



**TEXAS SKILL  
STANDARDS BOARD**

**ANNUAL REPORT  
SEPTEMBER 2013–AUGUST 2014**

## **A Message from the Chair**

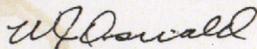
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Once again this year I am struck by how productive the TSSB's partnership with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and Del Mar College has been. Since FY 2004, these two parties have funded and administered, respectively, the Perkins skill standards-based curriculum development projects, which have brought attention to industry standards and provided incentive for their use by community and technical colleges. Over the past 11 years, these projects have led to the development of 10 TSSB-recognized skill standards and 64 TSSB-recognized programs, most (but not all) of which have subsequently renewed the recognitions. To date, 2,957 students have graduated with industry skills and knowledge from TSSB-recognized programs.

The TSSB thanks both of these partners, as well as the Texas Community College Instructional Leaders. The association has hosted the awards ceremony for TSSB-recognized programs at its fall conference since 2009 to showcase the colleges and faculty that do the hard work to earn the recognition.

It is with gratitude that we bid farewell and best wishes to Larry Lee, PhD, as he retires from his position as Del Mar College dean and administrator of the Perkins projects. Dr. Lee has been a stalwart supporter of skill standards usage in technical education. We welcome and look forward to working with David Arreguin, DDS, interim dean, who will be assuming that role for Del Mar College.



Wayne Oswald

## **TSSB Origin and Mission**

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### **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 board, whose members are appointed by the Governor, consists of:

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

### **What is the TSSB's mission?**

The TSSB 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 in the use of skill standards in their workforce programs

#### **Skill Attainment: Certification and Credentialing**

- facilitates the portability of skills by recognizing standards and credentials from other states and nations

## Skill Standards Development and Recognition

### Perkins Projects for Skill Standards Development

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) again funded the Type 2 project competition for community and technical colleges (CTCs) from its federal Perkins State Leadership grant. The Type 2 project provides \$20,000 to facilitate the development of skill standards for emerging and evolving occupational areas to guide curriculum development. Specific deliverables include TSSB recognition of the newly developed standards, incorporation of the standards into the college's curriculum, and achievement of TSSB program recognition. Colleges are required to hire a job analyst and follow the TSSB's *Guidelines for the Development, Recognition, and Usage of Skill Standards* in the standards development process.

The TSSB conducted outreach and technical assistance workshops for two-year colleges interested in applying for the Type 2 project grant. The workshops, which consisted of information about the TSSB, the skill standards development and program recognition processes, as well as about grant application requirements, were presented at two colleges for the following occupational areas:

- Industrial Maintenance
- Mechatronics

Although no college took advantage of this opportunity in FY 2014, nor did a Texas industry group develop skill standards, the TSSB will continue to focus on this area in the future.

### Review and Update of Skill Standards

TSSB policy ensures that recognized skill standards are current and relevant by requiring that they be reviewed by industry experts, and updated if necessary. In March 2014, the Manufacturing Skill Standards Council (MSSC) notified the TSSB that both the Manufacturing Certified Production Technician and Manufacturing Logistics skill standards had been reviewed. The national expert panel that reviewed the standards made no substantive changes to the content and stated that they were still valid and relevant. However, the panel did recommend updates to the related curriculum materials developed by the MSSC.

## Skill Standards Awareness and Usage

### Promotion of Skill Standards Use

The TSSB continued to implement strategies to increase the number of CTC programs that incorporate skill standards into curriculum. For the sixth year, the TSSB participated in an awards ceremony at the Texas Community College Instructional Leaders (TCCIL) conference to honor four programs. The TSSB continues to appreciate TCCIL's hosting of this annual event to recognize the hard work and accomplishments of technical education faculty.

### Program Recognition Renewal

TSSB policy requires that program recognition be renewed every three years. The process requires colleges to develop assessments that evaluate student mastery of the skill standards integrated into the program. The assessments indicate students are graduating with industry-defined skills and knowledge. The TSSB renewed its recognition of these programs:

