

MTEA NEWS

Why I Teach by Denise Bordeleau

There are several reasons to teach Traffic Education. Many of them would, or should, align with why an individual chose teaching as a profession in the first place. If you're in it because of June, July, and August --- then you're in it for the wrong reasons. If you teach Traffic Ed because of the money, again --- wrong option. Those of us who teach, do so because we have a deeper commitment to the learning process.

Personally, I teach because I have a passion for education and all that comes with it. There are many ups and downs of Driver Education, but it is totally worth it. Instructors get to see students become mature in their skill and confidence levels. We also have the opportunity to hear how their friends and co-drivers are advancing and learning a very new and valuable skill. Almost all of the students in Driver's Ed are there because they *want* to be, not because their counselor put them in the class. This makes for an immediate bonding situation, because driving a vehicle is a rite of passage for most. Students who know I teach Driver's Ed continually share their next exciting experience: I hear, "Hey, Miss B, I'm taking my test tomorrow," or "I am getting my license Friday," or "I just got my first car and now I'll be able to drive to work!" All of these comments make me smile, because the kids are growing up and becoming productive members of the community.

If you have a passion for teaching and education, maybe you can share and help recruit new instructors. Many of us know and work with others who would be very good at Traffic Education but are not endorsed to do so. Why? Sometimes I think that it is because no one has asked them about it or offered help by pointing them in the right direction. More importantly,

Driver's Ed offers a prime opportunity for teachers to see a heightened level of competence from "that kid" who normally struggles in a regular classroom setting. The program produces growth in skill, perception, and maturity. Often, unlikely friendships develop.

Yes, we all have some moments where our lives may flash before our eyes, when everyone in the car, instructor included, has a fright. Often those events involve a wild card driver from another vehicle. I often hear the comment, "I do not know how you can do it!" My answer is, "How can I *NOT*?" My intent is simple: I want better, safer drivers on the road. Don't we all? If I can have a positive impact with kids that I normally do not see in the regular classroom situation and increase their level as a safer driver, then I have met my goal and it makes my heart sing!!

Forsyth Receives Car Kits

Rosebud County Prevention Specialist, Susan Treible, was able to purchase car safety kits for students who have successfully completed the Driver's Education program at Forsyth Schools. Kits will be given to all traffic classes this year. The PFS grant also purchased much needed traffic cones for traffic training.

Funding was provided by the **Partnership for Success (PFS) Grant** that aims to prevent substance abuse in youth.

Contact the county prevention specialist in your area as they are actively seeking youth projects to invest in and expose students to the dangers of substance abuse.



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MTEA President's Message



Greetings to my fellow Traffic Education Instructors,

I am LeAnn Haas, the newly elected President of MTEA. You are reading this newsletter as either a current, past, or prospective member of the MTEA. If you are not yet an active member, we hope you will consider joining our organization and attend our spring conference!

Seeing all of you wonderful teachers in April is a highlight of my school year. Learning new laws, teaching techniques, and technologies are always beneficial. It is my hope that you all will join me in celebrating MTEA and attending our conference this coming April to make it the best year yet! The goal of MTEA is to provide all Montana Traffic Education teachers with up to date local and national resources to help us deliver the best education possible to our students.

On a personal note, I have recently become a 2-wheel motorist on the roadway. After becoming an endorsed motorcycle rider, I have learned to be even more cautious behind the wheel. On October 1st, the state of Montana rolled out a new law allowing for "lane filtering" on the roadways. Montana is only the third state in the nation to make lane filtering a legal practice after California and Utah. This new law comes with several restrictions. Motorcycles can't travel over 20 miles per hour while passing slower moving or stopped traffic. However, they can overtake and pass vehicles that are either stopped or traveling at 10 miles per hour or less in the same lane. Lane filtering is allowed on either the right or left side of vehicles. This new law was passed in the hopes of making the roads safer for motorcyclists; especially in traffic congested areas where motorcycles are at higher risk for being hit from behind. Some concerns have been raised that motorists in Montana are not accustomed to motorcycles overtaking within the same lane and will not be looking for them; creating the potential possibility for an accident. Be on the lookout for those utilizing this new law. While you probably won't see many motorcycles this winter, be aware of this new law as the spring and summer months are really not that far away.

