

PPA RECOMMENDATION: Support efforts by the Clarke County Parent Advisory Board to pursue cost effective efforts to provide Drivers Education for eligible (16 years old and above) students in Clarke County.

December 11, 2006

Parent Advisory Board
Clarke County School District
Athens, GA 30606

Clarke County School District
Board of Education
240 Mitchell Bridge Road
Athens, Ga. 30606

Dear Board Members:

The Parent Advisory Board is concerned about the absence of Driver's Education in Clarke County High Schools especially as Joshua's Law will go into effect in January 2007. The new law states that sixteen year olds must have completed an approved driver's education course to obtain a class D license. Unfortunately, private driving schools in the Athens area cost between \$350 and \$450, and many Clarke County families cannot afford such an expensive choice. Also, this presents a hardship for high school students who must have employment and need to drive to their jobs. Hence, the PAB has contacted the Joshua Brown Foundation for further information on this issue.

According to Pat Wilder, executive director of the foundation, the new legislation is designed so as not to financially burden schools. In fact, money for driver's education is already being deducted from traffic fines. In addition, Governor Purdue has created a commission, headed by the Highway Safety and Drivers Service of Georgia, to decide how to distribute the funds. Presently, the commission has 8.5 million dollars to help high schools set up driver's education programs. Currently, a pilot classroom, designed by the Joshua Brown Foundation, is up and running in Cartersville High School. The classroom combines simulator, computerized curriculum, and crash reduction experience for teens over a 9-week course. At present, the Joshua Foundation is interested in setting up a similar program in Clarke County, provided they can obtain the funding.

The Parent Advisory Board is gathering the necessary information to find out how to implement driver's education programs in our high schools. For this purpose, Alan Brown, father of Joshua Brown and founder of the Joshua Brown Foundation, will be addressing the Board of Education on January 11, 2007. Alan Brown has spoken at a conference of the Georgia Association of Educational Leaders regarding the importance of driver's education programs. Moreover, we will inform the Partners for a Prosperous

Athens of our intentions, for this matter impacts youth employment in our county. The Parent Advisory Board is hopeful that the Board of Education will work with us on pursuing this plan. We appreciate your attention to this important community issue.

“Sharing family, community and government responsibility, we can efficiently and effectively go about the business of providing the training that can and will save lives.”

- Pat Wilder, Executive Director of the Joshua Brown Foundation

Sincerely,

Regina Goldman
Clarke County Parent Advisory Board
Alice Harris, President
Al Henderson, Vice President

joshuabrownfoundation.org

cc: Dr. Lewis Holloway, Superintendent
Dr. Maxine Easom, Clarke Central High School Principal
Dr. Tommy Craft, Cedar Shoals High School Principal
Vivian Fisher, Partners for a Prosperous Athens
Heidi Davison, Athens Mayor