

Governor's Task Force on Teen Safe Driving

Education and Training Subcommittee Minutes

Monday, February 11, 2008

10:00 – 12:30

Multimedia Room

Department of Motor Vehicles

60 State Street

Wethersfield CT 06161

ATTENDEES:

Task Force Members: Jim MacPherson AAA Co-Chair
Gillian Mosier RN Co-Chair
Sherry Chapman, IMPACT
Susan Naide, Chief State's Attorney's Office
Mario Damiata, MA NHTSA

Invited Guests: Sgt Eubanks – MA State Police (teleconference)
Mike Towle - Staying Alive (teleconference)
LT Supina – CT Driver Education Unit

- Call to Order
- Sign in for committee members
- Handing out of meeting minutes
- Subcommittee procedure – allowing public to present comment for a limit of 10 minutes
- Increasing Education time (behind wheel)
 - What can we do for underprivileged populations?
 - Possible tax write offs for driving schools who offer free or discounted rates for underprivileged teens
 - Note the existing legislation about substance abuse treatment
 - Presented a more formalized log for behind wheel hours
 - Parents submit log to DMV
 - Want to see consistency about what is taught
 - Training times: 30/8 verses the 8; no statistics available on who is doing what
- Training Schools
 - Currently two types: secondary schools (limited numbers) and commercial schools
 - Commercial schools often contract with secondary schools to offer classes in school
 - Currently looking at inventory of schools with curriculum information on file
 - Secondary schools do not have to submit curriculum because they are considered professional educators
 - Want to standardize curriculum
 - All accessible
 - There are pros and cons to doing this because there are constant changes

- Currently there are general guidelines for driver's education in classrooms, but there is little structure and are flexible as to the specific content and hours spent on each segment.
- Massachusetts Programs Presentation
 - Sgt. Eubanks-MA State Police with the SCARR program
 - Free program
 - New, innovative, however is not yet being recommended by NHTSA
 - Targets aggressive drivers
 - Junior Operators with speeding and drag racing (or related violations) have to automatically take class-in addition the teens lose their license, have to retake both permit and driving test, and pay a \$500 reinstatement fee
 - Try to limit classes to 20-35 participants because there is a lot of paperwork involved
 - Run for about three hours during daytime hours
 - Currently do not offer the program on weekends or evenings because of funding limitations
 - They see 180 junior operator violators per week
 - 7000-9000 are expected to go through within the first year of Junior Operator Law
 - Program consists of individual reasons for participation, a DVD, guest speakers (prisoners, victims families, etc)
 - Has been used for general deterrence activities
 - See Jan 9 and Feb 10 articles by Matt Carroll in the Boston Globe
 - Basically two people administer/run program with three classes per week
 - Discussion after presentation by committee members
 - Want to go and observe
 - There are other program such as the hospital program and Impact
 - Needs evaluation
 - Because of DMV requirements and the RFP process, program cannot just be selected and implemented. However committee can suggest mandate certain program requirements and how to get to the program
 - Administrative concerns of programs with judicial and DMV
 - Identify junior operators as special class of operators
 - Create a separate statute instead of continually branching off of current one (the adult statute)
 - Currently already do for youthful offenders
 - Modify traffic ticket to have junior operator box to check on infraction
 - Mike Toll-Director of a Driving Training Center-The only one in MA of a commercial mandated retraining program "Staying Alive"
 - There is also the National Safety Council Program "Alive at 25;" this program is the other option for Junior Operator offenders
 - This program starts by taking a difficult version of the permit test
 - This course, or the "Alive at 25" course needs to be taken in addition to the SCARR course
 - Curriculum involves respect for vehicle safety features (i.e. airbag works best with seatbelt), state specific information, and alcohol and other risk factor information. It is also comprehensive and teen friendly.
 - Class is four hours long.
 - The attitudinal training part last for about 40 min by going over a series of statements

- Any licensed driving school can offer this course, but so far only one does
 - Also uses situational videos
 - Does on monthly basis; has had about 90 students take the course
 - Gives students a parent/teen driving contract
 - Also runs a two hour parent class
 - Really proud of this program
 - Required for junior operator licensure
 - For parents with multiple children, course is required once every five years
 - Takes parents through licensure process
 - Addresses poor parental driving habits
 - Discussion after presentation by committee members
 - Parents need to know about risk at all levels including physical and financial risk that adolescent drivers face
- Current Retraining programs
 - Segregated by age
 - 16 and 17 year olds after two violations over a two year period
 - Have a presentation about what is currently taking place.
- Driving Simulators
 - Expensive-huge range of prices ("pay for what you get")
 - Lacks feedback
 - Most approved for identifying driver styles and helping with searching skills
 - Many have cited physical illness from using
 - The Children's Medical Center plans on piloting a simulator based program
- Prof. Metolla-Public Health
 - Works on driver behavior and developing curricula
 - Suggested looking at Oregon's program
 - Believes drivers education is broken
 - Thinks committee needs to focus on risk reduction
 - Wants parents more involved in process
 - Find, solve, and control hazards
 - Know what to do without thinking about it. Used the home key method as an example.
 - Adolescence is a time where sensory and perception skills are primed for learning; on the same token decision making abilities are limited
 - Believes there needs to be clearly defined outcomes for risk, education classes, coaches, informed parents, and licensing that tests for the same outcomes
 - Concerned about further addressing passengers as an influence
 - Perceptual skills are best to be learned at ages 12-14
- Additional Discussion
 - Want recommendations for task force on educating police
 - Concerns about weak infrastructure
 - Agrees that a joint meeting needs to be arranged with legislation subcommittee
 - Behind wheel and written exams needs to include alternating experiences
 - Setting higher performance standards for teens
 - Cannot move ahead of public awareness
 - Look at long term recommendations and charges, in addition to 18 and 19 year olds (next time)
 - Concerns about training for "older" beginning drivers, as well as drivers from other countries
 - Recommendations are due April 4 by subcommittee; should turn in the last week of March to Bill Seymour
 - The task force will then have a month to review, then reconvene on May 9th to vote

- This will mark the “end” of the task force
 - Uniform, comprehensive, and standardized drivers education and retraining
 - Give examples, but do not develop our own version of education and retraining curriculum.
 - Assignments:
 - Susan - will draft a recommendation for a specific statute separating junior operators with their violations
 - Jim – will draft proposal for driver education programs to standardize their programs.
 - Gill – will review the program that has all violations for all age groups into one program. Draft a recommendation for junior violators for retraining and education
 - Sherry – will work on recommendations based on the long term goals set forth by the task force.
- Adjourn