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ANNUAL REPORT

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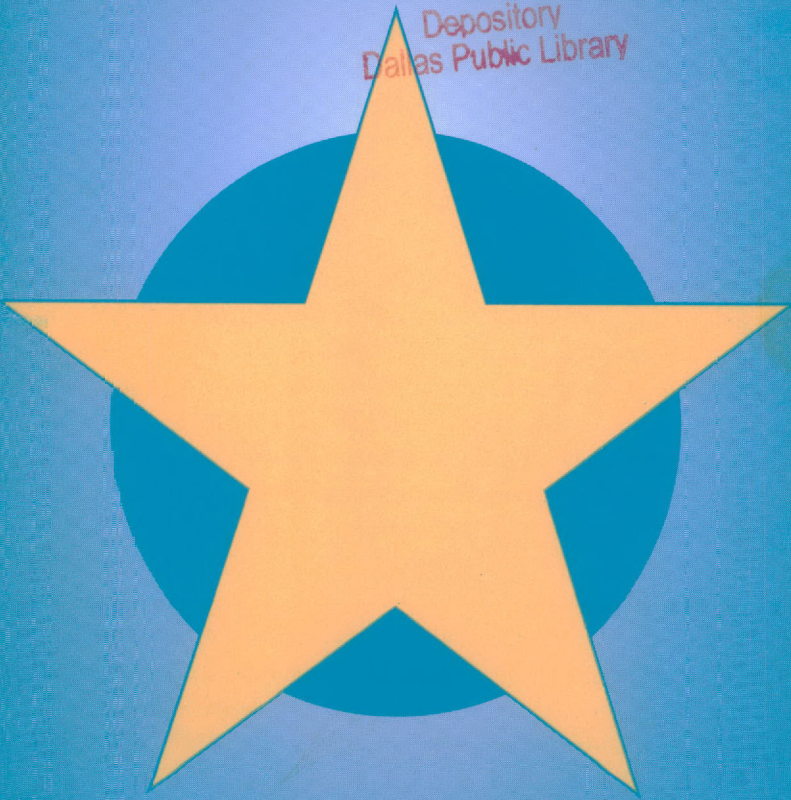
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Texas Skill Standards Board

A MESSAGE *from the* CHAIR

Dear Interested Party:

Whether you are just discovering the Texas skill standards system or have been following its progress over the past eight years, I invite you to share with the Texas Skill Standards Board (TSSB) the FY 2004 successes that are highlighted in this report.

These successes are by no means the TSSB's alone. They have been achieved collectively by the efforts and enthusiasm of the TSSB's many partners, including community and technical college presidents, administrators, and faculty members; employers, both large and small; state agencies; and industry and educational associations.

On behalf of the TSSB, I offer my gratitude to all these entities that have joined together to benefit the citizens of the State of Texas as we strive to improve the quality of our workforce. I hope you will enjoy the new condensed format of this report. We believe it increases the readability and accessibility of the information.

Please feel free to let us know what you think about the TSSB, this report, or any of the initiatives described within it. Or if you want to become involved in the Texas skill standards system, please call the TSSB office at (512) 936-8100.

Sincerely,

Wayne J. Oswald

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ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Recognized 4 national skill standards:

- ★ Biotechnology and biomedical skill standards for entry-level technicians in research, development, and manufacturing.
- ★ Biotechnology and biomedical skill standards for entry-level technicians in regulatory affairs and clinical trials.
- ★ Highly automated manufacturing systems technician.
- ★ Semiconductor manufacturing systems technician.

Development of the first two skill standards was facilitated by the State of Washington and the second two by the Maricopa Advanced Technology Education Center.

Recognized 14 updated or amended skill standards:

- ★ 10 in Information Technology, developed by the National Workforce Center on Emerging Technologies.
- ★ Hazardous Materials Maintenance Technician.
- ★ Heavy Equipment Maintenance Technician.
- ★ Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning and Refrigeration Technician.
- ★ Telecommunications Maintenance Technician.

The TSSB requires standards to be reviewed at least once every five years to maintain their currency and relevance.

Amended Academic and Employability Knowledge and Skills Policy.

The TSSB amended this policy to reduce industry costs and increase incentives to both develop skill standards and use them in workforce education and training programs.

SYSTEM PROGRESS

Assisted Industry Partnerships. The TSSB provided technical assistance to two Texas industry partnerships, the Gulf Coast Process Technology Alliance, and the Industrial Instrumentation and Controls Technology Alliance, which continued to develop skill standards for the occupations of Process Technician and Industrial Instrumentation and Controls Technician, respectively.

Both standards are expected to be completed in 2004 and brought to the TSSB for recognition in FY 2005.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In FY04, the TSSB concentrated on encouraging the use of skill standards by community and technical colleges. Initiatives and tools were developed and implemented to increase awareness of skill standards and the TSSB, and to guide colleges in the use of standards to develop new, or revise existing, curricula. Accomplishments include:

Launched College Awareness and Usage Campaign.

The TSSB launched its Fall 2004 Awareness and Usage Campaign with a letter to community and technical college presidents. The letter announced the TSSB's Program Recognition, which formally acknowledges college programs that have skill standards integrated into the curricula. A brochure introducing colleges to skill standards, the TSSB, and its services, accompanied the letter.

