



# MTEA NEWS

## Adapting Driver Education During the COVID-19 Pandemic

By Steffani Grogan — 2018-19 MTEA President

The year 2020 has been a series of adaptations. The Spring MTEA Conference, "Building the Thinking Driver," has been rescheduled for April 2021. Driver Education classes were caught partially started or put on hold as school closures were announced. What resilient way did traffic ed programs forge through these times?

The state curriculum flexed scheduling allowing for classroom instruction to move to remote learning and BTW to resume when in-person/in-vehicle instruction could be done safely with strict protocols. Forsyth classes consisted of two-hour online Zoom meeting daily in April. My controlling personality just couldn't give up the required face-to-face meeting hours. Materials and activities were run through Google Classroom. The structure of curriculum materials were based on resources shared by Billings Central traffic education teacher, Branden Martinez.

Luckily, all of my Drive Right tests were produced on [easytestmaker.com](https://www.easytestmaker.com) by Bob Schultz who shared with me. Unfortunately, some students realized that remote teaching didn't fit their personal learning style and were offered refunds to drop and wait for the fall session. By May 18<sup>th</sup>, my board allowed just two students in the car with masks and parent approval for each driving session.



I made the decision to do a condensed class in August/September instead of running into the first week in December. Students attended 2-3 hour classes in person with social distancing until school started and we implemented the school policy of wearing face masks. Two groups a day were driven, so all lessons could be completed within the 25-day minimum requirement. Even teaching drivers in person, I utilized many of the digital materials used in the spring. The emphasis swirled around the data that COVID cases weren't exploding in Rosebud County, so the district wanted to get the learners through by the second week of September. Fear of the unknown is a powerful motivator.

The Office of Public Instruction sponsored three Zoom meetings where MTEA members presented ideas, projects and tools that were working for online instruction. I was only able to participate in one session and wished I had made the other two. Many of you found resources, created new materials or borrowed from others. My take-away from the online experience was if I didn't have it, create it, or know it, all I had to do was pick up the phone or email another MTEA member for information. Help was readily given.

Thank you to all the instructors who stepped up to educate students and a special thank you to those who freely shared their expertise with others.

### A few of Steffani's favorite online resources:

- **Edpuzzle.com** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eWRseaT7-9U> (Tutorial)  
Take videos and embed your questions right into the video. It grades for you and posts directly into Google classroom.
- **Kami Chrome Extension** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l6bNrS3oWmw> (Tutorial)  
This is the best PDF and Document annotation program. Kids can easily open a PDF in Kami and type, draw, and write on document. This interacts with Google classroom as well.
- **Flipgrid.com** A video discussion experience. Teacher can create a topic or question then students respond in 1 ½ minute videos. Other classmates can respond to the videos presented.
- **Tab Resize Chrome Extension** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=scMVTilt7mo>  
Allows you to have two tabs or more open side by side to work on multiple online windows.



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MTEA News is published by the Montana Traffic Education Association in the fall, winter, and spring. MTEA, PO Box 637, Conrad, MT 59425. Jim Carroll, Executive Secretary, (406) 278-7856. MTEA News is mailed to members and published at [MTEAOnline.org](http://MTEAOnline.org). The spring issue is mailed to all traffic educators in Montana as an invitation to the annual traffic education conference.

Submissions can be emailed to:

[sgrogan@forsyth.k12.mt.us](mailto:sgrogan@forsyth.k12.mt.us).

Articles are due 10/1; 12/1; 3/1.

## MTEA President's Message: Doug Van Zee

*Hello Fellow Traffic Ed Instructors,*



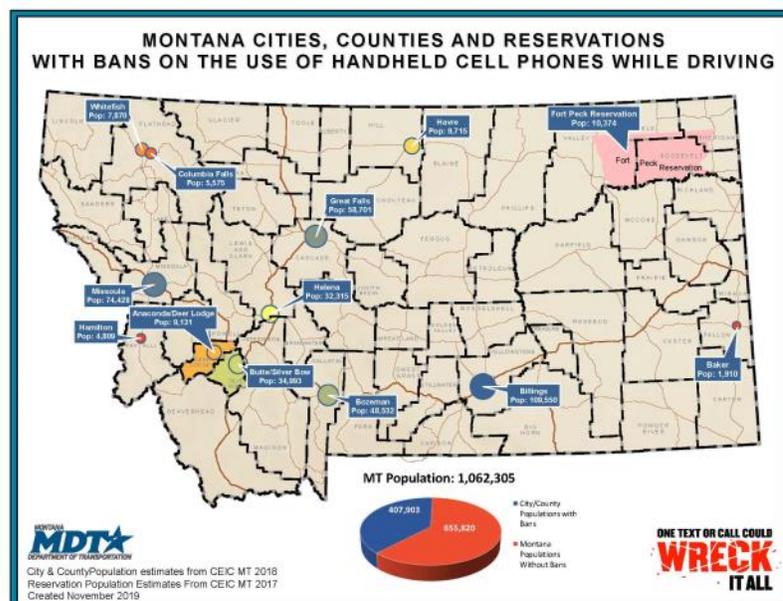
It is my pleasure to represent the MTEA as your President for the 2020-2021 year. I was looking forward to addressing the membership at our annual conference, but as we all know, we live in difficult times now and the cancellation of the conference, while necessary, was a disappointment for us all. It is always a welcomed opportunity to connect with each other, share ideas, and celebrate our successes. We look forward to the Spring of 2021!

On a personal note, becoming a CDL holder within the last year has given me a new sense of energy for Traffic Education. When you have 55 student athletes and coaches under your guidance in a 40,000-pound bus, it tends to heighten your awareness for safety. Even though we are constantly reminded about the deaths on reader boards on our roads, the Highway Traffic System is an amazing system that controls over four million miles of roadway in the United States. One out of every seven jobs in the U.S. is related to transportation.

You all know how important your job is and you are all appreciated for your many talents and contributions ensuring the safety of the next generation of drivers.

I look forward to seeing you at the 2021 Traffic Education Conference!

MTEA President (2020-21)



Montana doesn't have a statewide ban on using handheld cell phones while driving, but there are many local ordinances in place that have outlawed this dangerous habit.

Visit the Resources page on MTEA's website to download the map.

Thanks to our colleagues at the Montana Department of Transportation for this useful map!

## MTEA Executive Board Meeting Summary—March 26, 2020

The Board held a virtual meeting to consider the logistics of trying to host the conference relative to current health issues. Main topics decided included:

- Move the spring conference and current format to April 25-27, 2021.
- Steffani Grogan and Janette Arps will co-chair conference duties.
- All service and retirement awards will be rolled over to the 2021 conference.
- Doug Van Zee will take over the presidency after the normal dates of the 2020 conference.
- OPI will offer TE Zoom trainings for anyone wanting to share ideas during the school closures.

The next virtual meeting will be scheduled in late October or early November. Anyone having items for discussion should contact Doug Van Zee, President, or Jim Carroll, Executive Secretary, as soon as possible to be included on the agenda.



### Montana Teen Driver Safety Day Tuesday, October 20, 2020

Montana Teen Driver Safety Day, now in its 11th year, was created by the Montana State Legislature in 2009. Its mission is to bring teens, community leaders, educators, and parents together to prevent young driver crashes, the leading cause of death for teens. Visit <http://opi.mt.gov/DriverEd/Resources> for helpful teaching tools and parent/teen guides.

Montana has its own special day, the third Tuesday in October, to celebrate teen driver safety, but there is also a national week to recognize the importance of teen driver safety, this year October 19-24, 2020. NHTSA has great resources for parents and teens at their Teen Driving website. Visit <https://www.nhtsa.gov/road-safety/teen-driving>.

And don't forget Module 1 of the OPI's MT Teen Driver Curriculum, with handouts for the required Parent Meeting.

## Your MTEA Membership

### Have you renewed?

Because membership dues are usually paid with conference registration and our 2020 conference was postponed, please maintain your individual MTEA membership so the Association can continue to stay strong, plan for next year, and also provide you with the benefits you've come to appreciate as part of your MTEA membership.

