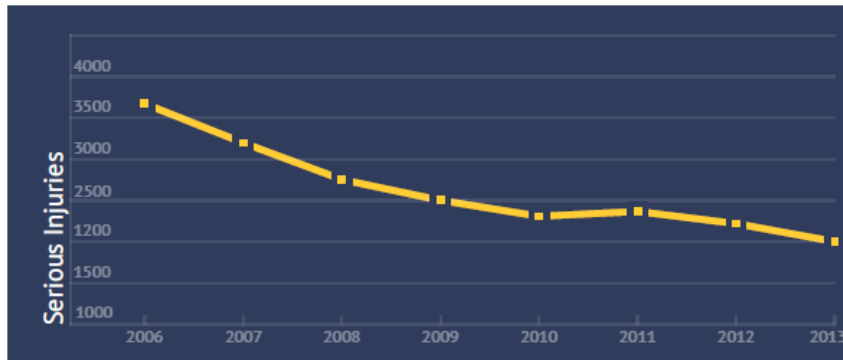


Figure 4: Serious Injuries Resulting from Crashes (2006 – 2013).

Although significant progress has been made in reducing fatalities and injuries, in 2013, 1,260 people died on North Carolina’s roadways, and another 2,109 people were seriously injured. Additionally, the downward trend in fatalities and serious injuries has flattened over the last few years.

From April 2010 – July 2013, the State’s population increased 3.3 percent to more than 9.8 million people—significantly faster growth than the 2.4 percent realized nationally. The driving public in North Carolina is very diverse, yet a few populations are overrepresented in fatal and serious-injury crashes, including younger and older drivers, Native Americans, and Hispanics

In 2013, there were 254 fatalities and 330 serious injuries from crashes involving older drivers (age 65 and older) in North Carolina. In 2013, there were 111 fatalities and 255 serious injuries from crashes involving younger drivers (ages 16 – 19) in North Carolina, as shown in Figures 5 and 6.¹

FIGURE 5

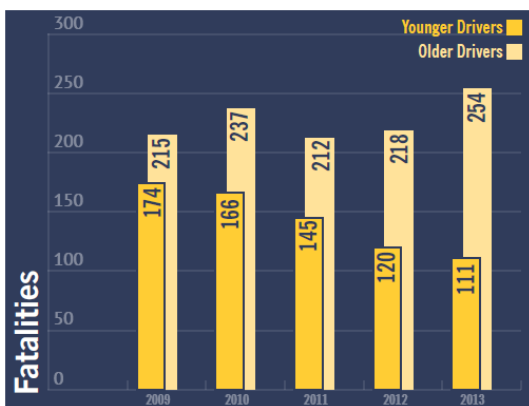
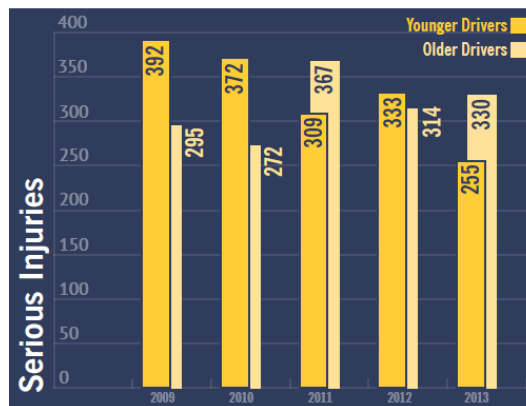


FIGURE 6



In 2012, there were 40,717 crashes involving young drivers (ages 15-19), a slight increase from 2011, but a decrease since 2007. There were 71 fatal crashes and 9,372 injury crashes involving young drivers in 2012. In 2012, 30 percent of the crashes, 60 percent of the fatalities and 27 percent of the injuries in teens were speed related.

In 2012, 23.5 percent of the crashes, 85.5 percent of the fatalities and 49.9 percent of the injuries in teens were related to lane departure. In 2012, 3.3 percent of the crashes, 18.4 percent of the teen fatalities and 6.7 percent of the teen injuries were alcohol related. See Figure 7 for a detailed look at the data.²

FIGURE 7

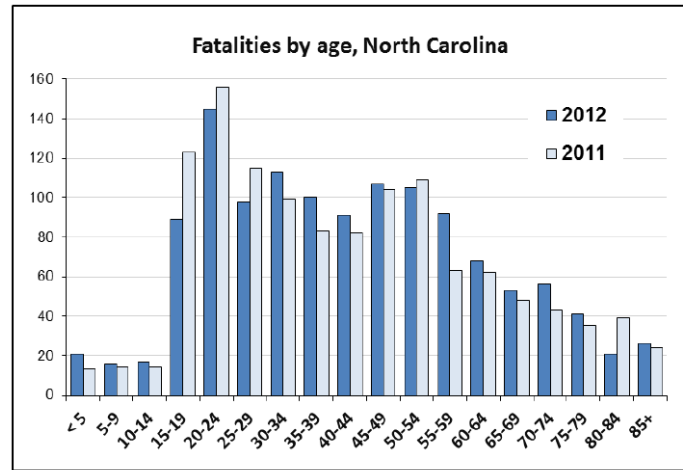
2012 Teen Data							
(Ages 15-19)							
ALL TEENS (regardless of driver age)							
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	07-11 Avg.	2012
All Crashes							
Total Crashes	53,063	48,818	47,820	42,890	40,670	46,652	40,717
Fatal Crashes	138	135	120	95	101	118	71
Injury Crashes	13,143	11,762	11,340	10,397	9,253	11,179	9,372
Injuries							
Total Teen Fatalities	154	152	125	102	109	128	76
Total Teen Injuries	16,247	14,692	14,193	12,392	11,551	13,815	11,581
Belt Use*							
Total Teen Fatalities	150	142	120	95	105	122	76
Unbelted Teen Fatalities	65	71	61	45	57	60	43
% Fatalities that were Unbelted	43%	50%	51%	47%	54%	49%	57%
Alcohol Related							
Crashes	1,794	1,690	1,543	1,335	1,299	1,532	1,358
Teen Fatalities	36	35	24	28	29	30	14
Teen Injuries	1,014	945	846	700	699	841	772
<i>Percent of Total</i>							
Crashes	3.4%	3.5%	3.2%	3.1%	3.2%	3.3%	3.3%
Teen Fatalities	23.4%	23.0%	19.2%	27.5%	26.6%	23.9%	18.4%
Teen Injuries	6.2%	6.4%	6.0%	5.6%	6.1%	6.1%	6.7%
Speed							
Crashes	16,705	15,184	15,342	14,005	12,520	14,751	12,245
Teen Fatalities	79	80	67	60	54	68	46
Teen Injuries	5,019	4,529	4,227	3,730	3,215	4,144	3,094
<i>Percent of Total</i>							
Crashes	31.5%	31.1%	32.1%	32.7%	30.8%	31.6%	30.1%
Teen Fatalities	51.3%	52.6%	53.6%	58.8%	49.5%	53.2%	60.5%
Teen Injuries	30.9%	30.8%	29.8%	30.1%	27.8%	29.9%	26.7%
Lane Departure							
Crashes	12,686	11,619	11,705	10,436	9,356	11,160	9,563
Teen Fatalities	114	110	87	72	79	92	65
Teen Injuries	6,451	5,914	5,607	4,952	4,585	5,502	4,676
<i>Percent of Total</i>							
Crashes	23.9%	23.8%	24.5%	24.3%	23.0%	23.9%	23.5%
Teen Fatalities	74.0%	72.4%	69.6%	70.6%	72.5%	71.8%	85.5%
Teen Injuries	49.1%	50.3%	49.4%	47.6%	49.6%	49.2%	49.9%

* Counts only vehicle occupants in vehicle types with safety belts

² North Carolina 2012 Traffic Crash Facts

During 2012, there were 54 fatalities among persons age 14 or younger, an increase of 32% from the 41 fatalities in 2011. Fatalities increase substantially once teens reach driving age. During 2012, there were 89 fatalities among those ages 15 to 19, down 28% from 2011. Among all age groups, fatalities were highest among young adults between the ages of 20 and 24. See Figure 8.

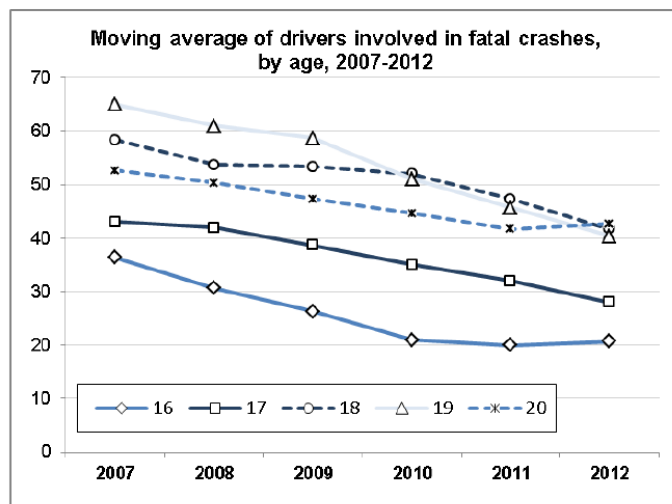
FIGURE 8



Source: FARS 2011 – 2012

Generally, 16-year-old drivers experience fewer fatal crashes than their older counterparts. Drivers age 17 have slightly higher involvements in fatal crashes, while involvement is higher still for ages 18 to 20. This is not surprising, since many 16 year-olds (and some 17 year-olds) do not have a license, and younger teens drive fewer miles, on average, than older teens. Perhaps the most important finding, however, is that involvement in fatal crashes has decreased since 2007 for young drivers of all ages. See Figure 9.

FIGURE 9



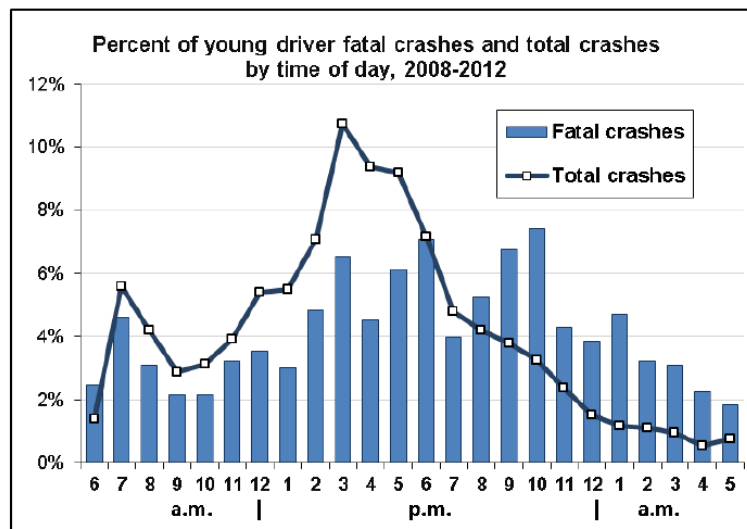
Source: FARS 2007 – 2012

Despite the reduction in young driver fatal crashes in recent years, young drivers in North Carolina continue to be over-represented in crashes and fatalities. In 2012, 16 to 20-year-olds comprised 7% of the population in North Carolina, yet they accounted for 13% of all crashes and 9% of fatal crashes.

