

Driving the Message Contest Winners

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The 2009 *Driving the Message* Contest was a huge success and the judges had their hands full this year with a record-breaking number of entries. This year there were 163 entries, compared to last year's 72.

In the poster category, first place went to **Lauren Souers of Coronado High School** with "Driven to Distraction." **Chris Trevino and Trevor Walker of Jarrell High School** took second place with their entry, "One Way Road." Third place went to **Brianna Short of Winnsboro High School** for "Just Don't Do It."

In the video category, first place went to **Rolando Rodriguez Ruiz-Healy of Communications Arts High School** for "Just Another Saturday Night." Second place went to **JM Berlet, Kelsey Pena, Matt**



"Driven to Distraction" won first place in the poster contest. It was designed by **Lauren Souers of Coronado High School**.

Hallstein and Krystal Clark of Communications Arts High School for "Reasons Not to Wear a Seat Belt." The group effort from **Bronte High School** took third place for their entry "Stay Focused."

In the overall program scrapbook category, first place went to **Creekview High School's** leadership class. **Winnsboro High School** took second place, and third place went to the **Vidal M. Trevino School of Communications and Fine Arts**.

Judges were from State Farm Insurance, Sherry Matthews Marketing, ThinkStreet, the Texas Department of Transportation and the Texas Transportation Institute.

Tiffany Wilkerson, a judge from State Farm said, "The videos were really heartfelt, and there was a lot of thought and creativity put into them. I think everyone did a great job."

Dannah Peck, a judge from Sherry Matthews, said, "I think it's important that these messages come from teens because there's a lot more credibility when it comes from someone you know and trust."

Congratulations to all the winners and thank you to all of you who participated!

TDS Day at the Capitol

TDS leaders will gather at the Texas capitol in Austin later this spring to help raise awareness of the teen driving safety issue in Texas. State legislators will sponsor a resolution to recognize TDS efforts to fight the number-one killer of teens, and the event will also feature the first meeting of the new TDS Teen Advisory Board.

Plans also call for a formal recognition of the winners of the *Driving The Message* Contest and Sponstar honorees, as well as the new advisory board. That means there is still time to be part of the festivities through the advisory board and Sponstar nomination process. The deadlines for both are coming up soon, so go to t-driver.com for more information.

Mark your
calendar!



Is your teacher or sponsor awesome, supportive and award worthy? Nominate him or her for a Sponstar award! Sponstars are teachers or sponsors that make a difference to teens through their work with the Teens in the Driver Seat program.

A teacher or sponsor is defined as a “non-student” adult that is assisting students with their TDS program. Examples of individuals that qualify would be a teacher, school administrator, counselor, or group leader (Ex: FCCLA, 4-H program, etc.)

The deadline for nominations is **5:00 p.m. CST on Friday, March 27, 2009**. TDS Regional representatives can assist with nominations for those who do not have Internet access. For more information and the nomination form, go to t-driver.com.



Calling all teen leaders! Are you a natural-born leader? Teens in the Driver Seat wants you to be part of the TDS Teen Advisory Board. Advisory board members will assist in organizing program-oriented events and activities in their region; provide feedback on new program materials, safety messages, promotional items and related deployment elements; provide new strategy ideas on engaging teens in the TDS program; participate in meetings, and serve as ambassadors for TDS by setting a positive example for their peers.

To apply go online to t-driver.com. The deadline for applications is **5:00 p.m. CST on Wednesday, April 1, 2009**. Advisory board members will be announced at the TDS Day at the Capitol.

Fall 2009 TDS Summit

Thanks to the sponsorship support from HEB, Six Flags Fiesta Texas and The University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA), the inaugural TDS Summit in October of 2008 was a huge success. Planning is actively underway for the second annual Teens in the Driver Seat (TDS) Summit scheduled for the fall of 2009 in El Paso, Texas. The TDS Summit is a great way for teens, parents, professionals and safety advocates to get plugged into the TDS movement and stay informed on teen driving safety issues.

