



**Texas AFT**

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**TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE  
REGARDING SB 1313**

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*Patty Quinzi, Texas AFT Legislative Counsel*

We would like to thank you, Senator Shapiro, and the Career and Technical Education Review Panel for working to make these significant improvements in career and technical education in Texas. Texas AFT supports well-designed, well-implemented career and technical education programs that significantly increase the academic rigor and relevance of the high school curriculum and expand what students can do with their future. SB 1313 is a plan that will increase rigor, help reduce dropout rates, and increase the postsecondary readiness of students who complete high school.

**Recommendations to improve SB 1313**

- Some exemplary CTE programs are achieving the goals of SB 1313 already, and we are glad to see that the best practices clearinghouse will disseminate valuable information on these model programs throughout the state. While conducting our own site visits with successful CTE programs, Texas AFT has learned about effective strategies such as co-teaching that CTE instructors use to engage students' interest. (Co-teaching involves collaboration between teachers in core academic subjects and CTE teachers to engage students through relevant applications of academic concepts.) SB 1313 could be improved by requiring that the best practices clearinghouse in Section 1 collect and report on such valuable teaching strategies used by current CTE teachers who have first-hand knowledge of how to engage students and help them achieve postsecondary success.
- The clearinghouse should also include examples of local partnerships between school districts, labor councils, and businesses that join forces to fund students' training, including apprenticeships, and even scholarships. Because of the tremendous advantage of having a ready workforce at hand, local businesses have actually invested in individual students and provided two-year scholarships to community colleges and four-year colleges as well.
- The high-demand occupations list that is developed by the Texas Workforce Commission, in consultation with the Texas Workforce Investment Council, could be strengthened by requiring consultation with Texas labor organizations. Texas labor unions, through regional AFL-CIO central labor councils, have partnered with school districts and businesses and have been involved in successful career and technology programs throughout the state. Because of their regional nature, central labor councils are keenly aware of area labor needs and how to address them.
- Section 11 of the bill, which refers to the development of mathematics and science courses for high-demand occupations, could also be improved by including the input of teachers and local labor organizations in developing coursework.

By seeking the counsel of front-line educators and the network of career and technical education experts in central labor councils, we can better ensure that students have academic choices that are attractive, attainable, rigorous, and aligned with regional economic-development needs.

*An affiliate of the American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO*