

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 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 across states and nations.

This report lists the TSSB's accomplishments and progress in each of these areas in FY 2008, followed by a list of challenges for the future.

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

ANNUAL REPORT

September 2007 – August 2008

As I reflect upon the past year, I am struck, once again, by how important the contributions of our education, industry, and state agency partners are to the success of the Texas Skill Standards Board (TSSB). This collaboration has made possible the accomplishments and progress in this report.

Fiscal year (FY) 2008 was the most successful one yet for skill standards usage in community and technical colleges (CTC). The TSSB recognized nine new CTC programs, six of which took advantage of an FY 2008 Skill Standards-Based Curriculum Development Incentive Award. The awards, administered by the Texas State Leadership Council and funded by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board from a federal career and technical education grant, provide colleges with \$5,000 to integrate standards into curriculum and apply for TSSB program recognition.

The TSSB also made significant progress in implementing its replication policy to enable common, skill standards-based curricula in programs and colleges throughout Texas. Seven colleges applied for program recognition under the policy, leading to four program areas that now have a common technical core. Those areas and number of colleges include Petrochemical Process Technology (3), Biotechnology (3), Geographic Information Systems (2), and Visual Communications (3).

Finally, two other developments deserve mention. The TSSB recognized another skill standard in an emerging occupation, Fuel Cell Systems Technician, in the energy sector, which is crucial to the State of Texas' future economic competitiveness. Secondly, the TSSB effectively implemented its program recognition renewal process with one of the first TSSB-recognized programs. The process requires colleges to provide assessments of the skill standards content, the key to meeting the industry standards.

I hope you find this report informative. If you have questions about any of the initiatives, please feel free to call the TSSB office at (512) 936-8100.



Wayne J. Oswald

SKILL STANDARDS DEVELOPMENT AND RECOGNITION

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Recognized New Texas Skill Standards

Fuel Cell Systems Technician – translated from a job analysis into skill standards and validated by a panel of national fuel cell technology experts, including industry representatives from Texas.

The skill standards development process was facilitated by Texas State Technical College (TSTC) Waco under a Type 2 Incentive Award, which grants \$15,000 upon completion of deliverables. The skill standards are the basis for the curriculum of the related Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degree program at TSTC Waco.

Recognized National Skill Standards

Electronic Game Content Development – developed by a panel of experts in the field and validated by a survey of industry representatives.

The standards development was facilitated by Lake Washington Technical College and endorsed by the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges. Texas-based game development industry representatives, including creative directors, studio directors, and members of the International Game Developers Association and the Digital Media Council, reviewed the standards and recommended them for TSSB recognition.

Semiconductor Manufacturing Equipment Technician – developed by the Maricopa Advanced Technology Education Center (MATEC) and originally recognized by the TSSB in November 2003.

At the request of an industry specialist from Intel Corporation and MATEC, conditional recognition of the standards was extended for five years. MATEC described the ongoing use and review of the standards by industry and training providers, which has shown their continued industry relevance and content validity, as reason to extend recognition under the TSSB's standards development, review, and recognition policy.

SKILL STANDARDS AWARENESS AND USAGE

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Career Clusters-Skill Standards Crosswalk Developed

The US Department of Education has organized all occupations and broad industries into 16 national career clusters. These clusters enable the identification of pathways from secondary school to two- and four-year colleges, graduate school, and the workplace. In Texas, programs of study aligned with these clusters are being developed across secondary and postsecondary education. In FY 2008, the TSSB organized its skill standards by career cluster category. This crosswalk allows community and technical colleges seeking to integrate skill standards into curricula to readily identify the programs to which the skill standards are related.

SYSTEM PROGRESS

Developed Employer Outreach Strategy

As a voluntary initiative, the skill standards system must be promoted to employers to be successful, as indicated in the TSSB's third legislative mandate. Employers on community and technical college industry advisory committees (IAC) are an ideal target audience for promoting skill standards usage because they are already committed to providing quality education and training for the current and future workforce. In FY 2008, the TSSB developed a strategy to engage IAC employers in promoting skill standards development and use in curricula.

