

**TEEN SMART DRIVER COMMUNITY HEALTH CAMPAIGN  
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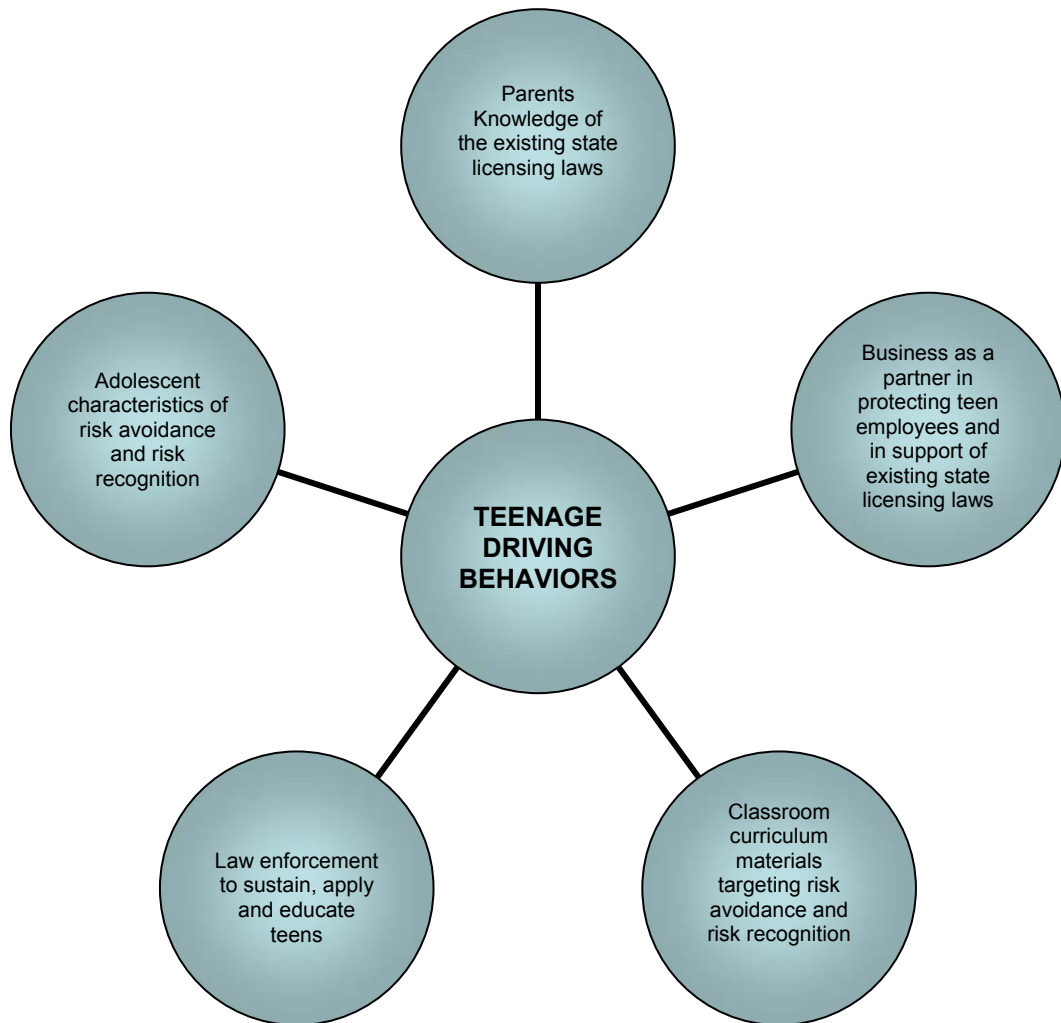
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## **GOALS**

The goals of the Teen Smart Driver Community Health Campaign media campaign are:

- To develop a multi-media health campaign addressing risk and risk avoidance behaviors of the novice teen driver.
- To form alliances with business communities in Virginia to promote teenage safe driving practices and reinforce state licensing procedures and curfew laws.
- To educate parents as to their role in support of existing state licensing law and the promotion of safe driving practices.
- To provide instructional materials to enable teens to assess their risk and modify risk taking behaviors.
- To form alliances with Virginia law enforcement agencies to sustain, apply, and educate teens concerning safe and responsible driving habits.



**Teen Smart Driver Community Health Campaign**

## Introduction

Virginia teens, like millions of their counterparts throughout the nation, see driving as the gateway to the world beyond their homes and to greater personal and social autonomy. Teens view the driver's license as a tangible symbol conveying their admittance and participation in society.

The act of driving an automobile is the single most dangerous act Virginians engage in daily. The art and responsibility of driving is far from the simple task it is perceived to be. Driving is a complicated mix of cognitive, perceptual, and psychomotor activities. (COMSIS, 1995)<sup>1</sup>

Least prepared are the youngest drivers in our communities. (Virginia Traffic Crash Facts 2002)<sup>2</sup> Sixteen- and 17-year-olds are the most likely to suffer the consequences of inexperience and failure to recognize risky situations.

There is great risk associated with the freedom and mobility of driving. The young driver's inexperience to anticipate road hazards and risks, coupled with a lack of personal motivation to avoid risk, often sets up a series of psychological reactions that increase the likelihood of an automobile crash. (Lonerio (1998) cited Anderson p4)<sup>3</sup> An "optimism bias" exists where the young driver discounts the dangers or risk, which cumulatively fosters an illusion of control. This illusion of control simply means that the individual feels he/she has more control in a situation that he/she really does. Every time an individual gets away with risky actions, there is a reinforcement of these behaviors. Many times these risky behaviors are repeated; and the more frequently these behaviors occur, the greater the chance that there will be negative outcomes. (Eby and Molnar (1998) cited Anderson p9)<sup>4</sup>

These risk-taking behaviors are the result of the exuberance of youth, their sense of invincibility, and their not understanding the ultimate consequences of their actions. In addition, young drivers do not fully appreciate the situational risks and are easily swayed by peer social influences. (Doherty, Audrey and MacGregor (1998) cited Anderson p9)<sup>5</sup> They overestimate their driving ability and disregard the seriousness of getting behind the wheel of a car, not realizing how deadly it can be. With their parents and driving instructors, teens may do everything "by the book"; but with friends, the rules are often forgotten.

Research indicates that when comparing drivers across age groups, the accident involvement rates of 16-19 year olds were higher than those of 20-24 year olds and 25-29 year olds, and were disproportionately higher on weekends and at nighttime. In addition, the 16-19 year old group of drivers was the only group to show that rates of crash involvement increase as the number of passengers increase. (IIHS, 2000)<sup>6</sup>

Risk acceptance and risk tolerance identify this age group as the most dangerous driver on Virginia highways. Cognizant of this, the Virginia General Assembly has enacted steps to mitigate these characteristics. Changes in the

licensing process enacted July 1, 2003, provide a graduated plan for teens to gain experience behind the wheel.

The Prince William County School Board acting through Prince William Network has partnered with the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) and the Virginia Association of Drivers Education and Traffic Safety (VADETS) to provide a media component for a Teen Smart Driver Community Health Campaign. This program will be a statewide media campaign aimed at modifying the at-risk behavior of teens 16-19 years of age. The health campaign will focus on:

- teen recognition of risky situations and risk avoidance strategies
- their parents as role models and reinforcers of existing state law
- the Virginia business community to solicit support for existing state laws and to partner for teen safety
- the community of driver educators and traffic safety persons
- law enforcement to sustain, apply and educate teens

As will be pointed out in this report, there has been no lack of attention to this health concern. Numerous state and national programs have been developed and volumes of research conducted and written. Educators and traffic safety researchers have worked to lessen the identified risks. Still, this health risk remains.

There are many models for addressing community health issues. One model -- the syndemic approach -- examines the connections between components of a health-related problem. What are the factors that play a part in a persistent health problem and how might they support and reinforce each other to reduce the health tragedy of rising teen injuries and fatalities?

The Center for Disease Control has identified ten essential elements of a health campaign. (CDC DHHS, (1999) Kopan J., 1999)<sup>7</sup>

1. Monitor health status to identify the community's health problem.
2. Diagnose and investigate the health problem and health hazards within a community.
3. Inform, educate, and empower people about health issues.
4. Mobilize community partnerships to identify and solve the health problem.
5. Develop policies and plans that support individual and community health efforts.
6. Enforce laws and regulations that protect health and ensure safety.
7. Link people to health services.
8. Assure a competent public healthcare workforce.
9. Evaluate effectiveness, accessibility, and quality of health programs.
10. Research new insights and innovative solutions to the health problem.

The essential elements and insights mentioned above provide the logic and structure for the application for the Teen Smart Driver Community Health Campaign.

This “ecological” examination of community factors that influence teen safe driving will provide the framework for an aggressive, insightful, and effective public health campaign that will make a difference in the lives of thousands of Virginia teens.

### Bibliography

- <sup>1</sup>COMSIS Corporation and the Johns Hopkins University. (1995). Understanding Youthful Risk Taking and Driving. (DOT-HS-808-318). Washington, D.C.: Department of Transportation.
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- <sup>3</sup>Lonero, L.P., (1998) Risk Mentality: Why Drivers Take the Risk They Do. World Traffic Safety Symposium, New York Auto Show. cited Anderson p4.
- <sup>4</sup>Eby, D.W. and L.J. Molnar. (1998). Matching Traffic Safety Strategies to Youth Characteristics: A Literature Review of Cognitive Development. (Report No. DTNH22-96-C05101). Washington, D.C.: Department of Transportation. cited Anderson p9.
- <sup>5</sup>Doherty, S.T., J.C. Audrey, and C. MacGregor. (1998). The situational risks of young drivers: The influence of Passengers, time of day, and day of week on accident rates. Accident Analysis and Prevention, 30(1), 45-52. cited Anderson p9.
- <sup>6</sup>Insurance Institute for Highway Safety. (2000a). Safety Facts, Fatality Facts: Teenagers [Online]. Available: [www.hwysfety.org/safety\\_facts/fatality\\_facts/teens.htm](http://www.hwysfety.org/safety_facts/fatality_facts/teens.htm)
- <sup>7</sup>The Center for Disease Control. (CDC DHHS, 1999: Kopan J., 1999)

## **IMPLICATIONS**

The statistics concerning the high rate of crashes and fatalities for teen drivers and research about teen cognition and risk-taking behavior provides the foundation for developing the Teen Smart Driver Community Health Campaign. The campaign will work with a public relations company to develop a theme, slogans, media, and educational components to complement the existing state driver curriculum.

### **Adolescent Component**

Driving an automobile is the single most dangerous activity that anyone can undertake during a day. Tens of thousands of accidents occur each day, and thousands of Americans die annually. Billions of dollars are lost through property loss, increased insurance costs, property damages and lost wages. From a health care and economic fact the United States is mired in an on-going health crisis that touches most families in America.

In Virginia, an estimated 92,000 new drivers obtain their permanent driver's license annually and many of these are our teenage sons, daughters, nephews, nieces, friends and acquaintances.

These teens are the most vulnerable and accident prone in our communities. Thousands will experience crashes and some will die.

The evidence regarding the attitudes and inclinations of teen driving have been studied and analyzed. The findings reveal the consequences of immaturity and inexperience that our teens negotiate as they practice on our highways. The lack of knowledge often translates into poor decisions, personal risk and risk taking behaviors.

### **Parent Component**

Parents are essential in promoting the safe-driving habits of their children and upholding existing Virginia licensing laws designed to give learning drivers the practice they need before teens earn full driving privileges.

The parent campaign will:

- Develop a survey for parents concerning their knowledge of the law
- Create Public Service Announcements directed at parents
- Aggressively targeting a parent's responsibility to provide a positive role model and to effectively communicate with teens during the driving learning experience

- Develop passive message mediums, such as billboards, slides before movies, and newspaper advertising
- Encourage support for graduated licensing and seatbelt use
- Form a network of Virginia parent organizations and associations to convey the message of parent's responsibility toward safe driving

### **Business Component**

Businesses' role will be to reinforce existing state licensing laws and procedures and communicate a commitment to good community health practices. The campaign will particularly target amusement parks, theaters, leisure sites, convenience franchises, and gasoline distributors where large numbers of teens work. Further, the campaign will seek to partner with state agencies that work with business that hire teens, encourage local and county governments to carry the message to local business community, and work with the Virginia Manufacturers Association and its members, as well as the State Chamber of Commerce, National Employees for Traffic Safety participation, and DriveSmart Virginia.

Also, the business campaign will:

- Form of a network of businesses that hire teens and young drivers
- Develop surveys posted on a web site for business representatives to test their knowledge of driver licensing procedures
- Develop passive media messages for businesses to support the teen driver campaign

### **Educational Component**

The educational component will include materials to:

- Evaluate personal risk levels
- Distinguish risky and hazardous driving situations
- Recognize risky driving behaviors in other teen drivers
- Develop an internal set of "guides" to evaluate risk while driving. UPS joined with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and Dale Jarrett, driver of the #88 UPS Ford Taurus on Lascar's Winston Cup circuit, to promote these safe driving tips that could be useful in this campaign. United Parcel Service website:  
[http://www.racing.ups.com/racing/ups\\_racing/archive/20020513.html](http://www.racing.ups.com/racing/ups_racing/archive/20020513.html)  
(02/07/04)<sup>1</sup>

1. Aim High In Steering: Look as far down the road as possible to uncover important traffic information to make appropriate decisions.

2. Get The Big Picture: Maintain the proper following distance so you can comfortably determine the true hazards around your vehicle. Don't tailgate others.
3. Keep Your Eyes Moving: Scan -- don't stare. Constantly shift your eyes while driving. Active eyes keep up with changing traffic conditions.
4. Leave Yourself An Out: Be prepared. Surround your vehicle with space in front and at least on one side to escape conflict.
5. Make Sure They See You: Communicate in traffic with your horn, lights, and signals to establish eye contact with motorists and pedestrians. Be reasonably sure of people's intentions.

In addition, the Teen Smart Driver campaign will be presented at state conferences for driver's education, health and physical education, and high school teachers and for high school principals. Later in the campaign, students ages 13 to 15 will be targeted to receive developmentally appropriate materials that are similar to those prepared for the young driver.

### **Law Enforcement Component**

Few occupations, other than morticians, see more dead and injured teenagers than police. Police, if not first on the scene, are always on the scene of most car crashes. Dedication, collaboration and commitment define the work of Virginia's law enforcement however, teens often resent this authority. Enforcing the "social contract" of Virginia's laws offers no better example of a community of individuals committed to protecting and safeguarding Virginia's teenagers.