Instituted Skill Standards ID System. The TSSB developed and implemented a tool to help users identify, at a glance, four valuable pieces of information about any skill standards. All skill standards stored in the Texas Skill Standards Repository at www.tssb.org are assigned a unique code. The ID code indicates each standard's TSSB industry cluster designation, recognition category, expiration date, and the workforce education programs most directly related to the occupational area encompassed by the skill standards.

SYSTEM PROGRESS

The TSSB developed and piloted tools to help community and technical colleges use skill standards. Both tools guide participants through a step-by-step process to integrate skill standards elements into a program's curriculum components.

Conducted Skill Standards Usage Workshops. A number of Skill Standards Usage Workshops were conducted on Texas college campuses, with more than 75 participants served.

Piloted User's Guide. The TSSB successfully piloted *A User's Guide: Incorporating Skill Standards into Community and Technical College Curriculum* with two colleges that applied for TSSB Program Recognition.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

A key goal of the Texas skill standards system is a transcript or credential that documents a student's skill attainment to the performance level specified in the standards. To fully implement this vision, skill standards must first be integrated into workforce education programs. In FY04, the TSSB adopted policies and collaborated with community and technical college partners to facilitate this first step. Accomplishments include:

Adopted Program Recognition Replication Policy. The TSSB instituted a policy that enables and encourages common, statewide skill standards-based curriculum. By allowing community and technical colleges to adopt the curriculum of a Recognized Program at another college, the policy addresses an employer concern that students across the state be prepared with the same industry-defined skill sets, regardless of which college teaches the program.

Adopted Program Recognition Renewal Policy. The TSSB specified the renewal requirements for TSSB Recognition of community and technical college programs. Colleges must renew their Program Recognition every three years, and at that time, submit evidence of assessments to evaluate students' skill attainment as specified in the standards. Under the policy, Recognized Programs gain added credibility with employers by documenting that students are being taught and assessed to the skill standards.

SYSTEM PROGRESS

Collaborated on Skill Standards Incentive Awards. The TSSB continued to serve in an advisory capacity on the Steering Committee of the Texas State Leadership Consortium for Curriculum Development (TSLCCD). The TSLCCD, a group of community and technical college leaders, manages all Perkins-funded curriculum development projects. The TSSB collaborated with the TSLCCD in awarding incentive grants to two community and technical colleges. The colleges integrated skill standards into their programs' curricula and completed all requirements to apply for TSSB Recognition in FY05.

RECOGNITION AND MAINTENANCE OF SKILL STANDARDS

The TSSB continues to recognize both new skill standards developed in Texas and nationally-established, industry-endorsed standards. To date, 32 standards are housed in the Texas Skill Standards Repository. In the future, the TSSB will take advantage of Texas' competitive industry clusters initiative to identify additional skill standards development and recognition opportunities.

PROMOTION OF STANDARDS TO EMPLOYERS

An ongoing challenge is to promote the use of voluntary standards and credentials among industry. In FY05 and beyond, the TSSB will publicize to employers, in partnership with community and technical colleges, Recognized Programs that teach and assess to industry standards. The goal is to have employers recruit at Recognized Programs when seeking qualified applicants. In addition, the TSSB will address local workforce development boards, encouraging their employers to promote skill standards usage among area training providers and colleges.

FACILITATION OF SKILL STANDARDS USAGE

In FY05, the TSSB will consider for Recognition the first two community and technical college programs integrated with skill standards. In the coming years, Program Recognition will continue to be promoted to colleges as a way to meet industry-defined standards. In addition, the TSSB will research the feasibility of introducing this initiative to career schools and colleges and will prepare to launch an outreach and awareness campaign to that audience.

STATES AND NATIONAL SYSTEMS ALIGNMENT

In FY05 and beyond, the TSSB will develop a new strategy to address its third mandate to enhance the portability of skills across not only the State of Texas, but other states and nations. This will be an ongoing challenge given the fact that the National Skill Standards Board, which was the TSSB's primary vehicle to achieve this charge, has been discontinued.

TSSB ORIGINS *and* MISSION

WHAT IS THE TSSB?

The TSSB was established by the Texas Legislature in 1995 as an 11-member advisory board to the Governor and the Legislature. The members, who are appointed by the Governor, consist of:

- ★ 7 business and industry representatives
- ★ 2 labor representatives
- ★ 1 secondary education representative
- ★ 1 postsecondary education representative

WHAT IS THE TSSB'S MISSION?

The Board is charged with the development of a statewide system of industry-defined and industry-recognized skill standards for all major skilled, sub-baccalaureate occupations with strong employment and earnings opportunities.

WHAT ARE THE TSSB'S MAJOR FUNCTIONS?

Skill Standards Development and Recognition

- ★ Convenes industry groups to develop new skill standards and validates existing, nationally-established industry standards.
- ★ Recognizes skill standards based on TSSB-established validity and reliability criteria.

Skill Standards Awareness and Usage

- ★ Promotes the use of standards and credentials.
- ★ Assists education and training providers to use skill standards in their workforce programs.

Skill Attainment: Certification and Credentialing

- ★ Facilitates the portability of skills by recognizing standards and credentials across states and nations.

This report lists the TSSB's accomplishments and progress in each of these areas in Fiscal Year 2004, followed by a list of challenges for the future.

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Texas Skill Standards Board

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