



# E-Newsletter

*Keeping Our Membership Informed Since 1952*  
*Senior Editor - John Papa*

SPRING EDITION

[www.ihscdea.org](http://www.ihscdea.org)

APRIL 2010

## IHCDEA EXECUTIVE BOARD

### President

Dr. Dale Ritzel  
SIU Safety Center  
1435 Douglas Drive  
Carbondale, IL 62901  
618-453-2080  
[dritzeld@siu.edu](mailto:dritzeld@siu.edu)

### President Elect

Scot Sutherland  
Burlington Central  
44 W 625 Plato Rd.  
Burlington, IL 60109  
847-464-6030  
[scotsutherland@burlington.k12.il.us](mailto:scotsutherland@burlington.k12.il.us)

### Past President

Debra Twenhafel  
Burlington Central  
44 W 625 Plato Rd.  
Burlington, IL 60109  
847-464-6030  
[dtwenhafel@burlington.k12.il.us](mailto:dtwenhafel@burlington.k12.il.us)

### Treasurer

Tony Barrette  
Bismarck-Henning CUD#1  
17268 E. County Rd. 2750N  
Bismarck, IL 61814-0350  
217-759-7291  
[tbarrette@aol.com](mailto:tbarrette@aol.com)

### Secretary

Dennis Peters  
Mather H. S.  
5835 N. Lincoln Av.  
Chicago, IL 60659  
630-202-9593  
[dspeters5@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dspeters5@sbcglobal.net)

### Executive Secretary

Raymond Kracik  
104 Kohl Drive  
Lake Bluff, IL 60044  
847-234-4085  
[raykracikvet60@comcast.net](mailto:raykracikvet60@comcast.net)

## State of Driver Education in Illinois by Dan Kleinfeldt

Since our last newsletter went out, much has happened legislatively in our state with regards to state funding for education, our pensions and especially the unrelenting desire for school districts to dismantle and de-mandate Driver Education through contracting-out with commercial driving schools.

There has never been a more important time for all of us to stay informed on these legislative matters, and it is critical that we all try to attend this year's state conference in Effing-

ham slated for May 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> as our jobs and the mere existence of public high school Driver Education may depend on your involvement.

Those who have been around for awhile tell me that it is hard to remember a more challenging time for our association. That being said, I believe it has shaken the core of our Association and we are now stronger and ready for both the troubling, yet exciting time for IHCDEA to meet the challenges ahead. With our small group of

legislative task force members we were able to accomplish a tremendous amount in a short period of time.

Please take the time to look over our accomplishments and challenges and be ready to help us this spring when the legislators go back to work after their spring recess.

**Dan Kleinfeldt is department chair at Oak Park-River Forest H. S. and chairperson for the Legislative Action Committee of the IHCDEA.**

## IEA Legislative Platform . . .

It is with great excitement that we inform you that the driver education initiatives were passed at the IEA Representative Assembly.

With your help we were able to get our initiatives onto the IEA legislative platform that will now allow the IEA's powerful lobbyists the ability to speak on our behalf and move our agenda forward

in Springfield. Almost immediately after the passing of the initiatives the IEA lobbyists were testifying in Springfield on our behalf.

Thanks to all who contacted their union representatives and told them to support the driver education initiatives. It truly made a difference. Many of the representatives we spoke with at the assembly told me their driver

education teachers in their region had contacted them and insisted they support the initiatives.

A big thanks goes out to driver education teachers Mark Gruca, Mike Orr, Tony Barrette and Dan Kleinfeldt who went as representatives to the IEA Representative Assembly. Thanks to all for your hard work.

**SurveyMonkey**

## IHSCDEA Survey Results

**A**n online survey was conducted in February 2010 through SurveyMonkey.com to the membership of the Illinois High School and College Driver Education Association in relation to some of the current issues and concerns about driver education in Illinois. The survey was broken up into three separate categories; General District/School Information, Specific Program Information and Enrollment & Fees. Below are some highlights of the Executive Summary. For a complete copy of the summary go to our web site at:

[http://www.ihscdea.org/documents/2010\\_ihscdea\\_program\\_survey\\_executive\\_summary.pdf](http://www.ihscdea.org/documents/2010_ihscdea_program_survey_executive_summary.pdf)

### General District/School Information

From the IHSCDEA membership who received the survey, a total of 122 different Illinois public schools were involved in the responses. The schools represented all 10 regions of the IHSCDEA with most of the responses coming from regions 1, 2 and 4. The median size of the responding schools was 1500 students with a range of 105 to 4600 students. Forty seven out of the 102 Illinois counties were represented with the most responses coming from public schools in Cook County.

