

CASE Newsletter

California Association for Safety Education Volume XXVI, No. 1 - March 2015

A Traffic Safety Educator's Open Letter

Editor's Note: The following article was written by CASE Vice President Bart Schwarz and submitted to the California Department of Education Driver Education Update newsletter, which is e-mailed quarterly to school superintendents.

It is with great pleasure that I write this article, as I am the sole surviving public classroom teacher of Driver Education in San Diego County. I began teaching driver education at Escondido High School in 1984. I currently teach driver education at Valley Center High School and Oak Glen High School, our continuation site, as well as Mira Costa Community College located in Oceanside, CA.

It is with extreme interest that I saw your recent solicitation for driver education stories. Now, in my 30th year of teaching driver education, I constantly seek to improve my curriculum. I have developed a curriculum that includes workbooks, tests, and corresponding PowerPoints. The students are very engaged, as it addresses relevancy in their lives as well as their parent's lives. Driver Education is a fundamental arena for both Common Core principles as well as STEM (Science Technology Engineering & Mathematics).

The three E's of traffic safety in the United States are Education, Enforcement, and Engineering. The educational element has been pretty much decimated in our public schools in the last ten years. It is extremely disheartening for me to have witnessed this happen throughout the state of California. How can we take the number one public health hazard affecting our youth out of the educational system?

Tragically, two recent events only exacerbate the necessity of bringing driver education back into our high schools. Early last October in Irvine, an unlicensed 16 year-old driver lost control of his 1995 BMW while heading south on Interstate 5. Five teenagers were killed and the driver seriously injured. In January in Escondido, a neighboring community, we had a 17 year old unlicensed driver fall asleep at the wheel and careen off the road killing a pedestrian. One has to wonder if these teen drivers had an opportunity to take a quality driver education course? Would they have been legally licensed if their high schools had offered a driver education course? It's not as though we are reinventing the wheel. California Education code sections 51220-51229 already embrace driver education as a mandated course in our schools! The state mandates a minimum 30-hour course that is often unfortunately taken online without the interaction of teacher-lead discussions.

I am willing to put forth everything I have to see that our crucial curriculum is taken seriously and placed back in our California public education system as well as our private and charter schools. I am currently the Vice President of the California Association of Safety Education (CASE) and am actively attempting to revive our presence and ensure that our education codes are enforced. I encourage you to contact me if you would be interested in my curriculum or need assistance with your school's program. My email address is: blkbartolo@sbcglobal.net I am also very interested in reviving credentialing programs for interested teachers, schools, and districts.

In closing, how can we ignore the fact that the number one public safety issue facing our teens is not addressed in our school programs? Please help me eradicate this injustice!

California Strategic Highway Safety Plan Update

Jerry Gaines reports that at the January 15 Strategic Highway Safety Plan meeting, a new task force established a name for the group: **"Young Drivers (age 15-20)."**

Recommended strategies include:

- Increase education, awareness, and compliance with graduated driver licensing laws
- Promote social norming and behavior change on youth-related traffic safety issues
- Promote the use of evidence-based programs and outreach methods
- Improve school policies and procedures relating to young driver safety
- Improve enforcement and adjudication of youthful offenders.

Accomplishments from the previous task force include:

- The creation of a GDL Made Simple program that included an instructional video, brochures, posters, and other information (materials were widely disseminated and used statewide)
- Conducted statewide education GDL for law enforcement officers through the train-the-trainer programs
- The DMV developed a new young driver web site with videos and other information

We will continue to report on progress from future meetings in upcoming issues of this newsletter.

New DMV Touch Screen Testing Creates Anxiety

By Bart Schwarz, CASE Vice President

It seems the DMV's new touch screen testing has been creating a lot of issues for our students. The DMV has posted a very brief, but to the point, YouTube video for you to share with your students. The video is titled Find out How To Take DMV's New Drive Test on the TouchScreen Test Machine. Here is the link: www.youtube.com/watch?v=ow6GYPjkKd8

The anxiety that this testing format is creating has become very difficult for the applicants. As you progress through the test, it scores each question immediately upon making your choice. If you feel a little uncertain about a question, it will allow you to skip three questions which will then be placed at the end of the test. With the paper version of the tests, students could read and evaluate their answers several times before proceeding to the DMV employee who would then score their test. It would actually be rather simple for the DMV to allow applicants to complete the entire test and review their answers before submitting it for grading. The 3-minute time period per question, even with the extended time option, exacerbates one's anxiety. And then there is the immediate grading of each question which negatively affects the psyche for the applicant.

In the past, those applicants who failed the test were offered their graded paper tests to use as a study guide for their retake. Now, they leave the DMV with nothing other than major frustration and virtually no material for review or support! I sincerely hope that the DMV seriously considers revamping this new test-taking approach. Please share your feedback with me about your personal experience or that of your students. Perhaps with your assistance and CASE's influence we can make a difference. My email address is: blkbartolo@sbcglobal.net

California's DMV is 100 Years Old

The California Department of Motor Vehicles is 100 years old this year. The first office opened in 1915 in a one-room office at the state Capitol in Sacramento.

New 2015 Laws

Effective January 1, 2015



The Definition of Motorized Bicycle or Moped

The definition for motorized bicycles or moped has increased the maximum gross brake horsepower from less than two to less than four gross brake horsepower. The full definition of this vehicle's description can be found on the California Vehicle Code (CVC) 406.

Effective November 11, 2015

Driver Licenses Veteran Designation

The designation "VETERAN" will be available to be printed on a driver license or identification (DL/ID) card to indicate a person has served in the the United States Armed Forces. Veteran will provide verification of service from their local County Veteran Service Office. The designation can be printed on an original, renewal, or duplicate (DL/ID) card for \$5.00 in addition to the cost of the DL/ID card.

2015 CASE Conference

The 2015 annual CASE conference is being planned for Saturday, October 10 in the Central Valley city of Tracy. As this edition of the *CASE Newsletter* goes to press, the hotel site has not been confirmed, but plans are to have traditional presentations at a suitable hotel near Tracy with vehicle demonstrations and participatory activities at the nearby Altamont Raceway Park.

Among the presenters will be CASE members Dan O'Rork and Bart Schwarz inspiring us with teaching tips and techniques. There will also be presentations from Impact Teen Drivers and Get Real Behind the Wheel at the Altamont Raceway...and more. It's shaping-up to be an informative and exciting conference, so we hope you'll plan to attend! As the details for location and registration firm-up, we'll notify the membership by email and in the June *Newsletter*.

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Richard Mikulik, Editor

25 Shelbourne Place
San Mateo, CA 94402

E-mail: casemembership@sbcglobal.net

CASE Web Site: www.casewebsite.org



CASE Calendar

April 2015 - National Distracted Driving Awareness Month. Contact: www.focusdriven.org

May 2015 - National Youth Traffic Safety Month. Contact: www.noys.org

July 12-15, 2015 - ADTSEA Conference, Raleigh, North Carolina. Contact: www.adtsea.org

September 13-19, 2015 - Child Passenger Safety Week. Contact: www.safercar.gov

October 10, 2015 - 63rd Annual CASE Conference, Tracy, CA (hotel location to be announced).

October 19-25, 2015 - National Teen Driver Safety Week. Contact: www.teendriversource.org

Bill Would Require Bike Helmets for Adult Riders

Last month, state Senator Carol Liu introduced a bill requiring adult bicyclists to wear helmets. If SB192 becomes law, California would become the first state to require helmets for riders over 18.

Since 1994, California cyclists under 18 have been required to wear a helmet. In addition to requiring adults to wear helmets, the proposed law would require riders to wear reflective clothing at night.