**Bibliography**

<sup>1</sup>United Parcel Service website:  
[http://www.racing.ups.com/racing/ups\\_racing/archive/20020513.html](http://www.racing.ups.com/racing/ups_racing/archive/20020513.html)  
(02/07/04)

## ADOLESCENT RISK-AVOIDANCE STRATEGIES

### National Trends

- Young drivers account for 6.8% or 12.9 million of the 190.6 million licensed drivers in United States, this number is projected to increase (Traffic Facts 2001, DOT HS 809 483)<sup>1</sup>
- Driver fatalities for this age group dropped 1% from 1991-2001 <sup>1</sup>Ibid.
- In 2001, young male driver fatalities dropped 3% <sup>1</sup>Ibid.
- In 2001, young female driver fatalities increased 15% <sup>1</sup>Ibid.
- Statistics confirmed that motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for 15-20 year olds <sup>1</sup>Ibid.
- In 2001, 3,608 drivers 15-20 years old were killed, and an additional 337,000 were injured in motor vehicle crashes <sup>1</sup>Ibid.
- Teen drivers have the highest crash risk of any age group (“Beginning Teenage Drivers” A joint IIHS and NHTSA publication)<sup>2</sup>
- Per miles traveled, teen drivers have the highest involvement rate in all types of crashes <sup>2</sup>Ibid.
- The problem is worse for 16-year-olds who have the least driving experience <sup>2</sup>Ibid.
- Compared to crashes of older drivers, those involving 16-year-olds more often involve driver error <sup>2</sup>Ibid.
- Sixteen-year-olds have a higher crash rate where excessive speed is a factor <sup>2</sup>Ibid.
- Sixteen-year-olds fatal car crashes are more likely to occur when other teenagers are in the car <sup>2</sup>Ibid.
- Per miles driven, the nighttime fatal crash rate for 16-year-olds is about twice as high as the daytime fatal crash rate <sup>2</sup>Ibid.
- The population of 16-year-olds is rising, with 11% more 16-year-old drivers in 2000, and a projection of 17% more in 2005 and 23% more in 2010 (AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety)<sup>3</sup>
- Studies conducted in the U.S. and Australia report fatal crash rates four to six times greater for young truck drivers under 21 years old (Truckload Carriers Association, “Status Report”, Vol. 36, No. 10, 11/15/01)<sup>4</sup>
- Similar increases have been observed for crashes resulting in serious injury or property damage <sup>4</sup>Ibid.
- In the U.S. Army report for the Center for Army Lessons Learned (CALL)<sup>5</sup>, research indicated that soldiers younger than 21 are hospitalized for motor vehicle injuries about 5 times more often than of soldiers over 40
- Sixteen-year-old male drivers die at twice the rate of female drivers (“Beginning Teenage Drivers” A joint IIHS and NHTSA publication)<sup>2</sup>
- The three most common problems for the adolescent driver are insufficient instruction, nighttime driving, and teen passengers urging immature drivers to behave irresponsibly <sup>2</sup>Ibid.

- The risk of being injured or killed in a traffic crash is disproportionately higher for members of these ethnic groups: Latinos, African-Americans, and Native Americans (Traffic Safety Center Online Newsletter, Vol. 1, No. 4, Fall 2003)<sup>6</sup>
- Motor vehicular death is the leading cause of death for Latinos under 24 years of age <sup>6</sup>Ibid.
- 53% of teen driver deaths due to motor vehicle crashes occur on weekends (DriveHomeSafe.com)<sup>7</sup>
- More teens have been killed in automobile accidents during the last 10 years than soldiers lost in the Vietnam War (James and Nahl, University of Hawaii, Traffic Psychology)<sup>8</sup>
- One out of three teens have an accident during their first year of driving <sup>8</sup>Ibid.
- Teen drivers account for only 7% of all licensed drivers but 14% of all accidents and deaths <sup>8</sup>Ibid.
- According to police reports, 82% of teen accidents are caused by “driver error” <sup>8</sup>Ibid.
- The economic cost of accidents in 1999 was 150 billion <sup>8</sup>Ibid.
- Today, only cigarette smoking and heart disease kill more people in the U.S. than auto accidents, and 16-year-olds are 20 times as likely to be involved in an automobile accident <sup>8</sup>Ibid.

### **Virginia Trends**

- In 2000, fatalities have decreased 2.35%, injuries decreased 1.61%, crashes increased 2.18%; one crash occurred every 3.56 minutes; one driver out of every 19.38 drivers was involved in a crash; 2.50 lives are lost per day because of traffic crashes; and 216.15 persons injured per day because of traffic crashes (Virginia Crash Statistics for 2000, 15-20 year olds)<sup>9</sup>
- In 2002, 913 persons were killed in traffic crashes (of that 583 drivers were killed and 242 passengers killed); 78,896 persons were injured (of that 53,801 drivers were injured and 23,195 passengers were injured). There was a total of 147,737 crashes (of that 832 were fatal, 54,560 resulted in personal injury and 92,345 were property damage crashes) <sup>9</sup>Ibid.
- In 2002, 45 teenagers were killed in alcohol related crashes <sup>9</sup>Ibid.
- In the last 10 years teen drivers were most frequently involved in fatal accidents <sup>9</sup>Ibid.
- Teen drivers make up about 7% of licensed drivers, however, they account for about 13% of all fatal accidents and drive fewer miles than other age groups <sup>9</sup>Ibid.
- Most fatalities of this age group are males <sup>9</sup>Ibid.
- Losing control and running off the road are very common reasons for fatal accidents with this age group <sup>9</sup>Ibid.
- Most victims were unbelted <sup>9</sup>Ibid.

- The most common factors leading to a crash are excessive speed, driver inattention/distraction, driver left of center on road, and alcohol use <sup>9</sup>Ibid.
- Virginia has trimmed its driver education programs to include classroom sessions only, leaving mandatory behind-the-wheel instruction to commercial driving schools (The Washington Post, Health Section, p13, 09/08/98)<sup>10</sup>
- “Of all the health risks to young people -- infectious disease, other types of injuries, drug overdoses, homicides, suicides -- none is nearly as dangerous as what happens when teens climb inside vehicles.” <sup>10</sup>Ibid.
- Most commonly spoken foreign languages in Virginia: Spanish 61%, Korean 5%, Vietnamese 5%, Urdu 4%, Arabic 4%, Chinese-unspecified 3%, Farsi 2% (U.S. Department of Education’s Survey of Limited English Proficient Students and Available Educations Programs and Services report 2000-2001)<sup>11</sup>

### Adolescent Cognition and Risk Avoidance

During the research phase of the project, we have become aware of scores of teen driver studies. Representative of these studies was Ford Motor Company’s “Real World Driver: Driving Skills for Life.” (Ford Motor Company, 2003)<sup>12</sup> Utilizing a driving simulator laboratory, Ford uncovered some of the reasons why teens could be at a higher risk than adults. The research found that distractions within the automobile were a leading cause of accidents. How can a driver manage the interruptions and distractions of a cell phone and other electronic devices now found in so many vehicles? The Ford study revealed three characteristics of teens:

- Teen drivers don’t know how to share attention with multi-distractive devices.
- Teens have more trouble staying in their lane, especially when preoccupied by dialing a phone.
- Teens don’t leave enough distance between their car and the car ahead. ([www.realworlddriver.com](http://www.realworlddriver.com)) <sup>12</sup>Ibid.

These are examples of real-life adolescent risk taking that all too often end tragically. What the Ford study found was similar to many other surveys, reports, investigations, and editorials; adolescents accept risk and, in many cases, are attracted to it.

The George Mason University report entitled, “Young Drivers: A Study of Policies and Practices” asked the same fundamental question: what can we do to make our young drivers safer drivers? (Anderson, 2000)<sup>13</sup> In order to address this question, it is necessary to explore the variables in a teen’s life that are ironically juxtaposed with the right to drive.

Adolescent behavior is best described as behavior in transition. The visibly distinctive growth changes the make adolescents look almost adult belie the cognitive and neural changes, which have not yet reached adult maturity. Further, teens are in transition from the managed life of the child to the free choices of adult life, and their maturity is tested by the freedom and independence offered by the automobile. To complicate matters more are the complexities and variability of modern life.

The physiology of the adolescent is not fully developed. New technologies, such as MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging), reveal that the adolescent brain is far from mature. The adolescent does not have the emotional, mental, and physical abilities of an adult. Judgment formation located in the prefrontal cortex impacts on adolescent cognition and involves the inability to keep track of multiple thoughts, delays access to memories and emotions, and makes it difficult for teens to organize several tasks.

Augmenting this is the fact that myelination, or the coating of nerve cells to allow for rapid electro-chemical signals to pass from muscle to brain and back, is not completed until the early 20s. Some of these developing nerves connect areas of the brain that regulate emotions, judgment, and impulse control. This lack of complete neurological development becomes obvious in the adolescents underestimating of the dangers in risky situations. (Lonerio, L. *et. al.* 1995)<sup>14</sup>

Increased risk taking among adolescents is a critical factor in explaining high crash statistics. The COMSIS report in conjunction with Johns Hopkins University reported in "Understanding Youthful Risk Taking and Driving," that countermeasures are needed to deal effectively with youthful risk taking. (COMSIS 1995)<sup>15</sup> A better understanding of the nature of risk is critical to this end.

### **Teens, Driving and Risk-taking Behaviors**

Teens see risk as an acceptable trade off for the benefits of mobility and freedom. Teens seek varied, novel, complex, and intense sensations and experiences and are quite willing to take physical, social, legal, and financial risks to gain these experiences. <sup>13</sup>Ibid.

Teens and adults adopt different approaches to risk, called "risk orientation." There are three different risk-taking types:

- Risk avoiders (who avoid activities due to the risks involved)
- Risk reducers (who participate in high-risk activities in spite of the risks involved)
- Risk optimizers (who participate in high-risk activities partly because of the risks involved)

### **How Immaturity and Adolescence Intersect to Set the Stage for High-risk Behavior**

Teens are characterized by:

- Being susceptible to peer pressures
- Being immersed in a growing subculture of risk taking and aggressive driving attitudes
- Using poor judgment
- Being easily distracted by other teens inside the vehicle, which accounts for the increase in accidents when there are more passengers in the car
- Having an invincible attitude
- Failing to think ahead of the consequences of their high-risk driving behavior

Other mitigating factors that may contribute to high-risk behaviors among teens:

- Sleep deprivation
- Physiological developmental characteristics
- Hazards assessment
- Attraction or tendency to exceed speed limits
- Approach intersections at higher speeds
- Tendency to tailgate
- Lack of parental involvement regarding:
  - with whom their children are riding with
  - where are they going
  - what times will they be on the highway
  - how responsible is the teen driver that will be operating the vehicle
  - periodic monitoring of the teen's driving

### **Determining Adolescent Preferences from Survey and Focus Groups**

Critical to the success of the media campaign and the design of the theme and messages is the need to investigate the opinions, behaviors, and preferences of those who the campaign seeks to change, namely the novice driver. It was determined early in the planning process that a review of initial concepts would begin to give us insight into the tone of the campaign. The driver's educator's conference held in October 2003 in Hampton, Virginia, and sponsored by the VADETS (Virginia Association of Drivers Education and Traffic Safety) presented an opportunity to examine the preferences of the teachers of those teen drivers.

Fourteen creative concepts were presented to over 100 driver education teachers. Response sheets ranked the choices from 1 to 10, ten being the most desirable, and space was provided for written comments. After reviewing both the choices and comments, we narrowed the first 14 ideas offered down to the six with the highest averages on our response sheets. Six representative

schools across Virginia volunteered to participate in the survey. These high schools were contacted and packets of instructions and forms were mailed. The media concepts offered were those that had been selected by the teachers at the VADETS conference. We also conducted a survey at a high school in Prince William County following the same format used at the other schools. In addition, the first of three taped focus groups convened to discuss the style and content of public service announcements and media formats that appeal to teens.

### **Methodology for off-site Student Concept Survey**

The off-site surveys were conducted by volunteer driver education teachers at: Liberty High School, Atlee High School, Brunswick High School, E.C. Glass High School, and Denbigh High School. The manner of presentation was uniform and was read to the classes. Instructions to the teachers discussed the necessity to follow the script while presenting the concepts to ensure as uniform an environment as possible for students. It must be noted that since there was no Prince William County personnel present, one has to assume that all procedures were followed. No reported problems were encountered by the teachers and all were prompt in returning the student forms. The results are in two categories: the average of all schools (off-site surveys) and the average of the individual school (off-site surveys.) Attached are the results and comments for the six creative concepts.

### **Methodology for on-site Student Concept Survey**

The on-site surveys were conducted by Jon Bachman and took place at Osbourn Park High School, Giles County High School, and Warwick High School. The presentation was scripted and the six different concepts were read aloud to the students. The students were then given time to rate the concept and write down the strengths and weaknesses of the idea and make any other comments or suggestions. The results are in two categories: the average of all schools (on-site surveys) and the average of the individual school (on-site surveys.) Attached are the results and comments for the six creative concepts.

### **Methodology for Teen Focus Groups**

The teen focus groups were conducted by Jon Bachman and took place at Osbourn Park High School, Giles County High School, and Warwick High School. The focus groups were made up of students currently enrolled in a Drivers Education Class and were 15, 16, or 17 years of age. The presentation was uniform and the students were asked scripted questions. The question and answer session gave students an opportunity to express their thoughts, feelings, and personal experiences. The session was video taped and the dialogue between the students and Jon Bachman was then transcribed. Attached are the transcribed dialogues between Jon Bachman and the students.

### **Six Creative Concepts**

#### **1. The Anatomy of a Crash**

- This spot would show a car crashing in slow motion with the sound of a clock ticking and degrees of seconds being shown on the screen - .1 sec, .2 sec., etc. A narrator would tell what happens at each interval to your body during a 50 mph crash.
- Suggested opening graphic: “Would you Survive?”
- Tag possibilities: Consider the Price, Think Twice—It’s Real Behind the Wheel

#### **2. Why Bugs Don’t Drive Cars**

- Scene opens with a group of “rowdy” cartoon bugs hanging around a ceiling light fixture in a drivers’ Ed classroom. They are making fun of the students in drivers’ education class. Scene dissolves to another setting, this time the same group of cartoon bugs is seen flying around a student driver’s car. As he/she is practicing, the bugs continue laughing and mocking the teenage driver. One of the bugs continue laughing and mocking the teenage driver. Freeze frame (face of bug) a split second before the viewer hears a “splat and squoosh.” The teen driver turns on the windshield wipers smearing what was once one of the “bugs.” Screen is blank except for the slogan.
- Tag: “That’s why bugs don’t drive cars.”

#### **3. “Crusher,” the Mechanic**

- A semi-comic character developed to appear in some of the spots. This guy would be called, “Crusher the Mechanic.” He is a big guy, always greasy, always carrying a car part of some sort. His objective is to teach the kids the mechanical side of safety, checking tires, oil, glass, lights, road conditions, etc. There is no limit to where he can show up: at a funeral, by the side of the road, etc. “Crusher” would look “dumb” but is really quite an asset to help young people stay out of trouble with their vehicles.
- Some situations for “Crusher”: He talks to a state trooper about speeding, a judge at traffic court about the results of bad driving, etc.
- He visits people in the hospital who have been involved in a car accident. He could interview a racecar driver about the dangers of speed.

