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# ACTIVE news

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THE ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR TECHNICAL-VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN TEXAS

Texas Public Library

## Vocational Ed Students Gifted...?

Creating a stronger linkage between gifted and talented students and vocational education was the topic discussed by three speakers at the January Advisory Council meeting in Austin.

"We don't hold that there is one kind of giftedness relating only to academic. We think too often we overlook the importance of giftedness in the technical and vocational area," one of the speakers said in describing the problem that often exists in this arena.

Ms. Ann Shaw, program director for the Gifted and Talented Student Program at the Texas Education Agency, gave a quick description of gifted and talented students. "We describe gifted and talented students as those who excel consistently or have the potential to excel in one or more of six broad areas: (1) general intellectual ability (reasoning); (2) specific subject matter aptitude (math, science, foreign language, etc.); (3) creative and productive thinking (outstanding imagination and creative problem solving); (4) leadership ability (being able to influence others); (5) visual and performing arts; (6) life and motor ability (manipulate machinery, the body, or other motor areas -- this area would include outstanding athletes, surgeons, automobile mechanics, etc.).

"You may ask why these students need special programs," Ms. Shaw said. "Primarily because their needs are not ordinarily met in the regular school program. Some of the characteristics of the gifted child is that they have greater insight into the problem; they observe closely and retain information. Many gifted children learn to read early. They have an intellectual curiosity that is not easily squelched. They are constantly questioning. They are interested in a wide variety of things. They may have a persistent interest in a hobby -- something outside the school -- and are usually not easily distracted from this interest. They respond to a challenge. And one of the most interesting characteristics of a gifted individual is that they have a very fine sense of humor. They may also indicate a sense of maturity beyond their age.

"As we think about the kind of program for them in the public schools, we are not talking about our traditional accelerated learning programs where students are moved through subject matter rapidly. Normally, these activities do not give a great deal of time to

creative problem-solving or for high levels of thinking like analysis, synthesis or evaluation. Generally, a gifted child might face boredom with conventional classes. Gifted children thrive on complexity in intellectual tasks. We are talking about going beyond the ordinary curriculum which tends toward memorization and development of basic skills. Unless the gifted child is given the proper educational program, they cannot reach their full potential," Ms. Shaw said.

"Generally, we have had more lip service than actual provision for the gifted child. Ms. Shaw stated that as an average, about five percent of the general school population or 150,000 students in Texas, would be considered gifted. "The variations from community to community depends a great deal on the parents and the provisions they make for the child. Research tells us there are equal numbers of gifted individuals in every population group. Figures indicate that the Japanese have outstripped us in average IQ. We tend to believe this is because of the heavy emphasis on excellence in education and the home and family environment where education is stressed."

The Gifted Education Program was established in the Texas Education Agency in 1976 with small federal grants. The money was used statewide for staff development and the impact was multiplied through training of people in each of the regional service centers. These in turn trained teams in the school districts. Schools were asked to develop a long-range plan for education of the gifted, covering grades K through 12 for a period of five to ten years. In 1979, the first state funding was provided for the program. The method of distribution has been \$150 per student identified and served in the school district with a maximum of five percent of the ADA.

Ms. Shaw made the point that many gifted students are overlooked due to behavior problems generated because their needs are not being met. Recent research indicates that 12% of the federal prison population have been identified as gifted. She said a call from a worker at the Austin State Hospital indicated that 90% of the emotionally disturbed are highly gifted.

When asked about the amount of counseling that is being done to point gifted students

(Continued on Page 2)

(Gifted and Talented, Continued from Page 1)

to vocational education, Ms. Shaw replied, "not enough...there needs to be some indepth training for counselors. Many of the gifted children can do so many things well that they are frustrated in trying to make up their minds as to which area they would like to focus."

Ms. Shaw concluded her comments with these statements: "There is a problem with regard to educators in that they tend to identify the academic achiever as gifted. We recognize that we must not only address the needs of the individual, but also our society. Many of the gifted students would find very challenging work in the high technology fields as well as maintenance of the very sophisticated equipment that is used in several aspects of our nation's economy. We need the help of the Council in strategies for instruction in vocational-technical education programs."

