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ACTIVE news



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THE ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR TECHNICAL-VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN TEXAS

LETTERS TELL THE STORY

If you are under the impression that everyone who wants to learn a skill knows where to go -- guess again. The Texas Education Agency has just received letters from 1,500 Texans of all ages and educational backgrounds who do not have the faintest idea of where to go for training in vocational/technical fields.

These letters were in reply to a national public service announcement concerning the desirability of vocational/technical training, and interested persons were to write "Careers" in Washington, D.C. The national operation then sent the Texas letters to the Texas Education Agency, where they are now being processed and the requested information provided.

Several thoughts come to mind as one reads these letters: (1) we are not doing a very good job of informing the public about vocational and technical education and where training is available; (2) we are in a people business; (3) we're reminded just how important a skill or career is to the quality of life -- something many of us take for granted.

The bulk of the letters were asking for general information on "careers" or for specific details on a particular field. Many were "desperate" in asking for help, and some were heart-rending.

Some examples:

"My name is _____. I am sixteen years of age, and have recently dropped out of high school. I am interested in a career as a chef. I would appreciate any information you can send me regarding a technical school for this type of career..."

* * *

"I am just 14 years old and I want to choose my career early. I wonder if you can help me. I'm not sure what field I want to go in. But I am sure of one thing...I want a career where I can work with animals.

Would you please send me any pamphlets, information, etc., that can help me in choosing where I want to be when I grow up?..."

* * *

"I would like some career information in a field which you might suggest. My interests are interior design, art (drawing and printing), journalism and singing and dancing. I am twenty-two years old and have taken several college courses with a B average. While I was taking freshman English, I was asked to write for the college paper. If you have any information which you think might interest me, please send it along with any career brochures you have to offer..."

* * *

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Dallas Public Library

"Sirs, I am writing to you about careers. Can you find me a job in careers. My happy interest is in music and writing songs. My other interests and things I like to do are fix cars and radios, too...and cooking and taking care of kids, too. Sirs, can you help me find those things. Sirs, I love to clean houses. Sirs, try to understand my needs for these careers. Thank you for trying to help me. Please write me at once..."

* * *

"I've got training in the field of refrigeration, a/c, heating. I have college hours and 6-7 years experience. I'm in prison and have heard it's impossible for me to receive a license. Is this not discrimination. I do qualify. Would you send me information and careers information. I would hate to change at this stage..."

* * *

"Please send me information on technical schools in my area. Is there any way I could take a correspondence course in electrical wiring? I am interested in becoming an electrician..."

"My name is _____ (female). I am 21 years old and a high school graduate. I've seen your commercial on TV about Careers and decided to write. Ever since I graduated from high school, I've had a hard time maintaining a job because things are just not what I want. I want to be a machinist, but I do not have any kind of experience and they never have any trainee positions. So, I would greatly appreciate it if you could let me know how I can go about learning more on Careers..."

* * *

"I have a son who will finish high school this year. He has always been in special education. He is 20 years old and is very much interested in being a mechanic. He has four years in special education mechanics and must have more training than that. If you could send me anything in the way of a booklet, I will go from there..."

* * *

"I have contacted every agency I know in Houston to get help. I want to become an LVN or R.N. Now, my problem is that I am divorced, have two sons to support and am making \$4.25 an hour. So, I am not eligible for CETA because I make too much money and I have a job. The only way I can go to school is with financial aid, at least minimum wage, because I can work part-time. I don't need welfare, I want to work. But like your ad on TV says, 'You're happy when you love your work.' I went to

Houston Community College in 1976 while I was still married, but through marital problems, I dropped out. Now I can't afford it. My grades were good and I can be re-admitted to the school. I have good credit and I can pay back a loan when I begin working. I live in the city limits so I can't even get on CETA program that way. It's all kind of corny the way help is set up. But anything you can do to help would be appreciated. You can contact _____ at Houston Community College (address and phone number) for my past records at the school. Again, the CETA program and the welfare program I am not eligible for -- and because of where I live and because I can work and am not on welfare. But there has to be some type of help for people who WANT to help themselves..."

There are many of the foregoing types of requests which will require a personal reply, and the Texas Education Agency is feverishly working on this. The majority of the requests are for information on specific occupational areas and these are more easily answered. If you vocational educators would like a boost as to your importance in the scheme of things -- come to the Agency and read some of these letters.

Next month we will discuss the origin of requests, and perhaps what the most "popular" occupational field is...and that will include many chefs and even some butlers!

COMMUNITY SUPPORT SALUTED

One of the most outstanding examples of cooperation between education and industry is exemplified in the Marketing and Distributive Education program of Houston ISD. The program has a 38-member Advisory Board made up of representatives of such well-known companies as J.C. Penney Co., Houston Post, Foley's, Houston Chronicle, Delta Airlines, Loehmann's, Oshman's, Exxon Company, McDonald's Restaurants, Sears Roebuck, Radio Stations KTRH/KLOL, several banks and the Retail Merchants Association.

During the year, members actively work with the HISD Marketing and Distributive Education program through seven subcommittees, some of which are Facility Planning, Training, Fashion Retailing, and Awards and Scholarships. Members work year-round and it all comes to fruition in the Spring at the Annual Employers' Banquet. Here, outstanding M/DE students and outstanding business supporters alike are re-

cognized. Thousands of dollars in scholarships are awarded and state winners of HISD Distributive Education Clubs of Americas competition are spotlighted.

