

TSSB Origin 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:

- seven business and industry representatives
- two labor representatives
- one secondary education representative
- one 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 to use 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.

Texas Skill Standards Board
P.O. Box 2241
Austin, Texas 78768



A Message from the Chair

I am pleased to present this progress report of the Texas Skill Standards Board (TSSB) for fiscal year (FY) 2013. I call your attention to the following highlights.

First, the TSSB welcomes its newest member, Terri Flow. Representing business, Ms. Flow is government relations manager for BancVue in Austin. I look forward to her contribution to the Texas skill standards system, as she continues the good work begun by her predecessor, Mr. Gary Blagg, a founding member of the TSSB who served from 1996 until his retirement in 2010.

The TSSB's partnership with administrator Del Mar College to provide Skill Standards-Based Curriculum Development Project grants funded by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board again has been advantageous. These grants helped to facilitate the development of industry-defined skill standards in the emerging occupational areas of biomanufacturing and digital forensics, by Austin Community College and Richland College, respectively. Texas State Technical College (TSTC) Harlingen replicated the skill standards-based common technical core curriculum in three program areas: biomedical equipment technology, digital media technology, and wind energy technology.

I am gratified to see how many colleges value TSSB recognition, as demonstrated by their application for multiple programs and their renewal of the recognition after three years. TSTC Harlingen now has five recognized programs, right behind Del Mar College with the most at six. Seventeen colleges now have two or more recognized programs, and six colleges—including Brookhaven College, Lamar Institute of Technology, TSTC Marshall, and TSTC Waco—have three or more. Finally, seven colleges renewed their TSSB recognition for 10 programs in FY 2013.


Wayne Oswald

Skill Standards Development and Recognition

Biomanufacturing Skill Standards Recognized

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) again provided federal Perkins State Leadership grant funding to two-year colleges to facilitate the development of occupational skill standards as the vehicle to guide curriculum development. Austin Community College leveraged Perkins leadership funds, industry expertise, and TSSB technical assistance to develop skill standards for biomanufacturing. The standards describe the work functions, activities, and skills of the biomanufacturing occupational area, which includes upstream, downstream, microbiology, and chemistry technicians.

Digital Forensics Technician Skill Standards

The TSSB also recognized the Digital Forensics Technician skill standards that were developed as part of a Perkins Type 2 Skill Standards-Based Curriculum Development Project. The FY 2013 Perkins project recipient, Richland College, facilitated the skill standards development process and validated the information with a diverse panel of subject matter experts statewide. These standards describe the work functions and activities, and required skills and knowledge, for digital forensics technicians.

Recognition of National Skill Standards

The TSSB recognized the National Precision Optics Skill Standards for Technicians, developed and submitted by the National Center for Optics and Photonics Education, an Advanced Technological Education Center of Excellence funded by the National Science Foundation. These standards describe the work functions, activities, and skills associated with the precision optics technician occupation.

TSSB policy ensures that recognized skill standards are current and relevant by requiring that they be reviewed by industry experts and updated as work-oriented information changes.

Skill Standards Awareness and Usage

Promotion of Skill Standards Use

The TSSB continued to implement strategies to increase the numbers of community and technical college programs that incorporate skill standards into curriculum. For the fifth year, the TSSB participated in an awards ceremony at the Texas Community College Instructional Leaders (TCCIL) conference to honor three colleges that achieved TSSB recognition for five programs in FY 2013. The TSSB continues to appreciate TCCIL's hosting of this annual event to recognize the hard work and accomplishments of technical education faculty among their college peers.

In addition, the TSSB conducted outreach to encourage colleges to apply for Perkins project grants as an incentive to earn program recognition.

Program Recognition Renewal

TSSB policy requires that TSSB recognition of community and technical college programs be renewed every three years. The renewal process requires colleges to develop assessments that evaluate student mastery of all the skill standards competencies that have been integrated into the program. The assessments indicate to employers that students are graduating with the skills and knowledge that have been identified by industry in the standards. The TSSB renewed its recognition of the following programs, which met all renewal requirements, for three more years:

- Alvin Community College's Process Technology Associate of Applied Science (AAS)
- Brookhaven College's Geographic Information Systems AAS, Communication Design AAS, and Web Design and Development Level Two Certificate
- Lone Star College North Harris' Visual Communications-Multimedia AAS
- San Jacinto College Central's Instrumentation Technology AAS
- Temple College's Biotechnology Laboratory Technician AAS
- TSTC Waco's Nanotechnology AAS and Solar Energy Technology AAS
- Wharton County Junior College's Computer Programming AAS

Skill Attainment: Certification & Credentialing

Newly Recognized Programs

The TSSB continued to recognize community and technical college programs this past year. To date, 56 workforce education programs at 28 colleges have incorporated skill standards into their curricula and earned TSSB recognition. In FY 2013, colleges took advantage of Perkins leadership funds to earn recognition for the following programs:

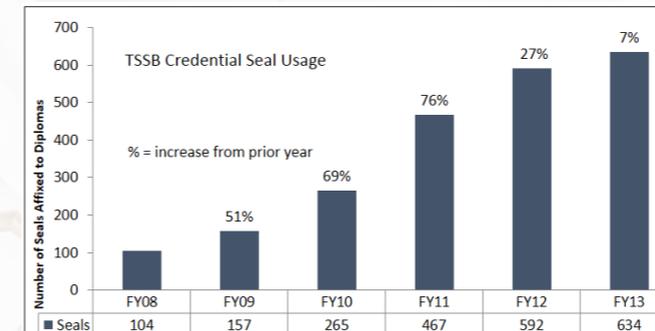
- Austin Community College's Biomanufacturing Level Two Certificate
- Richland College's Digital Forensics AAS
- TSTC Harlingen's Biomedical Equipment Technology AAS, Digital Media Design Technology AAS, and Wind Energy and Turbine Technology AAS

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 2013, the number of colleges offering a common, skill standards-based technical core increased in three program areas: biomedical equipment technology, digital media/graphic design, and wind energy technology. In total, 34 colleges in nine program areas now offer a common core curriculum.

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 2013, 27 colleges with 50 programs participated in this initiative, including one new college and four new programs. A total of 634 seals were affixed to the credentials of graduates from TSSB-recognized programs.



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 2014. 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 20 programs at 12 colleges is due to expire in FY 2014. 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. TSSB also will implement its recently adopted subsequent renewal policy for seven programs 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.