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ACTIVE news

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THE ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR TECHNICAL-VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN TEXAS

Opportunity for Disabled Stressed

The United Nations has declared 1981 as the International Year for Disabled Persons.

It signifies an opportunity for vocational educators to take stock in their role and responsibilities in providing services to people with disabilities.

"The unemployment rate among disabled persons nationwide is over 40 percent," according to Bobby Simpson, President of the Coalition of Texans with Disabilities.

Simpson, who recently addressed the Advisory Council for Technical-Vocational Education in Texas, said this high rate of unemployment is partially due to societal misconceptions as to the abilities and potential of disabled persons. "Many believe that disabled people must be cared for the rest of their lives and are the children of society and a burden on society.

This high rate is also due to many disabled persons not knowing how to function and compete in the workplace with non-disabled persons, said Simpson. "They tend to be sheltered and pampered at home, missing out on the everyday experiences encountered by able bodied persons which help prepare people to compete with others and function independently in our social system.

"Of the 14 million people in Texas, 1.5 million have handicapping conditions," said Simpson. "They cross all racial, social, aptitude, and economic boundaries.

"Disabled people want to work. They don't want to sit around drawing supplemental security income checks and having their medical expenses paid for by medicaid and living that type of existence for a lifetime. They want to be recognized as a resource rather than a burden to taxpayers."

The Coalition headed up by Simpson was

formed in 1978 to promote the abilities of persons with handicapping conditions. It is comprised of 18 organizations, representing persons who are disabled because of blindness, deafness, mobility impairments, learning disabilities, mental impairments, and autistic problems.

"If disabled persons are going to be functioning, taxpaying members of society, they must have a job that requires training," Simpson told the Advisory Council. "There is not a more important element of education for disabled persons than vocational training."

Simpson went on to say, "the most appropriate place for the disabled person to receive vocational training is in the public school system."

He stressed, however, that "vocational training is an element of education which is lacking at this point in time for the disabled population."

During the 1979-80 school year, voc ed in Texas served 25,000 persons with handicapping conditions, which represents less than three percent of the total voc ed enrollment for all programs and levels.

"People within the school system are not really sure what to do with disabled persons," he said. "Many times we find the vocational offerings limited, leading toward jobs that tend to be repetitive. Programs involving disabled persons tend to be separated from other vocational programs."

Simpson said "disabled persons should be given an opportunity to equally participate in the broad range of vocational education programs which are available to the non-disabled students."

He had several recommendations:

1. Provide occupational investigation and career exploratory experiences for disabled persons, starting at the

junior high school level.

2. Stress the development of work related attitudes and behaviors in disabled persons, providing ample pre-employment training in order for these employability skills to be practiced prior to entering the job market.
3. Promote work study programs for disabled persons just as those provided for non-disabled persons.
4. Mainstream disabled persons in regular voc ed programs when possible and feasible.
5. Make better use of 10 percent voc ed funds set aside for handicapped by involving disabled persons in planning and conducting programs.
6. Involve disabled persons in providing "how to" presentations at inservice workshops for vocational personnel.

He said the Coalition has active members in Austin, San Antonio, Houston, Dallas, Fort Worth, El Paso, Amarillo, and Lubbock that are available to provide technical

assistance to schools in planning and conducting programs for disabled persons. Furthermore, he said, "the use of disabled people in planning and conducting programs provides an excellent role model to disabled students."

Simpson encourages vocational educators to use the services of such rehabilitation agencies as the Texas Rehabilitation Commission, the Commission for the Blind, and Commission for the Deaf.

To secure a list of Coalition member organizations in your area, write or call: Bobby Simpson, President, Coalition of Texans with Disabilities, P.O. Box 4709, Austin, Texas, 78765, (512)454-3761.

In conclusion, Simpson told the Council, "a favor is being done not only for the disabled, but the state as a whole because disabled persons will become active, participating, taxpaying members of society."

Simpson says his Coalition refers to the "non-disabled as temporarily able bodied because no one ever knows when they might find themselves disabled."

Advisory Committees Merge

LAKE JACKSON...The recent decision of Brazosport College and the Brazosport Independent School District to merge their advisory committees for related technical-vocational programs is apparently a first in the state of Texas.

"As far as I know, this has never been done before in Texas," said Alton Ice, Executive Director, Advisory Council for Technical-Vocational Education in Texas, at a recent barbecue at Brazoswood High School kicking off the merger.

Ice, who has served in his present position since 1969, complimented both school systems for the spirit of cooperation which made the merging of the committees possible.

According to administrators at both schools, merging the committees will have several benefits:

1. The dual programs will be better coordinated, thus insuring easier transition for high school students moving from BISD to BC.
2. Duplication of efforts will be reduced, making both systems more cost

efficient.

3. The time commitment will be reduced by one half for advisors who previously served on both committees.
4. Faculty members in both systems will become more aware of the programs of their counterparts since they meet with their advisory committees.

"Merging the advisory committees is another example of continuing cooperative efforts of the college and BISD to provide better and more effective educational services to the community," said BC President Dr. W. A. Bass. "I'd like to emphasize that the merger wouldn't have been possible without the enthusiasm and cooperation of administrative personnel at both institutions."

