

The Blumenfeld Education Letter



"My People Are Destroyed For Lack Of Knowledge" HOSEA 4:6

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The purpose of this newsletter is to provide knowledge for parents and educators who want to save the children of America from the destructive forces that endanger them. Our children in the public schools are at grave risk in 4 ways: academically, spiritually, morally, and physically — and only a well-informed public will be able to reduce these risks.

"Without vision, the people perish."

Homeschoolers to be Included and Bar Coded in the School-to-Work Education Plan

Plans are afoot to include homeschoolers in the new School-to-Work education system being constructed by the education-business establishment. According to a Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL) newsletter, *Northwest Tech Prep Networker*, September 1995, educational researchers are seeking ways to make it easy for homeschoolers to become part of the system. The newsletter states:

Some 20 school districts in Washington state are developing programs for students participating in home-based learning, including one district that is developing a computer lab for their use.

How to include home-based students in Tech Prep activities and articulated courses will be an issue to address by state and local educators. Creative planning will require new strategies to ensure that all students have access to a Tech Prep education. Home schoolers will need to consider such factors as: Work-based learning experiences; Competency-based educational practices and methodologies; SCANS skills development; Occupational information.

Employees in the not-so-distant future must be well equipped with skills such as teamwork, understanding different modes of communicating with diverse populations, computer technologies, and critical-thinking skills.

These are only some of the elements required for the new workforce that home-based learning may not be able to provide. Homeschooling parents should contact their local Tech Prep coordinator about strategies to ensure a Tech Prep education for their children.

Tech Prep coordinators and school staff may need to consider creative options for homeschooled students such as providing workbase experiences at family-operated businesses where homeschoolers can learn worksite skills. Parents may need to take the initiative for coordinating Tech Prep activities for their children.

As Tech Prep evolves, new issues will surface that require creative solutions for reaching a broader and diverse student audience.

Obviously, the educators realize that they will not be able to fulfill their totalitarian vision of America's future if homeschoolers remain independent and separate from the government system. As of now, they must rely on the homeschooler's voluntary desire to participate in the workforce or Tech Prep system which is being piloted in the state of Washington.

According to the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board of Wash-

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ington state, Tech Prep "is a competency-based program that begins in the last two years of high school, continues through two years at the postsecondary level, and leads to completion of an associate degree, certificate, or apprenticeship."

Once in the system, the homeschooler will be bar-coded with a permanent record in the system computer. The bar-coding system is being developed by Diploma Technologies, Inc., 309 11th Ave. W., Kirkland, WA 98033. Phone: 206-827-3953; Fax: 206-827-3953.

Robert Lehr, CEO of the company, presented a paper entitled "Bar Code Based Competency Tracking" at the Workforce Conference Roundtable, Nov. 6, 1995, Portland, Oregon. A summary of his presentation states:

All elements of implementing and using bar code technology for managing a competency-based program will be discussed. Particular emphasis will be placed on how a competency management system can facilitate any competency-based program as well as manage Tech Prep within an organization.

Participants will be able to see the many advantages that can be realized from a competency management system; learn how to use a bar code based competency tracking system and recognize the accuracy and time saving features that it offers; understand how competency tracking fits into a Tech Prep and/or Competency-based Program.

Teams of educational researchers, with funding from the U.S. Departments of Labor and Education, are in the process of transforming America's failed public education system — which, believe it or not, was once capable of providing a decent academic education for its students — into a system of job training via Mastery Learning to meet the needs of industry and the government's economic policies. Apparently, the Northwest has been chosen as the area in which to try out the new system before implementing it nationwide.

School-to-Work Is OBE

One thing we have noticed is that the phrase "outcome-based education" has been purged from the literature now coming out of the educational labs. They know that OBE has become a dirty word in the public's mind, and that the mere mention of "outcome-based education" as the system being implemented will create bitter controversy. And so they now talk about "benchmarks" instead of "outcomes" or "a competency-based workforce training and education system" instead of OBE.

That the system is the very one outlined by Marc Tucker in his famous letter to Hillary Clinton is confirmed by a paper from NWREL, dated Jan. 29, 1996, which states:

Because of the increasing demands of a highly competitive global economy, employers say they have difficulty finding workers with the academic, analytical, and technical skills they need. "If we want to maintain our current level of income in this country, our whole workforce has to be vastly better educated than it is," noted Marc Tucker, director of the National Center on Education and the Economy, in an interview in the March 1992 issue of *Educational Leadership*. "We can either be a high-skill and high-wage country or a low-skill and low-wage country. The consequences of not accepting these challenges would be a fairly steep dive into Third World status. It's as simple as that."