**4. IM in Hospital**

- For the majority of the PSA, you see only a laptop computer screen with text being typed in the format of Instant Messaging. The two screen names have a dialog-one of the screen names was the driver in an automobile accident. The other screen name is checking to see how he is recovering. The last frames of the PSA have a computer screen dissolve to the top third of the screen where you can still make out the text, but now you also see image of the boy who was driving typing at the laptop AND you see a boy in a hospital bed hooked to machines. The IM dialog that there was a passenger in the car who did not fare as well as the driver.

**5. Don't Get Left by the Side of the Road**

- Scene opens with passing of landscape on a rural two-lane road. In the distance on the side of the road is a small white "roadside cross." Camera freezes on a close up of the cross. Message is seen under the cross,
- Tag: "Don't Get Left by the Side of the Road. A License is for Life."

**6. Real Survivors – Interview**

- Somber music. Fade to photo of teen. Name: Jane Doe, Died: 1/12/03, cause of death: Auto Accident. Fade to close-ups of parents, friends, sister or bother talking about child dying in an auto accident with photos of child fading in and out.
- Tag Possibilities: Consider the Price; Your Life Matters!; Don't Be A Memory!

**Results of Student Survey of 6 Creative Concepts****Off Site Schools (Average of Atlee, Liberty, E.C. Glass, Denbigh, and Brunswick High School )****Presented order:**

Anatomy of a Crash 6.9

Why Bugs Don't Drive Cars 4.53

"Crusher," the Mechanic 5.27

IM in Hospital 5.84

Don't Get Left by the Side of the Road 5.92

Real Survivors: Interviews 6.58

**On Site Schools (Average of Giles, Osbourn Park, and Warwick High School)**

**Presented order:**

Anatomy of a Crash 6.39

Why Bugs Don't Drive Cars 5.03

"Crusher," the Mechanic 5.85

IM in Hospital 6.75

Don't Get Left by the Side of the Road 4.93

Real Survivors: Interviews 7.79

**Results of VADET Survey of Creative Concepts**

**108 Respondents**

The Anatomy of a Crash 8.12

Why Bugs Don't Drive Cars 7.52

"Crusher" the Mechanic 7.40

IM in the Hospital 6.57

Don't Get Left by the Side of the Road 6.41

Real Survivors: Interviews 6.19

**Teen Focus Group: Osbourn Park High School (OPHS)**

The following is a list of questions and responses that were asked to a class at OPHS.

1. What is your preferred media-where do you get most of your information-radio, TV, newspapers, or other sources?
  - Their preferred media is the internet and television. As a result teens get their information from the internet, television, or through a friend from word of mouth. When teens do listen to the radio they are constantly changing the stations when a commercial or PSA comes on or they listen to CDs.
2. If you wanted to create a message or market an idea to teens, what would be some of the things to think about?
  - Use real people in real situations
  - Show the truth i.e., The Truth Campaign
  - Scare people by using real images
  - Show the effects of an accident on the family, friends, insurance, etc.
3. Do you think public service messages are effective?
  - They are not effective because they do not get the attention of teens. The content of the public service messages are uninteresting because of the language and content.
4. What public service announcements do you remember?
  - Tobacco PSA: People outside a tobacco company fall down on the sidewalk/street representing the number of people that were killed by tobacco
  - Anti-Drug PSA: A young child outside is putting an inflated tube in a pool. The babysitter responsible for watching the child is getting high.
5. What safe driving public service announcements do you remember?  
(No response)
6. Which public service messages are the most effective in your opinion?
  - Tobacco PSA: People outside a tobacco company fall down on the sidewalk/street representing the number of people that were killed by tobacco

- Anti-Drug PSA: A young child outside is putting an inflated tube in a pool. The babysitter responsible for watching the child is getting high.
7. Should public service messages aimed at teens scare them?
- Yes: Make them realize the consequences of driving irresponsibly, Make them think when they are driving.
  - No: Might scare people so they will not want to drive.
8. Which is worse getting a ticket or having an accident?
- Having an accident is worse but some teens would say that getting a ticket is worse. Most teens do not think about getting into accidents they are more worried about tickets because:
    - they do not want to get into trouble with their parents
    - they do not want to have their license taken away
    - they do not want to have to pay for a ticket or their insurance if it goes up as a result of a ticket.
    - Teens have a “that won’t happen to me” attitude about accidents.
9. Most highway deaths are alcohol related?
- Teens think that accidents are a result of alcohol.
10. Is safe driving a community or personal issue?
- Personal: they are the ones that are driving
  - Community: the driver can harm others

**Teen Focus Group: Giles County High School Group 1**

1. What is your preferred media-where do you get most of your information-radio, TV, newspapers, or other sources?
- Majority of students own a computer and get their information from the internet
  - Majority of students spend up to a half hour on the computer
  - Half of the students spend a half hour or more on the computer
  - Half of the students prefer television over other types of media
  - 2 students prefer the internet over other types of media
  - 3 students prefer the internet and television over other types of media

- 4 students read the newspaper on a daily basis
  - ¼ of students receive a daily newspaper at home
2. Do you think public service messages are effective?
- None of the PSAs are effective
  - People don't change their minds or behaviors
  - They wouldn't pay attention to them
  - A majority of students agree that these ads were not effective
  - They weren't going to change their behaviors because of the ads
3. What public service announcements do you remember?
- Majority of students have been exposed to public service messages such as: drugs, safe sex, drunk driving, conservation, Subway-Jared
4. Which public service messages are the most effective in your opinion?
- A majority of students think serious is more effective/better
  - If something is funny they are more likely to go out and try it (try the risky behavior) it is not going to persuade me to not do it
5. Should public service messages aimed at teens scare them?
- Most students said it did not matter if the ad is scary or not. It is not going to effect them either way
- Examples of risky behavior:
- I was in the car with my mom's boyfriend and he was driving over 100 mph.
  - I was in the car and we drove past a car that was on the wrong side of the road with a blown out tire.
  - I got stopped by police because I was speeding on the highway.
  - I was riding in a truck and there was a sofa in the bed of the truck. The sofa fell out onto the highway. The car behind us swerved and hit the median. Another car rear-ended us.
6. Is safe driving a community or personal issue?
- Most students feel that it is a personal issue
  - Some students say it effects both you personally and the community
  - A few students think it effects just the community

**Teen Focus Group: Giles County High School Group 2**

1. What is your preferred media-where do you get most of your information- radio, TV, newspapers, or other sources?
  - Half of the students get their information from the internet
  - A majority of students have a computer at home
  - 1/3 of the students spend at least an hour on the computer everyday
  - 1/6 of the students spend more than an hour on the computer everyday
  - Half of the students get their information from television
  - One third of the students get their information from friends.
  - Less than one fourth of the students get their information from newspapers.
  
2. If you wanted to create a message or market an idea to teens, what would be some of the things to think about?
  - Half of the students agreed that PSAs should be serious
  - Lots of ways to get attention without making them (the audience) sad, depressed
  - You can't sugar coat some issues
  - Most students agree that you should make the message blunt and to the point, factual
  - Don't make it too complicated
  
  - If it is too serious they won't listen. Example: "If my parents are trying to talk to me about a serious subject I usually just shrug it off and don't pay any attention to what it is they are trying to get across."
  
3. Do you think public service messages are effective?
  - Only one student from this group believed that PSAs can change their behavior
  
4. What public service announcements do you remember?
  - I remember ads that are funny because they catch your attention. It stays with you and the next day you will talk to your friends about it. Example: Super Bowl commercials.
  - Depends on your personality whether or not you are going to think something is humorous
  
5. What safe driving public service announcements do you remember?
  - Tobacco ads

- Anti Drug Example: This is your brain, this is you brain on drugs
6. Which public service messages are the most effective in your opinion?
- Most PSAs are stupid. They don't understand them. They are directed towards younger kids.
  - The PSAs are being made by people who don't know what they (teenagers) like. There are so many opinions that the PSAs are only geared towards one group of people. There are so many groups of people that you can't reach all of the groups. Example people's musical tastes rock, rap, R&B, country, etc. The PSAs try to be hip and please the "in crowd"
7. Is safe driving a community or personal issue?
- All students feel that is both a community issue and a personal issue
8. Have you ever been involved as a driver, passenger, or observer of risky behavior?
- I was hit by a truck when turning onto a road.
  - Two of my friends were killed in a car accident.
  - ¾ students know someone who has been involved in an accident
  - 1/3 of students know someone who has been killed in an accident

**Teen Focus Group: Giles County High School Group 3**

1. What is your preferred media-where do you get most of your information-radio, TV, newspapers, or other sources?
- A majority of students get their information from television
  - 3 or 4 students get their information from the internet
  - 1 student gets their information from a newspaper
2. If you wanted to create a message or market an idea to teens, what would be some of the things to think about?
- Make PSAs that are serious and to the point
3. Do you think public service messages are effective?
- Commercials dealing with weight loss are effective
  - 3 or 4 students commented that weight loss campaigns are effective and have changed their behavior

4. What public service announcements do you remember?
  - Remember ad campaigns for AIDS, smoking, SARS, cancer, drugs, mad cow disease
  - Most students have seen PSAs relating to drugs and tobacco
  
5. Have you ever been involved as a driver, passenger, or observer of risky behavior?
  - Almost half of the students have been in a car with risky behavior
  - Almost half of the students have been in a car with 4 or more friends
  - 5 students have been involved in a car accident
  - Half of the students know someone (friends or family) who have been in an accident
  - Example: Family friend fell asleep at wheel and hit a tree. Their child was in coma and had severe brain damage as a result
  - Example: Girls say that boys scare them when driving because of road rage, like to go fast, joking around, they like to show off
  - $\frac{3}{4}$  of the Girls feel that boys are more of a risky than they are
  - 1 student (girl) got out of a car when someone was driving at risk
  
6. Would NASCAR be an effective campaign for teen driver safety?
  - Not a good idea because the NASCAR drivers drive fast and they would want to follow this behavior
  
7. What role models would you use?
  - Athletes, rescue squad, people that have been involved in accidents (survivors)

**Teen Focus Group: Giles County High School Group 4**

1. What are your thoughts about being able to drive?
  - Your parents do not have to chauffeur you around
  - Do what you want, Go where you want
  - Responsibility
  - Parents say, "I can't wait until you can drive."
  - More than  $\frac{3}{4}$  of parents have talked to their teens about driving responsibly
  - 4 students said their parents have not talked to them about this
  
2. What is most enjoyable about driving?
  - Jobs
  - Listening to music
  - Seeing your friends

- Freedom of choice
- Go where you want, when you want

Experience:

- Half of the students have had some behind the wheel experience
  - 6 students are keeping a log of their driving experiences
  - 1 student's parents are being strict about the log
  - The rest of the parents are not being strict about the log
3. How confident are you about your driving skills?
- Would like to think that I could drive well, but probably can't
4. How confident are you about driving in bad weather conditions?
- I drive slow when the weather is bad
  - Parents won't allow us to drive when the weather is bad, but how do we get experience in those types of conditions?
5. Have you ever been involved as a driver, passenger, or observer of risky behavior (scary situations)?
- Have to keep up with other cars, which means you have to go over the speed limit
  - I was driving home with my mom when a cop followed us the entire time, my mom was freaking out
  - When other family members are in the car I am concerned for their safety
  - Tractor trailers on the interstate
  - Driver is trying to show off
  - Half of the students have been in car with 4 or more people
6. What are some distractions?
- Don't like cops
7. Have you ever been involved in a car accident? Do you know of anyone that has been in a car accident (friend or family member)?
- Family member involved in accident about half of students
  - 3 students have been in accidents
8. Have you ever been afraid when someone else is driving?
- Brother drives fast on back roads
  - Afraid when girls are driving

- All have been in car when someone was driving at least 10 mph over speed limit
9. Are you currently employed?
- 3 or 4 students currently have jobs
  - Half of the students have summer jobs and they plan to drive to work when they receive their license
10. Should public service messages be serious or funny?
- Can be funny and still have a serious meaning

**Teen Focus Group: Warwick High School Group 1**

1. What is your preferred media-where do you get most of your information-radio, TV, newspapers, or other sources?
- More than half of the students have a computer
  - Majority of students spend 30 minutes or more on the Internet
  - Their friends are not a source of information, they get their information elsewhere
  - All of the students watch television
  - One third of the students get a newspaper daily
  - A few students only receive newspapers on Sundays
2. What would you put in a commercial?
- Teens involved in athletics
  - Drinking and driving results in car crash
  - Cartoon of teens eating healthy
3. What public service announcements do you pay attention to?
- I pay attention to public service announcement where the families are affected and once you see that you think that could happen to my family. It could happen any day and it makes you think and maybe change your ways.
  - Mostly the are boring and don't grab your attention
  - Drug commercials
4. What are some public service announcements you remember?
- Tobacco-all the bodies falling
  - Drugs-Little boy waiting for his older brother to pick him up after practice. His brother forgot to pick him up because he was getting high

- Drugs-Died from overdosing on drugs and they show pictures of her and her family
  - Drugs-Little girl standing next to a pool and the babysitter is inside getting high instead of watching her
  - Drugs-Babies crying
5. What public service announcements are most effective serious or comical?
- Serious: 1/3 of students raised their hands
  - Comical: 2/3 of students raised their hands
6. You are about to get your license, so what are your thoughts now about driving? What scares you about driving?
- Scared to drive in the rain
  - Pulling out into oncoming traffic is scary
  - Scared about driving with big trucks on the road like tractor trailers
  - Driving is a privilege
  - Scared to drive on an interstate
7. What are the things most enjoyable about driving?
- Freedom
  - You can go where you want to
  - You don't have to have your parents permission
  - More independent
  - You can be in the car with friends
  - Get away from your parents
  - Showing off with friends
8. How many of you already have driving experience?
- $\frac{3}{4}$  of students raised their hands
9. How confident do you feel about your driving skills now?
- I'm okay but I need a lot more practice with traffic
  - I'm ready and I can do it and it's fun
  - I just keep pressing the break
  - You can be as confident as you want but you don't know what's going to happen when you are on the road so you just have to keep your eye on the road and be ready for anything
  - Best way to drive is defensively so you don't run into anything

10. How many of you have had a friend involved in a car accident?
- 10 students raised their hands
11. How many of you have had a family member involved in a car accident?
- 11 students raised their hands
12. How many of you have been in an accident?
- 9 students raised their hands
13. What do you consider “risky driving” behavior?
- Swerving in and out of lanes or changing lanes and not using a blinker
  - Not paying attention with friends in the car
  - Talking on your cell phone
  - Speeding around sharp corners
  - Trying to show off
  - Speeding on ice
  - Drinking and driving
14. Have you ever been scared when you were in the car while friends were driving?
- Half of the students raised their hands
  - My cousin was driving too fast almost hit a car
  - Friend likes to tailgate
  - When she turns on wiper she turns the wheel with them
  - My friend sits way, way, way back in the seat
  - My friend likes to change lanes a lot and not use a blinker
15. In the last few months have you read or heard about teens and people under the age of 21 dying in car accidents?
- 6 students raised their hands
16. The number of teens dying in car crashes is rising-do you think there are reasons for the rise?
- Some people just don’t know when too much is too much
  - Some parents aren’t responsible about buying their teens a car
  - Some parents don’t let their children earn the privilege to drive; they just give them the keys
  - Some teens just not responsible enough to drive
  - More technology out like cell phones and the radio, these are all distractions