If you need to renew your membership, please download the membership form at [MTEAOnline.org](http://MTEAOnline.org) and send with your \$45.00 dues to MTEA's address on the form.

If you have any questions, contact Jim Carroll, Executive Secretary, at either (406) 278-7856 or (406) 289-0208. Thank you for your support!

### MTEA Membership Benefits

- Annual Traffic Education conference every spring that brings 160+ teachers together with experts in the field, college credit or renewal units for professional development, and the latest research and resources for traffic educators.
- Three newsletters per year (Fall, Winter, Spring).
- \$5,000 AD&D/life insurance policy.
- Voting on and eligibility to serve on MTEA board and annual recognition awards.
- A voice in the ongoing improvement of driver education in Montana through policy and legislative actions.

### Spring Conference Door Prizes and Silent Auction!

MTEA buys door prizes with the proceeds from our 50/50 drawings, but we can always use more items. Consider asking at least one business in your community to donate a door prize or silent auction item. Bring your prizes and auction items with you when you arrive at the conference.

Our silent auctions are a huge success because of the great gifts donated and your generous bidding on them. The proceeds raised will help fund the David Huff Scholarship and conference prizes and giveaways.

### David Huff Memorial Scholarship for First-time Conference Attendees!

First-time attendees to the conference can participate in a drawing for one of three \$150 David Huff Memorial Scholarships. Winners are asked to submit an article to *MTEA News* and lead a workshop at a future Montana Traffic Education Conference.

## The Race Is On

By Doug Van Zee, MTEA President (2020-21)

As educators we all have an ingrained process to plan for future events, whether it be in our personal or professional lives. From my background in athletics and coaching, I like to attack life in a similar way one prepares for and runs a race. When obstacles like the COVID-19 pandemic present itself, adjustments must be made. We have all made tremendous sacrifices and adjustments to ensure the safety of our students and communities.



The past seven months have presented us with tremendous obstacles along the way. It is like the length of the race has changed mid race, the lanes have narrowed, the surface has changed, our shoes have become untied, runners are getting added as we go, and just when we see the finish line the lights have gone off! So, how can we slow down the slowest to win this race?

Did you know the winner of a race is the ***slowest to slow down?*** In other words, once the gun goes off we all accelerate at different speeds, peak at some point, maintain a top speed for different lengths of time and then eventually slow down before we cross the finish line. It is our top speed and how long we can maintain that speed that makes the difference in the order of finish. It is an optical illusion that looks like a runner shifts to another gear near the end of the race. In fact, the rest of the field simply slows down dramatically. We have all been running a race against this pandemic.

I would like to offer some words of encouragement:

- **Try something new.** Online drivers education classes have given us an opportunity to teach differently. Adding variety like digital projects can enhance your lessons, giving you a new perspective on traffic education.
- **Pace yourself.** Accept that this race cannot be won with one short burst. Eating a balanced diet, getting some exercise, and ensuring adequate sleep will be necessary for the long haul.
- **Celebrate your successes.** Set short term goals and when they are achieved, share with others.

## Driving Safely Around School Buses

We can't stress enough the importance of drivers knowing that they **must stop** when school buses flash their red lights and put out their stop arms. Too many drivers are ignoring the signs that children may be about to cross the road. Education is key to preventing tragedies when children exit their school buses.



The Montana Department of Justice produced a video, in association with the OPI, to inform drivers about driving safely in school zones and around school buses. Please consider assigning this video to your students with a possible follow-up essay or quiz. If you have used this video in your driver education classes, please send us a note about how you used it in class and your students' response. **Find the video on YouTube (search for [Driving Safety 101: School Buses](#)).**



## JABS: Jordana's Alliance for Bus Safety

Almost one year ago, on November 12, 2019, six-year-old Jordana Hubble was tragically injured after exiting a school bus and crossing U.S. 93 north of Whitefish. She was struck by a driver who failed to stop despite the bus's flashing red lights and activated stop sign arm. Jordana is still recovering from a traumatic head injury and coma, but many children every year are killed by red-light runners who ignore the law.

