

Education and Training Becomes Third to Develop Skill Standards

Buoyed by its leadership and commitment to develop skill standards for its sector, the Education and Training Convening Group received the wholehearted approval of the NSSB to become the organization's third Voluntary Partnership, joining the Manufacturing Skill Standards Council (MSSC) and the Sales and Service Voluntary Partnership, Inc. (S&SVP) in that distinguished class. The Board's action was taken during its September Board meeting in Herndon, Virginia, just outside Washington, DC.

Tish Olshefski, Director of the American Federation of Teachers' (AFT's) Paraprofessionals and School Related Personnel (PSRP) Department, was on hand at the Open Board meeting on October 1st to represent the newest Voluntary Partnership. She thanked the

Board and staff of the NSSB for their support in helping to make this happen and signaled Education and Training's readiness to "move forward as soon as we can."

Voluntary Partnership Committee Co-Chair Bill Weisgerber was extremely pleased at the Board's approval and welcomed Education and Training into its new role. "I am pleased to have the Education and Training Voluntary Partnership on board. They have diligently followed the criteria established by the NSSB and have a strong coalition,

resulting in an ability to arrive at consensus in the skill standards process. I am looking forward to their products," remarked Mr. Weisgerber following the Board's vote.

The Education and Training Voluntary Partnership is composed of over 30 key organizations and groups committed to excellence in the field of education and workforce training. The sector currently employs over 12 million workers

(approximately nine percent of the country's workforce) and includes sub-industries such as child day-care services, elementary and secondary schools, colleges and universities, and job training and vocational rehabilitation services.

The American Federation of Teachers, the National School Boards Association, the National Education Association, the American Association of Community Colleges,

and the American Society for Training and Development are the lead organizations in this effort. The partnership has strong support from the private sector, including companies such as General Motors, IBM, and the Marriott Corporation.

These organizations first assembled under the Education and Training Convening Group in January 1998 to address several common goals: raise the quality of the American education system by ensuring that all staff and



WHO WE ARE:

The NSSB is building a voluntary national system of skill standards, assessment and certification that will enhance the ability of the United States workforce to compete effectively in a global economy. These skills are being identified by industry in full partnership with education, labor, civil rights and community-based organizations. The standards will be based on high performance work and will be portable across industry sectors.

News Scan

New Committee Has Its Eye on The Future

The impending release of skill standards in the manufacturing and sales and service industries will be an occasion to remember for the NSSB. In preparation for that event, a new committee, the Integration and Implementation Committee (I&I), was created. It is chaired by Ray Marshall, former U.S. Secretary of Labor, with Susan Auld, president of Capitol Strategies, Ltd., as Vice Chair. Other members of the committee include Tim Flynn, Marc Tucker, Anne-Lee Verville, and Carolyn Warner.

The committee's main objective is to develop and recommend policy related to the integration of skill standards and certifications into the larger systems of education, workforce development, and industry application. Additionally, it will advocate for the development of processes and criteria for NSSB activities related to system build-out and implementation.

The work approved by the I&I committee will be of critical importance to the NSSB in that it will engage partners active in skill standards development at the international, national, and local levels. Internationally, the work will include cooperation with foreign counterparts to ensure the sharing of research and information such as the development of benchmarking studies that will benefit the national system. At the national level, I&I will promote the collaboration with national organizations on projects of mutual importance, such as promoting standards through workshops, conferences, employer networks, and in policy development. It will also stand ready to create policy for providing technical assistance to states that wish to incorporate NSSB skill standards. Finally through the recommendations of the I&I committee, the Board will establish policy for assistance to localities in implementing local projects.

I&I's work in policy-making has begun on a solid footing. It is spearheading a State Partnership Initiative to engage individual states with their own skill standards programs and involve them in the development of the national system. The NSSB invited a number of representatives for a meeting on October 28, 1999, at its national offices to discuss this worthwhile initiative.

Message from the Executive Director



Edie West
Executive Director

It certainly has been an active past couple of months here at the NSSB.

We are well on our way to developing our first sets of skill standards for the manufacturing and sales and services industries. The NSSB's Board, Staff, and its affiliate organizations would like to thank you for your valuable input and continued support. We look forward to continuing our relationships in the months ahead. Our work certainly is paying off and I'd like to share with you some of our recent accomplishments.

The NSSB held its quarterly Board meeting from September 29th through October 1st at the Washington-Dulles Airport Hilton in Herndon, Virginia, just outside Washington, DC. The highlight of the meeting was the approval of the Education and Training Convening Group as the third Voluntary Partnership, joining the Manufacturing Skill Standards Council (MSSC) and the Sales and Services Voluntary Partnership, Inc. (S&SVP) (see cover article). The Board and Staff of the NSSB would like to thank Tish Olshefski and

the rest of the Education and Training convening group for their tireless efforts in reaching this distinction and pledge to support them in their efforts to come.