- Some people just drive carelessly

**Teen Focus Group: Warwick High School Group 2**

1. What is your preferred media-where do you get most of your information-radio, TV, newspapers, or other sources?
  - A majority of students have access to a computer
  - A majority of students spend an hour or more on a computer
  - ¾ of the students watch television
  - Half of the students receive a daily newspaper
  - Few students receive a newspaper on Sundays only
2. Which Public Service Announcements do you remember?
  - Truth Commercials-They hit you hard because they show you a different aspect that you don't see. Example: Body bags
  - Truth Commercials-They are reality, they do it in a way you don't think about, but they put it in such a way that makes us think
  - Anti drug-Makes you not want to smoke because of sports and other activities and all that. Keeps you away from all that
3. What type of public service announcements are most effective serious or comical?
  - 4 students said comic
  - 12 students said serious
4. Have you ever seen a public service announcement for driving?
  - Put the baby in the back seat
  - Click It or Ticket
5. Are there any driving public service announcements you remember?
  - Crash dummies
  - Drugs-Guy was smoking weed and he hit a girl while at a drive thru
6. Do you ever listen to commercials on the radio?
  - No, turn it to a different station
7. Should public service announcements scare you?
  - Yes
  - Example: Smoking-All these dead bodies on the street and there were people walking past them

- Example: Smoking-Every 8 seconds someone dies from smoking cigarettes and they pass around an orange dot to the next person who is going to die
  - Example: Smoking-Poster of a woman and she was smoking and her face was all burned up, it was nasty
  - Smoking-When you smoke your lungs turn black what if the outside of your body turned black like your lungs from smoking
8. What do you consider “risky driving” behaviors?
- Under the influence of drugs or alcohol
  - Driving too fast
  - Driving without a license
  - Radio or bass is too loud and causing the car to shake
  - Doing too many things while driving: talking on the phone, doing your make up, and talking to friends
  - Racing
  - If you wear glasses and you don’t wear them while you drive
9. What are your thoughts about driving?
- Hopefully the first day I get my license I won’t wreck or like the first week something like that
  - Please don’t let me get a ticket close to when I get my license
10. What is worse getting a ticket or getting into an accident?
- 3 students said ticket
  - 15 students said crash
11. What is enjoyable about driving?
- Get away from your family
  - Being able to leave when you want to you and you don’t have to wait on someone else
  - You can go wherever you want to
  - Being able to get away and do what you want
12. What scares you about driving?
- Old people are dangerous on the road
  - Little children playing in the street and jumping out at you
  - Getting into an accident and hurting someone and its my fault or getting a ticket
  - Other people driving because you know what you are doing but you don’t know what they are doing
  - Trucks driving in front of you with stuff in the back of the truck

- Getting on the interstate
  - Seeing a car on the side of the road that is messed up from being in an accident
  - Kids throwing a ball into the street and you have to swerve to miss them
  - Getting into an accident with a big truck
13. How many of you have had a friend involved in a crash?
- 14 students raised their hands
14. How many of you have had a family member involved in a crash?
- 8 students raised their hands
15. How many of you have been in an accident?
- 10 students raised their hands
16. The number of teens dying in car crashes is rising-do you think there are reasons for the rise?
- Impatient on the road
  - Watching movies like "The Fast and the Furious" and it makes you want to go out and try it
  - Women are complicated so they are thinking about themselves and not the road
  - It is cool to speed, it is a rush
  - They are anxious to drive so when they get their foot on the pedal they just go all out
17. Have you ever seen someone get really mad on the road?
- All students raised their hands.

**Teen Focus Group: Warwick High School Group 3**

1. What is your preferred media-where do you get most of your information-radio, TV, newspapers, or other sources?
  - Half of the students have access to computers
  - ¼ of students spend an hour or more on the computer
  - Half of the students receive a daily newspaper
  - None of the students receive a paper on Sundays only
  - Half of the students say they get their information from other people
  - ¾ of the students say that television is the most influential
  - A few students say that Internet is influential
2. What public service announcements do you remember?
  - Tobacco-Mannequins walking around and they have messages written on them
  - Crash Dummies were shown drinking and driving
3. What driving public service announcements have you seen?
  - Going to the gravesite of his brother. A drunk driver killed the brother and it ended up being him.
  - Newspapers tell you about accidents
  - Squirrels in the middle of the road and the car swerves to miss hitting the squirrel. (Insurance Commercial)
  - Drunk Driving-Shows home videos of people that were killed by drunk drivers
4. What public service announcements scare you?
  - Don't like the drunk driving one with the home videos
5. What public service announcements are most effective serious or comical?
  - 10 students say serious
  - 6 students say comical
6. What do you consider "risky driving" behaviors?
  - Racing
  - Distractions such as cell phones, make up, etc
  - Smoking
7. Do movies, video games, etc., encourage "risky behavior?"

- In reality they know that they can't get away with it. They know the difference between the two.
  - You remember the action scene and you talk about it with friends but you don't go out and do it
  - It is influential and sometimes you aren't always aware of what is make believe and what you can do
8. How many of you have some driving experience?
- $\frac{3}{4}$  of the students raised their hands
9. Now that you have driving experience what are you thoughts about driving?
- I feel confident
  - You have to have a lot of concentration
  - When I'm driving I get nervous about the other people on the road and what they are doing like changing lanes and driving fast
  - I take it more seriously now
10. What is enjoyable about driving?
- Go places without parents
  - Go anytime you want
  - Go out with friends
11. Have your parents ever said "I can't wait until you get your license?"
- $\frac{3}{4}$  of students raised their hands
12. Have you ever been scared by someone's driving?
- I was in the car when my friend was speeding on back roads
  - My mom pulled out into oncoming traffic
13. In the last few months have you read or heard about teens and people under the age of 21 dying in car accidents?
- A few students raised their hands

14. General Comments:

- They shouldn't make cars go so fast. Every year they come out with cars that go faster
- Speed limit encourages people to go faster
- People are right on your tail and you don't have a choice but speed
- Speed limits pressure people to check their speedometer

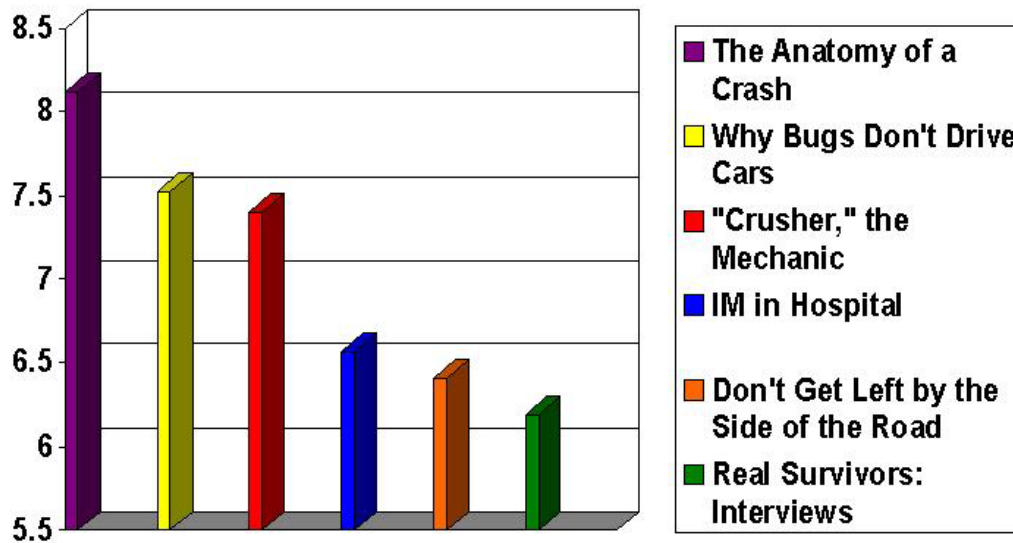
The results of those surveys and focus groups are listed below:

VADET (p.18)

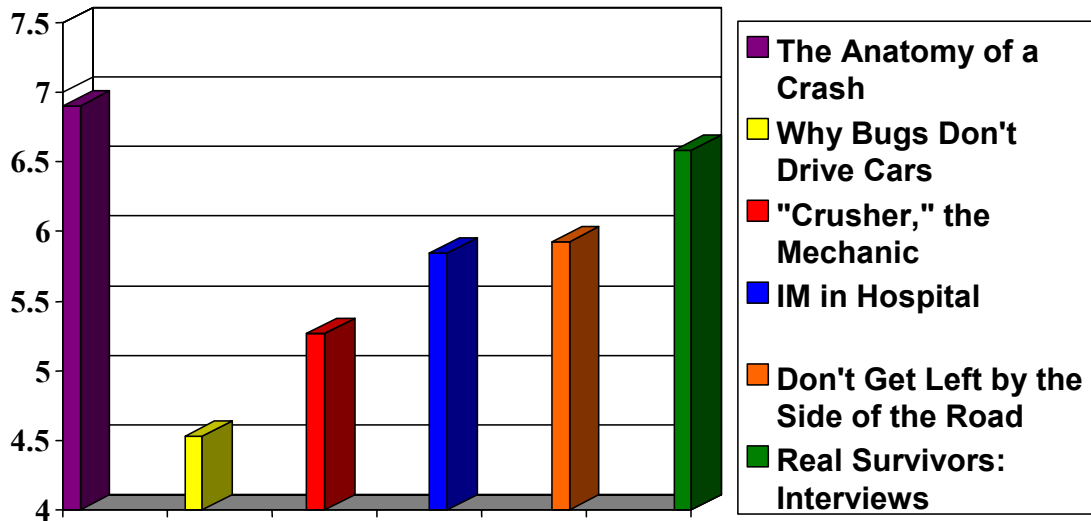
External and Internal High Schools Concept Survey (p.19-22)

Virginia Alcohol Safety Action Program (VASAP), Kinzey and Day Focus Groups,  
December 2000 (p. 23-24)

## VADET Survey of Creative Concepts

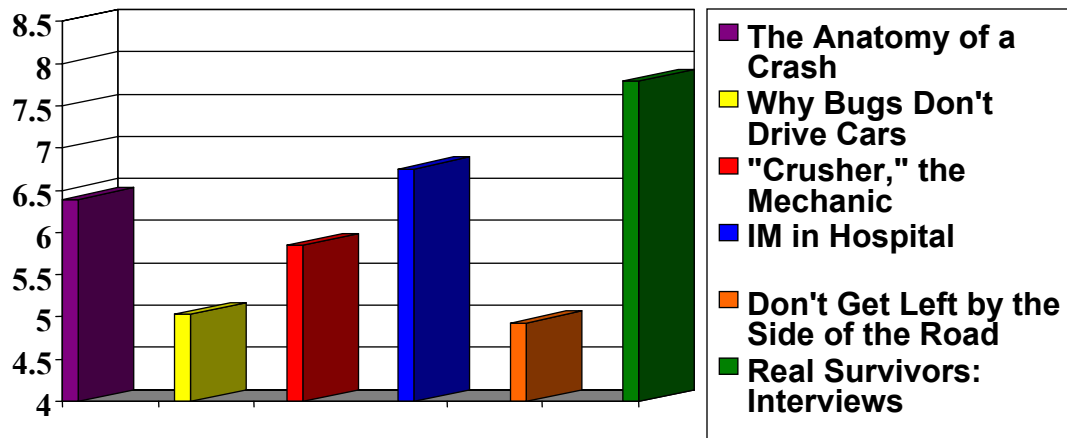


# Creative Concept Averages Off Site Schools



\*This survey based on a scale of 1 (lowest) to 10 (highest). Includes Atlee, Liberty, E.C. Glass, Denbigh, and Brunswick High School.

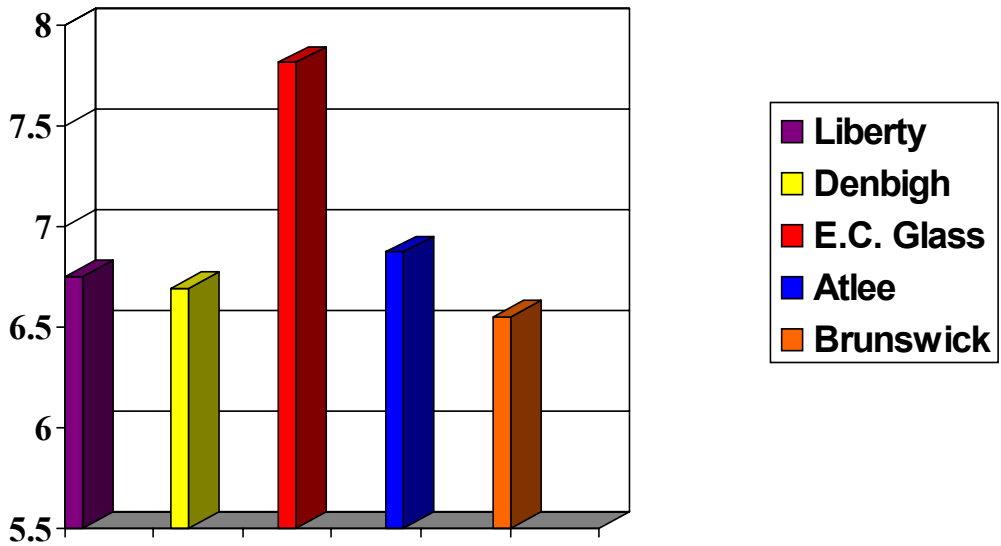
# Creative Concept Averages On Site Schools



\*This survey based on a scale of 1 (lowest) to 10 (highest). Includes Giles, Osbourn Park, and Warwick High School.

