

# Memorandum

To: Terry Reilly, Pre-service Educator Quality Programs Coordinator  
From: Lyle Jepson, Director – Career & Technical Teacher Education Program  
Date: May 23, 2019  
Re: Driver Education Instructor Endorsement Program

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## **Overview:**

This information is intended to serve as a review of the current and future need for Driver Education instructors in high schools in Vermont and, more specifically, the cost effectiveness and feasibility of developing a Vermont-based sustainable series of courses that would lead to endorsement for a potential teacher-candidate.

Based upon the information noted below, Vermont Tech is interested in being a partner in creating a Vermont-based Driver Education Instructor endorsement program if sustainable administrative funding can be provided for program development and delivery. Delivery is predicated upon gathering more evidence that there is a sustainable demand for driver education teachers, that there are qualified individuals who can serve as program instructors, and that there is a sustainable interest by teacher-candidates.

## **Process Used to Investigate the Need:**

A survey was provided to 62 high school principals to learn more about the current and future needs at their schools. In addition, I spoke with the current President of the Vermont Driver and Traffic Safety Education Association - George Rooney, Patty Morgan - Program Director at the Vermont Higher Education Collaboration, and Nancy Andrus – Driver Training Coordinator for the Vermont Department of Motor Vehicles.

## **Background:**

The Vermont Higher Education Collaborative recently discontinued an endorsement program. Currently, the closest option for teacher candidates is Keene State College in New Hampshire. Vermont residents are able to access the coursework at the in-state tuition rate. Many courses are hybrid in delivery model but travel is still required for weekend coursework for most courses.

## **Survey:**

Principals in 62 high schools received an email invitation to take an online survey. They received the survey twice, once on 4/2/19 and again on 4/9/19. The survey allowed each principal the option of taking the survey only once. As of April 16, 2019, 22 principals responded, a 35% return rate (22/62).

The data suggests that some schools that are currently looking for an instructor will be looking again or will be replacing a second driver's education instructor in the future, assuming the school has two.

Current openings	6
Openings in 1-3 years	7
Openings in 4-6 years	9
No anticipated openings	5

If every school responded in a similar manner, the data would look like the following.

Simple projection:

Current openings	18
Openings in 1-3 years	21
Openings in 4-6 years	27
No anticipated openings	15

**Comments:**

A sustainable class size is eight students. Therefore, if the "simple projection" scenario is correct, it would meet the threshold that would financially support the creation of a program. This assumes the program totals 18 credits of coursework and would take two years to complete; six semesters (fall, spring, summer.) This also assumes that all of the potential teacher-candidates would attend the program that is created.

If the remaining 40 principals, who did not respond to the survey, do not have an opening, it would not be financially sustainable for a Vermont based program to be launched.

Open ended survey question responses are attached.

**Interview with George Rooney - VTDTSEA:**

Mr. Rooney, suggested the following:

- A marketing campaign needs to be undertaken to attract individuals to become a Driver Education instructors.
- Coursework needs to be affordable, accessible and convenient.
- It is essential to insure that quality controls are built into a Driver Education Instructor Training Program that insures consistent, state-wide, delivery of Driver Education curriculum and instruction.
- There are Driver Education instructors in Vermont who would be good instructors for an endorsement program.

**Response from Patty Morgan – VTHEC:**

Ms. Morgan indicated that she believes the following:

- There is a sustainable program cohort size that can be drawn upon from within Vermont but this should be substantiated with data including, numbers of driver educators retiring, numbers of current openings, survey from supervisory unions, etc.
- It is important to be able to offer coursework at the graduate and undergraduate level, depending upon individual teachers' needs, for those individuals who wish to seek the

endorsement. It is difficult to find locally available instructors, because the instructors need to have a master's degree.

- It is essential to insure that quality controls are built into a Driver Education Instructor Training Program that insure consistent, state-wide, delivery of Driver Education curriculum and instruction.

#### **Response from Nancy Andrus – VTDMV:**

- Running all courses in one year might attract more candidates.
- A driver educator would be a good coordinator for the program.
- Having a program in Vermont would be more convenient.
- New Hampshire has been very flexible, allowing people to take coursework at the in-state tuition rate.
- There are some educators in Vermont who have taught the courses.
- Equity in high school student access to a driver education program is essential, especially for those who cannot afford private training, which many schools are using or considering.