On September 28th, Board Member, Jim Burge and the NSSB Director of Communications, Tina Kelley, traveled to McLean, Virginia, to present an NSSB Recognition Award to the National Institute for Metalworking Skills (NIMS). NIMS was recognized for its development of a skilled workforce for the metalworking industry whose certification system is used by over 30 states throughout the country. Our heartfelt congratulations go out to NIMS for their superb accomplishment.

Have you checked out our Web site lately? We've updated our site with a number of changes to make your visit to NSSB Online better and more convenient. In addition, we've added a number of certification programs to our Clearinghouse database in recent weeks. We hope that these changes will enhance your knowledge of skill standards. You can get all this information by logging onto NSSB Online at <http://www.nssb.org>.

On October 15th, the S&SVP held a provider's conference here in Washington at the historic Willard Intercontinental Hotel.

A number of individuals from a host of backgrounds attended to learn more about the work of the Voluntary Partnership. Among the highlights of the conference were a showcase of the industry's skill standards, a preview of the national assessment prototype of products and services, an informational session on gaining Partnership endorsement, and a session on putting skill standards to work in the nation's schools and the community.

At press time, the MSSC is scheduled to hold its semi-annual meeting on November 3rd and 4th in Atlanta, Georgia. Among the items for discussion are a preview of proposed skill standards for the manufacturing sector, validation, assessment and certification processes, system building initiatives, and a comprehensive marketing plan for the skill standards.

As you can see, there is a lot of activity with the NSSB and its Voluntary Partnerships. We invite you to check in regularly with our Web site to make sure you keep up with all that's going on during this exciting time, and we thank you for your continued support.

NSSB Receives Additional Corporate Support



The NSSB and the skill standards effort received a major boost with the recent release of a positive and motivating endorsement from a leader in the

telecommunications industry.

Christopher B. Galvin, Chairman and CEO of Motorola, Inc., has joined the chorus of top business leaders in stressing the benefits and importance of a skill standards system in this country.

In his support of a skill standards system, Mr. Galvin writes: "Today, the success of the American economy rests in the brainpower of its workforce... The mismatch between skill needs and skilled employees clouds our nation's economic future. Motorola supports the

National Skill Standards Board as this business-led group strives for the voluntary adoption of skill standards to bridge the gap between the high performance workplace needs and the available pool of applicants... Delivering tomorrow's workforce with the skills portfolio to perform well in this ever-changing workplace is the challenge that America faces today."

Motorola's relationship with the NSSB in helping to develop a national system of skill standards has been highly productive. The company realizes that customer expectations for high performance in product quality and on-time delivery can only be achieved with a workforce that is empowered to make decisions and solve problems at all levels, requiring a highly trained and educated team of associates. The work of the NSSB parallels Motorola's desire

to improve the skill levels of America's workforce to enhance this nation's ability to compete globally.

Motorola is a global leader in providing integrated communications solutions and embedded electronics solutions. These include: software-enhanced wireless telephone, two-way radio, messaging and satellite communications products and systems, as well as networking and Internet-access products, for consumers, network operator, and commercial, government and industrial customers; embedded semiconductor solutions for customers in the consumer, networking and computing, transportation, and wireless communications markets; and embedded electronics systems for automotive, communications, imaging, manufacturing systems, computer and consumer markets.

S&SVP Assists with Retail Skills Center at Jersey Gardens

As the NSSB's Sales and Service Voluntary Partnership (S&SVP) moves closer to producing standards, assessment and certification for the retail and wholesale industry sector, they are exploring real-world outlets for the application of these standards. Building on their success with the King of Prussia retail skills center, the S&SVP helped unveil the grand opening of the Retail Skills Center in Elizabeth, New Jersey, on October 5th, 1999. The Retail Skills Center at Jersey Gardens was created in partnership with the National Retail Federation (NRF) and its research and education arm, the NRF Foundation. It is envisioned as a "one-stop-shopping" center for skills assessment, training and job placement for would-be retail sales associates, and a clearinghouse for potential retail employers.

The Retail Skills Center came about through the combined efforts of the S&SVP, the NRF Foundation, the City of Elizabeth, the County of Union, and Glimcher Development Corporation, along with the New Jersey Department

of Labor, Union County College, American Express Foundation, and the Elizabeth Development Company. Speaking at the dedication ceremony, NRF President Tracy Mullin remarked: "This center represents the next step in NRF's goal to establish industry-wide



skill standards for the retail industry and to promote retailing as a career. It also underscores how local economies can reap tangible benefits from cooperation between private business and public entities."

The establishment of the Retail Skills Center at Jersey Gardens continues the momentum of earlier skill standards, assessment, and certification-related successes. Recently, more than 4,500 potential applicants attended two job fairs in Elizabeth, whereby 2,000

individuals went on to receive initial skills assessment and orientation. Many retailers, including The Gap, Burlington Coat Factory and Rainforest Café, already have hired hundreds of individuals who completed the training program.