It's not too early to begin your planning as well! Students from Vidal M. Trevino (VMT) School of Communications and Fine Arts in Laredo, Texas have already begun fundraising events to send their TDS team to the next summit. On March 1, the students held a 5K fun run in memory of Mercurio Martinez IV, a teen who passed away in a roll-over car crash, and to promote safe teen driving. Alberto Torres, student president of the Teens in the Driver Seat program at VMT said, “The money we raised will help us pay for airline tickets for this year’s El Paso, Texas TDS Summit.”



U.S. Representative Ciro Rodriguez opens first-ever Teens in the Driver Seat Summit.

Don't forget to sign up for e-mail updates regarding the TDS Summit by joining the TDS listserv on the TDS homepage, or check t-driver.com for updates and more details on the 2009 fall TDS Summit.



Channelview Press Conference

Channelview High School, in Channelview, Texas, is the first Houston-area school to start the Teens in the Driver Seat program. A press conference, which was rescheduled twice due to Hurricanes Gustav and Ike last fall, announced the launch of the program on January 21.

Kayla Mizell, Kellie Denison and Danielle Thibodeaux, student leaders from Channelview High School, led the press conference and announced the findings of an assessment done by the Texas Transportation Institute (TTI), which found the following:

- Only about one percent of teens statewide and locally regard nighttime driving as risky, and about 30 percent of them routinely drive after 10 p.m.
- Half of the Channelview students recognize that speeding is dangerous, but 20 percent of them say they speed frequently.
- Two-thirds of Channelview students recognize that talking or texting on a cell phone while driving is dangerous, but nearly 20 percent said they frequently do so anyway.

Danielle said, "The problem has become an epidemic across America. Effective laws and driver training are important, but they are not enough. We can't reverse this deadly trend without positive peer pressure; that's the idea behind Teens in the Driver Seat."

Kayla, who first learned of TDS at the Texas Association of Student Councils (TASC) convention last spring, said the biggest reason why young people die in car crashes is lack of experience, combined with the top five dangers for young drivers.

The students said they have been putting up flyers, drawing chalk outlines of people in the student parking lot and wearing their TDS shirts so people will ask about what they are doing.

Kellie said, "We're making sure that the messages are coming from us so that our friends and classmates really listen and understand."



What's going on in your area?



Coronado High School students receive a rose in memory of a loved one who had passed in a car crash.

El Paso

TDS Reps. Jeff Shelton & Llubia Corella

•**Coronado High School's** TDS group participated in a worldwide holiday memorial ceremony on December 14 honoring the memories of children who have died from car crashes. Each student received a rose in memory of their loved one. Guest speaker Paula Madriles, whose teenage daughter, Grace Elizabeth Madriles, died in a car crash September 21, 2002, provided a testimony on what it's like to lose a child.

•**Irvin High School** hosted the Rockets, Rods and Rides Car Show to kick off the new year and remind everyone to stay safe. They are also hosting a memorial walk in remembrance of Chris Ramirez, who died in 2006 and would have graduated in 2009. The walk will be held in conjunction with "For the Life of Your Friend" Teen Driving Safety Day.

•**The Pan-American Health Organization's (PAHO) Centros de Integracion Juvenil (Teen Integration Center)** in Ciudad Juarez and the TTI El Paso office are working on beginning a pilot TDS program across the border.

•**Americas High School** TDS team gave a short presentation on dangerous driving facts and TDS during a basketball pep rally.

•**Sweetwater High School** made daily announcements with video and statistics regarding the

El Paso *continued*

factors. They have also done a radio show, posted TDS flyers on cars, and had DPS presentations with drunk goggles and a roll-over cage to promote driving safety. Additionally, they are also the winners of a TDS poster contest sponsored by State Farm.

•**Canutillo High School** set up a table to provide information to both students and parents about TDS.

