

**EDUCATING YOUNG DRIVERS
IN NORTH CAROLINA:
A REVIEW OF CURRENT PRACTICES**

Final Project Report
for the
NC Governor's Highway Safety Program

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Background

Driver education and training has been a staple in North Carolina schools for nearly half a century. “Driver ed” was first offered to high school students in the state in 1953. Since 1965 driver education has been fully funded by the state, although the specific source of funds has varied over the years. In fiscal year 2001 most of the program’s costs were supported by the state’s Highway Fund, although a small portion came from the General Fund.

Driver education programs are intended to provide students the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed for safe driving. However, NHTSA-funded research during the 1970s and 1980s generally failed to show a reduction in crashes or traffic violations associated with formal driver education training (Stock et al., 1983; Smith and Blatt, 1987; DeWolf and Smith, 1988; Lund et al., 1986; Davis, 1990). As a result, driver education was removed as a NHTSA priority program funding area in the early 1980s, and without Federal support programs were dropped from required state education curricula. In North Carolina driver education was removed from the high school curriculum effective fall of 1992.

Some have argued that it is unreasonable to expect driver education to have a bottom line impact on teen crashes. Over a quarter century ago Dr. Patricia Waller postulated that

“To hold driver education instructors responsible for the subsequent driver records of students is a little like holding home economics teachers responsible for whether the students prepare well balanced meals two years later . . . I would maintain that in driver education we should be able to hold the instructor responsible for how well the student is able to operate the vehicle and how well he knows the rules of the road. However, whether he actually uses the skills and knowledge he has acquired depends on many things beyond the control of the driver education instructor. It is utterly foolish to expect a teacher to change the attitudes of students in 36 hours of contact.” (Waller, 1975, pp.17-18).

Dr. Waller went on to describe her vision of a graduated driver licensing system involving the cooperative efforts of driver educators, licensing agencies, and parents or other responsible adults.

Today all but about a dozen states have some form of graduated driver licensing in place, and there is a renewed interest in the role and potential for novice driver education within such a system. In 1994 NHTSA released a report to Congress that outlined its vision for future novice driver education programs. A key conclusion of the report was that graduated driver licensing could help strengthen driver education, and vice versa. Graduated driver licensing was viewed as “a vehicle for actualizing the safety potential of driver education/training” (Mayhew and Simpson, 1996). Graduated licensing could, in effect, make students more likely to put into practice the safe driving skills and techniques they had learned in the classroom and under the guidance of a trained behind-the-wheel instructor.

North Carolina was the second state, behind Michigan, to implement a graduated driver licensing (GDL) system. Effective December 1, 1997, beginning drivers who are at least 15 years old, but younger than 18, and who have passed a mandatory driver education class, a vision test, a road sign recognition test, and a written driving test, can obtain a Level I license that allows them to drive only while supervised by a designated adult. After a full year of violation-free driving, they are allowed to progress to a Level II license, which allows unsupervised driving from 5 AM to 9 PM, and supervised driving at any time. Only after six months of violation-free driving at the Level II stage can teens obtain a Level III, or unrestricted license. A recent evaluation of the effectiveness of North Carolina's GDL system showed a sharp decline in crashes among 16-year-old drivers following program implementation, including a 57-58% reduction in fatal crashes and a 28-32% reduction in non-fatal injury crashes. Nighttime crashes also showed a significant decline (Foss, Feaganes and Rodgman, 2001).

In addition to graduated licensing, the 1994 NHTSA report identified three other areas that could contribute to a revitalization of novice driver education:

- Parental participation,
- A two-stage driver education program, and
- Use of electronic devices in training.

The UNC Highway Safety Research Center is currently working under another GHSP-funded project to develop and evaluate materials and approaches for involving parents in the driver education process. The goals of the project include increasing parents' knowledge of the state's GDL system; helping parents understand that driving is a complex cognitive task; and promoting effective communication between parent and teen about driving. Interventions that were developed and piloted on a limited basis during the initial year of the project are currently being evaluated in an expanded number of counties. The end product should be a set of materials and guidelines that can be used by parents to help supplement the learning that has occurred in their teen's driver education classroom and behind-the-wheel.

To date only the state of Michigan has formally implemented a two-stage driver education program. Under this program teens complete an initial segment of driver education prior to obtaining their learner's permit, and a second more advanced classroom segment prior to obtaining their intermediate stage license. The effectiveness of the program, however, has only been evaluated in conjunction with the state's graduated licensing system. In this regard Michigan's experience has been very similar to that in North Carolina, with a 24% reduction in fatal and non-fatal injury crashes (Shope, Molnar, Elliott and Waller, 2001). Any beneficial effects of the two-stage driver education program may be masked by other differences in Michigan's GDL system, including the fact that the nighttime driving curfew for teens in the intermediate phase only extends from midnight to 5 AM. Thus, the potential benefits of a two-stage driver education program remain unproven.

With regard to the use of electronic devices in driver training, a 1996 NHTSA report on the feasibility of using existing simulation and other electronic technology to train novice drivers concluded that, at that point in time, training products geared for personal computers were limited primarily to knowledge-based applications and were not as interactive as they might be.

At the same time, driving simulators were found to be too costly for widespread use in training novice drivers (Decina, Gish, Staplin and Kirchner, 1996). However, much has changed in the ensuing years, and today there is a growing market for individualized interactive learning products using new and much more affordable technologies.

Finally, over the past five years NHTSA has supported a variety of research and programmatic efforts to help bring about an improved driver education system. One of these projects is the National Driver Development Program being carried out by Indiana University - Pennsylvania in cooperation with the American Driver and Traffic Safety Education Association (ADTSEA). The goal of the project is to define the future of driver education by identifying appropriate outcomes, defining program content, and developing a system for its effective delivery. The project is currently seeking feedback on its efforts from states and from driver educators across the U.S.

Study Purpose and Approach

Within this context, the NC Governor's Highway Safety Program (GHSP) asked the UNC Highway Safety Research Center to oversee a project to review current practices in North Carolina with regard to novice driver education, and to obtain input from key stakeholders – teachers, program administrators, students, and parents – about their experiences with the system and ways it might be improved. The GHSP realized that, despite continued strong support for novice driver education at the state level, little is known about how driver education programs are being implemented by local high schools and the actual instruction and training that young drivers receive. Since the removal of driver education from the high school curriculum, there has been less centralized oversight by the State Department of Public Instruction (DPI), and related changes in teacher certification and qualification procedures. With a strong graduated driver licensing system in place in the state, it seemed appropriate to take inventory of the state's driver education system as well.

The specific tasks to be carried out as part of the project included:

1. Review existing information and form project steering committee;
2. Conduct a statewide mail survey of high school driver education teachers and program coordinators;
3. Conduct a telephone survey of teens, and the parents of these teens, who have recently completed a high school driver education course.

The overall goal of the project was to provide an updated accounting of current practices with regard to educating young novice drivers in North Carolina, and to lay the groundwork for an even stronger statewide driver education program. This report summarizes the project results. Chapter 2 presents the results of the mail survey of driver education teachers and LEA (local education administration) program coordinators; Chapter 3 presents the results of the telephone survey of teens and their parents; and Chapter 4 presents an overall summary and discussion of project findings.

CHAPTER 2. MAIL SURVEY OF DRIVER EDUCATION TEACHERS AND PROGRAM COORDINATORS

Background and Methods

As noted in Chapter 1, one of the primary objectives of the project was to obtain input directly from teachers about their experiences in teaching driver education and ways the North Carolina driver education program might be improved. To provide guidance to these efforts, an informal steering committee was formed consisting of NC Department of Public Instruction (DPI) personnel and members of the Board of Directors of the North Carolina Driver and Traffic Safety Education Association (NCDTSEA). Project personnel were able to meet with the NCDTSEA Board on two occasions, and to communicate with them via follow-up telephone calls and electronic mail.

Feedback and input to the project were also obtained at the annual NCDTSEA conference held in Fayetteville on April 20-21, 2001. In addition to talking informally with conference attendees, a more formal focus group was held at the conclusion of the conference. The focus group was announced in the spring NCDTSEA newsletter, and was open to any interested driver education teacher attending the conference. Appendix A contains a list of the topics discussed in the focus group and a summary of the group's discussion. There were seven participants in the group, many with considerable years of teaching experience.

Two of the biggest questions facing the project were how to ensure broad and equitable distribution of the mail survey, and how to encourage open and honest responses to the survey questions. Another issue was whether and how to differentiate among the various levels of involvement in school-based driver education programs – classroom teacher, program administrator, behind-the-wheel instructor, etc. Based on the recommendations of the steering committee and focus group participants, it was decided that each of the State's 117 LEA (Local Education Association) driver education program coordinators should be sent a survey focusing on their overall programs. In addition, program coordinators would be asked to distribute copies of a second survey to all classroom and/or behind-the-wheel instructors in their program, whether they worked directly for the school system or for a commercial driving school. All responses would be anonymous, with individual surveys to be returned directly to HSRC rather than to DPI or to the local driver education program coordinator.

The project steering committee also provided guidance with respect to the content of the two surveys and the formulation and wording of specific questions. Draft surveys were developed and presented to the NCDTSEA Board and discussed. A smaller group reviewed and edited later versions of the surveys.

Copies of the final surveys and accompanying cover letters are contained in Appendix B (Driver Education Teacher Survey) and Appendix C (Driver Education Program Coordinator Survey). The surveys were mailed to the LEA coordinators in mid-May of 2001, using a mailing list provided by DPI. Each coordinator received a packet of materials that included their own survey, copies of the teacher survey (based on an estimate of the number of driver education

teachers in the school system), and a pre-printed return address envelope for each enclosed survey. The cover letters initially asked for a response by June 15, but this was later extended to July 2 due to the end-of-the-school-year timing of the mailout and delays in distributing the survey to some of the teachers.

Results from the surveys are described in the remainder of this chapter, focusing first on the teacher survey results followed by the LEA program coordinator results. The results are primarily descriptive in nature, including single variable distributions and crosstabulations of the data by selected variables of interest. For example, responses may be examined with respect to employer (public school versus commercial driving school) or years of teaching experience. Single variable distributions are presented in the tables, while significant crosstabulation results are highlighted in figures. Unless otherwise noted, statistical significance was determined on the basis of Chi-square tests of association between categorical variables.

Driver Education Teacher Survey Results

Participant Characteristics

A total of 397 driver education teachers responded to the survey. It is not known what percentage of all driver education teachers in the state received copies of the survey, or what percentage of those receiving copies chose to respond. So that we could have some indication of the survey's distribution, copies of the teacher surveys included in the packets mailed to the driver education program coordinators were coded with the three-digit LEA number. Based on a tally of these numbers, surveys were returned from 79 of the state's 117 LEAs, or 67.5%. The largest numbers of survey returns were from the Cumberland, Charlotte-Mecklenberg, Guilford, Wake and Rowan-Salisbury school districts. **Although the survey returns came from teachers in a large number of school districts, it should be stressed that they do not necessarily constitute a representative sample of all driver education teachers in the state.**

Characteristics of the survey respondents are summarized in Table 1. Two-thirds (66.5%) of the survey respondents taught both classroom and behind-the-wheel (BTW), and an additional 9.6% were also program administrators. The remaining respondents were primarily BTW instructors only. Nearly half (46.9%) were certified to teach driver education by the NC Department of Public Instruction, 40.2% were certified by the NC Division of Motor Vehicles, and 12.4% held both DPI and DMV certifications. The two "other" respondents had both received training at a community college and were seeking certification. Certification type did not vary significantly across levels of involvement in driver education: classroom only, BTW only, and classroom and BTW instructors were just as likely to be certified by DMV as by DPI. Instructors who also held administrative responsibilities, however, were more likely to have DPI certification.

The majority of the survey respondents (69.3%) indicated that they were employed either full or part-time by a school or school system, while just over one-fourth (25.8%) said that they were employed by a commercial driving school. The "other" category here included driving school owners, persons who were self-employed, those employed by both a school or school

Table 1. Characteristics of respondents to driver education teacher survey (n=397).

Participant Characteristics	n	%
How involved with high school driver education		
Classroom teacher and BTW instructor	262	66.5 ¹
Classroom, BTW, and program administrator	38	9.6
Classroom teacher only	16	4.1
Classroom and program administrator	2	0.5
BTW instructor only	67	17.0
BTW instructor and program administrator	2	0.5
Program administrator only	5	1.3
Other	2	0.5
Missing / Unknown	3	–
Type of certification for teaching driver education		
NC Department of Public Instruction	182	46.9
NC Division of Motor Vehicles	156	40.2
Both DPI and DMV	48	12.4
Other	2	0.5
Missing / Unknown	9	–
Current employment status		
Employed full-time by school / school system	136	34.4
Employed part-time by school / school system	138	34.9
Employed full-time by commercial driving school	79	20.0
Employed part-time by commercial driving school	23	5.8
Other	19	4.8
Missing / Unknown	2	–
Year first certified to teach driver education		
Prior to 1970	39	10.2
1970-1974	56	14.6
1975-1979	28	7.3
1980-1984	25	6.5
1985-1989	30	7.8
1990-1994	80	20.8
1995-1999	107	27.9
2000-2001	19	5.0
NA / Missing	13	–
Years worked in driver education field		
30 or more years	56	14.1
25-29 years	42	11.0
20-24 years	23	6.0
15-19 years	32	8.4
10-14 years	47	12.3
5-9 years	97	25.4
Less than 5 years	85	22.3
NA / Missing	15	–

Cont.

Table 1. Characteristics of respondents to driver education teacher survey.
(cont.)

Participant Characteristics	N	%
Years plan to continue working in driver education		
No additional years	5	1.3
2 years or less	17	4.4
3-5 years	109	28.2
6-10 years	111	28.7
More than 10 years	145	37.5
NA / Missing	10	–
Membership in NCDTSEA		
Yes	214	54.3
No	180	45.7
NA / Missing	3	–
Membership in other professional organizations serving field		
Yes	85	21.9
No	304	78.1
NA / Missing	8	–
Engagement in continuing education last 2 years ²		
Attended conferences, meetings, etc.	295	75.5
Attended driver education training sessions/courses	161	41.1
Participated in internet or on-line training programs	27	6.9
Other types of continuing education or training	77	19.6

¹ Column percent.

² Number and percent of total responding “yes.”

system and a commercial driving school, and others for whom the employer was unclear. Where possible, these “other” individuals were re-categorized as employed by either the public or private sectors. Overall, 71.4% of the respondents were employed by the public sector, 26.8% by the private (commercial) sector, and 2.8% remained uncategorized.

Figure 1 shows the certification type for teachers employed in public school settings versus those employed by commercial driving schools. As expected, driver education teachers employed by schools or school systems were more likely to hold DPI teaching certification, while those employed by commercial driving schools were more likely to hold DMV certification ($p < .001$). However, there is considerable deviation from this norm, with many public school employees holding DMV certification and commercial driving school employees holding DPI certification. There were also a fair number of teachers in each setting with both forms of certification.

Many of the survey respondents had numerous years of driver education teaching experience, but many also were relatively new to the field: nearly a third had taught for 20 or more years and 22% for less than five years. Almost regardless of how long they had taught,

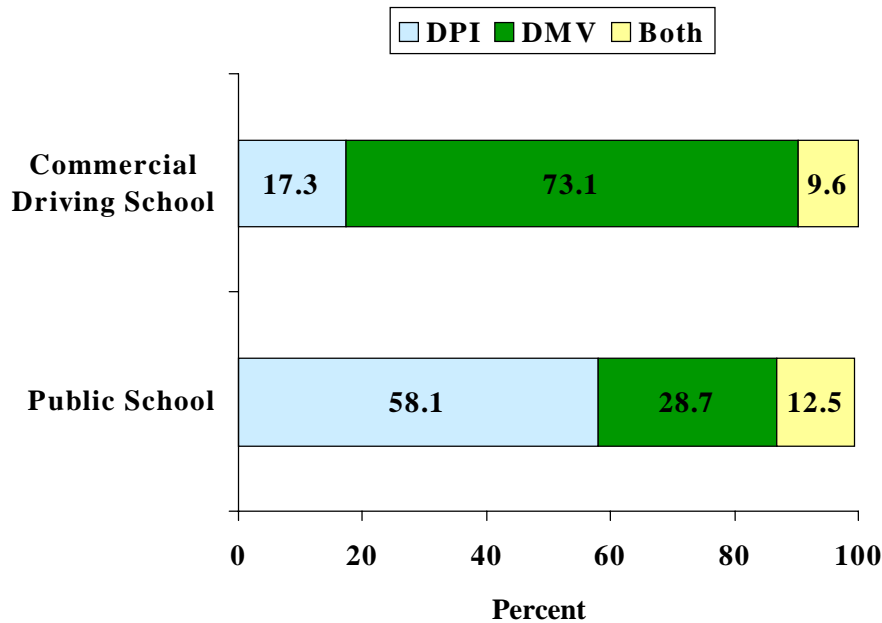


Figure 1. Type of driver education teacher certification by employer.

most planned to continue their involvement in driver education for at least the next several years. Even among those who had already taught 30 or more years, half planned to teach at least three to five more years, and one-fourth planned to teach at least six more years. Still, one-third of the respondents indicated that they would be retiring from teaching in five years or less.

As shown in Figure 2, teachers who had worked in the field less than 10 years (as well as those who had obtained their certification more recently) were more likely to hold DMV certification, while those who had worked in the field for at least 10 years were more likely to hold DPI certification ($p < .001$). Those who had worked in the field 20 or more years almost exclusively held DPI certification, or both DPI and DMV certifications. Still, many of those planning to teach for at least 6-10 more years hold DPI certification (see Figure 3, $p < .001$). Given current trends in certification, however, those certified by DPI will likely be in the minority in the next few years.

Just over half of the respondents indicated that they were members of the NC Driver Traffic Safety Education Association, a professional association open to public and commercial school teachers as well as instructors at commercial driving schools in the state. Some of the other professional organizations that respondents were members of included the American Driver and Traffic Safety Education Association, National Education Association, North Carolina Association of Educators, NC Passenger Safety Association, and North Carolina Professional Driving School Association.

A final question on this part of the survey asked about continuing education activities engaged in during the previous two years. Respondents were most likely to indicate that they had attended conferences or meetings on the topic of driver education (75.5%). In addition, 41.1%

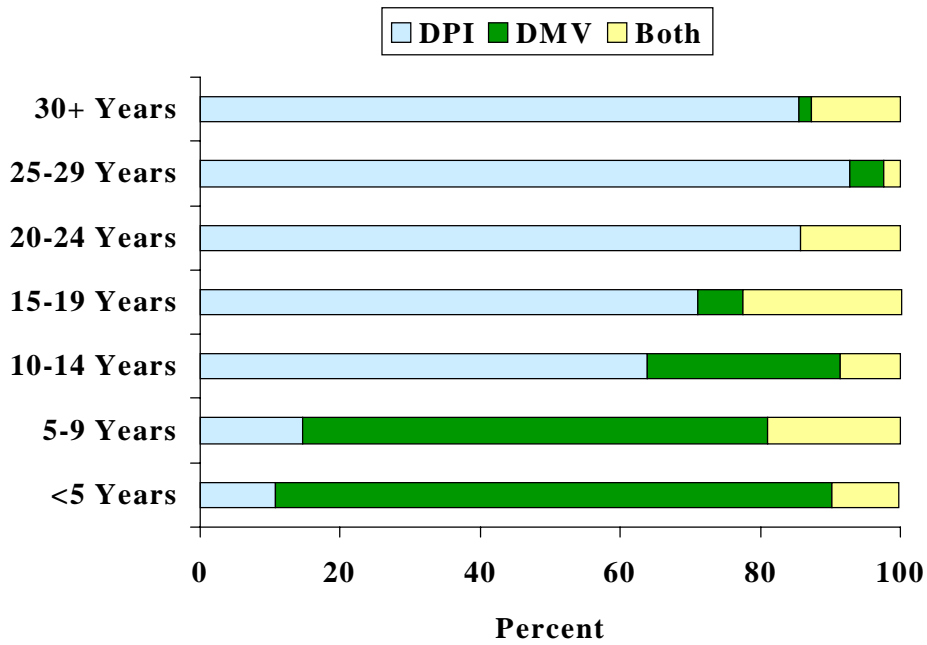


Figure 2. Type of driver education teacher certification by years worked in field.

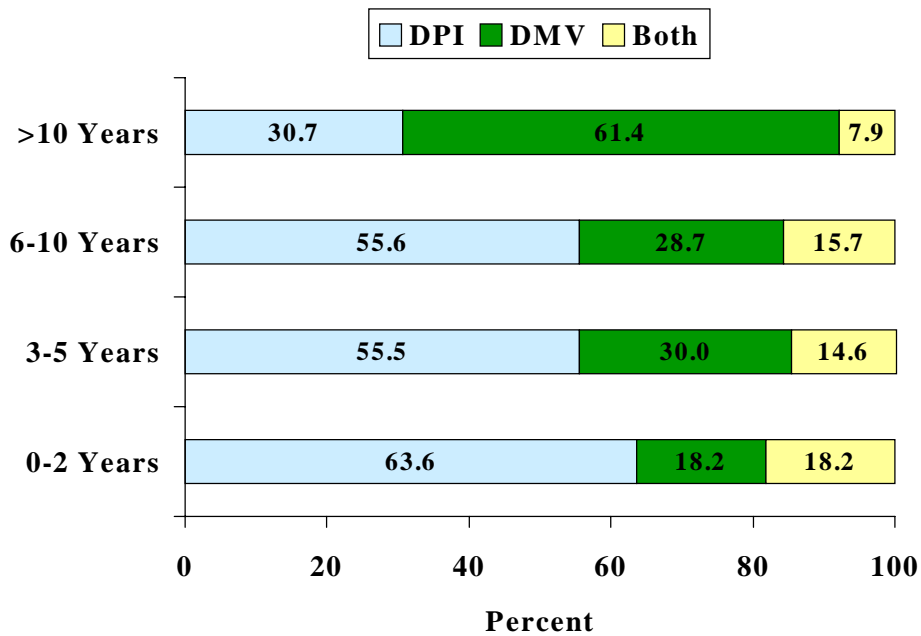


Figure 3. Years plan to continue working in field by certification type.

said that they had attended driver education training sessions or courses, and 6.9% said they had participated in Internet or other on-line driver education training programs. The most frequent “other” forms of continuing education included computer technology programs, advanced driving courses (AAA Defensive Driving, National Safety Council classes), and in-service teacher training.

Teachers’ Classroom Teaching Experience

Approximately 84% of the survey respondents provided information on their experiences teaching the classroom portion of driver education. (Respondents who only taught behind-the-wheel were instructed to skip this part of the questionnaire.) The responses of these classroom teachers are summarized in Table 2. Almost everyone indicated that they usually teach driver education in a classroom at the school; only a few indicated teaching at a commercial driving school or in both settings. The seven “other facilities” identified were also all located in schools, primarily school auditoriums or cafeterias.

Almost half (45.1%) of the teachers indicated that their typical class size was 30 or fewer students, and three-fourths (76.3%) said that it was 35 or fewer students. The average number of students in a class was 34.9 and the median was 33. The range was from 5 to 145. Class size was not significantly associated with the certification type of the teacher, but it was associated with whether the teacher was employed by a school/school system or by a commercial driving school (see Figure 4). In particular, teachers employed by public schools were more likely to have 30 or fewer students in their class, while driving school employees were more likely to have 31-35 students. Only public school employees reported having 50 or more students in a typical class. Nevertheless, the average class size was almost identical for both public school and commercial driving school employees (35.0 and 35.1, respectively). The age composition of the classes was also the same – most often 14 and young 15-year-olds.

When asked whether there was a maximum number of students allowed in their classes, nearly 70% of the teachers said that there was. For most teachers, this maximum number was 35 students. However, responses to this question varied for public and commercial school teachers. For public school teachers, maximum student numbers of 35 (29% of respondents), 30 (22%) and 40 (21%) were given. For commercial school instructors, the maximum number of students was most often either 35 (49% of respondents) or 50 (35% of respondents). Three teachers, all public school employees, said that the maximum number of students allowed in their classes was 150. Such large class sizes, however, were exceptions.

The length of a typical class session varied based on whether the class was being taught during the school year versus during the summer vacation period. During the school year, classes typically lasted two hours and seldom longer than three hours (see table). This was true regardless of whether the teacher was employed by the school system or by a commercial driving school. During the summer months class sessions were considerably longer, lasting up to six (or occasionally 6.5) hours. These longer class periods were especially common for teachers employed by commercial driving schools.

Table 2. Survey participants' classroom teaching experience (n=333).

Classroom Teaching Characteristics	n	%
Where generally teach driver education		
In a classroom at the school	316	94.9 ¹
At a commercial driving school	1	0.3
Both of the above	9	2.7
Other facility	7	2.1
Number of students in typical class		
≤30 students	150	45.1
31-35 students	104	31.2
36-40 students	39	11.7
41-50 students	23	6.9
>50 students	17	5.1
Typical age composition of classes		
Almost all 14-year-olds	14	4.2
14 and young 15-year-olds	189	56.8
Older 15-year-olds and young 16-year-olds	13	3.9
Other (varies, mixed ages, etc.)	117	35.1
Whether there is a maximum number of students per class		
No	98	30.1
Yes	228	69.9
If yes, maximum number of students allowed		
≤30 students	45	20.0
31-35 students	87	38.7
36-40 students	35	15.6
41-50 students	53	23.6
>50 students	5	2.2
Length of typical class during school year		
1 hour	15	4.9
>1 hour but < 2 hours	12	3.9
2 hours	150	48.9
> 2 hours but <3 hours	41	13.4
3 hours	80	26.1
> 3 hours	9	2.9
Length of typical class during summer vacation		
< 2 hours	5	1.8
2 - 2.5 hours	54	19.7
3 - 3.5 hours	80	29.2
4 - 4.5 hours	49	17.9
5 - 5.5 hours	5	1.8
6 hours or more	81	29.6

Cont.

Table 2. Survey participants' classroom teaching experience. (cont.)

Classroom Teaching Characteristics	n	%
Level of satisfaction with primary textbook/curriculum		
Very satisfied	199	62.4
Somewhat satisfied	114	35.7
Not very satisfied	4	1.3
Not at all satisfied	2	0.6
Perceived quality of available curriculum materials		
Excellent	135	41.0
Good	159	48.3
Average	21	6.4
Fair	8	2.4
Poor	6	1.8
Resources use in teaching (number and percent using):		
Videos / films	330	99.4
Guest speakers	269	81.0
Overhead transparencies	225	67.8
Demonstrations	224	67.5
Internet resources	68	20.5
Interactive computer programs / software	65	19.6
Powerpoint or other computer presentations	57	17.2
Slides (35 mm)	24	7.2
Driving simulators	10	3.0
Other	52	15.7
Whether students can "test out" of classroom instruction		
Yes	106	32.2
No	223	67.8
If yes, percentage of students taking the test		
10% or less	34	36.6
11-25%	13	14.0
26-50%	12	12.9
51-89%	6	6.5
90% or more	28	30.1
Percentage of those taking the test who pass		
1% or less	30	31.6
2-5%	35	36.8
6-10%	13	13.7
11-25%	9	9.5
More than 25%	8	8.4
If pass, whether any classroom instruction required		
Yes	16	16.3
No	82	83.7

Table 2. Survey participants' classroom teaching experience. (cont.)

Classroom Teaching Characteristics	n	%
Whether students taking class are required to pass a final exam or have passing average to receive credit		
Yes	319	95.8
No	14	4.2
If yes, percentage of students <i>not</i> passing		
1% or less	68	25.0
2-5%	127	46.7
6-10%	57	21.0
More than 10%	20	7.4
If yes, provisions made for students not passing (<i>multiple responses allowed</i>) ²		
Allow students to retake the exam	147	46.72
Allow students to retake the course	205	65.1
No provisions made. Students must retake on own.	24	7.6
Other	26	8.2
Whether required to maintain records of student performance		
Yes	299	90.3
No	32	9.7
If no, whether records maintained anyway		
Yes	29	90.6
No	3	9.4
Whether classroom teaching was evaluated during current year		
Yes	193	57.8
No	133	39.8
Not applicable / did not teach past year	8	2.4
If yes, who evaluated (<i>multiple responses allowed</i>) ²		
School district driver education representative	72	36.7
Driver education program administrator at school	79	40.3
Principal of school	36	18.4
Another teacher	20	10.2
Driving school supervisor, owner, etc.	76	38.8
Other	17	8.8
Longest time students must wait for BTW instruction		
Less than 2 weeks	21	6.5
2-3 weeks	66	20.3
1-2 months	193	59.4
3 months or more	45	13.9

¹ Column percent.

² Number and percent of total responding "yes."

