Undertaking # 35

MPI to provide, if possible, an executive summary of the exit survey referred to at page 94 of CAC Exhibit number 5.

RESPONSE:

The Executive Summary from the Student Exit Survey Final Report completed by Northport and Associates is reproduced below.

Executive Summary and Recommendations

Assessment of Curriculum Delivery is identified as one of the priority tasks for evaluation and quality management of the High School Driver Education program. While other methods of gathering information are useful for this goal, one of the best tools is the Student Exit Survey. This type of evaluation is often used in other educational settings. An exit survey is intended to gather information from students, at the end of their course. This serves as a check on whether all curriculum components have been delivered as planned, and whether field operations, otherwise running with no direct oversight, are carried out in an acceptable manner. In the HSDE context, the Student Exit Survey is needed to gather a broad base of data from students on their instructors, the course overall, course materials, and the quality of understanding achieved by students in both the in-class course and in-car lessons.

The earlier Pilot of the HSDE Student Exit Survey and this partial implementation both indicate that the approach, with ongoing refinement and editing, can be an effective operational tool for formative evaluation and quality control. The partial implementation reported here provides a sampled snapshot of students' views of their courses at a good time, when the experience, at least of the classroom component is nearly ended and fresh in mind. This partial implementation can be seen as an operational pilot for full implementation of an ongoing Exit Survey.

Instructors and Course

The survey results provide a representative and objective confirmation of focus group data and other qualitative information that indicated inconsistent following of the curriculum requirements. The global approval items addressing instructors, in-class and in-car courses,

and the HSDE overall tend to have moderately strong ratings (4.3-4.5) and agreement proportions (87-88%). While these could be seen as quite high, it is important to focus also on the reciprocal proportions – the 12-13% that fail to agree. While the course content and structure have many inherent limitations, perhaps the strongest indication from the survey is the contribution of the instructors.

Monitoring of instructor performance for supervisory and training purposes would be one of the key objectives of an ongoing Exit Survey, but that is beyond the scope of this report. However, survey data were cross tabulated by individual instructors' code numbers (anonymously to consultants) to see if there was substantial variability of student survey ratings across instructors. On the global approval question (recommend this instructor, Q5m), 6 in-class instructors (13%) received perfect 5.0 ratings, but 3 instructors received mean ratings below 4.0. Overall satisfaction with the in-class course also indicated considerable variability across instructors. On the question of overall satisfaction with the in-class course (Q10), five instructors' students provided a mean rating the course less than 4.0, with one instructor's class giving a mean rating of 3.2. However, in contrast, one instructor's students provided a perfect 5.0 rating of satisfaction with the in-class course. These findings confirm other information that suggests in-class instructor performance is not consistently strong and needs to be better understood and improved.

In assessing aspects of the in-class course other than the instructor, the students' mean ratings were mostly over 4.0, with lower ratings for the course being interesting and the right amount of homework. Regarding the in-class teaching materials, the strongest ratings were for videos, and the lowest for having read the textbook. In open-ended responses, more and better videos were frequently mentioned as ways to improve the in-class component of the course. There was substantial concern reflected about making the course more interesting, about the [course] timeframe. Asked about their understanding derived from the in-class course, students gave mean ratings 4.5 or higher, and all agreement proportions were over 90%. From the perspective of this broad group of students, all aspects of the in-class course should be reviewed for improvement.

About their in-car instructor and their in-car course, students who had some experience with in-car instruction were again reasonably positive, giving a 4.0 or higher response on the majority of statements. Some areas of in car instructor performance produced relatively weak ratings, including use of commentary driving, keeping the observer students engaged, advising what to practice between lessons, and use of visual aids. This confirms other information suggesting in-car curriculum delivery needs particular attention.

Many of the gender differences found in the survey cluster in the in-car instructor items, suggestive of in-car instruction being different for male and female students, or at least that they perceive it to be different. The gender differences apparent in-car instruction should be further investigated and appropriate action taken where warranted.

Regarding students' understanding resulting from the in-car course, the ratings of in-car items were highly positive. The item *How to handle dangerous situations* received a relatively low mean rating (4.4) and agreement proportion (87%). This is, of course a most critical skill area needing the strongest possible attention. As seen in other lower rated items, there was a significant gender difference. Male students were significantly more likely than females to agree that they have a good understanding of how to handle dangerous situations.

Ratings for the course overall, both in-class and in-car together, were generally positive. A fairly strong majority of students (87%) agreed or strongly agreed that they would recommend the course to their friends. The great majority of open-ended comments about the course overall were positive, but frequent concerns included: the course being boring or repetitive, too long, wanting more in-car and less in-class, and making the course easier to sign up for. Again, the 13% who did not agree that they would recommend the course are a concern, and the reasons for this substantial negative view should be explored further.

As with understanding resulting from the in-class course, in-car results can be seen as fairly positive, but also with the reservation that they may be more an indication of confidence rather than objectively measured knowledge and skill. The Large Scale Evaluation of Driver Education project has provided a one-time measure as a baseline for student outcomes, but steps should be taken to implement these types of measures in the future. Supplementing survey data with objective knowledge and skill measures is strongly recommended to make sure that HSDE is fully achieving its objectives.

Both in-class and in-car, the students of low-rated instructors tend to rate the course low, and high-rated instructors' students rate it highly. Instructor performance and course content/structure are important development needs and have substantial room for improvement. In addition these need to be coordinated. On the one hand, raising the performance of the lower-rated instructors should be seen as a relatively urgent priority. On the other hand, much stronger curriculum content, structure, and technology would better support the instructors and aid their performance. While earlier evaluation research pointed to the same needs, this substantial and reasonably representative survey strongly confirms the need for substantial action if HSDE is to achieve its goals and objectives.