### Specific Program Information

The median student fee that public schools charged for driver education was \$75 (the average fee charged was \$140) with a range of \$0 to \$500. Of the fees charged 45 schools charged \$50, 9 schools had a fee of \$200, 13 schools \$250, 8 schools \$300, and 12 schools charged \$350.

Of the responding public schools, 100% offered classroom instruction, 99.2% offered behind-the-wheel, 18.7% offered driving simulation, and 10.1% offered the driving range program. Almost 62% of the respondents believed that driving simulation and/or the driving range program offered students opportunities to practice a variety of driving skills that would otherwise be very difficult to teach. Before the latest GDL changes (2008), 35.3% of the public schools offered driving simulation as a part of their driver education program. Of these schools, only 36.1% still offer driving simulation in their school. Prior to the latest GDL changes (2008), only 17.4% of the public schools offered the driving range program.

Currently 65.4% of the responding public schools administer the ISOS state vision test, while 81.0% of the schools administer the ISOS state permit test. Over 75% of the same responding public schools participate in and administer the ISOS Cooperative Driver Testing Program.

Over 58% of the responding public schools indicated that the 2008 GDL requirements had impacted the driver education curriculum offering at their school. Fifty-three point seven percent of the public schools have had to change the course availability in order to meet the 9 month GDL requirements. These items included; changing the birth date entry, course cut-off dates, etc.

### Enrollment & Fees

It was found that 56.5% of responding public schools are now allowing freshmen to enroll in the driver education course. Over 25% of the schools have been approached by 8th graders asking to take the driver education course. When asked whether the public schools noticed a drop of enrollment in their driver education since 2007, 37.5% indicated yes. On average the drop in enrollment was 23.2% with a range of 1% to 70%.

### How This Information Will Be Used

The data was used almost immediately to help the legislative task force get important information to state officials so that they were and will continue to be able to make sound decisions regarding Driver Education. We were also able to use the data to begin the process of securing new revenue for the Driver Education Fund. Please look for more surveys in the future. The data collected from these surveys is extremely important for furthering our cause and will ultimately lead to better funding and stronger legislation for Illinois High School Driver Education.

## Early March Meetings . . .

### ***Legislative Task Force Has Strategy Sessions with Sec. of State & State Board of Education***

In an effort to keep an open dialog with state officials, an Ad Hoc committee of the Legislative Task Force traveled to Springfield meeting with the Secretary of State (SOS) and the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE). These meetings were designed to rejuvenate dialog between our Association and each administrative body. Our Association has always enjoyed open communication with these groups, but with the current financial situation in our state, we thought it would be prudent for a face-to-face meeting.

Early in the morning the group met with top representatives from the SOS. The meeting was very productive and allowed us the opportunity to discuss new funding and the effects of the new GDL laws on our programs. We were able to provide Sec. of State personnel with some preliminary data from our survey. Discussions about the differences between commercial and public high school driver education programs including instructor preparation. The legal ramifications of schools that were considering or "*contracting-out*" the lab portion of the course with a commercial driving school was also discussed. The meeting lasted for about 2 hours as other topics including National Driving Standards, funding and proposed legislative changes were also discussed. We believe this meeting laid the groundwork for more productive dialogue between our groups.

A working lunch with lobbyists from the IEA who brought us up to speed on current issues effecting not only driver education but education as a whole in Illinois. The future of education in this state is very uncertain right now. One thing is for sure, without new revenue streams, we will continue to see education funding reduced. How this will ultimately affect driver education in the future is unclear, but we will work together with the Sec. of State and other legislative groups to make sure every teen in our state has the opportunity to receive the best driver education that can be delivered in an affordable and assessable manner.