During 2012, young drivers 16 to 20 years old were involved in 45,517 crashes in North Carolina. Consistent with previous years, males (53%) accounted for a somewhat greater proportion of crashes than females (47%). Crash-involved young drivers were most likely to be driving passenger vehicles (67%), followed by SUVs (17%) and pickup trucks (12%). In addition, more young driver crashes occurred on urban roads (58%) than rural roads (42%).

Young driver crashes also vary by time of day. Figure 10 shows the time of day of fatal crashes and total crashes from 2008 to 2012. When looking at total crashes (the line in the figure), there are distinct peaks near 7 a.m. and 3 p.m. This coincides with times when teens are driving to and from school. Young driver crashes drop off in the evening, and are very low late at night. By comparison, fatal crashes occur at all times of the day, including evening and late at night.

FIGURE 10



North Carolina’s teen accident and fatality rates have declined since the implementation of graduated driver licensing but remain high. Teen drivers age 16-19 are three times more likely than drivers age 20 and older to be in a fatal crash. The fatality rate for male drivers and passengers age 16-19 is nearly double the rate for females in that age group. Other risk factors for teens include:

- being an inexperienced driver;
- failing to recognize or underestimating dangerous situations;
- the presence of multiple teen passengers;
- less prevalent seat belt use;
- speeding and following too closely; and
- driving at night.

Furthermore, research indicates that teen drivers continue to be overrepresented in traffic fatalities, although not to the extent that existed before states enacted graduated driver licensing. A 2011 study by the North Carolina Division of Public Health indicated that while 13% of North Carolina traffic fatalities in 2009 were among drivers age 16-20, this age group represented only 7% of the North Carolina population. This overrepresentation in traffic fatalities was shared only by the age 21-25 population, which was nearly identical. Except for individuals over age 66, all other age groups are underrepresented in proportion.³

Major Accomplishments in Traffic Safety and Education Outreach

In North Carolina, teens must take driver education in order to qualify for their learner permit. Teens may take driver education through the public schools or through private lessons with approved providers.

In 2011, North Carolina developed a standardized curriculum and implemented the curriculum in the 2012 school year, which was an on-going common recommendation from experts.⁴

The Governor's Highway Safety Program (GHSP) is evaluating a novel, evidence-based orientation session for parents of new drivers. *Time to Drive* was developed by the UNC Highway Safety Research Center (HSRC) to provide guidance to parents who will be supervising a novice teen driver. *Time to Drive* is the first parent program to employ unscripted video of real parent-teen interactions while driving. An evaluation of the program was launched during FY2014 and will continue in FY2015. Parents are being randomly assigned to the *Time to Drive* session or a comparison group. Parents complete questionnaires after the program to examine their knowledge and understanding of key issues related to teen driver safety (e.g., the importance of teens getting lots of practice in a wide variety of driving settings). Additionally, telephone interviews are being conducted with parents and teens several months following the session to examine the effect of the program on parent supervisory behaviors.

A full-time driver education consultant position was created by the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) to assist with the communication and consistency among driver education programs in North Carolina school districts. Some of the accomplishments include but are not limited to: creating a Driver Education Strategic Plan, creation of a Driver Education programs contact list within each school district, providing technical assistance to schools, convening the Driver Education Advisory Committee, collaborating with the Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) and connecting law enforcement and Driver Education experts at the state and local levels.

It is not the intent of this report to document all of the accomplishments in North Carolina.

³ Performance Measurement and Monitoring Would Strengthen Accountability of North Carolina's Driver Education Program: Final Report to the Joint Legislative Program Evaluation Oversight Committee

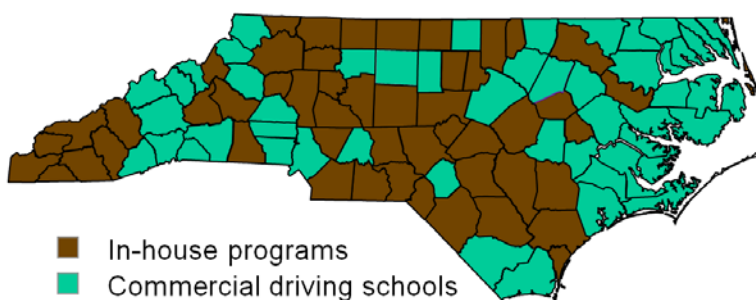
⁴ Teen Road Safety in North Carolina: Putting Best Practice into Action, December 2012

Licensed/Permitted Drivers and Completion of Driver Education

Collectively, the state has approximately 120,000 students annually who become eligible to take Driver Education.⁵ Of that eligible number, about 96% of the state's teens are actually taught to drive – in 2013-14 numbers were around 116,000. There were 106,000 who took classroom driver education and 98,600 who took behind-the-wheel driver education. There were 1,188 driver education teachers in 2013 – 2014.⁶

Approximately half of the driving schools in North Carolina are in-house programs and the other half are commercial driving schools. There were 57 commercial schools and 58 “in-house” schools in 2013-2014. See Figure 9.

FIGURE 9
NC Driver Education by Program Type
2013-14



According to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), North Carolina had 6,667,693 licensed drivers in 2012. Eighty-six percent (86%) of the driving-age population in the state is licensed. FHWA records indicate a total of 7,593,351 registered vehicles in 2012, of which 3,445,365 were privately owned automobiles and 199,205 were privately owned motorcycles.

In 2012, there were 27,020 licensed sixteen year olds and 19,387 licensed seventeen year olds, which was an increase from 2011. See Figure 10.

⁵ North Carolina Driver Education Strategic Plan, June 2012

⁶ 2013-2014 Driver Education Student and Teacher Data by LEA

FIGURE 10**Number of Licenses Issued for Drivers 16-17 years old, for years 2010 - 2012.**

Year	Age	Lev	Total
2010	16	2	53140
2010	16	3	24878
2010	17		10
2010	17	2	16923
2010	17	3	18030
2011	16		1
2011	16	2	53321
2011	16	3	26129
2011	17		5
2011	17	2	16812
2011	17	3	18815
2012	16		3
2012	16	2	53585
2012	16	3	27020
2012	17		3
2012	17	2	16132
2012	17	3	19387

In 2012 there were 69,337 permitted fifteen year olds, 15,092 permitted sixteen year olds and 5,794 permitted seventeen year olds. See Figure 11.

FIGURE 11**Total Number of Permitted Drivers ages 15 – 17 for the years 2010 – 2014**

Year	Age	Total
2010	15	69121
2010	16	15650
2010	17	6173
2011	15	71046
2011	16	15347
2011	17	5964
2012	15	69337
2012	16	15092
2012	17	5794
2013	15	70494
2013	16	15920
2013	17	6065
2014	15	69974
2014	16	17040
2014	17	6220

ASSESSMENT BACKGROUND

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of unintentional injury and death in the United States. Nationwide, the economic cost of motor vehicle traffic crashes exceeds \$230 billion annually. Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of teen (age 15-20) deaths in the United States.

The mission of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) is to reduce deaths, injuries, and economic and property losses resulting from motor vehicle crashes. In its ongoing efforts to reduce teen traffic crashes and subsequent fatalities and injuries, NHTSA continues its program of providing technical program assessments including Driver Education to the States upon request.

NHTSA acts as a facilitator by assembling a team composed of individuals who have expertise in driver education program administration, program development and evaluation, curriculum and instruction, and teen driving advocacy and outreach. Expertise among Team members includes: Program Administration, Driver Licensing, Education and Training, Instructor Qualification, and Parental Involvement.

The purpose of the assessment is to assist in the review of the driver education program in the State of North Carolina, identify the program's strengths and accomplishments, identify weak areas and offer suggestions for improvement. The assessment can be used as a tool for planning purposes and for making decisions about how to best use available resources. This assessment tool follows the format of the *Novice Teen Driver Education and Training Administrative Standards*. The Advisory that precedes each section of this report is taken from this document. The assessment process provides an organized approach for measuring program status.

The initial Driver Education Program Assessment was conducted in the State of Maryland. The Maryland Assessment Team and the State of Maryland developed the assessment tools and processes with the assistance of NHTSA and independently conducted an assessment in August of 2010. Following the success of the Maryland driver education assessment, NHTSA assumed the role of coordinator and facilitator of future assessments. North Carolina is the tenth State to undertake a driver education assessment.

NHTSA utilized the newly developed *Novice Teen Driver Education and Training Administration Standards* as the assessment framework. These standards were developed by representatives from the driver education professional community, with assistance from NHTSA. The five major topic areas in the standards are:

- Program Administration
- Education/Training
- Instructor Qualifications
- Parent Involvement
- Coordination with Driver Licensing

The topic areas identified in the standards became the foundation for this assessment as well as key factors in identifying the panel of experts for the technical assistance team. NHTSA developed a list of national experts in the five areas above and used that list to determine the assessment team. Team members were also provided with a comprehensive “briefing book” by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI).

Assessment Process

NHTSA Headquarters and NHTSA Region 3 Office staff facilitated the Driver Education Program Assessment which was conducted at the Embassy Suites – Crabtree Hotel in Raleigh, North Carolina from May 5 - 8, 2015. The Department of Public Instruction (DPI) took the lead for the State in coordinating the assessment. Working with the NCDPI, NHTSA recommended a team of six individuals with demonstrated expertise in the topic areas of the National Administrative Standards. Efforts were made to select a team that reflected the needs and interests expressed by the NCDPI during pre-assessment conference calls. The assessment consisted of interviews with NCDPI staff, State and community level driver education program managers, trainers, public and commercial (private) instructors, law enforcement, traffic safety resource prosecutor (TSRP), district attorney, researcher, parents and students. The conclusions drawn by the assessment team are based upon the facts and information provided by the various experts who made presentations to the team as well as the briefing materials that were provided to the team during the assessment planning phase.

Following the completion of the presentations, the team convened to review and analyze the information presented and developed recommendations. The report is a consensus report by the Team. The recommendations are based on the unique characteristics of the State and what the Team members believed the State and its political subdivisions and partners can do to improve the effectiveness and comprehensiveness of their programs.

The assessment Team noted that there are a variety of education and outreach initiatives conducted throughout North Carolina in the area of driver education and traffic safety. It is not the intent of this report to thoroughly document all of these successes, nor credit the large number of individuals at all levels who are dedicated to driver education. By its very nature, the report tends to focus on the areas that need improvement based on the *Novice Teen Driver Education and Training Administrative Standards*. The report is an attempt to provide assistance to all levels for improvement, which is consistent with the overall goals of these types of assessments.

On the final day of the assessment, the Team briefed representatives from the State of North Carolina and the driver education community on the results of the assessment and discussed major points and recommendations. This report is an assessment Team report; it is not a NHTSA document. North Carolina may use the assessment report as the basis for planning driver education program improvements, assessing legislative priorities, providing for additional training, and evaluating funding priorities. On behalf of the Assessment Team, NHTSA provides the final report to the GHSP, NCDOT and NCDPI.

PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

1.1.2

- **Establish an effective and comprehensive process for providing oversight for the teen driver education program.**

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.**

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.**

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.**

3.1.1

- **Standardize the pre-requisites 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).**

3.1.2

- **Adopt a standards based instructor training curriculum that is used by all training programs in North Carolina.**

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.**

4.1.2

- **Require a parent to complete an end-of-course debriefing with the driver training instructor that includes:**
 - **Feedback to the parents on their teen’s in-car driving skills using a proficiency-based grading system to measure student achievement;**
 - **The parent’s role in the remainder of their teen’s learning experience and remind them that driver education is only the start of their teen’s driving education;**
 - **The importance of GDL restrictions and how these restrictions empower them to minimize known high risk situations for their young driver (i.e., driving at night and/or with other teens in the vehicle);**
 - **A reminder that it is the responsibility of the parent to ultimately determine the teen’s readiness to obtain a license with full driving privileges.**

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.**

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.**

ASSESSMENT FINDINGS

1.0 Program Administration

All entities delivering driver education and training should be treated fairly and equitably, meet the same quality standards, and have equitable access to State driver education and training resources.

Most States may have a multitude of public and private novice teen driver education and training programs. Each State may have different administrative and provisional structures. Alternative delivery (e.g., online, parent-taught, and correspondence) programs can be either public or private, may not have a physical location, and are subject to varying requirements set forth by the State.

1.1 Management, Leadership, and Administration

Advisory

Each State should:

1.1.1 have a single agency, or coordinated agencies, informed by an advisory board of stakeholders and charged with overseeing all novice teen driver education and training programs. That agency should have authority and responsibility for the implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and enforcement of these standards. This agency should also be charged with developing and executing communication strategies to inform parents and the public about driver education and training issues. In addition, the agency should inform providers in a timely fashion about changes to laws, regulations, and procedures.

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.

1.1.3 have a full-time, funded State administrator for driver education and training. This individual should meet or exceed the qualifications and training required by the State for a novice teen driver education and training instructor and/or school owner or possesses equivalent experience or qualifications. This administrator should be an employee of the agency that has oversight of driver education and training.

1.1.4 have standardized monitoring, evaluation/auditing, and oversight procedures to ensure that every driver education and training program uses a curriculum with written goals and objectives.

1.1.5 have a program renewal process to ensure that curriculum material and procedures are current.

- 1.1.6 adopt an instructor certification renewal process.
- 1.1.7 approve driver education and training programs that conform to applicable State and national standards.
- 1.1.8 deny or revoke approval of driver education and training programs that do not conform to applicable State and national standards.
- 1.1.9 ensure that programs reflect multicultural education principles and are free of bias.
- 1.1.10 administer applications for licensing of driver education and training instructors, including owner/operators of public and private providers.
- 1.1.11 develop and execute monitoring, evaluation, and auditing procedures to ensure standards are met by public and private providers.
- 1.1.12 adopt goals, objectives, and outcomes for learning.
- 1.1.13 develop criteria to assess and approve programs, curricula, and provider effectiveness. Financial and/or administrative sanctions for non-compliance with the State application and approval processes and/or standards should be provided to all applicants and provide remediation opportunities to driver education and training programs when sanctions are issued.
- 1.1.14 establish and maintain a conflict resolution system for disputes between the State agency and local driver education and training programs.
- 1.1.15 require, provide, or ensure the availability of ongoing professional development for instructors to include updates in best education and training methods and material.
- 1.1.16 require all public and private driver education and training providers to report program data to the designated State agency so that periodic evaluations of the State's driver education and training programs can be completed and made available to the public.
- 1.1.17 ensure that student information submitted to the agency or used by the agency remains confidential, as required by applicable State and Federal regulations.
- 1.1.18 ensure that all novice teen driver education and training programs, instructors, and associated staff possess necessary operating licenses and credentials required by the State.
- 1.1.19 ensure that each driver education and training provider has an identified person to administer day-to-day operations, including responsibility for the maintenance of student records and filing of reports with the State in accordance with State regulations.
- 1.1.20 ensure that all materials, equipment, and vehicles are safe and in proper condition to conduct quality, effective driver education and training.

1.1.21 refer to a general standard for online education such as those established by the North American Council for Online Learning in the absence of national standards specific to the delivery of online driver education or online teacher preparation.

1.1.22 ensure that the instruction of novice teen drivers is completed using concurrent and integrated classroom and in-car instruction where the bulk of the classroom instruction occurs close in time to the in-car instruction to ensure the maximum transfer of skills.

Status and Recommendations

Standard 1.1.1

1.1.1 have a single agency, or coordinated agencies, informed by an advisory board of stakeholders and charged with overseeing all novice teen driver education and training programs. That agency should have authority and responsibility for the implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and enforcement of these standards. This agency should also be charged with developing and executing communication strategies to inform parents and the public about driver education and training issues. In addition, the agency should inform providers in a timely fashion about changes to laws, regulations, and procedures.

Status

1.1.1

The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (DPI) has legislative authority and responsibility for administering the State's novice teen driver education and training program. All 115 Local Education Agencies (LEA) are required to provide driver education classroom and behind the wheel instruction for all physically and mentally qualified individuals older than 14 years and six months that are approved by the principal of the school and enrolled in a public or private school or receiving home instruction. An LEA may administer their own in-house courses or contract with a Department of Motor Vehicle (DMV) licensed commercial driving school to provide behind the wheel, classroom or both classroom and behind the wheel instruction. The DPI has the authority to administer the driver education program. Most of the responsibility for managing, monitoring and evaluating driver education instruction has been delegated to the LEA. The DPI distributes state funds to the LEAs, tracks the number of individuals completing driver education instruction and audits the LEAs driver education expenditures.

The North Carolina Driver Education Advisory Committee (DEAC) was created in 2013 to advise and make recommendations to the State Board of Education through the DPI on implementing a Driver Education Strategic Plan and other issues related to driver education and traffic safety.

The duties of the Committee are solely advisory. Duties of the DEAC are to: (Policy TCS-B-008 Statutory Reference N.C. Gen. Stat. §115C-215)

1. Advise and confer on matters pertaining to the establishment of rules necessary to carry out the duties of the Driver Education Program and the implementation of the North Carolina Driver Education Strategic Plan.
2. Review and update guidelines for the operation of the Driver Education Program.
3. Promote the positive effects of the Graduated Driver Licensing Program.
4. Foster partnerships with the NC Division of Motor Vehicles including testing, instructor training, driving school regulations and related protocol.
5. Provide a communication channel between driver education and stakeholders.
6. Stimulate public awareness of driver education needs and contributions.
7. Serve as an advocate of driver education.
8. Influence driver education support through appropriate channels.
9. Lend credibility to driver education programs.

The State Board of Education approves appointments to the DEAC of up to a maximum of nineteen voting members. Committee members shall have expertise relevant to the functions of the Committee. The Committee shall have voting members from the following groups:

1. NC Department of Public Instruction
2. NC Department of Transportation and Division of Motor Vehicles
3. UNC Highway Safety Research Center
4. NC Driver and Traffic Safety Education Association
5. Commercial Driving Schools
6. LEA Coordinators/Teachers
7. University/Community College
8. Law Enforcement
9. NC Department of Insurance
10. PTA Representative
11. Student Representative

Committee members serve a two year term. It was reported to the assessment team that the DEAC meets quarterly.

The DEAC has created the Driver Education Strategic Plan and is now working on implementing each component of the plan.

Recommendation

1.1.1

- No recommendation.

Standard 1.1.2

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.

Status

1.1.2

The general statute § GS 115C-215 states that the DPI has the authority and responsibility to organize and administer a standardized driver education program that is offered at public high schools across the State. § GS 115C-216 requires LEA's to provide driver education classroom and behind the wheel instruction at their high schools. The DPI does not provide driver education instruction. DPI is responsible for developing the standards for the driver education program and then providing the necessary oversight to ensure the quality of the instruction.

Based on the information provided to the assessment team it appears that the state is not providing adequate oversight to ensure uniform quality of instruction.

Recommendations

1.1.2

- **Establish an effective and comprehensive process for providing oversight for the teen driver education program.**
- Expand the duties of the Driver Education Advisory Committee (DEAC) to include an evaluation of effective oversight methods.

Standard 1.1.3

1.1.3 have a full-time, funded State administrator for driver education and training. This individual should meet or exceed the qualifications and training required by the State for a novice teen driver education and training instructor and/or school owner or possesses equivalent experience or qualifications. This administrator should be an employee of the agency that has oversight of driver education and training.

Status

1.1.3

The DPI hired a full-time Driver Education Consultant in January 2013. The Consultant is a licensed DPI teacher and certified Division of Motor Vehicles commercial driver education instructor.

The primary purpose of this position is to serve as the DPI's primary contact for driver education. The consultant works to improve school leadership by maintaining an integrated vision of curriculum development, program planning, technical assistance and educational training for driver education. The consultant organizes and administers curriculum development and revisions, serves as a resource for best practices, administers the Driver Education Strategic Plan, provides recommendations and guidance for local-level policy and fiscal operations, implements the standardized curriculum and collaborates with the Division of Motor Vehicles and other stakeholders regarding driver education concerns.

Recommendations

1.1.3

- No recommendation.

Standard 1.1.4

1.1.4 have standardized monitoring, evaluation/auditing, and oversight procedures to ensure that every driver education and training program uses a curriculum with written goals and objectives.

Status

1.1.4

The Department of Public Instruction (DPI) currently does not have standardized procedures for monitoring, evaluating or regulating the North Carolina driver education program. The Local Education Agencies (LEAs) monitor and evaluate their driver education efforts. Since 2013, non-compliance violations have not been identified or investigated. The LEAs are responsible for following the DPI driver education policies and administrative rules.

The Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) is responsible for regulating the commercial driving schools and DMV licensed instructors. The DMV has not received any complaints regarding driver education and no sanctions have been applied in the last three years. Annually the DMV checks the driving schools classrooms, vehicles, records and licenses.

During the student and parent presentations, several issues about driver education were identified, but no complaints were filed.

Recommendations

1.1.4

- Establish standards and procedures for monitoring the quality of the driver education program and instruction provided by the Local Education Agencies (LEAs).
- Develop and implement a process to apply sanctions against driver education schools which are found not to be delivering comprehensive and quality driver education.
- Establish a process for parents and students to file complaints regarding the driver education courses and instructors.

Standard 1.1.5

1.1.5 have a program renewal process to ensure that curriculum material and procedures are current.

Status

1.1.5

The Department of Public Instruction (DPI) adopted a North Carolina driver education curriculum in 2011. There was no evidence presented to the assessment team that there is a renewal process to ensure that curriculum material and procedures are current.

Recommendations

1.1.5

- Establish a process for reviewing and updating the curriculum to ensure it is current and addressing the instructional needs of the North Carolina students.

Standard 1.1.6 and 1.15

1.1.6 adopt an instructor certification renewal process.

1.1.15 require, provide, or ensure the availability of ongoing professional development for instructors to include updates in best education and training methods and material.

Status

1.1.6 and 1.1.15

Licensed Department of Public Instruction (DPI) teachers are required to renew their teaching license every five years and complete 7.5 CEU's in approved subject areas. The Local Education Agencies (LEAs) approve the subject areas. The Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) licensed instructors must renew their license every four years and complete 64 contact hours of renewal credit.

Recommendations

1.1.6 and 1.1.15

- Create a progressive professional development program for all recently licensed instructors to support their continued development of essential teaching skills and support quality driver education instruction.
- Allocate sufficient resources to support the creation of a progressive professional development program.

Standard 1.1.7

1.1.7 approve driver education and training programs that conform to applicable State and national standards.

