

CDL Town Hall Meeting

February 27, 2020 1PM-2PM

Facilitator: Stacey Thompson

DPS Presence: Capt. Kenneth Kocab, Lt. Herb Homan, Julia Tipple—Administrative Professional, Carolyn Nolan (Chief IRP), Anne Dean—Assistant Registrar BMV

Attendees: Scott Marx—The Marx Brothers Consulting, Aimee Napier—Napier Truck Driver Training, Jim Rosen—Vantage Career Center, Michael Lattavo—Big Rig Truck Driving School, Ian Wilson—Cuyahoga Community College, Dan Schweitzer—Stark State Community College, Steve Gold—160 Driving Academy

The meeting began with Lt. Homan opening—overview of the Driver Training program within the Ohio Traffic Safety Office, including changes to the program and a brief update. Posed the question of how we can work with the schools to bring everyone into compliance; additionally how can we make school's lives easier? How are the processes and procedures of the Driver Training Program Office affecting school's businesses? While the office understands that many are present today to have a question and answer session, these town hall meetings are meant to be a one way conversation about the good and bad, we as an office are not here to defend or deny, but rather listen. Many of the topics today are the top "hot topic buttons" we have received over the last few months, and we are looking for insight into how we can assist in these key areas of the program.

- Ian: In what context are these areas hot topic buttons?
 - Stacey: These topics are often subjects of investigations, both internally and externally. These topics are being looked at to improve the process for everyone. Will be holding more than one town hall meeting so that we can cover more than just these specific topics.
- Topic 1:
 - Stacey: The Training Manager Requirement: what are some of the pros and cons of the training manager requirement for your business? Do you see that this position has a positive or negative outcome in regards to both running the business and training students? How can this position be changed or improved upon to assist you, or does it need to be eliminated all together?
 - Pros:
 - Scott: Gives a degree of responsibility to the organization to have someone who is focused on student training and not just the running of the program
 - Ian: Responsibility to teach the owners about how to run a truck driving school.
 - Scott: New owners are often thankful to have someone they can count on to walk them through the processes of becoming a truck driving school and helping them to understand how important proper training of students is.
 - Dan: it is helpful to know that there is a position that is part of DPS structure to keep instructors and schools accountable.

- Ian: The position has the capacity to improve the instructional staff and improve the quality of the training.
 - Dan and Scott: Helps with the consumer protection portion of the business.
 - Scott: Puts a control on who can open a training enterprise so that people with no prior experience cannot open a school without someone who has experience.
 - Dan: The current training manager course run by the Driver Training Program Office is well run and priced accordingly. Two employees have been through the course and have come back to the school with a wealth of knowledge about both CDL instructor training and training as a whole.
 - Scott: By allowing someone to have multiple enterprises under their license it also allows people to open businesses.
 - Group majority: The position creates a career for people because there is such a high demand.
 - Dan: The position keeps the businesses liable in the long run, as well as the instructors.
 - Michael: The position, when executed at its full capacity, helps keep the state out of the business.
- Cons:
 - Michael and Jim: If there is no training manager the business cannot operate—would recommend employing more than one training manager for this reason. Since there are so few training managers this is hard.
 - Aimee: All training manager courses should be held in Columbus since it is a centralized location.
 - Aimee and Steve: The requirement of having to have a CDL is a hindrance. Businesses should be able to hire and train their own employees.
 - Steve: Ohio is the only state that has this requirement. All training managers do is sign off on paperwork this should be the responsibility of the business owner.
 - Michael: Too much faith is placed on training managers, dishonesty is prevalent in the position in regards to paperwork just being signed off on and not reviewed.
 - Michael: Training managers should not be allowed to be affiliated with multiple entities because it creates a monopoly and it is hard to keep track of what is going on at one school, let alone multiple at a time.
 - Scott: Because the position is not well enforced and does not have enough pull, people are not allowed to act as a training manager even with that endorsement in certain businesses.