# The Anatomy of a Crash

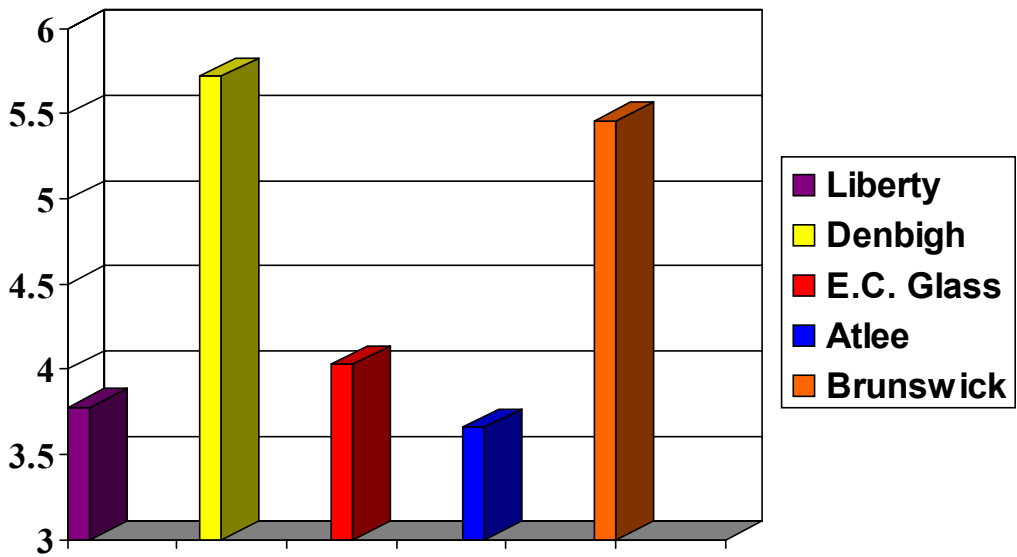
## Off Site Schools



\*This survey based on a scale of 1 (lowest) to 10 (highest)

# Why Bugs Don't Drive Cars

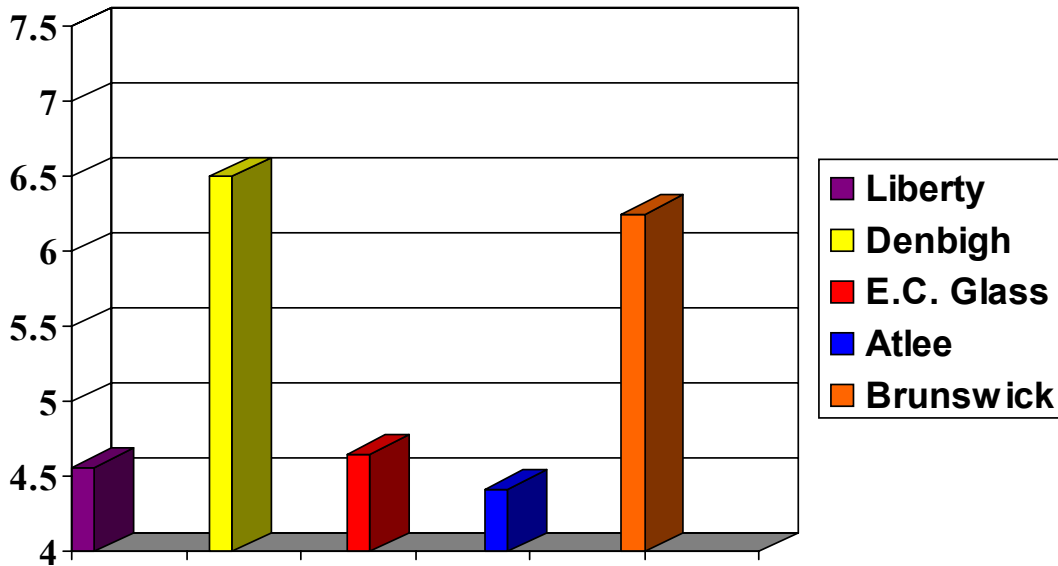
## Off Site Schools



\*This survey based on a scale of 1 (lowest) to 10 (highest)

# “Crusher,” the Mechanic

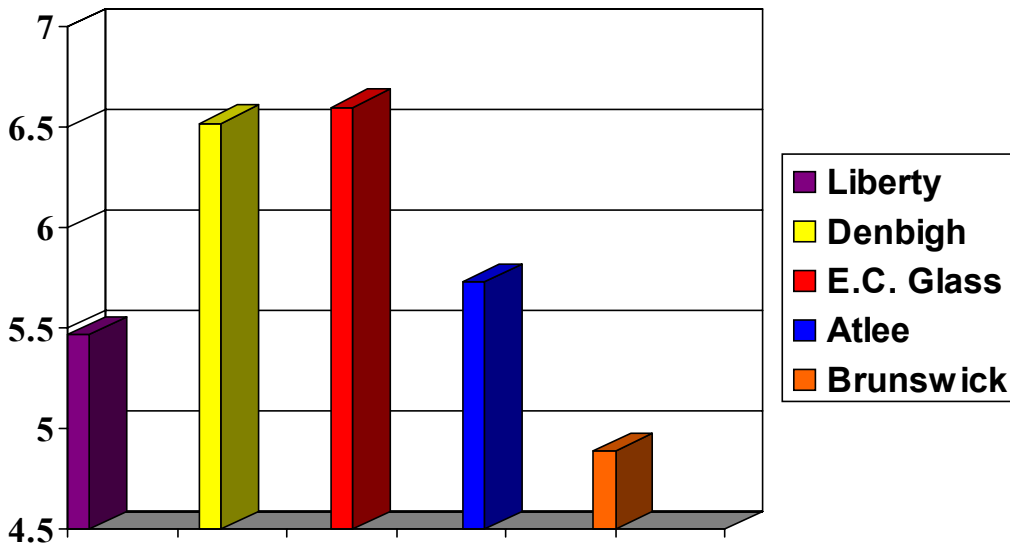
## Off Site Schools



\*This survey based on a scale of 1 (lowest) to 10 (highest)

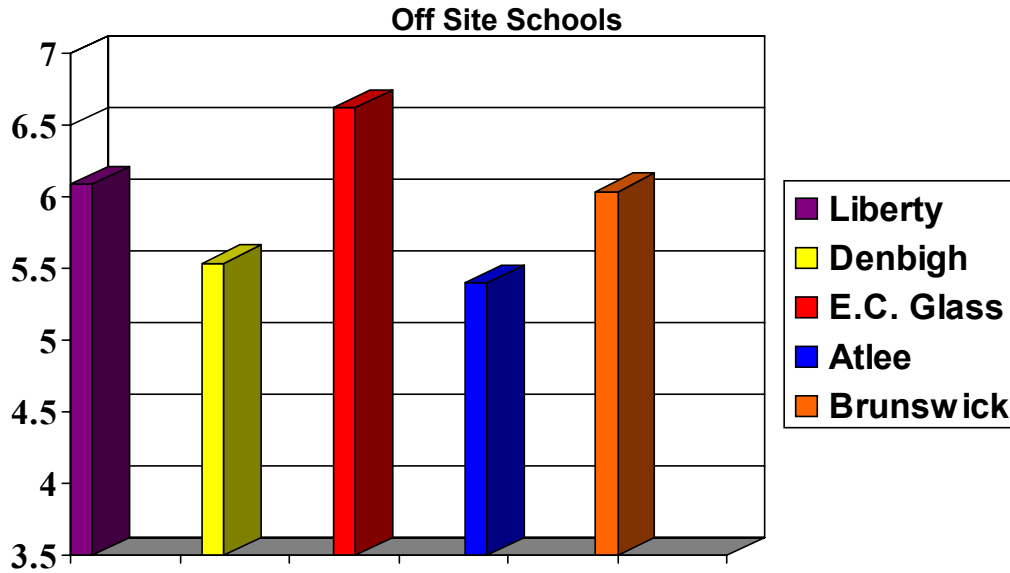
# IM in Hospital

## Off Site Schools



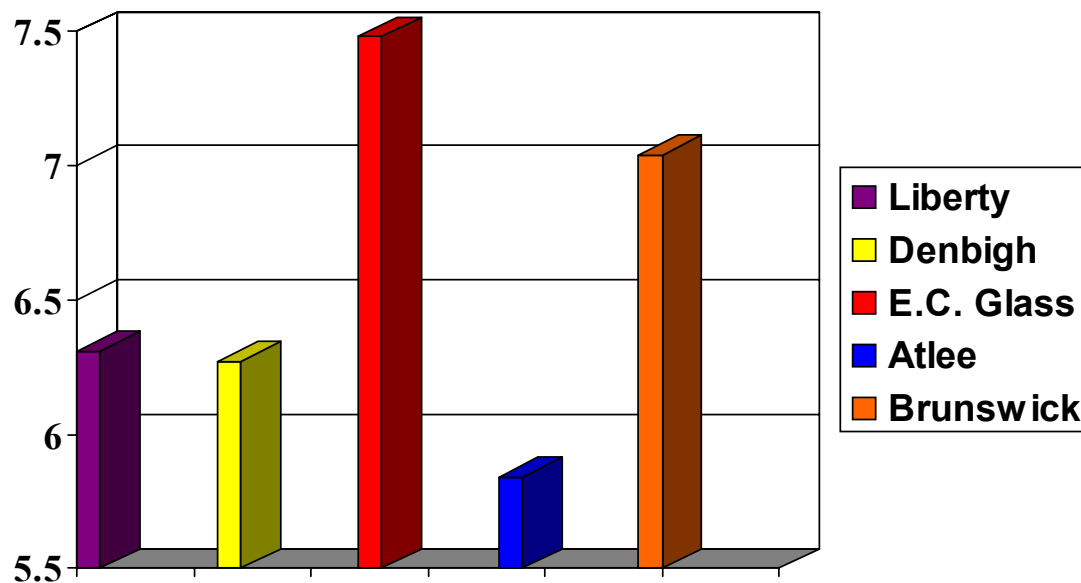
\*This survey based on a scale of 1 (lowest) to 10 (highest)

## Don't Get Left by the Side of the Road



\*This survey based on a scale of 1 (lowest) to 10 (highest)

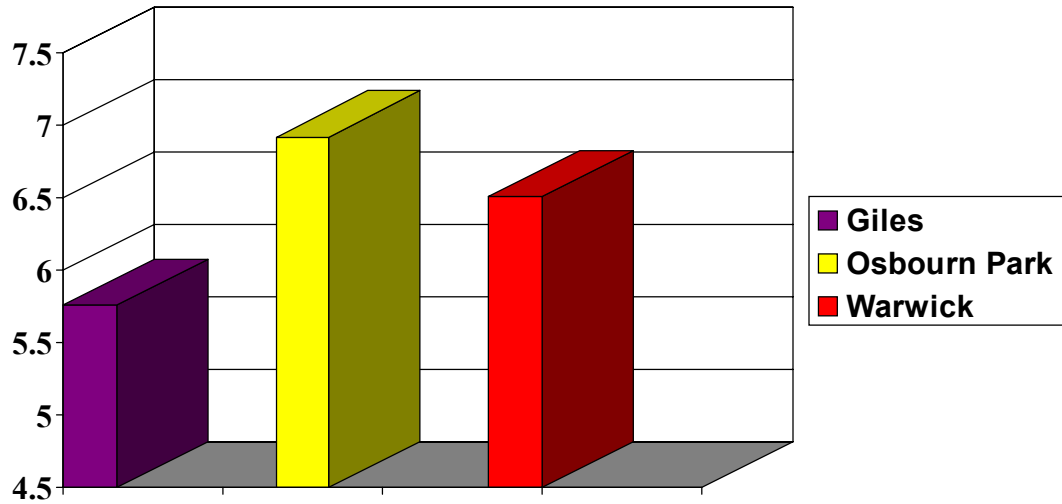
## Real Survivors: Interviews



\*This survey based on a scale of 1 (lowest) to 10 (highest)

# The Anatomy of a Crash

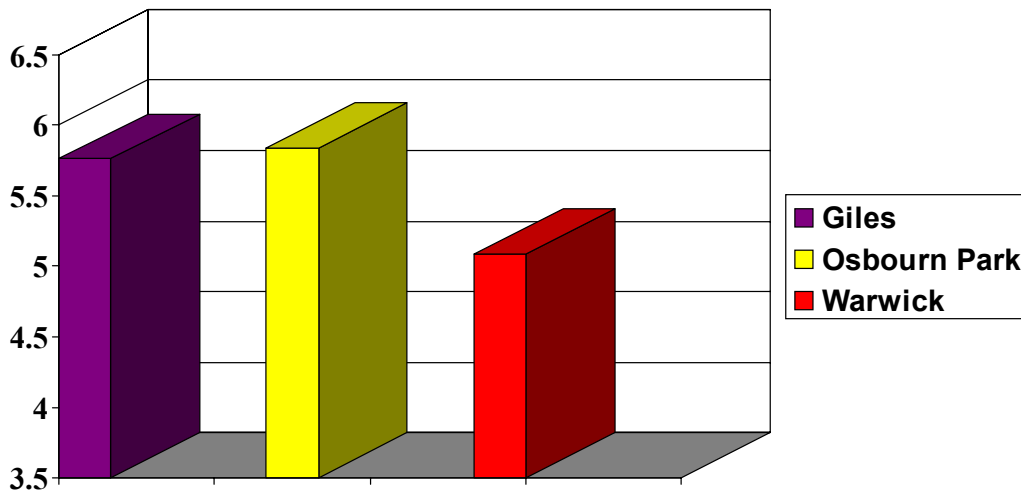
## On Site Schools



\*This survey based on a scale of 1 (lowest) to 10 (highest)

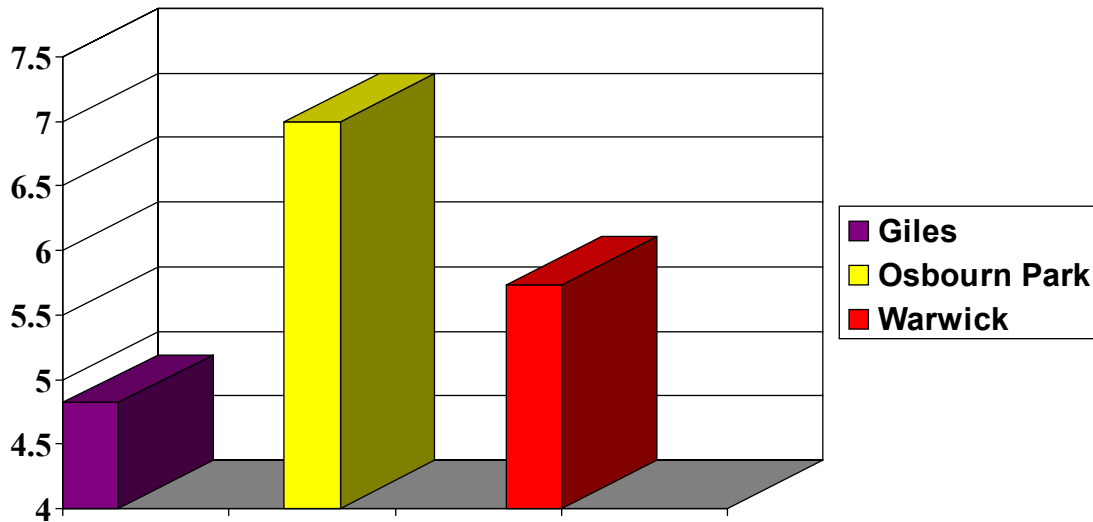
# Why Bugs Don't Drive Cars

## On Site Schools



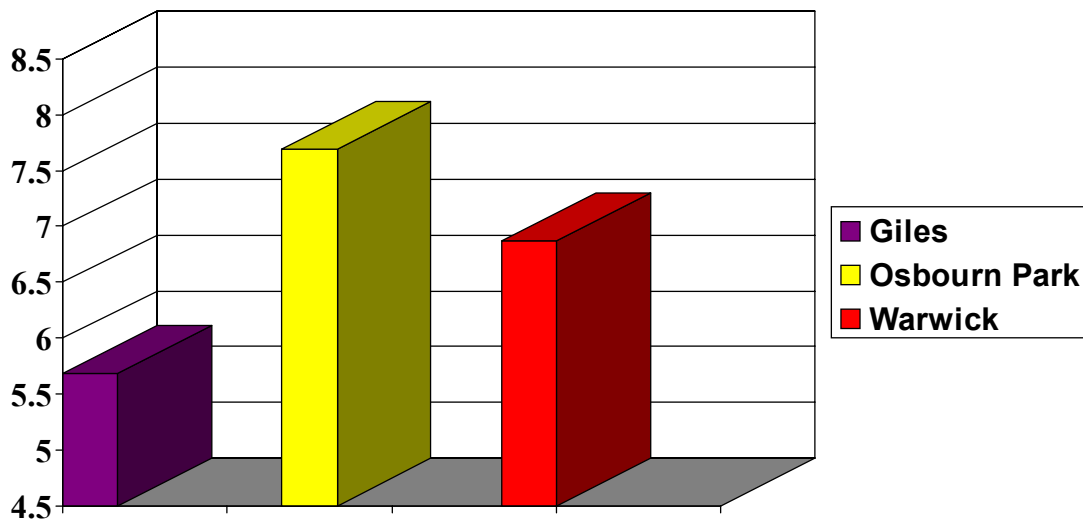
\*This survey based on a scale of 1 (lowest) to 10 (highest)