Tucker also served on the National Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce. In 1990, the commission released *America's Choice: High Skills or Low Wages*. The report carried with it this dire prediction: "If productivity continues to falter, we can expect one of two futures. Either the top 30 percent of our population will grow wealthier while the bottom 70 percent becomes progressively poorer or we all slide into relative poverty together." . . .

America's Choice has served as a catalyst for reform efforts throughout the country, and has provided a blueprint for national school-to-work legislation. Oregon's sweeping statewide reform effort — Schools for the 21st Century — was heavily influenced by the recommendations in the report.

American educators and policymakers also are looking to European apprenticeship and other programs as a framework for their school-to-work models. . . . Larry McClure, director of NWREL's Education and Work Program, was among a group of policymakers from the United States who toured and studied European education and training programs and their relationship to a national economic strategy. . . . The Center for Learning and Competitiveness published five reports on school-to-work transition following the European tour to study systems in Germany, Denmark, and Sweden.

And so, American educators are looking to socialist countries for their models of school-to-work programs. What they fail to mention is that the unemployment rates in those countries are far higher than ours. Also, Denmark and Sweden are small countries with homogeneous populations, and the mentality of the Germans is far different from that of Americans. But if our American educational planners are more interested in socialism than freedom, then obviously Europe is the place to go for models. Actually, the old Soviet's school-to-career model is probably closer to Marc Tucker's vision than any other. But calling attention to that would cause as much controversy as mentioning OBE.

Tucker, explaining his own vision, wrote in his letter to Hillary:

We take the proposals Bill put before the country in the campaign to be utterly consistent with ideas advanced in *America's Choice*, the school restructuring agenda first stated in *A Nation Prepared* and later incorporated in the work of the National Alliance for Restructuring Education, and the elaboration of this view that Ray and I tried to capture in our book, *Thinking for a Living*. Taken together, we think these ideas constitute a consistent vision for a new human resources development system for the United States.

Tucker then describes the system as:

A seamless system of unending skill development that begins in the home with the very young and continues through school, postsecondary education

and the workplace.

First, it should be noted that the Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce was an offshoot of Tucker's National Center on Education and the Economy. Many of its board members were also on the commission. Its report, dated June 1990, was issued two years before Clinton was elected. Thus, the letter to Hillary, written in November 1992, outlined what the new administration must do to implement the commission's recommendations.

The Planning Elite

The chairman of the Commission was Hillary Clinton's buddy, Ira Magaziner, president of SJS, Inc. Commission members included the heads of the United Automobile Workers, Sheet Metal Workers International Association, American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, and the president of the AFL-CIO. Corporate heads included John Sculley of Apple Computer, Kay R. Whitmore of Eastman Kodak, James R. Houghton of Corning Inc., and others. Also on the commission were former governor of North Carolina, James B. Hunt, Jr., and former governor of New Jersey, Thomas H. Kean. Educators on the commission included Marc Tucker, Lauren B. Resnick (director of the Learning Research and Development Center at the Univ. of Pittsburgh), Laura D'Andrea Tyson (Berkeley Roundtable on the International Economy, Univ. of Calif. at Berkeley), Eleanor Holmes Norton (Georgetown Univ. Law Center), Ray Marshall (LBJ School of Public Affairs, Univ. of Texas, and former Secretary of Labor).

Quite a lineup of education, business and labor establishment heads! Prof. Friedrich Hayek wrote in his prophetic 1944 book, *The Road to Serfdom*:

Apart from the intellectual influences which we have illustrated . . . the impetus of the movement toward totalitarianism comes mainly from two great vested interests: organized capital and organized labor. Probably the greatest menace of all is the fact that the policies of these two most powerful groups point in the same direction.

They do this through their common, and often concerted, support of the monopolistic organization of industry; and it is this tendency which is the great immediate danger. (p. 194)

Funding for the commission came from the Carnegie Corporation of New York; the State of New York; Towers Perrin; Cresap/Telesis; SJS, Inc.; and The German Marshall Fund of the United States. This is monopoly education, big labor, big business, and big liberal government in partnership to impose on America a socialist-fascist economic strait-jacket which will deprive Americans of the individual freedom they have enjoyed since the founding of this great republic.

Naturally, the report was hailed by other establishment heads as soon as it came out. Booth Gardner, Governor of the State of Washington and Chairman of the National Governors' Association and Chairman of the Education Commission of the States, strongly endorsed the report, stating:

"This is a great report! I hope . . . that the governors will read this report and understand not only its attractiveness as a report, but the importance of the mission that it outlines, and they will go back to their states and figure out a way to implement it."

