

DRAFT

DRIVER EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
April 4, 2024 Meeting Minutes
Virtual & In Person Meeting

Members Present: Helen Jones (Chair), Stephanie Kahee, Melissa Richey, Sarah Whisenhunt

Members Absent: Rich Greene (Vice Chair), Amber Shuler

ODOT TSO Staff: Jody Raska, Mary DeFerrari, Traci Pearl

Liaisons/Guests: Megan McDermeit (Western Oregon University), Bill Merrill (Driver and Motor Vehicle Services), Lt. Lindland (Oregon State Police)

WELCOME, ANNOUNCEMENTS & INTRODUCTIONS

Chair Jones called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES – Chair Jones

Chair Jones called for a review of the January 2024 meeting minutes. Ms. Whisenhunt moved to approve the January 2024 meeting minutes as presented. Chair Jones seconded. No vote was held. Meeting minutes approved by consensus.

PROGRAM UPDATE – J Raska

Ms. Raska reported the Transportation Safety Office is preparing for an upcoming Management Review. At least every three years, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), who funds a significant portion of TSO's grant funding, performs a file review/audit to make sure the office is correctly using those funds and documenting it as required in federal regulations. In preparation, TSO program managers are reviewing the 2022, 2023 and 2024 grant files to make sure documentation is complete and in the file. This review will take place the week of April 15.

Implementation meetings have begun on the DMV2U driver education electronic entry project. A team, including representatives from all affected DMV business lines, has been formed and we've held two meetings in the last two weeks. Chair Jones is serving on that committee and is representing DEAC as well as DE providers. Our target go-live implementation date is October 14, 2024. TSO was hoping for an earlier implementation date but because the process will require Oregon Administrative Rule change, the later date was selected. TSO will keep DEAC and all providers/instructors updated on progress through regular reporting at these meetings as well as email announcements sent as needed.

TSO DE is also moving forward with a proposed legislative concept requesting an increase in the reimbursement rate as well as adding private schools to the list of entities eligible to receive reimbursement under ORS 336.805. Draft language will be submitted on Friday, April 5, 2024.

COMPLIANCE UPDATE – M DeFerrari

Ms. DeFerrari reported on the conclusion of an investigation of an ODOT-approved driver education provider. In September 2023, TSO received a credible and serious complaint about one of the approved providers. The complaint alleged that instructors were providing far fewer behind the wheel hours than required by OAR and that instructors and the provider were knowingly falsifying documentation related to the complaint. After initial investigation, TSO requested assistance from the DMV Fraud Prevention Team (FPT) and a formal investigation was conducted. The formal investigation included covert observations of student drives on several dates and revealed multiple instances of student drives not following drive routes and shortened drive times. Upon completion of the covert surveillance, a member of the FPT and Ms. DeFerrari conducted an

unannounced visit to the provider to request student records related to the observed drives. Upon inspection of the documented drives in comparison with the surveillance records, it was determined that multiple students were receiving far fewer hours behind the wheel than required by OAR, sometimes as much as 50% fewer. The results of the investigation should have led to the provider's approval and instructors' certification revocations. In conversations with the provider, extreme remorse and a desire and determination to become compliant was demonstrated. Based on those discussions, TSO and FPT agreed to impose a one-year probation during which the provider must complete a specified set of actions and activities to become compliant. Some of those activities include providing TSO with weekly schedules of instructors' classroom and behind the wheel instruction, redoing drive routes, updating a flow chart, creation of an instructor manual, overt and covert observations of both classroom and behind the wheel lessons, creation of an employee onboarding process document, etc. Additionally, four courses have been denied reimbursement. Future reimbursement requests must be accompanied by complete backup documentation. This probationary period runs through January 2025.

A question was asked about whether the involved instructors will be tracked if they leave employment with that provider and move to another. How would a new provider know there were issues in that instructor's past? That was not part of the investigation, but TSO will discuss internally.

LIAISON REPORTS

Oregon State Police – Lt. Lindland

Lt. Lindland was present but had nothing to report.

Continuing Education – S. Whisenhunt

Chemeketa continues to offer multiple courses for instructors to obtain continuing education. Several courses are being updated and continue to be available during the update. A question was asked about whether an updated course could be taken within the same certification cycle, based on the new update. It was noted that these updates are not significant, and the changes are limited to grammatical fixes and new statistics. There is still a plan to develop shorter, 4-credit courses. It was also noted that Chemeketa does not track which instructors have taken a course so cannot easily determine if an individual is repeating coursework.