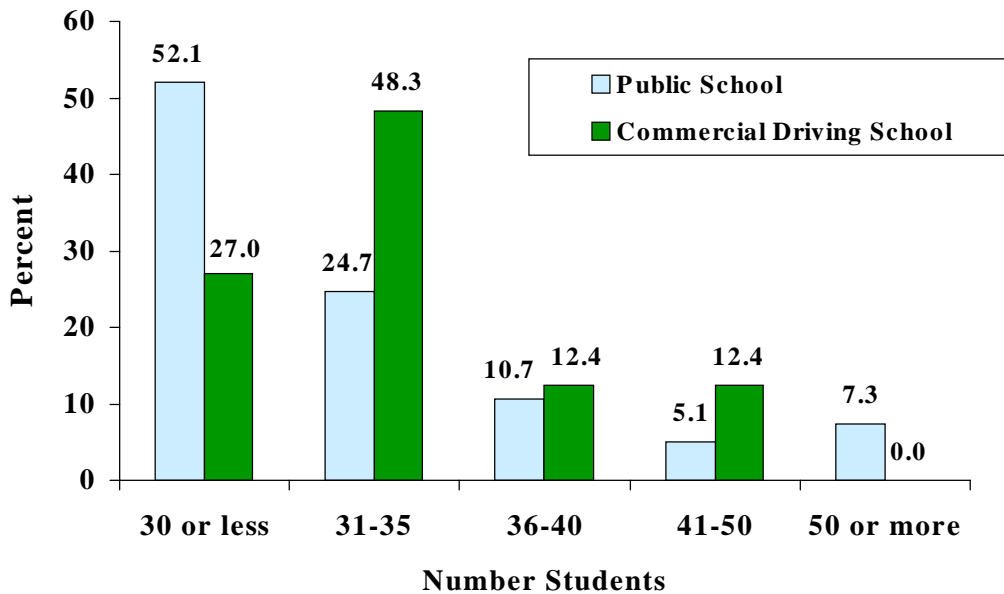


Figure 4. Typical class size by employer.

By far the driver education textbook or curriculum guide reported used most often by teachers was *Drive Right* in its various editions (9th - 11th were all specifically mentioned). Four out of five survey respondents reported using the *Drive Right* curriculum. Other curriculums mentioned were *Responsible Driving* (7.3%), *Tomorrow's Driver* (2.8%), and *Let's Drive Right* (1.0%). Twelve respondents also indicated that they used a "NC Driver Education Curriculum," although it is not immediately clear just what this refers to. The NC Driver and Traffic Safety Education Association (NCDTSEA) is currently working to develop a recommended course of study for the state, but this has not yet been released. It could also refer to an older NC curriculum guide last distributed by DPI in 1990, or to a text published by Costech Technologies of Canada and used by some of the commercial driving schools.

While 62% of teachers indicated that they were "very satisfied" with their chosen curriculum, over a third (35.7%) said they were only "somewhat satisfied." When asked to rate the overall quality of the curriculum materials available to them, teachers were more likely to give them a "good" rather than an "excellent" rating (48.3% and 41.0%, respectively). A number of teachers indicated that they pulled materials from a variety of sources, and one noted that the state was in need of a standard curriculum guide.

In addition to standardized texts and materials, teachers reported using a variety of other resources in their classrooms. Almost all (99.4%) used videos or films, and most also made use of guest speakers (81.0%), overhead transparencies (67.8%), and various classroom demonstrations (67.5%). Only one in five teachers, however, reported using more technology oriented resources such as Powerpoint or other computer presentation software, interactive computer programs, and Internet resources. Also, only 10 teachers (3.0%) reported using driving

simulators in their classrooms. Some of the “other” resources teachers mentioned include Drunk Buster or Fatal Vision goggles, newspaper and magazine articles, worksheets and other handouts, group projects, and role playing games.

Several questions were asked about requirements for students taking a driver education class. One area of interest concerned whether students are allowed to “opt out” of the classroom portion of driver education by taking and passing the North Carolina Driver Education Proficiency Test. Just under a third of the teachers reported that their schools follow such a policy. The percentage was higher for public school teachers than for commercial driving school teachers (36.8% versus 20.0%, $p < .01$). Among those who offered this option, there was considerable variability in the proportion of students taking the test: over a third (36.6%) of the teachers reported that 10% or fewer of their students took the test, while just under a third (30.1%) reported that 90% or more took it. The average percentage reported taking the test was 44%, while the median was only 25%. Regardless of how many students took the test, very few scored high enough to exempt them from the classroom instruction – usually five percent or less of those taking the test. For those students who did pass, however, most (83.7%) were exempt from all classroom instruction.

Almost all (95.8%) of the teachers responding indicated that their students must pass a final exam, or have a passing average in the class, to receive credit for taking driver education. The vast majority of students do obtain a passing grade. For those who do not, just under half of the teachers indicated that students are allowed to retake the exam, while two-thirds said that they may retake the course (presumably at no cost to the student). Nearly 8% of the teachers indicated that no provisions are made for students not passing the class; these students would presumably have to retake a driver education class on their own at a commercial driving school in order to apply for a driving permit. Some of the “other” category responses included allowing the student to retake the exam one time only; providing additional tutoring or make-up work; scheduling make-up days; requiring the student to pay a fee before retaking the class; and evaluating the student orally. Several of the teachers noted that such decisions are made on an individual basis, often in conjunction with the school principal, guidance counselor, or other teachers.

The vast majority of the teachers (90.3%) indicated that they were required to maintain records of the performance of students in their classes, and even for those who were not required to maintain records, most (90.6%) did so anyway. These results were independent of whether the teacher was employed by a public school or by a commercial driving school.

A smaller majority (57.8%) of teachers indicated that their own classroom teaching performance had been evaluated during the past year. Those employed by commercial driving schools were much more likely to indicate that their teaching had been evaluated than those employed by public schools (89.8% versus 47.4%, $p < .001$). In many cases, this evaluation was conducted by a supervisor at the driving school; however, both commercial driving school and public school teachers were about equally likely to have been evaluated by their school district’s driver education representative (36.7%) or by the driver education program coordinator at the school (40.3%). “Others” involved in evaluation included assistant principals, DMV examiners, and school transportation specialists.

Finally, teachers were asked what was the longest time students typically had to wait after completing the classroom instruction before beginning their BTW instruction. For most teachers (59.6%), the longest time was one to two months. This was especially typical of teachers employed by commercial driving schools. Teachers employed by public school systems were more likely than commercial school instructors to have either shorter (3 weeks or less) or longer (3 months or more) wait times (see Figure 5, $p < .001$).

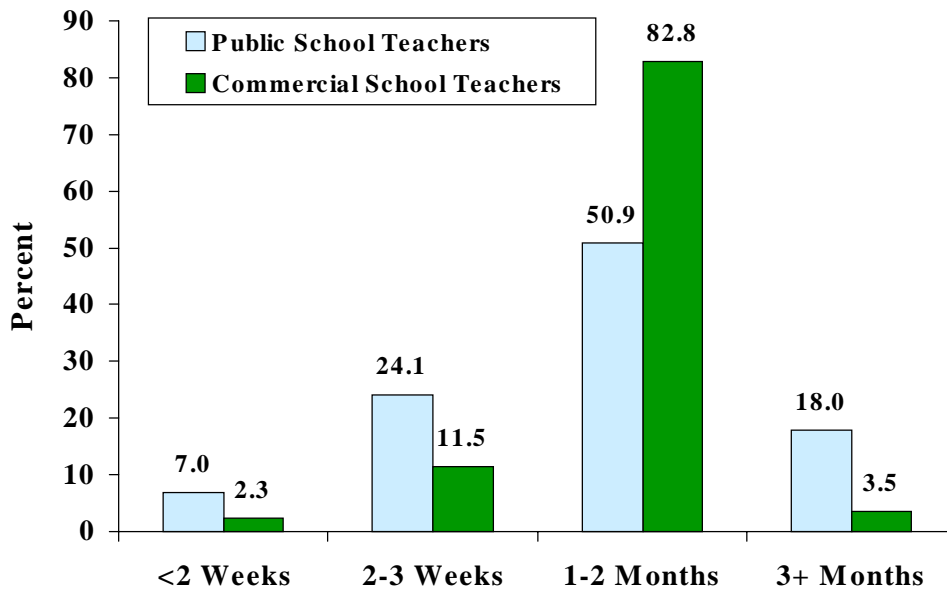


Figure 5. Usual longest wait time before beginning BTW instruction.

Teachers' Behind-the-Wheel Teaching Experience

A smaller set of questions on the survey dealt with the teachers' behind-the-wheel teaching experiences. Of the total 397 survey respondents, 386 responded to these questions, including a few program administrators and classroom teachers who had indicated that they were not currently teaching BTW. A decision was made to include all responses, under the assumption that only persons who had active knowledge of what was happening in their schools would respond to the questions asked.

Table 3 summarizes responses to the questions pertaining to BTW driving instruction. Only a few teachers (9 total, including both public school and commercial driving school employees) indicated that they did not have access to enough vehicles to conduct their in-car instruction. Teachers were also asked whether they had access to a driving range for BTW instruction. Nearly 10% of the teachers said that they did, with the 37 positive responses coming from 18 different LEAs. A higher percentage of these teachers were employed by public school systems than by commercial driving schools (10.2% versus 5.1%), although this difference was not significant statistically.

Table 3. Survey participants' BTW teaching experience (n=386).

Participant Characteristics	n	%
Have access to enough vehicles for in-car instruction		
Yes	377	97.7 ¹
No	9	2.3
Have access to driving range for in-car instruction		
Yes	37	9.6
No	347	90.4
Able to schedule students for BTW as soon as would like after completing classroom instruction		
Yes	314	82.6
No	66	17.4
Number of driving sessions to complete 6 hours BTW		
1	1	0.3
2	6	1.6
3	60	15.8
4	89	23.4
5	29	7.6
6+	195	51.3
Number of students typically in car when drive		
1	3	0.8
2	277	74.1
3	93	24.9
4	0	0.0
5	1	0.3
Typical hours of in-car "observation time"		
1-2 hours	14	3.7
3-4 hours	27	7.1
5-6 hours	242	63.5
7-8 hours	17	4.5
9+ hours	81	21.3
Actions taken if student cannot perform satisfactorily after 6 hours BTW (<i>multiple responses allowed</i>)		
Offer additional BTW time to bring performance up	257	66.8
Pass, but recommend obtain additional instruction	132	34.3
Discuss with student's parents	271	70.4
Fail student. Student must receive training elsewhere.	23	6.0
Other	29	7.5

Cont.

Table 3. Survey participants' BTW teaching experience. (cont.)

Participant Characteristics	n	%
Percentage of students not performing satisfactorily after 6 hours of BTW instruction		
1% or less	101	37.7
2-5%	148	43.3
6-10%	44	12.9
11-50%	18	5.3
>50%	3	0.9
Whether required to maintain records of student driving performance		
Yes	344	90.3
No	37	9.7
If no, are records maintained anyway		
Yes	27	71.1
No	11	28.9
Was BTW instruction evaluated during current year		
Yes	157	41.3
No	216	56.8
Not applicable / did not teach past year	7	1.8
If yes, who evaluated (<i>multiple responses allowed</i>) ²		
School district driver education representative	60	38.0
Driver education program administrator at school	58	36.7
Principal of school	17	10.8
Another teacher	13	8.2
Driving school supervisor, owner, etc.	76	48.1
Other	18	11.5

¹ Column percent.

² Number and percent of total responding "yes."

Teachers were also asked whether they were able to schedule students for BTW instruction as soon as they would like after completion of classroom instruction. While most teachers said that they were able to do so, almost one in five said that they were not. Public school teachers were more likely than commercial driving school teachers to indicate a problem in this regard, although the difference (20.0% versus 10.2%) was only marginally significant ($p < .03$).

Several questions were asked regarding the actual logistics of students' BTW driving. One important question pertained to the number of driving sessions typically required to accumulate the required six hours of BTW instruction. Just over half (51.3%) of the teachers responding indicated that six or more sessions were generally required, suggesting that students drive for an hour or less in any given session. However, nearly a fourth (23.4%) completed their driving time in four sessions, and 15.8% in three sessions, suggesting longer driving times per session. The number of sessions typically required was strongly associated with employer type: teachers employed by public schools or school systems generally drove with students on six or more occasions, while those employed by commercial driving schools were more likely to complete the BTW instruction in three or four sessions (see Figure 6, $p < .001$).

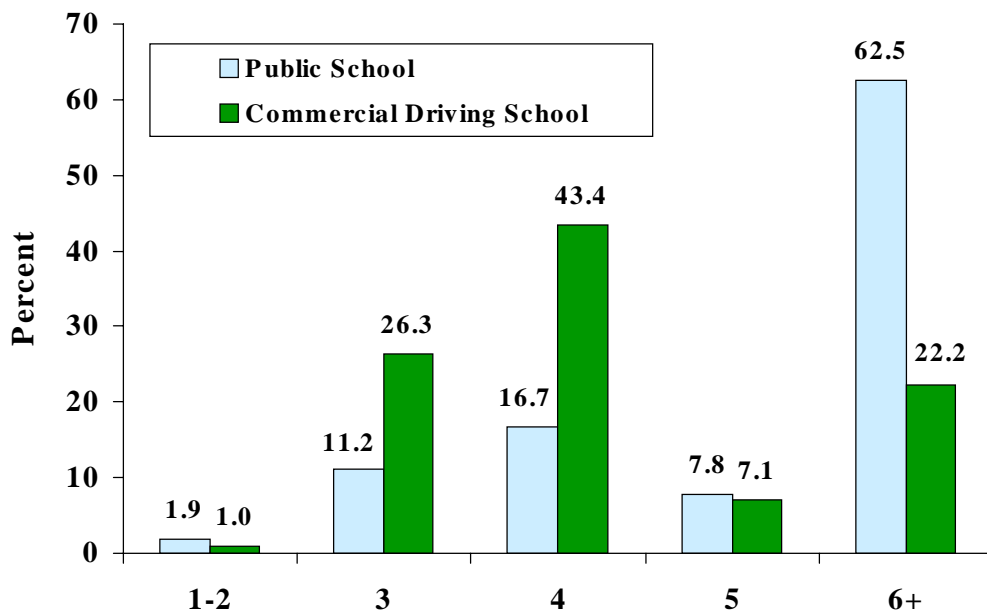


Figure 6. Number of driving sessions to complete 6 hours BTW training.

Teachers employed by commercial driving schools also reported having fewer students in the car during driving instruction. While both public school and commercial driving school teachers most often carried only two students in the car at a time, public school teachers were more likely than their commercial driving school counterparts to carry three or more students in the car (see Figure 7, $p < .01$). This result also likely contributes to the fact that students taught by commercial driving school instructors are less likely to accumulate more than six hours of “observation time” as part of their BTW driving instruction (see Figure 8, $p < .001$). Still, nearly 90% of students do accumulate at least 5-6 hours of observation time, in addition to the time they spend behind the wheel.

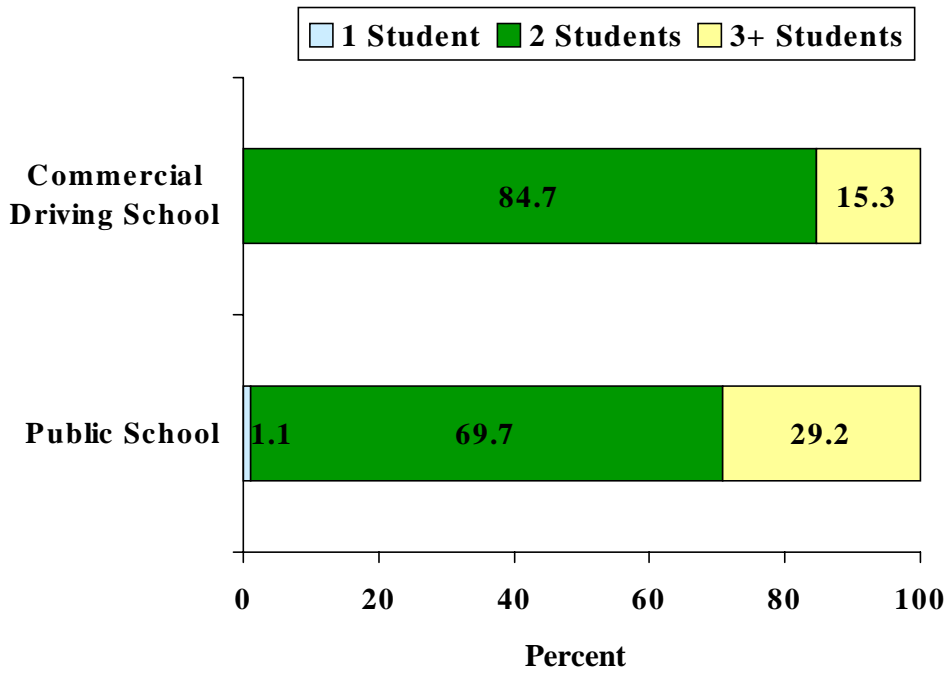


Figure 7. Number of students typically in car during BTW instruction.

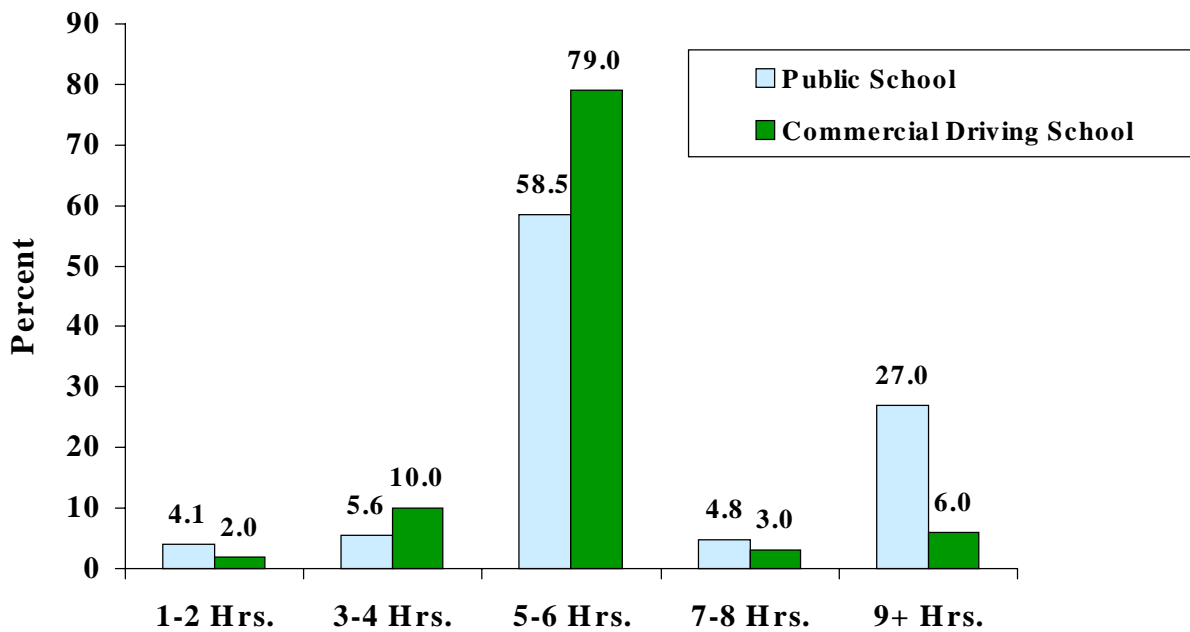


Figure 8. Total hours of in-car observation time (in addition to driving time).

As with the classroom instruction, teachers were asked what they did if, after six hours of BTW instruction, a student was not able to drive satisfactorily. Most teachers said that they would discuss the situation with the student’s parents (70.4%), and/or offer additional BTW driving time to bring the student’s performance up to a passing level (66.8%). Just over a third (34.3%) said that they would pass the student but recommend they obtain additional instruction. Only a few indicated they would fail the student without providing further options. These results were strongly influenced by whether the teacher was employed by a public school or a commercial driving school (see Figure 9). In particular, teachers employed by public schools were much more likely to offer additional BTW instruction, while those employed by commercial driving schools were more likely to pass such students but recommend they obtain additional instruction (presumably at their own expense) ($p < .001$ for both). The most often mentioned “other” provision made for students was to fail them but allow them to retake the BTW portion of driver education. Several teachers noted that it was very rare for them to have a student they could not teach to drive at an acceptable level, although special needs students might require additional help.

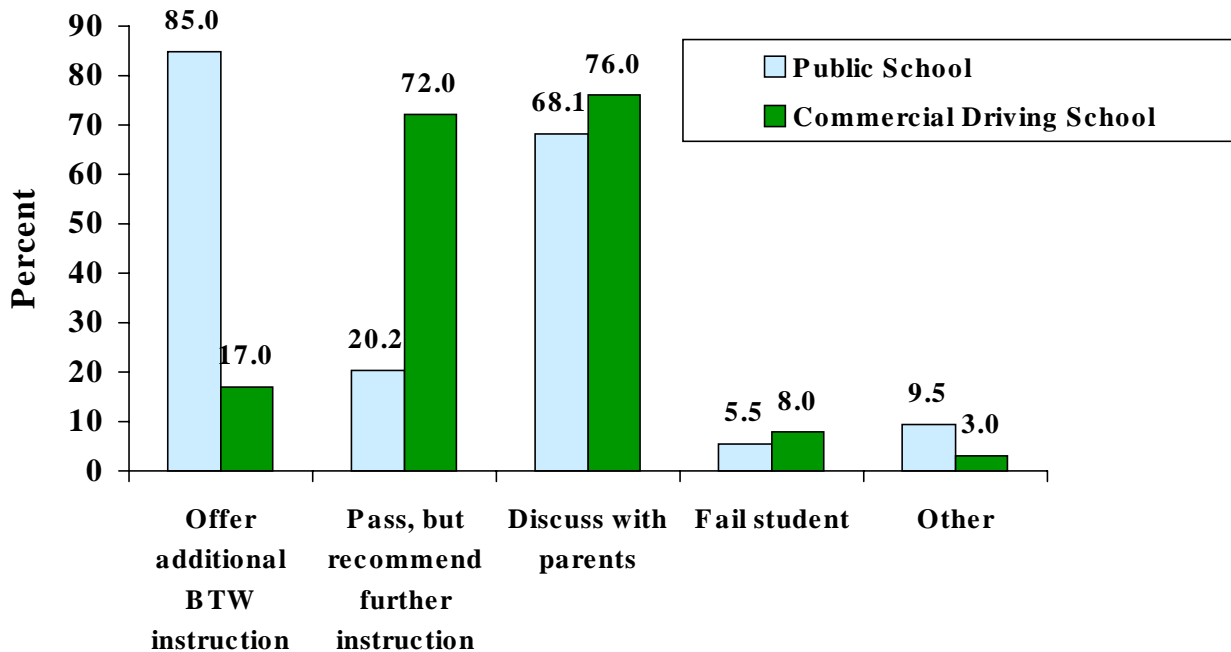


Figure 9. Teachers’ actions if student cannot drive satisfactorily after 6 hours BTW.

Related to the above, teachers were asked about what percentage of their students do not perform satisfactorily after six hours BTW instruction. Over a third (37.7%) of the teachers gave percentages of one percent or less, and 80% said five percent or less. The few who indicated higher levels (especially the two who said 80% and 90%) might be expressing the opinion that six hours of BTW instruction is generally inadequate for teaching a teen to drive, or they might simply have very high expectations for their student drivers.

As with the classroom teachers, BTW instructors were asked if they were required to maintain records of the driving performance of students they taught, and if not, whether they maintained records anyway. Results were similar to before, with 90.3% of teachers indicating that they were required to keep records. Even if not required to keep records, 71.1% of teachers said that they still did so. There were no differences with respect to teacher employer (public school versus commercial driving school).

Teachers were also asked if their BTW instruction had been evaluated during the current year and, if so, who provided the evaluation. In general, a teacher's BTW instruction was less likely to have been evaluated than their classroom instruction: only 41.3% of the BTW teachers said they had been evaluated, compared to 57.8% of classroom teachers. The percentage was much higher for commercial driving school instructors than for school employees – 86.9% versus 24.2% ($p < .001$). And although driving school employees were more likely to have been evaluated by their supervisors at the driving school and public school teachers by their principals, both were equally likely to have been evaluated by their LEA representative or school program administrator.

Teachers' Opinions and Recommendations

A final section of the survey contained 16 separate agree/disagree statements to gather information on teachers' opinions about a variety of driver education issues. For each of the 16 statements, teachers were asked to indicate whether they strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed, or strongly disagreed. They were also given the option of indicating no opinion on the issue. Responses to these questions are summarized graphically in Figure 10. Since opinions on many of the issues varied with respect to a teacher's employer (public school/school system versus commercial driving school) and type of certification (DPI versus DMV), these crosstabulation results have also been presented in Table 4.

The statements receiving the highest proportion of "strongly agree" responses were:

- All teachers should be qualified to teach both classroom and BTW.
- All teachers should have to pass the same course of study to be qualified to teach in public schools.
- Driver education should be re-instated into the required school curriculum.

For all three statements, public school teachers and teachers holding DPI certification were especially likely to indicate strong support. In fact, commercial school teachers and those certified through DMV course work *opposed* re-instating driver education into the required school curriculum, and were mixed in their support of a standardized course of study for all teachers.

Other statements receiving a high level of overall agreement (80% or more of respondents either agreeing or strongly agreeing) included the following:

All DE teachers should have to pass the same course of study to be qualified to teach in public schools. **

Current procedures for training and certifying new driver education teachers are adequate. **

All DE teachers should have to pass 12-16 hours of college level DE course work. **

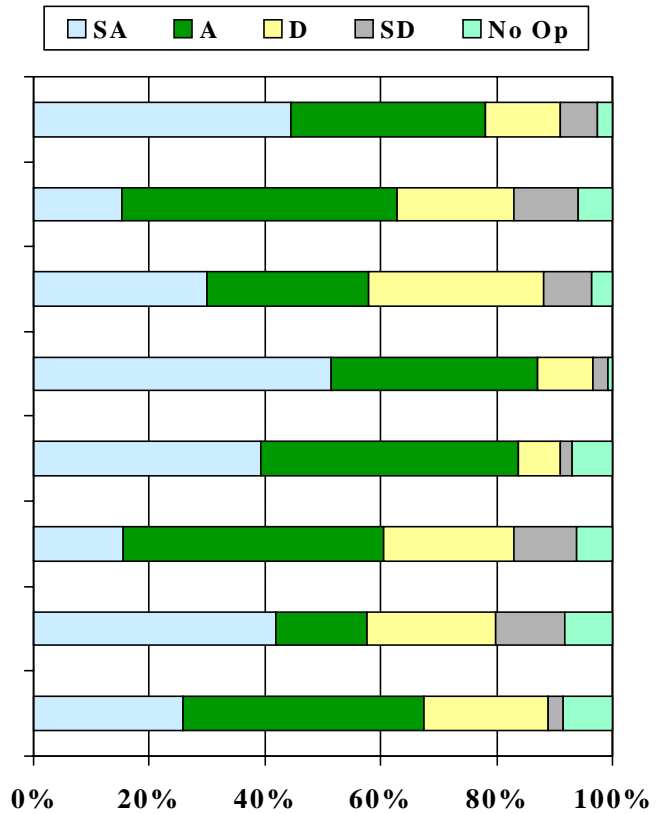
All teachers should be qualified to teach both classroom and BTW. **

Training should be made more widely available through universities/community colleges. *

At least some DE training should be made available through the internet and other long-distance learning.

Driver education should be re-instated into the required school curriculum. **

NC needs greater standardization of its DE curriculum. **



There should be a single standardized driver education curriculum for NC students. **

The required 30 hours of classroom instruction should be increased.

The required 6 hours of BTW instruction should be increased.

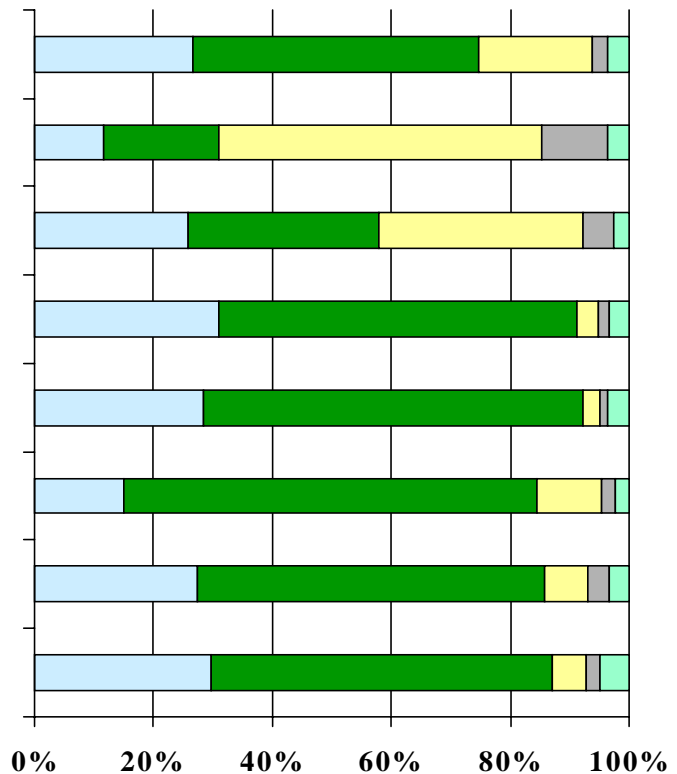
More continuing education opportunities are needed for driver education teachers.

