



2026

TEEN SAFE DRIVING TEAM TOOL KIT



A JOINT INITIATIVE BETWEEN THE NCHSAA
& GOVERNOR'S HIGHWAY SAFETY PROGRAM

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Welcome to this toolkit, created to provide guidelines and ideas to help your student-led group join the statewide effort to encourage safe teen driving practices.

• Welcome Message/Intro	03
• Initiative Objectives	04
• Teen Safe Driving Team	05
• Getting Started	06
• Suggested Activities	08
• Sample Assets	18
• Measure the Impact	24
• Resources & Contact Information	25

Together, we can build a culture of young people who respect the rules of the road and strive to maintain safe driving practices that protect their peers, themselves, and the general public. Help us #SetTheStandard!

WELCOME MESSAGE/INTRO

National Highway Traffic Safety Association (NHTSA) reports that motor vehicle crashes remain the leading cause of death for teens ages 15-18, and in 2024, 51% of teen drivers who died in crashes were unbuckled. NHTSA also notes that when an unbuckled teen dies in a crash, 9 out of 10 passengers who died were also unbuckled.

NCHSAA Commissioner Brad Alford stands behind the initiative noting that “Education-based athletics is about developing young people who understand that their choices impact others. We want our student-athletes to carry that responsibility with them when they get behind the wheel, because their teammates, friends, and families are counting on them to get to their destination safely. If our young people can encourage one another to buckle up, put the phone down, and make good decisions, they can help set the standard for safe driving across North Carolina.”

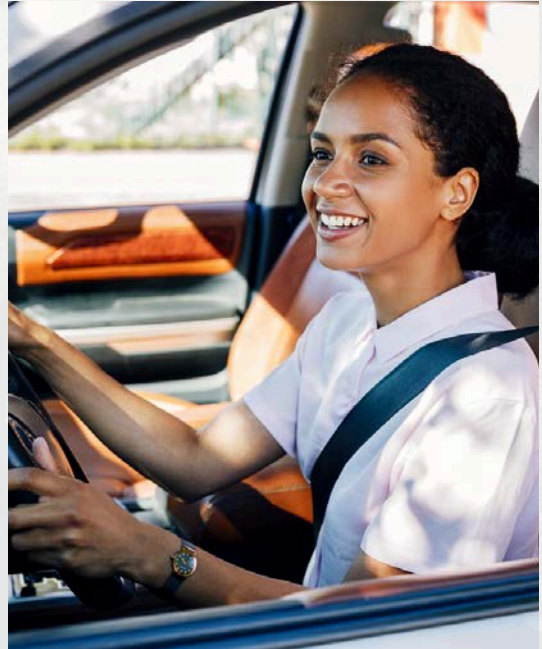


From the Governor’s Highway Safety Program perspective, Dr. Cheryl Leonard adds, “The North Carolina Governor’s Highway Safety Program (GHSP) is dedicated to eliminating traffic crashes and fatalities across our state. Through an impactful partnership with the North Carolina High School Athletic Association (NCHSAA), we are establishing a new standard for teen driving behavior. By empowering peer-to-peer advocacy Teen Safe Driving Teams, this initiative mobilizes student leaders to champion safe driving habits from within their own high schools and communities. Together, we are cultivating a generation of responsible motorists focused on eliminating distracted, impaired, and high-speed driving - safeguarding North Carolina's roads for everyone.”



INITIATIVE OBJECTIVES

The North Carolina High School Athletic Association, in conjunction with its partner, NCDOT-Governor's Highway safety Program, encourages member schools to establish a student-led Safe Driving Team - a group of student-athletes and other members of the student body who become peer advocates for:



- Buckling up - Every Seat. Every Time.
- Putting the phone down
- Never driving impaired
- Following speed limits
- Limiting distractions from music, phones, passengers
- Speaking up when a driver is making an unsafe choice

This toolkit is intended to provide some guidelines and suggested activities that student-led groups can implement within their own school communities.

