

To: Senate Education Committee

From: Kevin Masse, M.E.

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Coordinator/Lead of the Curriculum Review Committee that created the Driver Education Learning Targets during the State transition to Proficiency Based Learning.

RE: Bill S259

Position: **Oppose**

Date: February 16, 2026

I oppose Bill S259. It will not enable a quality educational experience for students, which could lead to public safety issues.

Within this testimony you will learn my five reasons for opposing it. One, it reduces opportunities for realistic and healthy interactions. Two, it will reduce or prevent connections with community partners. Three, it will not meet the needs of all learners. Four, it could create negative experiences for students at their homes and within their families. Five, why change things when it meets and aligns with Act 77? As you read further, you'll learn why I oppose Bill S259.

I believe that Asynchronous online education reduces opportunities for realistic and healthy peer interactions, collaborative learning, and social emotional development that naturally occurs in a concurrent and integrated classroom setting.

- Driving is a social task.
 - Concurrent and integrated in person classroom learning enables realistic communication between Students, Students and Teachers/School faculty members. Such as partners in class, table talk, small group and large group discussions.
 - It supports communication between Students and Families, Families and Schools, Students and Community Members, the School and Community Members.
 - The Partnership extends to include the Agency of Education, Department of Motor Vehicles, Agency of Transportation, Governor's Highway Safety Alliance, State and National Stakeholders. .
- Refer to bill number H.54 and S.21, both acts regarding cell phones in schools. Reducing distractions, use of personal devices during the school day and less screen time.
- From the Pandemic (Stay home and be safe) and the Hybrid year we learned that most students and teachers struggled with Online learning.
- Being another online experience, will Asynchronous online learning take the form of just another website?
- How will students learn to understand body language and visual communication with Asynchronous online learning?

I believe that Asynchronous online education will limit involvement with community partners. It will reduce the opportunities for personal connections and relationships with professional experts and trusted adults.

- Some Partners being
 - The Town Police Department, Chief or assigned Officer visits the DE Class.
 - [VEEP](#)-Vermont Energy Education Program-[Eco Program](#), Environment and Economics curriculum with VEEP Professionals working collaboratively with DE Teachers.
 - [Local Motion](#)-Non motorized Users with emphasis for [Pedestrians and Bicyclists](#),
 - Jim Carter-[Seat Belt Use](#) and Organ donation,
 - [Choices Matter](#)-Providing students with opportunity to be educated on life changing decisions, most often the entire school. The VPA and Agency of Transportation supports it.
 - [Distracted Driving Prevention](#)-Golf Cart Simulation and Safety Fair sponsored by the Youth Safety Council of Vermont in the past and supported by Co-Operative Insurance. Currently the Vermont Department of Health.
 - [Car Dealerships](#)-Field Trip, meet the staff-sales and service.
 - [Local Service Shops](#)-Connect with local people, relationships-Costs, Expert advice.
 - [Town and State Road Crew](#), Plow Trucks-Meet the staff, see the equipment, learn first-hand.

I'm concerned that Asynchronous online learning will not meet student needs. It will not include differentiated instruction or learning opportunities.

- Online instruction delivers information in limited ways.
- Students learn differently. Quality education enables differentiated learning opportunities.
- Best practice is to change the method every 15-30 minutes.
- Some students require Individual Education Plans (IEP) with accommodations, others have 504 or 203 plans.

Asynchronous online learning could expose students to frequent home-based distractions (cell phones, social media, and household interruptions), weakening attention and retention of critical traffic-safety concepts that require sustained focus and reflection.

- For some, home is not a safe place to study. For most, in a classroom with an A.O.E licensed teacher or D.M.V certified instructor are best.
- At home, students have other responsibilities; taking care of siblings and family household chores/work that creates additional stress/division between what is best for the student to be doing. That could lead to multi-tasking.
- Part of time management is the tendency to multi-task and not give full attention to whatever task they have at hand. This affects learning and retention and is contrary to Preventing distracted driving. Scientific research is showing that multi-tasking is bad.
[Brown University Study](#)-specific reference to checking email while on a Zoom call.
[Psychology Today](#)-[The fallacy of Multitasking](#)
- Other concerns; who's doing the work? Is it an honor system?
- How is it integrated and concurrent, current expectation?

Why change when Synchronous integrated and concurrent learning aligns with Act 77, which went into effect for the graduating class of 2020?

- During the Agency of Education transition to Proficiency Based Learning, Driver Education was used as a model. Shown around the state was the video, “What's the deal with Proficiency Based Learning” Driver Education is grounded and fundamentally structured by Proficiency Based Learning.
- Educational structure being Know (K), Understand (U) and Do/Demonstrate (D).
 - To enable success there needs to be growth over time, practice with rapid feedback and then support/remediation. For Driver Education that process includes the Partnership that was mentioned earlier; Students, Families, School, and community. It's a genuine, realistic and holistic education.
- Transferable Skills-”skills that are needed for life” from the video, are embedded in Synchronous concurrent and integrated Driver Education.
 - Personal Development, Innovative Thinking, Community Connection and Effective Communication.
 - Personalized Learning opportunities are created using the Driver Education Learning targets. Students have the opportunity for Personal Development, for example learning to make a safe and legal left turn at a traffic light, It will include innovative thinking by problem solving (innovative thinking) to understand the proper lane use, understanding the traffic light and the proper timing for the turn, while by being courteous and ensuring public safety for all (community connection) by using the proper directional signal. Then applying this one example while driving at night, in a snow storm, in Burlington rather than the student’s home town, then extending beyond high school to driving to college.