The next two speakers, June Cox and Laura Allard, were from the Gifted Student Institute in Arlington.

Ms. Cox explained the Institute was chartered in 1972 for the purpose of improving the educational experiences of the gifted and talented students. Institute staff members work directly with the schools and in providing summer programs for the gifted students. Ms. Cox challenged the group to make certain that all students have strong basic education skills which allows them to move from one special interest to another to fully utilize their special abilities and skills. She pointed out that gifted people tend to change careers every five to ten years, in search of new challenges. They should be prepared for these career moves through a broad educational background.

Laura Allard stated that from her background as a counselor, she does not believe that counselors, faculty members and students view high technology courses as being gifted programs. "Very often students in these programs are not viewed as gifted students; consequently, the lack of identification means neglect to the needs of many of these students. They must be challenged to develop their ability." Ms. Allard encouraged the Council to emphasize the type of inservice received by the vocational teachers in order to work with gifted students.

(NOTE: For a copy of the full text of the remarks made by the three speakers on gifted and talented students, write the ACTIVE office.)

### Curriculum Revision Workshops Slated

CURRICULUM REVISION WORKSHOPS -- Curriculum for each of the vocational education programs is being revised. Two copies of the draft of the proposed revisions were sent to each

school district the first week in April. Vocational personnel are urged to obtain a copy, study them, duplicate and disseminate to interested persons.

A series of workshops are being held in each Education Service Center (ESC) region. The explicit purpose of these workshops is to familiarize school personnel and other interested persons with the content of the documents. These are not public hearings. Agency staff will discuss the materials, identify the significant issues, and respond to questions related to the content. These workshops are also in preparation for the public hearings which will be held in July and August 1983.

The workshops began April 11, so the entire schedule will not be included in this newsletter -- only the ones occurring after the publication of this issue (hopefully).

ESC IV	Houston	April 28	8:30-11:30 1:00- 4:00
ESC V	Beaumont	April 27	1:30- 4:30
ESC VI	Huntsville	April 26	1:30- 4:30
ESC VII	Kilgore	May 3	9:00-12:30
ESC VIII	Mt. Pleasant	May 4	8:30-12:00 1:00- 4:30
ESC IX	Wichita Falls	May 3	9:00-12:30
ESC X	Richardson	April 19	9:00-12:00 1:30- 4:30
ESC XI	Fort Worth	April 20	9:00-12:30 1:30- 5:00
ESC XIV	Abilene	April 19	8:30-11:30 12:30- 3:30
ESC XV	San Angelo	April 18	1:00- 4:30
ESC XVI	Amarillo	May 4	9:00-12:30
ESC XVII	Lubbock	May 5	9:00-12:00 1:30- 4:30
ESC XVIII	Midland	April 26	9:00-12:00 1:00- 4:00
ESC XIX	El Paso	April 27	9:00-12:30

### Comings and Goings

#### Retirements:

Jean Barton, program director for Vocational Home Economics Education, retired January 31 after 12 and one-half years with the Texas Education Agency. Her retirement plans include decorating the family home in Austin and perhaps writing for some of the professional organizations in which she is involved.

(Continued on Page 3)

(Comings and Goings, Continued from Page 2)

W. W. Inkman, Jr., who served as occupational education specialist for Distributive Education in the Big Spring Area Office for 25 YEARS!

Promotions:

Judith A. Hetherly was selected to follow Mrs. Barton as director of Vocational Home Economics programs. She comes highly credentialed. Ms. Hetherly was a secondary teacher for five years and a teacher educator in the Home Economics Department at the University of Texas at Austin. In the business and industry field, she taught extensively at Evelyn Wood Reading Dynamics, was a salesperson/buyer for clothing specialty and department stores and also worked closely with CETA/Manpower on industrial training projects. The new director joined the state staff in 1971 as an area consultant. She served as assistant director for Vocational Home Economics for the two years prior to her promotion.



**Judith A. Hetherly**

Appointments:

Sylvia Jeanne Allen as education specialist for Distributive Education in the Big Spring Area I Office.

Mark R. Butler as occupational education specialist I, Program Monitoring - CETA.

