

TESTIMONY

Testimony To: Senate Education

Respectfully Submitted by: Andrew Prowten, Director of Education Approvals

Subject: S.259 - An act relating to online driver education

Date: February 19, 2026

Thank you for the committee's time to discuss S.259, an act relating to online driver education. The Agency of Education appreciates the effort to address the issue of accessing driver's education, but has the following concerns with the bill as written:

1. Online education is already authorized under [16 V.S.A. § 948](#) (Flexible Pathways). Creating separate rules for online driver's education in [16 V.S.A. §1045](#) could create confusion and inconsistencies in how online instruction is administered. It may also create limitations to online driver's education if AOE policies and guidance around online education change. The Agency has been working with the Vermont Virtual Learning Cooperative to provide an online driver's education program with school-based, in-car instructors. Additionally, 75% drive's education teachers in Vermont public and independent schools currently incorporate the *AAA How to Drive* online curriculum in their classroom.
2. The bill allows in-class instruction to be completed without in-car instruction. This conflicts with [AOE policy](#) clarifying 16 V.S.A §1045-1048 and State Board of Education Rules Sections 2350-2352. In-car and in-class driver's education must be integrated and concurrent. Allowing students to complete the in-classroom instruction in an asynchronous online environment, without the integrated and concurrent in-car instruction will be in violation of current state policy and create a backlog of students waiting for in-car instruction. Students who do not complete in-car instruction within 2 semesters will be required to retake the in-class portion, which will be an added and duplicative cost to families and Vermont school districts.
3. In Vermont, driver's education instructors must meet specific licensure requirements under State statute and administrative rules. Private programs must have a DMV certified Driver Training Instructor. School-based instructors must be Vermont Licensed Educators with a Driver's Education Endorsement. These requirements also apply to online and asynchronous courses. In addition, educators teaching online must hold the Online Teaching Specialist add-on endorsement. The proposed language does not clearly reflect these requirements and may result in non-compliance with state statute and rule.