Drive safe, ride safe and I hope to see you all in the spring!



Scan me!

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From the Classroom to the Classroom: The Driver's Education Experience

By Anthony Johnson, Sheridan School District

In 2019, my superintendent approached me to become Sheridan's new Driver's Ed teacher, but COVID delayed my return to the role of a student for a year. Driving forty miles from Dillon, MT to Sheridan, MT daily through "Deer Slayer Alley" qualified me to "teach them what not to hit, since you have seen it all," according to my boss! This article therefore, offers a glimpse into my story as an MSU-Northern student who in a very short time took on the role of instructor, teaching my first Traffic Ed course.

We all know that teachers make the worst students as we already know everything, right? It began online with my Motor Vehicle Law class, TED 565. My first day I thought, *I can do this*. The program progressed quite quickly. Methods of Traffic Safety Education, TED 561, and Methods of Behind-the-Wheel Instruction, TED 562 started a few days later.

In my mind I was cruising through the courses with ease, but I was contacted by the instructor asking if I was continuing with the program? An email notified me that all my assignments were missing for the two courses. I was then given a choice to get everything caught up by midnight or drop out of the program. As a teacher, I expect excellence from my students. Yet I was falling short at that moment in my student role. I felt like my students trying to cram for the big test to graduate. I told the instructor I would do whatever I needed to, in order to get my foot into the classroom in Havre.

Being a student at that point was a bit scary. I was going to fail and let my students and administration down and throw away the funding they gave me to complete the program. I spent the next few days sweating, not knowing my future, and yet only having two days before I had to get on the road to Havre.

An email arrived that read, "I believe you have shown your dedication, you will be able to pass, but you will really have to work your butt off in order to get it done; we would love to see

you in Havre." I did it! I got my foot in the door; I was going to pass and not let anyone down.

The first day of class felt like I was back in high school again taking Algebra II. What am I doing here? I am an awful student and the anxiety was overwhelming. I was sitting in class for over eight hours taking in so much information. I thought failing was inevitable. Every night in the hotel room I would be up working on assignments, and cramming for the next day. It was exhausting; like studying for a college final every night. Something good came from that experience; it finally opened my mind to what we put our students through every day.

The first week finally came to an end and I was sitting pretty. I would be able to put my methods to the test. I was making new friends with classmate who would become family. The ideas flowed like an untamed river, and we were bouncing these ideas off other teachers and getting great feedback. Being a student was fun again!

Returning home, I quickly realized how much I was going to enjoy teaching this course. The students were engaged in discussions. I felt like I was making a huge difference in my students' lives and giving them tools to use. It was amazing to see the students soak up the information given, not only to become better drivers, but also better human beings. I was finally seeing again why I love to teach. Now, don't get me wrong, we still had the students that thought, "I knew that already". That comment did get tiresome, but we worked through to the driving portion of the class.

Practicing with student drivers in Havre made me realize how our students were going to feel. When giving the instructions you had to be very specific and be ahead of the game, or you might hear, "Do I turn here?" or "Where am I supposed to go?"

Continued on page 4.....

From the Classroom to the Classroom, continued.....

The randomness of student reactions behind the wheel reared its ugly head this summer. One drive we were on the freeway and my student freaked out, threw his hands in the air, and said, "God help us all!" Needless to say, he failed that drive. Another driving adventure I had the pleasure of enduring involved a student popping her lips and making different sounds. What was going on? We finally returned to the school and she said, "Thank God we are finally back; I was falling asleep."

In conclusion, being a driving student and then a driving instructor is quite an eye opener. It is an amazing experience to teach; I would much rather do that than be a student again. This experience has taught me to appreciate what we do for our students to prepare them for the future.



ADTSEA Virtual Winter Workshop Series

ADTSEA Members can earn up to 16 hours of Professional Development Credit!

Save the Dates! This event will include four virtual training workshops:

January 25
January 27
February 22
February 24

- A Blueprint for Virtual Training
- Unique and Engaging Learning Activities
- Tire Safety: There's More than Meets the Road
- Strategies for Training Drivers with Disabilities

Workshops will be conducted virtually through Zoom. The workshops will relate to current issues in driver education. The purpose of this event is to assist driver educators in continuing their education and improving their teaching skills. Each workshop will be 3 - 4 hours in length. Registration details and the specific date for each topic will be posted soon. Continue to check the ADTSEA website at www.adtsea.org for updates and more information.