# “Crusher,” the Mechanic On Site Schools



\*This survey based on a scale of 1 (lowest) to 10 (highest)

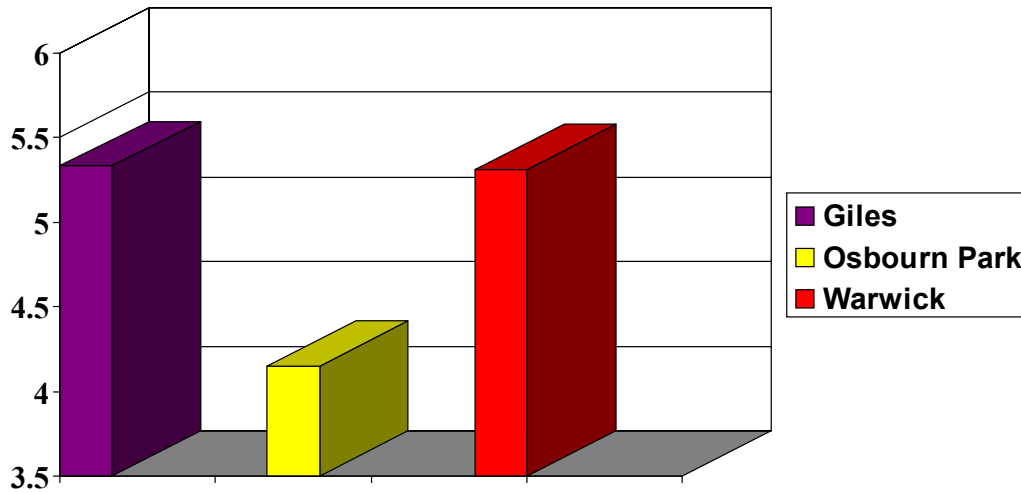
# IM in Hospital On Site Schools



\*This survey based on a scale of 1 (lowest) to 10 (highest)

# Don't Get Left by the Side of the Road

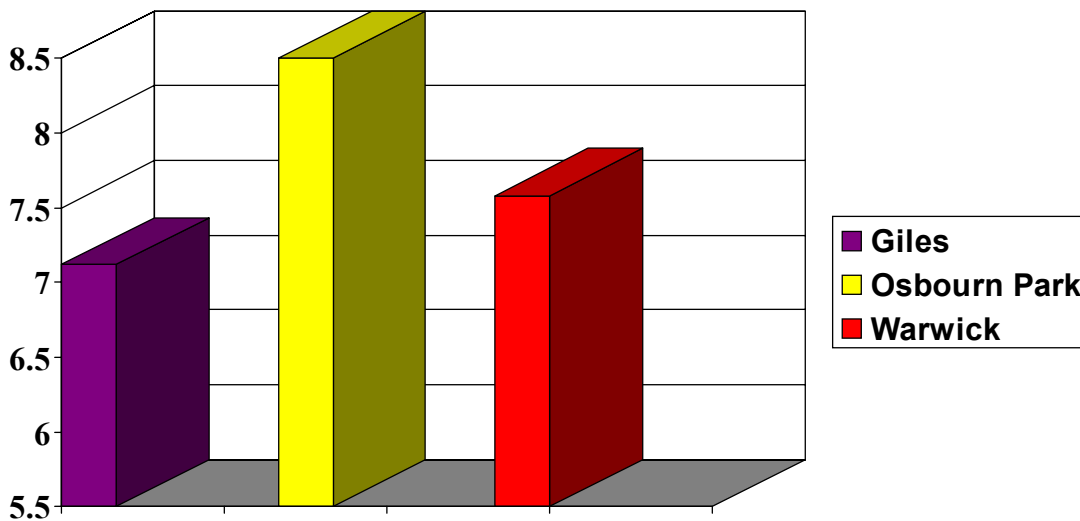
## On Site Schools



\*This survey based on a scale of 1 (lowest) to 10 (highest)

# Real Survivors: Interviews

## On Site Schools



\*This survey based on a scale of 1 (lowest) to 10 (highest)

**Attitudes Towards Driving and Safety Issues**

**By**  
**Rebecca Day**  
**Reynolds Kinzey**

Report on four focus groups: Men 15-17, Men 18-20, Women 15-17, and Women 18-20. Participants represent a mix of races and household incomes and they either have a full driving permit or a learners' permit. The groups were conducted on December 5 and 6, 2000 in Richmond, Virginia.

**Driving Behaviors**

Older Men 18-20 years of age

Admit to aggressive behavior when:

- They are running late
- They are in a hurry
- When another driver irritates them

Younger Men 15-17 years of age

Admit to racing:

- They do this for fun on Friday and Saturday nights
- They do this to show off for their friends
- They do this because it is scary

Women 15-20 years of age

Admit to risky behavior when:

- They are distracted
- They are not paying attention
- They are not concentrating

(One or two women in each group admitted to aggressive driving, racing, and speeding.)

**Attitudes towards tickets and accidents**

Participants all like the freedom that having a license provides, but they are all concerned about the expense of driving, including the gas, insurance, maintenance, and paying for tickets. All are concerned about getting tickets and having accidents.

- Women (especially younger women) are more concerned about having accidents than the men. Women seem much more concerned about harming other people.
- Men expressed some of the same concerns, but not as much.

Most of the men and a good number of women seem more concerned with getting tickets than having accidents.

- Most men and some older women expressed hostility to the police. They believe that the police are there to harass them for minor infractions that really are not dangerous and do not harm people. For example, many do not feel that doing 75 in a 65 zone is really risky.

**Wearing Seatbelts**

- The women in both groups were more likely to say that they never drive without a seatbelt.
- Some participants in each of the groups said they do not generally wear seat belts when they drive.
- Participants do not seem to wear seat belts as passengers, especially when sitting in the rear seat.

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- <sup>11</sup>U.S. Department of Education's Survey of Limited English Proficient Students and Available Educational Programs and Services report 2000-2001
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#### **Reports**

- Virginia Crash Investigation Team-Special Report #14, Special Report on Young Drivers Involved in Fatal Crashes, Virginia Commonwealth University
- Teen Fatal Crashes School Access Roads and School Bus-Report #190, Virginia Commonwealth University, May 2003
- Pilot Study of Distracted Drivers-Virginia Commonwealth University, January 2003
- State of Virginia Survey on Adolescent Driver Education-Norfolk State, January 2003

#### **DMV Laws and Regulations**

The following references from the Virginia Code are essential as we link the existing law with the media campaign target audiences. Contact: R.B. Hall, Senior Deputy Director, Driver Licensing Division, Drivers Services Administration, Department of Motor Vehicles  
Virginia Code-Article 5, Title 46.2-334, Licensure of Minors, Student Drivers, School Bus Drivers, and Motorcyclists

## PARENT STRATEGIES

### National Trends

Licensing policies and procedures vary greatly among states, with differences in the minimum age at which a teen can receive a learner's permit, the duration of time for that permit, and restrictions placed on young drivers. In the U.S., there are 51 separate licensing systems with significant variations among them. (Williams 2003)<sup>1</sup> In recent years, the crash data for young drivers has led to new licensing policies and restrictions. The most common of these programs take into account school and classroom attendance, passenger restrictions, nighttime driving restrictions, and zero tolerance policies. <sup>1</sup>Ibid. The trend is toward graduated licensing programs, which place emphasis on time behind the wheel and experience on the road.

Despite this evolution and change in the licensing procedures and policies in many states, traditional driver education models place the bulk of training in the learner stage. <sup>1</sup>Ibid. Throughout the nation, one of the common threads of concern is the young drivers' lack of experience. It is precisely this lack of experience coupled with risk acceptance that places the young driver in peril.

Only one state, Michigan, has instituted a version of the NHTSA two-stage driver education program. <sup>1</sup>Ibid. The first stage of driver education occurs during the first phase of the graduated program or the learner's permit portion of the licensing process. Six months of supervised experience in basic vehicle control skills and the passing of a basic road test prepare the young driver for the intermediate or provisional stage with an additional six months of driver education. After these steps have been completed, students focus on safe driving skills and procedures, including perceptual and decision making skills. (Anderson 2000)<sup>2</sup>

Repeatedly mentioned in the literature on national driver education programs is the role of the parent in monitoring this graduated licensing program. Heavy emphasis is placed on parent's role in mentoring, coaching, and modeling. As of June 2000, 28 jurisdictions in the U.S. require "supervised driving" as a part of the learner stage of the graduated licensing programs. <sup>2</sup>Ibid.

The *Cincinnati Inquirer*, Parent Survey, October 29, 2001<sup>3</sup>, questionnaire reported an implied sense of denial by parents that may contribute to fatal crashes involving Ohio teens. Though "unscientific" in nature, the multiple choice survey of parents offered some useful insights.

The questions and answers were as follows:

**Q: What worries you most?**

A: Other teens-60%  
Their own children-26%  
No selection-14%

**Q: What behavior worries you the most?**

A: Inexperience-33%  
Drinking and driving-19%  
Speeding-16%  
No selection-14%  
"I'm not worried"-7%  
Too many teens in the car-6%  
Non-use of seatbelts-4%

**Q: Should teens face further driving restrictions?**

A: No selection-37%  
Limit the number of passengers-27%  
Limit driving hours-10%  
Raise the driving age to 18-7%

The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) recommends that parents act as a role model, coach, and mentor. Further, IIHS recommends a minimum of 30 to 50 hours of supervised driving, preferably with a parent or guardian. (Anderson, 2000)<sup>2</sup> Also, research published in the Health Education and Behavior Journal<sup>4</sup> suggests parents can influence safer driving behavior in their teen drivers.

Research conducted by the Department of Public and Community Health, University of Maryland, College Park (Levin, A., 2003)<sup>5</sup> looked at Maryland's new graduated licensing and noted that parents who have placed greater restrictions on newly licensed teens contributed to the lower probability of their teen becoming involved in an accident. Accordingly, the report found that not only does graduated licensing reduce teen driver crashes, but that there is a relationship between parental restrictions and reduced risk-taking behavior.  
<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

In other words, those parents who imposed greater restrictions on their teens when they were able to drive without an adult in the car had teen drivers who engaged in less risky driving behavior. Parents can influence teen driving behavior, whether they are in the car or not!

At the other end of the spectrum are parents whose own driving record is questionable. Reports from studies concerning teen driving behaviors have found that risky driving behaviors are learned from childhood through observations of adult drivers, cartoons, commercials, and movies. (Anderson,

2000)<sup>2</sup> In addition, an IIHS report found that the teens of parents who have crashed their cars are likely to have crashed also. <sup>2</sup>Ibid. The more crashes a parent has had the greater the likelihood that the teen will also experience a crash. The study revealed that if a parent has had three crashes in a five-year period, the teen driver in the family had a 26% greater chance of having a least one crash on their record. <sup>2</sup>Ibid.

Methods of risk analysis and risk assessment have proven useful in modifying the proclivity towards risk taking and risk avoidance behaviors among young teen drivers.

The graduated licensing program can have other unforeseen benefits. The North Carolina law states that teenagers may drive only with a supervising adult for the first year. After that, teens get a second-level license that lets them drive without supervision but prohibits recreational night driving. After six months at Level 2, teens with a clean driving record get unrestricted licenses. North Carolina was the second state, after Michigan, to enact a graduated system.

A survey by the University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center found that about 44% of teens and adults said their communication had improved due to the effects of a six-year-old law requiring teenagers to spend their first year driving with an adult. ([http://www.hsrb.unc.edu/pubinfo/grad\\_overview.htm](http://www.hsrb.unc.edu/pubinfo/grad_overview.htm), 02/06/04)<sup>6</sup> Many parents and teens found the car to be “perfect place to converse. It is a side-by-side relationship. Nobody can walk away from a conversation when you are driving together in a car,” stated a student interviewed in the *Wilson Daily News* January 3, 2004, edition. Rob Foss, senior research scientist with the Highway Safety Research Center stated in the news article, “In virtually every behavior risky for teens -- drinking, drugs, premarital sex -- a protective factor against that are parent-teen closeness.” However, it should be noted that being in the car with an inexperienced driver can be a stressful experience with 16% of the teens and 8% of the parents stated that they “get on each other’s nerves more than usual.” (Foss, R. 2004)<sup>7</sup>

While improved interaction between teens and parents was an unexpected benefit, most important, fatal crashes involving 16-year-old drivers fell 57% the first year after the law was enacted. Overall, crashes fell 23%. (*Wilson Daily News*)<sup>8</sup>

### Virginia Trends

The licensing process within Virginia is a modified version of the graduated licensing process now found in over 40 states. The Virginia Department of Education’s 40-Hour Parent/Teen Driving Guide: With Freedom Comes Great Responsibility notes that parents serve as models to their children. “Parents are their children’s first teachers. Learning happens even when we are not aware we are teaching! This is true when we, as parents, drive a motor vehicle and our young children ride with us. They learn our habits, good or bad. Fortunately,

most of the time most parents probably drive safely and children learn driving habits which will help them become safe drivers,” states the publication. <http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/Instruction/PE/40hour.pdf>, 09/03<sup>9</sup> In addition, it notes that parents may file with the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) a written request that the license of the minor be canceled. The DMV will cancel the minor’s license for a period of six months or until the minor reaches his or her 18th birthday, whichever occurs sooner. (DMV 39, 2003)<sup>10</sup>

An article in the *American Journal of Health Education* sums up the status of parent involvement as their teens learn to drive. It notes that parents are involved in their teenagers’ driving from the beginning, teaching them to drive, governing their access to vehicles, and setting rules. “However, an alarming number of teens report not having driving rules or restrictions for high-risk driving conditions, including driving at night and with teenage passengers,” the article states. “Simple strategies, including videotapes, newsletters for parents and parent-teen driving agreements, can effectively inform both parents and children of the risks of teenage driving and increase the adoption of restrictions during the first year of driving.” (Levin, A. 2003)<sup>11</sup>

More important is the need to put these approaches together. Parental management could be integrated into driver education and licensing activities to increase supervision of driving practice, vehicle availability, and driving conditions as well as the timing of teen licensure. <sup>11</sup>Ibid.

