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ACTIVE news

The Advisory Council For Technical-Vocational Education In Texas



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Vol. VIII, Number 2, March 1977

'Blue Ribbon' Education Study Commissions Urged

EDITOR'S NOTE: This issue of the ACTIVE News contains three articles on the keynote addresses made during the February 15-16th Governor's Conference on Technical-Vocational Education, held in Austin. The April issue will highlight major points made during the Conference Workshops.

Governor Dolph Briscoe and House Speaker Bill Clayton have both called for 'blue ribbon' commissions to study education.

Briscoe wants a commission to conduct a two-year study of the entire voc-ed system in Texas, and to produce a "master plan" that will improve the responsiveness of voc-ed to the State's needs in the years ahead.

Clayton wants a commission to investigate the matter of educational curriculum, and to bring about proposals for the overhaul of the curriculum so that students could have the flexibility to move into skills training, career development, and technical education.

Both Briscoe and Clayton's feelings were made known at the Governor's Conference.

Briscoe was to address the conference, but at the last minute was called to the White House. John Poerner, director of the Governor's Office of Education Resources, delivered the Governor's remarks.

Clayton likewise was to address the conference but was unable to do so due to the House being in session. He asked State Representative Frank Gaston of Dallas to convey his feelings.

Briscoe wants the blue ribbon commission:

- to investigate the present administrative structure of voc-ed to see if it is efficient;
- to study the current state of information which exists on the expected supply of and demand for specific jobs in the future; and
- to examine other essential items

of information which are needed to evaluate programs, such as follow-up data on students to measure the impact that their training had.

The Governor recognizes that vocational education must play an important role in the years ahead in serving the needs of individuals and the needs of the economy. He wants to ensure that all of voc-ed functions as a unified team, and that financial resources for public education are directed at the programs which genuinely speak to the State's needs.

Briscoe wants the commission to be totally independent and free to draw whatever conclusions to which its investigation leads it, but, the commission, says Briscoe, should seek input from all agencies now involved in vocational-technical education.

The Governor wants the commission to report its findings to the 66th Legislature in 1979.

He plans to ask the current Legislature to pass legislation establishing the commission, and to appropriate \$1 million for its operation.

Clayton hopes that one of the accomplishments of the 65th Legislature will be the formation of a blue ribbon study commission to investigate the matter of educational curriculum.

He feels that recommendations for the content and duration of career programs, the role of school counselors, accountability measures, and other changes could lead to an improved curriculum which would prepare students for that big "world of work." "Reorganization of the curriculum could revitalize public education on all levels," Clayton said.



Dolph Briscoe



Bill Clayton

calling for 'blue ribbon' commissions

Hobby Wants Greater Vocational-Ed Efficiency

Lt. Governor Bill Hobby, delivering the banquet address at the Governor's Conference, said a "truly comprehensive program for occupational education will require major additional funding, but we cannot afford to overlook ways to reduce its potential cost."

"The answer to the problem of increased expenditures must lie at least in part in the adoption of procedures designed to bring greater efficiencies to the process of financing and governing occupational education programs," said Hobby.

He said, the "State Board of Education and the staff of the Texas Education Agency should undertake an immediate examination of the bureaucracy which has been built up in the name of occupational education at the state, regional, and local level."

One of Hobby's concerns was the need for greater communication and coordination between TEA's regional voc-ed field offices and the Regional Education Service Centers. He noted that the field offices and the ESC's are independent of each other, but that they are both involved in many related activities.

Another concern of Hobby is the area vocational schools. Hobby said the area vocational school is "one of the greatest misnomers of educational nomenclature."

He said that "less than 5 percent of the enrollments in the State's area vocational schools are from another school district or campus." Believing that in these schools lies the solution to the problem of providing a comprehensive educational program for all students, Hobby called on the appropriate agencies of state government to provide the Legislature with the effective answers as to how area schools can be better utilized.