MTEA Executive Board Meetings

April 26, 2021 (spring conference, Great Falls)

- Minutes, financial reports, and correspondence were reviewed.
- Feedback about the conference was provided.
- Reports from the silent auction, awards, and door prizes were heard.
- A legislative report was heard.
- An OPI report was given, including comments by the new state TE Director, Dwight Nelson.
- Class Directors gave an overview of the information from their respective classification meetings.
- Discussion took place on how to proceed in an election to fill the currently open President-Elect position.

November 14, 2021 (via Google Meet)

- Minutes, financial reports, and correspondence were reviewed.
- A membership report was given.
- A Board update and discussion on filling the next President-Elect position with an election took place.
- A newsletter and webpage report was given.
- Conference surveys were discussed in regard to future conference planning.
- Tim Beckham of ADTSEA provided an update on the national conference and how MTEA can become involved in the planning.
- Future conference sites and dates were discussed.
- Conference topics/speakers for 2022 were discussed. More details will be available for the winter meeting.
- Conference assignments relative to door prizes, silent auction, college credit, renewal units, giveaways, and classification meetings were made.
- Teacher and Contributor of the Year awards were discussed.
- An OPI update was given in regard to filling the open office position, Class IV licensing, and monetary support.
- An increase of \$10 to the conference fee to offset rising costs was approved.
- The state driver application was reviewed relative to new changes in the form.

The next meeting was set for January 23rd, via remote link. Anyone having items for discussion should contact LeAnn Haas, President, or Jim Carroll, Executive Secretary, as soon as possible to be included on the agenda or for the link access to the meeting. Meetings are always open to any interested individuals!

The Competencies for a Driver Education Teacher

By Richard McMahon

Originally, I would have described the competencies for a good traffic education teacher as knowing (or knows how to find) current laws and best practices associated with TE. I would have included good teaching strategies and provided the necessary info and opportunities that should be included in any program. I would have included the initial 8-credits of coursework, a valid teaching certificate, good driving record, and a valid driver's license as well. I would have included a lot of things, and probably forgot the most important thing that is not a competency at all – PASSION. More specifically a passion to help kids learn probably the most long-lasting life skill they will ever acquire.

Great instructors, traffic educators or otherwise, all have passion as part of their instructional DNA. Dan Marinkovich was my first exposure to this in a traffic instructor sense. He loved the experiences he had and that is the essence of passion required for this or any job. Love what you do and work your butt off to get kids to love what you are teaching. If they do, they will remember your lessons long after you are gone.

By being in this program, I can honestly say the people that I observed, the people that I have been instructed by, and the people that have been guest teachers, all have it. Not one of them said they teach traffic education to pad their retirement or that the risk of what they do is not worth the ultimate "my kids are safe" reward. With all these people, I can honestly say I have found myself thinking I wish my own kids (Tanner, Timmy, and Tyler) had been taught by you. I say this not because their instructors were bad, but I just did not recognize the passion that they most assuredly have for this job as well. Probably the most passionate person I "met" was Dan. I wish my kids had him too. His video showed me what it was all about. It is about learning every year, every day, and every hour to try and find that best way

Being 51 years-of-age, I wish I would have taken the plunge much earlier. Admittedly, when I first saw the syllabuses a month ago, I was questioning whether I was too old for all the tests, coursework, and online/classroom discussions. Yet as each hour in Havre added up, my level of anxiety about getting started so late in my career and lack of perceived preparedness subsided. Thankfully, becoming a certified Traffic Education instructor probably keeps me sharing a passion, building relationships, and, God willing, keeps me in the teaching game even if I eventually retire out of my classroom.

Protect Those at Work to Keep Montana's Roadways Safe

(taken from Montana Dept of Transportation, "Newsline", December, 2021 issue)

Winter driving in Montana requires extra preparation and vigilance. Planning ahead and making the right choices behind the wheel not only help you arrive safely as a driver, but also help keep those who work on our roads out of harm's way.