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- <sup>2</sup>Anderson, D., A. Abdalla, C, Goldberg, T. Diab, and B. Pomietto. (2000) Young Drivers: A Study of Policies and Practices. George Mason University, Center for the Advancement of Public Health, Department of Health, Fitness, & Recreation Resources, Graduate School of Education.
- <sup>3</sup>*The Cincinnati Inquirer*, Parent Survey, October 29, 2001
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## BUSINESS PARTNERSHIP STRATEGIES

The Teen Smart Driver Community Health Campaign needs the support of the Virginia business community to help reinforce existing state licensing procedures and curfew laws.

### National Trends

The business community throughout the nation has a special relationship with teenagers for three important reasons.

First, teens control vast sums of discretionary money that filters back into the business community. The December 20, 2003, *Charleston Post Courier*<sup>1</sup> reported that teens expect to spend nationally \$175 billion dollars this year. Some estimates are that teens are spending over \$100 on average a week. (Nelson, J. 2001)<sup>2</sup> Teens have multiple sources of income and most of it is disposable. Rob Callender, a Teenage Research Unlimited (TRU) trend manager reports: "The teen population is growing and will continue to grow for several years, so even if individual teens spend a little bit less, the growth in the population means (total) spending will go up. There is no shortage of retailers zeroing in on the teen demographic." TRU is a leading researcher and surveyor of contemporary teen habits and trends. (<http://www.teenresearch.com/home.cfm> 2/3/04)<sup>3</sup>

A partial list of specific industries and businesses that rely on teenage drivers for profit include:

- Automobile retail and sales
- Automobile insurance companies and underwriters
- Automobile repair and customizing shops
- Automobile parts and service centers
- National and international petroleum industries
- Convenience store chains
- Movie theaters
- Video and CD outlets
- Restaurants and food courts
- Gasoline service centers and hybrid service/grocery store chains
- Shopping malls, markets, and plazas
- Retail establishments specializing in music, clothing, and electronics industries
- Amusement parks, arcades, private, and public parks
- Concert venues
- Sports complexes, gyms, ball fields, and courts
- Trails and paths for recreation, bicycling, and BMX

- Motorcycles, motorbikes, scooters and off road “dirt bikes”
- Specialty boutiques and collectable shops
- Training, educational settings, and coursework

Second, the business community has come to rely on millions of teens as a source of entry-level labor. Teens supply the necessary workers for a significant portion of our national economy. During the 1996-1998 period, 2.9 million youths aged 15-17 worked during school months and 4 million worked during the summer months. During the school months of 1996-1998, the Current Population Survey (CPS) found that only 9% of 15 year olds were employed in an average month, compared with 26% of those age 16, and 39% of the 17 year olds. Youth in these age groups were more likely work in the summer, during which employment rates increase to 18% for 15 years olds, 36% for 16 year olds, and 48% for 17 year olds. The CPS also found that male and female youths had similar employment ratios. During the school year, about one fourth of both males and females worked and during the summer about a third worked. (<http://www.dol.gov/dol/topic/youthlabor/childlaborstatistics.htm>, 2/5/04)<sup>4</sup> More than three million teens leave their classrooms each summer to find work. (National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health Institute (NIOSH), <http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/restaurant/>, 2/5/04)<sup>5</sup>

Third is the sense of community commitment to the health and welfare of the teen. Adolescent workers are protected by two laws enforced by the Department of Labor: the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA). Employers must comply with both federal and state laws. When federal and state standards are different, the rules that provide the most protection to youth workers will apply. The FLSA and state laws provide child labor provisions that were designed to protect minors in non-agricultural and agricultural employment by restricting the types of jobs and the number of hours they may work. The OSHA Act ensures that employers provide a safe and healthful work environment and comply with occupational safety and health standards found in 29 CFR, Part 1910. This includes the requirement for employers to provide appropriate personal protective equipment (such as gloves, aprons, and foot protection) to help protect employees from identified hazards [1910.132(a)]. Workers are more likely to die from traffic-related motor vehicle crashes than from any other hazard on the job, including workplace violence and machine-related injuries, but employers and others must take practical steps to reduce the risk, according to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health. <sup>5</sup>Ibid.

### **Business and Federal Law Protecting Teen Drivers**

- The child labor provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) are intended to protect the educational opportunities of minors and prohibit them from working in jobs and under conditions that are detrimental to their health or well being. These provisions restrict the types of jobs that minors may perform. One such provision, Hazardous Occupations Order

#2 (HO 2), prohibits minors under 18 years of age from driving automobiles and trucks on public roadways unless the driving is occasional and incidental.

- Public Law 105-334, which became effective on October 31, 1998, amends the FLSA to modify HO 2. One major change implemented by the amendment sets a minimum age of 17 for any on-the-job driving on public roadways.
- No employee under 17 years of age may drive on public roadways as part of his or her job if that employment is subject to the FLSA.
- Seventeen-year-olds may drive on public roadways as part of their employment, but **ONLY** if all of the following requirements are met:
  - Driving is limited to daylight hours
  - The 17-year-old holds a state license valid for the type of driving involved in the job performed
  - The 17 year old has successfully completed a state-approved driver education course and has no record of any moving violation at the time of hire
  - The automobile or truck is equipped with a seat belt for the driver and any passengers, and the employer has instructed the youth that the seat belts must be used when driving the vehicle
  - The automobile or truck does not exceed 6,000 pounds gross vehicle weight
- The driving may not involve:
  - Towing vehicles
  - Route deliveries or route sales
  - Transportation for hire of property, goods, or passengers
  - Urgent, time-sensitive deliveries
  - Transporting more than three passengers, including employees of the employer
  - Driving beyond a 30-mile radius from the youth's place of employment
  - More than two trips away from the primary place of employment in any single day to deliver the employer's goods to a customer (other than urgent, time-sensitive deliveries which are prohibited)
  - More than two trips away from the primary place of employment in any single day to transport passengers, other than employees of the employer
  - Such driving is only occasional and incidental to the 17-year-old's employment. This means that the youth may spend no more than one-third of the work time in any workday and no more than 20 percent of the work time in any workweek driving.

The relationship of the teen's disposable income and the business community is clear.

What is equally important is the commitment of corporate America to the safety and well being of the teen driver.

The following documents contain a sampling of federal government and private companies policies that promote teen safe driving practices:

- Ford Motor Company, “Real World Driver” <http://realworlddriver.com/>
- Mothers Against Drunk Driving, MADD <http://www.madd.org/home/>
- National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) <http://www.nhtsa.org/>
- National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) <http://www.nts.gov/>
- U.S. Department of Transportation <http://www.dot.gov/>
- National Automobile Dealers Association (NDNA) <http://www.nada.org/>
- American Automobile Association (AAA) <http://www.aaapublicaffairs.com/Main.asp?CategoryID=3&SubCategoryID=6&SectionID=&>
- Insurance Institute for Highway Safety <http://www.hwysafety.org/>
- National Organization for Youth Safety (NOYS) <http://www.noys.org/>
- National Association of Police Organizations <http://www.napo.org/driveforlife.pdf>
- Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety <http://www.saferoads.org/>
- Nationwide Insurance, Preparing a teen to drive <http://nwinsurance.nationwide.com/nwarticles/news.asp?key=902>
- Traveler’s Insurance, Tips for Teens [http://www.travelers.com/personal/auto/auto\\_teentips.cfm](http://www.travelers.com/personal/auto/auto_teentips.cfm)
- National Employers for Traffic Safety (NETS) <http://www.trafficsafety.org/>
- National Organization for Youth Safety (NOYS) <http://www.noys.org/>

### Virginia Trends

Every year, thousands of Virginia teens work in part-time or summer jobs that provide great opportunities for learning important life skills and acquiring hands-on experience. Federal and state rules regarding young workers strike a balance between ensuring sufficient time for educational opportunities and allowing appropriate work experiences.

There are over 275,000 businesses in Virginia employing 4,445,124 Virginians that contribute \$273 billion to the overall economy of Virginia. About 450,000 teens work in businesses throughout the Commonwealth. Virginia teens follow national trends for work locations and for in-school versus summer employment patterns. (U.S. Census 2000, <http://www.census.gov/main/www/cen2000.html>, 02/04/04)<sup>6</sup> (Bureau of Labor Statistics, <http://www.bls.gov/ces/>, 02/04/04)<sup>7</sup> (Survey of Virginia Kids and Teens A, <http://www.rich.frb.org/research/regional/profiles/virginia/stategov/product.cfm2/6/04> ©RoperASW, 02/04/04)<sup>8</sup>

### Businesses and Virginia State Law

State laws governing this age group are found in the Virginia Code 40.1, 1-78 and 40.1, 1-116. As enforced by the Virginia Department of Labor and Industry,

teens aged 16 to 17 have no restrictions on hours of work and places of work except those deemed hazardous by state law. (Virginia Code <http://leg1.state.va.us/000/src.htm>, 02/04/04)<sup>9</sup>  
Department of Labor and Industry <http://www.dli.state.va.us/>, 02/04/04)<sup>10</sup>

State laws governing the licensing process and curfew are located in the Virginia Driver's Manual, Rules of the Road. (DMV 39, 2003)<sup>11</sup>

Some businesses in Virginia have gone beyond the minimum requirements to promote safety and serve as models. Examples include:

- MetLife Auto & Home has announced a series of initiatives, including free handbooks and videos for students and parents. (MetLife, 08/15/01, <http://info.insure.com/auto/metlife101.html>)<sup>12</sup>
- A chain of 31 pizza restaurants has posted signs offering a \$100 reward to workers under 18 who report that they have been asked to perform hazardous jobs (including driving situations.)
- Wawa convenience stores are issuing different colored smocks to workers younger than 18. (Bole, B., 06/23/97, [http://www.villagelife.org/news/archives/6-30-97\\_teeninjuries.html](http://www.villagelife.org/news/archives/6-30-97_teeninjuries.html))<sup>13</sup>
- DriveSmart Virginia was spearheaded in 1995 by six of Virginia's insurance companies, including Allstate, GEICO, Nationwide, State Farm, USAA, and the Virginia Farm Bureau. Since 1997, Erie Insurance, Farmers Group, Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, Liberty Mutual, Progressive and Rockingham Group have also joined the Board of Directors. Other members include leaders from private industry, state and federal government, law enforcement, military, media, and traffic safety organizations. In May 1996, DriveSmart Virginia entered a private-public partnership with the Commonwealth of Virginia, with both parties pledging to work together to reduce traffic-related injuries and fatalities. (<http://www.drivesmartva.com/>, 05/96)<sup>14</sup>

### **Government Agencies**

Government agencies in Virginia have undertaken a number of projects where safety is the primary concern and these naturally benefit young, inexperienced drivers:

**Virginia Department of Transportation** projects have included:

- "It takes a village or two. . ." program in Campbell County in which a new road was built to keep students and motorists safe.
- Managing Incidents on I-81. Coordinating responses of emergency responder to reduce delays during interstate incidents.
- Survive the Ride: A Crash Course designed by team of VDOT, students, and state police have created a popular guide for new drivers.

(Armstrong, C.,  
[http://www.viriniadot.org/bulletin/2003sept/life\\_at\\_vdot.asp#i-81](http://www.viriniadot.org/bulletin/2003sept/life_at_vdot.asp#i-81), Bulletin  
09-10/03)<sup>15</sup>

**Division of Motor Vehicle** projects have included:

- Child safety seat installation program
- Youth programs
- Alcohol programs
- Local law enforcement
- Virginia State Police programs
- Grassroots programs
- Statewide program for occupant protection  
(Grier, R., 2003,  
[http://www.lifesaversconference.org/webfiles2003/witter\\_findingresources.pdf](http://www.lifesaversconference.org/webfiles2003/witter_findingresources.pdf))<sup>16</sup>

### **MetLife and Virginia Driving Licensing**

MetLife Auto & Home has developed an outstanding series of initiatives, including free handbooks and videos, and partnered with the DMV to help parents and teens understand the changes in the Virginia driving laws and improve safety.

Virginia legislators strengthened the existing licensing laws by increasing the number of hours that teens must drive with adult supervision and these changes went into effect July 1, 2003, to curb the number of automobile injuries and deaths involving teens. MetLife Auto & Home developed a 6-page handbook, reviewed by the National Highway Traffic Safety Association, entitled "Teaching Your Teen to Drive (Without Driving Each Other Crazy)," and a video for families with teenagers entitled, "Young Drivers: The High Risk Years." Both provide parents with important guidelines to follow before their teenagers get behind the wheel and stress the importance that preparation and planning can play in defusing potentially stressful situations. Both are available to the public free by calling 1-800-638-5433 (1-800-MET-LIFE).

- "Over 7,000 teens lose their lives on America's roadways each year. MetLife Auto & Home is working diligently to partner with parents to 'put the brakes' on these numbers," said Cathy Rein, President and CEO of MetLife Auto & Home. "Many parents and teens may find the prospect of spending more driving-time together disconcerting. Our material provides parents and teenagers with the tools they need (and) serves as a strong reminder for teens to drive with the utmost caution," added Erin Higgins, senior company representative in Virginia. (MetLife, 08/15/01, <http://info.insure.com/auto/metlife101.html>)<sup>12</sup>

MetLife Auto & Home is also offering incentives to teens to help make their first years driving safe and profitable. These incentives include:

- A \$50 cash reward for each year between 16 and 20 a teen policyholder is without any accidents, claims, or violations. This is offered through the "DriveSafe and Cash In" portion of the company's "Teens on the Road to Safety" program.
- A \$100 U.S. Savings Bond for insured between 16 and 20 who log 20 drives with a parent or guardian. Called "Sunday Drive," this is an optional component of the "Teens on the Road to Safety" program. The cash award and savings bond program is available in 18 states including Virginia.
- In Virginia, MetLife Auto & Home offers its Driver Improvement Course Discount of 10% off bodily injury, property damage, personal injury protection, medical and collision premiums to drivers who have been licensed at least two years and who successfully complete a company-approved driver improvement course, such as that offered by Top Driver, Inc. The Driver Improvement Course Discount is effective for three years and is renewed upon re-certification. The company-approved Top Driver video course is called "Take Control." This course and discount are not just available to teen drivers.

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- <sup>1</sup>Charleston Post Courier, 12/20/03.
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## EDUCATIONAL STRATEGIES

The goal of the education component is to provide instructional materials to enable teens to assess their driving risk and modify their risk-taking behavior.

### **Driver Education Standards of Learning for Virginia Public Schools**

The revised Driver Education Standards of Learning provide the framework for the *Curriculum Guide for Driver Education in Virginia*. As prescribed by §22.1-205 of the *Code of Virginia*, this curriculum guide serves as the Board of Education's approved driver education and traffic safety program of instruction for public and private school programs. Commercial driver training schools are approved and licensed by the Department of Motor Vehicles as prescribed by VR 485-60-9201, and they follow the same course content as public and private school driver education programs.

