

NEWS RELEASE

GEORGIA GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF HIGHWAY SAFETY AWARDS GRANT TO CLAYTON COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

12/5/2011

FOR INFORMATION CONTACT:

Clayton County Public Schools SADD – Students Against Destructive Decisions

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How many Georgia high schools make headlines because young drivers die at the wheel, plunging entire student populations into sudden periods of grief and disbelief? Car crashes remain the *Number One* cause of death for teens and inexperienced young drivers, ages 15-19, have a higher rate of crashes, injuries and fatalities than adult and elderly drivers. In 2008, there were 134 fatalities, 13,968 injuries and 85,297 crashes that involved 15-19 year-olds on Georgia's roadways. According to the most recent data (2008), 41% of the 15-19 year-old passenger vehicle occupants killed or seriously injured were unrestrained. The inexperience and immaturity of younger drivers are thought to be major contributing factors in the higher fatality rate. (Georgia Accident Reporting Crash Data).

In an effort to involve Georgia students in reducing injury and death to young drivers, the Georgia Governor's Office of Highway Safety (GOHS) has awarded a **\$25,000** highway safety grant to Clayton County Public Schools to start Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD) chapters at Drew High School; Elite Scholars High; Forest Park High; Jonesboro High; Morrow High; Mundy's Mill High; North Clayton High; Open Campus High; Riverdale High. GOHS believes that student input into the solution will help alleviate the problem of teen driver fatalities in Georgia.

"The Governor's Office of Highway Safety is committed to changing the tragic trend of teen driver deaths in Georgia," said GOHS Director Bob Dallas. "We're here to make changes and I believe the SADD students in Clayton County can help us achieve the goal of lowering teen driver, crash, injury and fatality rates statewide. Who better to address the challenges and dangers of teen driving than teens themselves? The fact is that the rate of teen driver deaths in Georgia and across the country needs to change and it needs to change now. I'm confident these SADD students can convince their peers to be safer, more conscientious drivers."

By having a comprehensive effort statewide, GOHS/SADD plans to cover teen driving issues including safety belt use, speed, inexperience, and impaired driving in a coordinated manner. Participating schools will focus on a variety of highway safety issues throughout the school year.

The Clayton County Public School SADD chapters plan to conduct two seatbelt checks and conduct awareness campaigns to stop impaired driving during Prom and Graduation.

In addition, each SADD chapter will send its president and advisor to a statewide leadership-training program this spring along with the representative from other high schools in the state of Georgia that received similar grants.

For more information on how to obtain a SADD grant, contact: Eshon Poythress at 404-657-1955, epoythress@gohs.ga.gov