Keith Geiger, president of the National Education Association, also endorsed the report, stating:

". . . a landmark and significant report signaling the need for drastic changes in preparing students to enter the U.S. workforce. . . . The NEA stands ready to become a stakeholder in this initiative."

Clearly, this was a report that every socialist-fascist member of the establishment could love. First it criticizes how American

businesses are organized. It states:

. . . 95 percent of American companies still cling to old forms of work organization. . . . Because most American employers organize work in a way that does not require high skills, they report no shortage of people who have such skills and foresee no such shortage . . .

The primary concern of more than 80 percent of employers was finding workers with good work ethic and appropriate social behavior: 'reliable,' 'a good attitude,' 'a pleasant appearance,' 'a good personality.'

Most employers we interviewed do not expect their skill requirements to change. . . .

The reason we have no skills shortage today is that we are using turn-of-the-century work organization. If we want to compete more effectively in the global economy, we will have to move to a high productivity work organization.

Apparently the commission found no great sense of urgency among American companies for a radical restructuring of American education to meet skill demands that do not exist. Nevertheless, the commission decided to anticipate the changes that American employers *might* be forced to make in the future, therefore making it urgently necessary to destroy every last vestige of traditional education and put an entirely new school-to-work system in its place to help American students meet this unknown future demand. This is the unbelievably phony rationale for creating a socialist-fascist education system in America. The report states:

We propose that all American students meet a national standard of educational excellence by age 16, or soon thereafter. Students passing a series of performance based assessments that incorporate the standard would be awarded a Certificate of Initial Mastery.

Possession of the Certificate of Initial Mastery would qualify the student to choose among going to work, entering a college preparatory program or studying for a Technical and Professional Certificate, described below.

Creation of the Certificate of Initial Mastery standard would require a new approach to student

performance assessment. We recommend the creation of new performance based examinations for which students can explicitly prepare. . . . Our goal is to set a tough standard that almost everyone will reach, although not all at the same time. . . .

The states should take responsibility for assuring that virtually all students achieve the Certificate of Initial Mastery. Through the new local Employment and Training Boards, states, with federal assistance, should create and fund alternative learning environments for those who cannot attain the Certificate of Initial Mastery in regular schools. . . .

Youth Centers should be established to enroll school dropouts and help them reach that standard. . . . Once the Youth Centers are created, children should not be permitted to work before the age of 18 unless they have attained the Certificate of Initial Mastery or are enrolled in a program to attain it.

No wonder the labor unions and educators are for it. The unions will have no competition from teenagers without certificates seeking jobs before 18 and the educators, through compulsory attendance, will have these youngsters under their benign authority until they get their certificates. In other words, a youngster without a certificate, if hired, will be considered an illegal worker like an illegal alien. The employer will no doubt be fined and the illegal worker forced back into the Youth Center for additional "training." The report further recommends:

A comprehensive system of Technical and Professional Certificates and associate's degrees should be created for the majority of our students and adult workers who do not pursue a baccalaureate degree.

Technical and Professional Certificates would be offered across the range of service and manufacturing occupations. A student could earn the entry-level occupation specific certificate after completing a two- to four-year program of combined work and study, depending upon the field. A sequence of advanced certificates, attesting to mastery of more complex skills, would be available and could be obtained throughout one's career.

The Secretary of Labor should convene national committees of business, labor, education and public representatives to define certification standards for two- to four-year programs of professional prepara-

tion in a broad range of occupations. These programs should combine general education with specific occupational skills and should include a significant work component. . . .

A means should be established to ensure that all students can receive financing to pursue these programs.

Naturally, this job training program cannot succeed without the full cooperation of employers — the owners of businesses — particularly those owners who are quite satisfied with how they presently operate their businesses. The report has a solution for that problem:

We propose a system whereby all employers will invest at least one percent of their payroll for the education and training of their workers. Those who do not wish to participate would contribute the one percent to a general training fund, to be used by states to upgrade worker skills. We further recommend that public technical assistance be provided to companies, particularly small businesses, to assist them in moving to higher performance work organizations.

Concerning the levying of that one percent, Tucker wrote in his letter:

We propose that Bill take a leaf out of the German book. One of the most important reasons that large German employers offer apprenticeship slots to German youngsters is that they fear, with good reason, that if they don't volunteer to do so, the law will require it. Bill could gather a group of leading executives and business organization leaders, and tell them straight out that he will hold back submitting legislation to require a training levy, provided that they commit themselves to a drive to get employers to get their average expenditures on front-line employee training up to 2% of front-line employees salaries and wages within two years. If they have not done so within that time, then he will expect their support when he submits legislation requiring the training levy.