Together, we can all make the roads safer and protect the greatest asset - our youth!

TEEN SAFE DRIVING TEAM

WHAT



The Teen Safe Driving Team is a student-led peer advocacy group that promotes safe driving habits throughout their school community. Students don't serve as police officers or "safety monitors." **Their job is to change the culture.**

Student-athletes are perfect role models to lead this change. They Set The Standard - on the field, in the classroom, and on the road.

They understand:

- You wear the uniform correctly.
- You show up for your teammates.
- You follow the rules.
- You don't put your team at risk.

Safe driving simply becomes another expression of this culture.

The ultimate message:

- Your teammates count on you to show up.
- Your family counts on you to come home.
- Your friends count on you to make the right choice.

MISSION



To use your voices, influence and set the example to make safe driving the standard - not the exception.

GETTING STARTED

01. Build Your Team

Identify an adult advisor or team sponsor

Recruit 5 to 15+ student peers

Establish the team

Pick your desired priorities

Determine activities to engage your student community

Adult Advisor

Potential advisors include:

- Student activities director
- Coach
- SRO
- Driver Education teacher
- School Counselor
- Health/PE Teacher
- Other school administrators

NOTE: The adult advisor provides oversight but students should own the initiative!

Recruit Members

Don't make this exclusively a driver's education group.

Consider recruiting:

- Student-athletes and Cheerleaders
- Student government
- Club leaders
- Band members
- Drivers & non-drivers
- All grade levels

GETTING STARTED

02. Establish Structure

Hold a 30-minute kick-off meeting.

Ask: “What would it take to make safe driving ‘cool’ at school?”

Have team members identify the biggest issues at the school.

Designate/elect:

- Team Captain - leads meetings and represents the team
- Social Media Lead - creates student-focused content
- Events Lead - Organizes activities
- Outreach Lead - Connects with teams, clubs and student groups within the school
- Data/Impact Lead - Tracks participation and results

03. Determine Priorities

Identify priorities and pick 2 - 3; examples may include:

- Everyone buckling up
- Limiting distractions while driving
- Stressing the importance of following the rules of the road
- Empowering students to speak up when a friend makes unsafe driving choices
- Hosting a rally or educational speaker to talk about safe driving

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES BY PRIORITY

01. Buckle Up

- “No Buckle, No Go” Challenge
 - Have students pledge: “I won’t move the car until all passengers are buckled up.”
 - Create a large pledge banner for students to sign. Hang it in the cafeteria or gymnasium.
 - Make it competitive between
 - Class vs. Class
 - Team vs. Team
 - Grade vs. Grade
- “Buckle Up” Parking Lot Challenge
 - With school administration approval, student advocates conduct voluntary observational count at different periods of time
 - Example: Monday- 72% buckled up; Friday- 81% buckled up
 - Student-led group then promotes the improvement with goal of 100%
 - Consider giving students a Lifesavers candy if they are buckled up as the enter/leave student parking area

BUCKLE UP WEEK

The Challenge

Make buckling up the standard at your school. Challenge students to wear a seat belt every time they ride in a vehicle - front seat, back seat, short trip, long trip.

The Goal

Get as many students as possible to make the commitment: My car doesn't move until everyone is buckled up.

The 5-Day Plan:

Day	Take Action
Monday- Launch It	Introduce Buckle-Up Week through announcements and social media. Start collecting Buckle Up Pledges.
Tuesday - Show It	Create a pledge wall or banner: "I Buckle Up. Do You?"
Wednesday - Challenge It	Hold No Buckle, No Go Day. Challenge student drivers to make sure everyone is buckled before moving the car.
Thursday - Share It	Ask teams, clubs and student groups to take a #SetTheStandard Buckle Up photo or video.
Friday - Celebrate It	Announce participation totals and recognize teams/classes with strong participation.

PA Announcement:

"Before the music. Before the GPS. Before the car moves—buckle up. Front seat or back seat, make it automatic. Every person. Every ride. Set the Standard."

