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THE ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR TECHNICAL-VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN TEXAS

Alton Ice Shares Parting Thoughts

It is a privilege to have this opportunity to share some thoughts as I complete my "formal" service in vocational education. In my 14 years working with the Advisory Council, I have come to know and appreciate some dedicated and capable people from all walks of life that are true friends to vocational education. Also in these 14 years, I have had the privilege of working with professionals on the Council staff, educators, community leaders and others at the local level, the State Board of Education and the Texas Education Agency, as well as other state agencies and groups who are our friends. We have been fortunate to have had a responsive Legislature and Governor. We believe these and others will be even more supportive in the years to come as they better understand the critical role vocational education plays in the lives of workers and employers and in the economic climate of Texas.

The following are some random thoughts about the challenges that lie ahead of technical, vocational and occupational education at all levels:

* Limited resources are forcing us to look critically at programs and activities at all levels and set some rather discriminating priorities.

* Many items relating to prioritizing will be brought forth by the recommendations that will be made by the Select Committee on Education in the next few months.

* We must look carefully at many proposals now under consideration by policymaking bodies, relating to high school graduation requirements and their impact on vocational education at the secondary level, and proposals such as the three-level tracking system. (Even though vocational education is one of the 12 essential elements of the secondary curriculum, if there is not time provided in the school day, then the students and employers are still not served.)

* There MUST be critical attention given to QUALITY instruction in all programs at all levels. This must be tied closely to the needs of employers and students.

* Policymakers must make adequate provision for funds for redirection of programs, updating equipment, curriculum materials and other instructional resources to make sure training is on the cutting edge of technology in the work place.

* Vocational education must serve the needs of all students. Some of the most critical needs today are for the skilled craftsperson and technician. Many of these cannot be prepared in two-year programs. Effective articulation must be developed between levels of instruction. The two + two program (coupling two years in high school with two years at the post-secondary level) offers an excellent opportunity to achieve this goal.

* Progress has been made in organizing and utilizing local advisory committees, but we have a long way to go to fully benefit from the resources of our community.

* Vocational education has been and continues to be a way of learning. A recently completed statewide survey gives equal importance to basic education and specific job skills for many jobs. It is not either academic OR vocational skills, but BOTH. Job skills, like most other competencies, are developmental and sequential.

* Dr. Calvin Kent of the Baylor University Center has remarked to several groups in recent months that vocational education is the only segment of education that provides a substantial number of entrepreneurs. We need to improve on the business and management skills of many of our students.

* We are reminded that about 80% of the new jobs are generated by the smaller employers of 100 or less employees.

* Our students will have jobs if our economy is healthy, and it will be healthy if everyone works together to improve productivity and an understanding of our great private enterprise system.

* Through the years the Council has emphasized the interrelationship and dependence of the HOME/SCHOOL/COMMUNITY for the most effective and efficient preparation of our citizens for productive employment and lives. With the assaults on the family in our society, much of the rightful responsibilities of the home have shifted to the education system, which cannot fulfill these needs adequately.

You, individually and collectively, no doubt, have additional priorities and challenges from your perspective, as these I have presented from my perspective. But one thing I am sure of...as we UNITE and work toward the universal goal and focus of serving the needs of students and employers...we will come out at the right place.

Basic Skills Not Enough for Job Success

A good command of the 3 R's are important skills to have when applying for a job, but they alone are not always enough to get hired, according to the results of a recently completed statewide survey of employers.

Conducted by the Advisory Council for Technical-Vocational Education in Texas, the survey asked 5,000 Texas employers to rate the "qualities they like and dislike in job applicants." There were 1,143 responses.

Thirty-six percent of the respondents said that occupational skills (characteristic to the performance of a job) in addition to basic education skills (reading, writing, and arithmetic) are required for most or all entry level jobs with their firms. Another 32 percent said they are required for at least some jobs.

Only 32 of the respondents said that occupational skills are not required for any entry level job with their firm.

The employer sample, representative of the state, was developed by the Texas Employment Commission. Employers were asked to base their responses on entry level jobs requiring less than a bachelor's degree.

Seventy-nine percent said applicants with occupational skills in addition to basic education skills will start at higher pay for at least some jobs than applicants with just a basic education. Twenty-one percent of the respondents said they would start at equal pay.