The classroom and in-car driver education standards focus on safe driving attitudes; time, space, and distance-perception skill development; and the recognition of and appropriate response to hazards in the ever-changing driving environment. Emphasis is placed on linking visual search skills, space management, and maintenance of balanced vehicle control to risk-reducing driving strategies. Significant attention is given to risk awareness, driver alertness, driver distractions, the social and economic consequences of driving, occupant protection, positive interactions with other roadway users, and the physical and psychological conditions that affect driver performance. Students apply basic driving skills in low-to-moderate traffic environments and progress to demonstration of skill proficiency in more complex traffic situations. When possible, teachers are also encouraged to use simulation and other technologies that will enhance student learning.

Successful completion of a state-approved driver education program does not, alone, make a teenager a responsible, experienced driver. Traffic safety education involves family, community, industry, government, and personal factors such as motivation, maturity, and perceptive abilities. These factors play major roles in the development and safety of young drivers. Evidence shows that often it is not poor driving skills that cause accidents among this age group, but inexperience and/or poor attitude. The family, not the school, is in the best position to have a sustained effect on minimizing the risks faced by inexperienced drivers and encouraging responsible behaviors. Throughout the course, emphasis is placed on extensive supervised practice with a licensed parent or guardian to develop precision in the use of skills, processes, and responsibilities.

## Goals

The purpose of driver education is to provide students with a detailed understanding of the fundamentals of driving and foster responsible attitudes and behaviors. As a result of quality traffic safety instruction, students will be able to:

- demonstrate a working knowledge of the rules and procedures of operating a motor vehicle;
- identify and analyze the physical and psychological conditions that affect driver performance;
- apply knowledge, processes, and skills to become safe, competent users of the highway transportation system;
- display responsible driving behaviors when alone and with peers.

Though all of the standards are critical to the safety of the novice driver, the following standards may offer focus for media development:

- DE.1 The student will demonstrate an understanding of Virginia traffic laws, licensing procedures, and other responsibilities associated with the driving privilege. Key concepts include:
- a) licensing requirements and types of licenses;
  - b) the motor vehicle section of the *Code of Virginia*;
  - c) the organ and tissue donation designation process.
- DE.3 The student will recognize the effects of momentum, gravity, and inertia on vehicle control and balance, and the relationship between kinetic energy and force of impact. Key concepts/skills include:
- a) seating and hand position;
  - b) steering, braking, and acceleration; compensating for shifts in vehicle load (from side to side, front to rear, and rear to front) that affect vehicle performance.
- DE.4 The student will demonstrate the ability to manage visibility, time, and space to avoid conflicts and reduce driving risks. Key concepts/skills include:
- a) synthesizing information visually from the driving environment, using a space-management process;
  - b) applying following-interval concepts;
  - c) selecting gap and judging distance;
  - d) estimating passing-time and space needs.
- DE.5 The student will demonstrate appropriate adjustments when approaching controlled and uncontrolled intersections, curves, railroad crossings, and hills with line-of-sight or path-of-travel limitations. Key concepts/skills include:
- a) roadway signs, signals, and markings;
  - b) right-of-way rules;

- c) slope/grade of terrain;
  - d) vehicle position.
- DE.6 The student will identify the characteristics of an expressway and apply risk-reducing expressway driving strategies. Key concepts/skills include:
- a) entering, merging, integrating into, and exiting from traffic flow;
  - b) managing interchanges;
  - c) selecting vehicle position and changing lanes.
- DE.8 The student will analyze and describe the physiological and psychological effects of alcohol and other drugs and their impact on a driver's awareness of risks and involvement in collisions. Key concepts include:
- a) prescribed and over-the-counter medications;
  - b) illegal or illicit drugs;
  - c) effects of alcohol and other drugs on vision and space management;
  - d) synergistic effects of drugs;
  - e) alcohol elimination factors.
- DE.10 The student will recognize the consequences of aggressive driving and other emotions that influence driving behaviors. Key concepts include:
- a) stress and anxiety;
  - b) anger management;
  - c) the relationship between aggressive driving and road rage.
- DE.12 The student will identify distractions that contribute to driver error. Key concepts include:
- a) passengers and pets;
  - b) vehicle accessories;
  - c) cell phones and other portable technology devices.
- DE.13 The student will identify changes in the environment that affect visibility and traction and demonstrate an understanding of appropriate driver reaction to these risks. Key concepts/skills include:
- a) driving at night;
  - b) smoke- and weather-related conditions;
  - c) road conditions and construction;
  - d) vehicle stability and traction control systems.
- DE.15 The student will identify and evaluate emergency response strategies to reduce the severity of or avoid a collision in high-risk driving situations. Key concepts/skills include:
- a) evasive maneuvers, using brake and steering combinations;
  - b) off-road recovery;
  - c) front and rear traction control.

- DE.17 The student will compare vehicle-braking systems and explain proper braking techniques for various weather and roadway conditions. Key concepts/skills include:
- a) small and large vehicle conventional brake systems;
  - b) two- and four-wheel anti-lock brake systems (ABS).
- DE.19 The student will identify and describe the legal aspects of and calculate the financial responsibilities associated with purchasing, operating, maintaining, and insuring a motor vehicle. Key concepts include:
- a) Financial Responsibility Law;
  - b) required and optional insurance coverage;
  - c) title and vehicle registration;
  - d) vehicle inspection; crash involvement.

## National and International Research

The following is a summary of research papers on risk and young teen drivers that will help inform the development of the Teen Smart Driver Community Health Campaign.

- **Traditional driver education is insufficient for reducing the high risk of teen crashes** (Mayhew & Simpson, pp. ii3–ii8, cited Hartos, J.L. *et. al.* 2001)<sup>1</sup>  
Most traditional driver education provides classroom training about the rules of the road and a few hours of behind-the-wheel training. Research suggests that this approach is not effective in reducing the crash risk among newly licensed teen drivers. Driver education programs may be improved by teaching psychomotor, perceptual, and cognitive skills that are critical for safe driving, and by addressing inexperience, risky behaviors, and other age-related factors that increase the crash risk among young drivers. However, more research into these factors is needed before they can be addressed effectively.
- **Important risk factors highlight the need for graduated driver licensing** (Williams & Ferguson, pp. ii9–ii16, <sup>1</sup>*Ibid.*)  
Young, beginning drivers have an extremely high crash risk. Certain situations contribute to even greater risk, most notably nighttime driving and driving with teen passengers. The graduated drivers licensing (GDL) approach addresses the high risks faced by young drivers by requiring an apprenticeship of planned and supervised practice, followed by a provisional license that places temporary restrictions on unsupervised driving in some higher-risk situations.
- **Developmental characteristics of young drivers may contribute to their crash risk** (Arnett, pp. ii17–ii23, <sup>1</sup>*Ibid.*)  
Inexperience increases the crash risk for new drivers of all ages. However, younger novice drivers crash at higher rates than older novice drivers. These higher crash rates may be due in part to developmental factors such as peer influence, poor perception of risk, and high emotionality. Research about such developmental characteristics could increase our understanding about why young drivers have higher crash rates and could help to improve driver education programs and licensing policies.

## Summary from Risk Research Data

- Teens are more likely than older drivers to underestimate the dangers in hazardous situations, and they have less experience coping with such situations. (Jonah, B.A. 1987)<sup>2</sup>

- Teens are more likely than older drivers to speed, run red lights, make illegal turns, ride with an intoxicated driver, and drive after using alcohol or drugs. <sup>2</sup>Ibid.
- Compared with other age groups, teens have the lowest rate of seat belt use. In 2001, 14% of high school students reported they rarely or never wear seat belts when riding with someone else. (CDC 2002)<sup>3</sup>
- Male high school students (18%) were more likely than female students (10%) to rarely or never wear seat belts. <sup>3</sup>Ibid.
- African American students (16%) were more likely than white students (14%) to rarely or never wear seat belts. <sup>3</sup>Ibid.
- At all levels of blood alcohol concentration, the risk of being involved in a motor vehicle crash is greater for teens than for drivers who are older. (IIHS 2003)<sup>4</sup>
- In 2002, 29% of drivers ages 15 to 20 who died in motor vehicle crashes had been drinking alcohol. (NHTSA 2003)<sup>5</sup>
- Analysis of data from 1991–1997 found that, consistently, more than one in three teens reported they had ridden with a driver who had been drinking alcohol in the past month. (IIHS 2003)<sup>4</sup>
- One in six reported having driven after drinking alcohol within the same one-month time period. (Everett 2001)<sup>6</sup>
- In 2002, among teen drivers who were killed in motor vehicle crashes after drinking and driving, 77% were unrestrained. (NHTSA 2003)<sup>5</sup>
- In 2001, 43% of the teen motor vehicle deaths occurred between 9 p.m. and 6 a.m. (IIHS 2002)<sup>7</sup>

### Ecological Models of Risk Prevention

Trends and advances in the understanding of the determinants of good health and risk prevention have changed. (Volpe, R. 2004)<sup>8</sup> Driving is a matter of risk avoidance and risk recognition. With that in mind, there is smart risk and unintelligent risk. Unintelligent risk pays little heed to the probability of injury. Driving is never risk free; however, it can be exercised in the most intelligent approach. Dr. Richard Conn, a Canadian pediatric surgeon who pioneered an organization known as SMARTRISK© founded in 1992, examined traditional safety approaches to injury prevention and discovered that the messages were often negative. SMARTRISK© techniques applicable to the Teen Smart Driver Community Health Campaign may include choosing to remember the choice of injury versus non-injury, remembering the odds of risk taking, and the fostering of significance of the teens' place in the company of adults driving in a community.

### What Do We Know about Risk Taking?

1. Healthy risk taking is a positive tool in an adolescent's life for discovering, developing, and consolidating his or her identity.

2. It is important to remember that learning how to assess risks is a process that we work on throughout our lives. Children and adolescents need support, tools, and practice in order to do this.
3. Young children give clues about how they do or don't take risks (e.g., how they ride a bike or skateboard or handle a new social situation). These clues contribute to styles or patterns of risk-taking.
4. Although there are many styles, certain patterns can be seen, such as the cautious risk-taker, the middle-of-the-roader, the adventurer or high-end risk-taker, and the teen whose risk-taking increases when he or she is with friends.
5. Risk taking can be accelerated in one area-social, physical, intellectual, artistic, or sexual, for example-and not in others.
6. Helping a child or teen understand or define his or her own risk-taking pattern is important.
7. This includes helping the child understand how and why he or she makes both healthy and unhealthy choices. Questions to ask include:
  - a) Do you feel pressured to make risky choices by friends?
  - b) Do you rush into decisions?
  - c) Do you think it is uncool to try things in a safe manner?
  - d) Are dangerous risks more exciting? Do they feel more like "you"?
  - e) Do you make dangerous choices to show off to others?
  - f) Does it feel as though it's happening "in a dream" when you make dangerous choices?
8. Role-playing risk assessment with children and teens is crucial.
9. Adults can share what they have learned about risk-taking. A nonjudgmental and non-bragging manner is most helpful. It is often most important to share feelings and mistakes.
10. Risk-taking can be practiced and learned in healthy, supportive situations.  
(Ponton, L.E. 2003)<sup>9</sup>

### **Implications for the Teen Smart Driver Community Health Campaign**

This campaign will use the above research to help the education community better serve teens learning to drive. Determining the best methods of instruction to help students assess their own level of risk, to assess risky driving situations, and to learn methods of risk avoidance is critical to the success of the Teen Smart Driver Community Health Campaign.

As a means to address these issues of risk recognition and risk assessment in teen drivers, the use of the Internet will be vital. Focus group responses (PWNET-Osborn Park High School) and responses located in the Roper Report (RoperASW, 2001)<sup>10</sup> indicate a clear preference in accessing information from television and the Internet.

Teens in Virginia use the Internet somewhat differently than teens throughout the rest of the country. Nationally, the No. 1 one use is getting help with homework, which in Virginia only ranks seventh. Further, boys and girls use the Internet differently. Girls are more likely to participate in communication-related activities such as sending e-mail, chatting, and instant messaging. Boys, in contrast, are more likely to participate in activities such as playing games, downloading pictures and videos, and using software <sup>10</sup>Ibid.

A web site will be developed as part of the Teen Smart Driver Community Health Campaign to serve as a conduit of information and exchange. It will include a clearinghouse of information, an anonymous method for discussion and dialogue, an interactive means for anonymous polling, and an anonymous means to survey teen attitudes and observations. The initial target will be the VADETS classes throughout the state. As the campaign progresses, the use of survey information to augment and enhance the web site and campaign will be a natural outgrowth of this data acquisition.

The initial classroom online components available on the Teen Smart web site for driver education may include:

- an anonymous questionnaire for teens to assess their risk acceptance
- driving scenarios that help teens understand the risk of certain hazardous situations
- information and links to sites about risk and altering risky driving behaviors
- coordinated materials for the classroom on perceiving road hazards and judging risk during driving
- up-to-date traffic statistics
- a means for discussion and dialogue concerning driving and driving habits
- the physics of vehicular travel

Subsequent materials to augment the Internet resources may include:

- Reinforcement of the risk-avoidance message and theme published DMV licensing materials
- Posters reinforcing the Teen Smart Driver focus of seeing the risks and choosing the smartest way to avoid them
- Pamphlets for schools and community health organizations
- Materials developed in conjunction with the Virginia Department of Health

### Specific Behaviors to Be Modified

The ability to deal with the attraction of risk and the recognition of hazards and hazardous situations are teens' biggest challenge. Characteristic behaviors that may be the source of at-risk behaviors of teens include:

- excess optimism and the feelings of invulnerability (Anderson, 2000 cited Lenero, L.P. 1998)<sup>11</sup>
- “control illusion” every time an individual “gets away” with a particular risky action without suffering potentially negative outcomes <sup>11</sup>Ibid.
- “cumulative risk,” which is the increased chance of negative outcomes as a result of repeatedly engaging in a risky behavior. The more frequently the risky behavior is performed, the greater the chances that there will be negative outcomes (Anderson, 2000 cited Eby and Molnar 1998)<sup>12</sup>
- inability to estimate the danger in certain risky behaviors (Anderson, 2000 cited Lenero, L.P. 1998)<sup>11</sup>
- overestimation of the danger in certain risky driving situations <sup>11</sup>Ibid.
- inability to pay full attention to the details of the driving task <sup>11</sup>Ibid.
- Cognitive processing skills that are delayed rather than anticipatory avoidance responses (COMSIS 1995)<sup>12</sup>
- Deliberate risk-taking actions, thrill seeking, driving at high speeds, driving while impaired (Anderson, 2000 cited Lenero, L.P. 1998)<sup>11</sup>
- Seeking the social benefits of risk taking <sup>11</sup>Ibid.
- Willingness to take physical, social, legal, and financial risk for the sake of such risk-taking behaviors (Anderson, 2000 cited Eby and Molnar 1998)<sup>12</sup>

The product design, distribution techniques, and duration of the campaign will be determined by the media purchases, which are yet to be determined as of the writing of this report.

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