



# Parkland High School

*“Embracing Change,  
Opportunities to Lead and Learn Together”*

## Parkland School District

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### Drivers Education Staff

**Bonnie Bortz**  
Department Chairperson

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Don Steele	Paul Stewart
Bob Tice	Rich Thompson
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Steven Ott	Matt Brown
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June, 2010

Dear Parent,

This letter is to inform you of a forthcoming change effective **July 1, 2010** in Parkland’s driver’s education behind-the wheel course. Many public school districts across the valley, state and nation have either modified their behind the wheel course or have dropped it due to financial considerations. Parkland values all the courses it offers to our school community especially the behind-the-wheel course because it promotes safe driving. Therefore the change explained in this letter reflects a slight modification in the instructional practice of this course but this change continues to promote safe driving.

Here in Parkland School District, students are provided a two-part program in driver education. The first course is Classroom Theory. This course is a graduation requirement and is offered in tenth grade. This course emphasizes the sound principles of highway safety, students’ responsibility in the operation of a motor vehicle, and endeavors to show students the effect of physical, mental, and emotional traits on safe driving.

Our second course is The Behind-the-Wheel program. This course is an optional course and it is available as soon as the student has a valid learners permit. The behind-the-wheel program is a sequential progression of lessons starting with basic **skills/routes** and finishing with more advanced skills/routes, such as inner city and highway driving. It is designed to introduce students to the skills needed to drive a car and then in part, using behind the wheel practice, to develop those same skills for students to safely and successfully maneuver a vehicle in traffic. We stress in part because parental practice of these same skills/routes is crucial in the student’s path to being successful. **Regardless of reason, when students are not practicing driving skills with parents, skill progression is not accomplished. The importance of student practice with parents is essential for student success in becoming safe, proficient young drivers.**

**The cost associated with the Behind-the-Wheel course starts at the fee of fifty dollars.** The fifty dollar fee is for the student’s **6 hours** spent in our behind-the-wheel program. The state of Pennsylvania has identified through its state standards the essential driving skills that promote safe driving. Parkland has grouped these skills into 15 learning/teaching competencies to help our students become proficient drivers. Additionally, the State of Pennsylvania has certified members of our instructional staff to administer the driver’s license examination for students who have met the requirements of the driver education class and have also successfully **completed** the behind-the-wheel program by proficiently demonstrating the 15 driving competencies. Students meeting the qualifications of Parkland’s two courses will be offered the Pennsylvania Driver’s License Examination from Parkland instructors free of charge, will be issued a behind-the-wheel program certificate of successful completion (for insurance purposes) and lastly, will receive a signed application for a senior license.

**Beginning July 1, 2010, there will be a change in the Behind the Wheel program.** Students who have not met the requirements of the classroom program or have not successfully completed the behind-the-wheel program by proficiently demonstrating the 15 driving competences have the following options:

1. Students will receive a certificate stating they have recorded 6 hours of behind-the-wheel instruction and will have to test at the Department of Motor Vehicles for their license.
2. Students who have not completed the program within the 6 hours or would like additional practice/lessons may acquire additional instructional time in Parkland's Driver Training Program **at the Parkland School District tutorial rate of \$42 per hour** and upon successful completion will be offered the Pennsylvania Driver's License Examination from Parkland, will be issued a certificate of successful completion (for insurance purposes) and will receive a signed application for a senior license.

**Parents, it is important to know that our data supports that students who practice these skills/routes with parents for 50 hours as required in part for their learning permit are usually able to complete the program within the 6 hours.** As a common practice, instructors will issue to students who are not progressing at the normal rate of completion an evaluation form recommending skills and hours of practice before scheduling their next appointment. All requests for this additional instruction are to be made through Ms. Bonnie Bortz, Department Chairperson, Driver's Education.

Your child has nearly reached the legal age for being issued a Learner's Permit. We urge your child to sign up with the Driver Education Department at Parkland High School for the Behind-the-Wheel course. For your child to participate in the Behind-the-Wheel course in the Driver Education Program, please complete and return the enclosed parental consent card along with your check. Checks should be made payable to Parkland Driver Education, please list your child's first and last name on the memo line of the check. These items can be mailed to Parkland High School or your child may bring these items directly to the Driver Training Classroom. Once the laboratory fee and parental consent card are received and the student has obtained a Learner's Permit, the student may schedule him/her self for the Behind-the-Wheel instruction.

If you have any questions, please call us at 610-351-5900, extension # 74410 or email to [bortzb@parklandsd.org](mailto:bortzb@parklandsd.org) . For more information on Drivers Education program and the Behind-the-Wheel training, as well as links to Pennsylvania Department of Motor Vehicles log onto the Parkland High School Driver Education Web Site at <http://psdweb.parklandsd.org/phsweb/>

Respectfully,

Bonnie L Bortz  
Parkland Driver Education Department Chairperson