Clinton may well do that if elected to a second term. The report further states that:

The United States is not well organized to provide the highly skilled workers needed to support the

emerging high performance work organizations. Public policy on worker training has been largely passive, except for the needs of a small portion of the severely disadvantaged population. The training system is fragmented with respect to policies, administration and service delivery.

In other words, the United States has to reorganize itself to be more like the former Soviet Union to provide "highly skilled workers" to support "high performance work organizations" which do not, as yet, exist! Thus, we need a national policy for workforce training. How did the United States become the world's pre-eminent economic power without it? That's the mystery that hardly bothers noodle-heads like Marc Tucker and his colleagues as they pursue their messianic mission to save America. And so they recommend:

A system of Employment and Training Boards should be established by Federal and state governments, together with local leadership, to organize and oversee the new school-to-work transition programs and training systems we propose.

We envision a new, more comprehensive system where skills development and upgrading for the majority of our workers becomes a central aim of public policy.

In other words, the government, through its compulsory school attendance laws, should create a system of skills development whereby Americans will be trained to serve the needs of the economy. In a free society, it's just the other way around. The economy serves the needs of the people who pursue their own lives according to their own needs. Americans are not born to serve the economy. Free men make of their lives what they will. Only under a socialist-fascist system are people forced to serve the state, or the economy, or some five-year master plan devised by some ruling elite.

The report further states:

The key to accomplishing these goals is finding

a way to enable the leaders of our communities to take responsibility for building a comprehensive system that meets their needs.

Notice the vagueness of the statement. Who are the "leaders" of the community? Are they the elected representatives or officials or some local dictators? And whose needs are they going to meet? The needs of the companies that have said that there is no shortage of skilled workers? The report continues:

The local Employment and Training Boards for each major labor market would:

- Take responsibility for the school-to-work and Youth Center-to-work transition for young people.
- Manage and oversee the Youth Centers.
- Manage and oversee a 'second chance' system for adults seeking the Certificates at the local level.
- Manage a labor market information system.
- Manage and oversee the job service.
- Coordinate existing programs.

The states would need to create a parallel structure to support the local Boards, coordinate statewide functions and establish state standards for their operation.

Apparently, the state of Washington has already begun to implement the Tucker plan. They've already set up their Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board which has already published a student career-occupation guide, *Plan for Tomorrow Today*, based on the Washington Occupational Information System and labor market information provided by the Employment Security Department and the Washington State Occupational Information Coordinating Committee. As one can see, the Tucker program will provide thousands of new jobs for bureaucrats who, no doubt, will enjoy planning the lives of Washington's young citizens.

Ellen O'Brien Saunders, executive director of the Coordinating Board, has af-

firmed that they will develop a competency-based workforce training and education system and advance "a coherent vision of a system of lifelong learning."

That the Northwest has become the area furthest advanced in implementing the new system was made apparent by the huge "Work Now and in the Future Conference," held in Portland, Oregon, on Nov. 6-7, 1995. Here are some of the more interesting of the 175 or so workshops:

- Career Clusters: K through Life
- Reducing Resistance to Reform
- Bar Code Based Competency Tracking
- Computerized Classroom Management
- Visions: A Comprehensive School-to-Career High School Program
- Youth Apprenticeships: A New Spin on How the German Model Can Help Implement Youth Internships
- The Dawn of a New Era: Changing the Nature of Work
- Creating Work-Centered Schools: Education Through Occupations
- The Conservative Reconstruction of Education
- The New American Worker
- Restructuring Your School for Career Paths
- The Exploration and Understanding of Effective Conflict Resolution
- Certificate of Advanced Mastery Curriculum Design
- Creating Effective Business/Community Partnerships
- Meister Training for Worksite Supervisors
- The Promise of Consolidation: Creating a System of Occupational Education and Job Training
- Who's Responsible for Creating the Future?
- Critical Thinking Skills—Everyone Can Do It!

One of the highlights of the Conference was a Dialogue with JD Hoye. Ms. Hoye was head of Oregon's professional and technical education program before becoming director of Bill Clinton's National School-to-Work Office in November 1994. At that time, Ms. Hoye was interviewed by the editor of NWREL's *Northwest Policy*. Here are some of the statements she made in the interview:

Our system is designed . . . to provide a connection between the employer's observation in training and experience back to the school so that the school can help develop skills that are needed in the workplace. It also involves making the curriculum in the school site more relevant, more clearly connected to why students need the knowledge.