Through the efforts of a local Flathead-area group founded by Dennis "Griz" Woldstad — Jordana's Alliance for Bus Safety — Flathead Electric Cooperative's Roundup for Safety program awarded a \$5,000 grant to the Flathead Community Foundation to purchase longer stop arms for school buses in Kalispell, Columbia Falls, and Whitefish. The [Kalispell Daily Interlake's](#) article about this effort to make school buses safer for their precious passengers is linked on the MTEA website and is worth a read. Griz maintains an informative Facebook page for JABS.



In February 2020, MTN News broadcast an investigative news story about Butte school buses catching red-light runners on camera. You can also find a link to this story on the Resources page at [MTEAOnline.org](#).

## Hybrid Teaching in Traffic Education

By Branden Martinez, Billings Central Catholic HS & MTEA Board Member

In March we all found ourselves thrust into the world of “Virtual Learning.” This had all of us flying by the seat, but as traffic educators we are used to that, so we buckled up and kept doing our best to educate our students to make our roads in Montana a safer place to be. Traffic Education can be taught effectively and safely during these uncertain times with the help of our local health officials, advice from MTEA, OPI, and each other. Here are a number of things that educators can do to keep Traffic Education safe and effective.

**Ask for Help:** We all need it and whether it is our pride or “I Can Do It” attitude, there are so many people that are willing to help out. Prior to entering this fall semester I was thrust into teaching all music classes at my high school. I was happy to do it, but that left no time for me to teach Traffic Education. This left parents and students with questions and no options, but with the help of another Traffic Educator in the community Central has kept the program alive and well.

**Virtual Classes:** Personally I use whatever resources our school has purchased. Last spring, I used MOODLE, ZOOM, and REMIND, which helped foster my students’ learning safely and effectively for in-class instruction. I am currently using a “hybrid model” for all my classes through a program called SCHOLOGY, a virtual learning program designed and powered through Power School. This works well for students who are in class and online because I can stream my classes live through Schoology using conferences, all materials and testing can be done live, and the students that are home can interact with the students in class through my smart board.



**Schoology:** A learning management system—[schoology.com](https://www.schoology.com)

**BTW Instruction:** Before driving I check temperatures, provide students with hand sanitizer, require face masks at all times, drive with the windows down whenever possible, and limit two students per drive. Each student drives for 30 minutes with a five minute “cleaning break,” where I Lysol the car and give an “air change” by simply leaving the doors or windows open. Being a Music Educator as well, I found that the things I am doing in my rehearsal space are things I should be doing BTW. When I limit my drive times it limits potential exposure for both me and my students.

**Flexibility:** It is more important now more than ever that we reschedule if I am not feeling well or any one of my students are ill. This can be difficult within the timetables we have to work with, but for my future classes and planning, I plan on fitting in 3-5 extra days in my class schedules for make-up drives.

I wish every single instructor the best of luck this year. We are all doing our best to educate each student virtually or in person, so thank you all for being Traffic Educators and doing your part to make Montana roads safe for all in these unprecedented times.

## Travelers Insurance Distracted Driving Videos — *Unfinished Stories*

Each day nine people are killed by distracted driving, leaving their stories unfinished. Travelers Insurance produced four excellent animated videos about real people who lost their lives to distracted driving, bringing an unfinished story to life through imagining what could have been. Showing these videos in your driver education class could inspire some meaningful discussions, in class and online. Visit: <https://www.travelers.com/resources/auto/distracted-driving>



**Zadii’s Unfinished Story:**  
The Legend of Z-Hawk



**Howard’s Unfinished Story:**  
The Tree House



**Shreya’s Unfinished Story:**  
The Stage



**Phillip’s Unfinished Story:**  
The Route



## CDTP & You

Most of us know that CDTP stands for Cooperative Driver Testing Program. The CDTP provides a way for state-approved traffic education programs and CDTP-certified teachers to test and then issue learner licenses to teens enrolled in driver education in Montana. They can also give the road test that allows teen drivers to be waived on that test when they are ready to apply for a restricted driver license.