Robert A. Chapman as occupational education specialist I, Trade and Industrial Education in the Corpus Christi Area Office.

Nelma J. Dodd as occupational education specialist I, Home Economics Education in the Sulphur Springs Area Office.

Carol Ann Edwards as education specialist I, Post-Secondary Programs.

Mary Kathleen Smith as occupational education specialist I, Health Occupations.

Deborah S. Stedman as education specialist I, Adult and Community Education.

Resignations:

Poe J. Brown, occupational education specialist for Trade and Industrial Education in the Sulphur Springs Area VII Office.

## HERE AND THERE

JOB OPPORTUNITIES MONTH -- April has been proclaimed Career Opportunities for Youth Month in Texas by Governor White. The Texas Education Agency, again this year, is cooperating with the Texas Department of Community Affairs in an effort to expose high school age youth to information on labor market trends, training alternatives and financial opportunities available to pay for education and training. Local school administrators are being asked to plan special career awareness activities during this month. Where possible, emphasis should be given to planning career day activities on campuses of participating post-secondary institutions including junior colleges, communities and Texas State Technical Institute. For more information, contact Dr. W. N. Kirby, Deputy Commissioner for Finance and Program Administration, Texas Education Agency, 512/475-3723.

ASSISTANTSHIPS AVAILABLE -- Florida State University has full-time (12 mo.-\$6,400) and part-time (9 mo.-\$4,800) assistantships available for doctoral and specialist degree students. In addition, out-of-state fee waivers are usually available. Some assistantships will be available this summer and 10 will be offered this fall. University fellowships are also available. Florida State is strong in the areas of research, evaluation, administration, curriculum design and policy development and planning for vocational education. For more information, contact Hollie B. Thomas at 904/644-6029.

NEW VOCATIONAL BUILDING DEDICATED -- Madison High School in San Antonio officially "opened" its new vocational education facility in December with tours, Christmas decorations and music, and loads of delicious goodies to eat. Madison vocational education personnel were evidently very proud and pleased with their new 40,566-square-foot facility. The two-story masonry and brick building houses first-year programs of meat processing, sheet metal trades, diesel mechanics, word processing, masonry and commercial food services. It also houses classroom and lab areas for courses in upholstery-furniture repair, vocational office education, marketing and distributive education, office duplication, industrial cooperative education and coordinated vocational academic education. Steve Foster, vocational director for North East ISD, said he was very proud of the new building and the equipment, which he said was the most up-to-date available.

(Continued on Page 4)

(HERE AND THERE, Continued from Page 3)

Foster said 90% of the meat shops in the city couldn't compare with Madison meat processing lab. It is equipped with the latest and most efficient machinery, which includes a trolley from the dock to the cutting and trimming room, a heavy-weight hanging scale, a walk-in cooling room and walk-in quick freeze room. The masonry teacher commented that he was especially proud that local merchants had donated 35,000 bricks, 1,500 tiles and a large quantity of masonry, cement and sand to help his program get started this year.

TSTI BREAKS GROUND -- The TSTI-Waco campus will have several new buildings by the summer of 1983. About \$9.6 million was appropriated for the buildings that will house classes and labs for 16 programs. The new additions are the Technical Studies Center, Construction Trades Center and Electrical Trades Center and Library.



## HATS OFF TO...

THE MARKETING AND DISTRIBUTIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM PERSONNEL of the Houston ISD for developing a classy, full-color brochure on the M/DE program and then selling the design to the Marketing and Distributive Education

Association for use nationally. The brochures are entitled "Marketing Yourself for Success" and may be purchased for 25¢ each from MDEA, 1908 Association Drive, Reston, VA. 22091.

DR. GUY R. JONES, director of Career Education for the Port Arthur ISD, for taking the initiative in getting the Greater Port Arthur Chamber of Commerce involved with their vocational programs. The Chamber appointed one of its members as the liaison between the vocational department and the Chamber. Another goal is to get interested and knowledgeable Chamber members to serve on the 21 program advisory councils.

Jeanine Hicks, Editor  
Lynda Permenter, Assoc. Editor

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