Status

1.1.7

The Department of Public Instruction (DPI) has approved a standardized driver education curriculum that prescribes the scope and expectations for student learning. The Local Education Agencies (LEAs) are to adhere to this curriculum in the provision of their locally approved novice teen driver education and training program.

The LEAs reported using the standardized curriculum and supplementing it with other instructional materials they felt were needed. Although the information provided to the team suggested that some schools may not be consistently using all elements of the North Carolina driver education curriculum, the team is not aware of any administrative action that has been taken against schools that may not be using that curriculum.

Students who recently completed driver education instruction reported that many of the driver education materials were out of date and not differentiated to be engaging. They also reported significant differences in the curriculums and the behind the wheel training used by various instructors.

Recommendations

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 States driver safety efforts.**
- Establish an effective and efficient process to ensure the adopted curriculum is used by the Local Education Agencies (LEAs) and the quality of instruction meets the established standards.

Standards 1.1.8; 1.1.11; 1.1.18; and 1.1.20

1.1.8 deny or revoke approval of driver education and training programs that do not conform to applicable State and national standards.

1.1.11 develop and execute monitoring, evaluation, and auditing procedures to ensure standards are met by public and private providers.

1.1.18 ensure that all novice teen driver education and training programs, instructors, and associated staff possess necessary operating licenses and credentials required by the State.

1.1.20 ensure that all materials, equipment, and vehicles are safe and in proper condition to conduct quality, effective driver education and training.

Status

1.1.8; 1.1.11; 1.1.18; and 1.1.20

The Department of Public Instruction (DPI) does not have an established driver education quality assurance program. The DPI relies on the Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to monitor the driver education instruction at their schools. As mentioned previously in the report, the Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) licenses commercial driving schools and instructors. The DMV does annual checks on commercial driving school classrooms, records, licenses and vehicles.

Neither the DPI nor the DMV have procedures in place to communicate or promote high quality instruction of the novice teen driver education and training program nor have there been any administrative actions taken against non-compliant schools in the last three years.

Recommendations

1.1.8; 1.1.11; 1.1.18; and 1.1.20

- Establish the standards and procedures for regulating, monitoring and evaluating driver education programs.
- Develop and implement a formal process to apply sanctions against non-compliant driver education programs.

Standard 1.1.9

1.1.9 ensure that programs reflect multicultural education principles and are free of bias.

Status

1.1.9

All 115 Local Education Agencies (LEAs) are required to provide driver education classroom and behind the wheel instruction for all physically and mentally qualified individuals older than 14 years and six months that are approved by the principal of the school and enrolled in public or private school or receiving home instruction.

Recommendation

1.1.9

- No recommendation.

Standard 1.1.10

1.1.10 administer applications for licensing of driver education and training instructors, including owner/operators of public and private providers.

Status

1.1.10

All Local Education Agencies (LEAs) are required to provide driver education instruction. The Department of Public Instruction (DPI) reported they are no longer issuing new driver education instructor licenses. The Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) licenses commercial driving schools and driver education instructors. The DMV application and licensing process is formalized in Administrative Code.

Recommendations

1.1.10

- No recommendation.

Standard 1.1.12

1.1.12 adopt goals, objectives, and outcomes for learning.

Status

1.1.12

The Department of Public Instruction (DPI) adopted a North Carolina driver education curriculum in 2011. Learning objectives and outcomes are identified in the curriculum.

Recommendations

1.1.12

- No recommendation.

Standard 1.1.13

1.1.13 develop criteria to assess and approve programs, curricula, and provider effectiveness. Financial and/or administrative sanctions for non-compliance with the State application and approval processes and/or standards should be provided to all applicants and provide remediation opportunities to driver education and training programs when sanctions are issued.

Status

1.1.13

The Department of Public Instruction (DPI) has not developed criteria to assess and approve programs, curricula, and provider effectiveness and does not have standardized procedures for evaluating local driver education programs. The Local Education Agencies (LEAs) monitor and evaluate their driver education efforts. In spite of information provided to the team regarding inconsistent curricula and behind the wheel instruction no non-compliance violations have been identified or investigated by the State. The LEAs are responsible for following the DPI driver education policies and administrative rules.

The Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) is responsible for regulating and licensing the commercial driving schools and instructors. In spite of information provided to the team regarding inconsistent curricula and behind the wheel instruction no non-compliance violations have been identified or investigated by the DMV.

Recommendations

1.1.13

- Develop criteria to assess and approve programs, curricula, and provider effectiveness.
- Develop and implement a formal process to apply sanctions against non-compliant driver education programs.

Standard 1.1.14

1.1.14 establish and maintain a conflict resolution system for disputes between the State agency and local driver education and training programs.

Status

1.1.14

Both the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) and Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) have a conflict resolution process. Conflicts between the DPI and Local Education Agencies (LEAs) are handled through the State Board of Education. Conflicts between the DMV and commercial driving schools are handled through a hearing process. In the last three years neither agency was involved in a conflict resolution process.

Recommendations

1.1.14

- No recommendation.

Standard 1.1.16 and 1.1.17

1.1.16 require all public and private driver education and training providers to report program data to the designated State agency so that periodic evaluations of the State's driver education and training programs can be completed and made available to the public.

1.1.17 ensure that student information submitted to the agency or used by the agency remains confidential, as required by applicable State and Federal regulations.

Status

1.1.16 and 1.1.17

The Department of Public Instruction (DPI) collects information on the number of students completing driver education courses and the Local Education Agencies (LEAs) expenditures. These numbers are used to provide funding to the LEAs. Student personal information is not collected by the DPI. The Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) collects student personal information at the time the student applies for their initial learner's permit. The DMV follows state privacy rules and laws. The LEA and the commercial driving schools are required by law and administrative rules to protect personal information.

Recommendations

1.1.16 and 1.1.17

- Investigate methods to improve the secure transmission of records between all organizations involved in the driver education process.

Standard 1.1.19

1.1.19 ensure that each driver education and training provider has an identified person to administer day-to-day operations, including responsibility for the maintenance of student records and filing of reports with the State in accordance with State regulations.

Status

1.1.19

Each Local Education Agency (LEA) designates a driver education coordinator or supervisor to administer their driver education program. The coordinator is responsible for scheduling courses, instructors, maintaining student records and submitting reports to the Department of Public Instruction (DPI). The commercial driving schools designate a person to collect the student records and prepare reports for the LEA.

Recommendations

1.1.19

- No recommendation.

Standard 1.1.21

1.1.21 refer to a general standard for online education such as those established by the North American Council for Online Learning in the absence of national standards specific to the delivery of online driver education or online teacher preparation.

Status

1.1.21

The Department of Public Instruction (DPI) pilot tested online driver education courses at selected Local Education Agency (LEA) schools. The pilot test was inconclusive and DPI elected not to adopt online driver education instruction. The Driver Education Advisory Committee (DEAC) will continue to work on establishing guidelines for online learning. Some LEA schools are continuing to use the online driver education instruction developed for the pilot test.

Recommendation

1.1.21

- Continue to evaluate the option of online classroom driver education instruction that meets the North American Council for Online Learning (NACOL) national standards or other national standards for online learning.

Standard 1.1.22

1.1.22 ensure that the instruction of novice teen drivers is completed using concurrent and integrated classroom and in-car instruction where the bulk of the classroom instruction occurs close in time to the in-car instruction to ensure the maximum transfer of skills.

Status

1.1.22

Classroom and in-car instruction are not integrated or concurrent. All the Local Education Agencies (LEAs) offer classroom instruction separately from in-car instruction. All the students complete the 30 hours of classroom first and then are scheduled for 6 hours of in-car instruction. The time between the completion of classroom and in-car instruction varies from a few days to several weeks depending on the school scheduling process.

The Department of Public Instruction (DPI) and LEAs have no plans to integrate classroom and in-car instruction. Integrating the classroom and in-car instruction could reduce the number of students completing driver education annually and delay some students from obtaining their learner's permit. The LEAs and commercial driving schools are comfortable with non-integrated instruction.

Recommendation

1.1.22

- The State should establish a standard for the provision of behind the wheel training occurring within a specific timeframe during and after classroom instruction to maximize student learning.

2.0 Education/Training

Advisory

2.1 Each State should:

2.1.1 have driver education and training that meets or exceeds current nationally accepted content standards and benchmarks.

2.1.2 approve curricula that are based on nationally recognized standards such as ADTSEA and DSAA – Attachments E and F. Each State retains authority in determining what curricula meet its State standards. Other resources include AAA² and NIDB.³

2.1.3 regulate the use of simulation and driving ranges.

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.

2.1.5 require a course provider to conduct valid post-course evaluations of driver education and training programs to be completed by the students and/or parent for the purpose of improving the effectiveness of the program (a resource for help in conducting these evaluations is the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety⁴).

2.1.6 require core driver educational hours that focus on the driving task and safe driving practices sufficient to meet the criteria established by the end-of-course examination. To enable States to select the appropriate guidelines for contact hours to meet the desired outcomes, the following instructional time should be:

- First stage education:
 - Minimum of 45 hours of classroom/theory;
 - Minimum of 10 hours of behind the wheel instruction;
 - 10 hours in-car observation;
- Second stage education;
 - Minimum of 10 hours; and
- The in-car instruction can be enhanced with simulation or driving range instruction.

2.1.7 require distributive learning.

² Lonero, L., Clinton, K., Brock, J., Wilde, G., Laurie, I., & Black, D. (1995). Novice Driver Model Curriculum Guidelines. Washington, DC: AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety. . <http://www.aaafoundation.org/resources/index.cfm?button=lonaro>

³ Mottola, F. R. (n.d.). Standards for a Risk Management Program. Chesire, CT: National Institute for Driver Behavior. <http://www.nidb.org/>

⁴ Clinton, K., & Lonero, L. (2006, October). Evaluating Driver Education Programs: Comprehensive Guidelines Washington, DC: AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety. <http://www.aaafoundation.org/pdf/EvaluatingDriverEducationProgramsGuidelines.pdf>

Status and Recommendations

Standards 2.1.1 and 2.12

2.1.1 have driver education and training that meets or exceeds current nationally accepted content standards and benchmarks.

2.1.2 approve curricula that are based on nationally recognized standards such as ADTSEA and DSAA – Attachments E and F. Each State retains authority in determining what curricula meet its State standards. Other resources include AAA¹ and NIDB.²

Status

2.1.1 and 2.1.2

In accordance with the criteria and standards approved by the State Board of Education, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction shall organize and administer a standardized program of driver education [NC Gen Stat § 115C-215 (2014)]. In addition, classroom instruction shall cover the objectives provided in the North Carolina Driver Education Curriculum (Board of Education Policy GCS-R-004).

As directed in the 2010-11 Special Budget Provision of the NC General Assembly, the NC Department of Public Instruction worked collaboratively with the Highway Safety Institute, UNC-Chapel Hill, East Carolina University, the North Carolina Driver and Traffic Safety Education Association (NCDTSEA), the NC State Highway Patrol, and other interested groups to develop the *North Carolina Standard Curriculum Guide*. The guide meets the national standards and benchmarks, and provides a framework for standardizing instruction by defining the skills and competencies necessary to become a proficient and safe user of the highway transportation system. While the *North Carolina Standard Curriculum Guide* provides the framework for the scope of content and performance benchmarks, it does not include lesson plans, assessments, suggested video enhancements and other teaching tools that would enhance student learning, effective teaching practices, and a standardized delivery of instruction. Consequently, Local Education Agencies (LEAs) reported using multiple “model” curricula and textbooks to enhance the *North Carolina Standard Curriculum Guide* giving the appearance of a fragmented curriculum and inconsistent delivery of content.