Other Findings

"Newspaper want ads" and "word-of-mouth" are the two leading sources from which employers get job applicants.

A past history of "job-hopping" and a "lack of job related skills/education" are the top two reasons employers give for rejecting job applicants after the submission of an application form.

The top two reasons given for rejecting applicants after the initial job interview are "little interest or poor reasons for wanting the job" and the "inability to communicate during the interview."

Once a choice of applicants for an entry level job has been narrowed to a final few, employers say "previous work experience" and "interest shown in the job" are the top two reasons one applicant is chosen over another.

"Absenteeism" is the number one reason people get fired. The second leading reason is "workers are not qualified to perform the tasks of the job."

When asked where improvement is needed in the

preparation of people for work, employers said improvement is most needed in the "ability to write and speak effectively." "Work habits" is the second area in which improvement is most needed.

As an additional goal for public education, employers believe that greater emphasis needs to be put on assisting students in developing the "ability to apply theoretical knowledge gained in the classroom or laboratory to real life situations."

Similar Survey in 1975

In 1975, the Advisory Council conducted an employer survey similar to the 1983 survey. There were a few significant differences in the results of the two surveys.

Sixty-eight percent of the 1983 respondents said that occupational skills (characteristic to the performance of a particular job) are required for at least some entry level jobs. Only 53 percent said this in the 1975 survey.

The 1983 respondents rated "not qualified to perform tasks" as the second leading cause of employee termination. This reason was not among the top five in 1975.

The 1983 respondents said the "ability to write and speak effectively" is the number one area of improvement needed in the preparation of people to go to work. This was not among the top five in 1975.

"Newspaper want ads," ranked first in the 1983 survey as the leading source of job applicants, was ranked third in the 1975 survey.

Additional Copies

The ACTIVE has published a brochure summarizing the results of the survey. Multiple copies can be obtained by contacting the ACTIVE office at (512)475-2046 or P.O. Box 1886, Austin, Texas 78767. The brochure would be ideal for use with students and policymakers.

HERE AND THERE

CERTIFICATION HEARING SET -- The Commission on Standards for the Teaching Profession will hold a public hearing to receive comments, suggestions and/or recommendations concerning proposed program standards for all provisional certificates and endorsements as well as proposed undergraduate and graduate institutional standards. The hearing is scheduled for Friday, September 16, at 1:30 p.m. and Saturday, September 17, at 8:30 a.m. in room 101 of the TEA North Building. The hearing will cover all of the secondary vocational education program teacher certification standards.

Interested parties are invited to register in advance to give oral testimony by contacting Henry Wheeler, Director of the Commission, at

(Continued on Page 3)

(HERE AND THERE, Continued from Page 2)

(512)834-4042. Presenters will be assigned consecutively as they call unless a later time is requested. Each presentation will be limited to five minutes and must be inclusive of proposed standards to be discussed.

A brief written abstract of the oral presentation and/or a written position paper shall be submitted to Henry Wheeler (201 East 11th, Austin, Tx 78701) no later than September 8; the written document must contain the name and address of the presenter.

REMINDER -- Remember to register and participate in the American Vocational Association regional conference on "Vocational Education in the Comprehensive High School" set for October 20-21 at the Wyndham Hotel in Austin. Vocational educators are urged to participate and involve their advisory committee member, public officials, school board members and administrators. See the August issue of the newsletter for program and registration details.

Comings and Goings

Promotions:

Robert Patterson will remain as director of Trade and Industrial Education and will also coordinate all vocational secondary programs. Other staff members in the new Secondary Program Services and Coordination cost center are Arnie Balboa and Fran LaTour.

Gay Nell McGinnis, formerly the Vocational Home Economics occupational education specialist at Big Spring, is now in Austin at the TEA headquarters as occupational specialist II. She is the assistant to the director of Vocational Home Economics Education, Judith Hetherly, and serves as state advisor for the Young Homemakers of Texas.

Appointments:

Cindy G. Gruner as occupational education specialist for Vocational Home Economics in the Big Spring Area II Office.

Michael E. McCallum as occupational education specialist for Industrial Education in the Area VII Sulphur Springs Office.

Jana Ray Pruett as clerk II for Agricultural Education in the Area V Denton Office.

Brenda Brown as clerk II for Industrial Education in the Area IV Big Spring Office.

