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A Special Report To The State Board Of Education

From The
**Advisory Council
For
Technical-Vocational
Education In Texas**



June 24, 1982

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**THE ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR TECHNICAL-VOCATIONAL EDUCATION
IN TEXAS**

(Advisory Council to the State Board of Education)
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Mr. Joe Kelly Butler, Chairman
State Board of Education
Texas Education Agency
201 East 11th Street
Austin, Texas 78701

Dear Chairman Butler:

The Advisory Council receives input through public forum activities, surveys and other contacts. The Council has identified concerns requiring state legislation or appropriations and submit these in this Special Report for consideration of the State Board for Vocational Education and the further consideration by the 68th State Legislature during 1983.

Favorable action on these recommendations would further improve the vocational programs in the state and thereby more effectively serve the citizens and employers.

The Council expresses its gratitude to the State Board and the Texas Education Agency Staff for the support and encouragement given the Council in the fulfillment of its responsibilities. We are ready to assist in any manner appropriate to our role in serving the best interests of our citizens.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jacinto Juarez".

Jacinto Juarez
Chairperson

PURPOSE: "To establish a climate conducive to the development of technical, vocational, and manpower training in educational institutions in the State of Texas to meet the needs of industrial and economic development of the state."

Commendations

The Advisory Council publishes a "Special Report" every two years, containing primarily recommendations requiring state legislation and/or appropriations.

The State Board of Education has been quite receptive to these special reports. The Board has successfully carried many recommendations forward to the State Legislature.

The Council commends the State Board of Education for its efforts in securing legislative action in response to two recommendations contained in the 1980 special report. The 1981 Legislature:

1. enacted legislation to pay every secondary level vocational teacher for two years of business and industry work experience required for certification; and
2. appropriated \$5 million in state funds for the purchase of instructional equipment for use at the secondary school level.

Thanks to the State Board of Education and the Texas Legislature, the recruitment and retention of vocational teachers will be enhanced, and vocational educators will be in a much better position to implement new programs in response to community needs.

There were other actions taken by the State Board of Education and/or Legislature during the past two years, either independent of or in response to Council recommendations, which warrant special commendations.

Among these actions were: special allocation to secondary school districts from general revenue funds in support of vocational education; enactment of curriculum reform legislation which recognizes vocational education as a part of a well-balanced curriculum; enactment of legislation calling for a comprehensive study of vocational education to improve its quality and delivery; passage of substantial pay increases for teachers; passage of policies improving the allocation of teacher units and allowing extended contracts for pre-employment laboratory teachers; and work was begun on revamping teacher education and certification.

Texas Education Budget Proposals:

In May 1982, Commissioner of Education Raymon Bynum shared with State Board of Education members preliminary Texas Education Agency budget recommendations for submission to the 1983 Legislature. Among the preliminary recommendations for vocational education were:

1. a funding level that would permit 500 new vocational education units each year of the 1984-85 biennium.
2. an increase in foundation school program funds from \$215.7 million in

FY '83 to \$280.7 million in FY '85 for vocational education at the secondary level.

3. an increase from \$5 million in state funds in '82-83 biennium to \$10 million in '84-85 biennium for vocational education equipment at the secondary school level.

4. an increase in general revenue funds from \$3.2 million in FY '83 to \$3.8 million in FY '85 in support of local vocational programs at the secondary school level.

5. an increase from \$1.5 million each year of '82-83 biennium for community education to \$3 million each year of '84-85 biennium.

6. an increase from \$7.2 million each year of '82-83 biennium for adult education to \$10 million each year of '84-85 biennium with a rider specifying a \$2 million setaside for adult vocational education.

7. an increase from \$1.78 million in '82-83 biennium for industrial start-up training to \$2.8 million for '84-85 biennium.

The Advisory Council recognizes these are preliminary figures, subject to change. The Council commends the Texas Education Agency and State Board of Education for work done thus far on legislative and appropriations recommendations.

The Council supports these budget recommendations. In the section that follows, the Council makes recommendations on some of these items, and addresses additional items for consideration by the State Board.

The Advisory Council believes Texas should have a "master plan" for vocational education that addresses the "universe" of needs and resources and which requires planning on a regional basis with broad participation in the planning process. Rather than address this concern through recommendations at this time, the Council looks to the Comprehensive Study of Vocational Education in Texas (HCR 23), now in progress, as the mechanism for developing such a plan or at least recommending the essential elements.

Recommendations

1. Transportation:

An Advisory Council survey of school districts offering vocational education, conducted in May 1982, revealed that 45 percent of the respondents contract with other school districts, post-secondary institutions, or private vocational schools for vocational instruction.

