
TESTIMONY

Testimony To: Senate Committee on Education
Respectfully Submitted by: Daniel M. French, Secretary of Education
Subject: Driver Education
Date: February 28, 2023

The COVID-19 pandemic limited the ability to provide Driver Education. Also, many districts are reporting a shortage of qualified driver education instructors. To address these concerns, we need to create new ways to expand access to these programs without comprising safety.

To expand the number of instructors, the Standards Board for Professional Educators created a new licensing endorsement for just the classroom portion of Driver Education. We believe this might be an attractive opportunity for teachers already licensed in other areas. These teachers, although not necessarily interested in teaching behind the wheel, might be interested in teaching just the classroom portion of the program for an additional stipend.

Expanding access to the clinical or behind the wheel portion of the program is more challenging without a consideration of a regional approach. I have discussed this with Commissioner Minoli of the Department of Motor Vehicles, and we think there might be an opportunity to offer regional driver clinics patterned on the successful motorcycle safety program.

I recommend that the Agency of Education and the Department of Motor Vehicles be directed, in partnership with interested school districts, to develop a model to implement regional driver clinics program. The goal would be to develop a model program this summer with the intention of implementing a pilot in the summer of 2024. An appropriation of \$200,000 could be made from the Education Fund to support this planning work. I believe it is appropriate to make an appropriation from the Education Fund for this purpose since ultimately a state-level appropriation of this type would replace local Education Spending for these costs.