Better use of new technologies (computers, simulators, etc.) would facilitate classroom learning. *

I feel I am able to keep “up to date” with new developments in the field. *

My LEA driver education coordinator keeps me informed of new developments in the field.

My LEA driver education coordinator is knowledgeable about my classroom and in-car teaching performance.



** p<.01 for public vs. commercial driving school teachers.
* p<.05 for public vs. commercial driving school teachers.

Figure 10. Teachers’ opinions on various driver education issues.

Table 4. Teachers' opinions on driver education issues by employer and type of teaching certification.

Opinion regarding:	p ¹		Agree - Disagree ²				
			SA	A	D	SD	NO
All driver education teachers should have to pass the same course of study to be qualified to teach in public schools.	**	Public	54.2	32.7	8.7	2.6	1.8
		Commercial	19.2	35.4	23.2	17.2	5.1
	**	DPI	62.9	30.3	4.5	1.7	0.6
		DMV	20.5	36.4	24.5	13.3	5.3
Current procedures for training and certifying new driver education teachers are adequate.	**	Public	15.1	40.1	23.5	14.0	7.4
		Commercial	17.0	67.0	10.0	3.0	3.0
	**	DPI	6.7	32.6	30.9	20.8	9.0
		DMV	22.5	68.2	6.0	0.7	2.7
All driver education teachers should have to pass 12-16 hrs. of college level driver education course work.	**	Public	38.8	30.0	23.1	4.4	3.7
		Commercial	7.1	21.2	49.5	18.2	4.0
	**	DPI	50.3	32.8	13.0	2.3	1.7
		DMV	5.3	20.0	53.3	16.0	5.3
All teachers should be qualified to teach both classroom and behind-the-wheel.	**	Public	60.4	34.2	2.9	1.8	0.7
		Commercial	25.7	39.6	28.7	5.0	1.0
	**	DPI	61.5	29.6	5.6	2.8	0.6
		DMV	38.2	43.4	13.8	3.3	1.3
Driver education training should be made more widely available through universities and community colleges in the state.	*	Public	43.4	40.2	7.3	2.2	6.9
		Commercial	27.5	58.9	5.9	2.0	7.8
	**	DPI	53.6	36.9	5.0	1.7	2.8
		DMV	23.0	58.6	5.3	2.6	10.5
At least some driver education training should be made available through the internet and other long-distance learning.	ns	Public	17.9	42.0	23.4	11.3	5.5
		Commercial	8.9	51.5	20.8	10.9	7.9
	**	DPI	18.4	45.3	20.1	10.1	6.1
		DMV	7.9	48.3	25.2	10.6	7.9
Driver education should be re-instated into the required school curriculum.	**	Public	51.5	17.5	16.1	7.3	7.7
		Commercial	14.6	10.4	40.6	24.0	10.4
	**	DPI	59.3	14.7	12.4	6.2	7.3
		DMV	18.9	17.6	37.8	18.2	7.
North Carolina needs greater standardization of its driver education curriculum	**	Public	30.3	42.0	15.3	2.9	9.5
		Commercial	12.5	39.6	40.6	2.1	5.2
	**	DPI	37.1	42.1	11.8	2.3	6.7
		DMV	10.2	40.1	35.4	2.7	11.6

Cont.

Table 4. Teachers' opinions on driver education issues. (cont.)

Opinion regarding:	p ¹		Agree - Disagree ²				
			SA	A	D	SD	NO
There should be a single standardized driver education curriculum for NC students.	**	Public	30.1	54.7	9.1	3.3	2.9
		Commercial	14.9	27.7	51.1	1.1	5.3
	**	DPI	36.6	50.3	11.2	2.2	1.7
		DMV	13.7	46.6	31.5	3.4	4.8
The required 30 hours of classroom instruction should be increased.	ns	Public	13.0	21.4	51.1	10.5	4.0
		Commercial	7.1	15.3	61.2	13.3	3.1
	**	DPI	16.7	21.7	49.4	9.4	2.8
		DMV	3.4	15.4	65.8	12.1	3.4
The required 6 hours of behind-the-wheel instruction should be increased.	ns	Public	28.1	31.4	33.2	5.1	4.1
		Commercial	19.4	31.6	38.8	6.1	2.2
	ns	DPI	30.3	29.8	32.6	5.1	2.3
		DMV	18.8	30.9	42.3	6.0	2.0
More continuing education opportunities are needed for driver education teachers.	ns	Public	31.9	59.8	3.3	1.8	3.3
		Commercial	26.5	62.8	4.9	2.0	3.9
	*	DPI	37.2	57.8	2.2	1.1	1.7
		DMV	23.5	64.7	5.2	2.0	4.6
Better use of new technologies (computers, simulators, etc.) would facilitate classroom learning.	*	Public	31.9	60.5	2.2	1.1	4.4
		Commercial	18.6	73.5	4.9	1.0	2.0
	ns	DPI	31.1	61.7	1.7	1.7	3.9
		DMV	20.9	71.9	3.9	0.7	2.6
I feel I am able to keep "up to date" with new developments in the field.	**	Public	13.4	66.3	14.9	2.5	2.9
		Commercial	19.6	77.5	2.0	0.0	1.0
	ns	DPI	17.2	66.7	10.6	3.3	2.2
		DMV	11.1	78.4	7.8	0.7	2.0
My LEA driver education coordinator keeps me informed of new developments in the field.	ns	Public	29.7	55.8	8.7	2.9	2.9
		Commercial	23.5	65.7	3.9	2.9	3.9
	ns	DPI	27.8	56.1	8.9	3.9	3.3
		DMV	25.5	64.1	4.6	2.6	3.3
My LEA driver educ. coordinator is knowledgeable about my classroom and in-car teaching performance.	ns	Public	31.6	54.6	6.9	2.2	4.7
		Commercial	27.5	65.7	2.0	2.0	2.9
	ns	DPI	30.0	55.6	6.1	3.3	5.0
		DMV	26.8	62.8	3.9	1.3	5.2

¹ ** = p<.01, * = p<.05

² SA=strongly agree, A=agree, D=disagree, SD=strongly disagree, NO=no opinion.

- Better use of new technologies (computers, simulators, etc.) would facilitate classroom learning (92.3% agreement).
- More continuing education opportunities are needed for driver education teachers (91.0% agreement).
- My LEA driver education coordinator is knowledgeable about my classroom and in-car teaching performance (88.1% agreement).
- My LEA driver education coordinator keeps me informed of new developments in the field (86.5% agreement).
- I feel I am able to keep “up to date” with new developments in the field (84.4% agreement).
- (Driver education) training should be made more widely available through universities and community colleges in the state (83.8% agreement).

Public school teachers and those holding DPI certification were more likely than commercial school teachers and those holding DMV certification to strongly agree that driver education training should be more widely available at universities and community colleges, although the statement received widespread support from all groups. (There might also have been some confusion in the wording of this question, since we did not specify driver education *teacher* training.) Interestingly, commercial school teachers were more likely to feel that they were able to keep up to date with new developments in the field: 77.5% agreed and 19.6% strongly agreed with this statement (compared to 66.3% and 13.4%, respectively, for public school teachers). Both public school and commercial school teachers felt that their LEA coordinator kept them informed of new developments in the field and was knowledgeable of their teaching performance.

The statement receiving the least support from teachers concerned the need to increase the current requirement for 30 hours of classroom instruction. Both public school and commercial school teachers felt that 30 hours of classroom instruction was adequate; teachers certified by DMV were especially likely to support the current standard. Opinions were more equally divided about the need for more BTW instruction time, with just over half of the teachers saying it should be increased and no significant differences by employer or certification type.

Another area where opinions varied for public school versus commercial driving school teachers concerned curriculum standardization. Overall, 26% of survey respondents strongly agreed, and an additional 42% agreed, that North Carolina needs greater standardization of its driver education curriculum. Respondents were even more likely to feel that there should be a single standardized driver education curriculum for North Carolina students (27% strongly agreed, 48% agreed). But commercial driving school teachers and, to a lesser extent, teachers certified by DMV were much less likely to express support for increased standardization. Only half (52.1%) of commercial school employees agreed that the state needed greater standardization of its driver education curriculum, and less than half (42.6%) agreed that there should be a single standard curriculum.

And finally, there were also differences in opinion regarding teacher training and certification requirements. Whereas 63% of all respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that current procedures for training and certifying new driver education teachers were adequate, this percentage dropped to 55% for public school teachers and 39% for teachers certified by DPI. Differences were even greater in response to the statement that all driver education teachers should have to pass 12-16 semester credit hours of college level driver education course work. Overall, 58% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, but the percentage rose to 69% for public school teachers and 83% for teachers certified by DPI.

Altogether, these results show strong support among driver education teachers for making teacher training and continuing education opportunities more widely available and accessible, and for making better use of new technologies in classrooms. Teachers generally agreed that the 30 hours of classroom instruction is adequate, but leaned toward increasing the required six hours of BTW instruction. The two areas of greatest disagreement between public school and commercial driving school teachers concerned teacher certification requirements and the need for a standardized curriculum. As might be expected, commercial school teachers and those certified by DMV were more likely to feel that current practices were adequate, while public school teachers and teachers holding DPI certification were more likely to feel that certification requirements needed to be strengthened and a more standardized curriculum established.

LEA Driver Education Coordinator Survey Results

Participant Characteristics

Fifty-nine respondents completed and returned the Local Education Association (LEA) driver education coordinator survey that was sent to 117 county and city LEAs. One survey was excluded because it evidently was completed by a teacher instead of the program coordinator, reducing the total to 58 surveys for a response rate of 50%. (A few other surveys may have been completed by teachers, but could not be clearly ruled out from being completed by an LEA coordinator.) Since there is only one LEA coordinator per school system, sample sizes are necessarily low, even with a 50% return rate. Statistical power is therefore often too low to detect differences in policies or opinions based on types of employees hired, type or extent of experience of the coordinator, size of the school system, or other variables of interest. Results are sometimes nevertheless analyzed for trends which although not statistically significant, could be meaningful. Test results reported in this section are all based on Chi-square tests of association for categorical variables.

LEA coordinators reported an average of 25.1 ± 9.9 total years of teaching experience (range 0-43 years). Coordinators reported a lower level of driver education teaching experience than total teaching experience, with an average of 12.9 ± 13.6 years (range 0-44 years). Table 5 summarizes information on the experience and qualifications of the participating LEA program coordinators. Over a third reported having no experience teaching driver education, but there were also about 19% with 30 or more years experience. The remaining coordinators were fairly evenly distributed with respect to their years driver education teaching experience.

Table 5 . Characteristics of respondents to LEA coordinator survey (n=58).

Participant Characteristics	n	%
Years teaching experience		
None	2	3.5 ¹
1-4	1	1.7
5-9	1	1.7
10-14	5	8.6
15-19	5	8.6
20-24	8	13.8
25-29	14	24.1
≥30	22	37.9
Years driver education teaching experience		
None	20	34.5
1-4	5	8.6
5-9	5	8.6
10-14	4	6.9
15-19	6	10.3
20-24	2	3.4
25-29	5	8.6
≥30	11	19.0
Types of past experience (multiple answers allowed) ²		
Driver education classroom teacher	32	55.2
Behind-the-wheel instructor	24	58.6
Classroom teacher (non-driver education)	44	75.9
School administrator	28	48.3
Other	23	39.7
Currently teach classroom driver education?		
Yes	23	41.4
No	33	58.9
Missing / Unknown	2	–
Currently teach behind-the-wheel?		
Yes	27	47.4
No	30	52.6
Missing / Unknown	1	–
Perform other duties unrelated to driver education?		
Yes	47	81.0
No	11	19.0
If yes, percent of work time devoted to driver education		
1-10 percent	17	37.8
>10 to 30 percent	13	28.9
>30 to 70 percent	7	15.6
>70 percent	8	17.8
Missing / Unknown	2	–

¹ Column percent

² Number and percent of total with indicated experience.

Approximately 55% of the program coordinators had taught classroom driver education, and 59% had taught behind-the-wheel (BTW). Cross-tabulations of the data revealed that half the coordinators had both driver education and other teaching or school-related experience, while 41% had school teaching or administrative experience but no BTW or classroom driver education experience. Five coordinators (<10%) had driver education experience only. (It is unclear why the 41% with no classroom or BTW experience is higher than the 35% above reporting no years of driver education teaching experience.) Although a substantial proportion of coordinators indicated they had no direct prior driver education experience, 76% had classroom teaching experience, 48% had school administrative experience, and 40% had other types of experience. Other experience most often included school-related backgrounds such as coaching, counseling, assistant principal, etc.

With regard to current teaching activities, 41% reported that they were teaching classroom driver education and 47% said they were providing BTW instruction. A cross-tabulation revealed that 54% of the coordinators were not teaching any driver education, 41% were teaching both classroom and BTW, and 5% were teaching BTW only.

When asked if they performed other duties unrelated to driver education, the vast majority of coordinators (81%) responded 'yes,' while 19% indicated 'no.' Among those with additional responsibilities, the average percentage of time devoted to driver education was 35%; the range was from one percent to, as one respondent reported, 152%! Two-thirds of the coordinators devoted 30% or less of their time to driver education, while nearly one-fifth devoted greater than 70% of their time. Among those school systems (LEAs) employing commercial driving school instructors, 75% devoted less than 10% of their time to driver education. By contrast, around 30% of those either employing both commercial driving instructors and teachers/school system personnel or school system personnel only spent less than 10% of their time on driver education duties. Similarly, coordinators with no driver education experience were more likely to spend less time on driver education. There was no clear trend, however, between amount of time spent on driver education and size of the school system (average 9th grade enrollment) alone.

Specific coordinator responsibilities varied but included such areas as administering all aspects of the program, recruiting and supervising personnel, coordinating curricula, scheduling teachers and students, maintaining the automobile fleet, and teaching BTW and classroom. Among those coordinators who contracted with a commercial driving school, the responsibilities appeared to involve mostly facilitating between the NC Department of Public Instruction and the driving school. Responsibilities also appeared to vary between larger and smaller school system. For example, two-thirds of coordinators in the smallest systems (those with <500 9th grade student enrollments) taught, compared to less than 20% for teachers in larger school systems.

Program Characteristics

Information on the characteristics of the LEAs and their driver education programs is summarized in Table 6. The average number of high schools within an LEA was three with a range from 1-16. Forty-five percent of the LEAs consisted of a single high school, followed by 28% with two or three high schools, 17% with four or five, 7% with six to ten, and two systems (3.5%) with more than ten high schools. Consistent with the small number of high schools in

Table 6. Characteristics of LEA/School System Driver education Program (N=58).

LEA Program Characteristics	n	%
Number of high schools in program		
1	26	44.8 ¹
2-3	16	27.6
4-5	10	17.2
6-10	4	6.9
>10	2	3.5
Total 9th grade average daily enrollment		
250	9	17.0
>250 to 500	23	43.4
>500 to 1000	12	22.6
>1000 to 2000	8	15.1
>2000	1	1.9
Missing / Unknown	5	–
Total number driver education teachers in program		
1-2 teachers	14	25.0
3-5 teachers	12	21.4
6-10 teachers	15	26.8
11-20 teachers	10	17.9
>20 teachers	5	8.9
Who teaches driver education? (Combined responses)		
Teachers/staff certified by DPI or DMV	40	70.2
Driving school instructors certified by DMV	8	14.0
Both of above	9	15.8
Missing / Unknown	1	–
Have teachers who teach: (56 responses)²		
Classroom only	17	29.3
Behind-the-wheel only	24	41.4
Both classroom and behind-the-wheel	51	89.5
Teaching staff composition (combined responses)		
Only teachers teaching both classroom and BTW	32	57.0
Classroom and BTW teachers + BTW only teachers	7	12.5
Classroom and BTW + BTW only + Classroom only	12	21.4
BTW only + Classroom only	5	8.9
Have adequate number of qualified: (57 responses)²		
Classroom teachers	51	89.5
Behind-the-wheel teachers	49	86.0
Do teachers all use a standardized curriculum?		
Yes	50	86.2
No	4	6.9
Don't know	4	6.9

Cont.

LEA Program Characteristics	n	%
Person having primary responsibility for teacher eval.		
LEA coordinator / survey respondent	20	35.1
Individual school principals	9	15.8
Driver education site coordinator at the school	2	3.5
Contracted driving schools	7	12.3
Other	17	29.8
No one	2	3.5
Missing / Unknown	1	–
Feel able to keep teachers in LEA informed		
Yes	52	91.2
No	5	8.8
Missing / Unknown	1	–

¹ Column percent.

² Number and percent of total responding "yes."

most LEAs, most also had a fairly small average daily 9th grade enrollment and employed relatively few driver education teachers. Nearly half employed five or fewer teachers, and three-fourths employed ten or fewer teachers.

When asked who teaches driver education in their schools, 70% of the program coordinators indicated that they only employ public school teachers or staff with either DPI or DMV certification; 14% use commercial driving school instructors certified by DMV; and 16% use a combination of school teachers or staff and driving school instructors. It is important to bear in mind that these percentages may not accurately reflect actual proportions of LEAs in the state hiring various types of driver education teachers, but only percentages of LEAs that reported using each type among those responding to our survey.

Coordinators with no driver education experience were more likely than those with experience to utilize commercial driving school instructors (35% versus 3%, $p < .01$). This result may be due to the school system believing that if they contract their program to a commercial driving school they do not need someone with driver education experience to oversee the program. Conversely, administrators with no driver education experience may be more likely to contract their program through a commercial driving school if they have such latitude. It also appears that the smaller (< 500 9th grade enrollment) and/or larger (>2000 9th grade enrollment) school systems employ commercial driving school instructors more often than the medium to moderately large systems (>500 but <2000 enrollments); but with only one response from a system of greater than 2000 freshmen, this conjecture must be treated cautiously. Furthermore, five of the eight systems employing commercial schools had only one high school, and five of nine systems employing both commercial school instructors and teachers had only one high school.

Altogether, 89% of the LEAs reported hiring at least some teachers who teach both classroom and BTW, 41% reported hiring at least some who teach BTW only, and 29% reported hiring at least some who teach classroom only. By crosstabulating the data, we determined that 57% of the responding LEAs employ only teachers who teach both BTW and classroom; 13% employ some BTW-only teachers along with others who teach both; 9% employ only teachers who teach either BTW or classroom; and 21% employ all three types of instructors.

When asked whether their LEA had an adequate number of qualified classroom driver education teachers, 90% of the program coordinators said 'yes.' Almost as many (86%) reported an adequate number of qualified BTW instructors. Seven out of the nine coordinators who indicated they did not have sufficient classroom teachers were themselves inexperienced in teaching driver education.

A majority of coordinators, 86%, indicated that a standard curriculum was used by all teachers in the LEA. Four coordinators said they were not using a standard curriculum, and four did not know. Three of the four who did not know were in LEAs that contracted with commercial driving school instructors. The curriculum reported used most often, by 28 LEAs, was Drive Right (N=38). Responsible Driving and Tomorrow's Driver were mentioned by four and three coordinators, respectively. Often a text was mentioned in conjunction with another text or other curriculum materials. There were several variations of a NC Driver Education text or curriculum also used by five of the LEAs. As discussed in the teacher survey results, there are various publications that this name may encompass. Probably most frequently meant is a text published by Costech Technologies of Canada and used by some of the commercial driving schools. In at least one instance, however, specific mention is made of a NC Curriculum Guide which may be the older public school curriculum guide, last produced and distributed by DPI in 1990 when driver education was still taught during the school day. Another five coordinators specified no particular curriculum, but reported using a variety of materials, often in conjunction with the NC Driver Handbook.

Coordinators indicated that they were the person most often responsible for evaluating classroom and BTW instructors. Thirty-five percent said they are the primary person responsible for evaluating teaching performance, while 30% indicated 'other,' 16% indicated individual school principals, 12% driving school personnel, and 4% a driver education site coordinator at the school. The 'other' answers usually encompassed some combination of responsible persons such as the LEA coordinator along with school principals, site coordinators, or contracted driving school personnel. DMV personnel were also mentioned a few times, as well as other school administrators.

LEA coordinators were also asked whether they were able to keep teachers within their LEA informed of new developments in the field. Nine out of 10 said that they were. About half also provided an explanation of how they were able to keep their teachers informed. Thirteen referred to various factors that might facilitate effective communication within the LEA – procedures that were followed, meetings held, personal contacts with teachers, or simply the small size of the LEA that fostered frequent contacts. Ten coordinators said they kept themselves up-to-date through attending meetings, conferences, and other professional development activities, while five indicated that they kept their teachers up-to-date through materials received from DPI.

Five coordinators admitted they had difficulty keeping their teachers informed about developments in driver education. The three reasons coordinators mentioned for being unable to keep teachers informed included (1) "Do not attend conferences so only information I receive is by mail" (2) "I don't get the information to keep them updated. Need a better chain of communication from the state on down" and (3) "It is outside the regular curriculum and taught by instructors contracted through a private driving school who do not normally interact with teachers in our LEA."

Driver Education Program Policies

Driver education program coordinators were asked whether their LEAs had policies or procedures for a number of quality-related program characteristics. Those responding 'yes' were asked to describe the policies or procedures in place. Results are summarized in Table 7.

Overall, fewer than 60% of the LEAs had standards on maximum class size. In LEAs where the coordinator had driver education experience the percentage was 66%, compared to 42% in LEAs where the coordinator did not have experience ($p=.09$, $df=1$). When analyzed by employee type, over three-fourths of LEAs employing both teachers/school staff and commercial school instructors had requirements for maximum class size, while only about half of those employing commercial school instructors only or teachers/school staff only had policies. Among those LEAs with policies in place, one-third keep class sizes to 30 or fewer students, while one-fourth have maximums of 31-35 students.

Interestingly, more LEAs had policies on minimum class size, at 67% overall. When examined by the experience level of the coordinator, the percentage with policies on class size minimums was again higher for those LEAs with experienced coordinators – 73% versus 56% for non-experienced coordinators (results not statistically significant). And again, systems employing both types of teachers had the highest incidence of having a policy.

Seventy-five percent of LEAs reported having a maximum class period length. The vast majority (82%) of those responding reported maximums of either two or three hours. Fifteen percent had limits of less than two hours, and one LEA allowed classes up to six hours. (The question did not differentiate between classes taught during the school year and those taught during vacation periods, which might presumably be longer.) Although unable to perform a valid statistical test due to small sample sizes, all nine of the LEAs employing both commercial driving instructors and licensed teachers/staff reported having a maximum class length, compared to 71% of LEAs employing teachers/school staff only and 57% for those employing commercial driving instructors only. There was not a strong trend according to coordinator experience, although those with experience did report a higher incidence of policy establishment.

Almost all the LEAs (95%) had policies on maximum and minimum numbers of students allowed per car during driving instruction. A lower percentage of LEAs employing exclusively commercial driving school instructors reported having policies on maximum or minimum numbers of students per car with only 57% having a minimum number. This result, although based on a small sample size, corroborates the results of the teacher survey which showed that teachers employed by commercial driving schools generally carry fewer students in the car for BTW instruction.

Table 7. LEA/School System Driver Education Program Policies or Standards.

LEA Program Policies/Standards	Having Policies	
	n	%
Maximum driver education class size (57 responses)	33	57.9
≤30 students	9	33.3%
31-35 students	7	25.9
36-40 students	4	14.8
41-50 students	6	22.2
> 50 students	1	3.7
Minimum driver education class size (55 responses)	37	67.3
≤15	12	41.4%
16-30	16	55.2
>30	1	3.4
Maximum length of class period (55 responses)	41	74.6
1 hour	4	12.1%
1.5 hours	1	3.0
2 hours	14	42.4
3 hours	13	39.4
6 hours	1	3.0
Maximum number students per car during BTW (56 responses)	53	94.6
2 students	6	13.6%
3 students	36	81.8
4 students	2	4.5
Minimum number students per car during BTW (56 responses)	53	94.6
1 student	4	9.1%
2 students	40	90.9
Maintenance of records on student class performance (57 resp.)	52	91.2
Maintenance of records on student BTW performance (57 resp.)	49	86.0
Requirements for driver education teacher evaluation (56 resp.)	26	46.4
Allowing students to "test out" of classroom instruction (57 resp.)	23	40.4
Standardized end-of-course test that student must pass to receive course credit (57 responses)	23	40.4
Procedures to follow if student fails classroom driver ed (54 resp.)	45	83.3
Procedures to follow if student fails BTW driver ed (53 resp.)	41	77.4
Policy/guidelines regarding special needs students (54 resp.)	39	72.2

Nine out of ten (91%) coordinators indicated that their LEA had a policy on maintenance of classroom records, and almost as many (86%) said it had a policy on maintenance of students' BTW driving performance. There were no apparent differences in record requirements by type of teachers employed or by coordinator driver education teaching experience. Forty-seven respondents described classroom records kept as basically those one would maintain for any class (rollbook, class grades, test grades, etc.). A few indicated that record-keeping was the responsibility of the instructor. Two mentioned that records were kept by contractors (described in one case as "excellent"). When record retention was mentioned, records were maintained anywhere from 2-30 years. Mentioned in connection with BTW records were 450 or 451 forms, the restricted permit form, logs or records kept by the driving instructor, "mileage, hours and standards students should be able to pass," "daily car instruction sheet on activities completed each driving session," "form supplied by the state," and the Miller Roads Test (SBTS-800 form). One respondent indicated that records were not kept unless the student was a poor driver and then to document extra effort. There were 40 responses describing BTW records requirements.

Less than half of the coordinators indicated that they had requirements for driver education teacher evaluation. LEAs employing commercial driving instructors only were the most likely to have a policy requiring teacher evaluation (75%), although sample sizes were too small for statistical testing. Similarly, coordinators with no driver education experience, who also more frequently manage programs employing commercial driving school instructors, were somewhat more likely (58%) to have a policy for teacher evaluation than were those with driver education experience (41%). Only 18 respondents attempted to describe their teacher evaluation requirements: a few use a state evaluation process, one or two indicated teachers receive yearly evaluations, some indicated that the private driving schools complete the evaluations, while others cite requirements for maintaining certification and/or lengthy teaching experience. By-and-large, there seems to be little standardization for driver education teacher evaluations, even among those establishing some requirement.

When asked whether they have a policy that allows students to "test out" of all or part of the classroom instruction, about 40% indicated that they did. There were no clear trends by employee types or by coordinator experience, although those LEAs employing both teachers and commercial driving instructors were somewhat more likely to have such a policy. Seventeen respondents described their policies. Most all indicated that they offer the NC Driver Education Proficiency exam. One added the requirement of parental permission, and several stated that an 80% score was required to exempt class. None mentioned that any class work was required of those passing the test. One respondent indicated that their policy was "We DO NOT allow this to happen [testing out of classroom portion]."

Forty percent of the responding coordinators also indicated that they require a standardized end-of-course test to receive credit for the course. Coordinators employing commercial driving school instructors more often required such a test (75%), compared to 38% of those employing teachers only and 22% employing both teachers and commercial school instructors. Coordinators with no experience were also more likely to do so, although these findings were not statistically significant. Twenty respondents described their policies for a standardized end-of-course test. Three indicated their students must pass a test on the handbook, presumably the NC Driver Education Handbook produced by NC DMV and distributed by DPI to all the school systems.

One coordinator requires the test before students move on to BTW, not for course credit. Most others cited comprehensive tests, probably created locally ("locally developed," "multiple choice driver's test," "50 questions," "100 questions," "based on curriculum covered," "provided by the contractor," etc.), while one respondent indicated that "this is required by the state " but did not indicate if a statewide standardized test was administered. Some require passing a test on "book work only" while another requires passing "by the 3rd attempt at the end of 6 hours or they fail BTW portion." Another indicated that students "must pass total class work and road work" rather than a final exit exam.

Approximately 83% of the coordinators indicated that their LEA had procedures to follow if a student fails the classroom instruction. These percentages were very similar across teacher types and coordinator experience. For the 39 coordinators describing their policies, two-thirds offered that the student either was required or allowed to take the course over or make up or repeat work in the next session, with several of these limiting re-takes through an appeals process, to one repeat, or to those in special programs. Seven mentioned allowing students to re-take the NC handbook or other test, take an oral test and/or re-take the class. One mentioned that students must pay to re-take the exam. There were a few specialized procedures such as providing special help or tutoring or being referred to the director for re-evaluation. One respondent indicated that students who fail the course are recommended to a commercial driving school.