Recommendations

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.**
- Create model instructional strategies to actively engage students in learning and enhance student learning.
- Integrate relevant outside resources and collaborate with traffic safety stakeholders to enhance the curriculum and improve student learning (e.g., traffic safety experts, field and educational experts, exceptional education specialists, language learner specialists, community organizations).
- Identify uniform performance standards and criteria for evaluating effective delivery of curriculum.

Standard 2.1.3

2.1.3 regulate the use of simulation and driving ranges.

Status

2.1.3

The information provided to the team suggested that no schools in North Carolina use simulation or multiple-car driving ranges to enhance instruction. The State does not allow substitution for any of the 30 hour classroom or 6 hour behind-the-wheel requirement for the driver education course.

Recommendation

2.1.3

- Develop policies and guidelines to accommodate new and emerging technologies to engage students in active learning.

Standard 2.1.4

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

North Carolina does not require a state-approved end-of course knowledge or skills assessment based on the stated goals and objectives to graduate from the driver education and training program. In addition, there was no mention of teachers systematically gathering, analyzing, and using relevant data to measure student academic progress, guide instructional content and delivery methods, and provide timely feedback to both students and parents throughout the course. Consequently there appears to be no consistent expectation of student mastery.

Recommendations

2.1.4

- Create methods to collect pre-assessment data to develop expectations for students, to differentiate instruction, and to document learning.
- Provide sample assessment tools for both formative and summative purposes, and grading practices that report final mastery in relationship to content goals and objectives.
- **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.**

Standard 2.1.5

2.1.5 require a course provider to conduct valid post-course evaluations of driver education and training programs to be completed by the students and/or parent for the purpose of improving the effectiveness of the program (a resource for help in conducting these evaluations is the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety³).

Status

2.1.5

North Carolina does not require driver education course providers to conduct valid post-course evaluations of driver education and training programs to be completed by the students and/or parent for the purpose of improving the effectiveness and continuous improvement of the program.

Recommendation

2.1.5

- Design appropriate post-course evaluations of driver education and training programs to identify strengths, areas for improvement, and data for stakeholders.

Standard 2.1.6

2.1.6 require core driver educational hours that focus on the driving task and safe driving practices sufficient to meet the criteria established by the end-of-course examination. To enable States to select the appropriate guidelines for contact hours to meet the desired outcomes, the following instructional time should be:

- First stage education:
 - Minimum of 45 hours of classroom/theory;
 - Minimum of 10 hours of behind the wheel instruction;
 - 10 hours in-car observation;
- Second stage education;
 - Minimum of 10 hours; and
- The in-car instruction can be enhanced with simulation or driving range instruction.

Status

2.1.6

Driver Education is an integral part of the Graduated Licensing Process and required in North Carolina for a student to obtain a learner's permit or driver's license before the age of 18. Driver Education is provided in all 115 Local Education Agencies (LEAs) and is available to all public, private, charter, federal and home school students enrolled in the State. It is interesting to note, however, that North Carolina has approximately 120,000 students annually eligible to take Driver Education. Of that eligible number, approximately 90% of the students are actually taught to drive. It was mentioned that students who did not benefit from a state-approved driver education course, not only performed worse on the driving assessment administered by the DMV, but they also were described as dangerous drivers.

Consideration should be given to increasing the amount of classroom and behind the wheel instructional time from the current 30 hours (classroom) and six hours (behind the wheel) to align with either the National Curriculum Standards – 45 hours of classroom instruction and eight hours of behind the wheel instruction, or the Novice Teen Driver Education and Training Administrative Standards (NTDETAS) - 45 hours of classroom, 10 hours of in-car observation, and 10 hours of behind the wheel instruction.

Recommendations

2.1.6

- Increase the time of both classroom and behind the wheel time from the current 30 hours (classroom) and six hours (behind the wheel) to more closely mirror the national standards.
- Allow Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to explore options regarding the delivery of classroom driver education instruction during the regular school day as a component of health instruction.

Standard 2.1.7

2.1.7 require distributive learning.

Status

2.1.7

One of the most powerful tools the State can use to raise the quality of this instructional program is how the driver education course is scheduled. Currently, in North Carolina a student could complete a state-approved classroom driver education course in a week, and the in-car phase in three days. Consequently, some students in North Carolina are required to attend “marathon” classroom sessions and drive for two hours a day.

Recommendations

2.1.7

- Limit the number of classroom hours taught per day to no more than two hours on a regular school day, or four hours on any other day; and set the recommended number of behind-the-wheel hours to one hour per day.
- Establish a statewide committee made up of researchers, teachers, instructional specialists and other stakeholders to design a schedule with the goal of improving student learning.
- Provide two hours of behind-the-wheel instruction during Level II of the GDL restriction.

3.0 Instructor Qualifications

Advisory

3.1 Each State should:

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.

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. (See Attachment B, Instructor Qualifications Statement)

3.1.3 require instructors to receive training in accepted best practices in course delivery and evaluations using various delivery modalities.

3.1.4 require that an instructor pass a State-approved practical and/or written exam (e.g., Praxis II, National Teacher Certification Program [available at www.ADTSEA.org]).

3.1.5 require annual continuing education and professional development hours for instructors.

3.1.6 require an annual driving record review for instructors.

Status and Recommendations

Standard 3.1.1

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.

Status

3.1.1

For the most part, North Carolina meets the standard for instructor certification and recertification. Because there are two licensing bodies for driver education instructors and multiple Local Education Agencies (LEA) that set requirements for teacher hiring it is difficult to fully describe the status of this standard. For teachers licensed through the State Board of Education (SBE) North Carolina code § G.S. 115C-215(e) states. . . all driver education instructors shall meet the requirements established by the State Board of Education. Also, driver education instructors must possess a valid North Carolina driver's license and must have a driving record acceptable to the local board of education. North Carolina Administrative Code (NCAC)) 16 NCAC 6C.0313 grants to each LEA the authority to conduct background checks on driver education instructors. However, the rest of the requirements vary throughout the State, with different LEAs and therefore, difficult to say if North Carolina meets this standard.

For teachers who are licensed to teach driver education by the Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV), the following prerequisites as described in the North Carolina Administrative Code must be met before a candidate can be licensed to teach.

Section 16 NCAC 06E.0302 for Non-Certified Instructors Status says that to qualify for non-certified instructor status, a person must, as a minimum:

- (1) be at least 21 years of age and have graduated from high school or hold a high school equivalency certificate;
- (2) be of good moral character;
- (3) not have had convictions of moving violations totaling seven or more points in the three years preceding the date of application;
- (4) have at least four years' experience as a licensed operator of a motor vehicle;
- (5) not have had a revocation or suspension of his or her driver's license in the four years immediately preceding the date of application; and
- (6) have completed the licensed instructor course approved by the Department and the Division of Motor Vehicles.

Furthermore, .0501 REQUIREMENTS states:

- (a) Each instructor of a commercial driver training school or branch shall:
 - (1) have at least four years of experience as a licensed operator of a motor vehicle;
 - (2) not have been convicted of a felony, or convicted of a misdemeanor involving moral turpitude, in the ten years immediately preceding the date of application;
 - (3) not have had a revocation or suspension of his driver's license in the five years immediately preceding the date of application;
 - (4) have graduated from high school or hold a high school equivalency certificate;
 - (5) not have had convictions for moving violations totaling five or more points in the three years preceding the date of application;
 - (7) successfully complete the written test administered by a Driver Education Specialist; (Allowed only one retest)
 - (10) submit a criminal background check from the Clerk of Court for each county of residence for the past 10 years;
 - (11) be observed, evaluated, and recommended by a Driver Education Specialist

- within the three month probationary period; and
- (12) be exempt from the 80-contact-hour basic course, Miller Road Test, and the probationary period if the applicant is an accredited driver education teacher with a current certificate based on the requirements of the Department of Public Instruction and if he or she successfully completes the written Commercial Driver Education exam with a score of 80 or above, and if the test is administered by a Driver Education Specialist. The applicant is allowed only one retest.

Recommendations

3.1.1

- **Standardize the pre-requisites 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).**
- Change the background check for all driver education instructors to require a national background check.
- Meet the health and physical requirements established by North Carolina under .502 in the Admin. Codes for Original Application.

Standard 3.1.2

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. (See Attachment B, Instructor Qualifications Statement)

Status

3.1.2

Instructor training in North Carolina is at a critical juncture. With East Carolina University discontinuing its driver education teacher preparation courses the State no longer has a university or college to provide credits required for State Board of Education (SBE) licensing. Without the ability to provide courses and credits to license teachers the board has discontinued issuing the driver education certificate which by default moves all teacher training responsibilities to the Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV).

Eighty trainers in five different locations deliver the DMV training program to classes of 20 instructor candidates in each location. The maximum number of teachers the DMV can train per year is 100. It was reported that some commercial schools have staff certified by the DMV to also train instructors. It was reported to the team that approximately over 300 retired teachers currently teaching driver education could completely retire and discontinue teaching, creating a critical teacher shortage.

The DMV requires applicants to have completed the 80-contact-hours, community-college course for driver education teachers; an equivalent course approved by the commissioner, or an Instructor Training Program conducted by an approved Commercial Driver Training School within four years prior to application. If the applicant is a State Board of Education (SBE) driver education teacher the 80-hour requirement is waived. 19A NCAC 03I .0501.

The DMV and the eight commercial schools that offer teacher training do not have a standardized curriculum. Nor is there a requirement in statute or administrative rule that requires instructor-training providers to collaborate or share training resources. DMV personnel indicated that much of their teacher training focuses on the laws of North Carolina and does not spend much time on teaching methods, in-vehicle teaching methods, or the driving task. At the conclusion of the training the instructor is issued a three-month temporary permit and must be observed, evaluated, and recommended by a Driver Education Specialist within the three-month probationary period.

DMV personnel said they thought the training hours should be increased with an emphasis on teaching methods and strategies to help the instructor candidates be more successful as they begin teaching students.

A driving school's operation officer reported that they are authorized by the DMV to train driver education instructors. Their training includes 120 hours of teacher preparation coursework. It also requires instructor candidates to observe an entire driver education class and then teach the next class while being mentored by a master teacher. They must also

observe a complete six-hour series of lessons in the car and then be observed teaching the same series of in-vehicle lessons.

There is no standardized, evaluated or consistent delivery of instructor training programs within North Carolina. The instructor training curriculum is not based on any State or national standards and is varied and inconsistent.

Recommendations

3.1.2

- **Adopt a standards based instructor training curriculum that is used by all training programs in North Carolina.**
- Increase the instructor training requirement from 80 hours to 120 hours.
- Train all trainers of trainers (TOTs) to deliver the standards-based curriculum to create consistency of instructor training across North Carolina.

Standard 3.1.3

3.1.3 require instructors to receive training in accepted best practices in course delivery and evaluations using various delivery modalities.

Status

3.1.3

North Carolina instructor training is conducted by multiple entities that do not coordinate their efforts or training materials. Much of the instruction provided by the Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) trainers focuses on the laws of the State and not so much on the best practices in course delivery and evaluations using various delivery modalities. The various training curricula have not been reviewed and updated or compared to a national standards based curriculum. Some training providers reported that they do include best practices in their training but this appears to be the exception, rather than the rule.