Practice Log and Home Practice

Students were asked to evaluate the practice log and process of home practice, and they rated the two items on use of the log at below 4.0, and a substantial minority failed to agree on these items. However, they felt that the log was easy to use and it was easy for them to get at-home practice with an approved driver. A number of significant gender differences in home-based practice and log use suggest further investigation of reasons for a seemingly weaker response from females and if their needs can be better met. Further improvement of the log and home-based practice is needed. There is substantial R&D work recently completed and currently underway in the U.S. that can be leveraged to aid this development.

HSDE Exit Survey

An Exit Survey is an integral part of quality control and continuous improvement of a well-managed driver education program. Substantial divergence of student ratings of instructors on global approval items provide an objective indication that there is substantial performance variation among instructors, and this supports the need for complete instructor coverage in an operational Exit Survey.

Ideally, the Exit Survey would have every student of every instructor provide data. However, for ongoing quality control management, coverage of every instructor should receive precedence over capturing data from every student.

Maintaining the ideal Exit Survey covering all instructors with 100% student response using paper surveys is likely to be logistically difficult and too costly for continuous operation. The present trial implementation demonstrated the feasibility and utility of a classroom-based paper survey of a cluster-sampled group of students representing one class for each in-class instructor working during a three-month period. However, a substantial number of instructors' failed to return the questionnaire packages, reducing the actual completion rate (47/62, 76% of sampled class clusters). Since the instructors are subject to supervision and discipline, there seems little need for a quarter of them to fail to implement the survey. Future surveys using this approach should take steps to increase the class/cluster response rate to near 100% of the sampled classes. While a higher completion rate is clearly achievable for a class-cluster survey approach, sampling even a single class for all instructors each year would still lead to a fairly large burden of data handling from a paper survey.

The Exit Survey questionnaire administered in-class has the strength of potentially achieving a very high completion rate. However, students may not have started their in-car

lessons or may be very early in their in-car course, and filling out the questionnaire in the classroom will not provide a consistent and uniform picture of the in-car component of HSDE. Since some students cannot participate (21% had not started in-car yet), and some in-car instructors will not be included, additional means of surveying students after completion of their in-car training should be explored. However, since a majority of students have had at least some experience with in-car training by the second-last in-class session, it is worthwhile including the in-car questions in the classroom-based Exit Survey approach, at least until on-line or other opportunities for feedback from all in-car students and for all in-car instructors can be implemented.

Going to an on-line survey method will likely give a lower response rate than was achieved in this implementation. However, at a moderate cost it could provide the *opportunity* for every student to respond. It could also potentially capture data from students of all in-car instructors, and do so after the students had completed the in-car course. While there would be a loss of some potential respondents who choose not to go to the web site and complete the survey, presumably those students who are either very pleased or disgruntled will be more likely to take the trouble. For quality control, these are, of course, the most important respondents. It would also be possible to provide incentives for survey completion to raise the rate. Full automation of on-line survey data handling and report preparation would save substantial data handling costs, and that savings could be applied to incentives.

A continuous on-line survey approach could be occasionally supplemented by sample surveys as needed to address special concerns or issues. An ongoing Student Exit Survey should be implemented, using the demonstrated sampled classroom method. It should be applied to cluster-samples of all in-class instructors' classes, until an on-line approach is available that is available to all students after in-class and in-car courses are complete.

Recommendations

1. The substantial minorities (12-13%) that cannot agree with the global approval items regarding instructors and the course should be tracked, the reasons investigated further, and steps taken to reduce these proportions substantially.
2. The reasons for inconsistency of in-class instructor performance should be further investigated and steps taken to improve training, curriculum support, and performance.
3. All aspects of the in-class curriculum and course delivery should be reviewed and steps taken to improve instructor support and the students' experience.

4. The reasons for inconsistency of in-car instructor performance should be further investigated and steps taken to improve training, curriculum support, and performance.
5. All aspects of the in-car curriculum and course delivery should be reviewed and steps taken to improve instructor support and the students' experience.
6. Resources sufficient to meet substantial, simultaneous program development needs found in the survey results should be provided.
7. The gender differences apparent in-car instruction should be further investigated and appropriate action taken where warranted.
8. Methods of supplementing Exit Survey data with objective knowledge and skill tests to permit ongoing assessment of intermediate student outcomes must be developed.
9. Instructor performance and curriculum content/structure development processes should be coordinated.
10. Continue improvement of the log and home-based practice, leveraging R&D work recently completed and currently underway in the U.S.
11. The gender differences apparent home-based practice should be further investigated and appropriate action taken where warranted.
12. Substantial performance variation among instructors apparent in the survey should be seen as support for complete instructor coverage in an operational Exit Survey.
13. For ongoing quality control management, coverage of every instructor should receive precedence over capturing data from every student.
14. Any future surveys using the class/cluster approach should take steps to increase the response rate to near 100% of the sampled classes.
15. In-car questions should be continued in the classroom-based Exit Survey approach until on-line or other opportunities for feedback from all in-car students and for all in-car instructors can be implemented.
16. It is recommended that an ongoing Student Exit Survey be implemented, using the demonstrated sampled classroom method, but applied to all in-class instructors' classes, until an on-line approach that is available to all students after in-class and in-car courses are complete can be substituted.