Most LEAs, about three-fourths, also have procedures to follow if a student fails the BTW instruction. There were no apparent differences by teacher types employed or coordinator experience in BTW policy establishment. About half of 35 respondents indicated that they give extra driving time beyond the six hours. Another 12 (34%) allow students to re-take the driving portion, usually with a new instructor, or re-apply to take the course. Three respondents indicated that they refer the student to a commercial driving school, while one indicated that they also communicate with a parent or guardian.

Lastly, about three-fourths of the LEA coordinators reported having policies on teaching students with special needs. LEAs using commercial driving school instructors were the most likely to have a policy regarding special needs students at 87%; this compares to 72% for LEAs employing teachers/staff only and 67% for those employing both types (no statistical test). Coordinators with no experience were less likely to report such a policy. The 35 respondents describing their policies indicated variously that they follow state guidelines, or student individual education plans, provide "whatever is necessary," or utilize various resources or staff to accommodate the special needs (both physical and special learning needs were mentioned) of students.

Opinions on Driver Education Program

LEA coordinators were asked their opinions on the same 16 statements as the teachers (with modifications as necessary to adapt a few questions to the coordinators). They were likewise asked to indicate if they strongly agreed or agreed, strongly disagreed or disagreed, or had no opinion. Results are presented graphically in Figure 11.

All DE teachers should have to pass the same course of study to be qualified to teach in public schools.

Current procedures for training and certifying new driver education teachers are adequate.

All DE teachers should have to pass 12-16 hours of college level DE course work.

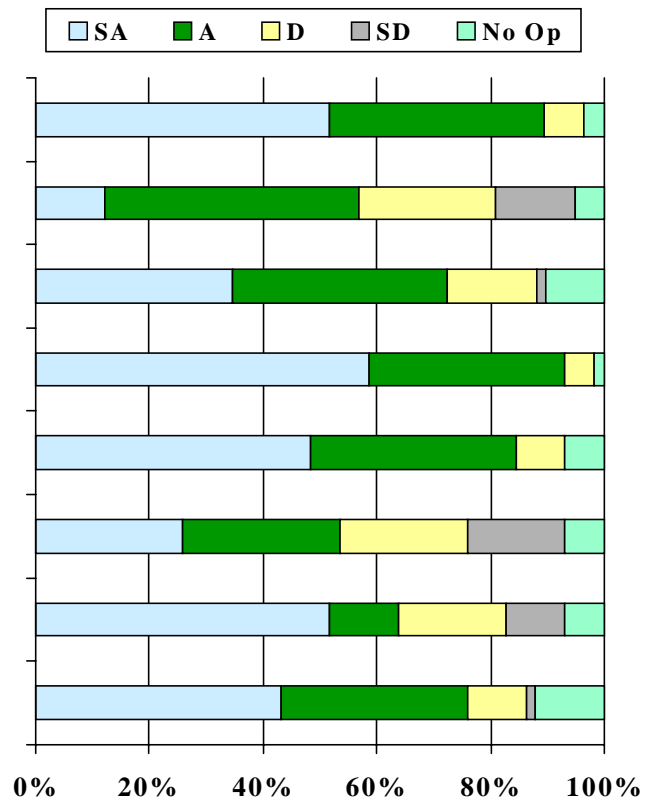
All teachers should be qualified to teach both classroom and BTW.

Training should be made more widely available through universities/community colleges.

At least some DE training should be made available through the internet and other long-distance learning.

Driver education should be re-instated into the required school curriculum.

NC needs greater standardization of its DE curriculum.



There should be a single standardized driver education curriculum for NC students.

The required 30 hours of classroom instruction should be increased.

The required 6 hours of BTW instruction should be increased.

More continuing education opportunities are needed for driver education teachers.

Better use of new technologies (computers, simulators, etc.) would facilitate classroom learning.

I feel I am able to keep "up to date" with new developments in the field.

I am able to keep the teachers in my LEA up-to-date on new developments in the field.

I am knowledgeable about the classroom and in-car teaching performance of driver education teachers in my LEA.

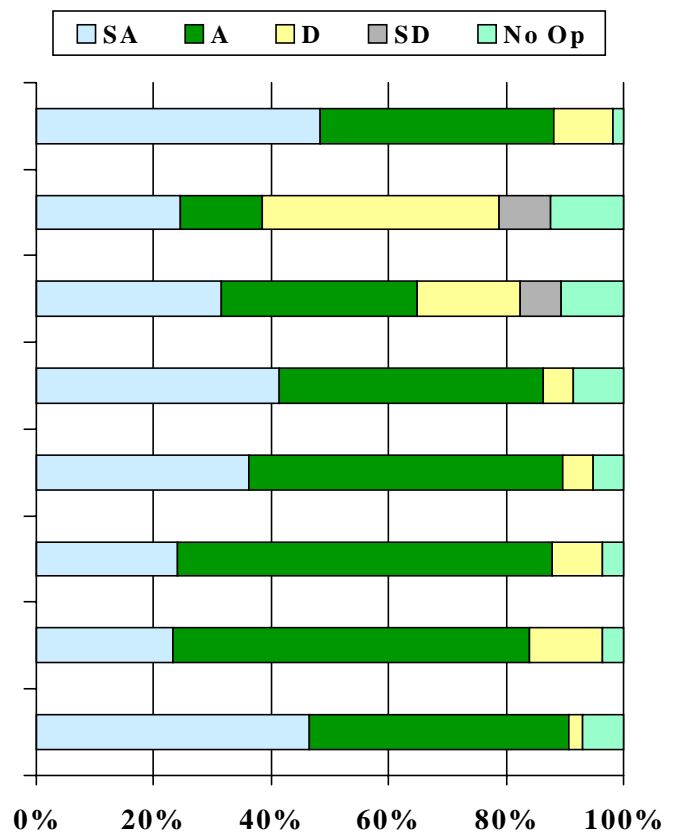


Figure 11. LEA coordinators' opinions on various driver education issues.

Three statements had 90% or greater agreement when strongly agree and agree were combined. They were:

- All teachers should be qualified to teach both classroom and behind-the-wheel (93% agreement, 59% strong agreement).
- I am knowledgeable about the classroom and in-car teaching performance of driver education teachers in my LEA (91% agreement).
- Better use of new technologies (computers, simulators, etc.) would facilitate learning in the classroom (90% agreement).

Coordinators agreed or strongly agreed with six other statements more than 80% of the time:

- All driver education teachers should have to pass the same course of study to be qualified to teach in public schools (89% agreement).
- There should be a single standardized driver education curriculum for NC students (88% agreement).
- I feel I am able to keep "up to date" with new developments in the field (88% agreement)
- More continuing education opportunities are needed for driver education teachers (86% agreement).
- Driver education training should be made more widely available through universities and community colleges in the state (85% agreement).
- I am able to keep the teachers in my LEA up-to-date on new developments in the field (84% agreement). (This percentage is slightly lower than those who said 'yes' in the previous question on the same topic.)

Approximately three-fourths of the coordinators agreed or strongly agreed that:

- North Carolina needs greater standardization of its driver education curriculum (76% agreement), and
- All driver education teachers should have to pass 12-16 hours of college level driver education course work (72% agreement).

Only about 65% of the LEA coordinators agreed that driver education should be re-instated into the required school curriculum, or that the six hours of BTW instruction should be increased. Just over half of the respondents strongly agreed with re-instating driver education into the school day, while those in favor of increasing hours of BTW instruction were more evenly divided between strongly agree and agree. Coordinators with driver education teaching

experience agreed 80% of the time that driver education should be reinstated into the school day, while only 47% of those with no experience agreed with this statement ($p=.01$, $df1$).

Fifty-seven percent agreed that current procedures for training and certifying new driver education teachers are adequate, while 38% disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement. Coordinators with no driver education experience agreed or strongly agreed with this statement 82% of the time, while those with experience agreed with it only 50% of the time.

Even fewer, 53%, agreed that some driver education training should be made available through the Internet and other long-distance learning. The generally low level of support for Internet/distance learning could be due to a poorly worded question being misinterpreted to apply to students rather than to teachers as was intended. It is possible, though, that experienced teachers (more of whom are university trained) do actually disagree with providing Internet opportunities for newer teachers.

The statement with the lowest level of support of LEA coordinators was, "The required 30 hours of classroom instruction should be increased," with only 39% agreeing or strongly agreeing. Coordinators lacking a driver education teaching background disagreed with this statement 86% of the time, while those with experience actually agreed a majority (56%) of the time when those with no opinion were excluded. This difference is statistically significant ($p<.01$, $df1$).

In general, these results closely parallel those for driver education teachers presented earlier in this chapter. The LEA coordinators tended to have a higher proportion of "no opinion" responses and expressed generally higher levels of agreement, but the overall patterns of responses were much the same. The statement receiving the highest overall agreement from both coordinators and teachers was that teachers should be qualified to teach both classroom and BTW, and the statement receiving the lowest level of agreement from both coordinators and teachers was that the required 30 hours of classroom instruction should be increased.

CHAPTER 3. TELEPHONE SURVEY OF TEENS AND THEIR PARENTS

Background and Methods

The telephone survey of teens and their parents was conducted as part of a larger, multi-year survey being carried out by HSRC researchers to evaluate the effects of the state's graduated driver license (GDL) system. Since the GDL went into effect December 1, 1997, three statewide surveys have been conducted to help gauge its impact – in 1999, 2000, and 2001. For the most recent survey, a series of questions was added to both the teen and parent questionnaires focusing specifically on driver education. Data were collected over a three-month period from mid-May until mid-July, 2001.

As in the previous years, the sampling frame for the survey was generated by identifying a random sample of public high schools in the state and then contacting these schools to obtain a listing of telephone numbers (no names or addresses) of their students. From the state's approximately 400 public schools serving high school age students, a random sample of 72 schools was identified for the 1999 survey. From this sample, 45 schools were contacted for the current survey, with 37 of these agreeing to provide the requested student telephone numbers. The numbers were compiled into a single randomized listing, and smaller subsets were opened as needed for the telephone survey.

Eligible households included those with at least one teen aged 15, 16 or 17. If the household included two or more teens in this age range, the teen "with the next birthday" was selected for participation. Interviewers first questioned the parent or legal guardian, then asked for permission to speak with their teen. Often, follow-up calls were needed to reach the teen at a time he or she was available and could talk privately. The parent and teen interviews each took about 10-15 minutes to complete.

The driver education questions were added to the end of the interviews. There were 18 questions directed to teens and eight to their parents. Copies of these questions are included in Appendix D. In addition to these specific questions, the analysis below incorporates some of the demographic variables available from the full survey, including the teen's age, gender, race, urban/rural residence, and current level of licensure.

Altogether a total of 875 teen-parent interviews was completed. The overall response rate for the survey (completed interviews / total sample attempts) was 63.0%. This is lower than in previous years when a 70 percent or higher response rate was obtained, due primarily to the survey being conducted later in the year when many of the families and teens were away for the summer.

Of the 875 teens interviewed, 723, or 82.6%, reported that they had taken driver education in North Carolina. The vast majority of those who had not taken driver education in the state were unlicensed at the time of the survey. The analysis below focuses on these 723 teen-parent pairs. The analysis is primarily descriptive in nature, including single variable tabulations and some two-way crosstabulations of the data. Since the data are categorical, Chi-square tests of association were used to assess significance of the reported crosstabulations.

Although a distinction was made in the driver education teacher and coordinator surveys between public and commercial school instructors teaching in the public schools, no effort was made to obtain this information from the students. Generally, it was not felt that students could reliably identify whether they had been instructed by a school system employee, a driving school employee, or perhaps both. The results presented in this chapter differentiate only between those students taking driver education through their school program (regardless of who actually taught it), and those taking the course on their own through a private driving school.

Results

Participant Characteristics

The demographic characteristics of the 723 teens who had completed a driver education course in North Carolina are summarized in Table 8. Although 15-year-olds comprised nearly a third of the total 875 survey participants, they were much less likely than the 16- and 17-year-olds to have completed a driver education course. This results in a lower proportion of 15-year-olds among the subset of participants included in our study sample. Males and females were equally represented in the two samples.

Only 10.4% of the teens who had taken driver education had not yet obtained a driver's license (compared to 25.2% in the full sample). The percentages of Level 2 and Level 3 licenses may be slightly inflated, since a few 15-year-olds included themselves in these categories and technically a 15-year-old can only hold a Level I license under North Carolina's graduated licensing system.

Just over half (53.1%) of the teens lived in urban or suburban areas and 45.1% in rural areas, according to information provided by the parents. In addition, 71.2% of the parents identified themselves as White. This percentage is considerably higher than for parents of teens who had not completed a driver education course and who were therefore excluded from the analysis: in this case, only 49.3% had identified themselves as White. Two-thirds of the adults interviewed were mothers, nearly one-fourth fathers, and the remaining portion a combination of stepfathers, stepmothers, grandparents, and legal guardians.

Over half (57.4%) of the survey participants had completed their driver education course, including the behind-the-wheel instruction, within the past 1½ years (i.e., since January 2000), and nine in ten (89.5%) had completed it within the past 2½ years (i.e., since January 1999).

Teen Results

Classroom Experience. With regard to the classroom component of driver education, teens were asked whether they were able to get into a class when they wanted to, where they took the class (either through their school or a commercial driving school), how long the class met on a typical day, and how many students were in the class. Responses to these questions are summarized in Table 9.

Table 8. Demographic characteristics of teen survey participants who had completed a driver education course in North Carolina (n=723).

Participant Characteristics	n	%
Age		
15	172	23.8
16	295	40.8
17	256	35.4
Sex		
Male	365	50.5
Female	358	49.5
Current license status		
No license	75	10.4
Level 1 (Learner's Permit)	340	47.0
Level 2 (Restricted license)	126	17.4
Level 3 (Unrestricted license)	182	25.2
Area where live		
Urban	135	18.7
Suburban	249	34.4
Rural	326	45.1
Other / Don't know	13	1.8
Parent's Race		
White	545	71.2
Black	173	23.9
Other / Refused	35	4.8
Parent's Relationship to Teen		
Mother	492	68.0
Father	177	24.5
Other	54	7.5

Seven of ten teens (70.9%) said that they were able to schedule their class when they wanted to, while three in ten (29.1%) said that they had to wait before taking the class. The most frequently given reasons for having to wait were that the class was full or there were problems in scheduling the class. A few additional teens said that the class was not being offered when they wanted to take it. Teens who took driver education through a commercial driving school as opposed to through their high school were somewhat more likely to report being able to get into a class when they wanted to (74.3% versus 70.7%), but these results were not statistically significant. Overall, less than five percent of the teens interviewed said that they took their driver education through a commercial driving school.

Table 9. Teens' responses to questions regarding their classroom driver education instruction.

Classroom Experience	n	%
Able to take class when wanted?		
Yes	507	70.9
No	208	29.1
DK / NA / Ref	8	–
Main reason for not taking when wanted		
Class full	103	50.0
Schedule problems	34	16.5
Class not offered	12	5.8
Fault of student	10	4.9
Parent didn't want student to take	3	1.5
Other	44	21.4
DK / NA / Ref	2	–
Where took driver ed class		
At the high school	687	95.2
At a commercial driving school	65	4.8
DK / NA / Ref	1	–
Typical class period		
1 hour or less	74	10.5
> 1 hour but \leq 3 hours	457	64.9
> 3 hours but \leq 6 hours	127	18.0
> 6 hours	46	6.5
DK / NA / Ref	19	–
Number of students in class		
1-19	139	19.8
20	164	23.3
21-25	117	16.6
26-30	169	24.0
31-50	65	9.3
51-500	49	7.0
DK / NA / Ref	20	–
Quality of classroom instruction		
Excellent	189	26.9
Good	378	53.7
Fair	119	16.9
Poor	18	2.6
DK / NA / Ref	19	–

For nearly two-thirds of the teens, a typical driver education class lasted longer than an hour but not longer than three hours. Nearly a fourth of the teens, however, reported that their class periods were longer than three hours. This was especially common for the teens who had taken classes through a commercial driving school (see Figure 12, $p < .01$). Although based on a relatively small sample of only 34 students, 44.1% of the students taking driver education through a commercial driving school reported that their class periods lasted from three to six hours, while an additional 32.4% said they lasted more than six hours.

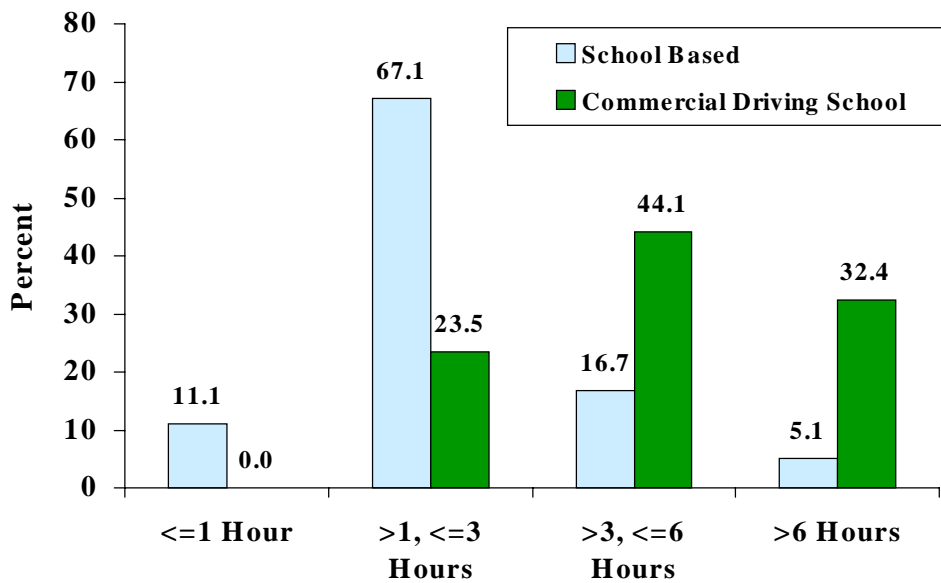


Figure 12. Length of driver education class period.

With respect to class size, 83.7% of teens reported 30 or fewer students in their class; but this still left many students in much larger classes of 100, 200, and (for one teen) up to a reported 500 students. In this case, the commercial driving schools held the advantage, with 88.6% of their classes limited to 20 or fewer students (see Figure 13, $p < .01$).

Finally, four in five teens rated the quality of their classroom instruction as either good or excellent, and less than 3% gave their class a “poor” rating. Although school-based classes were slightly more likely than classes offered by commercial driving schools to receive an “excellent” rating (26.4% versus 22.9%), the differences between the settings were not significant statistically.

Behind-the-Wheel Driving Experience. Results pertaining to teens’ behind-the-wheel, or BTW, driving experience are summarized in Table 10. Overall, the teens reported fewer problems scheduling BTW than classroom instruction: less than one in five teens said that they had problems in scheduling their BTW instruction when they wanted to take it. The main reason again for not getting BTW instruction when it was wanted was that the class was full or there were problems in scheduling the instruction at a convenient time. The large category of “other” reasons included a wide variety of responses such as sports activities at the school, lost forms, vacations, and “it went by ABC order and our last name was R—.”

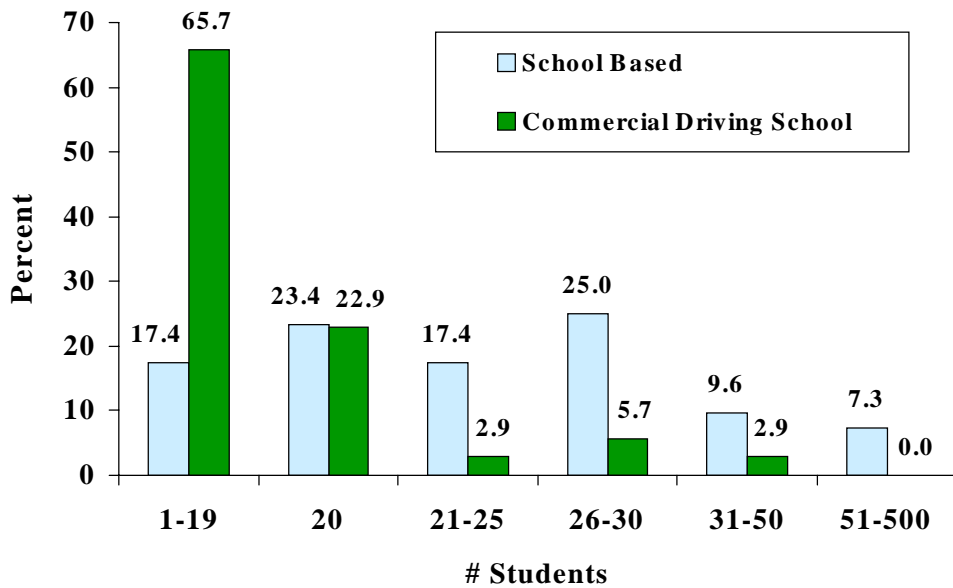


Figure 13. Number of students in class.

Even though students taking driver education through their high schools were no more likely than those taking it at commercial driving schools to report problems in scheduling BTW instruction, they generally did have to wait longer for it (see Figure 14, $p < .01$). Overall, close to a third of the teens said that they were able to begin BTW instruction within two weeks of their class, but this percentage rose to 57.1% for students taking driver education through commercial driving schools. Altogether, nearly one in five students reported waiting three or more months before beginning their BTW instruction.

Just over a third of the teens reported that they drove on three separate days, while another third reported that they drove on four or five separate occasions. Just under 10 percent reported that they drove six separate days to accumulate six hours of required behind-the-wheel driving instruction, while 13.5% reported driving more than six days. There was a significant difference in days spent driving for students taking driver education through their schools versus through commercial driving schools (see Figure 15, $p < .01$). At least for the small number of commercial driving school students included in the sample, these students tended to complete their BTW instruction in only two or three days, whereas the school-based instruction tended to span 3-6 days or more.

Along this same line, it should be noted that the number of days teens reported driving was generally lower than what was reported by teachers participating in our teacher survey. This could be because the majority of the teachers responding were school employees, whereas the teens may have had a higher proportion of teachers who were commercial driving school employees.

Table 10. Teens' responses to questions regarding their BTW driving instruction.

Driving Experience	n	%
Any problems scheduling BTW when wanted?		
No, did not have problems	586	82.0
Yes, had problems	129	18.0
DK / NA / Ref	8	–
Main reason for not scheduling when wanted		
Class full	59	46.8
Schedule problems	28	22.2
Class not offered	3	2.4
Fault of student	1	0.8
Parent didn't want student to take	1	0.8
Not allowed to take	1	0.8
Other	33	26.2
DK / NA / Ref	3	–
How long before could get BTW instruction?		
2 weeks or less	232	32.6
>2 weeks but <= 1 month	176	24.8
>1 month but < 3 months	173	24.3
3 months or more	130	18.3
DK / NA / Ref	12	–
How many separate days drove		
1 day	5	0.7
2 days	62	8.9
3 days	238	34.2
4 days	105	14.9
5 days	126	18.1
6 days	68	9.8
7-8 days	59	8.5
9-10 days	21	3.0
>10 days	14	2.0
DK / NA / Ref	25	–
Total driving time		
Less than 6 hours	80	11.3
About 6 hours	361	50.9
More than 6 hours	268	37.8
DK / NA / Ref	14	–

Cont.

Table 10. Teens' responses to questions regarding their BTW driving instruction. (cont.)

Driving Experience	n	%
Was driving time		
Too little	95	13.3
Too much	23	3.2
About right	597	83.5
DK / NA / Ref	8	–
Number of other students usually in car		
No other students	74	10.3
1 other student	496	69.2
2 other students	136	19.0
3-4 other students	11	1.5
DK / NA / Ref	6	–
Were you ever a passenger in the car?		
Yes	628	87.1
No	93	12.9
DK / NA / Ref	2	–
Total time as passenger in car		
2 hours or less	174	28.3
2-4 hours	140	22.7
4-6 hours	205	33.3
More than 6 hours	97	15.8
DK / NA / Ref	12	–
How useful was time spent as passenger		
Very useful	188	30.0
Somewhat useful	329	52.5
Not at all useful	110	17.5
DK / NA / Ref	1	–
Quality of BTW instruction		
Excellent	283	39.6
Good	340	47.6
Fair	79	11.1
Poor	13	1.8
DK / NA / Ref	8	–

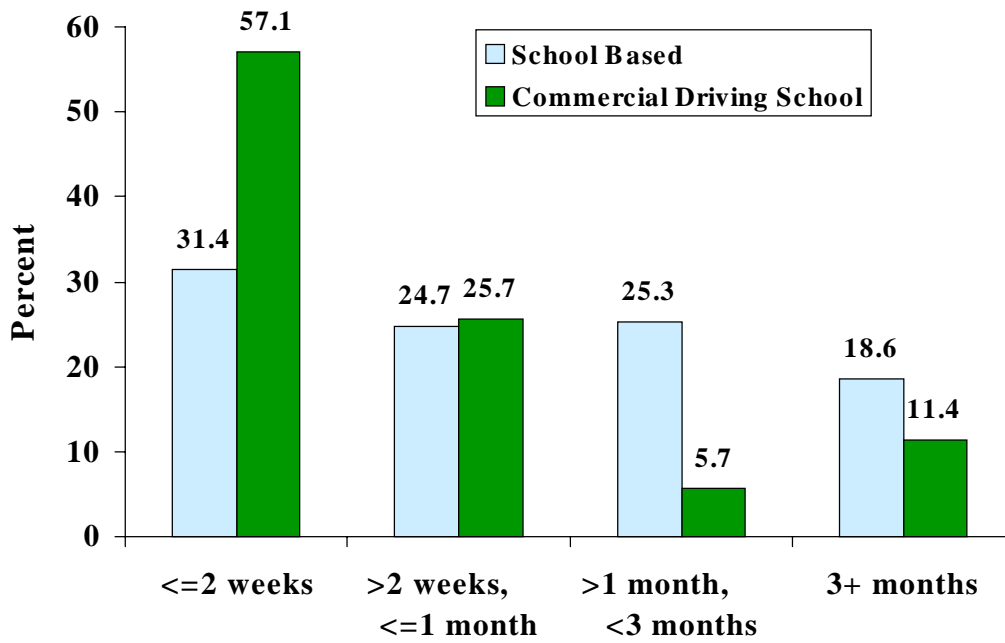


Figure 14. Time before beginning BTW instruction.

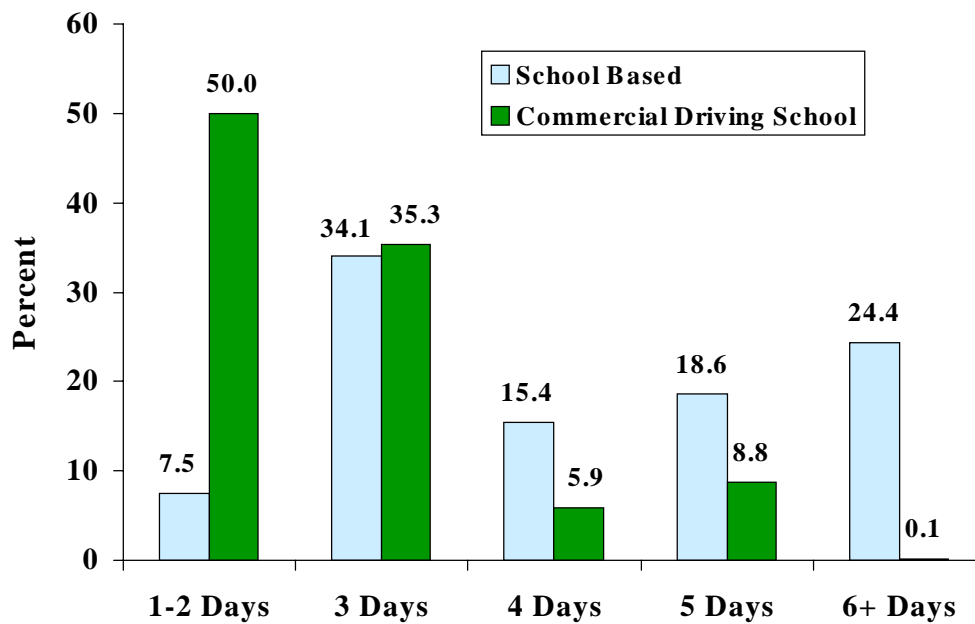


Figure 15. Days drove to complete BTW instruction.

Half (50.9%) of the teens reported receiving about six hours of total BTW driving time, and 37.8% reported receiving more than the required six hours. Only 11.3% reported receiving less than the required six hours. These percentages did not vary significantly for students receiving instruction through their schools versus through commercial driving schools. And although students who received less than six hours of total driving time were slightly more likely to report that this time was “too little,” there was no significant association between students’ total driving time and the perceived adequacy of this amount of time. Overall, 83.5% of students felt that the time they spent behind-the-wheel was “about right.”