Social Post:

CLICK IT BEFORE YOU KICK IT.

Every seat. Every ride. Every time.

Who's buckled? Everybody.

#SetTheStandard #BuckleUp #NCHSAA

Supplies Needed:

- Pledge cards or digital pledge
- Banner/poster & Markers
- Social graphics
- Participation tracker

Track Impact:

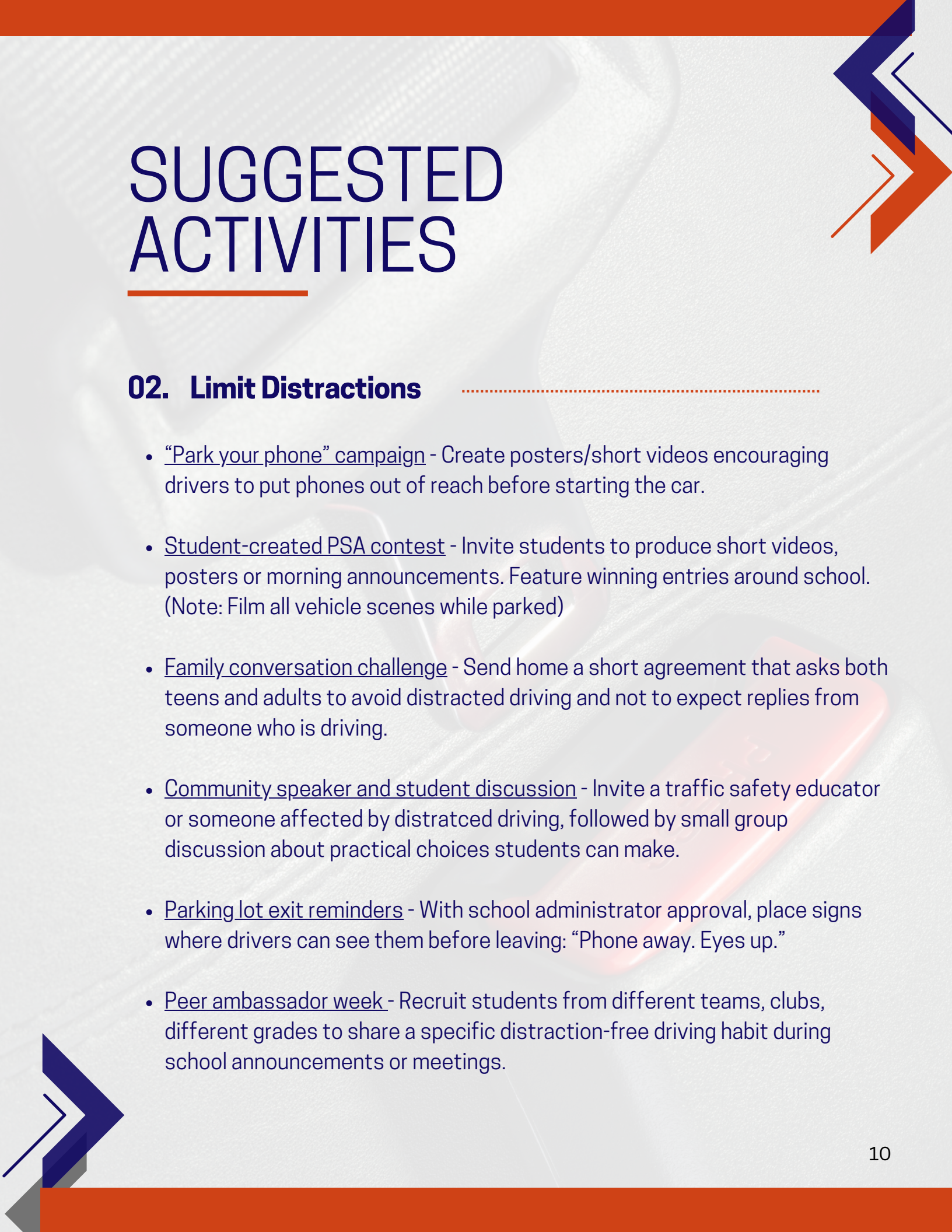
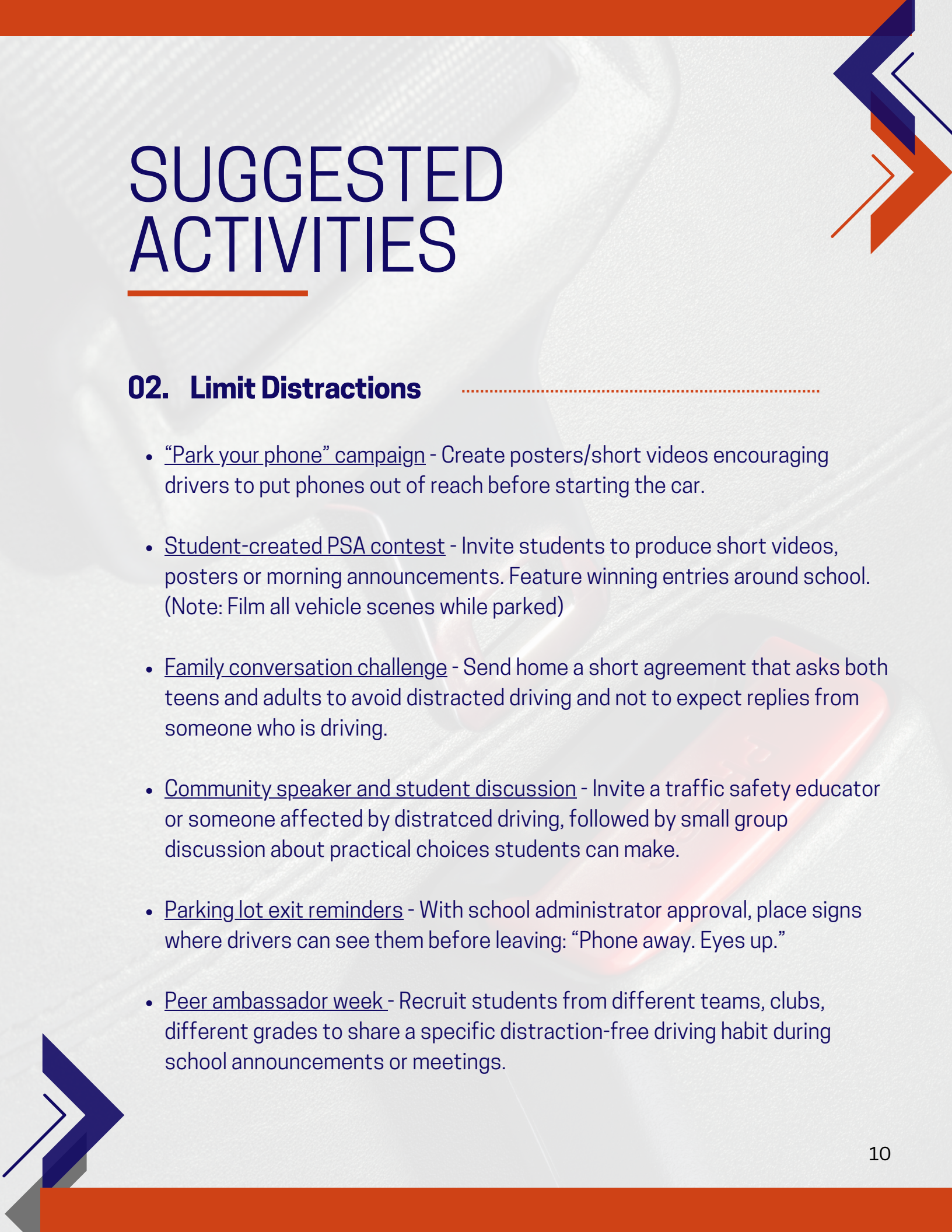
___ Number of social posts