In conjunction with the banquet, a tabloid is printed and distributed city-wide. This year's theme of the banquet and tabloid was "What's In Store." Companies salute their M/DE student employees through advertising in the tabloid and stories tell of current program activities, current and former student successes, as well as parents satisfaction with the M/DE program. Various advisory board members contribute articles detailing the value of M/DE to their operations. When asked why board members donate so much of their time to the Marketing and Distributive Education program, one answered that it's a way of "putting something back" into a field that has been good to them.

In case one questions the value of local advisory committees, he or she has only to look at the cooperation between HISD M/DE

program and the Houston business community to see that it can and does work.

STATE PLAN APPROVED

The State Board for Vocational Education approved the State Plan for Vocational Education for FY 1981 during its June meeting. The plan now goes to the U.S. Department of Education for approval. The State Board also approved on first reading a rule change which will permit local districts to extend the contracts of Shop and Pre-employment Laboratory teachers from 10 to 11 months, an action the Council has supported as an effort to improve the recruitment and retention of vocational teachers. During the May meeting of the Board, action was taken to allocated state

general revenue funds to local districts who have vocational programs. Each district is to receive \$900 plus \$25 for each vocational unit. Deputy Commissioner Bynum says these funds may be used for any lawful purpose for vocational education. Because of some constraints in the expenditure of federally allocated funds, local districts will use the state funds for travel for vocational administrators and supervisors, as well as vocational teachers, depending upon the vocational program needs of the district.

ACTIVE TO ELECT OFFICERS

The Advisory Council for Technical-Vocational Education will elect officers for 1980-81 at its June 23 and 24 meeting at the Ambassador Room of the Villa Capri Hotel in Austin. Meeting times are 1:30 to 5:00 p.m. on the 23rd and 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. on the 24th.

Program participants on the 23rd will be Grace Grimes, Deputy Commissioner for Planning, Accreditation, Professional and Program Development for the Texas Education Agency; Walter Rambo, Director of Career Education, TEA; and Robert Caster, Associate Commissioner

for Occupational Education and Technology, TEA. Ms. Sandra Marvel, Vocational Administrator for Wichita Falls ISD will speak on "Meeting Employment Needs Through Vocational Education." Mr. Caster will discuss the State Plan for Vocational Education -- FY 1981.

ACTIVE Executive Director, Alton D. Ice, will give a report on the "State of Vocational Education," committee chairs will give annual reports of activities, and the ACTIVE Program of Work will be discussed.

HEARING SLATED

Six regional meetings of the Vocational Home Economics Education Standards Project will be held during September, October, and November, 1980, for the purpose of allowing participants to examine preliminary standards and to make suggestions for additions, deletions and revisions. During each meeting, participants will convene by states to form a plan for implementing and utilizing the standards within their individual states. Because the meetings are designed as working conferences, the number of participants is limited to 125 persons at each. Since it is antici-

pated that more than 125 persons will want to attend, a procedure has been devised for selecting participants. Participants must attend the meeting that is designated for their state.

If you desire to be considered for participation in the regional meetings or would like further information, please contact Wilma P. Griffin, Project Director, Division of Home Economics Education, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas, 78712, phone (512) 471-4287.

HERE AND THERE

GOVERNOR CUTS RIBBON--Governor William P. Clements cut the ribbon on the Electrical and Electronics Center recently at Texas

State Technical Institute in Waco. He commended TSTI for the quality of training provided and said, "When I was a candidate, I

was the only one in the race with callouses on my hands."

The Governor went on to say, "Your training programs are producing graduates who provide the skilled workers needed to fill the needs of our great state's industrial base." Governor Clements concluded his remarks by saying, "I understand these programs very, very well."

STUDENTS PREPARE FOR MUSIC/RECORD INDUSTRY--Students in Cedar Valley College's (Dallas) Commercial Music Program have set a goal to record an album, composed, performed, and produced by CVC's Commercial Music students working in the College's own recording studio.

The Commercial Music Associate Degree at Cedar Valley has 50 declared majors in the only such program available in the Southwest. The program differs from Fine Arts music degrees in that the students learn the basics of making a living in the music/recording industry. Students in the program choose from the available program options which include: Performing Musician; Arranger/Composer/Copyist; and Retail Music. A fourth option in Recording/Sound Technician is being readied for the Fall, 1980 launching.

P.R. MATERIAL AVAILABLE--The Texas Education Agency has printed extra copies of the publication "Promoting Vocational Education in Texas." This material is valuable to those who want to start planning their campaign for Vocational Education Week early or just for tips on public information activities. The techniques outlined in this guide: Contacting Local Newspapers, Suggested Story Ideas, Exhibits, Producing a Newspaper Insert, Television Coverage, Special Media, Radio Appearances, Radio Public Service Announcements, Special Events, Speaking Out and Printed Materials -- should be used by vocational educators all year-round. We must all be responsible for telling the story of vocational education and how it is working. To order a free copy contact Jeanine Hicks, P.O. Box 1886, Austin, Texas, 78767, phone (512) 475-2046.

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