The survey, involving 300 school districts with an 80 percent return, identified the three chief benefits of contracting as: (1) expanding comprehensiveness of offerings available to students; (2) reduces duplication of facilities/programs; and (3) makes it more economical to train students.

A minor problem, but a problem nonetheless, with contracting for vocational instruction is "transportation guidelines/restrictions." Interpretations of existing laws allow for the reimbursement of transportation costs only to school districts and then if the transportation is in a school bus. This makes it very difficult and costly to transport just one, or two, or a limited number of students. This might account for school districts identifying "travel time/expense" as the number one problem with contracting.

The Council therefore recommends:

That Section 16.206 (g), Texas Education Code, be amended, to make provisions for payments to individuals for reimbursement of transportation expenses incurred while participating in an instructional program of vocational education under contract between school districts, post-secondary institutions and/or private vocational schools, when it is not economical to use school owned vehicles.

2. Vocational Teachers:

A Council survey of the state's post-secondary institutions offering vocational education, conducted at the same time as the secondary survey in May 1982, revealed that over 23 percent of the respondents contract with secondary level schools to provide vocational instruction to high school students. The post-secondary survey involved 66 campuses and had a response rate of 70 percent.

Among the top five problems identified as impeding contractual arrangements with school districts is a "lack of instructional personnel with secondary certification." In other words, any post-secondary teacher coming in instructional contact with high school students must be certified to teach at the secondary level.

Post-secondary institutions maintain high standards in the hiring of qualified teachers. The current law is unnecessarily restrictive and impedes the preparation of a skilled work force to meet the state's labor market needs.

The Council therefore recommends:

That Section 16.103 (g), Texas Education Code, be amended, as follows: "...to provide for such appropriate vocational education instruction provided the instructors and instructional materials and equipment utilized meet secondary school program requirements OR THOSE PRESCRIBED FOR APPROVED POST-SECONDARY VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS."

3. Instructional Materials:

The Council's 1982 survey of school districts offering vocational education revealed that "quality of instruction in each program" is the number one evaluation indicator used by school districts in determining the effectiveness of vocational programs. "Employer satisfaction with program graduates/leavers" is the number two indicator used by school districts.

Since 1969, the State Legislature has made provision for an allocation of \$400 for each vocational education teacher unit for instructional materials related to the vocational education program. This provision has been beneficial in improving the quality of vocational instruction in the state. The increased cost of instructional materials has diminished the purchasing power of the allocation.

The survey of school districts also revealed that 33 percent of the respondents indicated they use 26 percent or more of their federal allocation for the purchase of instructional supplies/materials. The prospects for increased federal involvement in vocational education are sketchy which further jeopardizes the quality of instruction.

The Council therefore recommends:

That Section 16.103 (f), Texas Education Code, be amended, by changing the \$400 allocation to \$600. In further provision, that the allocation as it applies to pre-employment laboratory units be increased to \$1,000.

4. Allocation of Units:

The Council's 1982 survey of school districts offering vocational education revealed that 27 percent of the respondents discontinued at least one vocational program during the past two years. The number one reason given (35 percent) was "low enrollment." In many instances, the program discontinued was on target with job needs in the community. There were just not enough regular students.

Sixty-three percent of the school districts responding to the survey also offer adult vocational courses in addition to their regular vocational programs. Nearly one-half of these school districts experienced enrollment increases in their adult programs. Only 11 percent experienced decreases. Forty percent had about the same enrollment level the past two years.

"Insufficient funds" was identified as one of the top three difficulties hindering school districts in their efforts to provide adult vocational education.

The Council therefore recommends:

That statutory and/or policy provisions be made to make adults eligible students for the allocation and reallocation of vocational teacher units.

Adults in the Texas Department of Corrections presently participate in education programs funded by the Foundation School Program, under the provisions of Section 29.02 of the Texas Education Code.

Such action would address the shortage of skilled workers and allow local schools to maintain comprehensive vocational offerings, better serving regular and adult students. Collaboration between secondary and post-secondary programs should be ensured to minimize duplication of resources and efforts.

5. Area Vocational School Jurisdictions:

The lack of sufficient funding, facilities, equipment, and teachers were identified by secondary and post-secondary institutions in the Council surveys as the major constraints to implementing vocational programs to meet community needs.

Vocational education has been blessed over the past 15 years with substantial increases in funding, resulting in tremendous increases in facilities and programs. Even still, many school systems, by themselves, are hard pressed to respond to their respective community's labor market needs.

The Council surveys revealed that many school districts and post-secondary institutions are receptive to joining hands to provide vocational instruction. Such relationships not only expand the number of programs available to students, but also can prove to be more economical in the long run.