#### **Next Steps:**

1. Create a budget for the development of the program.
2. Target funding for the budget and hiring of a part-time VTC staff member to oversee the program. Duties will include:
  - overseeing funding and budget for development and for the endorsement program,
  - forming an advisory committee,
  - creating curriculum and delivery model with input from the advisory committee,
  - attending the summer and/or fall conference of the Vermont Driver Traffic Safety Education Association or other appropriate conferences or events,
  - conducting a more comprehensive phone survey of supervisory unions current and future needs,
  - targeting a pool of potential instructors,
  - organizing a marketing campaign for the program, and
  - other, as determined by VTC and the advisory committee.

#### **For more information, please contact:**

Lyle P. Jepson | Director, Career & Technical Teacher Education  
VERMONT TECH  
Office of Continuing Education & Workforce Development  
802.249.0037 cell | 802.728.1354 fax | [vtc.edu](http://vtc.edu)  
124 Admin Drive | PO Box 500 | Randolph Center, VT 05061

## Q4 Is there anything you would like to share about your experience with the Driver Education endorsement process or issues relating to staffing and Driver Education instruction?

Answered: 12 Skipped: 9

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	We have a provisional teacher this year, which it was a struggle to find. Then, for this teacher, it was difficult for him to find certification programs. The hiring pool for DE instructors is very shallow. It seems to me that a generation of teacher retired, and we do not have, in VT, the next generation of certified teachers to fill the void... Thanks for doing this inquiry! - Elijah Hawkes, RUHS Principal	4/10/2019 2:35 PM
2	There are no applicants. The teacher shortage is hitting us hard in rural areas.	4/9/2019 5:53 PM
3	We have a drivers ed teacher within 5 years of retirement. We could use someone .5 to support the amount of driving time students need. Drivers ed is the third rail of high school course selection process! Not enough teachers to meet the need. I would support and might even take the course!	4/4/2019 9:07 PM
4	There does not appear to be any certified drivers education instructors willing to work in more rural communities. We have had a full time position open and advertised for almost a year and a half now with no takers.	4/3/2019 11:19 AM
5	It has been near impossible to hire a DE teacher. We were without one for the last 4 years and only recently found someone. Folks who have their DE Endorsement work privately rather than for schools because they make more money privately. It is a frustrating and near impossible mandate for schools to meet.	4/2/2019 7:20 PM
6	There are a limited number of candidates that can even apply for this position and it is not clear how long a new hire will stay.	4/2/2019 4:13 PM
7	It would be great if there was a greater presence in education programs offering DE endorsement alongside other disciplines. In my experience most DE instructors come from other fields turning to DE to supplement their current income or are changing careers later in life. There are times I believe I'm one of the few instructors who chose this profession because they wanted to do so. Not as a second choice or additional money stream. The state having lost its training program to NH dealt a huge blow to developing DE instructors in the Vermont way. I would be interested in sitting down with you and sharing thoughts. Thank you, George Rooney MUHS DE Instructor President: Vermont Driver and Traffic Safety Education Association 802-989-6187	4/2/2019 3:25 PM
8	we have the teacher we need and do not foresee the need for 10 years. the number of students is going down at that time it might not be full time.	4/2/2019 2:40 PM
9	There needs to be better communication between the State, program institute and the school/person trying to enroll in the course. Too many people to try to connect with and different answers provided.	4/2/2019 12:26 PM
10	We had a hard time filling our current position. It is now part time (full time from Jan - June) and we begged our previous teacher to come back. However, he is in his 70s so I don't know how much longer he will be here.	4/2/2019 12:17 PM
11	In both high school principalships I have had, it has been difficult to recruit DE teachers. This year I have an interested teacher who is having a difficult time finding the coursework necessary to be certified.	4/2/2019 12:16 PM
12	We have had a successful process of obtaining driver's ed instructors with endorsements. Our current teacher has been with us 10 years and will probably stay through retirement.	4/2/2019 12:01 PM