

ACTIVE news

The Advisory Council For Technical-Vocational Education In Texas



Dorothy R. Robinson, Chairman

Alton D. Ice, Executive Director

Box 1886 Austin, Texas 78767 512/475-2046

Government Documents

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IMPACT CONFERENCES COMPLETED

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Exploratory programs, communications, and imagery were among issues addressed during 19 ACTVE Impact Conferences held across Texas between February 3 and March 4.

Nearly 2,000 representatives of both the education and work communities participated in the conferences which were directed at assessing the impact that voc-ed is having upon Texas citizens.

Praise was abundant from both educators and non-educators for the many contributions voc-ed has made in recent years in response to society's increasing demand for marketable skills.

At the same time; however, there was a universal concern among educators that despite voc-ed's phenomenal growth there is still a long way to go.

Both school administrators and students voiced the tremendous need for pre-vocational exploratory programs at the junior high school level that will enable students to investigate or explore the myriad of career opportunities in the work world as well as the training required for these careers.

Industrial arts programs are beginning to serve as pre-vocational exploratory in some school districts around the state. Participants, however, felt that a greater variety of exploratory programs need to be developed and implemented and at the same time efforts need to be stepped up to ensure that all industrial arts programs presently in operation quickly become exploratory in nature.

Young people, both in and out of school, also believe all avenues of communications must be utilized to keep students aware of the types of vocational programs available to them. It was felt that counselors alone cannot handle the awareness task, but that this must be a

partnership between the home, school, and community.

There were also concerns voiced that communications between the schools and work community need to be improved especially in the areas of job placement and followup; identifying skill shortages in the labor market; and identifying skills and attitudes that need to be taught. It was felt that vocational advisory committees, in many communities, are not being used to the extent that they should be used.

Employers in almost all communities visited noted that young people coming out of the public schools lack an understanding of what is expected of them in the work world and the importance of a business showing a profit.

Young people, say the employers, are also deficient in communication, computation and citizenship skills when they arrive on the job.

Present as well as former students, both academic and vocational, were quick to note that if there is a stigma or negative image attached to voc-ed, it rests primarily with the parents and school personnel and not with the students.

The quarter system, public school finance, age requirements for entry into voc-ed, and tenure credit for work experience for persons entering teaching were among numerous other key issues addressed during the conferences.

The ACTVE's 7th Annual Report to the Governor in April will contain a summary of many key issues which surfaced during the conferences. A report strictly on the conferences will be published this summer. Persons desiring to receive copies of either report should contact the ACTVE.

AVA URGES PROPOSAL CHANGES

The American Vocational Association is asking its members to contact their Congressmen and urge them to make changes in some legislative proposals recently made to Congress which pose a serious threat to the future of vocational education.

Proposals made by a coalition of major education organizations, headed up by the National Education Association, in the eyes of AVA would weaken voc-ed programs.

AVA Executive Director Lowell Burkett says "those of us in voc-ed who have worked long and arduously to put the voc-ed program in a prominent role in the total education system are confronted by a strong coalition that would divide voc-ed up among the institutional and bureaucratic interests."

There are two proposals which anger AVA the most. One calls for the elimination of state voc-ed boards. They would be replaced with state planning councils which would decide how to divide voc-ed funds between secondary and post-secondary programs.

The other proposal relates to turning over federal voc-ed funds to state boards of education and post-secondary education agencies, then passing most of the secondary school money to local education agencies according to formulas devised by the state educational agency.

AVA believes these proposals, if enacted into law, would only make vocational education wasteful and uncoordinated.

"Vocational education has fought long and hard for a planned, coordinated and administered program that would serve people of all ages in any type of institutional setting as determined by the state and administered by a sole state agency," says AVA.

"To destroy this concept is to invite duplication; overlapping and high administrative costs. Some states have tried to have two agencies responsible for voc-ed programs--one at the secondary level and one at the post-secondary level--with less than success."

AVA feels it is quite evident that the coalition will push hard for acceptance of their proposals. "Every vocational educator has a stake in this matter. Your program could be

weakened. The potential is ominous," says AVA.

AG TEACHERS IN DEMAND

Nationally known newsman Paul Harvey recently noted in a syndicated column that "many of the agriculture schools which must produce our next generation of farm experts can't find competent teachers."

"We are the 'promised land' of milk and honey, but an important factor in our nation's agricultural productivity is the educational and research contribution of the land-grant colleges and other educational institutions," says Harvey. "And many of them are having to make do with less than the best teachers."

Harvey emphasized that "despite that comprise with excellence, there is a chronic shortage of at least 500 vocational agriculture teachers. The shortage worsens as additional schools establish courses in vocational agriculture and agribusiness education."

"The publicity about too many unemployed teachers has tended to discourage teaching as a career," Harvey added. "For a young man or woman with an agriculture major the opportunity was never greater."

VOC-ED GUIDANCE SAID DEFICIENT

A serious deficiency in our nation's schools is inadequate vocational guidance, according to the results of a study published recently by the American Institutes for Research (AIR).