___ Number of student pledges

___ Data from social post views, reach & engagement

___ Number of teams/clubs participating

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES



02. Limit Distractions

- “Park your phone” campaign - Create posters/short videos encouraging drivers to put phones out of reach before starting the car.
- Student-created PSA contest - Invite students to produce short videos, posters or morning announcements. Feature winning entries around school. (Note: Film all vehicle scenes while parked)
- Family conversation challenge - Send home a short agreement that asks both teens and adults to avoid distracted driving and not to expect replies from someone who is driving.
- Community speaker and student discussion - Invite a traffic safety educator or someone affected by distracted driving, followed by small group discussion about practical choices students can make.
- Parking lot exit reminders - With school administrator approval, place signs where drivers can see them before leaving: “Phone away. Eyes up.”
- Peer ambassador week - Recruit students from different teams, clubs, different grades to share a specific distraction-free driving habit during school announcements or meetings.

PHONE DOWN WEEK

The Challenge

Make driving phone-free. Encourage students to decide before starting the car where their phone will go and how they'll avoid the temptation to check it.

The Goal

Create a school culture where this is normal: "When I'm driving, my phone can wait."

The 5-Day Plan:

Day	Take Action
Monday- Lock In	Launch the challenge and ask students to make the Phone Down Pledge.
Tuesday - Make a Plan	Ask: "Where does your phone go when you drive?" Share student strategies.
Wednesday - Poll It	Post: "Your phone buzzes while you're driving. What do you do?"
Thursday - Say It	Ask student-athletes and leaders to record 10-second "My Phone Can Wait" videos.
Friday - Own It	Students share one strategy they will continue using after the challenge.

PA Announcement:

"You got the keys. Now lock in. Phone down. Eyes up. That text, Snap or notification can wait. When you're behind the wheel, your job is to drive."

Social Post:

Buzz. Ding. Snap. Text.
Still not worth looking.
Phone down. Eyes up. Lock in.

#SetTheStandard #BuckleUp #NCHSAA

Supplies Needed:

Phone Down Pledge
Social polls
Student video prompts
Posters/signage
Participation tracker

Track Impact:

___ Pledges taken ___ Data from social post views, reach & engagement
___ Student videos ___ Poll responses

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES



03. Follow the Rules of the Road

- “Rule of the Week” campaign - Highlight one topic each week—speed limits, full stops, turn signals, yielding, or seat belts - through posters and morning announcements.
- Road Rules Trivia - Run a lunchtime quiz or classroom competition using questions from your state’s current driver handbook. Offer small prizes for participation.
- Traffic Sign Challenge - Set up a matching game where students identify signs and explain the correct driver response. Include less familiar signs.
- Mock Intersection Activity - Use floor tape and signs to create a walk-through intersection in a gym. Have students practice scenarios as drivers, pedestrians, and cyclists.
- Road Rules Scavenger Hunt - Place traffic signs and scenario cards around the school. Students visit each station on foot and answer a question to complete the challenge.
- Ask a Driving Instructor - Invite a certified instructor to answer anonymous student questions about right-of-way, lane changes, and other commonly misunderstood rules.

PROTECT YOUR CREW WEEK

The Challenge

Remind students that their decisions behind the wheel don't affect only them. Drivers and passengers share responsibility for helping everyone get home safely.

The Goal

Get students thinking about one simple question: Who's counting on you to get home?

The 5-Day Plan:

Day	Take Action
Monday- Ask It	Post “Who's Counting on You?” on a large board. Let students add answers throughout the day.
Tuesday - Pledge It	Launch the Protect Your Crew Pledge: buckle up, limit distractions and look out for your friends.
Wednesday - Picture It	Students hold signs naming who is counting on them: My family. My teammates. My friends. My people.
Thursday - Team Up	Challenge athletic teams and clubs to create a short Protect Your Crew video.
Friday - Get Home	Share a collage of student responses with the message: “You've got people counting on you. Drive like it.”