All but one school district in Montana participates in the CDTP which means that most of the teens who take driver education have a learner license when they complete the course. In turn, the DOJ provides the funds that the OPI annually distributes to more than 125 school districts providing this valuable training to Montana's young drivers.

The Office of Public Instruction works closely with the MVD to administer the CDTP. When questions or problems arise, it's important to contact either the OPI's Traffic Education Office or your MVD regional manager for assistance:

- **Eastern Region, Billings (406) 896-4335**  
Susan Kyriss, Interim Regional Manager
- **Central Region, Bozeman (406) 594-8115**  
Josh Bennett, Regional Manager
- **Northern Region, Great Falls (406) 727-2569**  
Ken McGuire, Regional Manager
- **Western Region, Kalispell (406) 257-2148**  
Terry Davis, Regional Manager

## Need Supplies?

**MVD's Driver Exam stations can provide CDTP-certified teachers with Montana Driver Manuals, Traffic Education Permits (TEPs), CDTP knowledge exams and answer key overlays, learner licenses, and road test score sheets (however, the larger districts obtain these items for the teachers). Please contact the MVD regional manager (see above) at least two weeks before you plan to pick them up, so they can make sure to have what you need on hand.**



Contact Patti Borneman ([pborneman@mt.gov](mailto:pborneman@mt.gov)) by email or call the OPI Traffic Education Office at (406) 444-4432 with any questions about Teen Driver Education in Montana. Visit <http://www.opi.mt.gov/DriverEd> for resources and information.

## Take the Online CDTP Refresher Course!



*Is it okay to reprint a learner license for a student who lost their first one? How many times can I give the knowledge exam? When does the six months of GDL practice begin—with the TEP or Learner License date?*

These questions and many more are asked by teachers who call the OPI Traffic Education Office for answers. But our free, online Hub course is available to answer these questions 24/7!

If you haven't taken the **CDTP Refresher Course** yet, please consider spending an hour to refresh your CDTP knowledge. **One renewal unit can be earned upon course completion. And you can take it again a year later, if you want.**

This course will update instructors on staying CDTP certified, students' eligibility to participate, what to do when you have a special ed or disabled student wanting to take driver education, Driver License application completion, and how to properly administer and record CDTP knowledge and road tests. It includes helpful resources to manage the CDTP part of driver education, with TEDRS tips, too.

Visit the OPI Teacher Learning Hub at <https://learninghub.mrooms.net/>, log in or create a new account, and use "CDTP" as the Enrollment Key.

If you have any questions or feedback about the course, send an email to Patti Borneman at [pborneman@mt.gov](mailto:pborneman@mt.gov).

## OPI wants you to know . . .

- That **students' birthdates** given at registration must be validated and checked for accuracy on driver license applications and OPI Student Lists.
- That the **GDL six-month practice period** begins with the TEP date (when the student starts driving with their teacher) and the Learner License is valid for a whole year, giving students plenty of time to practice before applying for a restricted license.
- That the vision test that is required for issuance of a learner license is ALSO required for all students before they begin in-vehicle instruction with their teacher. ***Please make sure all students have had their vision checked before they get behind the wheel.***

## Plan ahead for the 2021 MTEA Spring Conference!



While we all wished we could have participated in the 2020 conference, this was not to be this year, due to concerns about the Coronavirus that is currently affecting many Montana communities. The decision was made by MTEA's board to postpone the conference and make plans for next year. As of right now, the 2021 spring conference is scheduled to be held April 25-27 at the Heritage Inn in Great Falls. Look for more details as the year progresses and on the MTEA website. Remember, costs of attending the conference are considered to be an allowable expense for local program costs under OPI guidelines.