In the afternoon the group met with representatives from the Illinois State Board of Education. The purpose of this meeting was to get their interpretation of the Driver Education Act and the Administrative Rules and Regulations that govern our discipline. This is important, because for some time, school administrators and even some less-informed driver education teachers have been using their own interpretation of the rules to create policy that may or may not be within the true intent of the law.

After the meetings with both the Sec. of State and the Illinois State Board of Education, our legislative committee now has a better understanding of the Driver Education Act and its impact on how we teach. As a result, however, more questions were raised and will need to be addressed soon in order to secure driver education for all teens in the state. Both meetings also had spirited discussions on funding and the process involved for securing additional revenue. Again, we believe these meetings opened the door for more dialog and for future meetings to occur.

**The Legislative Task Force is made up of representatives throughout Illinois.**

**Members that have been involved in numerous conference calls and meetings this year are:**

**Dan Kleinfeldt - Brent Johnston - C. E. Welch - Dennis Renner - Don Fontana - Ralph Duke - Dr. Frank Gruber  
Jay Huffman - John Papa - Dr. Dale Ritzel - Mark Gruca - Ray Kracik - Spagnoli Bob - Steve Scott**

# Declaration of Intent

Losing students to the commercial driving schools because your school administration will not add more DE classes? We might be able to help. Studying the language in the Driver Education Administrative Rules and Regulations led us to a better understanding of how the law is designed.

This allowed us to create a document called the "**Declaration of Intent**" for your students. According to Section 252.20 of the Administrative rules, when a student declares in writing that he or she would like to enroll in driver education at a public high school, that same school is obligated to provide that instruction to the student within 12 months.

This may help reduce the number of students leaving your program and taking the course at a commercial driving school. You should publicize this "**Declaration of Intent**" to all incoming and current freshmen **IMMEDIATELY**.

School districts across Illinois have **purposely and consciously** not hired driver education staff to meet the needs of the students and their parents thus causing a "**false backlog**" of students who then get tired of waiting for the course and enroll in commercial driving school programs.

It is the belief of the IHSCDEA Board of Directors and the Legislative Action

Committee that parents and students be informed of this "**Declaration of Intent**." Suggested avenues are during Driver Education Parent Involvement Programs, PTA / PTO Meetings and 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Parent Nights.,

It is our hope that we can curtail this deceptive practice and force school districts to comply with state law. Look for this document on our web site at:

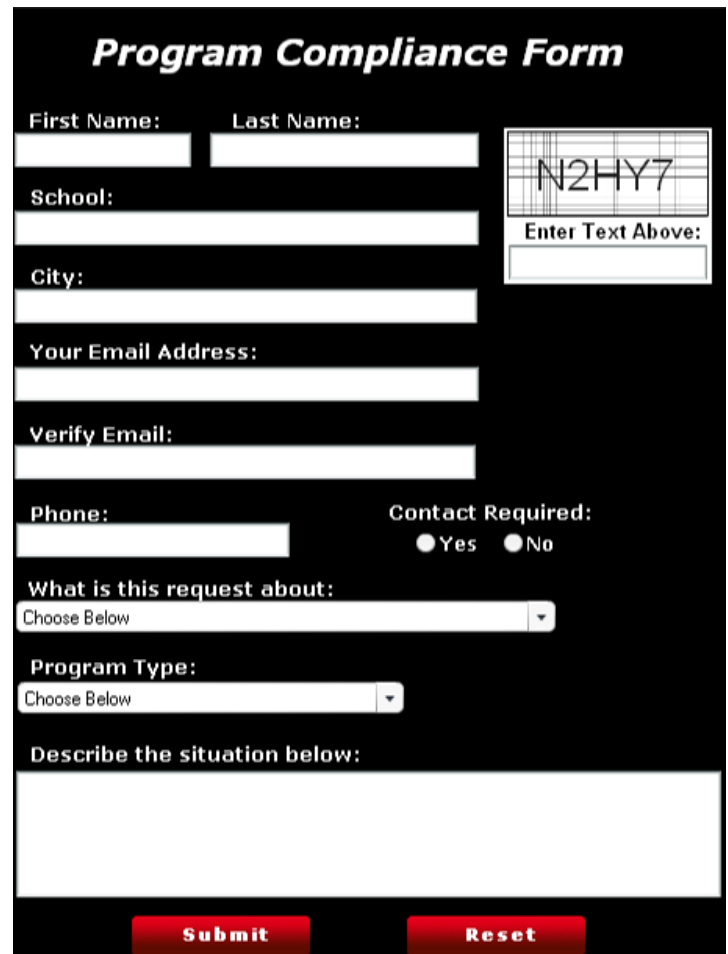
[http://www.ihscdea.org/documents/declaration\\_of\\_intent.pdf](http://www.ihscdea.org/documents/declaration_of_intent.pdf)