Dallas/Fort Worth

TDS Rep. Christie Madsen

•**Garland High School** will host a booth on seatbelts and have participants sign a seatbelt pledge. Students will show videos from the Garland Police illustrating the dangers of not wearing a seatbelt.

•**Rowlett High School's** booth will show the results of not listening to these safety messages by drawing body outlines on the ground and using crime scene tape. Prizes will be given to the school that has the most attendees from their high school.

•**Cumby, Miller Grove and Como-Pickton High Schools** have all signed on to the TDS program with the help of Silvia Millsap, a Region IV-V nurse.

•**Archer City High School** is holding a day of TDS and safe driving activities on March 11. The event will include a parent awareness program with a panel of experts.

Dallas/Fort Worth

continued

•**The Garland Youth Council** is hosting a TDS Day event at Firewheel Town Center on Saturday, March 7. All seven GISD high schools are expected to participate. Booths at the event will be decorated and hosted by individual schools, and each booth is intended to portray one of the five risk factors.

•**Sachse High School** will host an alcohol/drug use booth, and the Garland Police will provide "drunk goggles" and help students conduct field sobriety tests to illustrate the dangers of driving under the influence.

•**Naaman Forest High School** will host tricycle texting races. Attendees will race on tricycles through a small course in the parking lot while texting on their cell phones.

•**North Garland High School** will host a speeding booth and set up hurdles to illustrate the stopping distance required for various speeds.

•**Lakeview Centennial High School** will host a night driving booth and will create an obstacle course dealing with visibility.



Juarez-Lincoln High School kicked off their TDS program at a pep rally.



Kinzi Jo Schacher and Katie Chavez from Lazbuddie High School with their TDS board in Odessa, Texas at their FCCLA event.

What's going on in your area?

Lubbock/Amarillo/ San Antonio/Laredo

TDS Reps. Krizia Martinez,
Kathy Montemayor & Russell Henk

•**Anton High School's** FCCLA held a teen driver safety week. Each day focused on a different safety message. The leadership group is incorporating TDS activities as part of their STAR project for FCCLA.

•**Vidal M. Trevino** held a 5K fun run on March 1 to raise money for scholarships to attend this year's annual summit in El Paso.

•**Jourdanton High School's** FCCLA is planning to incorporate TDS as part of their STAR event.

•**Memorial, McHi, Options High Schools and Lamar Academy** met with Krizia Martinez to learn more about the TDS program.

•Students from **Clark, Boerne, John Jay, Robert G. Cole, New Braunfels, Marshall, Holy Cross, Taft, Bandera, Earl Warren, Randolph, Alamo and Robert E. Lee High Schools** recently attended Project Celebration and learned more about the TDS program.

•**Juarez-Lincoln High School** launched their TDS program with a pep rally in November.

•Krizia Martinez attended the FCCLA regional meeting Feb. 20-21 in San Antonio.

Lubbock/Amarillo/ San Antonio/Laredo

Continued

•**Palmview High School** recently opened their new campus to the community. TDS banners were displayed in the halls of the new building.

•**Taft High School** students are planning a parade promoting TDS and safe driving.

•**Reagan High School's** Student Council and Peer Assistance and Leadership (PALs) group met to brainstorm TDS upcoming plans.

•**Hondo High School** participated in a community service event where they promoted TDS by passing out TDS promotional items and print material. Students are working to plan safe driving skits that they will perform at their school assembly. They also did a STAR event at the FCCLA conference highlighting TDS.

•**Holmes High School** hosted a SMASHED DVD event, and an HBO special on drinking and driving for their peers. They discussed how to incorporate TDS messages into the video. Teens took the time to meet before and after lunch and classes to present material to their peers on TDS.

BCS/Yoakum, Waco

TDS Reps. Bernie Fette, Jen Ross & Sam Holland

•**Gatesville High School** is planning to host a TDS week of activities with five booths representing the five risk factors. The group plans to complete the pre- and post-program assessment tools.