Provided Technical Assistance to Colleges

TSSB provided technical assistance to community and technical colleges, including the Type 2 Incentive Award recipient to translate a job analysis into skill standards, and nine colleges to integrate skill standards into curriculum and apply for program recognition.

Delivered Skill Standards Usage Presentations

Presentations were conducted at three industry association and practitioner conferences and a Gulf Coast Process Technology Alliance quarterly meeting. The purpose was to promote the replication of common curriculum based on integration of the TSSB-recognized Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Technician and Chemical/Refining Process Technician skill standards, respectively, and to encourage program recognition application in those areas.

SKILL ATTAINMENT: CERTIFICATION AND CREDENTIALING

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Recognized Nine Community/Technical College Programs

The TSSB continued to recognize community and technical college programs that integrated TSSB-recognized skill standards into curriculum. Those programs include:

- ★ Petrochemical Process Technology and Chemical Technology-Process Operations Associate of Applied Science (AAS) Degrees at San Jacinto College-Central and Brazosport College
- ★ Fuel Cell Technology AAS Degree at TSTC Waco
- ★ Biotechnology AAS Degree Programs at Collin County Community College and Lone Star College-Montgomery
- ★ GIS AAS Degree at Brookhaven College
- ★ Visual Communications-Graphic Design AAS Degree at Lone Star Colleges Cy-Fair, Kingwood, and North Harris

Several colleges applied for program recognition under the TSSB's replication policy, leading to four program areas with common, skill standards-based curricula, including Petrochemical Process Technology at three colleges, Biotechnology (3), GIS (2), and Visual Communications (3).

First Program Recognition Renewed

TSSB program recognition must be renewed every three years. To renew, colleges must develop assessments to evaluate students' mastery of all the competencies integrated into the curriculum, which is the essence of meeting the industry standards, and must submit samples for TSSB review. In FY 2007, program recognition for Cedar Valley College's Customer Service Representative Level 2 Certificate was renewed for three more years.

SYSTEM PROGRESS

Implemented Credentialing Strategy with Eight Colleges

The TSSB's new credentialing strategy, which indicates with a gold embossed "TSSB-recognized" seal on a CTC credential that an individual has graduated from a TSSB-recognized program, was implemented with eight colleges. The seals were affixed to the credentials of 131 graduates at those colleges in the three semesters (fall 2007, spring 2008, and summer 2008) of FY 2008.

CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

RECOGNITION AND MAINTENANCE OF SKILL STANDARDS

Under its legislative mandate, the TSSB must continue to identify sub-baccalaureate occupational areas with strong employment and earnings opportunities for which to facilitate development of new, or adopt existing, industry-defined skill standards. In FY 2009, the TSSB will pursue opportunities identified in FY 2008 to develop new, or adopt existing, standards. The TSSB will also facilitate the appropriate industry groups to review and update TSSB-recognized standards due to expire.

PROMOTION OF STANDARDS TO EMPLOYERS

An ongoing challenge is to promote the use of voluntary standards among industry. In FY 2009 and beyond, the TSSB will implement its strategy to engage employers on CTC IACs to publicize recognized programs as a source of qualified applicants to meet their workforce needs. As part of the effort to make employers aware of recognized programs, the TSSB will also implement the CTC credentialing strategy with newly recognized programs.

FACILITATION OF SKILL STANDARDS USAGE

The TSSB will continue to implement targeted strategies to increase the numbers of recognized programs that meet industry-defined standards. In FY 2009, the Texas Council of College Instructional Leaders, in collaboration with the TSSB, awarded, in a special ceremony at their fall conference, certificates of recognition from the Governor of the State of Texas for all colleges with current TSSB-recognized programs. To encourage CTC pursuit of program recognition, the TSSB will also utilize the continued funding in FY 2009 for incentive awards.

STATES AND NATIONAL SYSTEMS ALIGNMENT

The TSSB's third legislative mandate to enhance the portability of skills across other states and nations is an ongoing challenge. In FY 2009 and beyond, the TSSB will continue to build relationships with other entities and identify strategies to address this charge.