"It will take strong commitment on the part of administrators and staff in both systems to make the merger a success, and we think we have that commitment," said BISD Superintendent Dr. Vance Littleton. "Our principal goal is to provide the strongest, most practical vocational programs possible, and we think merging the advisory committees will help achieve that

goal."

Advisory committees to be merged include air conditioning and refrigeration, auto mechanics, building trades, computer technology and data processing, distributive edu-

cation and retail management, drafting, electricity, health occupations, electronics and instrumentation, machine tools, office education, pipefitting, and welding.

Legislative Update

The battle of the budgets is waging in both Austin and Washington. President Reagan proposed a rescission of 25% on FY 1982 education expenditures, which would be a \$11 million cut in voc ed funds for Texas. A 20% cut is proposed for the FY 1983 budget. The voc ed community has generally resisted the rescission and proposed cuts for the following reasons: (1) vocational education has been taking a cut for the last 10 years...the federal investment per voc ed enrollee has decreased from \$32 in 1972 to \$16 currently; (2) other segments of education have received substantial funding increases in recent years; (3) the nation and particularly Texas currently are experiencing severe shortages of skilled workers; (4) national priorities of President Reagan include "reindustriali-

zation," "strengthening the defense enrollment," and "improving the production of defense equipment and materials," all of which require skilled workers; and (5) in view of the foregoing, now is not the time to reduce commitment and funding to vocational education at any level. Vocational education is part of the solution...not part of the problem. The reduction in federal money would impact voc ed in Texas in qualitative aspects, such as cutting funds for upgrading instructional personnel, developing and upgrading curriculum, equipment for programs, serving the disadvantaged and handicapped and other aspects.

NOTE: The number given for the Texas Legislative Information was incorrect. The number is 1-800-252-9693.

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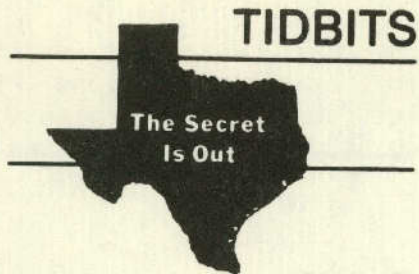
ALTON O. BOWEN, Texas Commissioner of Education has announced his plans to retire from the post he held nearly two years. Bowen, 65, will end a 35-year career in public education, including 10 years on the staff of the Texas Education Agency. His resignation is effective May 31, but he will stay on until his successor is selected.

THE LAST WORKSHOP for Vocational Leadership Training in Identification and Placement of Gifted and Talented Students will be April 29 in Corpus Christi. It has been changed to a one-day meeting and includes persons represented by Education Service Center Regions 1, 2, 3, and 13. For more information call Sharon Colson at Texas A&M, (713)845-7722.

ACTIVE IS GOING SOUTH for its next meeting. The Council will meet at the Holiday Inn in McAllen, May 1-2. The Agenda includes a tour of the campus of TSTI-Harlingen and an overview of vocational and adult education programs at McAllen High School. Associate Commissioner Robert Caster will review the Annual Program Plan and Accountability Report and Dr. Robert W. Glover,

Chair of the Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training Advisory Committee will give an overview of apprenticeship training. The meeting will begin at 8 a.m. Friday, May 1, and conclude at noon Saturday, May 2.

THE NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR of the Texas Industrial Vocational Association is Talmon Jackson, former Building Trades teacher at Round Rock High for four years. Talmon has been a life member of TIVA since 1978 and has served on the Board since September, 1979. He was named outstanding teacher in Area V this year. His previous experience consists of public relations and legislative work with the Department of Public Safety. He is currently working on a B.S. Degree from Southwest Texas State University. Talmon's program of work includes increasing membership in TIVA, working more closely with business and industry supporters, helping teachers more effectively utilize their local advisory committees, and improving the image of vocational education by telling the true story of "paycheck" education and its opportunities and benefits.



a \$200.00 pledge from Texas Industrial Vocational Association. At the same Board meeting, the Directors took \$10.00 out of their own pockets and contributed another \$200.00. With the \$555.00 donated at the inservice meetings, the total for industrial teachers comes to \$955.00 -- almost one-third of the total contributions. Many thanks to you T&I folks and those in the school districts mentioned above.

THE IMMEDIATE GOAL of \$3,000 has been reached by the Vocational-Technical Education Development Foundation. Educators and student leadership organizations are continuing to respond. The Foundation received \$30.00 from the teachers and students of Lewisville ISD (Jerry Crossland, Voc. Adm.), \$500.00 from Duncanville ISD (Joe Pat Attaway, Voc. Adm.), \$380.00 from El Paso ISD (Mike Michel, Asst. Supt.), \$370.00 from North East ISD (J. A. Oppelt, Voc. Adm.), \$15.00 from Lampasas ISD (David Bohannon, Voc. Adm.), and \$100.00 from the Texas Association of Post Secondary Technical and Vocational Adult Educational Administrators.

The Industrial Education folks once again showed their support in the form of

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