PA Announcement:

When you get behind the wheel, you're responsible for more than yourself. Your life matters. Your friends matter. Everyone in your car matters. Be the driver who gets everyone home. Set the Standard.

Social Post:

Your car. Your crew. Your responsibility.
Protect your people. Make smart choices. Get everyone home.

#SetTheStandard #GetHomeSafe #NCHSAA

Supplies Needed:

Whiteboard/banner & Markers
Pledge cards
Photo signs
Phone/camera
Social templates

Track Impact: ___ Pledges taken ___ Data from social post views, reach & engagement
 ___ Photos & videos ___ Student responses ___ Number of teams/clubs involved

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

04. Speak Up

- “Would you say it?” Challenge
 - Give students scenarios and ask what they would actually say.
 - Scenario: Your friend is driving 70 mph in a 55 mph zone. What do you say?
 - Scenario: Your driver starts texting. What do you say?
 - Scenario: Your friends aren’t wearing seat belts. What do you say?

Then teach students simple language:

- “Put your phone down.”
- “Slow down.”
- “I’m not riding without a seat belt.”

The objective is to make speaking up socially acceptable.

SPEAK UP WEEK

The Challenge

Give students the confidence - and the words - to speak up when a friend is making an unsafe choice behind the wheel.

The Goal

Make speaking up for safety normal, not awkward. See something unsafe? Say something.

The 5-Day Plan:

Day	Take Action
Monday- Phone	Your driver starts texting. What do you say?
Tuesday - Speed	Your friend is speeding because you're late. Do you speak up?
Wednesday - Seat Belt	Someone refuses to buckle up. Does the car move?
Thursday - Safe Ride	Your friend shouldn't be driving home. What's your move?
Friday - Distractions	Your friends are distracting the driver. Would you tell them to chill?

Use each scenario for morning announcements, lunchtime discussions and social polls.

GIVE STUDENTS THE WORDS - Sometimes knowing what to say makes speaking up easier: "Put the phone down.", "Slow down.", "Buckle up.", "We're not moving until everybody buckles.", "I'll drive.", "Let's find another ride."

PA Announcement:

Your friend starts texting behind the wheel. They're speeding. Someone isn't buckled. What do you do? Speak up. Looking out for your friends is what real friends do. Set The Standard.

Social Post:

Your friend picks up their phone while driving. WHAT DO YOU DO?

___ Tell them to put it down.

___ Say nothing.

Follow with: Real friends speak up. Protect your people.

Supplies Needed:

- Scenario cards
- Social polls
- Speech-bubble signs
- Markers
- Pledge board
- Participation tracker

#SetTheStandard #NCHSAA

Track Impact:

___ Number of student-created posts ___ Number of social interactions
___ Number of students participating ___ Number of poll responses

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

05. Host an Event

- Mock Crash or Reality Event
 - Partner with your local Fire departments, EMS, Law Enforcement officials, Hospitals, Trauma Centers, Emergency Management, and/or Local Transportation agencies to set up an event.

Avoid making this a sensational “fake death” production.

Emphasis should be:

- What happens after a bad decision?
- Who responds?
- How long does it take?
- What happens to the families?
- What happens to teammates?
- What happens when someone survives but is seriously injured?

Goal: **Education**, not trauma.

- Seat Belt Simulator
 - Partner with local agencies to bring a seat belt convincer simulator to school.
 - Students can experience the importance of restraint in a controlled educational environment.
 - Pair it with messaging that “You don’t need to experience a crash to understand the importance of a seat belt.”

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

06 Social Media Takeover

- Teen Safe Driving Team controls a week of school social media:
- Monday: #MondayReminder “Before you start the car, buckle up.”
- Tuesday: #TakeThePledge Student-Athlete video
- Wednesday: #WouldYouSayIt Pose scenarios to peers
- Thursday: #SetTheStandard Student-Athlete message
- Friday: #GetHome “Have a great weekend. Get there safely!”