The Advisory Council therefore recommends:

That Chapter 28, Texas Education Code, be amended, to make provisions for Area Vocational Schools that would cross county lines and/or encompass parts of several counties based on a jurisdiction that would serve the needs of citizens for vocational education.

6. Post-Secondary Equipment Needs:

The Council's survey of post-secondary institutions offering occupational education, conducted in May 1982, revealed that 93 percent of the respondents cited a "lack of funds for equipment" as a problem or constraint to implementing occupational programs to meet community needs. Sixty-six post-secondary campuses were involved in the survey, with 70 percent responding.

When asked to indicate what they perceive to be the number one unmet occupational program need of the community and individuals served by their institutions, health occupations and computer related programs accounted for 50 percent of the unmet needs cited by the survey respondents.

Fifty-five percent of the survey respondents had to turn students away from occupational programs during the past year. Over 32 percent of the students turned away wanted to take health occupations programs. Another 19 percent wanted

to take office/computer courses.

Testimony received at a statewide public hearing held by the Council in September 1981, revealed that 218 of Texas' 254 counties are experiencing critical shortages of allied health care workers.

Nearly 79 percent of the respondents to the post-secondary survey indicated "if state funds were made available to fund equipment for new programs, this would essentially satisfy their need to initiate or start-up new programs."

Sixty-nine percent of the respondents indicated they spend 26 percent or more of their federal allocation on equipment. Forty-four percent indicated that reductions in federal funds will hurt them the most in the area of equipment.

The Council therefore recommends:

That \$5 million be appropriated to the Texas Education Agency during the 1984-85 biennium for the purchase of equipment to initiate or redirect occupational education programs at the post-secondary level in programs training for jobs in skill shortage areas.

7. Adult Education:

"Illiteracy in this country is turning out to be a blight that won't go away...Today, a staggering 23 million Americans - 1 in 5 adults - lack the reading and writing abilities to handle the minimal demands of daily living. An additional 30 million are only marginally capable of being productive workers...More than one third of adults have not completed high school."

--U.S. News & World Report, May 17, 1982

Texas provided adult academic education to 130,000 citizens in FY '81. The number of citizens served represents one-fourth the number of adults who would have participated if programs had been made available to them.

The results of local needs assessments, conducted annually by the state's adult educators and submitted to the Texas Education Agency, reveal that as many as 530,000 adults would participate each year in adult academic programs, if sufficient resources were available, and ample time were provided to expand the present delivery system.

Texas spent \$12.7 million on adult education in FY '81, of which \$7.2 million were state dollars and \$5.5 million were federal. The average cost per adult served, when state level administrative and special project costs are excluded, was \$89.54.

Texas has reached a crossroads in combating illiteracy. At the end of the current biennium, state funding for adult education will have remained constant at \$7.2 million for three consecutive years. Inflation has continued to rise. Federal dollars will decline from \$5.5 million in FY '81 to \$4.7 million in FY '83, with even deeper cuts on the horizon. The cost per adult served continues to escalate.

At a public hearing held last fall by the Council, Commissioner of Education Raymon Bynum testified that he was "concerned that dollars for adult education have not increased appreciably within the last four years." He went on to say that "Texas must have an adult education system that finances not only the ability to teach adults to read and write, but also to deliver to them the ability to enter the job market."

In addition to achieving proficiency in basic skills and to acquire a high school diploma or its equivalency, many adults have a need for "skill training."

The Council therefore recommends:

- a. *That \$15 million in state funds be appropriated the first year of the '84-85 biennium and \$17.5 million in state funds be appropriated the second year of the '84-85 biennium for use in providing adult academic education.*
- b. *That \$3 million in state funds be appropriated the first year of the '84-85 biennium and \$5 million in state funds be appropriated the second year of the '84-85 biennium for use in providing adult vocational education.*

The recommended funding levels for adult academic education would assure that the present level of adult services in Texas would be maintained through the next biennium, while allowing for slight increases. Texas would not be dependent on the federal government just to "stay even." Any federal dollars received would serve to expand the number of adults served each year.

The recommended funding levels for adult academic education would permit approximately 136,000 adults to be served with state dollars the first year of the biennium (\$110 per adult) and 146,000 adults to be served the second year of the biennium (\$120 per adult).

The recommended funding levels for adult vocational education would permit approximately 10,000 adults to be served the first year of the biennium (\$300 per adult) and 14,000 to be served the second year of the biennium (\$350 per adult). These levels assume that present facilities and equipment in place would be used.

Figures relating to adult education do not include the Windham Independent School District (Texas Department of Corrections). The bulk of Windham ISD funding comes from the Foundation School Program. A very minimal amount of dollars actually comes from the adult education funding sources.

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