•**West High School** set up a TDS booth during lunch periods to pass out information and promotional items to their peers.

•**China Spring, Harker Heights, Marlin, Rapoport, Robert M. Shoemaker, University and West High Schools** all attended the local Students Against Violence Everywhere (SAVE) teen driving safety summit, where they learned more about the Teens in the Driver Seat program as a local resource.

•TTI filmed a public service announcement (PSA) for "Buckle up, dude" on January 21. The PSA will air at the end of February.



Holland High School did their STAR event on TDS and are advancing to state.



Holland High School placed fifth at the Region III FCCLA meeting.



West High School students attend a teen driving safety summit hosted by Students Against Violence Everywhere (SAVE).

What's going on in your area?

Houston TDS Rep. Lori Gray

• **Channelview High School** held a press conference on January 21 to kick off their TDS program and announce findings from their pre-program assessment.

• The FCCLA leadership group at **Robert E. Lee High School** in Baytown, Texas, recruited new TDS members during lunch periods by passing out promotional items, answering questions about the program and showing video testimonials to peers.

• **Cushing High School** was highlighted in the Daily Sentinel because of their efforts in helping spread the safe driving message.

Austin/Tyler TDS Reps. Casey Dusza & Tina Geiselbrecht

• **Everman and Sterling High School** mentioned TDS as part of their recent FCCLA activities. Check it out at [Texas FCCLA](http://TexasFCCLA.org).

• **Sterling High School** sponsored a Safe Driving Month during October. Students handed out promotional items and drew chalk outlines on the sidewalks around the school to represent the teen deaths in car crashes. The activities were highlighted in the local newspaper, *The Sterling Courier*.

OUT OF STATE

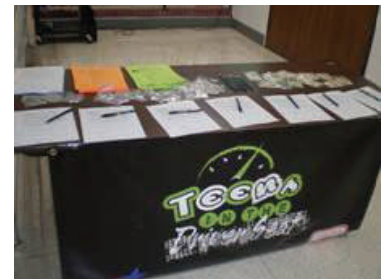
• **Bristol Eastern & Bristol Central HS in Connecticut** held a Thanksgiving Day parade promoting TDS and also shared TDS materials and safety messages during their annual Thanksgiving Day football game against each other. The students were featured in a morning pep rally in December, which was covered by a local TV station. Both schools have many events planned for March through June (school last several weeks into June in Connecticut) for their spring break, prom and graduation events.

• In **Georgia**, the Governor's Office of Highway Safety and the Georgia DOT are helping select schools in Atlanta and surrounding rural regions for the next phase of deployment in that state. During the last round of meetings in Georgia (in December) a new connection was also made with a major regional church that has eight high schools represented in it's mammoth youth group. The church youth group director has TDS materials in-hand and is working to develop a TDS team amongst his group of high school--age youth.

• **California** is now officially the third state to be added to states implementing the TDS program outside of Texas using NHTSA contract funds.



Students from Bristol Eastern High School promote TDS during their Thanksgiving Day parade.



Students at Robert E. Lee High School in Baytown, Texas set up a TDS informational table during lunch and recruited new membership into their TDS team.



Sterling High School students draw chalk outlines on the high school's sidewalk to show the severity of the teen crash epidemic.