(See page 20-21 for social media content ideas)

07 Student Video Idea

- “My Teammates Are Counting on Me.”
 - Ask athletes: “Who are you responsible for when you get behind the wheel?”
 - Responses:
 - “My teammates.”
 - “My little brother/sister.”
 - “My friends.” “My family.”
 - Final screen:
 - Drive like someone is counting on you.
 - #SetTheStandard #NCHSAA

SAMPLE ASSETS

Your school logo

Logos



PSAs



“Tonight’s game is about competition. Getting home safely is about something bigger. Buckle up, put the phone away and make the safe choice. Set the Standard.”

As you leave today’s event, remember: the most important part of your journey is getting home safely.

Buckle up before the car moves. Put your phone away. Speak up when a friend is making an unsafe choice.

Champions set the standard on the field and court—and leaders set the standard on the road.

Drive safely. Get home. Set the Standard.

SAMPLE ASSETS

Pledge Card Copy

I SET THE STANDARD.

I will buckle up every time I get in a vehicle.
I will put my phone away when I drive.
I will speak up when I see an unsafe choice.
I will respect my passengers, other drivers
and everyone sharing the road.
I will help my friends get home safely.
Because getting there safely matters
more than getting there first.

I will Set the Standard.

Digital Pledge (Can also be used in poster format)



SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

Day: Monday Theme: Lock In | Distracted Driving

You got the keys. Now lock in.



Phone down.



Eyes up.



Focus on the road.

That text, Snap or notification can wait.
Your job behind the wheel? DRIVE.

#SetTheStandard #DriveSmart #EyesUpPhoneDown #NCHSAA

Day: Tuesday Theme: Click Before you Kick It | Seat Belts

Before the playlist.
Before you pull out.
Before anything else.

CLICK. THAT. SEAT BELT.
Front seat. Back seat. Short trip. Long trip.
Every Person. Every Seat. Every Ride. Every Time.

#SetTheStandard #BuckleUp #NCHSAA

Day: Wednesday Theme: Protect your People | Passengers

Your car. Your crew. Your responsibility.
Friends can make the ride more fun - but they can also make it harder to focus.
Keep the chaos down. Keep your attention up.
Protect your people. Get everyone home.

#SetTheStandard #GetHomeSafe #NCHSAA

Day: Thursday Theme: Speak Up | Peer Challenge

Your friend is driving and picks up their phone. What do you do?



Tell them to put it down.



Say nothing.

Follow the poll up with:
Real friends speak up.
Awkward for five seconds > wishing you had said something.

#SetTheStandard #NCHSAA

SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

Day: Friday Theme: Get Home | Weekend Message

Friday plans? Have fun.
But remember—the night isn't a win unless everybody gets home.

- 📱 Put the phone away.
- 🔒 Buckle up.
- 🚗 Slow down.
- 👥 Look out for your friends.

The goal isn't just to get there. It's to GET HOME.

#SetTheStandard #GetHomeSafe #NCHSAA

Day: Saturday Theme: Who's Counting On You

Caption: Someone expects you home. Drive like it.

Post photos of students holding signs answering: "Who's counting on you to get home?"

Answers could be:

- My mom.**
- My teammates.**
- My little brother.**
- My best friend.**
- My dog.**
- My people.**

#SetTheStandard #NCHSAA

Day: Sunday Theme: Set Your Standard

What's YOUR driving standard?

- ☒ I buckle up.
- ☒ I put my phone down.
- ☒ I don't speed.
- ☒ I limit distractions.
- ☒ I don't drive impaired.
- ☒ I speak up when a friend isn't driving safely.

Screenshot it. Share it. Tag your crew.
Safe driving isn't just about you. It's about everyone counting on you.
What's your standard?