In most cases (69.2%), teens reported that there was only one other student in the car as a passenger when they drove. Only very rarely were there three or four other students in the car (the latter only reported by one teen). Students taking driver education through commercial driving schools typically had no other students in the car with them, or at most one or two other students. In contrast, students taking driver education through their high schools almost always had one or two other students with them (see Figure 16, $p < .001$).

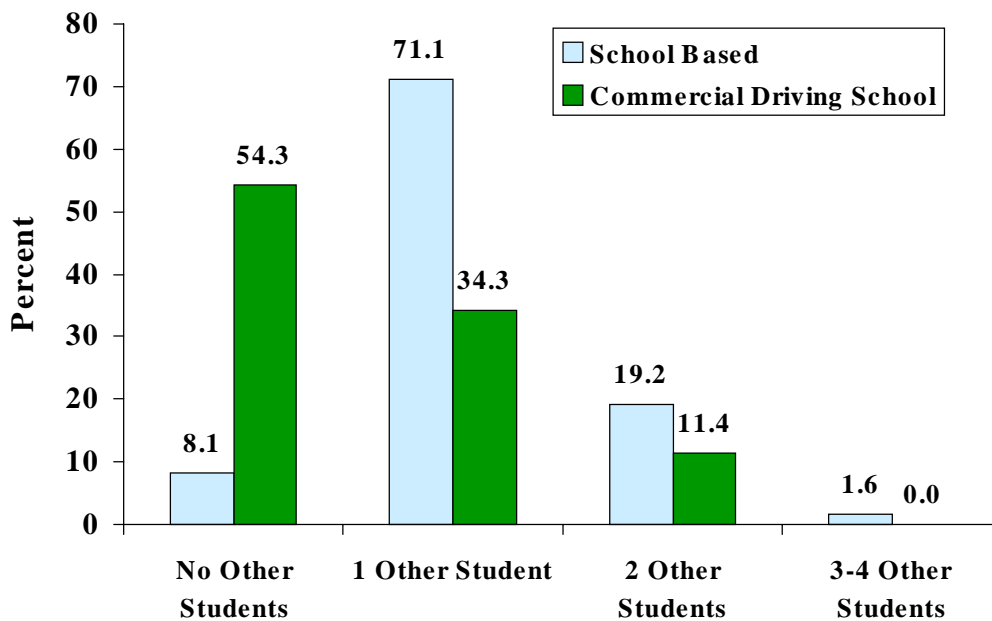


Figure 16. Number of other students in car when drove.

Several questions were directed toward time the teen spent as a passenger in a car while another student drove. The vast majority (87.1%) of the teens interviewed reported spending some time as a passenger in their driving instructor’s car. However, only half (48.6%) of the teens who took driver education through a local driving school reported ever being a passenger in the car (see Figure 17, $p < .001$). These teens also spent less total time riding as a passenger (see Figure 18, $p < .05$). Regardless of where they took driver education, over half of the teens interviewed (52.2%) judged it to be somewhat useful, and 30.0% very useful.

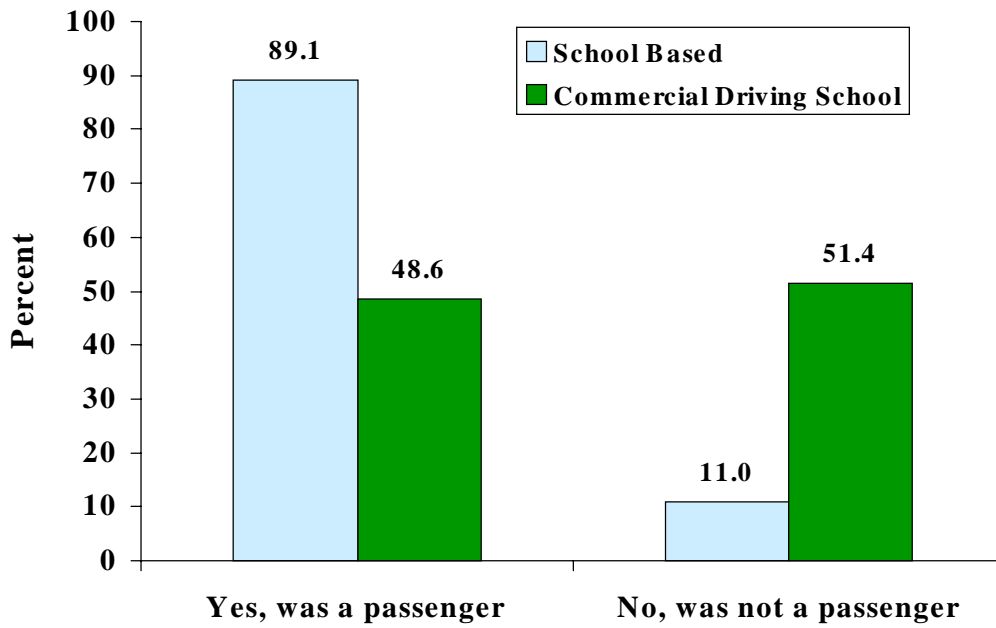


Figure 17. Whether ever rode as passenger in a car.

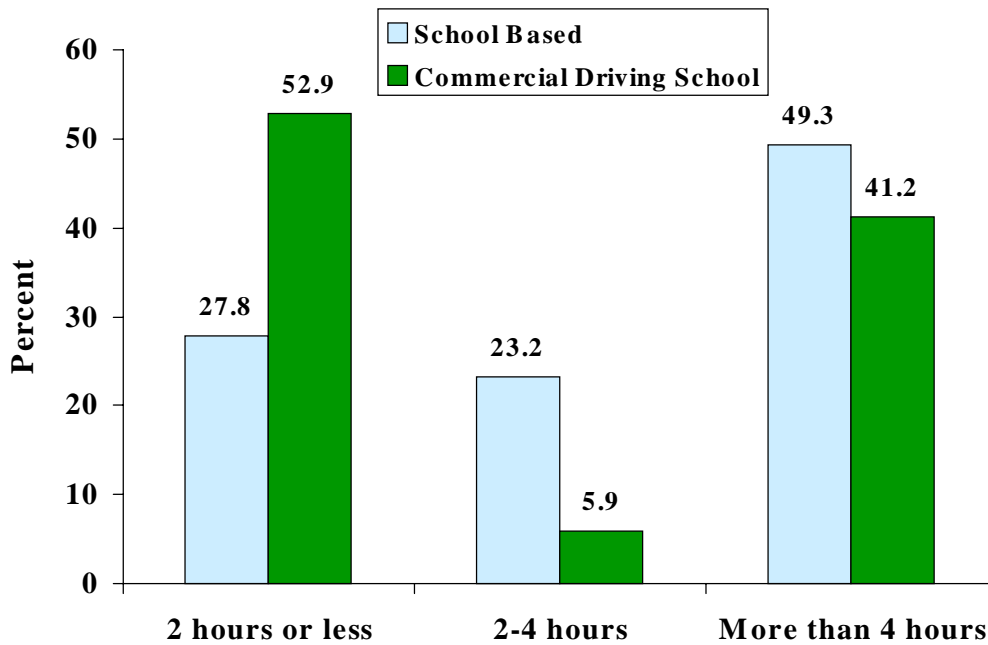


Figure 18. Number hours spent riding as passenger.

Finally, as with the classroom instruction, teens were asked to rate the quality of the BTW instruction they received. These ratings were again very positive, with 39.6% of the teens giving their instructional experience an “excellent” rating, and 47.6% a “good” rating. Differences between public school and commercial driving school settings were not statistically significant ($p=.08$), although there was a tendency for the commercial schools to receive more “good” ratings while the public schools received both more “excellent” and “fair” ratings (see Figure 19, non-significant p). There were very few “poor” ratings.

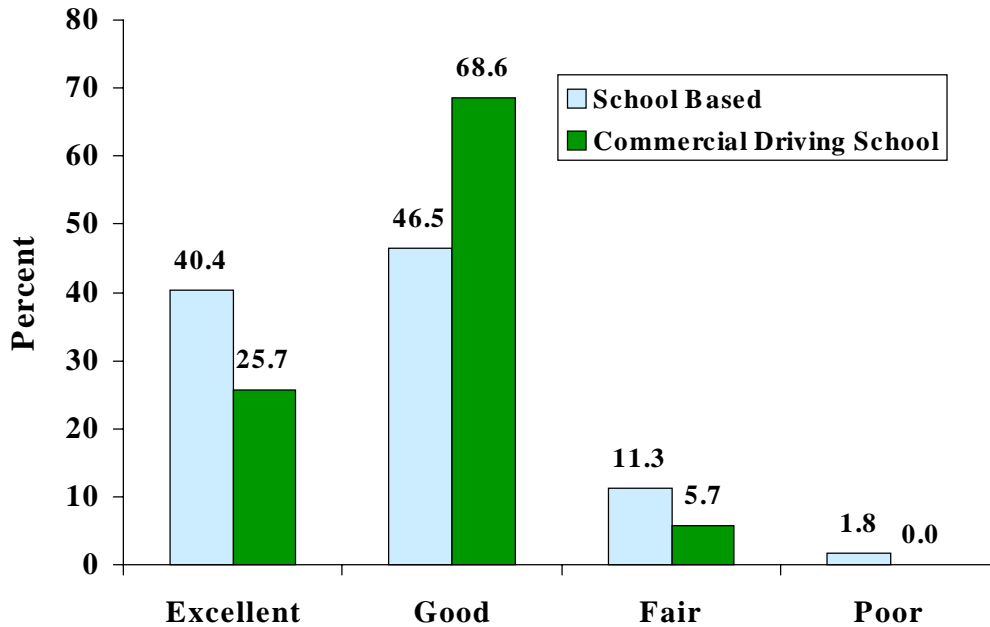


Figure 19. Teens’ ratings of their BTW driving instruction.

Suggestions for Improving Driver Education. A final question posed to the teens was an open-ended question: “Do you have any suggestions for ways driver education could be improved, either the classroom or the driving instruction?” Multiple responses were allowed and coded. The results are summarized in Table 11. Only a little over a third (36.5%) of the teens provided any specific suggestions. The suggestion offered most frequently was to provide more behind-the-wheel driving time, followed by better classroom materials, better classroom teachers, and fewer students in a class. Although some of the teens suggested less class time or shorter class periods, about equal numbers suggested more class time or longer class periods. Clearly these suggestions (as was the suggestion for fewer students in the car) were tied to the specific experiences of the teen. Some of the suggestions included in the large “other” category included having more speakers and fewer films and videos, adding nighttime driving, not starting so early in the morning, making more of an effort to calm students behind the wheel, and offering obstacle courses for practice driving instead of going directly into traffic. In general, however, it was clear that the majority of the teens interviewed were satisfied with their driver education experience.

Table 11. Teens' suggestions for improving driver education.

Suggestion	N	% of Teens ¹ (N=723)
More driving time	74	10.2
Better class materials	44	6.1
Better class teachers	32	4.4
Fewer students in class	27	3.7
Better BTW teachers	19	2.6
Less class time	14	1.9
More class time	9	1.2
Fewer students in car	9	1.2
Shorter class periods	7	1.0
Longer class periods	5	0.7
More computers, technology	3	0.4
Other	98	13.6
DK / NA / Refused	459	63.5

¹ Percentages total >100% due to multiple responses by some teens.

Parent Results

Most of the questions asked the parents or other guardians of the teens were opinion-related. The parents' responses to these questions are summarized in Table 12. Although equal numbers of parents and teens were interviewed, the parent results are based on a total of 728 responses, compared to 723 for the teens. This is because more parents than teens responded that their child took driver education in North Carolina. Only those answering "yes" to this question were asked the subsequent questions pertaining to driver education.

A question regarding state payment for driver education costs was worded as follows:

"Currently teens and their families in North Carolina do not have to pay for driver education when they take it through their schools. In other states, they may have to pay some or all of the costs. Do you feel North Carolina should continue to pay all of the costs for students to take driver education, should only pay part of the costs, or should not pay any of the costs?"

Not surprisingly, a large majority of parents (80.9%) felt that the state should continue to pay the full costs of driver education. However, 15.2% said that the state should only pay part of the costs, and 3.9% none of the costs. These results were not associated with the parents' level of education or race.

A solid two-thirds of the parents said that the current standard of six hours of BTW instruction was too little, with the remaining third saying it was about right. Almost no one said

Table 12. Parents' responses to questions regarding their teen's driver education experience (n=728).

Parent Questions	n	%
Opinion regarding state payment for driver education		
State should continue to pay full costs	579	80.9
State should pay part of costs	109	15.2
State should not pay any of costs	28	3.9
DK / NA / Refused	12	–
Opinion regarding 6 hours BTW instruction		
Too little	476	66.0
Too much	3	0.4
About right	242	33.6
DK / NA / Refused	7	–
Opinion regarding how well prepared teen was to drive after completing driver education		
Well prepared	231	33.1
Somewhat prepared	382	54.8
Not very well prepared	65	9.3
Not at all prepared	19	2.7
DK / NA / Refused	31	–
Whether received any feedback from teen's instructor		
Yes - did receive feedback	297	41.7
No - did not receive feedback	416	58.4
DK / NA / Refused	15	–
Form of feedback (for those receiving any)		
Written report or evaluation	99	33.7
In-person interview with instructor	118	40.1
Telephone call from instructor	15	5.1
Both written report and interview or phone call	60	20.4
Other	2	0.7
DK / NA / Refused	3	–
Usefulness of feedback (for those receiving any)		
Very useful	186	63.5
Somewhat useful	91	31.1
Not very useful	8	2.7
Not at all useful	8	2.7
DK / NA / Refused	4	–

that the six hours was too much. White parents were significantly more likely than Black parents to feel that the six hours BTW was inadequate (70.9% versus 55.8%, $p < .001$).

Parents generally felt that their teen was at least somewhat well prepared to drive after completing their driver education course. Only a third felt that their teen was “well prepared.” These results were not associated with the race of the parent.

A final set of questions pertained to any feedback the parent received from their teen’s driving instructor about how well he or she performed. Less than 42% of the parents reported receiving any feedback from their child’s instructor. Parents whose teens took driver education from a commercial driving school were more likely to report receiving feedback than were parents of teens who took driver education at their school (62.9% versus 40.6%, $p < .01$). Both percentages may be an underestimate, however, since the person may have forgotten receiving feedback, or since some other adult in the household may have received it without the knowledge of the person being interviewed. Feedback was mostly in the form of an in-person interview with the instructor (40.1%), a written report (33.7%), or some combination of written and oral communications (20.4%). Nearly two-thirds of the parents said that they found this information to be very useful, and most of the remaining said that it was somewhat useful.

CHAPTER 4. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

North Carolina has long been recognized as a leader in providing for the education and training of its young drivers. It continues to fully fund driver education through its public schools, and it was the second state, behind Michigan, to adopt a graduated driver licensing system. But much has changed over the past decade, and there are both new challenges and new opportunities facing driver education – not only in North Carolina but throughout the nation. The challenges come in the form of continued efforts to improve the effectiveness of novice driver education programs. In North Carolina, the focus has been on ensuring that quality programs are offered by well-qualified, well-trained teachers. With the 1991 removal of driver education from the required North Carolina high school curriculum came changes in how driver education is offered to students and how teachers are trained and certified. The impact of these changes has not been fully gauged. In addition, North Carolina, along with the rest of the nation, will face added challenges in the years ahead with projected large increases in the teen driving population, coupled with predicted teacher shortages and a tightened economy.

In the face of these challenges there are also opportunities. Following the Dekalb County study's disappointing results (see Chapter 1), high school driver education was not designated a priority area for Federal funding during the 1980s and early 1990s. However, in 1994 NHTSA was asked by Congress to develop a research agenda for an improved novice driver education program (NHTSA, 1994). In its report to Congress, NHTSA concluded that to be most effective, driver education should be an integral part of a graduated licensing system. It recommended a two-stage driver education program with emphasis on teaching safe driving strategies as well as vehicle handling skills, and using the graduated licensing system to motivate students to learn to be safe drivers. Within this new framework, there has been renewed interest and support for efforts to strengthen driver education, and optimism for its future.

The current project was carried out to provide driver and traffic safety educators, researchers, policy makers, and safety program personnel in the state an updated accounting of current practices with regard to North Carolina's high school driver education program. The project's primary tasks involved a statewide mail survey of high school driver education teachers and LEA program coordinators, along with a telephone survey of a sample of parents and their teens, ages 15-17, who had completed a driver education course in the state. Assistance in conducting these tasks was provided by DPI staff as well as by members of the NC Driver and Traffic Safety Education Association's Board of Directors.

Following is a summary of key findings from the study, with an emphasis on implications for strengthening North Carolina's driver education program. The summary and comments draw from the various survey results, as well as from the teachers' and coordinators' comments to some of the surveys' open-ended questions (see Appendix E). It is important to again emphasize that, particularly with respect to the mailback survey of driver education teachers and program coordinators, the results are not necessarily representative of all teachers and programs in the state. Survey forms were returned by only half of the LEA program coordinators and by individual teachers in two-thirds of the state's 117 school systems. LEA program coordinators were responsible for distributing the survey to driver education teachers working in their school

district, and there is some indication that response rates were higher among school systems employing DPI or DMV certified public school teachers than among those contracting with a commercial driving school. In analyzing and drawing conclusions from the study, we have tried to take into account potential biases in the data, and in general have focused our efforts on identifying specific avenues for improvement regardless of their source. The summary is organized around the following nine topic areas:

- Teacher training and certification
- Teacher staffing needs
- Program coordination and oversight
- Curriculum standards and guidelines
- Course scheduling and delivery
- New classroom technologies
- Student/teacher evaluation
- Coordinator qualifications
- Parental involvement

In each area, key study results are summarized and recommendations compiled.

Driver Education Teacher Training and Certification

As noted above, driver education was removed from the required high school curriculum by the State Legislature in 1991. Until this time, driver education teachers working in the public schools were for the most part all college graduates who had completed specialized course work to receive driver education teaching certification from the NC Department of Public Instruction (DPI). Once driver education was removed from the high school curriculum the door was opened for the private sector, and in particular commercial driving schools, to become involved in the process. Currently driver education teachers in the state can be (1) public school teachers with DPI driver education certification, (2) public school teachers with DMV certification, or (3) commercial driving school or other private sector employees with DMV certification (or some combination of these). Whereas DPI certification requires 12 semester credit hours of specialized college-level course work, which includes training in classroom teaching methods and other basic education coursework, DMV certification is typically offered as a two-week, 80-hour course focused on understanding key driver education concepts.

In North Carolina we currently have a mix of teacher types: 59% of the survey respondents held DPI certification and 53% DMV certification (12% held both); two-thirds were employed by school systems while nearly a third were employed by commercial driving schools or were self-employed. Not surprisingly, these groups had different opinions on issues related to teacher training and credentialing. In general, teachers who held DPI certification and those employed by a school system were much more likely than those holding DMV certification and/or those employed by the private sector to feel that all driver education teachers should have to pass the same course of study and that this course of study should include 12-16 semester credit hours of college level course work. Also, although there was general agreement that teachers should be qualified to provide both classroom and behind-the-wheel instruction, DPI certified and school

system teachers expressed the strongest support for such a requirement. In general, all teachers agreed that courses/training should be made more widely available through universities and community colleges across the state. This was, in fact, one of the most frequently offered suggestions for improving the recruitment and training of new driver education teachers in the state. There was also general support for making at least some driver education training available through the Internet or other long-distance learning.

In addition to making training opportunities more widely available through the state's universities and community colleges, other specific suggestions for improving driver education teacher training and certification included having more DMV classes offered in more locations; charging a higher fee for classes (to help ensure they attract committed teachers); offering after-school certification programs for current teachers; assigning new teachers to work with experienced teachers, either as "student teachers" or in a team teaching situation; providing additional "methods" training to non-teachers to develop their classroom teaching skills; and developing a tiered certification program that allows teachers to progress through different levels of teacher credentialing (e.g., basic course only, basic course plus teacher certification, basic course plus teacher certification plus advanced driver education certification).

At the national level, the trend is toward increased standardization of driver education teacher training and certification requirements. With support from NHTSA, the American Driver and Traffic Safety Education Association (ADTSEA) launched its "National Driver Education Teacher Certification and Recognition Program" in 1998. The program is intended to fill the void in teacher training that arose when states dropped driver education from their high school curriculums and from state education department oversight. The goals of the ADTSEA program are to improve the quality of driver education teachers, to standardize their training, to update professional knowledge and skills, and to make driver education teacher training more available nationally. To become certified, prospective teachers must complete three core courses plus one elective course, and have one year of verifiable teaching experience. The courses can be set up and offered through colleges or universities within a state, or through special arrangement with Indiana University - Pennsylvania (IUP). A number of states have expressed interest in adopting the ADTSEA model.

In practice, the course of study developed and promoted by ADTSEA may not be that different from courses developed by Joe Schrader at East Carolina University. The critical issue is not the courses per se, but getting universities and colleges to offer them when teachers are no longer required to have DPI certification. Also, the problem still remains of how best to train and certify non-teachers. Nationally, a number of states including Indiana, Washington State, and Oregon have made strides in standardizing their driver education certification requirements for public and commercial teachers. In North Carolina, there is clearly a concern among long-time, DPI-certified classroom teachers that non-teachers certified through DMV coursework are not as qualified to teach in the public schools. At the same time, there appear to be many examples of programs that have been successful under the new system. Since few foresee going back to requiring all driver education teachers to be DPI certified, the focus should be on making the current two-pronged system function most effectively.

Teacher Staffing Needs

It has been projected that the teen driving population will expand 25% by 2010, the result of a third generation of post World War II baby boomers. At the same time, the nation will be facing a growing teacher shortage. Driver education teachers are expected to be especially scarce due to renewed interest in driver education programs nationally and an aging teaching population. One study predicted that 85% of public school driver education teachers were within a few years of retiring (Bradshaw, 2000).

Here in North Carolina the situation may not be as dire. Although a fourth of the survey respondents had taught driver education for 25 or more years, 22% had taught for less than five years and 48% had taught for less than 10 years. Perhaps more importantly, many of those who might be eligible for retirement were not necessarily planning to retire in the near future, at least not from teaching driver education. (Many, in fact, may already have retired but were continuing to teach on a part-time basis). Even though 14% of the respondents had 30 or more years of teaching experience, less than 6% planned to retire in the next two years. Still, just over a third of the teachers responding to the survey indicated that they planned to retire from teaching within the next five years. Given that 22% of the teachers had taught for less than five years, this would suggest a net loss in teacher availability, even without taking into account projected increases in the student population.

Teacher staffing is closely linked to teacher training and certification. In particular, any efforts to increase the availability of training and certification opportunities will likely increase the number of new teachers. But other issues were also identified by the survey respondents in response to our open-ended question soliciting suggestions for improving the recruitment and/or training of new driver education teachers in North Carolina (see Appendix E). Several respondents suggested that current driver education teachers could play an important role in identifying and recruiting prospective new teachers. As noted by one teacher, "Advertising is acceptable, but [future teachers] should be selected by [their] peers for recruitment to the program. It should be an honor." And from another teacher: "It takes a person with a special temperament to do it. Identify those college students and have someone recruit them." Offering college students the opportunity to either major or minor in driver education was also mentioned as a potential recruitment tool, and one individual suggested that teacher courses should be more widely advertised.

A number of teachers as well as program coordinators stressed the importance of making driver education a more attractive employment opportunity by providing better pay and better job security. It was pointed out that re-instating driver education into the school day would attract teachers wanting to work a more normal work schedule. It might also encourage more retired teachers to continue teaching on a part-time basis. In general, it was felt that re-instating driver education into the school day would help raise respect for driver education teachers both within and outside the teaching profession, and make it easier to recruit new quality teachers.

Program Coordination and Oversight

When North Carolina removed driver education from its required high school curriculum, DPI no longer retained direct oversight of the program. Instead, oversight responsibilities became a shared responsibility of DPI and DMV, and individual school systems were given greater autonomy in administering their programs. In practice, there appears to be only limited program supervision and guidance at the state level.

Although there were no questions on the driver education teacher and LEA coordinator surveys that dealt specifically with program coordination and oversight at the state level, a number of LEA coordinators in particular expressed a desire for increased state guidance. In response to a question asking about their program's greatest weakness, one LEA coordinator responded, "the lack of help or the lack of communication from DMV, and almost no communication from DPI. If it were not for DTSEA there would be none." Another survey participant concurred: "No communication from the state except at the state conference." Several respondents noted the need for a standardized program of instruction and testing. One teacher noted that the proficiency exam, while helpful, needs to be updated yearly. Other suggestions included having a full-time consultant in DPI who could audit programs for both expenditures and instructional quality, and assistance with computer software to help schedule students, produce certificates and other program documentation, etc. In general, both teachers and system program coordinators appeared to welcome greater oversight at the state level. To be successful, this will require increased cooperation between DPI and DMV, and more direct communication with local program coordinators. The state of Washington presents a good example of the benefits derived from a coordinated and cooperative approach to teen driver education.

Curriculum Standards and Guidelines

As noted above, many program coordinators as well as teachers expressed interest in a standardized North Carolina high school driver education curriculum. Teachers most often reported using the *Drive Right* curriculum published by Prentice-Hall, and in general they were well satisfied with their chosen curriculum. Still, the overwhelming majority agreed that there should be a single standard curriculum for North Carolina students; only commercial driving school teachers were ambivalent on this issue (half agreeing and half disagreeing).

A group of NCADTSEA members is currently working to develop recommended curriculum guidelines for the state. While the guidelines will not be mandatory, they will be available to all schools and/or school systems wanting to utilize them in their driver education programs.

Almost since its inception, high school driver education has followed a "30 and 6" format – 30 hours of classroom instruction coupled with 6 hours of behind-the-wheel training. Recent developments, however, have challenged this tenet, and the ability to replace classroom time with self-directed learning activities or behind-the-wheel time with simulated driving has further blurred the hourly distribution requirements. The *Learning to Drive* curriculum developed by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety is based on 30 hours of classroom and 10 hours of BTW instruction, but 24 of the 30 classroom hours can be completed by the student independently.

The course being developed by ADTSEA as part of the National Driver Development Program involves 45 hours of classroom and 8 hours of BTW instruction and also makes use of individualized computer and Internet instruction so that no additional costs are associated with the classroom component.

Among the teachers and LEA program coordinators who responded to our mail survey, there was general consensus that 30 hours of classroom instruction was sufficient, but that 6 hours of BTW instruction was not enough for most teens. This was evident in their responses to the “opinion” questions as well as in their suggestions for improving the overall quality of teen driver education. Whereas just over a third of teachers and program coordinators felt that the required 30 hours of classroom instruction should be increased, almost twice as many felt that the 6 hours of BTW instruction should be increased. Increasing the hours of BTW training to 8, 10 or even 12 hours was one of the most frequently offered suggestions for improving driver education. Several respondents suggested a tradeoff of less time in the classroom and more time BTW, noting that this was how teens learned best. In practice, school system teachers were more likely than commercial driving school instructors to report that they often provided additional driving time to students who needed it.

Parents, too, felt that their teens would benefit from more BTW driving instruction. Two-thirds of the parents interviewed for the teen-parent survey said that six hours of BTW instruction was “too little.” And although most teens told us that the amount of driving time they received was “about right,” 38% also said that they received more than the six hour minimum.

Course Scheduling and Delivery

In addition to curriculum format and content, curriculum delivery is also of importance. NHTSA is encouraging states to develop a two-tiered driver education program, with basic vehicle handling skills taught early in the process and more complex driving strategies taught later, after the teen has gained some experience on his own. This would create a strong link between driver education and the graduated licensing process. The new ADTSEA course generally follows this model. While the state of Michigan has begun offering such a tiered approach, the effectiveness of the system has not been systematically evaluated. Meanwhile, other aspects of course delivery are also important. These include limiting the number of students in a classroom, offering shorter sessions over longer periods of time, and closely tying BTW to classroom instruction. These issues are addressed below.

Just over two-thirds of the teachers responding to the survey (and 58% of program coordinators) said that there was a maximum number of students allowed in their driver education classes. For a fourth of the teachers, this maximum was more than 40 students. Fortunately, class sizes typically were not this large: the average class size was 35 students. Still, large classes were a reality for some teachers. In removing driver education from the school day and from direct DPI oversight, some of the standards and restrictions that might protect against overly large classes were also taken away. The DMV has imposed a maximum of 50 students per class for commercial driving school teachers. While this number is higher than many would like, it is arguably better than having no restrictions at all.

One reason for large driver education class sizes is the demand by students (and by their parents) to get into a class in a timely manner, i.e., shortly after turning age 14½. In general, schools appear to be addressing this need. Ninety percent of the LEA coordinators responding to the survey indicated that they had an adequate number of classroom teachers. From the teen perspective, even though 29% of our telephone survey participants said that they had difficulties taking driver education when they wanted it, only half of them said it was because the class was full (scheduling problems were the second most frequently offered explanation). Thus, school systems appear to be doing a reasonably good job of making classes available to students.