Hobby was also concerned about the lack of contracting between public schools and community colleges for voc-ed services, saying that "as of this year, only 697 students are involved in contracting." He believes that contracting is a good idea and one which will provide greater efficiency in the

use of state funds.

At the local level, Hobby believes "we must look for ways to improve the productivity of educational resources in the area of teachers."

Hobby was critical of the lack of paraprofessionals used in voc-ed. He said "in the area of special education and regular education programs, Texas has developed major programs for the use of paraprofessional personnel to assist teachers and administrators in the performance of non-teaching functions."

"Yet, not once has any segment of the educational community recommended the adoption of this technique in the area of occupational education. I, for one, would like to see your recommendations on this matter," said Hobby.



Bill Hobby
'voc-ed efficiency'

Hobby also went on to say "vocational teachers in our high schools often have far lower teaching loads than their companions in the regular academic program. I believe that the time has come for the professional to examine this imbalance and use this technique only when the proven educational benefits exist."

He said "procedures at all levels of education which restrict teachers in occupational education programs from participating in other educational programs are contrary to basic management principles and should be re-examined with the yardstick of proven educational performance as the guidepost."

In his speech, Hobby also said "programs of financial support should be periodically re-examined to determine the relationship of the program to the actual job market existing in the area being served. Strong administrative leadership should be provided by the educational community to assure that these decisions are made on a regional or metropolitan area basis as opposed to considering only the job market within the individual school district."

In concluding his remarks, Hobby said "the resources of business and industry firms which are dependent upon the supply of qualified personnel produced by the occupational educational programs of this state should and must be harnessed in an effective manner."

National Council Member Kerr Stresses 'Are You Listening?'

"It is not beyond the realm of possibility that vocational education, as we know it in the public school system today, can be put on deep freeze."

Those were the words of Walter Kerr of Tyler, a member of the National Advisory Council on Vocational Education, as he asked participants at the February 15-16th Governor's Con-

ference on Technical-Vocational Education in Austin, "are you listening?"

In providing the conference wrap-up, Kerr said the Carter administration has looked at the investment in vocational education, and at the number of young people that are unemployed. The administration is not very impressed with the educational dollar

(See KERR page 3)

Five-Year Vocational-Ed Study Results Published

A recently published five-year nationwide look at vocational education by Project Baseline shows that voc-ed enrollments are up substantially, job placement rates are high, overall funding is increasing, and state and federal reporting is getting better.

All the news is not good, however. Project Baseline, a federally funded voc-ed data gathering effort, shows that voc-ed hasn't done enough for the disadvantaged and handicapped; work study programs have failed to reach more than a fraction of their potential; federal voc-ed expenditures are declining compared with state and local spending; and voc-ed teachers are still in desperately short supply.

Baseline researchers found that voc-ed enrollments grew faster during 1974-75 than any other time during the past five years, reaching a nationwide total of 15.3 million. Secondary, post-secondary, and adult programs grew at an almost equal rate.

Office occupations enjoyed the largest enrollment increases during the past five years, followed by trade and industrial training and consumer and homemaking programs. The fastest

growing training programs, though, were in health and technical occupations.

The report noted that over the past five years, cooperative education enrollments have grown by only 200,000, while work study enrollments have crept up less than 20,000 overall. The enrollment of disadvantaged and handicapped persons in voc-ed have gone up slightly over the past five years, but they have declined as a percentage of the total number of voc-ed students.

Project Baseline shows that inflation has cut significantly into voc-ed

expenditures. Taking inflation into account, increases in voc-ed expenditures during the past five years topped out at 10.4 percent during 1972-73, and have declined steadily, posting only a 2.9 percent increase during 1974-75. During the past 13 years, inflation has cut the buying power of the dollar by half.

In the area of job placement, the report showed that of the voc-ed grads available for work over the past five years, 88.2 percent found jobs. This extremely high figure may be suspect, however, the report cautions, although (See **BASELINE** page 4)

(KERR, continued from page 2)

that has been invested in vocational education in the traditional public school system."