# Program Compliance Form

The IHSCDEA has created a form on our website to report and/or request information regarding driver education program irregularities and compliance. The information from this website will be used to collect data on the irregularities and compliance issues that may be occurring at either commercial driving schools as well as public high schools.

If you have a concern, please go to our web site and let us know about it. It is our hope that we can correct any of the issues before they become a major problem. Please encourage your parents and students to do the same. The form can be found at:

[http://ihscdea.org/program\\_compliance\\_form.htm](http://ihscdea.org/program_compliance_form.htm)



The image shows a screenshot of a web form titled "Program Compliance Form". The form is set against a black background with white text and input fields. It includes fields for "First Name:", "Last Name:", "School:", "City:", "Your Email Address:", "Verify Email:", "Phone:", and "Contact Required:" (with radio buttons for "Yes" and "No"). There are two dropdown menus labeled "What is this request about:" and "Program Type:", both with "Choose Below" as the selected option. A large text area is provided for "Describe the situation below:". At the bottom right, there are two red buttons labeled "Submit" and "Reset". A small grid with the text "N2HY7" is visible in the top right corner of the form area.

# Spring Conference Afternoon Breakout Session

**M**ake sure you get your registration form in for the spring conference in Effingham. We have just added a new agenda item for early Thursday afternoon after the luncheon. The Legislative Action Committee will be holding a break-out session that day to discuss the Driver Education Act and Administrative Rules and Regulations. We will also be available to discuss any questions that you might have on the two-tier pension changes as well as current and pending legislation that could affect your programs.

This will be an important event if you feel the pressures from your school administration to reduce or remove driver education from your school. Learn the facts, so you can arm yourself with the accurate information you need to save your program. We can guarantee no matter how long you have been teaching driver education, you will gain insight and new information to save or strengthen your program.

Information is powerful, and we are discovering that administrators across Illinois are developing policies and making illegal decisions that sometimes go unnoticed because the local driver education instructor are not well-informed. The IHSCDEA can help, but many of these battles must be won by you at the local level. More on this will be announced at the beginning of the conference, but if at all possible, try to attend this break-out session. The atmosphere will be relaxed and casual, so bring some refreshments, your questions or comments.

Daniel Kleinfeldt & Brent Johnston  
Legislative Action Committee

## Driver Education Parent Newsletter . . .

Now may be the time to start thinking about sending a newsletter to all your students parents. The newsletter can be either electronic or a traditional paper newsletter. Some are probably thinking this is way too much work or I am not going to do something like that! These types of projects are easy to develop and pay huge dividends when BOE & administrators are looking to cut programs.

Many schools now have the ability for instructors to send an electronic newsletter out either by students currently registered in your DE class (or) as a larger group such as the entire freshman class. Each school is different as some districts may require administrative approval, but this can be a great tool to use in order to get the **"Declaration of Intent"** information out to the public.

We would suggest a couple of newsletters throughout the semester. One at the beginning and one towards the end. The first newsletter you can write about the legalities of the permit, parent involvement with BTW practice, course organization, etc. Subsequent newsletters should discuss night driving, 50 hours of practice, Cooperative Driver Testing Program (CDTP), what to expect at the Sec. of State's facility (ID's, what to bring, etc.)

Feel free to contact us you have questions on getting started at: [webmaster@ihscdea.org](mailto:webmaster@ihscdea.org)