From the teachers' perspective, the greatest problem may lie in reaching students who, for one reason or another, cannot take driver education during the time it is offered, generally either after or before school. Conflicts often arise with sports and other extracurricular activities, but jobs and transportation can also impose barriers. This problem was pointed out by several teachers. In the words of one,

“We miss out on teaching a large number of our students because they ride school buses and cannot stay after school because they don't have a ride home. These same students can't get to our summer program because their parents work. We need to put driver education back in the school day.”

Another important “course delivery” issue concerns the length (and by implication, number) of classroom and BTW sessions. Not surprisingly, classes taught during the school year are usually shorter than those taught during the summer months. During the school year, classroom sessions typically last two to three hours, whereas during the summer they typically last three to four hours, and frequently six or more hours. This is true regardless of whether the class is taught by certified school teachers or by driving school instructors. Shorter class sessions, not exceeding two hours and spread across more instruction days, are generally felt to be more conducive to learning.

With regard to BTW instruction, the question was phrased in terms of the number of sessions required to obtain six hours of instruction. Here there were significant differences between the public school teachers and commercial driving school teachers, with public school teachers tending to take six or more sessions and commercial driving school instructors only three or four sessions. These results were generally confirmed by the teens interviewed. Again, the shorter, more frequent learning sessions are considered to be more effective.

In addition, NHTSA has recommended that BTW instruction closely follow classroom instruction. Ideally the two would be intertwined in a two-tiered system, with basic classroom and BTW instruction offered prior to receiving a learner's permit, and more advanced classroom and BTW instruction offered after the teen has had the opportunity to accumulate driving experience on his own. Traditionally, however, states have required students to successfully complete all of their classroom driver education before progressing to BTW instruction. The issue, then, is how soon after completing classroom driver education students are able to begin their BTW instruction. Given the limited hours during which students can typically drive and the greater demands in terms of teacher resources, scheduling students in a timely manner can be a

challenge. Still, North Carolina schools appear to be responding well. Eighty-three percent of teachers said that they were able to schedule students for BTW instruction in a timely manner, and an almost identical 82% of teens reported no problems in scheduling BTW instruction when they wanted it. According to teachers, the *longest* time that students typically had to wait before beginning BTW instruction was one to two months, and the majority of teens reported starting BTW instruction within a month after completing their classroom instruction. Still, reducing even this amount of time might yield positive benefits for teen drivers. What is more critical, however, is avoiding the three month or longer wait period reported by almost one in five teens. Additional teachers, more cars, and greater flexibility in scheduling would appear most helpful in this regard.

As a final note, several teachers commented that teaching teens early in the morning before they are fully awake or late in the afternoon after a full day of classes is less than optimal, and that driver education is too important a subject matter to be relegated to these times. Again, the argument was made for at least allowing school systems the option of offering driver education classes as an elective during the school day.

New Classroom Technologies

Teachers participating in the survey were asked to identify resources used in their teaching. While videos and films, guest speakers, transparencies, and demonstrations were all widely used in classrooms, only one in five teachers reported using more technology-oriented resources including interactive computer programs, the Internet, and Powerpoint or other computerized presentations. Only 10 teachers (3%) reported using a driving simulator; yet there were several who noted in their comments that practice on a simulator would be helpful preparation for the BTW instruction and might provide a safer environment for practicing some driving skills. Overall, 90% of teachers and program coordinators agreed that better use of new technologies would facilitate instruction.

Part of the national research agenda outlined by NHTSA in its 1994 Report to Congress involved examining the feasibility of using new simulation technology to train novice drivers. A report completed in 1997 identified a number of areas in which existing technologies might prove beneficial (Decina et al., 1996). Although higher-end driving simulators remain an option, the advent of more powerful personal computers along with CD ROMS and, more recently, DVD, have broadened choices while lowering costs. What seems most important is that the student is actively involved in the learning process rather than passively listening to a teacher or watching a video. The AAA's *Learning to Drive* curriculum takes advantage of DVD technology to enable students to progress through much of the traditional classroom driver education material on their own; and ADTSEA is considering an Internet-based option for presenting some of its National Driver Development Program curriculum. But even using Powerpoint to animate more traditional classroom material, or to present photos of real-world driving scenes shot with a digital camera, can have a big impact on students' attention in the classroom at a relatively modest investment of time and money. In this regard, the greatest need appears to be educating teachers about the possibilities that exist and providing training and support to get them started, something for which the NC and national DTSEAs have already

demonstrated a strong commitment. Added support and encouragement from DPI and DMV could further facilitate wider use of new technologies in the classroom.

Student/Teacher Evaluations

A few questions on the teacher and LEA coordinator surveys pertained to how teachers evaluated their students, and whether the teachers themselves were evaluated. With regard to student evaluation, the most interesting findings pertained to actions taken when a student failed a class. While the majority of coordinators indicated that their programs had procedures to follow if a student failed either the classroom or BTW portions of driver education, the specific procedures varied widely, from allowing students to retake the test, having them retake the entire course, assigning makeup work, or simply referring them elsewhere for the course. Several teachers indicated that decisions were made on an individual basis, often in consultation with other school personnel and/or the teen's parents. When the failure was behind-the-wheel, teachers who were school employees were much more likely than those employed by commercial driving schools to offer additional instruction time at no additional cost to the student. Currently, we know of no guidelines at the state level to assist schools in formulating more consistent policy in this important area.

Fewer than half of the program coordinators responding to our survey indicated having requirements for teacher evaluation; programs relying on commercial driving instructors were the most likely to have evaluation requirements in place. Similarly, teachers employed by commercial driving schools were much more likely than those employed by school systems to report that they had been evaluated during the past year. Many factors may be involved here, including the longer teaching tenure of classroom teachers, school policies for evaluating other classroom teachers, and any DMV standards for commercial instructor evaluation. One teacher made the suggestion that both DPI and DMV certified teachers should have "spot" evaluations performed by a driver education specialist.

Regardless of the frequency of any formal evaluations, over 90% of the teachers surveyed agreed that their LEA coordinator was knowledgeable about their classroom and in-car teaching performance. For their part, LEA coordinators accepted primary responsibility for evaluating their teachers, with help from a variety of sources (driving school supervisors, assistant principals, etc.). Again, this is an area where more formal guidelines could be useful, especially for programs relying on a combination of school system and commercial school instructors.

Coordinator Qualifications

The topic of coordinator qualifications was not one that we originally set out to investigate, although questions were included in the survey that was mailed to coordinators about their teaching background and experience. It is clear that this is an important issue for driver education teachers, however, and especially for longterm public school teachers holding DPI certification. In particular, there is concern among this group that many program coordinators do not have the experience and the level of commitment required to promote strong driver education programs in their districts. In the words of one teacher:

“Some LEAs have retired supervisors in the school system running their Driver Education program. Many of these individuals do not have driver education experience; therefore these systems are not strong programs. I have heard this complaint during discussion with my peers in the profession. Staff the LEAs with Driver Education supervision.”

The survey data appear to bear out at least some of these concerns. Overall, the 58 program coordinators who responded to the survey had an impressive number of years teaching experience – an average of 25 years total teaching experience and 13 years driver education experience. Over a third of the coordinators, however, had no driver education experience at all, and less than half were currently teaching in the field. The vast majority had responsibilities other than driver education placing demands on their time: over half devoted less than 30% of their time to coordinating driver education activities within their LEA. For school systems contracting with commercial driving schools to meet their program needs, three-fourths of the coordinators spent less than 10% of their time administering the program.

Clearly LEAs vary, and the demands on a driver education program coordinator can be expected to vary as well. Almost half of the coordinators were from LEAs with only one high school, and three-fourths had 10 or fewer total driver education teachers. Still, it might be worthwhile to investigate the potential benefits of having only experienced driver education teachers oversee local programs, particularly given the greater autonomy LEAs now have in defining their programs. In addition, more specific guidelines might be developed to better define LEA coordinator responsibilities. Finally, it may be helpful for coordinators to have an opportunity to meet on some regular basis so that they can share their expertise and insights with their colleagues in the field.

Parental Involvement

Greater parental involvement has been identified as a target area for improving teen driver education, and is an important link between driver education and a graduated licensing system. In its 1994 Report to Congress, NHTSA noted:

Parents, guardians, or other adults must play a greater role in the education and licensing of novice drivers. There will never be enough time or money to fully train a novice driver through public institutions. There will always be the need for additional supervised oversight during initial training. Research has shown that parents and other guardians have great potential to influence youngsters.

While no questions were included on the teacher or coordinator surveys about parental involvement in their driver education programs, several of the respondents recognized the importance of including parents in the process. In response to our open-ended request for suggestions to improve the overall quality of teen driver education in North Carolina, one teacher said, “Have parents sign an agreement to drive 20-30 hours with their children so as to understand better their strengths and weaknesses as well as their attitudes involving driving. Then the parents could more easily assess the child’s readiness to be turned loose with the

responsibility of being behind the wheel driving.” Another said, “I recommend following the Michigan driver education program which involves parents as well as schools.” And finally, one teacher suggested having “a parent observe the final exam in the car so when they supervise their child, they could continue teaching those skills.”

Just under half of the parents interviewed told us that they had received feedback from their teen’s driver education teacher, and almost all agreed that the feedback was useful. Parents were more likely to report receiving feedback when their teen took driver education on their own from a private driving school rather than through a school-based program.

Since driver education programs are the first step in a graduated licensing system, it makes sense to have driver education teachers assist in securing parental involvement from the outset. HSRC is currently working on a project for the NC Governor’s Highway Safety Program to identify ways to encourage parents’ active involvement in the GDL system. Several approaches are being piloted, including hosting meetings with the parents of teens enrolled in driver education classes and distributing guided learning materials and tip sheets. The goals of the project are to (1) increase parents’ knowledge of the GDL system, (2) help parents understand that driving is a complex cognitive task, and (3) promote effective communication between parents and teens about driving. Driver educators are clearly in a unique position to help facilitate all of these goals.

Miscellaneous Comments and Suggestions for Improving NC Driver Education

In responding to our open-ended questions, teachers and program coordinators offered a number of other suggestions for improving the state’s driver education program that do not necessarily fit into any of the sections above, but which nevertheless are stimulus for thought. What follows is a sampling of these comments. (A full list of comments appears in Appendix E.)

“We need to maintain high standards for our students instead of expecting that all students are ‘entitled’ to a learner’s permit at 15 years of age. Low standards frequently produce poor drivers. . . The implication (for many students) is that driving may be important but that SAFE driving is not important.”

“More funds [are needed] for simulators and equipment to be used in the classroom.”

“Funding is adequate for payroll of personnel, but when purchases of vehicles are necessary during a fiscal year, it is very difficult to squeeze that money out in the smaller size LEAs”

“Every teacher should have an assigned classroom for driver education only, so that all visual aids (such as posters, charts, statistics, etc.) can be used at the moment necessary to enrich the program.”

“I feel that summer classes should be taught 3 hours a day for 10 days. During 6 hour classes you have to rush over the classroom work very quickly and I don’t feel that the students learn much in the classroom.”

“Bilingual classes. Many hispanic students are already driving by the age of 12. Some of their parents are also driving with no license.”

“Do away with the proficiency test. Everyone should take the class.” (Similar comments offered by other teachers)

Concluding Comment

It is not the purpose of this report to recommend changes to North Carolina’s high school driver education program. Any recommended changes should come from a committee of teachers and instructors working jointly with appropriate DPI and DMV staff. The objective of the current effort was simply to provide an updated accounting of the current state-of-the-practice in North Carolina, and to report on what teachers, program administrators, teens and parents had to say about the program.

Clearly many teachers are concerned about the future of driver education in the state. There are many who would like to see a return to former times when driver education was part of the high school curriculum and was taught during the school day by classroom teachers with DPI driver education certification. Realistically, however, this is not likely to occur in the foreseeable future. Neither is there likely to be a large increase in funding for investing in new facilities and technologies or for expanding the number hours of behind-the-wheel instruction. In the words of one teacher, “Our goal in driver ed should be to develop a program of the highest quality within the framework we are given.”

There are many strengths to build upon. North Carolina has a long history of support for its driver education program, and the national climate is ripe for renewed efforts to make driver education a more effective tool for producing better and safer drivers. The greatest strength, however, lies in the quality of North Carolina’s current driver educators. Again and again, program coordinators identified the quality, experience, and commitment of their teachers as the key to their programs’ strength. The state’s driver educators believe that they make a difference in the lives of the children they teach, and they are committed to offering students the best program possible.

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APPENDIX A

Results of Focus Groups with Driver Educators

Topics for Focus Groups with Driver Educators

1. From your own experience, how would you rate the overall quality of high school driver education in NC? Why?
2. Do you have any ideas for improving how things are done? Ideas for improving current practice?
3. In your opinion, should driver education have been retained as part of the required H.S. curriculum? Why or why not?
4. How do you feel about the quality of the materials available to you for instruction?
5. Would you like to see greater use made of driving simulators or interactive computer software?
6. Don't know how much flexibility you are allowed in the curriculum you teach, but are there things in your current curriculum that you would like to see omitted, or less time spent on? Are there things you would like to see added, or more time spent on?
7. Do you feel that there should be a standard statewide curriculum?
8. Does your school have problems scheduling students to take either the classroom or behind the wheel instruction when students want to take them (i.e., is there a "waiting period" at your school)?
9. Is there an adequate supply of driver education teachers in the state? What do you think can/should be done to attract more qualified teachers?

Regarding the planned surveys:

1. Who should be our primary target audience – school system program administrators, or individual teachers?
2. How do we make sure all administrators/program personnel receive a copy of the survey? How do we encourage them to respond?
3. What information would you most like to see collected on a statewide basis?

The Current Status of Driver Education in North Carolina

Focus group held April 21, 2001 in Fayetteville, NC, NCDTSEA Conference

The focus group was organized to obtain information and suggestions for the teacher survey to be conducted in connection with a project summarizing North Carolina driver education current practices, and perceived strengths and weaknesses. Most of the focus group members had seven years or more experience teaching driver education with one member (the only driving school teacher) having two years experience. (The range of experience was two to 30 years.) All of the participants were certified school teachers except for the private driving school teacher.

An immediate concern was expressed regarding the differences from one system to another and the quality of instructors teaching in some systems since driver education was removed from the required curriculum in the early 90's. A second participant also expressed concern about the lack of accountability and standards which, for example, limited class size. These decisions are now made at the local level. Standard reporting forms have also been eliminated, according to this participant.

Some participants also expressed concern that information, important both to the curriculum and regarding administration of the program, does not filter down to the local teacher. Concerns were expressed about the structure/hierarchy of the program(s) and how budgets are administered/funds allocated, who has access to information, etc. It was repeatedly stated that there are no rules governing the programs and that each system does things differently with no accountability.

One participant indicated that some past reports from the state and nation indicated that North Carolina was effective in reducing teen drink-driving, increasing seat-belt use and some other measures in the late 80's when driver education was still taught during school hours. S/he was interested having an (unbiased) comparison of driver education then versus now.

Participants felt that there are no standards in the class – some teachers were asked to teach 78 students in a single class, while other teachers within the same program taught 15-20 students. These participants indicated that they wrote a money-saving proposal that was disregarded so that some teachers could preserve their status and income. Again it was expressed that there are no standards, rules, stability, or even a standard curriculum within some systems, and apparently no textbooks in one system.

Each Local Education Association (LEA = one school system) is responsible for its own driver education program. There is an LEA designee (the superintendent's designee) who administers the program. The LEA designee may have no special knowledge about driver education but function primarily as a facilitator/coordinator.

Qualifications of the coordinators

Some central office coordinators as well as site coordinators have no direct driver education experience. They may be mostly facilitators and not directly involved in teaching driver education. One participant was very interested to know the (exact) extent of driver ed-related experience of the coordinators. He felt that someone who had taught less than full time might be less committed to driver education. Depending on how the program is administered, the coordinator's driver education qualifications could be important. If coordinators are not certified driver education teachers then they must also be paid from other funding sources, per one local administrator.

Administering the survey

Regarding asking questions on a system-wide basis of the LEA designee.

It remained unclear from the discussion whether there was an additional layer of program administration in all LEAs and who would be the best representative to survey. From some of the comments, it seems that there are site- (school) level coordinators in some systems, and principals may also execute some authority. Furthermore, in some contracted programs, a driving school representative or manager may have considerable authority. It appeared, however, that the LEA designee would be the person that all LEAs would have in common to respond to a coordinators' survey .

How to distribute the survey.

Several participants agreed that they would never receive the teacher questionnaire if it were sent to the LEA coordinator; that it would be preferable to send it to the school; nevertheless, the LEA coordinator is the person responsible for communicating with the instructors. Some felt that LEAs need pressure or guidelines from DPI to ensure the survey is distributed and returned. We could ask DPI to draft a cover letter for the survey; use DPI letterhead, etc. Should we have respondents mail completed surveys back to DPI to increase the authority? Some said yes, with a deadline indicated. One participant felt that surveys should go back through the principal, presumably to increase participation. It was generally agreed, however, that teachers should return completed questionnaires directly to DPI (or to HSRC) to ensure anonymity. A pre-addressed envelope was thought to be a convenience that would help to get responses returned. A problem with supplying pre-addressed envelopes is that we won't know how many are teaching in each district.

Question of anonymity was discussed.

Participants agreed that surveys should remain anonymous. Some superintendents have a working relationship with DPI administrators and it was felt that responses would be more honest if anonymity were assured and/or responses not go to DPI. If it is important to know where responses are from, we can put a county or school system number code on the surveys as they go out. We can then determine what percentage are returned based on the LEAs information on number of teachers, etc.

How to attract additional qualified teachers

Should the state pursue a national certification program (such as being developed by ADTSEA)?

It was agreed by all of the participants who spoke that North Carolina is very able to come up with a standardized driver education program for the state and that it is unnecessary to adopt (or spend money on) a national standardized program. There was however, support for a director or state hierarchy to control the program, provide support, and disseminate information.

Should there be standardized certification between driving schools and public (DPI) certified schools?

The private school teacher said not necessarily. But other participants had expressed concern about the (apparently) lower level of training and education of the driving school teachers. Someone commented that teachers do not, however, have to teach both classroom and behind-the-wheel: for example they may only teach behind-the-wheel. A suggestion was made that the same (DPI-required) courses could be offered through continuing education to DMV-certified teachers for re-certification credits or such. Mr. Joe Shrader's (ECU) program was admired extensively and university level courses were recommended to upgrade the quality of instructors.

How can the profession attract more good teachers?

There was agreement among a few participants that in some LEAs there is less a problem in recruitment than in practices which shut out potential new teachers. For example, some participants indicated the system has "locked in" older teachers at high salaries and therefore they can't afford new hires ("good ole boy network"). As a result, fewer students can be taught at any one time. Some older teachers also are resistant to changes in curriculum or the addition of standards. There are also the difficulties of varying class sizes, which are determined on a local level, the lack of record-keeping and accountability, and other problems particular to the LEAs support or lack of, so it is difficult to ascertain how many teachers are/will be needed.

The only other discussion pertinent to attracting new teachers was the suggestion that courses could be taught more widely through community colleges and other college campuses (by certified "master teachers" with advanced degrees).

What questions should be included in the survey? Responses of the focus group participants:

Would you like to see a standard course of study (provided by DPI or DMV) for all instructors?

Do you teach classroom/behind the wheel/or both?

Do you (teachers, principals, coordinators) have any input on how money is distributed for the driver's ed program.

Should the 12-16 hour certification be required of all teachers?

Should the 12-16 hour certification be offered more widely through community colleges, etc.?

Should there be greater standardization?

Is there enough/ should there be greater accountability/or regulation?

Should there be a standardized pay scale?

APPENDIX B

Driver Education Teacher Survey

North Carolina High School Driver Education Survey

I. About Yourself

1. How are you currently involved with high school driver education? *(Check all that apply)*
 - 1____ Classroom teacher
 - 2____ Behind-the-wheel instructor
 - 3____ Program administrator
 - 4____ Other *(please describe)* _____

2. What type of driver education certification do you hold? *(Check all that apply)*
 - 1____ Certification from NC Department of Public Instruction
 - 2____ Certification from NC Division of Motor Vehicles
 - 3____ Other *(please describe)* _____

3. In what year were you first certified to teach high school driver education? _____

4. How many total years have you worked in the driver education field? _____ years

5. Currently, are you: *(Check one)*
 - 1____ Employed full time by a private driving school
 - 2____ Employed part-time by a private driving school
 - 3____ Employed full time by a school / school system
 - 4____ Employed part-time by a school / school system
 - 5____ Self-employed (owner of a driving school, private contractor, etc.)
 - 6____ Other *(please describe)* _____

6. After the current school year, how many years do you plan to continue your involvement in high school driver education?
 - 1____ No additional years
 - 2____ 2 years or less
 - 3____ 3-5 years
 - 4____ 6-10 years
 - 5____ More than 10 years

7. During the past 2 years, have you: *(Check all that apply)*
 - 1____ Attended conferences, meetings, etc. on the topic of driver education
 - 2____ Attended driver education training sessions or courses
 - 3____ Participated in internet or on-line driver education training programs
 - 4____ Engaged in any other types of continuing education or training *(please describe below)*

8. Are you a current member of the NC Driver and Traffic Safety Education Association?
 - 1____ Yes
 - 2____ No

9. Are you a member of any other professional organizations serving the field?
 - 1____ Yes
 - 2____ No *(If yes, please identify)* _____

II. About Your Classroom Teaching Experiences (If you do not teach in the classroom, skip this section and go to the section on behind-the-wheel teaching experiences beginning on **page 4**.)

10. Where do you generally teach driver education? (Check one)

- 1____ In a classroom at the school
- 2____ At a private driving school
- 3____ Both of the above
- 4____ Other facility (please describe) _____

11. How many students are in a typical class? _____ students

12. Is there a maximum number of students allowed in a class? 1____ Yes 2____ No

If yes: What is the maximum number? _____

13. How long is a typical classroom session (i.e., total time with one group of students per day):

- a. During the school year? _____ hours and/or _____ minutes
- b. During the summer vacation period? _____ hours and/or _____ minutes

14. What is the typical age composition of your classes?

- 1____ Almost all 14-year-olds
- 2____ 14 and young 15-year-olds
- 3____ Older 15-year-olds and young 16-year-olds
- 4____ Other (varies, mixed ages, etc.)

15. What is the longest time that students typically have to wait after completion of the classroom instruction, before beginning their behind-the-wheel instruction?

- 1____ Less than 2 weeks
- 2____ 2-3 weeks
- 3____ 1-2 months
- 4____ 3 months or more

16. What primary textbook or curriculum guide, other than the NC Driver Handbook, do you use in your classroom instruction?

17. How satisfied are you with this textbook or guide?

- 1____ Very satisfied
- 2____ Somewhat satisfied
- 3____ Not very satisfied
- 4____ Not at all satisfied

18. How would you rate the overall quality of the curriculum materials available to you?

- 1____ Excellent
- 2____ Good
- 3____ Average
- 4____ Fair
- 5____ Poor

19. Which of the following do you use in your teaching? (*Check all that apply*)

- 1____ Overhead transparencies
- 2____ Slides (35 mm)
- 3____ Powerpoint or other computer presentations
- 4____ Videos / Films
- 5____ Interactive computer programs/software
- 6____ Driving simulators
- 7____ Guest speakers
- 8____ Internet resources
- 9____ Demonstrations
- 10____ Other (*please describe*) _____

20. Are students allowed to “opt out” of some or all of the classroom portion of driver education by taking and passing the North Carolina Driver Education Proficiency Test?

- 1____ Yes 2____ No

If yes: About what percentage of students take the test? _____ percent

About what percentage of students taking the test score high enough to place out of some or all of the classroom instruction? _____ percent

Is any classroom instruction required for students passing the test? 1____ Yes 2____ No

21. Are students required to pass a final exam or have a passing average to receive credit for taking driver education? 1____ Yes 2____ No

If yes: About what percentage of students typically *do not* pass the class? _____ percent

What provisions are made for students who do not pass the class?

- 1____ They may take the exam again.
- 2____ They may take the course again.
- 3____ No provisions are made. Students can retake at a private driving school.
- 4____ Other (*Please describe*) _____

22. Are you required to maintain records of the classroom performance of students you teach?

- 1____ Yes 2____ No

If no: Do you maintain records even though not required? 1____ Yes 2____ No

23. During the current school year, has your classroom teaching been evaluated?

- 1____ Yes 2____ No 3____ Not applicable (did not teach)

If yes: Who conducted this evaluation? (*Check all that apply*)

- 1____ School district driver education representative
- 2____ Driver education program administrator at the school
- 3____ Principal of school
- 4____ Another teacher
- 5____ Driving school supervisor, owner, etc.
- 6____ Other (*please describe*) _____

III. About Your Behind-the-Wheel or In-Car Teaching Experiences *(If you teach classroom only, you may skip this section and go to Section IV on the next page.)*

24. Do you have access to enough vehicles for in-car instruction? 1____ Yes 2____ No

25. Do you have use of a driving range for in-car instruction? 1____ Yes 2____ No

26. Are you able to schedule students for their in-car driving instruction as soon as you would like after completing the classroom instruction? 1____ Yes 2____ No

27. How many on-road sessions, on average, does it take for a student to accumulate six hours of driving time?

1____ one 2____ two 3____ three 4____ four 5____ five 6____ six or more

28. How many students are typically in the vehicle during a behind-the-wheel driving session?

1____ one 2____ two 3____ three 4____ four 5____ five

29. How many hours of in-car “observation time” do students normally receive, in addition to their time driving?

1____ 1-2 hours 2____ 3-4 hours 3____ 5-6 hours 4____ 7-8 hours 5____ 9+ hours

30. What do you do if a student is unable to perform satisfactorily after 6 hours of behind-the-wheel instruction? *(Check all that apply.)*

1____ Offer additional behind-the-wheel time to bring performance up to passing level

2____ Pass, but recommend obtain additional instruction

3____ Discuss with student’s parents

4____ Fail student. Student must receive training elsewhere.

5____ Other *(Please describe)* _____

31. About what percentage of students do not perform satisfactorily after 6 hours? _____ percent

32. Are you required to maintain records of the driving performance of the students you teach?

1____ Yes 2____ No

If no: Do you maintain such records anyway? 1____ Yes 2____ No

33. During the current school year, has your in-car instruction performance been evaluated?

1____ Yes

2____ No

3____ Not applicable (did not teach in-car during the past year)

If yes: Who conducted this evaluation? *(Check all that apply)*

1____ School district driver education representative

2____ Driver education program administrator at the school

3____ Principal of school

4____ Another teacher

5____ Driving school supervisor, owner, etc.

6____ Other (please describe) _____

IV. Opinions and Recommendations (All please complete this section)

Check one:

	<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Strongly Agree</u>	<u>No Opinion</u>
a All driver education teachers should have to pass the same course of study to be qualified to teach in public schools.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
b Current procedures for training and certifying new driver education teachers are adequate.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
c All driver education teachers should have to pass 12-16 hrs. of college level driver education course work.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
d All teachers should be qualified to teach both classroom and behind-the-wheel.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
e Driver education training should be made more widely available through universities and community colleges in the state.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
f At least some driver education training should be made available through the internet and other long-distance learning.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
g Driver education should be re-instated into the required school curriculum.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
h North Carolina needs greater standardization of its driver education curriculum	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
i There should be a single standardized driver education curriculum for NC students.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
j The required 30 hours of classroom instruction should be increased.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
k The required 6 hours of behind-the-wheel instruction should be increased.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
l More continuing education opportunities are needed for driver education teachers.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
m Better use of new technologies (computers, simulators, etc.) would facilitate classroom learning.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
n I feel I am able to keep “up to date” with new developments in the field.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
o My LEA driver education coordinator keeps me informed of new developments in the field.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
p My LEA driver educ. coordinator is knowledgeable about my classroom and in-car teaching performance.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

35. Do you have any suggestions for improving the recruitment and/or training of new driver education teachers in North Carolina?

36. Do you have any other suggestions for improving the overall quality of teen driver education in our state?

Thank You!

Please use the attached pre-addressed envelope to return the survey.