Complicating the situation is the lack of a single entity coordinating instructor training across the State. Once a commercial school is approved to deliver instructor training it was reported that it is not evaluated, reviewed, or provided extra training to insure that each site is consistently delivering their proposed instructor training materials.

Recommendations

3.1.3

- Adopt a training curriculum based upon the national standards that is consistent across the State for all driver educators and emphasizes accepted best practices in course delivery and evaluations using various delivery modalities.

Standard 3.1.4

3.1.4 require that an instructor pass a State-approved practical and/or written exam (e.g., Praxis II, National Teacher Certification Program [available at www.ADTSEA.org]).

Status

3.1.4

North Carolina does not currently require teachers to take a Praxis II test or equivalent. The Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) licensed teachers are all required to pass the Commercial Driver Education test with an 80% and pass a Miller Road Test. State Board of Education (SBE) teachers are not required to pass either test unless they wish to be licensed by the DMV.

Recommendation

3.1.4

- Require that an instructor pass a State-approved practical and a written exam (e.g., Praxis II, National Teacher Certification Program).

Standard 3.1.5

3.1.5 require annual continuing education and professional development hours for all instructors.

Status

3.1.5

Teachers wishing to renew their license must participate in continuing education. North Carolina Administrative Code states in 19A NCAC 03I .0503 RENEWAL APPLICATION:

The Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) certified driver education teachers, who work for commercial driving schools must complete 64 hours of continuing education during a four-year period. DPI teachers with driver education licensure must have 7.5 CEU's during a five year period to renew their teaching license. The Department of Public Instruction (DPI) and the Driver Education Advisory Committee (DEAC) are working on recommendations for those DMV certified instructors who provide instruction for an "in-house" driver education program, but are not licensed teachers or work for a commercial driving school.

Recommendation

3.1.5

- Require in-house Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) certified Driver Education Teachers to receive professional development hours similar to DMV Certified Commercial School Teachers.

Standard 3.1.6

3.1.6 require an annual driving record review for instructors.

Status

3.1.6

There is no evidence in any of the Local Education Agencies (LEAs), the Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) or the State Board of Education (SBE) which requires the review of the instructors driving record.

Recommendation

3.1.6

- Require an annual driving record review for instructors

4.0 Parent Involvement

Advisory

4.1 Each State should:

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 and 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. Information conveyed to the parent in this session should include, but not be limited to, the following known best practices of GDL and parental involvement:

- a) Manage the novice driver's learning-to-drive experience to determine the readiness of the teen to begin the process, and supervise the teen's driving so that the parent can better determine the teen's readiness to advance to the next licensing stage and assume broader driving privileges;
- b) Supervise an extended learner permit period of at least six months that provides at least weekly opportunities for the novice driver to accumulate a minimum of 50 hours of supervised practice driving in a wide variety of increasingly challenging circumstances. Hours of supervised practice driving required in GDL should not be reduced by a novice driver's participation in other driver education and training programs, nor should any other activity be considered a substitute;
- c) Supervise an extended intermediate license period that temporarily restricts driving unsupervised with teen passengers and during nighttime hours until the State's GDL requirements have been met and the parent determines the teen's readiness to drive unsupervised in these high risk conditions; and
- d) Negotiate and adopt a written agreement between the teen and parent that reflects the expectations of both teen and parent and clearly defines the restrictions, privileges, rules, and consequences that will serve as the basis for the teen to earn and for the parent to grant progressively broader driving privileges.

4.1.2 require a parent to complete a debriefing with the driver training instructor 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 and Recommendations

Standard 4.1.1

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 and 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. Information conveyed to the parent in this session should include, but not be limited to, the following known best practices of GDL and parental involvement:

- a) Manage the novice driver's learning-to-drive experience to determine the readiness of the teen to begin the process, and supervise the teen's driving so that the parent can better determine the teen's readiness to advance to the next licensing stage and assume broader driving privileges;
- b) Supervise an extended learner permit period of at least six months that provides at least weekly opportunities for the novice driver to accumulate a minimum of 50 hours of supervised practice driving in a wide variety of increasingly challenging circumstances. Hours of supervised practice driving required in GDL should not be reduced by a novice driver's participation in other driver education and training programs, nor should any other activity be considered a substitute;
- c) Supervise an extended intermediate license period that temporarily restricts driving unsupervised with teen passengers and during nighttime hours until the State's GDL requirements have been met and the parent determines the teen's readiness to drive unsupervised in these high risk conditions; and
- d) Negotiate and adopt a written agreement between the teen and parent that reflects the expectations of both teen and parent and clearly defines the restrictions, privileges, rules, and consequences that will serve as the basis for the teen to earn and for the parent to grant progressively broader driving privileges.

Status

4.1.1

North Carolina encourages but does not require driver education providers to conduct a pre-course parent seminar. Each Local Education Agency (LEA) has considerable discretion regarding the extent to which parental feedback and participation is encouraged.

One LEA, for example, requires every class (provider) to hold a parent meeting and reported that 75% to 80% of parents attend. Input from several other panel members suggested that few parents attend voluntary meetings when they are held. Further, there appears to be no template or model for how parent meetings are conducted.

Panelists made little mention of parental programs. The assessment team was presented information on parent programs that some counties in the state utilize to increase parental involvement.

Interaction with parents is generally limited to materials provided to them, often without explanation. Exceptions included several supplemental programs that were identified.

Parents (or other qualifying adults) are implicitly involved at the Level 1 stage of the graduated driver licensing program, as they must assist a teen with a Limited Learning Permit (Level 1) to complete 60 hours of supervised driving, with no more than 10 hours of supervision to be credited for any one week. The supervising driver (parent, grandparent, or guardian) must complete the Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) Driving Log.

During Level 2, the Limited Provisional Licensing Period, a parent (or other qualifying adult) must sign off on a minimum of 12 hours of additional driving, at least 6 hours of which must be at night.

Some LEAs have a parent-teen driving agreement, but the information given to the team did not confirm the State requires or encourages the use of it.

Recommendations

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.**
- Require a written agreement between the teen and parent (or qualifying adult) that reflects the expectations of both the teen and parent, and clearly defines the restrictions, privileges, rules, and consequences that will serve as the basis for the teen to earn, and for the parent to grant progressively broader driving privileges.
- Change the documents currently utilized to certify supervised driving hours to include the parent (or qualifying adults) Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) identification number and require acknowledgement of the penalties for falsification of the log.

Standard 4.1.2

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

North Carolina does not require or encourage a parent to complete a debriefing with the driver training provider.

Recommendations

4.1.2

- **Require a parent to complete an end-of-course debriefing with the driver training instructor that includes:**
 - **Feedback to the parents on their teen's in-car driving skills using a proficiency-based grading system to measure student achievement;**
 - **The parent's role in the remainder of their teen's learning experience and remind them that driver education is only the start of their teen's driving education;**
 - **The importance of GDL restrictions and how these restrictions empower them to minimize known high risk situations for their young driver (i.e., driving at night and/or with other teens in the vehicle);**
 - **A reminder that it is the responsibility of the parent to ultimately determine the teen's readiness to obtain a license with full driving privileges.**

5.0 Coordination with Driver Licensing

Advisory

5.1 Each State should:

5.1.1 have a formal system for communication and collaboration between the State driver education and training agency and the State driver licensing authority. This system should allow sharing of information between driver education and training program/course administrators and the State's driver licensing authority.

5.1.2 have a GDL system that includes, incorporates, or integrates driver education and training. Completion of driver education and training should not reduce the time requirements in the GDL process.

5.1.3 provide information and education on novice teen driving requirements and restrictions to judges, courts, and law enforcement officials charged with adjudicating or enforcing GDL laws.

5.1.4 ensure that sanctions for noncompliance with GDL requirements by novice teen drivers are developed and enforced uniformly.

5.1.5 require a parent to submit State-specified documentation that certifies completion of required supervised hours in a manner that reduces the possibility of fraudulent entries.

5.1.6 ensure that State licensing tests are empirically based and reflect performance competencies of the standards-based driver education and training program outlined in the previous sections of this document.

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.

Status and Recommendations

Standard 5.1.1

5.1.1 have a formal system for communication and collaboration between the State driver education and training agency and the State driver licensing authority. This system should allow sharing of information between driver education and training program/course administrators and the State's driver licensing authority.

Status

5.1.1

The administration of driver education is divided between two independent State agencies, the North Carolina State Board of Education (SBE) and the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT). Under this structure, the SBE's Department of Public Instruction (DPI) is responsible for the organization and supervision of the State's mandatory driver education program within the public school system (N.C. Gen. Stat. §115C-215).

The NCDOT's Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) manages the issuance of learner's permits and driver's licenses as defined under North Carolina's Graduated Driver's Licensing (GDL) process (N.C. Gen. Stat. §20-11), including all required knowledge and skills examinations. In addition, the DMV is responsible for the licensure of commercial driving schools and instructors.

As of this report, approximately 57 Local Education Agencies (LEAs) contract with commercial driving schools for the delivery of driver education. Fifty-eight LEAs offer driver education through an "in-house" program.

In 2010, the North Carolina General Assembly issued a report in response to concerns regarding the effectiveness of driver education, the lack of a unified program curriculum and the inability of the State to provide consistent technical and programmatic oversight. In response to this, the DPI established the North Carolina Driver Education Advisory Committee (DEAC) in November of 2013 to advise and make recommendations to the SBE through the DPI on implementing a driver education strategic plan and other issues relating to driver education and traffic safety.

The DEAC membership consists of representatives from the DPI, DMV, Department of Insurance, Governor's Highway Safety Program, State Highway Patrol, UNC-Highway Safety Research Center, NC Driver and Traffic Safety Education Association and other driver education/highway safety stakeholders. The State reported that the DEAC meets on a quarterly basis. The establishment of this Committee has the potential for providing leadership for program development and improvement and enhanced communication .

The DEAC has great potential with regard to addressing the various needs and deficiencies in the current driver education system (i.e. parent participation component). At the present time however it is not clear if this group is as proactive and effective as it needs to be.

Recommendations

5.1.1

- The Driver Education Advisory Committee (DEAC) should:
 - Develop specific goals, objectives and tracking mechanisms relating to the driver education strategic plan.
 - Ensure that information on all aspects of novice driver training throughout the State are communicated within the Driver Education Advisory Committee.
 - Develop standardized materials that are distributed to all driver education students and parents

Standard 5.1.2

5.1.2 have a GDL system that includes, incorporates, or integrates driver education and training. Completion of driver education and training should not reduce the time requirements in the GDL process.

Status

5.1.2

North Carolina has a long history of being a leader regarding the establishment of a Graduated Driver's Licensing System (GDL). First adopted on December 1, 1997, North Carolina's GDL process requires all applicants who are under 18 years of age to complete an approved driver training program prior to licensure. Currently, the driver education component in the State mandates the completion of at least 30 hours of classroom instruction and six hours of behind-the-wheel training. Completion of driver training does not shorten or modify any GDL requirement within the State.

North Carolina's GDL process is managed by the Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) and consists of four distinct levels or steps: Limited Learner Permit, Limited Provisional License, Full Provisional License and Full License. Individuals who are 18 years of age or older are not required to complete a driver education and training program or supervised driving as part of the license issuance process.