- Austin Community College's Associate of Applied Science (AAS) in Biotechnology
- College of the Mainland's AAS in Petrochemical Process Technology
- Del Mar College's AAS in Biotechnology; Computer Programming; Information Systems Security; and Network Support and Administration
- Howard College's AAS and Level Two Certificate in Integrated Computer Maintenance and Networking Technology
- Kilgore College's AAS in Process Technology
- Lamar Institute of Technology's AAS in Homeland Security, Homeland Security Technician, and Process Operating Technology
- Lone Star College-CyFair's Logistics Management AAS
- San Jacinto College Central's AAS in Petrochemical Process Technology
- Texas State Technical College Waco's AAS in Telecommunications Technology
- Texas State Technical College Harlingen's AAS in Telecommunications Technology
- Texas State Technical College West Texas' AAS in Wind Energy Technology
- Wharton County Junior College's AAS in Process Technology

## Skill Attainment: Certification & Credentialing

### Newly Recognized Programs

The TSSB continued to recognize CTC programs this year. Currently, 56 technical programs at 29 colleges are integrated with skill standards and recognized by the TSSB. In FY 2014, four colleges received Perkins leadership funds to earn recognition for the following programs:

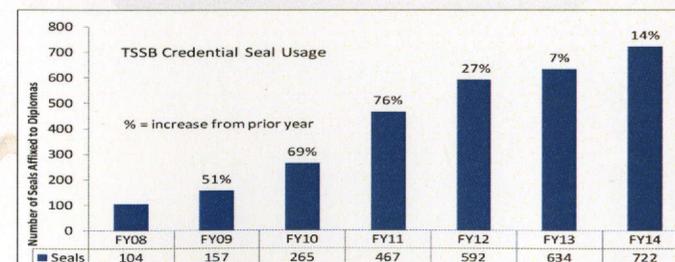
- El Centro College's Fashion Marketing AAS degree
- Lamar State College-Port Arthur's Process Technology AAS degree
- Midland College's Information Technology Network Systems Administration AAS degree
- Texas State Technical College Waco's Mechanical Engineering Technology AAS degree

### Common Technical Core Curriculum

The TSSB seeks to ensure consistent learning outcomes by promoting the use of common technical core courses among colleges with recognized programs in the same occupational area. In FY 2014, the number of colleges offering a common, skill standards-based technical core increased in two program areas: process technology and network administration. In total, 26 colleges in seven program areas now offer a common technical core.

### Increased Credential Seal Participation

The TSSB credential seal is an indication to employers that a student has graduated from a program that teaches to and assesses industry-defined skills and knowledge. For FY 2014, 26 colleges with 48 programs participated in this initiative, including one new college and four new programs. (Eight programs at three colleges have not yet taken advantage of this option.) A total of 722 seals were affixed to the credentials of graduates from TSSB-recognized programs in FY 2014 as indicated below.



## Challenges for the Future

### Skill Standards Development

To be responsive to employer needs, workforce programs at community and technical colleges often educate students in emerging and evolving occupations. The Type 2 Perkins project grants provide a valuable funding source for those colleges to develop skill standards in high-demand areas. Del Mar College has applied for and received another round of grant funding from the THECB for these projects in FY 2015. The TSSB will conduct outreach to encourage colleges to apply for these grants, and provide technical assistance to the grant recipients during the skill standards development process.

### Program Recognition Renewal

TSSB recognition for 13 programs at 11 colleges is due to expire in FY 2015. Each college has the option to renew recognition for its programs; all colleges have expressed their intent to do so. The TSSB will provide technical assistance throughout the renewal process, in which the colleges must submit documentation that they are teaching and assessing to the skill standards content defined by industry. For five of those programs, the TSSB will implement its recently adopted subsequent renewal policy and provide technical assistance, as needed.

### Common Technical Core Curriculum

The TSSB recognizes the desire of employers to see consistent, industry-defined outcomes in technical program areas across community and technical colleges in Texas. The TSSB believes program recognition can be used to foster a common, technical core curriculum, which enables colleges to offer a statewide standard of industry competencies. At the same time, specialized skill sets required by regional employers may be addressed in other courses in any college's program. The TSSB will continue to promote a common technical core through its program replication policy. Implementing this policy in program areas in which there are a wide range of technical courses across the state will be an ongoing challenge.

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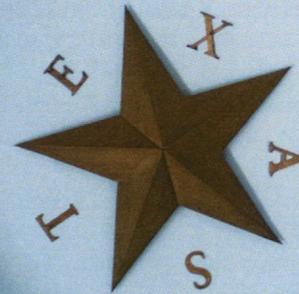
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Texas Skill Standards Board  
P.O. Box 2241  
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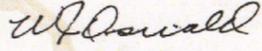
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