If envelope is missing, please mail to:

Jane Stutts
UNC Highway Safety Research Center
Campus Box 3430
Chapel Hill, NC 27599-3430

APPENDIX C

Driver Education Program Coordinator Survey

**North Carolina High School Driver Education Survey
(For LEA Program Coordinators)**

I. About Yourself

1. How many total years of teaching experience do you have? _____ years
2. How many total years of *driver education* teaching experience do you have? _____ years
3. In which of the following areas have you worked, in addition to your current role of driver education program coordinator for your school system? (*Check all that apply*)

- 1____ Driver education classroom teacher
- 2____ Behind-the-wheel instructor
- 3____ Classroom teacher (non-driver education)
- 4____ School administrator
- 5____ Other (please describe) _____

4. Do you currently teach:

- a. Classroom driver education? 1____ Yes 2____ No
- b. Behind-the-wheel driver education? 1____ Yes 2____ No

5. What are your principal job functions relating to driver education?

6. Do you perform other duties unrelated to driver education? 1____ Yes 2____ No

If yes: Approximately what percentage of your work time is devoted to driver education?

_____ percent

II. About your School System's Driver Education Program:

7. How many high schools are there in your program? _____ schools
8. What is your total 9th grade average daily enrollment, at all high schools? _____ students

9. Who teaches driver education in your high school(s)? (Check all that apply)

- 1____ Teachers licensed by DPI
- 2____ Teachers or staff certified by DMV
- 3____ Driving school instructors certified by DMV
- 4____ Other (please describe) _____

10. How many teachers do you have who:

- Teach classroom only? _____ teachers
- Teach behind-the wheel only? _____ teachers
- Teach both classroom and behind-the-wheel? _____ teachers

11. Do you feel you have an adequate number of qualified:

- Classroom driver education teachers? 1____ Yes 2____ No
- Behind-the-wheel instructors? 1____ Yes 2____ No

12. Do all of your teachers use the same curriculum for teaching driver education? (This would be in addition to the NC Driver Handbook.)

- 1____ Yes
- 2____ No
- 3____ Don't know

If yes: What curriculum is used? _____

13. Who is the primary person responsible for evaluating the classroom and behind-the-wheel teaching performance of driver education teachers in your school or district? (Check one)

- 1____ I am
- 2____ Individual school principals
- 3____ Driver education site coordinator at the school
- 4____ Contracted driving schools
- 5____ Other (please describe) _____
- 6____ No one
- 7____ Don't know

14. Do you feel you are able to keep the teachers in your LEA informed of new developments in the driver education field?

- 1____ Yes 2____ No

Why or why not?

15. Does your LEA have **policies or standards regarding:**

- a. Maximum driver education class size? Yes No
(If yes, please provide this information below)
- b. Minimum driver education class size? Yes No
(If yes, please provide this information below)
- c. Maximum length of class period? Yes No
(If yes, please provide this information below)
- d. Maximum number of students per car during driving instruction? Yes No
(If yes, please provide this information below)
- e. Minimum number of students per car during driving instruction? Yes No
(If yes, please provide this information below)
- f. Maintenance of records on student performance in the classroom? Yes No
(If yes, please describe below)
- g. Maintenance of records on student performance behind-the-wheel? Yes No
(If yes, please describe below)
- h. Requirements for driver education teacher evaluation? Yes No
(If yes, please describe below)
- i. A policy that allows students to “test out” of all or part of the classroom instruction? Yes No
(If yes, please describe below)
- j. A standardized end-of-course test that all students must pass to receive credit? Yes No
(Please describe below)

i. Procedures to follow if a student fails the classroom instruction? Yes No
(If yes, please describe below)

j. Procedures to follow if a student fails the behind-the-wheel instruction?
(If yes, please describe below) Yes No

j. Policy or guidelines regarding teaching students with special needs? Yes No
(If yes, please describe below)

III. Your Opinions and Recommendations

Check one:

	<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Strongly Agree</u>	<u>No Opinion</u>
a. All driver education teachers should have to pass the same course of study to be qualified to teach in public schools.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
b. Current procedures for training and certifying new driver education teachers are adequate.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
c. All driver education teachers should have to pass 12-16 hours of college level driver education course work.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
d. All teachers should be qualified to teach both classroom and behind-the-wheel.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
e. Driver education training should be made more widely available through universities and community colleges in the state.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
f. At least some driver education training should be made available through the internet and other long-distance learning.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
g. Driver education should be re-instated into the required school curriculum.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
h. North Carolina needs greater standardization of its driver education curriculum	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

- i. There should be a single standardized driver education curriculum for NC students. _____
- j. The required 30 hours of classroom instruction should be increased. _____
- k. The required 6 hours of behind-the-wheel instruction should be increased. _____
- l. More continuing education opportunities are needed for driver education teachers. _____
- m. Better use of new technologies (computers, simulators, etc.) would facilitate learning in the classroom. _____
- n. I feel I am able to keep “up to date” with new developments in the field. _____
- o. I am able to keep the teachers in my LEA up-to-date on new developments in the field. _____
- p. I am knowledgeable about the classroom and in-car teaching performance of driver education teachers in my LEA. _____

16. What do you feel is the greatest strength of your LEA’s driver education program?

17. What do you feel is the greatest weakness of your LEA’s driver education program?

18. Do you have any suggestions for improving the recruitment and/or training of new driver education teachers in North Carolina?

19. Do you have any other suggestions for improving the overall quality of teen driver education in our state?

Thank You!

Please use the attached pre-addressed envelope to return the survey.

If envelope is missing, please mail to:

Jane Stutts
UNC Highway Safety Research Center
Campus Box 3430
Chapel Hill, NC 27599-3430

APPENDIX D

Teen-Parent Telephone Survey Questions

Driver Education Questions for Teens

(Included as part of a larger telephone survey for evaluating Graduated Driver Licensing)

Now I have a few questions about your experiences taking Driver Education.

DE1. First, did you take driver education here in North Carolina?

1. Yes
2. No (skip rest of this section)
3. Don't know, refused (skip rest of this section)

DE2. What month and year did you complete the class, including all the behind-the-wheel *(Prompt: or driving)* instruction?

Month _____ Year _____

DE3. Did you take the class through your school, or did you go to a private driving school?

1. School
2. Private driving school

DE4. How long did your class meet on a typical day? Was it *(read categories)*:

3. For an hour or less
4. More than an hour but less than or equal to three hours
5. More than three hours but less than or equal to six hours
6. More than six hours

DE5. About how many students were in the class?

_____ students

DE6. After you finished the classroom instruction, how long was it before you were able to begin your behind-the-wheel *[Prompt: or driving]* instruction? Was it *[read categories]*

1. Two weeks or less
2. More than two weeks but not more than a month
3. More than a month but less than three months
4. Three months or longer

DE7. On how many separate days did you drive?

_____ days

DE8. Did you get less than six hours of driving time, about six hours, or more than six hours?

1. Less than six hours
2. About six hours
3. More than six hours
4. Don't remember, NA

DE9. Do you feel that this amount of driving time was too little, too much, or about right for you to learn the basic driving skills?

1. Too little time
2. Too much time
3. About the right amount of time

DE10. Other than yourself, how many other students were usually in the car with you when you drove?

1. No other students
2. One other student
3. Two other students
4. Three other students
5. Four or more other students

DE11. Were you ever a passenger in a car while another student drove?

1. Yes
2. No

DE11a. (*If yes*) About how many total hours did you ride as a passenger while another student drove? Was it [*read categories*]

1. Two hours or less
2. Between two and four hours
3. Between four and six hours
4. More than six hours

DE11b (*If yes*) How useful would you say this time as a passenger was for you learning to drive? Would you say it was [*read categories*]:

1. Very useful
2. Somewhat useful
3. Not at all useful

DE12. Were you able to get into the driver education class when you wanted to, or did you have to wait awhile?

1. Yes, when I wanted to
2. No, I had to wait

DE12a. **(If no)** What was the most important reason you couldn't take the class when you wanted to: *[Do not read categories. Code one response only. Prompt if necessary for most important reason.]*

1. Classes already full, too crowded, let older students into classes first, etc.
2. School wasn't offering the class when wanted to take it
3. Problems scheduling class, conflicts with other classes or sports, etc.
4. Cost of the class
5. Parent(s) didn't want me to take it then
6. Wasn't allowed to (no other reason given)
7. Student's fault - didn't turn in forms on time, misconduct, poor grades, etc.
8. Other 1 *(describe)* _____
9. Other 2 *(describe)* _____
10. Other 3 *(describe)* _____

DE13. Did you have any problems scheduling your behind-the wheel *[Prompt: or driving]* instruction when you wanted it?

1. Yes, had problems
2. No, did not have problems

DE13a. **(If Yes)** What was the most important reason why you couldn't get the driving instruction when you wanted it? *[Do not read categories. Code one response only.]*

1. No space available in the class, let older students into classes first, etc.
2. School wasn't offering the class
3. Problems scheduling class, conflicts with other classes or sports, etc.
4. Cost of the class
5. Parent(s) didn't want me to take it
6. Wasn't allowed to (no other reason given)
7. Student's fault - didn't turn in forms on time, misconduct, poor grades, etc.
8. Other 1 _____
9. Other 2 _____
10. Other 3 _____

DE14. Overall, how would you rate the quality of the classroom instruction you received? Would you say it was excellent, good, fair or poor?

1. Excellent
2. Good
3. Fair
4. Poor

DE15. And how would you rate the quality of the driving instruction you received? Again, would you say it was excellent, good, fair or poor?

1. Excellent
2. Good
3. Fair
4. Poor

DE16. Do you have any suggestions for ways driver education could be improved, either the classroom or the driving instruction? *[Do not read categories. Code all mentioned. Probe for multiple responses.]*

1. More total time in class
2. Less total time in class
3. Longer class periods
4. Shorter class periods
5. Fewer students in a class
6. Better classroom materials – less boring, more visuals, etc.
7. Better classroom teachers – more knowledgeable about subject, more interesting, etc.
8. More use of computers, other technologies
9. More time spent driving
10. No/fewer other students in car when drive
11. Better on-road instructors
12. Other 1 *(describe)* _____
13. Other 2 *(describe)* _____
14. Other 3 *(describe)* _____

Driver Education Questions for Parents

(Included as part of a larger telephone survey for evaluating Graduated Driver Licensing)

Now I have just a few questions to ask you about your teen's experience taking driver education, and ways you think this might be improved.

DE17. First, can you tell me if your teen took driver education here in North Carolina?

1. Yes
2. No *[skip rest of this section]*
3. Don't know, refused *[skip rest of this section]*

DE18. Currently most driver education classes in North Carolina include 30 hours of classroom instruction. Do you feel that this amount is *[read categories]*

1. Too little
2. Too much
3. About right

DE19. Most driver education classes in North Carolina also include six hours of driving instruction. Do you feel that this amount is *[read categories]*

1. Too little
2. Too much
3. About right

DE20. Did your teen take driver education through their high school, or did they take it at a private driving school?

1. through school
2. through private driving school
3. don't know / can't remember

DE21. Currently, teens and their families in North Carolina do not have to pay for driver education when they take it through their schools. In other states, they may have to pay some or all of the costs. Do you feel North Carolina should continue to pay all of the costs for students to take driver education, should only pay part of the costs, or should not pay any of the costs?

1. Continue to pay full costs
2. Pay part of the costs
3. Not pay any of the costs

DE22. When you first rode with your teen after s/he had completed driver education, did you feel s/he was *[Read first four categories only, but allow a don't know or don't remember response.]*

1. Very well prepared for driving
2. Somewhat prepared
3. Not very well prepared, or
4. Not at all prepared for driving
5. Don't know / can't remember / no opinion

DE23. Did you receive any feedback from your teen's driver education instructor about how well s/he had done when driving, or whether or not there were areas where more practice was needed?

1. Yes
2. No

DE23A. *(If yes)* What form did this feedback take? *[read categories. Code one response only]*

1. I received a written report/evaluation.
2. I had an in-person interview with the instructor.
3. I received a telephone call
4. I received both a written report **and** had in-person interview or telephone call
5. Other

DE23B How useful was this information to you? Would you say it was *[read categories]*

1. Very useful
2. Somewhat useful
3. Not very useful
4. Not at all useful

APPENDIX E

Comments from Teacher and Coordinator Surveys

Do you have any suggestions for improving the recruitment and/or training of new driver education teachers in North Carolina?

The State Department of Public Instruction needs to treat Driver Education as an important part of the curriculum, instead of trying to ax it during economic downturn.

- 1) A driver education teacher should be degreed in the field and if not, should be licensed to teach in some area.
- 2) Paraprofessional driver ed teachers in the public schools should be required to get re-certified every five years.

Instructors should not have to be "hired" to be certified. Teachers get a certificate or license to teach without being hired. This is ridiculous. The 2 week DMV course puts out people who have "no idea" how to teach the classroom or handle students. I know; they come to me begging for help.

Offering courses at the community college level for training teachers and for renewal credits would be great. Parents have expressed a deisre to have driver ed in the schools rather than in private sectors because students and parents are more familiar with on site teachers. Parents feel more comfortable knowing teachers answer to a school system.

Have the new teachers go through a "student teacher" segment in the car and the classroom

More continuing education opportunities and additional classroom resources.

Should be a certified teacher

We lose one-third to two-fifths of our checks to taxation. A lot of young instructors aren't interested in entering such a high-risk, high-stress situation for \$14-15 dollars net/hour.

Needs to be a part of the school curriculum.

I think all instructors should go through the same training and be required to pass the same final exam.

Universities should provide certification programs at the university and at community colleges.

Make more classroom available for certification of teachers.

Re- establish the university programs at many universities across the state in order to obtain college/university strudents gradual attention /interest regardless of whether such leads to supplemental (part-time) work in Driver Education or full-time or eventually both.

Put it back in the colleges.

Need to put it back into the schools.

Driver Education is treated like a step-child. We are second class citizens. Yet, if a student does not pass or is a problem in the classroom, he or she is punished via the driver license. This is wrong.

Make Drivers Ed programs more easily accessible.

I feel we do a very good job in our Safety & Driver Education program here in _____ County- and we all work together for a good and safe common goal for our young people.

1. Should return to teacher certification through college courses.
2. Too many limited training teachers.
3. Safety on highways is a lifetime skill which should be VERY important part of the educational system.

Re-instate a full major or minor degree in state colleges in Driver Traffic Safety.

Dr. Ed. Is the "unwanted step child" in Education. Fellow educators don't want us to use their rooms. We need to demand the respect that all educators deserve. Better conditions and facilities would certainly help.

I think each instructor should experience the same type of training and use the same curriculum no matter if they're in the school system or a private company.

More options for taking the instructor course.

Should go through law enforcement, Driver's Ed., EVOC, or classes at the community college. Driving ranges. Change some of the ways in the book that do not work or that are more dangerous than what I think it should be. There are some things that should be changed in the book- it helps in our county that we use a car that is shown in the book.

A curriculum at the college level is the best method for providing instruction for educators in driving education.

My opinions are expressed in Section 5.

Driver Education should be re-instated into the required school curriculum.

Get certified courses set up in a local school- community college so teachers can become certified.

There will be a big turnover of driver education teachers in the next five years. We need to find quality people in our school systems to continue the quality programs established over the past years. This "new blood" should be people that are dedicated and very serious about preserving the integrity of a great safety program and driver education programs for the students in their schools. Advertising is acceptable, but should be selected by your peers for recruitment to the program. It should be an honor.

Making the course required as part of the school curriculum.

Training- increase statewide college courses.

Put it back in the school day where it belongs.

College and University Programs should be offered as majors or minors to help with the need for qualified instructors.

Require a four year degree in Driver Education and Traffic Safety and pay teachers on the same scale as other classroom teachers.

Higher pay.

Offer it in more universities.

Standardized course of study for all instructors. More opportunities for training at university and college levels. Certification as on other courses to teach in North Carolina.

Our county does a great job of creating spots for new instructors.

Offer more driver ed programs at universities

Driver ed teachers should be college graduates with DPI certification. I realize we have lots of good teachers that hold DMV certification. However, every year I am contacted by 2 or 3 different people that want to know how to become DMV certified. Some of these people are barely literate. This scares me because the quality of education is deteriorating throughout the state. Driver ed. is one subject that everyone uses throughout their lifetime. I want quality driver ed teachers teaching in NC.

more access to certification classes and awareness of the need for teachers

Put Driver Education back in the classroom, (P.E. classes) and require instructors to obtain 21 hours of training for certification. Give respect back to Driver Ed.

keep up good work!

have state universities do a better job of teaching.

Driver education teachers should be at least "endorsed" on the NC License (certificate).

All teachers should be required to take a two year training in college courses as I did back in 1976. Should have a degree in Dr. Ed.

Better advertisement of when/where Driving Education courses are being taught.

Make the certification easier to obtain by offering an after school program for teachers.

I think that driver education teachers should have to take college courses. I feel those teachers that have driver education as a minor and on their teacher certificate should be paid a higher salary.

Should have the same type of "student teaching" for the BTW section.

Better pay and benefits will bring in better quality instructors.

Require more hours in classroom and behind the wheel instruction before being certified.

Driver and Safety Ed. must be given a higher priority in the state curriculum if new teachers are going to pursue this field of education. More sites offering state certification in driver education.

Put back into school day- part of the curriculum.
Encourage retired teachers/principals, etc. to teach

Put Dr. Ed back in the normal school day and some retired teachers may be willing to come back and teach. New and young teachers are hard to find period, for any subject.

When contracting driver education, contracts should be awarded based solely on the quality of services with price standardized by state (\$210- 225). This would allow contracting instructors hired by the company or teachers hired by the school to be paid adequate compensation based on experience and qualifications. (\$15-25 per hour).

Better background checks
Reinstate Dr. Ed. Programs in colleges and community colleges.

Higher salaries would encourage more people to teach driver's education.

"See my blue sheet."

Improve public understanding of what Dr. Ed. is and who needs it.

mandatory retake of classes every five years or at least show so many hours in staff development similar to teacher education.

I think we do a very good job in our system

Involve more community colleges and more credits to be used for re-certification.

Dr. Ed. Should be kept on an extended day basis and offered through the school system. This will ensure the students a certified dr.ed and public school teacher.

Make it more accessible and easy to take classes.

Reinstate program into the schools and/or
increase (mandate) minimum wage by private driving schools

1. DMV needs to offer more classes.
2. Classes need to be in more locations.
3. Increase the cost of class!!! We need people that are committed.

1. Allow sick and vacation time to be added.
2. New teachers should be allowed to team teach with an experienced teacher.

1. Re-instate DE into the required school curriculum and enable students to get BTW instruction throughout the school day regardless of what class they are in when called to drive. Teach classroom before or after school. This will help attract new DE teachers.

Put it back into school day and everything would be better all the way down the line.

1. DMV cert. of public sch. Teachers' lateral entry into the work force.
2. Teachers should be paid as pub. Sch. teachers
3. Three years allotment to complete ECU internet with allowance for time teaching.
4. Observation by principal's recommendation.

I am selling this as a "double dosing" qualified math, science. English/elem. Teachers with reading cert. enhance curriculum and move goals toward achievement.

The state has standardized curriculum guide that includes the objectives, lesson outline and number of hours required in both the classroom and behind the wheel. I believe most schools use the Drive Right textbook. We don't need anymore paperwork or standardization.

1. Make Dr. Ed a more attractive employment opportunity.
2. Teach during the school day

Teachers must realize that they have to capture the students respect.

should be a minimum of 18 hours of college courses to be certified to teach dr. ed. in NC public schools.

Re-institute the degree program in our State university system.

Increase the pay for teachers. (The risk we take with new drivers is high and the pay should be equal to the risk).

1. Seminars needed for Dr. Ed. instructor technology reps. to shows ways of better instructing or using technological devices to help in the classroom.

1. Bring back the 4 year Bachelor degree program in Dr. Ed.
2. Bring back the Master's Degree in Dr. Ed.
3. Driver Ed. would be more appealing if it were put back into the regular school day.
4. Make Dr. Ed. a 12-month salaried position.

Teachers should be state certified

1. Increase the salary.

State standardization of pay scale- pay on the teaching certificate.

Teachers should improve in classroom skills and try to improve in attitudes toward students needs. In the car phase, teachers should teach more skills, not time outs.

1. The certification programs should be available in community colleges.

1. More courses need to be offered at the community college/university levels.
2. A step pay scale- based on level of certification or degree and years of experience.
3. Dr. Ed. Teachers not holding a degree in education should be required to take a teaching methods and techniques course.
4. To teach car and classroom- should require 4 courses for certification - if not already a certified teacher- might include classroom. Car phase, teaching methods, alcohol and drugs, visual search techniques, maintenance and special needs populations, etc.

1. Dr. Ed should be re-instated into the school day to provide security for college educated teachers who wish to teach driver education.

You should be a classroom teacher first!

1. Money is always a factor.
2. Use the school system.

1. 1. Basic classes should be taught in order to gain certification.

Put it back in the school day.

- 1) More college classes should be offered in our area.
- 2) Do more evaluation on our teachers.

- 1) Dr. ed. teachers should have certification in some other area before being given certification in driver ed.
- 2) This should be at least 21 credits in safety and dr. ed.

Bring the program back into the colleges and universities.

I think Dr. Ed teachers should be certified in Dr. Ed and requirements should be the same as for any area of his or her degree.

All dr. ed. instructors should have teaching experience. Some DMV-certified teachers have no clue.

Re-instate the B.S. degree in Driver & Traffic Safety because the current [program] is inadequate and is not taught in enough universities.

1. A Dr. Ed teacher should be certified and qualified with impeccable credentials.
2. Courses should be offered through our university system to upgrade the current training of Dr. Ed. Teachers.

Make sure they are certified teachers in the state of North Carolina

Our school system should use certified teachers who also have dr. ed. certif. We have teachers who want to teach dr. ed. but our superintendent will not allow our dr. ed supervisor to hire more people. The funds are available, but he does not support our program. He wants to bring in a private school. The private schools are bringing the dr. ed. program down.

- 1) More money.
- 2) More accessible training/classes. I had to travel over 4 hours to take classes to become certified. Need additional classes in western NC.

- 1) Hire DPI certified teachers not just anybody.
- 2) Make dr. ed. a respectable program like it deserves. Education is useless when we are losing our young to deaths.
- 3) The state has turned its back on a vital program by privatizing it. Give good teachers back some power to make good programs.

1. Driving range instruction would improve a student's behind-the-wheel driving experience.
2. The use of simulators during the classroom experience.

Teaching driver ed is extremely important in my opinion. What other area of teaching could cause a student to lose their life!

I strongly believe we need highly qualified teachers who have been through a minimum of 21 college hours in this field.

- 1) Offer as an optional certification during college years/ or double major.
- 2) Return driver ed. to the scheduled school day with afternoon driving.

driver ed should be re-instated into required school curriculum and taught during regular school hours

- 1) Offer dr ed training courses and renewal workshops for certified teachers.
- 2) Try to keep and recruit dr ed instructors that are certified educators.
- 3) The administration of dr ed programs kept within the school system seem to serve students best

- 1) Offer college courses at a local level and local seminars involving dr ed instructors as well as anyone else in the field.

I find it most beneficial when I meet other instructors and we share techniques and styles used in btw and classroom training.

The courses at ECU are very good. [other comment]

I have just taken the ECU DR ED 2001 course by internet and planning to take the advanced course this fall for on-going education.

I think that anyone that is teaching dr ed should attend all workshops and take courses that would help better prepare them to teach.

Certification through 36 hours of college driver education credits.

To be part of the regular school day would help. You could have some teachers in the classroom, some b-t-w teachers, and some doing both.

require college credits

I think the teachers need more than two weeks of training

a lot of good quality people (police and fire) would like to teach on a part time basis but are unable to take 2 weeks off from a regular job for training. Travel distances for training are outrageous.
Make instructor training available through more community colleges or private driving schools.

More funding would certainly help.

It takes a person with a special temperament to do it. Identify those college students and have someone recruit them.

Offer the course at A.S.U. and E.C.U.

- 1) flexibility in the classes offered from driver ed certification.
- 2) More internet opportunities for people not able to attend classes over time.

more courses and easier to take

Raise standards and salaries.

- 1) regular classes offered
- 2) more internet offerings and long-distance learning

Retired teachers should get teaching credit toward certification. (1 hour per year).

1. More instruction.
2. Put back into the school curriculum.

There are a wide range of things that could be done in this area:

there should be 3 levels of certification - #1 the basic 80 hour DMV course, #2 Courses that provide teaching methods for non-certified teachers, #3, courses that provide dr ed methods.

Teachers should be able to move from level 1 certification to level 3 certification. There should be required courses to go from level 1 to level 2 to level 3.

Level 1 - Basic Course

Level 2 - Basic course + teacher certification courses

Level 3 - Basic Course + teacher cert + dr ed cert. courses

1. Standardize course of study.
2. Train teachers to new ideas, additional training
3. Utilize the internet
4. Train more teachers so students don't have to wait so long (6 mos.) to go BTW
5. Pay \$20/ hour on 1099 not at teacher rate- the state could save hundreds of thousands and this is still a fair hourly rate for behind-the-wheel. If you teach classroom, you should be paid at your rate not to be below \$20/hr.

must have college approved curriculum

All new driver education teachers should have to complete college driver education courses. The new teachers I see coming out of the two week programs are not prepared as well for different circumstances with driving and teaching. I also feel it is extremely unfair to only require 2 week course to become certified when so many of us had to attain our certification through many college hours and semesters.

Dr ed teachers should have to be certified by college or univ. - no two-week courses

- 1) Having more information available to those who are interested.
- 2) More offerings on certification.

All driver ed teachers should have to pass a minimum of 16 hours of college level courses in driver ed to be certified.

more community college involvement

- 1) increased pay
- 2) more local classes to obtain a certification

Do you have any other suggestions for improving the overall quality of teen driver education in our state?

Yes, some LEA's have retired supervisors in the school system running their Driver Education program. Many of these individuals do not have driver education experience; therefore these systems are not strong programs. I have heard this complaint during discussion with my peers in the profession. Staff the LEAs with Driver Education supervision.

- 1) In my opinion, driver ed should not be taught on Sunday since no other courses are taught on Sunday.
- 2) A teacher should not be permitted to coach and teach driver ed during their coaching season.
- 3) The 30 hour classroom phase of driver ed mandated by the state of NC should not be taught in 4 or 5 days but should be at least 15 days long.
- 4) The 6 hour behind-the-wheel phase of driver ed mandated by the state of NC should take more than 3 days.
- 5) A part-time teacher should not try to coordinate a full-time program when there are qualified teachers doing the job.
- 6) Paraprofessionals in driver ed should have a standard salary scale.

After the current group of college certified driver education teachers retire and the DMV certified "2 week wonders" are hired I perceive a drastic drop in the quality of dr. ed. programs. I think this is well on its way (steady decline, that is) even now. Hopefully, the state would see the need to have certified teachers teach. Many private schools hire people who know nothing of driver ed and tell them they will get paid more if they do not use but so many gallons of gas. This is pathetic. Money will replace education and eventually the toll of deaths & injuries will rise. I think the only reason some change has not been seen now is the incorporation of the GDL Law.

Private driving schools need to be scrutinized carefully, because private or contracted teachers are not as aware or cautious of parent/children needs. Sometimes problems arise which school systems can not be accountable for, but parents look to the schools for answers.

Promote workshops for trainers and teachers which create comradery among teachers of D.E. across the state so they look forward to them.

1. Other than the DMV Handbook. Have more videos available for all teachers. There are many great teaching videos on the market that need to be available to all students.
2. Check with the Driver Training Section of UPS and pick their brains. Have you ever seen a UPS truck involved in an accident? Me neither!
3. Thank you

Our system is operated through the school system. I believe the system was at its best when it was part of the school curriculum.

Age at which students take driver's education and get permits should be increased 6 months to one year.

A curriculum for NC teachers to follow.

Some students should receive more than the 6 required hours behind the wheel. Six to ten hours should be the standard. Some with fewer, some with more.

More hours in the car and a mandatory 500 hours of driving with a permit.

Have parents sign an agreement to drive 20-30 hours with their children so as to understand better their strengths and weaknesses as well as their attitudes involving driving. Then the parents could more easily assess the child's readiness to be turned loose with the responsibility of being behind the wheel driving.

I feel we have a quality program. The company that I work for does an outstanding job with the program.

Put it back in the school day.

Instructors should be certified by the state department of Public Education and University programs.

I think the recently passed "No pass, no drive" law has certainly helped but we could do more.

Make driver's education a part of a Health & Wellness program across the state since car accidents are a leading cause of death and injury for teens.

Less classroom time and possibly more driving time.
Too much classroom time, it is not necessary.

We need to expect and maintain high standards for our students instead of expecting that all students are "entitled" to a learner's permit at 15 years of age. Low standards frequently produce poor drivers. Many Driver Education teachers have no real standards for passing except the number of hours of driving needed. Some others have some standards but the students sometimes never get a clear understanding of what such standards really are. Then the implication (for many students) is that driving may be important but that SAFE driving is not important.

Less classroom time (30 hours) and more driving time can effectively teach the classroom 20 chapters from Drive Right in 15 to 20 hours.

Put Driver Education back into the classroom during the school day. To me, it makes no sense to allow a child to take a class in Russian History or flower planting and not allow them to learn something that may save their life. I could preach a sermon on this. How much is one child's life worth?