North Carolina residents are eligible to apply for a Limited Learner Permit (LP) at 15 years of age, which must be held for a minimum of 12 months before moving to the next stage within the GDL. To obtain the Permit, applicants must have completed an approved driver education course, provide the Driving Eligibility Certificate (DEC) issued by their school system and pass the State's vision and general knowledge examinations. During this period, the permit holder must be accompanied by a supervising driver, is prohibited from using cellular communication devices, may not driver between 9 p.m. and 5 a.m. (for first six months of permit), must require all passengers to wear a seatbelt, must document 60 hours of supervised driving, and must be free of traffic violations for the last six months of the permit period.

Following completion of the LP period, the applicant moves into the Limited Provisional License (LPL) stage. This stage requires that the individual successfully pass a driving skills examination administered by the DMV and provide the documentation of the 60 hours of practice from the previous level. Restrictions during this period include cellular devices, drive-time (similar to LP stage with exceptions for work/school), passenger restrictions, safety belt requirements and the completion of an additional 12 hours of documented supervised practice.

The final GDL step is the Full Provisional License (FPL). To obtain the FPL, the individual must be traffic violation free for a period of six months before application and must submit the documentation of 12 hours of supervised practice from the previous step. Most restrictions during this phase are removed, with the exception of the prohibition against mobile device usage, which remains in effect until 18 years of age. Prohibition against

alcohol consumption remains in effect at all levels until the license holder is 21 years of age.

North Carolina also requires individuals in the GDL process to undergo enhanced penalties should they obtain moving, seatbelt or impaired driving violations during their provisional periods. In addition, permit or license holders face administrative suspension/revocation should their DEC be rescinded for school suspensions, poor academic performance, or withdraw from school before 18 years of age.

Recommendation

- No recommendation

Standard 5.1.3

5.1.3 provide information and education on novice teen driving requirements and restrictions to judges, courts, and law enforcement officials charged with adjudicating or enforcing GDL laws.

Status

5.1.3

Enforcement of North Carolina's Graduated Driver's License (GDL) components is the responsibility of the State's various law enforcement entities, the Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) and court system. The DMV may also take enhanced actions for traffic violations and convictions for GDL holders.

Members of the Bar (both judges and attorneys) are required to undergo mandatory continuing legal education in North Carolina. While there have not been any significant changes to the State's GDL provisions in recent years, it was reported to the team that such information would be shared with local judges and prosecutors. While prosecutors currently receive limited training on the State's GDL provisions, it was stated that the North Carolina School of Government provides legal resource and technical expertise upon request in these areas.

Law enforcement officers are provided education on GDL provisions as part of their basic training when in the academy. While the North Carolina Office of Highway Safety reported an established communication network with the Department of Public Instruction, DMV and State law enforcement agencies, the Assessment team was not able to determine the extent to which ongoing officer training on GDL enforcement occurs. Information provided to the assessment team suggested that there may not be adequate or regular communication between the various GDL entities involved (i.e. DPI, DMV, enforcement, courts). Law enforcement reported that it can be difficult to expeditiously identify and charge GDL violations when they occur.

Recommendations

5.1.3

- Implement regular communications between the Department of Public Instruction, Division of Motor Vehicles, law enforcement agencies and courts regarding Graduated Driver's License issues.

Standard 5.1.4

5.1.4 ensure that sanctions for noncompliance with GDL requirements by novice teen drivers are developed and enforced uniformly.

Status

5.1.4

As mentioned in previous sections, enforcement of North Carolina's Graduated Driver's License (GDL) components falls upon the various law enforcement entities, Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) and unified District Court System. Adjudication of traffic offenses usually occur in the court system, which consists of 30 distinct districts. Traffic offenses are typically first reviewed in an Administrative court process where the violator and a representative from the local District Attorney's Office discuss charges and a course of action is determined. Should a trial be requested/required, the case is referred to the District Court for adjudication, where the officer's presence would be required.

During the Administrative review process, it is possible for offenders to utilize diversionary approaches in lieu of prosecution, such as various driver rehabilitative or remedial education programs. It was reported to the assessment team that the State has recently instituted deferred prosecution for traffic violations. The discretion to utilize this process is currently left to the local prosecutorial authority. Heavy caseload and dockets were referenced as concerns and possible motivation for the use of deferred prosecutions.

The enforcement of GDL provisions by law enforcement agencies was reported to be an area of concern to the team. In particular, the complexity of the State's GDL laws requires extensive review and interviews by officers at the time of the traffic stop. This makes it difficult to identify when a GDL violation has occurred, diverts time away from other enforcement priorities and increases the risk exposure to law enforcement officers. While education on GDL requirements is mentioned in basic officer training, it was unclear what type of continuing education on these provisions was provided post-academy.

An additional issue identified by the team was limitations within the current e-citation program utilized by law enforcement agencies across North Carolina. The current system renders it difficult to accurately charge drivers for GDL offenses, resulting in less than accurate citation issuance and traffic safety data evaluation. Data presented to the team showed that there were 1,342 charges filed (N.C. Gen. Stat. § 20-11(L)) for the 2012-2013 period resulting in 260 convictions, a rate of 19.4 percent. For the 2013-2014 period, there were 1,368 charges resulting in only 232 convictions, a rate of 17 percent.

Recommendations

5.1.4

- Evaluate methods to increase the enforcement of Graduated Driver's License Requirements among law enforcement officers, such as the creation of a quick reference guide.
- Develop modifications to the State's citation systems to enable better charging and tracking of violations of the State's Graduated Driver's License Requirements.
- Evaluate the impact of Deferred Sentencing practices on Graduated Driver's License enforcement and convictions.

Standard 5.1.5

5.1.5 require a parent to submit State-specified documentation that certifies completion of required supervised hours in a manner that reduces the possibility of fraudulent entries.

Status

5.1.5

The Graduated Driver's License Program (GDL) in North Carolina requires parents to submit documentation of required practice hours to the Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) at two stages: the Limited Provisional and Full Provisional License. The parent or authorized adult must submit the DMV form DL-4A documenting 60 hours of practice to advance from the Learner Permit phase, and the DL-4B documenting 12 hours of additional supervised practice to move from the Limited to Full Provisional Phase. Practice at both stages must be supervised by a properly licensed driver who must be a parent, grandparent, or guardian of the individual or a responsible person approved by the parent or guardian. In addition, the supervising driver must be a licensed driver who has been licensed for at least five years. The log of supervised driving hours is submitted as part of the verification form.

It was reported to the assessment team that falsification of the log is a common occurrence. The only penalties stated on the form, relating to falsification, apply to the GDL applicant, not to the adult fraudulently completing the document. In addition, the team was informed that numerous parents were not made aware of the GDL requirements, including the required supervised practice hours and DMV testing requirements.

Recommendations

5.1.5

- Include language on the DL-4A and DL-4B expressing consequences for adults falsifying the supervised practice driving documents.
- Develop a continuous communication plan regarding the importance of the Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL) requirements and accurate completion of the supervised practice log by parents/adults.

Standard 5.1.6

5.1.6 ensure that State licensing tests are empirically based and reflect performance competencies of the standards-based driver education and training program outlined in the previous sections of this document.

Status

5.1.6

The North Carolina Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) skills and knowledge tests were reported to reflect the State's driver license and road operation requirements in the State's Driver Handbook. License applicants are required to complete both the knowledge and skills tests before the issuance of a license can occur. The knowledge test must be passed with a minimum score of 80 percent at the Limited Learner Permit Stage (applicants at least 15 years of age), and the skills test at the Limited Provisional License level (applicants at least 16 years of age). The Permit may only be obtained after completion of driver education and certification of eligibility by the Local Education Agency (LEA).

Passage rates for the knowledge test have been the source of much discussion within the State for the past few years. A report issued by the North Carolina General Assembly in 2010 was critical of the failure rate on the DMV knowledge test, and questioned its relationship to the information provided within the driver education program. Since this time, the DMV and Department of Public Instruction (DPI) have partnered to evaluate test failure rates; differences in passing scores for the driver education end-of-course test and DMV driver licensing knowledge test and lag time between driver education completion and testing by the DMV. No information was presented regarding either test being validated.

A final report on testing modification was submitted to the North Carolina General Assembly in March of 2014 and is awaiting final approval. The proposal would create a "revised knowledge test" which will be aligned across DPI, LEAs and the DMV. The passing scores for the revised test administered in driver's education courses would be congruent with those administered by the DMV and all tests would utilize a common bank of test questions. To date, no action has been taken on this report. Additionally, the State could also benefit from a similar analysis to its driver's licensing skills test.

Differences in program delivery among the various LEAs and commercial driving schools could still prove a challenge in terms of consistency of educational programming and content.

Recommendations

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.**
- Ensure that the end-of-course test administered within the driver education program is commensurate with the Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) driver's license knowledge test.

Standard 5.1.7

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.

Status

5.1.7

As mentioned previously in the report, passage rates for the knowledge test have been a key area of concern among the State General Assembly, Department of Public Instruction (DPI) and Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV). The current knowledge test for the license application process is administered by the DMV and consists of 25 questions administered via kiosk (computer), paper or orally in certain circumstances. Applicants must obtain a minimum passing score of 80 percent.

Information provided to the team showed that the failure rate for knowledge testing has varied from a high of 59 percent (2007-2008) to a low of 33 percent (2012-2013). The six year average failure rate is approximately 46 percent. At the behest of the North Carolina General Assembly, the DMV and DPI completed an analysis on the potential of a revised knowledge test for use within the driver education program. The test would establish a common testing bank that would be utilized by both the DMV and DPI. Tests administered at the conclusion of driver education and provided by the DMV would be a common assessment. As such, the DMV would then accept the final driver education test in place of its administered knowledge test. To date, no action has been taken.

Skills testing is administered by the DMV, and is required before advancing to the Limited Provisional License stage. The DMV reported anecdotal observations noticing obvious skills differences between those who have taken driver education, and applicants who are not required to complete that process. Applicants completing driver education were observed to operate vehicles in a much safer manner and perform better on skills exams.

Additionally, it was reported that applicants are deferring licensure until the age of 18, a time when graduated licensing requirements are no longer in force. No empirical evidence was provided to support either claim.

The team was informed that teen crashes and fatalities continue to be an area of concern, and that there is insufficient training and education provided (particularly behind-the-wheel) to novice teen drivers regarding vehicle operation. Some LEAs have utilized alternative programs to supplement education in these areas.

Recommendations

5.1.7

- Ensure that the knowledge and skills assessed on Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) administered assessments are commensurate with the content included in driver education and training programs provided by Local Education Agencies (LEA's) and commercial providers.
- **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.**

APPENDIX 1 – Team Credentials

CHRISTIE FALGIONE

Christie Falgione is the Director of Traffic Safety and Licensing Systems with Highway Safety Services, LLC (HSS) located in Indiana, PA.

Ms. Falgione has been involved in the highway traffic safety arena for more than 12 years. She has assisted in developing projects in the areas of driver education, driver license test administration, commercial driver licensing, curriculum development, examiner training, teacher training, online training, and many others.

Ms. Falgione is also involved with the project development and management for both the National Association of State Motorcycle Safety Administrators (SMSA) and the American Driver and Traffic Safety Education Association (ADTSEA). Additionally, she is involved with projects for the Association of National Stakeholders in Traffic Safety Education (ANSTSE) and assists with the Association's secretariat duties.