Sponsored by the National Institute of Education, the study asked 1,000 of the nation's 30-year-olds to gauge the quality of their life and to tell how education contributed to or detracted from it. These young adults represented a cross section of the 400,000 secondary students interviewed in 1960 as a part of Project TALENT.

The study noted that a lack of adequate vocational and educational guidance inhibited the development of 86 percent of the men and 66 percent of the women interviewed.

John Flanagan, chairman of the AIR board, said "a lack of knowledge of their own interests, abilities and values and how these
(See VOC-ED GUIDANCE, page 3)

(VOC-ED GUIDANCE continued from page 2)

related to educational programs and careers resulted in much wasted time, a lack of motivation and a personal frustration."

Leona E. Tyler, a professor emeritus of the University of Oregon and one of ten educators assembled by AIR to review the study's findings, notes that "education's successes are primarily with students who use it as stepping-stones to college. Those who need education the most are benefiting from it the least."

The study also points out serious deficiencies in the quality of teaching, a lack of individualized instruction, inappropriate curriculum and insufficient counseling in the schools. The study's findings are available for \$3 from AIR, P. O. Box 1113, Palo Alto, California, 94302.

COLLEGE TEST SCORES DOWN

Failure of students to take traditional academic courses in high school is one reason for plummeting college entrance test scores over the past 12 years, according to a four-month study by two University of Chicago researchers.

Students are taking fewer basic courses like English and mathematics and fewer pre-college courses like algebra, languages, chemistry and physics, say researchers David Wiley and Annegret Harnischfeger, directors of the CEMREL, Inc. Laboratory's Chicago-based group for Policy Studies in Education.

Two other trends parallel the decline in scores, the researchers say. More students are regularly absent from school and fewer students are dropping out, resulting in a larger percentage of dropout prone students taking the college board tests. The study was funded by the Ford Foundation.

Copies of "Achievement Tests Score Decline: Do We Need to Worry?" are available free, but in limited numbers, from: Verna Smith, CEMREL, Inc., 3120 59th Street, St. Louis, Missouri, 63139.

YOUTH CONFERENCE SET

A "Bicentennial Youth Conference on the Third Century" is being planned for December in Washington, D.C.

The conference is being planned by a committee selected by the White House Office of Youth Affairs.

Frederick McClure of San Augustine, an ACTIVE member and an agricultural economics student at Texas A & M University, was recently named as the committee and conference chairman.

An estimated 500 leaders of youth organizations from across the country will attend the conference. Corporate leaders and members of President Ford's cabinet will be among the keynote speakers.

McClure, a past state president and national secretary of the Future Farmers of America, says the conference is being developed to provide our nation's young leaders an opportunity to:

- discuss the needs of Americans and the opportunities available to them as we enter the Third Century;
- focus on issues that will be relevant to the new generation of leaders;
- develop a broad spectrum of questions, opinions, and recommendations viable for the future's needs and foreseeable problems; and
- develop an awareness of each other that will provide a medium for future interactions.

Pam Powell, Director of the Office of Youth Activities at the White House, will coordinate the overall conference through the assistance of the youth planning committee.

APRIL DESIGNATED CAREER MONTH

April will be "Career Opportunities for Youth Month in Texas," according to Glenn McAlister, Director of the Texas Department of Community Affairs' Youth Services Division.

The TDCA and Texas Education Agency are asking local secondary and post-secondary educational institutions to formulate a variety of career day type activities for April that will enable interested youth to obtain an indepth examination of educational facilities and programs.

(See CAREER MONTH, page 4)

(CAREER MONTH continued from page 3)

Creating a greater career awareness among young people is certainly a year around task for our educational institutions; however, we feel that one month per year should be set aside to call special attention to the need to provide career guidance opportunities to our youth, says McAlister.

A TDCA spokesman says "it's crucial that our young people are exposed to the many types of careers and career training available in our state in order that they are well informed of the labor market demands and related training necessary to fulfill their needs and capabilities in today's economy."

Governor Dolph Briscoe notes that because approximately 48 percent of the state's total population is under 25 years of age and because Texas' economic environment is changing so rapidly, "we need to devote constant attention to guiding the young in choosing the training opportunities that will lead to enhancing tomorrow's world."

The Advisory Council for Technical-
Vocational Education in Texas
P. O. Box 1886
Austin, Texas 78767

LATHE DEDICATION IN HOWSLEY'S MEMORY

A new \$4,640 machine lathe went into use February 13 at the El Paso Independent School District Technical Center, thanks to generous El Pasoans who contributed to the James A. Hoswley Memorial Fund.

Howsley, who died last March in a boating accident in New Mexico, was El Paso school district's Assistant Superintendent for Vocational Education.

The lathe was installed in Technical Center's machine shop and dedicated in a brief ceremony attended by Howsley's wife, Kay, other members of the family, and approximately 50 school employees and friends.

Contributions to the memorial fund totaled \$3,178. The balance of the money needed to purchase the lathe was contributed by Taylor-Simpkins, Inc., a local welding and machine equipment supplier.

Will Reece, Editor