First responders, tow truck operators, maintenance workers (including snowplow drivers), law enforcement, and Motor Carrier Service (MCS) officers travel our roadways to provide aid, emergency care, regulation, and safer routes for the rest of us. On October 1, 2021, the statutory revisions to Montana's "Move Over" law (passed by the State Legislature) went into effect, and include changes in fines and penalties for "reckless endangerment of emergency or highway workers." You can find the updated statutes in Montana Code Annotated (MCA) here: <https://leg.mt.gov/bills/mca/index.html> (Refer to MCA 61-8-346; 61-8-715; 61-8-803).

Whether you are driving for your daily commute or traveling to winter fun, these tips will help ensure you and others along your journey arrive alive:

- Stay alert and focus on the road ahead.
- Use your vehicle lights during low-light times of day and during inclement weather to ensure you can see what's ahead and that other road users can see you.
- Slow down and adjust your speed for current weather and road conditions. The speed limit is not always a safe driving speed in winter.
- Plan ahead. Check the weather and travel conditions before leaving and allow extra time to get to your destination.

The Lighter Side of Driving With Teens by Patricia Sayer Butte High School

This gracious traffic instructor has given permission to share her humorous interpretations of driving situations that all of us have experienced. It was suggested that these insights become a regular column for the MTEA newsletter so Patty has dug back into her archives to provide some comic relief for all instructors. The Facebook posts are not in chronological order. Enjoy!

Driving with Teens: Remember a few years back the students even into the 4th drive couldn't find the brake and no one was really sure where this brake was going when it was missing. Even though my students looked for it every time.



Well now it's the gas pedal playing tricks on them. I have had several trying to find it. One insisted it was removed from the last time she had a lesson in the car. After I pointed it out she said, "That's not the same pedal that was there the last time I drove."

Driving with Teens: It's already begun.

Tonight we did eye tests. The most important part. Can you see when you drive? One student can only see the top line.

Me: (Students name) you will need to go to the eye doctor before you can drive. Can you do that?

Student: Well yes I guess so, but can I just put my glasses on. Her hand grips her glasses.

Me: Shaking my head and repeating her name several times, "Let's try it again."

Driving with Teens: not a good session for animals.

- A bird didn't fly up in time. Oops!
 - A chipmunk decided to stand in the road. Oops!
 - A deer jumped in front of us on the dirt road.
- Not oops, reflexes were good!

Driving with Teens: It is finished.

My husband will tolerate me for a while using the mirror on the visor to watch him out the rear window as he drives and occasionally I'll pump an imaginary brake. Eventually, he calmly says, "Patty, I'm not your student."

Outstanding Traffic Education Teacher of the Year Award

Since 1988, the Montana Traffic Education Association has honored an exceptional Traffic Education teacher with an annual Teacher of the Year (TOY) award presented at MTEA's spring conference. Any active teacher who has devoted a good part of their teaching career to traffic education is eligible to apply. Teachers can self-nominate or be nominated by someone who is familiar with their traffic education work. Deadline for nomination form is March 1st, so don't delay!

Download the two-page nomination form from the website at MTEAOnline.org (which includes a section that is completed by the candidate). A TOY committee member will review the application. If the nomination is eligible for consideration, the candidate will receive a letter notifying them of the nomination. For more information, contact Jim Carroll, Executive Secretary, at 406-289-0208.

Outstanding Traffic Education Contributor of the Year Award

MTEA recognizes companies, organizations, and individuals who make generous contributions of time, energy, equipment and/or expertise to support and sustain the mission of the Montana Traffic Education Association. To nominate a person or business for this honor, download the COY nomination form at MTEAOnline.org and submit to MTEA by the March 1st deadline. The Outstanding Contributor/Sustainer of the Year will be recognized at MTEA's spring conference in April.

Examples of outstanding contributors or sustainers are MVD driver examiners who have gone out of their way to assist driver education teachers with their CDTP requirements and needs; car dealerships who have loaned vehicles to local school districts for their traffic education programs, and local experts who have visited driver education classes to share their knowledge about various topics such as tire safety, distracted driving, or DUI prevention; as well as business development organizations that have funded materials, equipment and learning tools for your TE program.