RICHARD HANSON

Rich Hanson has 32 years of classroom teaching experience in a variety of subjects. His assignments have ranged from all levels of biology, speech, math, philosophy, auto and computer technology, alternative education, and driver education. He teaches both classroom and behind the wheel for Tigard High School and 11 years ago joined the “trainer of trainers” cadre for Western Oregon University. He teaches driver education teacher prep courses for Vermont Higher Education Collaborative and Castleton College, as well.

Mr. Hanson has worked with numerous states, including Oregon, Washington, Montana, North Carolina, Vermont, Virginia, and New Hampshire providing teacher training, curriculum development, and strategies for implementation of their new driver education curriculums. As one of five of Oregon’s lead trainers, Hanson helped revise Oregon’s student curriculum and Western Oregon University teacher prep courses, moving key elements to an online delivery. He was the lead developer for Montana’s teen driver education curriculum revision in 2013-14 and produced driver education teacher online training for Manitoba, Canada. He retired from his regular duties in 2010, but continues to be involved at the local, state, national, and international level in driver education.

Mr. Hanson is the past-president of Oregon Driver and Traffic Safety Education Association and currently serves as the legislative liaison for the Association. He is past chair of the Oregon Department of Transportation Driver Education Advisory Committee. He is involved at the national level as a conference speaker, having made presentations for the national driver education association in Oregon, Hawaii, Michigan, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Washington, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Missouri, and Vermont. He was selected by the Oregon Traffic Safety Education Association as the state driver education teacher of the year in 2005 and by the American Driver Traffic Safety Education Association as the 2006 National Driver Education Teacher of the Year.

ANDREW KRAJEWSKI

Andrew Krajewski retired from the Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) in 2014 as the Director of Driver Safety. He has participated in several National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) state motorcycle safety and traffic records assessments. While serving as the Director of Driver Programs at the MVA, he was involved in implementing the required driver education component for Maryland's Graduated Licensing System. He has served on several national work groups and committees associated with motorcycle safety, driver education, highway safety, traffic safety research and creating standards for programs. He has taught driver education on the high school level and instructor preparation at the University of Maryland and continues to teach program coordination courses for the Traffic Safety Institute (TSI). He has a Bachelor of Science degree from the Pennsylvania State University and a Master of Science degree from the University of Central Missouri.

THOMAS LIBERATORE

Tom Liberatore is the current director of the Office of Driver Programs for the Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA), a section that encompasses driver fitness evaluation, administrative penalization, novice driver education, and driver license issuance. He oversaw the development and initial implementation of Maryland's first automated ignition interlock monitoring system for the MVA, coordinated key system changes for the MVA in the areas of REAL ID and CDLIS modernization, and helped organize the first national assessment of a statewide driver education program. He also serves on the state-to-state pilot workgroup coordinated through DIVS and AAMVA. Tom is also the current president of the Association of Ignition Interlock Program Administrators, a non-profit professional organization for administrators of state ignition interlock and impaired driving programs. He received his bachelor's degree from Frostburg State University, and his master's degree in applied psychology from the University of Baltimore.

JAMES L. NICHOLS

Dr. Nichols is the former Director of the Office of Research and Traffic Records, Traffic Safety Programs, at the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), where he was most recently responsible for the behavioral research program.

Dr. Nichols has a Ph.D. in Experimental Psychology from the Driver Behavior Laboratory at the University of South Dakota. While at USD, he focused on driver education issues, co-authoring a book with N.W. Heimstra which included a chapter on the history and effectiveness of DE. He was an assistant professor of psychology at the University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point campus prior to joining the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration in 1971.

During his early years at NHTSA, Dr. Nichols was Chief of the Driver Programs Branch and later the Driver and Pedestrian Programs Division, with responsibility for driver education, occupant protection, alcohol impaired driving, pedestrian behavior, and motorcyclist safety. During this period, Dr. Nichols responded to challenges regarding the effectiveness of driver education and whether or not it resulted in early licensing. These issues were covered as part of a Driver Education Effectiveness Program (DEEP) Report to the Congress which he authored.

As a result of these challenges, Dr. Nichols designed and participated in the implementation of the Safe Performance Curriculum (SPC) evaluation in DeKalb County Georgia in the mid-to-late 1970s and monitored closely the results of that program and challenges to those results.

In the 1980s, Dr. Nichols served as the Deputy Director for the Office of Alcohol and State Programs, where he was responsible for programs to decrease alcohol-impaired driving and, from 1990 through 1995, as the Director of the Office of Occupant Protection, where he was responsible for the development and evaluation of programs to increase safety belt and child seat usage.

In 1996, Dr. Nichols was named as the Director of the Office of Research and Traffic Records where he was responsible for designing and implementing a behavioral research program that incorporated all of the areas mentioned above.

Since retiring from NHTSA, Dr. Nichols has been involved in a number of traffic safety program and evaluation efforts, including a complete review of the history and effectiveness of driver education programs (for the National Transportation Safety Board); reviews of alcohol-impaired driving and occupant protection (for NHTSA and for the Transportation Safety Institute); the effectiveness of child passenger safety efforts (for the Automotive Coalition for Traffic Safety and the Air Bag & Seat Belt Safety Campaign),

school-based education programs to prevent impaired driving (for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention), and Motorcycle Safety (for the National Academies of Science, Transportation Research Board).

Most recently, Dr. Nichols has been active in the evaluation of initiatives in several NHTSA regions to evaluate the impact of programs designed to increase seat belt use in rural areas, among teens, among occupants of pickup trucks, and during late-night hours.

VANESSA C. WIGAND

Vanessa Wigand is Principal Specialist for Health Education, Physical Education, Driver Education and Athletics at the Virginia Department of Education. She has over 38 years of experience in the field of driver education and has been at the Department of Education for 23 years. Vanessa oversees driver education program approval for public and private schools, and is responsible for establishing the standardized curriculum of instruction for public, private and driver training schools. She presently serves as Chairperson for the Driver Education and Training Administrators (DETA), the national organization serving state directors of driver education.

APPENDIX 2 – Assessment Agenda

NHTSA DRIVER EDUCATION PROGRAM ASSESSMENT North Carolina State Assessment Dates Embassy Suites-Crabtree, Raleigh, NC

Day 1: Monday, May 4, 2015

6:00pm - 8:00pm: Reception

Assessment Introduction and Overview

Day 2: Tuesday, May 5, 2015

8:15am–9:00am Session 1: Welcome & the State Data

- Dr. Benjamin Matthews, DPI Chief Finance Officer for Operations
- Reggie Flythe, DPI Driver Education Consultant

9:00am–9:30am Session 2: PED Driver Education Study & Recommendations

- Larry Yates – Program Evaluation Division Principal Evaluator

9:30am–9:45am Break

9:45am–10:45am Session 3: Current State of Driver Education in NC (Program Administration)

- Reggie Flythe, DPI Driver Education Consultant
- Connie Sessoms, Jr., DEAC Chairman, NCDTSEA Executive Secretary, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools Driver Education Specialist

10:45am–11:00am Break

11:00am–12:00pm Session 4: LEA Programs using Commercial School Contractors (Education/Training)

- Devin Tanner, Driver Education Coordinator, Wake County Public School System
- Mark Smith, Director of Operations, NC Driving School
- Sam Deyton, Director of Operations, Mountain Professionals or Eddie Jordan, owner/operator JDS Carolinas

12:00pm -1:30pm Team Debrief and Lunch

1:30pm - 2:30pm Session 5: LEA In-house Programs (Education/Training)

- Phil McGirt, Cumberland County Schools
- Henry Geddie, Cumberland County Schools
- Dale Fox, Iredell-Statesville Schools
- Phillip Rountree, Halifax County Schools

2:30pm - 2:45pm Break

2:45pm - 3:45pm Session 6: GDL Law Enforcement & Court Processes for Teen Drivers (Driver Licensing)

- *Ike Avery, NC Conference of District Attorneys*
- *Captain Freddy Johnson, NC State Highway Patrol*

3:45pm – 4:00 Break

4:00pm – 5:00pm Session 7: Parents and Students (Parental Involvement)

- *JoCo Teen Drivers*

5:00pm – 5:30pm Session 8: Community Involvement & Local Government Officials (Parental Involvement)

5:30pm – 6:30pm Team Debrief (Closed session)

Day 3: Wednesday, May 6, 2015

8:15am - 9:00am Session 9: State Teen Traffic Data Collection Processes & Current GDL Research in NC (Driver Licensing)

- *Arthur Goodwin, UNC – Highway Safety Research Center*
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9:00am–9:45pm Session 10: Governor’s Highway Safety Efforts & 2015 North Carolina State Strategic Highway Safety Plan (Program Administration)

- *Don Nail, Director, Governor’s Highway Safety Program, NCDOT*
- *Mark Scaringelli, Assistant Director, GHSP, NCDOT*
- *Joshua DeFisher, Highway Safety Specialist, GHSP, NCDOT, Occupant Protection*
- *Ashley Wade, Highway Safety Specialist, GHSP, NCDOT, Young Driver Youth Program*

9:45am–10:00am Break

10:00am–11:00am Session 11: Coordinating with Driver Licensing/Instructor Qualifications (Instructor Qualifications/Driver Licensing)

- *Rodney Coleman, Manager, NCDMV School Bus & Traffic Safety*
- *James Horton, Supervisor, School Bus & Traffic Safety*
- *Terry Fuller, Assistant Manager*

11:00-11:15am Break

11:15am-11:45am Session 12: Instructor Qualifications/Education/Training (Instructor Qualifications/Education and Training)

- *Dr. Joe Shrader, East Carolina University*
- *Chuck Lehning, Jordan Driving School – Charlotte*

11:45am–12:15pm Session 13: Improving Parental Involvement in NC (Parental Involvement)

- *Diana Bader, Parent and NCPTA representative*
- *Chuck Lehning and Connie Sessoms, CMS*

12:15 – 12:45 Section 14: Commercial School Providers without school contracts (Program Administration) – do not currently have contracts with schools

- *Dr. Ray Sparks, Owner, Gaston Driver Education, Inc.*
- *Sylvester Fuller, Owner, Fuller Driving School*

12:45pm Close of Briefing Section

12:45pm–2:00pm Team Debrief and Lunch

2:00pm - until Team Debrief and individual report writing

Day 4: Thursday, May 7, 2015

8:00am –until Report write-up

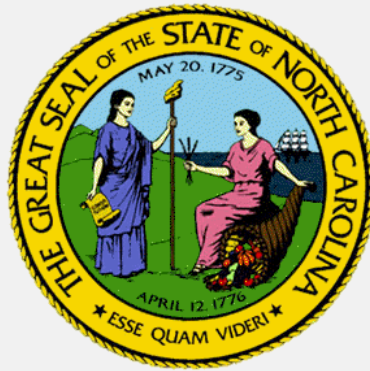
Session Closed to Public

Day 5: Friday, May 8, 2015

8:00am - Report Out

State Invites participants

Adjourn



Friday – May 8, 2015

8:00 am REPORT OUT

**Hilton Embassy Suites – Crabtree Hotel
4700 Creedmoor Road
Raleigh, NC 27612**

Open to all interested parties