- Scott: If the enterprise does something wrong and the training manager license is affected at one business it can affect a different school with only one training manager.
 - Suggestions for the position:
 - Don't make it so easy to become a training manager.
 - Greater oversight by the state.
 - Require more pre-training within the enterprise, not just the training manager course.
 - Don't restrict the position to CDL holders only.
- Topic 2:
 - Stacey: We have noticed an increase lately in violations during inspections by the motor vehicle inspection teams. Why do you believe we are seeing an increase in violations, and how can we remedy this?
 - Michael: The inspectors need to realize that range vehicles are not held to the same standard as the road vehicles.
 - Group: There is no consistency between inspectors.
 - Staff Lieutenant Homan: Why are businesses not utilizing the field staff to complete the range inspections?
 - Group: this is a new policy that just went into effect last year.
 - Aimee: Only two inspectors are coming out instead of the team that used to come to do the inspections.
 - Aimee: The businesses are needing to shut down for inspections.
 - Ian: There is nothing in writing regarding what needs to be checked regarding yard versus road vehicles.
 - Steve: What is the value of this regulation if no one is being hurt and students are passing?
 - Steve: Ohio is the only state that requires these inspections on training vehicles.
 - Scott and Dan: The inspectors aren't getting in and actually checking everything inside the vehicle that should be checked (i.e. instructor brakes)—problem with consumer protection.
 - Michael: Schools cannot just put a vehicle on the yard if one goes down.
 - Suggestions:
 - Start a registry of garages that could do the inspections instead of the MVI teams.
 - DOT inspections are done every year anyway, these should be sufficient for road vehicles.
 - Rented vehicles are inspected anyway, these should be allowable when temporarily putting a vehicle onto the road.
- Topic 3:
 - Stacey: Rule 4501-7-28(B) states that "All students must be taught and supervised by a licensed instructor..." How can technology be utilized in the classroom and still meet this requirement? Do you feel that having an instructor present in the classroom is necessary at all times?
 - Cons:

- Scott and Ian: If you do video teaching you miss a lot in a classroom. You do not get the nuances of the room or students.
 - Dan: This is a technical field and it should be hands on.
 - Scott: You cannot supplant an instructor with a video monitor.
 - Ian: Technology should support the instructor not the other way around.
 - Michael: Some of the curriculum could be learned online easily because there is still the driving portion of the training.
 - Steve: Proctored based online training (classroom portion, test taking, evaluations). This would cut costs for the businesses because a proctor would be cheaper to pay than an instructor.
 - Dan: Would need to be a well-designed web based course for it to be successful. There are many people that would not do well with online training—give students the option. Could be different from school to school—put the burden on the school.
 - Scott: How would you handle discipline? You cannot take a student outside of a classroom that is being taught over video monitor when they are being disruptive.
 - Jim: Look at the way the National Safety Council is teaching their online courses, this could be helpful
- Topic 4:
 - Stacey: The department is aware that many enterprises are having a hard time finding and keeping instructors on staff. How does the instructor training requirement play a role in the struggle to find quality instructors?
 - Aimee: Costly, it can cost anywhere from \$10,000-\$15,000 to completely train an instructor.
 - Dan: The probationary period should include the instructor training.
 - Michael: The probationary period should involve the training manager being on sight to oversee the training.
 - Steve and Aimee: more basic instructor courses so that instructors can meet that requirement quicker. Consider holding the basic instructor course online.
 - Aimee: It is hard to get the 80 hours because of scheduling around the instructor's other commitments. The paperwork for training is hard to understand and fill out.
 - Group consensus: The entire length of time is the problem.
 - Dan and Aimee: The paperwork is cumbersome, documenting the training should not be rocket science.
 - Aimee: There is too much additional paperwork (i.e. background checks, abstracts, documentation paperwork)
 - Dan: Let training managers have more responsibility, they should only be filling out one form that says the instructor has completed all of the training.
 - Michael: The forms are already not honest, training managers just sign off that the training has been completed, they do not actually ensure that it has been done.

- Steve: Ohio is the only state that does this. Employers that train their own employees should not have to do any of this.
 - Aimee: Restricted instructors should not have to have their CDL license.
 - Steve: What are the FMCSA's requirements to be a CDL instructor right now?
- Topic 5:
 - Stacey: Investigations seem to have become adversarial, how can we better handle the investigative process so that we can remedy this?
 - Consensus: The office is digging too deep into "he said she said" complaints. It is a waste of resources and money for our office.
 - Scott: Initially any investigation should be cooperative from the get go on both sides.
 - Michael: Conversations need to happen first between our office and the enterprise/instructor that received the complaint.
 - Dan: Pre-investigative steps should be taken before a full blown investigation.
 - Michael: Mediation is often the solution, most problems can be solved on the school level without needing to involve the department. The school can speak with the student and offer solutions to resolve the matter, especially shortages of time.
 - Consensus: Schools and instructors are treated as if they are guilty first.
 - Michael: Too much focus and energy is spent on paperwork documentation and nitpicking.
 - Michael and Scott: Talk with schools or give them the chance to fix things before it goes to the AG's office or to a full blown investigation.
 - Dan: An online time punch system could fix the shortage of time complaints.
 - Michael: Remotely investigate instead of constantly sending someone out to the school.
 - Michael and Aimee: The office has come a long way from the way it was run ten years ago, now we are much more approachable when there is an issue. We need to continue improving the approachability.
 - Dan: Put more responsibility on the training managers to ensure that problems are solved internally after a complaint has been raised before immediately beginning an investigation.