

DRIVER and TRAFFIC SAFETY EDUCATION CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

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**Mountain Brook Schools
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Introduction

The people of Alabama, like other Americans, spend much of their time moving from place to place in motorized vehicles. Frequent highway use is necessary due to societal, business, and industrial needs. To accommodate these needs, measure must be taken to promote safe and pleasurable driving conditions. Toward this end, the state of Alabama has adopted a three-pronged approach to enhance safe driving conditions and to promote highway safety: 1) the building of better roadways, 2) the monitoring of highway use by motorists, and 3) the formalized training for beginning or youthful drivers.

The Mountain Brook Curriculum Framework for Driver and Traffic Safety Education addresses the third approach by providing required content to be taught in the Driver and Traffic Safety Education course. This document reflects and incorporates current research in driver and traffic safety education, changes in national and state laws, together with the advent of new equipment and technology. It focuses on the required classroom and behind-the-wheel instruction of the Driver and Traffic Safety Education course.

The Alabama Legislature passed the Boating Safety Reform Act (Act No. 94-652) in 1994. Section 35 of that act requires the Alabama Department of Education to include an instructional segment devoted to boating safety in the Driver and Traffic Safety Education curriculum beginning with the 1994-95 school year. Thus, standards devoted to boating safety are also included in this document.

Mountain Brook Curriculum Framework for Driver and Traffic Safety Education describes the basic components of a sound Driver and Traffic Safety Education program. This document contains the minimum required content for a one-semester or one-term 70 clock hour course. Content standards within this document define what students should know and be able to do as a result of instruction.

Driver and Traffic Safety Education is offered as an elective course primarily for tenth-grade students who are fifteen years of age or older and who are eligible to obtain an Alabama Learner License, but can be taken by eleventh and twelfth grade students.

The goal of the Driver Education program is to learn the fundamentals of safe and responsible driving within a variety of environments. This goal is attained through the required minimum 30 hours of classroom instruction and actual hands-on driving experience under the supervision of a certified driver education teacher.

The classroom phase includes content regarding highway license requirements, traffic laws, responsible ownership, driving procedures and maneuvers, factors related to youthful drivers, physical and mental impairments, other highway users, driving environments, and boating safety. Upon completion of the classroom phase, student drivers understand their responsibilities for occupants of their vehicles as well as responsibilities regarding other users of the highway transportation system.

Position Statements from State Course of Study

Mandatory Course

Statistics from the latest Alabama Accident Summary reveal that over one-half of all drivers in Alabama will be killed or injured in an automobile crash at some point in their driving career. More than 1,100 persons die in motor vehicle crashes each year in Alabama. Of all drivers involved in fatal crashes, over one-third are between the ages of 15 and 25. Due to the fact that many youthful drivers are involved in traffic mishaps, the Driver and Traffic Safety Education State course of Study Task Force recommends that beginning drivers be required to complete the Driver and Traffic Safety Education course. This course emphasizes the development and improvement of driving skills enabling drivers to become more capable of handling situations that arise in today's complex driving environment. The Driver and Traffic Safety Education course helps students develop the appropriate knowledge, skills, and attitude necessary for survival in the highway transportation system.

Learner License

This Task Force support the 1999 opinion of the Attorney General of Alabama that states that students enrolled in a driver and traffic safety education program approved by the State Superintendent of Education can legally drive on the streets and highways of Alabama without a learner license if the student is driving a driver education automobile with a certified driver education teacher during the regular school day. Students enrolled in the Driver and Traffic Safety Education course without a valid learner license should meet minimum health standards to operate a motor vehicle as outlined on the Alabama Driver license application form.

Mandatory Occupant Restraints

Over 75 percent of all persons killed in traffic crashes in Alabama did not use mandatory restraint devices. This Task Force recommends that all occupants in the driver education vehicle use the mandatory restraint devices.