The editor of this newsletter was taught touch-typing back in the 1940s in junior high school in the context of traditional education, where phonics, penmanship and correct spelling were emphasized. Other students were taught shorthand in high school. Thus, learning workplace skills in school is not new and they were successfully taught in the traditional system. But the new School-to-Work program denigrates literacy with whole language and invented spelling and doesn't even teach penmanship—as if such skills are no longer important in the workplace. Ms. Hoye continues:

The SCANS Report provided some core skills that everybody who works in the 21st century will need. It identified skills like critical thinking, problem solving, and working in teams. Then you've got the hard skills being established by national associations. But the standards aren't done, they're being developed by national and international associations.

There will continue to be on-demand testing, both traditional SAT and state assessments. Part of that on-demand piece also is development of the work that's coming out of the national standards project. That involves the use of portfolios and a set of scales against critical outcomes [oops!] like thinking skills. How do you measure thinking skills? Part of it is testing, and part of it is demonstrating through work whether or not those skills are in place and are operative for the student. . . .

Our issue is it's for all kids. *And all means all—all does not mean some.* . . . [Our emphasis.]

We believe that the school-to-work piece will be an expectation for culminating activities around the Certificate of Mastery.

Ms. Hoye was then asked about kids who weren't in school. Would they be served? Her response:

Most of those kids we've got connected through other agencies. JTPA, adult and family services, teen parent programs, corrections programs, and *other alternative learning programs* [our emphasis] are all at the table. We're serious. All means all!

Homeschoolers, beware! "All means all."

And where is all of this leading us? Friedrich Hayek writes in *The Road to Serfdom*:

Most planners who have seriously considered the practical aspects of their task have little doubt that a directed economy must be run on more or less dictatorial lines. . . . (p. 88)

Economic control is not merely control of a sector of human life which can be separated from the rest; it is the control of the means for all our ends. . . . (p. 92)

Independence of mind or strength of character is rarely found among those who cannot be confident that they will make their way by their own effort. . . . Indeed, when security is understood in too absolute a sense, the general striving for it, far from increasing the chances of freedom, becomes the gravest threat to it. . . . (p. 119)

Just as the democratic statesman who sets out to plan economic life will soon be confronted with the alternative of either assuming dictatorial powers or abandoning his plans, so the totalitarian dictator would soon have to choose between disregard of ordinary morals and failure. It is for this reason that the unscrupulous and uninhibited are likely to be more successful in a society tending toward totalitarianism. . . . (p. 134)

It is not only, as [Bertrand] Russell has so well described, that the desire to organize social life according to a unitary plan itself springs largely from a desire for power. It is even more the outcome of the fact that, in order to achieve their end, collectivists must create power—power over men wielded by other men—of a magnitude never before known, and that their success will depend on the extent to which they achieve such power. . . . (p. 144)

Once you admit that the individual is merely a means to serve the ends of the higher entity called society or the nation, most of those features of totalitarian regimes which horrify us follow of necessity. (p. 149)

Such as at Waco.

Twenty-five years ago there was perhaps still some excuse for holding the naive belief that "a planned society can be a far more free society than the competitive laissez faire order it has come to replace." But to find it once more held after twenty-five years of experience and the re-examination of the old beliefs to which this experience has led, and at a time when we are fighting the results of those very doctrines, is tragic beyond words. (p. 200)

Hayek wrote all of that in 1944. Yet in 1996, American "leaders" are trying to impose on America the kind of education system used by the Soviet Union to control its citizens and fulfill its five-year economic plans. None of these leaders seem to have learned a thing from recent history, let alone the past in general. Or is the lust for power so strong that it simply drives individuals toward an inevitable pattern of actions that can only be stopped by a stronger countervailing power? We shall see.

Student Kills Three in Classroom

A 14-year-old honor student with a high-powered rifle killed a teacher and two students and seriously injured another student inside their junior high school classroom on Feb. 2, 1996, in Moses Lake, Washington, some 150 miles east of Seattle. The student was arrested shortly after he entered Frontier Junior High School at about 2 p.m., went to a classroom and began firing.

A 14-year old girl who was shot in the abdomen was flown to Harborview Medical Center in Seattle. Police would not release the identities of the suspect and the victims. Students were sent home early as parents streamed in to search for their children.

One classmate said the assailant wasn't the kind to make trouble. "He was an honor student. He was not involved in gangs or drugs. He was a normal student among the rest of us."