CDTP & You

Most of us know that CDTP stands for Co-operative Driver Testing Program. The CDTP provides a way for state-approved

traffic education programs and CDTP-certified teachers to test and then issue learner licenses to teens enrolled in driver education in Montana. They can also give the road test that allows teen drivers to be waived on that test when they are ready to apply for a restricted driver license.

All but one school district in Montana participates in the CDTP which means that most of the teens who take driver education have a learner license when they complete the course. In turn, the DOJ provides the funds that the OPI annually distributes to more than 125 school districts providing this valuable training to Montana's young drivers.

The Office of Public Instruction works closely with the MVD to administer the CDTP. When questions or problems arise, it's important to contact either the OPI's Traffic Education Office or your MVD regional manager for assistance:

Eastern Region, Billings (406) 896-4335 Susan Kyriss, Interim Regional Manager

Central Region, Bozeman (406) 594-8115 Josh Bennett, Regional Manager

Northern Region, Great Falls (406) 727-2569 Ken McGuire, Regional Manager

Western Region, Kalispell (406) 257-2148 Terry Davis, Regional Manager

Need Supplies?

MVD's Driver Exam stations can provide CDTP-certified teachers with Montana Driver Manuals, Traffic Education Permits (TEPs), CDTP knowledge exams and answer key overlays, learner licenses, and road test score sheets (however, the larger districts obtain these items for the teachers). Please contact the MVD regional manager (see above) at least two weeks before you plan to pick them up, so they can make sure to have what you need on hand.

Take the Online CDTP Refresher Course!

Is it okay to reprint a learner license for a student who lost their first one? How many times can I give the knowledge exam? When does the six months of GDL practice begin—with the TEP or Learner License date?

These questions and many more are asked by teachers who call the OPI Traffic Education office for answers. But our free, online Hub course is available to answer these questions 24/7!

If you haven't taken the **CDTP Refresher Course** yet, please spend an hour to refresh your CDTP knowledge. **One renewal unit can be earned upon course completion.** And you can take it again a year later, if you want.

This course will update instructors on staying CDTP certified, students' eligibility to participate, what to do when you have a special ed or disabled student wanting to take driver education, Driver License application completion, and how to properly administer and record CDTP knowledge and road tests. It includes helpful resources to manage the CDTP part of driver education, with TEDRS tips, too.

Visit the OPI Teacher Learning Hub at <https://learninghub.mrooms.net/>. Log in or create a new account and use "CDTP" as the Enrollment Key.

If you have any questions or feedback about the course, send an email to Dwight Nelson at dwight.nelson@mt.gov.

OPI also wants you to know . . .

That **students birthdates** given at registration must be validated and checked for accuracy on driver license applications and OPI Student Lists.

That the **GDL six-month practice period begins with the TEP date** (when the student starts driving with their teacher) and the Learner License is valid for a whole year, giving students plenty of time to practice before applying for a restricted license.

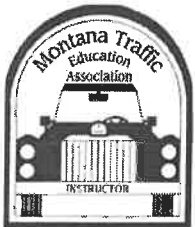
That the vision test that is required for issuance of a learner license is **ALSO** required for all students before they begin in-vehicle instruction with their teacher. **Please make sure all students have had their vision checked before they get behind the wheel.**

Contact **Dwight Nelson**, TE State Director, by email at dwight.nelson@mt.gov or call the OPI Traffic Education Office at (406) 444-4396 with any questions about Teen Driver Education in Montana. You can also visit <http://www.opi.mt.gov/DriverEd> for additional resources and information.



Montana Traffic Education Association
PO Box 637
Conrad, MT 59425

Return Service Requested



2022 Montana Traffic Education Conference

April 24-25-26, 2022—Colonial Inn, Helena

Look for more detailed conference information in the spring newsletter and on the MTEA website at www.mteaonline.org.

The 2022 ADTSEA conference will be held July 24-27 in Vancouver, Washington. The conference will provide you with a wealth of information and an opportunity to network with other professionals from across the United States. Remember, MTEA has a scholarship program that will provide up to \$500 per person to offset

ADTSEA
American Driver & Traffic Safety Education Association

conference costs. The MTEA Board is working in conjunction with the ADTSEA Northwest Regional planners for this event. With the national conference being so close to Montana, please consider attending. Even if you can't attend, at least consider joining your national organization. For more information, check it out at www.adtsea.org.