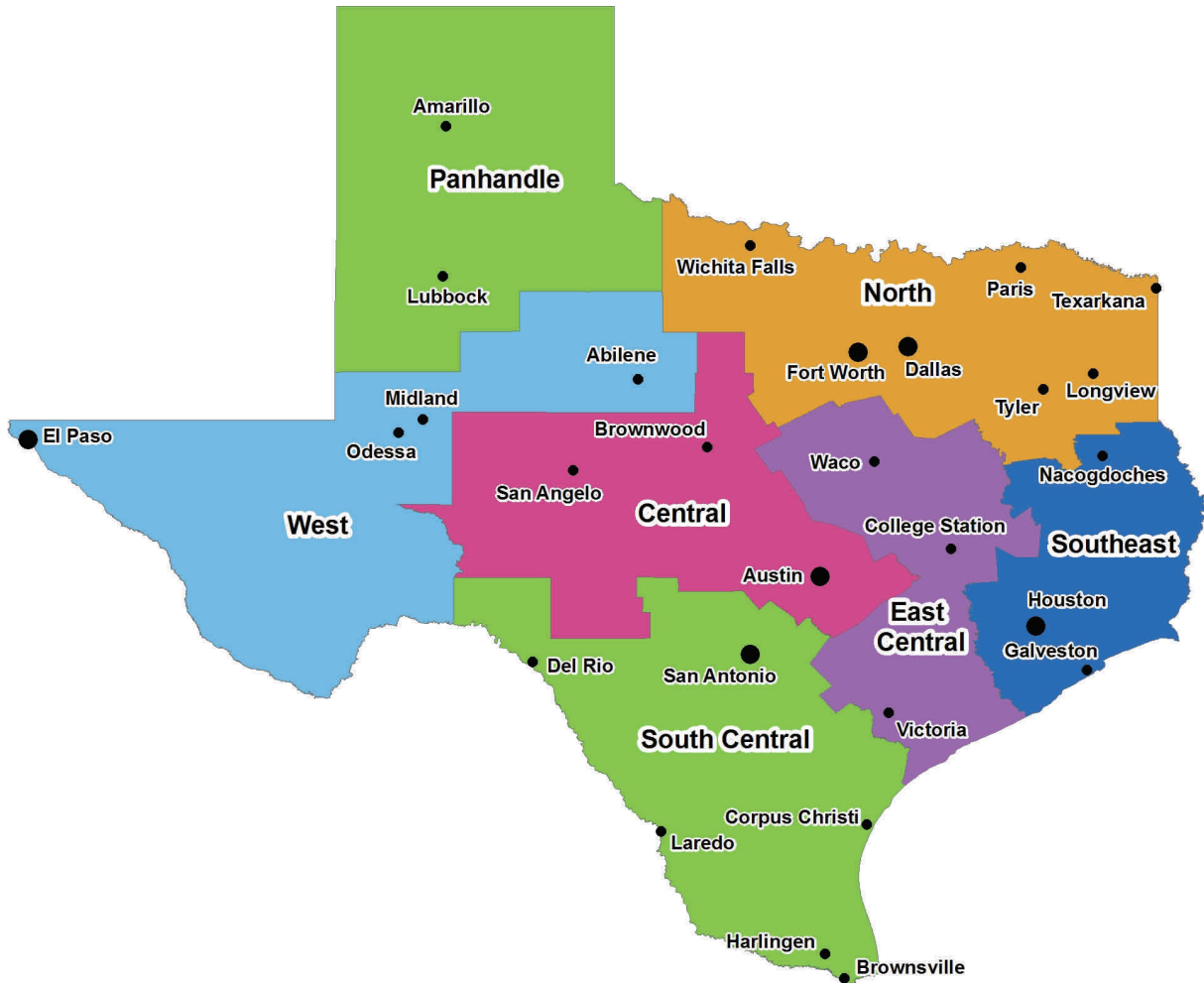


Students from Channelview High School highlight the dangers that plague their high school in a recent press conference.



Cushing High School student council officers, from left to right: C.J. West, Amber Smith, Kendall Lehart, Nicole Beasley and Katie Greer, pose in front of a TDS banner.

TDS Regional Contacts



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*Do you know teens who want to start TDS? Do you have an update to share? Does your TDS group need assistance?
 If so, find your location on the map and contact your regional coordinator.
 For out-of-Texas contacts, please contact [Russell Henk](mailto:r-henk@tamu.edu) or [Bernie Fette](mailto:b-fette@tamu.edu).*

Teacher Highlight

Mary Willard from Channelview High School in Channelview, Texas, is a highlighted TDS sponsor.