### ***Building the Thinking Driver* Conference** Scheduled Keynote Presenters:

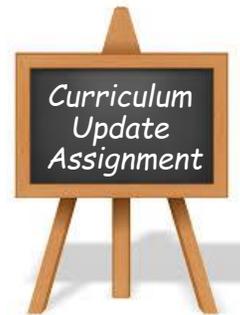
- Kansas educator **Will Dunn**
- Great Falls traffic educator **Jennifer Wasson**
- Florida Physics Professor **Dr. Griff Jones**
- Oregon traffic educator **Tim Beckham**
- MT Highway Patrol **Sergeant Doug Samuelson**
- Forsyth Bank President **Darryl Grogan**

Montana traffic education instructors presenting and/or leading workshops: **Jeff Mead, Warren Clark, Doug Van Zee, and Kim Sorkness-DeCock, Scott Brown, Gena Ferlan, and Charlie Brown.**

We are also planning four interactive Roundtables to suggest ways to **improve the tests** in the OPI's Deadly D's curriculum sub-modules:

- 6.1 Distractions**
- 6.2 Alcohol and Drugs**
- 6.3 Drowsy Driving**
- 6.4 Dangerous Emotions.**

Please prepare for this session by reviewing the test questions in **one** of the sub-modules in Module 6 of the OPI Traffic Education Curriculum. If you need the curriculum, contact the OPI for a flash drive. ***Come to the conference ready to suggest improved test questions for Module 6!***



## Outstanding Traffic Education Contributor of the Year Award

MTEA recognizes companies, organizations, and individuals who make generous contributions of time, energy, equipment and/or expertise to support and sustain the mission of the Montana Traffic Education Association.

To nominate a person or business for this honor, download the COY nomination form at [MTEAOnline.org](https://www.mtea.org) and submit to MTEA anytime during the year prior to the spring conference. The Outstanding Contributor/Sustainer of the Year will be recognized at MTEA's spring conference in April.

Examples of outstanding contributors or sustainers are MVD driver examiners who have gone out of their way to assist driver education teachers with their CDTP requirements and needs; car dealerships who have loaned vehicles to local school districts for their traffic education programs, and local experts who have visited driver education classes to share their knowledge about tire safety, distracted driving, and DUI prevention; as well as business development organizations that have funded materials, equipment and learning tools.

See the long list of past awardees on the MTEA website!



## Outstanding Traffic Education Teacher of the Year Award

### ***Nominations are being accepted for the 2021 Award***

Do you know a traffic education teacher who has taught driver education in Montana for many years, has volunteered for MTEA in one or more capacities, and has shared their knowledge, time and ideas to increase traffic safety in their community? You might know (or be) the ideal candidate for MTEA's annual Outstanding Traffic Education Teacher of the Year (TOY) award.

Since 1988, the Montana Traffic Education Association has honored an exceptional Traffic Education teacher with an annual teacher of the year (TOY) award presented at MTEA's spring conference. Any active teacher who has devoted a good part of their teaching career to traffic education is eligible to apply. Teachers can self-nominate or be nominated by someone who is familiar with their traffic education work.

Download the two-page nomination form from the website at [MTEAOnline.org](https://www.mtea.org) (which includes a section that is completed by the candidate). A TOY committee member will review the application. If the nomination is eligible for consideration, the candidate will receive a letter notifying them of the nomination.

For more information, contact MTEA TOY Committee Chair, Mick Davis at (406) 761-0400.



Montana Traffic Education Association  
PO Box 637  
Conrad, MT 59425

*Return Service Requested*

**2020** **Family Conversation Starters**

Rural Road Safety Awareness Week  
September 28 to October 2, 2020

#RRSAW2020  
#RuralRoadSafety

Traffic Safety



## Pacific Northwest Driver & Traffic Safety Conference

If you are looking for another great regional TE conference, the Pacific Northwest Driver & Traffic Safety Conference is a good choice. This conference is typically held the beginning of March in Portland, Oregon. As of right now, they are planning on a virtual conference for next year. Check out the following website for more information: <http://triwou.org/projects/tse>

## ADTSEA

American Driver & Traffic Safety Education Association

The 2021 ADTSEA conference will be held July 25-28 in Knoxville, Tennessee. The conference will provide you with a wealth of information and an opportunity to network with other professionals from across the United States. Remember, MTEA has a scholarship program that will provide up to \$500 per person to offset conference costs. If you can't attend, consider joining your national organization. Conference details: <https://www.adtsea.org/driver-ed-events.phtml>.