Put it back in the schools.

Make it a regular class in the normal day and put qualified teachers in the classroom to teach the course like it once was.

Create a course curriculum that follows the NC DMV booklet.
Have test bank questions for students to review.

Less book work and more driving experience (excluding range).

Require certain number of hours with simulator as well as behind the wheel instruction

Better teachers, longer BTW and parent involvement

Our state guidelines are very much in place and I support the efforts of our administrators and teachers in what we are doing.

1. Should be put back into the state curriculum- offering course on school schedule for semester credit. (elective course)
2. Should return to 3-phase program.
3. Some private driving schools are not providing quality program- some complete courses in a couple of days- doing all 6 hours driving in one day, etc.

Re-instate full curriculum for driver education into the Basic Education Plan.

More info from the state to co-ordinate programs

Citizens need better role models. We need to take our jobs seriously! Be professional!

Have meetings with DMV examiners to tell us what they experience with our students. Example: tests, signs and driving weaknesses.

Put it back in the school curriculum! What is more important, - band, PE, singing or driving a car the rest of your life.

Increase BTW hours by two.

Be able to take more remarks that can be sent to the DMV. More hours and more hands on with the car itself. They need to go abck to some of the old movies that used to show accidents. There needs to be a requirement that kids see accident photos. Hospital, SHP and police photos if possible.

The best way to improve the quality of teen driver education is by maintaining the quality of our Driver Education teachers. I feel the best pool of instructors to draw from is within the public school system.

1) Let the schools do the instruction. Private companies must make a profit. Therefore, many students are limited, in other counties, to the number of miles each student can drive, such as 75 miles. By using certified teachers, instruction should be better because they have an intensive training in teaching.
2) Also, utilizing the bus garage mechanics would insure a safety factor in the maintenance of vehicles. They are well trained and available with safety backgrounds.

I recommend following Michigan Driver Ed. Program which involves parents as well as schools.

We need continuing education opportunities for Driver Ed. Teachers.

It's possible students would get more out of classroom instruction if it were taught during school day. Having to go an additional several hours after school kids minds may not be too sharp.

Would love to see the program entered back into the school day because that is when it had merit and students thought it was more important. Also, this helps all the 9th graders receive a chance to enroll.

More funds for simulator and equipment to be used in the classroom.

Workshops and training for existing teachers.

I have taken a few minutes of time (about 10 minutes) to show the students how police radar works. It is not a trick or gimmick- local police enjoy doing this and the students seem to enjoy the quick demo.

Bring back Driver Education ranges where life saving skills can be taught in a controlled and safe environment.

Workshops and training for existing teachers.

1) Increasing the number of hours for both classroom and behind-the-wheel instruction would help.
2) use of computers and simulators
3) driving range/driving rodeo

I think we have made the right move to the Graduated License plan.

Hire the best qualified teachers.

After school training is not the best teaching environment. This forces large classes and students have to wait long periods of time between car instruction and class instruction.

Driver's Ed should be re-instated into the required curriculum during the school day. Increase the number of hours behind the wheel instruction.

- 1) standard course of study guidelines for all (private and public) driver ed curriculum
- 2) provide LEA's with a driving range for demonstrations and practical skill development

Once again our county does a good job for proper instruction to students. All our instructors are held accountable.

Give them more training in the most important task in their life.

- 1) mandate a defensive driving class during senior year as an elective.
- 2) allow btw to be done between sessions of classroom instruction.
- 3) mandatory training for all new drivers regardless of age!

more behind-the-wheel hours.

more time required b-t-w.

Put back in school day. With most state schools on a 4-period day, it would be easy. By allowing teachers to drive during the day and after school, many kids could be finished on time plus we could do a better job of getting students ready to be great drivers.

The Graduated License program has been a great help. We could always use more funds for technology.

Should drive for at least 8 to 10 hours.

Increase the BTW hours to eight hours.

More driving time.

It would be great if new drivers could get driving experience by practicing in a simulator before getting behind the wheel of a car.

Put the program back into the school curriculum.

More b-t-w for students. I would like to see each student have 12 to 16 hours btw.

Increase behind the wheel training.

Certified driver ed teachers should be allowed to teach during the school day. Teaching after school causes conflicts for many students participating in extra-curricular activities.

Increase minimum BTW hours.

Increase BTW to 8 hours.

I feel the instructors are doing an excellent job with teens.

Incorporate driver education with a comprehensive healthful living curriculum in the high schools.

At least 1 hour of night driving
More hours BTW

Require one hour night driving with one parent in the car.

1. Increasing pay and incentives for instructors.
2. Surveys and feedback from teachers, parents and students when addressing program changes.
3. Both DPI certified and DMV Lincensed Instructors should have "spot" evaluations performed by Driver Education Specialist.

Every teacher should have an assigned classroom for driver education only so that all visual aids (such as posters, charts, statistics, etc.) can be used at the moment necessary to enrich the program.

I feel that summer classes should be taught 3 hours a day for 10 days.

During 6-hour classes you have to rush over the classroom work very quickly and I don't feel that the students learn much in the classroom.

"See my blue sheet."

Get driver ed. back into the regular curriculum

- 1) do not allow students to take the class until their fifteenth birthday (instead of 14 ½).
- 2) bilingual classes. Many hispanic students are already driving by the age of 12. Some of their parents are also driving with no license.
- 3) require that driver ed. cars not only have the brake, but the wheel for the teacher.

Keep it in the hands and under control of public school educators who work with the students day in and day out.

- 1) Limit number of passengers for G.D.L.
- 2) Allow students to drive home from their school after 9 pm if involved in after-school activity, like work is exempted now.

More instruction and a little more driving time might help.

- 1) D.E. teacher needs more resources such as simulators, driving ranges, etc.
- 2) work load and coaching duties should be lifted for dr. ed. teachers.

- 1) Standardized course of study
- 2) increase btw hours.

1. Do away with the proficiency test. Everyone should take the class.
2. Private driving schools lack professionalism & adequate materials. The bottom line is money.
3. Increase funds allocated per student.

Make Dr. Ed a part of the school day.

Put it back in school.

More BTW instruction.

Do away with the Proficiency Test.

- 1) Needs to be a little harder to get your license.
- 2) More time behind the wheel.
- 3) All students need classroom; no proficiency test.

Driver's Ed crosses many lines of curriculum. A broad base of professionals receiving a level teacher's pay will not only allow more teachers to remain teaching (keeping the good ones) but it will also enhance not only the driver's ed. Curriculum but the other curriculums. Dr. Ed receives students from 14.5 to 18,

mostly 9th graders, some 10th and some 8th. These 8th graders would gain the most as far as double dosing from teachers in standard course of study curriculums.

More emphasis on changing student attitudes when they get behind the wheel. They must be more aware that bad things can happen to them.

Provide more training sessions and develop a standard curriculum.

Driver's Education should be allowed during the school days.

Six hours BTW is not enough.

- 1) classroom portion should be included in 9th grade health classes.
- 2) Driving part should be before or after school - not during the school day.

Add a more stringent distribution requirement to the licensing and permit requirements.

Have the student be required to have morning, evening and night driving.

Increase BTW hours.

1. Make private driving agencies more accountable.
2. Put Dr. Ed back into the regular school day and in the hands of licensed state teachers.
3. Require a mandatory "refresher" course in Dr. Ed to all high school seniors.

Extend driving time past 6 hours.

Put Dr. Ed back in the school curriculum.

Reduce classroom hours and increase BTW hours.

Make Dr. Ed. Should be available in the regular school schedule.

Every teen should be required to taken a driver's education course no matter his age.

1. Develop a uniform curriculum guide for Dr. Ed.- we had a format until they removed Dr. Ed. From the NC course of study.
2. Let DPI administer the Dr. Ed. Program and maintain uniform standards for both public and private schools. This would require having a Dr. Ed, consultant in DPI.
3. Having GHSP develop a parental involvement program and do a pilot study with this. Parents would be given an instructional guide and would attend 2-4 hours of instruction on how to use. This might incorporate using the internet.
4. Provide funding for remediation (for the 2-3% of exceptional students and other handicapped and slow learning students who need more instruction than what they receive in the traditional 30 and 6 program).
5. Provide the option that Dr. Ed. can be offered in a system or school during the regular school day as an elective course or blocked with another course (ex. Healthful living, character ed.)

Provide a statewide curriculum that is developed by a group of people with expertise in developing public school curriculum.

Dr. Ed needs to be kept in the schools. Certified teachers better understand how to teach students.

Course should be added to NC courses.

Teaching the class during the school day and have the students drive after school hours.

Have more hours behind the wheel

1. Make it mandatory for ALL students to take at least 30 hours of class work.
2. Do away with competency test.. There's nothing like experience! All the competency test does is show that one can test well, have common sense, and have the general knowledge about driving.

1. The state needs to employ personnel who would inform DMV of students not meeting certain criteria.
2. Students need more time BTW and less time in the classroom- they learn more by experience in BTW.

Putting a classroom phase into schools that have block scheduling would improve the program.

Put it back in the school day. I have no influence over the students if I am not there.

- 1) We need to be able to do more hands on studies. Teens need to spend some time seeing & hearing from other teens who have gone down the wrong path. Improving could allow us to spend more time with our students in the car.

- 2) Being able to attend more required workshops, etc.

- 1) All teachers need to be certified as teachers.
- 2) Should have at least 21 credits.

All dr. ed. instructors should be required to have a B.S. degree in driver ed. and be fully state certified just as any other teacher is required to do.

I think the amount of driving time should be increased to 9-12 hours.

Stiff penalties for teenage violations that are enforced.

There should be an allowance for kids to be able to drive more than 6 hours if needed.

Put at least the book part back in the regular school day. (Both parts would be great.) The life skills or health teachers could become certified to teach the health part. So many students miss the classroom phase because of extra-curricular & other obligations at home and transportation problems. Also, it's not really safe to be out on the roads during rush hours and at night with the inconsiderate Road Ragers.

- 1) I have a hard time getting/keeping driver ed. cars.
- 2) The 30 hour book/class time is all right.
- 3) I think the 6 hours of driving can be lessened for some students who drive well and more time added for those who can't. Leave it up to the teacher.
- 4) The policy on failing grades or H.S. dropouts not being able to get their permit/license is good, but it needs to be enforced more. Too many students who drop out or fail are not getting their permits/license taken away therefore encouraging dropouts or failures because they know no one will take away their permit or license. (This shouldn't be the schools' responsibility to do this either.)

More btw for students.

NC has alienated the driver ed program at the high school. How? They took a great program out of the school day. Driver ed. teachers are not on campus. Which is more important in life for survival? Classes like Spanish, Art, or driving which we do every day. We need to have certified DPI teachers not just people off the street. Also the proficiency test is totally unsound so that students don't take any classroom or very little so that NC saves a few dollars. I guess life isn't worth the time to the legislature to fund.

Set new driver requirements and leave them alone long enough to be able to judge their effectiveness.

Many teens are unable to take driver ed if they are involved in sports or other after school activities. I

strongly believe we could better serve our kids if the driver ed curriculum were returned to the regular school day! Good kids are being put in a bind with extra-curricular activities and driver ed occurring at the same time. Kids are also very tired after school and are not at their best.

More graphic videos to make them realize that driving a car is a life and death daily decision.

Allow parents to provide some driving training before they take dr. ed. class!

I very strongly support putting the dr ed program back into the school day. This is one activity that most if not all students will one day participate in within our society. With after-school and summer instruction being the only choice for scheduling, many students in our area opt not to take dr ed at all or choose an alternative and perhaps inferior instruction. Schools are established to educate young people. Dr ed for sure should be a course made available to all.

- 1) Allow more hours of training btw!
- 2) Allow dr education back into the schools as part of curriculum. This would allow for more parent involvement, fewer dropouts, day time driving hours, and quality classroom instruction.

Educate the parents.

Most teens drive like their parents do (speed up to get through yellow).

More classroom and BTW time.

An introduction through the physical education curriculum.

Not all students need the same amount of time in the clsroom or b-t-w. We should not keep those students back who are already experienced.

Put us into the school curriculum and increase the class and driving hours.

I have felt very strongly since the beginning of my teaching dr ed that the 6 hour minimum requirement is totally insufficient to prepare today's teenagers for the modern demands of btw instruction! Thankfully, our superintendent permits us to "teach until we professionally feel they are ready to be released to their parents." It is our general combined opinion and recommendation that the 6 hours be increased to a minimum of 8 hours. I would like to refer to the AAA's recommendation of 15 hours btw instruction as support to increasing this important component to the total driver's education in NC.

Put it back into the school curriculum so that it does not conflict with all after school activities and lose out to athletics.

This is the only course taught by the schools in which a student could die!

- 1) Increase btw to 8 hours instead of 6
- 2) Greater supervision of private school dr. ed performance. Many students come back to public school and report that they drove only a couple of hours instead of the required 6.

Raise license age to 17

- 1) Six hours should be required of all students, but some need more. Teachers should be allowed to give two or more hours to those students needing more training.
- 2) Teach them during the regular school day. This would give more uniform teaching of the in-car training - same roads, same areas.

Twenty hours classroom (vs. 30)
and eight hours BTW (vs. 6)

Simulators would help greatly, before getting on the road!

1. Build smaller driving ranges that offer defensive driving facilities such as off-road recovery, tire failure skills, etc.
2. More parental involvement.

There are no checks and balances to the program.

There should be some type of evaluation for teachers to see if they are teaching the curriculum that they should be.

Parents need to be involved more. Maybe have a parent observe the final exam in the car so when they supervise their child, they could continue teaching those skills.

- 1) smaller classes, taught more often.
- 2) available driving range.
- 3) simulated driving stations

1. Dr. Ed should be reinstated to the regular school day. This would allow students to receive better education in a shorter time span.

I think NC has one of the best, thanks to our people in Raleigh.

1. More experience
2. Treat as school curriculum with credit.

Counties should use the money provided to develop a 1st class, high quality dr ed program. Several counties run a low quality program and revert much money to the state.

I do not see the legislature putting dr ed back into the school curriculum/day in the foreseeable future.

Likewise I do not see the legis. Providing the money to increase classroom hours and/or btw hours. Our goal in dr ed should be to develop a program of the highest quality within the framework we are given.

1. Need a current standard curriculum - so all students learn same basics.
2. Check (evaluate) teachers to make sure they are current.
3. Profanity from teachers should not be tolerated

1. Prepare teachers better. Make them college certified.

Dr ed should be reinstated into the required school curriculum.

- 1) It should be offered again in the school curriculum instead of after school.
- 2) There needs to be newer videos, films, to keep with the current years we are in.
- 3) Simulators, if affordable, could be used to help the students get a better idea, before actually being put on the road.

1. Update material
2. Would like to have a course of study and/or curriculum.
3. State adopted text books

24 hours classroom instruction

12 hours btw

I feel a standardized course would be helpful, as long as it is current and not 4 years behind like most of our other text books.

Less classroom hours and more btw

- 1) The required 30- hours classroom phase should be reduced to 24.
- 2) the required 6-hours of btw should be increased to 10-12 hours.
- 3) Should hire personnel to adminster the dropout prevention law, the driver ed eligibility forms and GDL program.

I think our current process is doing very well.

- 1) put driving ranges back into use.
- 2) use computer-assisted programs for simulation and classroom training.
- 3) make certification uniform in content and requirements for all, private or public school employees.

increase classroom time requirement
increase btw time requirement

At age 15, go to DMV - get Learner's and drive with parent or guardian.
Between 15 and 16, take classroom.
AT age 16, go to restricted permit for 1 year or more.
Age 17, get driver's license, if no convictions.
Community Service to pay for all convictions until age 21.
Responsibility has to be taught.

What do you feel is the greatest strength of your LEA's driver education program?

quality teachers employed by the driving school

good teachers

Certified teachers facilitating instruction. Prompt course completion. Unified group. Continuing ed opportunities. Use of technology. Intense coursework. Excellent car maintenance. Wise spending of funds. Frequent meetings. Numerous classroom sessions offered. Elite programs

small system, trustworthy instructors, pay level for instructors, school-owned cars, students are enrolled by age - no special favors for BOE (?) children

a super instructor

Our ability to meet with the teachers and to work with them to work out problems

We are meeting the needs of our school system (rural) by teaching the classroom during the summer months (June). Teach b-t-w by picking up students at their homes and returning them. During school, we pick them up and return them home.

our instructors

No parent complaints, then we must be serving students in a timely manner.

don't know

Having updated materials for each driver education program and certified regular classroom teachers certified for driver education (DPI) for better teaching methods.

All instructors are teachers or have been teachers and I have a Master's in Dr. Ed.

The use of D.P.I. Certified teachers.

The experience of instructional staff. We use only certified teachers employed by our school system. These instructors are a combination of regular employees and retirees.

Continuity. Well qualified teachers who enjoy their work and who are experienced. They are constantly seeing new ideas to use to do a better job.

Local control of the entire program as opposed to contracting privately. Support from administration for the program.

Three-fourths of instructors are regular classroom teachers in the public school system.

Having great DPI certified teachers.

Attitude and work habits of our teachers

Experience

Meeting the needs of students and parents.

Training is offered.

Continuity- we have had the same instructors for 7 years.

All of our instructors are certified teachers and have certification in Dr. Ed.
If a student is not successful BTW after 6 hours, our teacher adds more time to help them.
The quality and upkeep of our cars are as good as any other in the state.
We have the ability to accommodate handicapped students.

We have good experienced instructors.

All employees are teachers first. As for Dr. Ed., 2 of the 6 instructors are DMV certified. The rest are DPI.
We want to keep it this way.

We have three excellent teachers who are state certified from the NC Dept. of Public Instruction.

Excellent staff, administrative support, our use of computers in the classroom, being associated with the STAR (Safe Teens on America's Roads) program, and a supportive community.

Good teachers who are organized and operate a quality program.

Outstanding instructors

NC Driving school quality and leadership

Certified teachers who care.

Flexibility

A strong contractor who takes care of all problems when asked- very professional

Lead instructors (all DPI masters degree through current year)

Teacher has 20 or more years experiences and knowledgeable of program and procedures

Having experienced teachers who are very dedicated to our students. Seven of our eleven teachers have taught Dr. Ed for 25 years or more.

All Dr. Ed instructors are also certified teachers in the school system. Very cooperative board of education. Maintenance of cars are excellent

1. Teach work approach of staff.
2. Support local LEA

Experienced teachers and a great program.

Qualified teachers that are aware of the need for Dr. Ed.

Being able to meet the needs of all my students by offering Dr. Ed. in a timely manner as they turn 14½.

Our instructor works with the school system and we are familiar with our kids on a daily basis.
We are also able to finish students by their 15th birthday if they enroll when first notified.

Contract driving school

Standard curriculum
Good teachers that make a difference

Qualified teachers

Administrative support and excellent instructors

1. It is kept in the school system where we set the rules and maintain quality control
2. Local flexibility

All Driver Education teachers are employed as teachers with our LEA

Students are served in a timely manner
Students who enroll in our program when eligible will complete the Dr. Ed requirement by the age of 15.

Service the students. Scheduling of the programs at all sites. Try to accommodate children before and after the school days.

I have only been working with the program since Jan 2001. I don't feel experienced enough to answer yet.

Communication

What do you feel is the greatest weakness of your LEA's driver education program?

Students delay in completion of requirements; do not use the opportunities at younger ages. Then students feel a class should be organized to meet their last minute need.

none!

(my retirement) HA!

No standardized test.

Personality of one male instructor to "do his own thing" in regards to curriculum.

classroom capacity - more than one instructor is needed. We always have more students than can be accommodated.

The lack of help or the lack of communication from DMV and almost no communication from DPI
If it were not for DTSEA there would be none [no help].

classroom space

No state curriculum.

No communication from the state except at the state conference.

Appropriate pay scale - a debate on [???] -- to pay by degree and experience or pay all an hourly wage or some other method.

don't know

Not having driver ed in the regular school curriculum.

Lack of funds to run the program, get teaching materials and to equip the cars.

Not teaching during school day as part of a school curriculum.

Adequate instructional materials for all schools. Some audiovisuals need to be updated. Since the program was removed from the regular school day, many students have difficulty getting either to or home from classes, particularly, home after school hours.

We miss out on teaching a large number of our students because they ride school buses and cannot stay after school because they don't have a ride home. These same students can't get to our summer program because their parents work. We need to put Dr. Ed back in the school day.

Funding is adequate for payroll of personnel, but when purchases of vehicles are necessary during a fiscal year, it is very difficult to squeeze that money out in the smaller size LEAs.

Dr. Ed offered afterschool. Classroom portion could be an elective or part of the PE curriculum.
Classroom to be taught during the regular school day and all BTW afterschool.

1. Being able to get all students BTW instruction faster.
2. Not having Dr. Ed as a regular high school course curriculum.

Need additional teachers

Having trained personnel

Lack of funding for practice facilities and simulators.

There are constant conflicts with student that are involved in sports or other academic activities because the Dr. Ed classes are taught after school.

The student attends their regular classes for 6 hours and then has to go to 2-3 more hours for Dr. Ed. Instruction. The student may not get what they should from this instruction.

1. At the current time, the director is new to this county.
2. There are no provisions to pay the director for time spent supervising the program.

Bad weather and transportation are big issues since we are located in the mountains. LEA does not allow night-time driving, so we are always pushed for 6 months of the year- If we put Dr. Ed back in the classroom, this problem would be solved and money would be saved.

The lack of computer technology

Concerned if there will be enough money available to give some students additional BTW time when needed.

Difficulty sometimes scheduling students for BTW before their 15th birthday.

The inability to offer Saturday sessions due to transportation issues.

Timely completion of BTW

Long classroom hours for students

Time to be offered the program

Have to contract BTW instruction

We do not meet as a group where we can discuss our strengths and weaknesses. No one really checks on the classroom teacher or the in-car teacher.

Setting up class hours that will accommodate students. Transportation to and from school is often limited in our area. Many of our students are involved in extra-curricular activities.

Rural nature of county affords some students no opportunity to take classroom phase of Dr. Ed.

No weaknesses observed when meeting the needs of all students.

1. Kids not being able to complete the course on time because of them dropping out before completion and having to take the course later.
2. Transportation home is a problem with some students- having Dr. Ed. as part of the school day would help solve this problem.

Limited scheduling opportunities (afterschool and weekends)

We need greater availability of workshops and curriculum, which is important opportunities for instructors.

Money to buy materials.

Our program is "top notch". I don't really think we have any major weaknesses.

Meeting students timeline for date of births

Q17 Coordinators' survey

1. No one with a background in Dr. Ed to supervise the program
2. We are using all of our instructors. We have no one to replace them when they have to retire.
3. Lack of instructor evaluation

The distance that students have to go for the classroom phase and getting a ride there.

Would like to have more time to supervise instruction (classroom and BTW)
Transportation for students is a problem due to the time of Dr. Ed classes

Time lapse between classroom and BTW.

I have only been working with the program since Jan. 2001. I don't feel experienced enough to answer yet.

Not enough certified DR. Ed instructors

Do you have any suggestions for improving the recruitment and/or training of new driver education teachers in North Carolina?

If the training were to be put back in the community colleges and universities with some teaching background.

- 1) Recruit only certified teachers for driver ed.
- 2) University trained teachers.

Have more community colleges or universities available throughout the state for training and recruitment.

Use teachers certified in other areas.

Recruitment should be through the ranks of the regular certified teachers within the school system. Also, if the programs were still available through several universities, undergraduate students could get necessary coursework. With improved technology more in-service could be offered through the internet either from DPI, universities or community colleges.

Have all Dr. Ed teachers double certified. They should be regular classroom teachers, professionals who are used to dealing with students. I think regular classroom teachers with coaching experience make some of the very best Dr. Ed. Teachers. I think that all Dr. Ed teachers should have a CDL and some experience as a professional driver.

Needs to be under umbrella of DPI rather than DOT/DMV- it is education of students.

More observation time required for classroom and BTW.

Make ALL instructors have DPI certification not DMV.

Use our current teachers to recruit new teachers into the program.
Set up certified classes that new teachers can have access to without causing more trouble than it is worth.

1. Make training more accessible.
2. Increase pay
3. Keep equipment up-to-date.

Put the program back into universities and community colleges with at least a 2 year program requirement.

You need colleges to teach the required courses to become state certified instructors. Teachers in other fields are willing to get certified if they only knew how.

Continue the current funding or add to it. DPI, state and local educators need to look at Dr. Ed. as a major player. Many times, Dr. Ed. Is the first contact the parent of a 9th grader has with the high school. It's important that Dr. Ed teachers are treated as the professionals they are. Local Dr. Ed teachers should recruit the best candidates for their schools.

Provide a curriculum for all instructors to follow.
Provide an EOC.

Having a course at a nearby community college or one of the high schools.

Train at college level- certified by DPI.

Add it back into the curriculum, especially the class.

I still feel local school personnel are best for teaching DE because:

1. Closer ties to students
2. Responsible to administration.

Make program more available to persons interested in going into the field.

I think the standards for instructors should be higher.

More colleges to offer training.

Yes - make teachers more aware of the opportunity. Mail with information about how, when, where and expense.

More than one university offering internet courses.

Students should be told in college about how to get certified as an instructor .

Include the Dr. Ed. course in the regular curriculum. As long as Dr. Ed are treated as part time workers for the most part, choosing a career in Dr. Ed work will be minimized.

No- we don't recruit the Dr. Ed teachers. We contract out through a driving school and they provide the instructors.

Higher pay with maximum number of hours per week.

Do you have any other suggestions for improving the overall quality of teen driver education in our state?

present standards when applied are adequate.

Link driver education requirements to discipline problems in school.

keep the graduated licensing.

Other comments - before retiring, this administrator did handle all student services (guidance, busing, health/PE curriculum, safe schools and driver ed.). No time percentage spent on driver ed was indicated. Also, claims no written policies or standards, but then says try to follow state guidelines (and common sense) and does indicate a number of standards. Also, we didn't indicate on the questionnaire whether guidelines had to be written.

Next time you wish to survey, please send it out in the middle of the year. May-June--July are full months.

more parent involvement

smaller class sizes

- 1) Give students a unit of credit for driver education.
- 2) Open school programs that aid licensed drivers in school as well as learner permit drivers. These will not get better for teens until we make them aware of the importance of safe driving on our state roads (regular school curriculum).

I think the classroom instruction should be a part of the school curriculum.

1. Improvements in teacher training should improve instruction to benefit teen drivers.
2. Put instruction back in the school day or at least give LEAs options. This can be done without compromising most students instructional program.

1. Put Dr. Ed back into the school day.
2. Hire only DPI certified teachers.
3. Have all Dr. Ed teachers be a member of NCDTSEA and pay them to attend conferences.

Hire a full-time DPI consultant who would audit programs for both expenditures and instructional quality. More hours are needed in both classroom and BTW but without additional funding per student, it is impossible.

SDPI and DMV to come together with one set of guidelines and curriculum.

1. More funding which would allow more classroom instructional and BTW training.
2. More emphasis by ALL on the importance of Dr. Ed.

Good program

Keep the instruction within the school system.

Put the Dr. Ed. Program back into the classroom, especially the classroom part- expenses would be cut because you would not have to pay the instructor for after school hours.

1. The proficiency exam really helps but it needs to be updated yearly.
2. We need to increase BTW time and decrease class work since most of the training and learning should take place in the car.
3. Would be nice if the LEA or SDPI could come up with a reasonable scheduling system with software to help with certificates as well as restricted instructor permits.
4. Might work better if students were required to take Dr. Ed as freshman to ease scheduling nightmares with students 16 and older who realize the need to hurry because of work.

Return the program to the school curriculum and school day and have it taught by all NC Department of Public Instruction certified teachers.

1. Have college level courses available for experienced teachers to update from time to time.
2. Someone in this state needs to send Dr. Ed. teachers updates on laws that pertain to Dr. Ed. Many times, I find out about these laws in the paper.
3. Continue funding Dr. Ed. at its current levels or higher.
4. Offer college level certification of Dr. Ed.

Continue to foster academic progress with getting/keeping a driver license.

Provide a curriculum for all instructors to follow
Provide an EOC for students.

Change in-car to 7 or 8 hours.

Very pleased with the graduated licensing program. Set a standard course of study - DPI involvement.

Standardize instruction and testing across the state.

An increase in the hours of BTW would improve quality.

Raise the age of obtaining a license to 17.

Put Dr. Ed back into the school day
Develop a state mandated curriculum with guide.

The classroom phase should be put back in the health curriculum.

More parental involvement on the local, state and national level.

An academic day is too long when you take a Dr. Ed class at 6 am. My students in some areas have to get up at 4 am, drive an hour to be on time for a 6 am class.

The instructors I have had the opportunity to talk with expressed they feel more time in classroom instruction and BTW instruction.

Apparently we do not teach enough about driver courtesy (i.e. using directional signals and moving to the right lane when not passing).