Kerr said the Carter administration wants "the most amount of service possible without expanding government and spending more money. The administration is looking for soft money — federal dollars not committed over a long period of time, to invest in reducing youth unemployment."

He said the "federal government is still committed to voc-ed, but the administration doesn't believe that more money should be expended through the education system, but through the Departments of Labor and Commerce."

Kerr went on to say "we can construct in our own minds what we want to hear about voc-ed, but the way it has been in voc-ed in our lifetime is not necessarily an indication that it will continue to be that way."

"There are many fine things about voc-ed, but at the present time, the play being called at the federal level is that voc-ed had better get to work on career, manpower, job employment, production training," said Kerr.

"Manpower training is not all of voc-ed, but it is the play that has been called by the quarterbacks that control many things including the purse strings."

Kerr went on to say that "it is time that education join the free enterprise system, and the portion of education that can be the vanguard of this great advance is voc-ed."

He said there isn't a single part of education, whether it be curriculum, equipment, funding, cooperative training, employment, scholarships, or prestige, that isn't affected by the free enterprise system.

He went on to say "we are being drawn into the free enterprise system, so let's run and join it." Once we have proven that we want to join it, that we want to produce the kind of citizen the free enterprise system wants, then we will receive the support we need for our programs, he said.

Associate Degree Status

Granted Air Force College

Under a recent decision by the U.S. Commissioner of Education, enlisted men and women in the U.S. Air Force can now earn associate degrees through the Community College of the Air Force.

This decision was reached after extensive review of the college by the Department of Defense, Congress, and the U.S. Office of Education. The decision marks the first time that a military agency has been given the authority to confer degrees upon members of the enlisted force.

CCAF, headquartered at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, is an accredited institution offering more than 80 fields of study matched to Air Force job specialties. Col. Lyle Kaapke is president of CCAF.



Walter Kerr
"are you listening?"

HISD Celebrates Vocational-Ed Week in Big Way

The Houston Independent School District honored occupational students in a special way this year, according to B. L. McLendon, HISD's superintendent for Occupational and Continuing Education. This was done during Voc-Ed Week, Feb. 6-12.

All of the various occupational divisions within HISD combined efforts to conduct an all district exhibition in the administration building mall. The exhibit interpreted to the public the scope of the occupational programs.

A city wide reception was also held to honor a wide cross-section of vocational leaders including advisory com-

mittee members, employers of students, retired personnel, students and teachers.

The highlight of the reception was the awarding of certificates of achievement to persons who have made a significant contribution to occupational education.

Junior and senior high schools, and many elementary schools all over HISD also conducted comprehensive recognition programs which included newspaper, radio and television coverage, exhibits, displays, marquee signs and public address announcement.

Many schools had receptions, banquets, auditorium programs, career days, and dress up days to recognize occupational students and their employers.

"The 66,000 Houston occupational students stood a little taller, had spring to their step and enjoyed a special feeling of pride at the unusual recognition paid to them for their very important present and future role in

the city's work force," concluded McLendon.

Voc-Ed, Advisory Groups Highlighted in Brochures

The ACTVE has published three brochures which are available upon request.

"Vocational Education... Gateway to Careers," tells what voc-ed strives to achieve.

"Vocational Education... Gateway to the Future," highlights the ACTVE's 7th Annual Report to the State Board of Education.

"Vocational Advisory Committees... Functions and Activities," offers suggestions as to what the role and scope of local voc-ed advisory committees should be.

(BASELINE, continued from page 3)

more reliable data are hard to come by.

Limited copies of the report, "Five years of Vocational Education," are available free from Project Baseline, Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, Arizona 86001.

NOTE: To secure an audio copy of the major addresses made during the Governor's Conference, send a 90-minute cassette tape to the Resource Center, Texas Education Agency, 201 East 11th Street, Austin 78701.

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