Western Oregon University – M. McDermeit

Ms. McDermeit provided an update on courses and certifications noting that there were 11 expirations between January and March and 12 new certifications for a net increase of 1. Currently there are 290 certified instructors. Spring courses are in progress with 13 in the Salem course, entering Phase 2, and 12 in the Eugene course. Summer courses are posted, and registration is open. Courses are scheduled in La Grande, Grants Pass, Reynolds and Redmond. The Grants Pass course was moved from White City due to an issue with security availability at the White City location. Fall courses are not yet posted. It was also noted that Oregon residents receive priority during registration over Washington residents.

The PacNW Conference on March 2 went very well, and evaluations were nearly all positive. The Trainer of Trainers team met on March 3 and the information provided during the roundtables provided good discussion material. The sessions that could be recorded are available for those who were unable to attend, and people are already taking advantage of that. There were 105 participants, and 690 continuing education hours were awarded. The virtual PacNW Conference is still planned for Saturday, June 1 and a save the date email was sent earlier this week.

Driver and Motor Vehicle Services – B Merrill

Mr. Merrell reported on DMV's online knowledge testing, noting that this offering is going well. The test is currently offered in English and Spanish and DMV is in process of making the test available in the 6 other

languages that are currently offered in field offices. Prior to implementation, there had been concern about cheating and there are instances where a test taker would be disqualified during the test if, for example, they navigate to another browser window, another person appears in camera range, etc. There was one instance of someone taking the knowledge test on another's behalf. When the individual went to the field office to get their license, the agent accessed the camera footage and was able to determine the person at the counter was not the person who took the test on camera, so they were unable to get a driver license.

Mr. Merrill reminded DEAC that the REAL ID requirement goes into effect in May 2025. Providers are reminded to talk to their students and parents about getting REAL ID prior to that May date. Standard licenses are still issued but it may be a good idea to just get a REAL ID from the beginning.

It was also reported that The Parent Guide to Teen Driving has been updated with clearer language, new graphics and a new title. It is now "How to Guide Your Teen Driver" and print copies will be available in the storeroom in the next few weeks. A question was asked about whether the previous version is still available and if a provider had recently requested these, would they receive the old version or the new one. There is limited stock of the old version still available so the provider would most likely receive the old version unless they call the storeroom and request the new. Ms. Raska also reported that TSO is moving ahead with translation of the new version into Spanish. Providers will be notified when that is available.

DEAC MEMBERSHIP – GUIDELINES / APPLICATION

There are currently three vacancies on the DEAC and in response to the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) training presented at the January 2024 meeting, TSO is updating the DEAC Guidelines and Application to include DEI elements. Ms. Lisa K Brown, of ODOT's Social Equity office, provided that training and was asked to provide feedback on the DEAC Guidelines and Application. Her suggestions were reviewed and discussed. Ms. Raska will update the Guidelines and Application and then post on the TSO website. An announcement about the vacancies and a call for applicants will be sent to all providers and instructors once the updates are complete. It is the goal of TSO to have new members in place for the July 2024 DEAC meeting.

DEAC / ODOT SURVEY

In previous meetings, it has been suggested that DEAC and ODOT prepare and distribute a survey asking for feedback from providers and instructors on several areas of the Driver Education program including challenges faced when starting a program, the use of in-car cameras, continuing education, Oregon Driver Training Safety and Education Association (ODTSEA), conferences, mentoring, and others. The goal of the survey is to get an overall look at the driver education program, identify strengths and gaps and areas in which providers and instructors need assistance, ways that DEAC and ODOT can assist providers and instructors, as well as topics for future conferences and resources needed. TSO will work with DEAC and may involve ODOT's public information officer to help craft the survey. Once distributed, results will be discussed at future DEAC meetings and will help inform the DE Strategic Plan update and creation of a DE Resources Guide.

ROUNDTABLE / GOOD OF THE ORDER

Chair Jones called for any roundtable items or items for the good of the order. It was noted the next meeting of the DEAC is July 11, 2024 at 10am. Chair Jones also noted that she is very appreciative of the discussion and work being done. She feels that in the past year or two, things are starting to get checked off and progress is being made.

ADJOURN

There being no further work before the Committee, Chair Jones adjourned the March 2024 DEAC meeting at 11:30 a.m.