The Retail Skills Center at Jersey Gardens is the second training center sponsored by S&SVP and NRF. The first opened in 1996 at the King of Prussia Mall in Pennsylvania. In addition to the support of local authorities, both the Elizabeth and King of Prussia Retail Skills Centers have received grant support from The American Express Foundation.

The NRF has been a leader with the S&SVP in developing national skill standards and skills-based training and curriculum for potential sales and service employees. Its retail skills curriculum has been used in job training centers throughout the U.S. and is being adapted for use in non-retail service environments and for national certification.

Manufacturing Workers Identify What it Takes to Do the Job Well

In August and September, the Manufacturing Skill Standards Council (MSSC), the NSSB Voluntary Partnership for the manufacturing, installation, and repair industry sector, brought together 68 workers from more than 60 companies and 22 unions to participate in Round II skill standards development panels. The purpose of the panels was to identify performance indicators, which are the things that tell you that you know the job has been successfully performed and are based on the critical work functions (broad groupings of work) and key activities (the specific tasks that need to happen to get the work done) identified in previous panels conducted in June and July.

At press time, the work function analysis portion was scheduled for completion by the end of October. Additional site visits to high performance companies will supplement the panel sessions as a varied methodology for

collecting the data and to fill in any data gaps. The next step in the standards development process will be to validate the work function portion of the standards—i.e. critical work functions, key activities and performance indicators—with the identification of skills and knowledge to follow in early 2000.

In July, MSSC completed the first round of research in the development of skill standards for the manufacturing, installation, and repair industry sector. Research in that round centered on developing critical work functions and key activities for six concentrations. To date, over 230 workers have participated in the standards development process. The panels have been conducted in the following states: California, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Missouri, North Carolina, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas, Washington, Wisconsin, and Michigan.

Companies that have participated in this effort include Boeing, BP Amoco,

Eastman Kodak, and Lucent Technologies. A number of labor unions, such as the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), the United Steelworkers of America, and the International Longshore and Warehouse Union, have also taken active roles. For a complete listing of companies and unions that have participated in this effort, visit MSSC on-line at <http://www.msscusa.org>.

So what's next? After collecting data on the work portion of the skill standards, the next step will be for MSSC to identify the skills and knowledge it takes to do the work that has been identified. Before that happens, MSSC will launch a comprehensive validation study to verify the accuracy of the work portion of the standards and to develop a complete picture of what is accomplished in the manufacturing workplace.

NSSB Online: Getting Better And Better Every Day



NSSB Online (<http://www.nssb.org>) continues to be an extremely popular site for people across the country and around the world, consistently registering thousands of visitors each month. "Skill surfers" visit the site because we continually add to and update the wealth of information housed there, providing comprehensive information on the development of skill standards at each stage of the process.

We've made several important changes that we believe will make it even easier for you to find what you're looking for straight from our homepage. Want to

know all about the NSSB and how we operate? Check out the "What is the NSSB?" section and become informed. Want to know the date of the next Board meeting or stay current on recently available skills-related publications? Go straight to the "What's New?" section to get this and more. Have questions

about skill standards and how they benefit you? Check out our "Frequently Asked Questions" and get the answers you need at the click of a button. In addition, you can also link directly to our Clearinghouse, which continues to increase its holdings and remains your Number One resource for skill standards information.

Another area of increasing interest is the growing collection of skill certification and apprenticeship descriptions. Located in the "Standards and Initiatives" section of NSSB Online, this collection provides detailed reports on existing

industry certifications, apprenticeships, and related skill standards activities. These reports provide descriptive and analytical information regarding existing programs for use by the general public, as well as by the Voluntary Partnerships and Convening Groups. We've made it easy for you to find the report that you need. Each existing skill standards descriptive report is categorized by NSSB industry sector and, when appropriate, by sub-sector. Each is titled with a term that usually identifies both a primary industry and occupation. Every month, new reports are added to the collection.

So visit NSSB Online today to see the latest initiatives in our effort to build a voluntary national system of skill standards, certification, and assessment. And if you haven't already done so, make sure you sign our on-line guest book.

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faculty attain the highest possible skill level; raise the standards of living and economic security of American workers by improving access to high-skill, high-wage employment; and improve U.S. competitiveness in the global economy by improving the training received by all American workers.

In two short years, the group has recorded remarkable progress to begin developing skill standards for the sector.

In 1998, the group conducted regional information meetings to explain its work in New Orleans, Boston, Chicago, Denver, and Portland; it convened the first meeting of its Decision Council; and established strong lines of communication with its stakeholder groups. This year, Education and Training held additional regional meetings among its stakeholders, conducted industry research on skill standards to assess the

current situation within the sector, and implemented a wide-ranging publicity and outreach plan for their project.

The Education and Training Voluntary Partnership will focus its immediate work on child-care, educational paraprofessionals, and job/corporate trainers. This will begin the development of a skill standards system for this important sector.



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