

Testimony concerning Teacher Credentials and Teacher Licensing

Having A Driver Education Teacher with proper professional Licensing is very important to our teens in this state. For many years we have had Driver Education Teachers take course through Keene State College. They hired master's degree teachers who had a background in Driver and Traffic Safety When AOE had a consultant at the Department who had a Driver and Traffic Safety Background they took the responsibility of conducting the Teacher Licensing Program first through University of Vermont, then Vermont College and then Castleton State Continuing Education Program. When the Department eliminated the consultant position the Higher Ed Group took over this responsibility. After that we decided that Keene state College's Traffic Safety Department would certify our Vermont Teachers at their in-state tuition. This worked out perfectly. Our teachers would take the classes and get certification through AOE and or DMV.

Recently, White Mountain Community College in NH has offered Driver Education Courses for licensing. They undercut the courses so much that Keene State as of January discontinued the Traffic Safety Department.

White Mountain CC does not have any instructors with a Traffic Safety Background. They have each student buy a text book and have them read a chapter and write a paper, read a chapter and write a paper. For the behind-the-wheel course, they would send articles about teaching behind-the-wheel instruction, and have teachers write a paper about the article.

Recently several Vermont teachers took the courses from White Mountain CC and became employed by Vermont School Districts.

They notified the Vermont Driver and Traffic Safety Association that they were nervous about teaching the behind-the-wheel segment of Driver Education since they themselves were never taught in a vehicle. We got into action and matched these teachers with veteran teachers to retrain them in teaching the behind-the wheel phase of Driver Education.

This practice cannot continue. Once I was notified of this situation, I contacted the Chancellor of the Vermont State Colleges. She connected me with Patricia Moulton the Executive Director of the Vermont State Colleges Workforce Division.

Patricia and leaders of the Driver Education Association had a zoom meeting and we explained the situation and discussed what we could do.

I recommended that we connect with Castleton Center for Schools where we once had the teacher licensing courses housed.

I thought two things. First let's keep the tuition money in the state. And second because there is a Driver Education Teacher Shortage we should connect with Juniors and Seniors at the State Colleges who are enrolled in a teacher prep program getting an endorsement in a subject matter and then take their electives in Driver and Traffic Safety. So, when they graduate, they would have an endorsement in their major subject and an endorsement in Driver Education. I know as a Former School Administrator in charge of hiring if I saw a resume of an applicant who had multiple endorsements they would get to the front of the pile for an interview.

The liability issue of having recently certified teachers from White Mountain Community College who are teaching the in-vehicle segment of Driver Education without the proper training is a collision waiting to happen.

It is important that not only AOE recognize Castleton Center for Schools as a place teachers can get certified but that they discontinue recognizing White Mountain Community College and not certify teachers who attended that program. If not, White Mountain Community College will undercut Castleton and we are back, were we started.

We will continue to work with Patricia Moulton as we continue to connect with Ric Reardon from Castleton to start having certification courses hopefully by this summer.

Thank you for your time.