

Dear SkillsUSA LOUISIANA Chapter Advisor:

Thank you for making a choice to have SkillsUSA as part of your educational program this school year. Students who leave school with a combination of academic skills, employability skills and technical skills will have the best chance for a rewarding career. Within your classroom, and through a solid SkillsUSA chapter, students can acquire these skills and become true SkillsUSA Champions at Work.

As a former classroom teacher myself, I realize the commitment you've made. Your students look up to you as their mentor and friend. As an instructor, you are the bridge between your students' need to develop marketable job skills and industry's need for quality employees. Producing graduates who are prepared for the workplace and the new economy is a serious responsibility but also a wonderful opportunity to change lives for the better on a daily basis.

In the past year, SkillsUSA has been fortunate to experience both a steady membership and growing national support from our industry partners. Our national magazine, *SkillsUSA Champions*, is an excellent classroom motivational tool and information resource. We are introducing several new benefits for teachers and students. More than 1,000 companies and associations are now champions for SkillsUSA because they believe career and technical education can help solve this nation's shortage of skilled, trained workers. Your students have an edge in the job market because they possess a skill set that distinguishes them from the rest of the population.

Your involvement in SkillsUSA will help students be champions for their own futures as they gain employability skills and the confidence necessary to succeed on the job. The technical and academic training you provide in your lab is critical to your student's success. In the same respect, your SkillsUSA chapter is the leadership lab where your students gain practice in problem solving, goal setting, teamwork, communications and customer service. This experience will help your students get their first job, and then help them advance throughout their careers. In many cases, participation in SkillsUSA is their first opportunity to belong to a professional society.

SkillsUSA benefits instructors just as much as students. You can network with other educators, learn directly from industry what skills are required, and participate with your students in leadership conferences and competitions. In the classroom, SkillsUSA is an effective management tool that helps day-to-day activities run smoothly. By running a well-rounded SkillsUSA program within your classroom, you can also achieve many of the new academic and employability skill standards being implemented within our school systems and in the workplace.

In the coming year, our focus in SkillsUSA will be on instructors. We will continue our emphasis on teacher training at all levels. We will continue to build stronger SkillsUSA state associations, so they can in turn support your school programs. We will continue to promote national business, industry and education partnerships to the benefit of all career and technical education programs we serve at the national, state and local levels. And, we will be your champions in Washington, D.C. as we advocate for federal support of technical education and the important role you play in shaping American's future.

Teachers leave a lasting impression on students and help to shape individual values and personal goals based on the experiences that take place within the classroom. Never forget the value and importance of what you do daily. Let's work together to make the 2003-04 school year the best ever. Let's make it a year of Champions at Work!

Sincerely,



Timothy W. Lawrence
Executive Director

P.S. Our national office is here to serve you. Please call us at 800-355-8422 or send an e-mail to anyinfo@skillsusa.org if we can be of assistance.