Mrs. Willard, Channelview High School's Student Council sponsor, has made the TDS program at our school very successful. She has supported our program in many different ways. If we ever have any questions on what to do next with the program she always knows and is well prepared. We have been successful with many projects in TDS because of her. We handed out flyers in a parade to publicize it in our school.

The TDS team and our school have been extremely lucky to have someone so hardworking and determined in changing the way teenagers view driving. The difference with Mrs. Willard is that her heart is really in this program! That is rare to find and that is why we have been privileged to work with her.

The Teen Perspective

It is with great honor that I announce that the Laredo ISD/Vidal M. Trevino School of Communications and Fine Arts Teens in the Driver Seat program has made history in South Texas!

Our 5K run, to promote safe teen driving, has become the biggest run in Laredo and South Texas history, according to professional runners. We have made the news every day on our local newspapers and TV stations (visit the link: <http://www.pro8news.com/news/local/40486002.html>).

The community is teaming up to help us give 19 scholarships to qualifying high school seniors, all under the name of Mercurio Martinez IV. Mercurio or "Merc the IV" as the community knew him was a teenager (19 years old) who lost his life in a traffic accident; he was the passenger. The 5K run is being named the "Fernando A. Salinas 5K Run" for his support to Teens in the Driver Seat; morally and financially. The money raised will help us pay for airline tickets for this year's El Paso, Texas Summit.

- Alberto Torres, Jr., Vidal M. Trevino School of Communications and Fine Arts, Junior



Alberto Torres, Jr., is a junior at Vidal M. Trevino School of Communications and Fine Arts.



Right: Runners at the 5K run. Left: Dr. Villarreal thanks participants for being a part of the first annual Fernando A. Salinas 5K Run.

To add your own "teen perspective" to our guest column, please e-mail your thoughts/comments to the TDS webmaster at tdswebmaster@ttimail.tamu.edu with "teen guest column" in the subject line.

The Director's Corner

While spring is full of wonderful, fun activities, it is important to remember that we are embarking on one of the most dangerous time periods for teenage drivers and their passengers. We start with an exciting spring break vacation, and before we know it we are celebrating prom, graduation and other end of school year events. Unfortunately, these celebrations can often end in tragedy – but that can be prevented. We still have time to spread the word about the top driving risks—driving at night, speeding/racing, distractions (like cell phones & texting), not buckling up and alcohol—and help prevent devastating crashes. Now is a great time to shift your TDS team efforts into overdrive and remind your classmates and community to stay safe behind the wheel.

We are excited that so many students are staying involved all school year and are actively working on TDS. We were so pleased that our second annual Driving the Message Contest was another success! With 163 contest entries this year, we had more than double the amount of last year's contest and we are always amazed at your passion and creativity. We would also like to thank our sponsors, State Farm Insurance of Texas and the Texas Department of Transportation, for continuing to make this contest possible and for serving as the judging panel again this year.

In addition to the contest, we have several new opportunities for you to be involved in TDS and to be recognized for your efforts. If you would like to have a stronger voice with the TDS program, we encourage you to apply online for the Teen Advisory Board before Wednesday, April 1. Your ideas and opinions are what make TDS so successful, plus it can be a great item to add to your resume. We are also highlighting *TDSers of the Week* on our homepage. Check out t-driver.com to nominate yourself or a friend. We will also now recognize our best teacher/sponsors in Texas through the Sponstar nomination process. If your teacher/sponsor is instrumental in your TDS program, be sure to nominate them online before Friday, March 27. Finally, we are planning to recognize all of our winners & leaders (from the statewide contest, the Teen Advisory Board, schools that completed all of the implementation steps and Sponstar winners) during a special one-day event at the Texas capitol in Austin later this spring. We hope you will be able to join us for this special event. We will be sending more information out soon, but start making plans now to attend.

Also, it's not too early to begin making plans to join us in El Paso, Texas for the 2nd annual Teens in the Driver Seat Summit. More details will be announced soon, but your efforts can begin now. We were excited to hear that Vidal M. Trevino Magnet school in Laredo, Texas has already accomplished some amazing fundraising efforts to take their team to El Paso. Congrats to the leaders in Laredo for planning ahead. We look forward to seeing you at the Summit this fall.

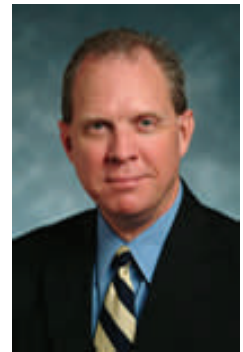
While the school year is entering the home stretch, there are still a few months left to start the TDS program at your school! Find your regional contact on page 7 of this newsletter and let us know if we can help you get started. Thank you for your efforts and continuing to help to save young lives. The latest available data show that teen traffic fatalities are now at a historic low for Texas and down 33 percent since the TDS Program was launched in 2003. Your efforts truly are making a difference!

Watch for our next edition in May before summer vacation. Enjoy the rest of the school year and stay safe!

My best to you,
Russell Henk



Russell Henk,
TDS Director



Bernie Fette,
Director of TDS
Public Affairs

Newest TDS Schools

- Allen HS (Allen, TX)
- Breckenridge HS (Breckenridge, TX)
- Central Heights HS (Nacogdoches, TX)
- Childress HS (Childress, TX)
- Clarksville HS (Clarksville, TX)
- Clint HS (El Paso, TX)
- Cumby HS (Cumby, TX)
- Cushing HS (Cushing, TX)
- D.W. Carter HS (Dallas, TX)
- Dublin HS (Dublin, TX)
- Eagle Pass HS (Eagle Pass, TX)
- Greenwood HS (Midland, TX)
- Jefferson HS (El Paso, TX)
- Jourdanton HS (Jourdanton, TX)
- Lamesa HS (Lamesa, TX)
- Lazbuddie HS (Lazbuddie, TX)
- Lubbock HS (Lubbock, TX)
- Martins Mill HS (Martin's Mill, TX)
- Martinsville HS (Martinsville, TX)
- McKinney HS (McKinney, TX)
- McKinney Boyd HS (McKinney, TX)
- Miller Grove HS (Cumby, TX)
- Ore City HS (Ore City, TX)
- Raul Yzaguirre School for Success (Houston, TX)
- Reagan HS (San Antonio, TX)
- Riverside HS (El Paso, TX)
- Socorro HS (El Paso, TX)
- Splendora HS (Splendora, TX)
- Vidal M. Trevino School of Communications and Fine Arts (Laredo, TX)
- Waxahachie HS (Waxahachie, TX)
- Winfree Academy Charter School (Grapevine, TX)

Want more TDS?

- Join our fan page on [Facebook](#)
- Check out our profile and friends on [MySpace](#)!
- Watch TDS videos and PSA's on [YouTube](#).
- E-mail updates are a great way to get current information on TDS programs and TDS announcements. To join go to [t-driver.com](#).



Calendar

March 7	GARLAND, Texas—Garland ISD TDS Day at Firewheel Town Center Mall
March 8	Daylight Savings Time—Change your Clocks!
March 17	St. Patrick's Day
March 20-21	SACRAMENTO, California—California Association for Safety Education
March 27	DEADLINE: Sponstar Nominations Due
March 29-31	ARLINGTON, Texas—TASC Annual State Conference
April 1	DEADLINE: Teen Advisory Board (TAB) Applications Due
April 12	Easter
April 16-18	CORPUS CHRISTI, Texas—FCCLA Texas State Meeting
May 1	DEADLINE: Post-Program Assessments Due
May 10	Mother's Day
May 25	Memorial Day