#SetTheStandard #NCHSAA

SIMPLE STUDENT VIDEO IDEAS

VIDEO IDEA	WHAT STUDENTS DO	SUGGESTED ENDING
"Before I Drive..."	Film themselves getting into a parked car: Buckle up - phone away - check mirrors - ready to go.	"Locked in. #SetTheStandard"
Phone Toss	Student gets in, looks at phone, then tosses it into a bag/back seat or puts it away.	"It can wait."
Click Check	Four friends get into a parked car. Camera catches each person clicking their seat belt.	"Everybody clicked? Let's go."
Who's Counting on You?	Student holds up a card: "My Mom," "My Teammates," "My Best Friend," "My Family."	"Drive like someone's counting on you."
Pass the Keys	Teammates pass car keys from person to person. Each says one word: "Buckle." "Focus." "Slow." "Home."	Everyone: "Set the Standard!"
Not Worth It	Phone notification appears. Student reaches toward it, stops, and puts the phone away.	"One text? Not worth it."
POV: Your Friend Is Texting	Passenger notices driver reaching for a phone while the car is safely parked/staged.	"Put it down. I'll answer it."
No Buckle. No Go.	Friends get in. One isn't buckled. Driver points at the seat belt and waits. Friend buckles.	"No buckle. No go."
One Word Challenge	Ask students: "What's your driving standard?" Responses: "Focused." "Belted." "Smart." "Safe."	"What's yours? #SetTheStandard"
"My Team Needs Me."	Have athletes appear in uniform one at a time: "My team needs me tomorrow." "My family needs me tonight." "My friends need me."	Finish with: "Drive like people are counting on you."

SIMPLE STUDENT VIDEO IDEAS

VIDEO IDEA	WHAT STUDENTS DO	SUGGESTED ENDING
Protect Your Crew	Several friends stand beside a parked car. Driver points to everyone.	"My car. My crew. My responsibility."
Finish the Sentence	Quick cuts of students answering: "I buckle up because -----"	End card: #SetTheStandard
Real Friends Speak Up	One student says, "Slow down." Another: "Put your phone away." Another: "Buckle up."	"Real friends speak up."
Driver vs. Passenger	Driver: "My job?" Passenger: "Drive." Driver: "Your job?" Passenger: "Don't distract you."	"Deal."
The 5-Second Routine	Quick countdown: 5...Get in. 4...Buckle. 3...Phone away. 2...Check surroundings. 1...Drive.	"Five seconds can set the standard."
What Can Wait?	Rapid cuts: Text? WAIT. Snap? WAIT. TikTok? WAIT. Group chat? WAIT.	"Getting home can't."
"Game Face = Drive Face."	Athlete is joking with teammates, then gets behind the wheel of a parked car, buckles up and becomes focused.	On-screen text: "Different game. Same focus."
"Don't Bench Yourself."	Student holds keys and says: "You worked too hard to get your license. Don't lose your freedom over speeding, texting or a bad decision."	Finish with #SetTheStandard.

Make it a school challenge

Invite teams, clubs, classes and friend groups to submit a 10to 20-second video.

Feature the best ones on the school's social channels and NCHSAA social accounts.

Some weekly prompt suggestions:

- "Show Us Your Buckle Up"
- "What Would You Say?"
- "Where Does Your Phone Go?"
- "What's Your Standard?"
- "Who's Counting on You?"
- "Protect Your Crew"

Production rules:

1. **Students should absolutely NOT film while actually driving.** Driving scenes should be staged while the vehicle is legally parked, with any road footage captured by a non-driver only when it can be done safely.
2. Create a 10 to 20-second video.
3. Shoot vertically on a phone.
4. Authentic student voices work best.

MEASURE THE IMPACT

Participation

- Number of students participating
- Number of student advocates
- Number of student pledges
- Number of teams/clubs formed or initiatives conducted at NCHSAA schools

Engagement

- Social impressions
- Video views
- Shares
- Comments
- Hashtag usage

Behavior

- Pre/post survey results
- Self-reported seat belt use
- Self-reported distracted driving behavior
- Student willingness to speak up

School Culture

- Percentage of students who say their peers expect them to buckle up
- Percentage who say they would speak up if a driver was unsafe



Governor's Highway Safety Association

NCHSAA: Alex Bass, Karen DeHart

 <https://www.nchsaa.org/teen-safe-driving-team/>