

DRAFT ED COMMITTEE POLICY STATEMENT ON DRIVER'S ED

The Madison Metropolitan School District (MMSD), similar to many school districts across the state and the country, has seen a significant shift in the ways driver's education curriculum has been delivered to students over the past 20 years. In 2003, Wisconsin Act 33 eliminated state categorical aid to school districts which highly compromised districts' abilities to effectively deliver drivers education such that ultimately both the classroom and behind the wheel portions of driver's education increasingly shifted out of the public schools and into private driving academies. Prior to this shift, all students in public school had ready access to free or very low cost driver's education and training that was required for both their temporary driving permits as well as their subsequent driving licenses.

The current state is such that very few, if any, districts remain in Wisconsin that offer a bonafide driver's education program through their regular curriculum or programming. Students in MMSD currently have one of three options in pursuit of acquiring their driver's license: They can enroll in a private driving school or technical college and pay at minimum \$500 out of pocket, for classroom and behind the wheel instruction; they can take advantage of a program offered through Dane County and Madison School and Community Recreation (MSCR), which offers classroom instruction and then behind the wheel instruction through the Cooperative Education Service Agency 2 (CESA2); or they can wait until they turn 18 and test for their license without any of the aforementioned training.

The program offered through Dane County, MSCR, and CESA2 is available to a limited number of students living with lower incomes and also has severe limitations due to a lack of teachers available to provide behind the wheel instruction. This lack of teachers creates a significant backlog of students who have completed the in-class portion of drivers education but have to wait approximately six months to take the behind the wheel portion of the curriculum. The shortage of behind the wheel instructors results from a variety of factors including licensure requirements from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) as well as pay rates. The costs associated with private driving schools and technical colleges present a financial barrier for many. The option to wait until one is 18 puts on hold the opportunity for 16 and 17-year-olds to effectively engage in many aspects of their life including employment, extracurricular and social.

All of these factors result in compromising MMSDs desire to prepare its students to be college, career, and community ready.

Transportation access and equity has long been a priority for the City of Madison Education Committee ("the Committee"). Over the last year, the Committee has received presentations from representatives from a variety of organizations with experience in driver's education programming to get a better understanding of the landscape of driver's education for Madison area youth, including Madison School and Community Recreation (MSCR), Cooperative Educational Service Agency (CESA) 2, Operation Fresh Start, and the Sun Prairie School District. The Committee has prioritized this issue as an area where it – as a collaborative committee of Madison, Dane County, and MMSD policymakers– can have a unique and necessary impact on this important issue.

To guide us in this work, The Committee recognizes:

- Expanding access to driver's ed is a racial equity imperative.

- Expanding access to driver's ed is an economic justice imperative.
- Expanding access to driver's ed supports public safety.
- Expanding access to driver's ed enriches the social and cultural experience of youth and families because it increases opportunities to be involved in community activities.

The Committee supports the following goals:

- Every MMSD student (or young person in Dane County) is able to access driver's education regardless of ability to pay.
- Driver's Ed, including behind-the-wheel instruction, is a part of the core high school curriculum.

The Committee supports the following strategies to achieve the above goals:

- City and County funding and advocacy to support MMSD expansion of access to driver's ed through the scholarship program.
- MMSD creating incentives to attract and retain driver's ed teachers.
- The State of Wisconsin re-examining current requirements for public instruction of driver's ed to address the instructor shortage and expand access to driver's ed. This includes, but is not limited to, addressing licensing requirement discrepancies between public and private driver's ed instructors and reducing barriers to licensing/certification.
- The State of Wisconsin restoring funding eliminated by 2003 Wisconsin Act 33 to support driver's education.