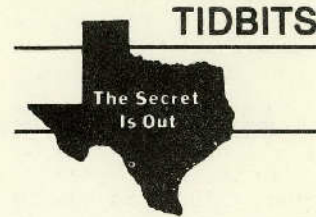
Dorothy Fern Drake as clerk II for Home Economics in the Crockett Area IX Office.

Doris K. Howerton as clerk II for Home Economics in the Waco Area VIII Office.

Anita Vaughn as clerk II for Office Education in the Big Spring Area IV Office.

Wayne Taylor as occupational education specialist for post-secondary programs.

Laura Brueggerhoff as clerk II for Home Economics in the Houston Area Office.



The Task Force and Board of Directors of the Vocational-Technical Education Development Foundation met August 30 and decided to continue the organization, with major activities being (1) to find a "champion" from the public sector or business community to spearhead the effort; (2) to contact other foundations who awarded education grants for a contribution; (3) continue fund-raising by each Director in their local communities.

Funds are needed to continue and develop promotional projects. These are: a videotape presentation on vocational student leadership organizations (VSO's), incorporating footage from each of the VSO groups (\$6,000); a presentation on each individual VSO--VICA, VOCT, FHA, VOCCT, OEA, DECA, HOSA (\$2,500 each for editing the existing tapes); a videotape presentation explaining what vocational education is and does, incorporating success stories of outstanding business people (\$6,000).

Vocational educators are urged to contact vocational supporters in your communities regarding sponsoring or contributing to any of these projects. These will be utilized by local communities across the state to spread the word about the benefits and opportunities of vocational education.

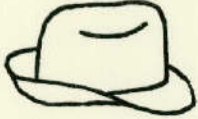
Inservice Meeting Contributions -- The hat was passed at all the teacher inservice meetings this summer (except Ag. and Homemaking--due to circumstances) in hopes of raising \$6,000 through \$1 from each teacher. The plan fell short, but we are thankful for those who did participate in the effort to make vocational education recognized and respected in the state. Contributions included Administrators and Supervisors - \$13.02; guidance - \$9.25; health occupations - \$108.53; marketing and distributive education - \$25.00; trade and industrial - \$106.92; and office education - \$139.54.

Goodies are Coming -- Four different products will be mailed to each school district in September. The items: The Public Information Cookbook, Vocational Trade Fair Handbook, Calendar of Events -- Vocational Education Week, and a checklist for vocational educators. Superintendents will receive the packet with a request to pass it along to vocational personnel. If you have not received

(Continued on Page 4)

(Secret Tidbits, Continued from Page 3)

the packet by the end of September, check with your superintendent. The Foundation paid for the printing of the Cookbook and Handbook, which were printed at Windham ISD, and the postage to mail the products to the districts.



HATS OFF TO...

The Health Occupations Students at Hastings High in Alief ISD for writing and editing a newsletter they called "HOSA House Calls." They hope to publish this newsletter quarterly, with future issues being devoted mainly to current health issues, medical trends and the latest in health news. Their inaugural issue gave a brief description of HOSA and some of their activities. Our thanks to their coordinator, Alice Wallace, R.N., for sending in the write-up from the national HOSA magazine and for sponsoring such a creative project her first year in Health Occupations education.

The Vocational Education Teachers at Comal ISD, which includes Canyon and Smithson Valley schools, for making my last public presentation so memorable. Their participation and enthusiasm regarding the program made my 2 1/2 hour activity fly by painlessly. To top off the event, Charles Rose, M/DE teacher at Smithson Valley, initiated a hat-passing on

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behalf of the Vocational Foundation, which netted \$29.00 from the small group. The caring, gung-ho attitude exemplified by this group is what is making vocational education work across the state.

Harold Dunphy, auto mechanics teacher at Waltrip High in Houston, for giving up his lunch hour each day to teach remedial reading to 18 students. He started it as a service for three or four of his own students, but they soon began bringing friends who also needed assistance. Dunphy is uniquely qualified to teach this group, as he has a master's degree and has been a special education teacher and counselor. Prior to coming to Waltrip last year, he was employed by the Houston Community College as an automechanics instructor for Vietnamese students and others with communication or learning problems.

**Jeanine Hicks, Editor
Lynda Permenter, Assoc. Editor**

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