

The Blumenfeld Education Letter

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

Vol. 11, No. 8 (Letter # 118)

EDITOR: Samuel L. Blumenfeld

August 1996

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."

Pennsylvania Implements Marc Tucker's Socialist School-to-Work Education Reform

In a show of utter contempt for the citizens of Pennsylvania, who have voiced their strong opposition to Outcome-Based Education and its School-to-Work variant, the state's educational bureaucrats, in league with Governor Tom Ridge and the Departments of Commerce and Labor and Industry, have decided to destroy traditional education in Pennsylvania and replace it with a glorified voc-ed style training system.

Despite all of the meetings that parents have attended, despite all of the speeches and workshops given by such articulate spokespersons as Anita Hoge, Peg Luksik, and Steve Kossor, the powers that be in Pennsylvania have decided that they will implement Marc Tucker's socialist education scheme which takes public education out of the hands of the taxpayers and their elected local officials and places it in the hands of revolutionary change agents following the Carnegie Foundation's agenda for the New World Order.

There is no doubt that there is much wrong with present-day public education. But instead of addressing such problems as faulty teaching methods that have produced millions of children with cognitive dysfunc-

tion, the educrats have decided to give us something much worse: a system that doesn't even pretend to be interested in high literacy or true intellectual development. Their goal is to produce workers with just enough comic-book level literacy to be able to function in the economy as soulless, animal-trained robots.

The state of Pennsylvania has embarked on a five-year implementation plan which has already been approved by the U.S. Departments of Education and Labor. The plan states:

Our belief is that there must be a statewide system which promotes industry-driven, community-based programs and systems. Much of the activity for program-specific areas will be determined by local labor market needs assessment and economic development.

To this end, we have developed a structure of School-to-Work Action and Training (SWAT) teams. These teams were enacted in our six strategic planning regions and are comprised of the following: Department of Education strategic planning advisors; labor market analysts; and representatives from industrial resource centers (Commerce), job centers (Labor and Industry), industrial development corporations, intermediate units, teacher leadership centers, school districts and area vocational/technical schools (especially those in Youth Apprenticeship

The Blumenfeld Education Letter is published monthly. Original material is copyrighted by The Blumenfeld Education Letter. Permission to quote is granted provided proper credit is given. Readers are encouraged to order and distribute additional copies of those newsletters they believe should be sent to legislators, columnists, talk shows, pastors, etc. Subscription Rate: 1 year \$36.00. Address: Box 45161, Boise, Idaho 83711. (208) 322-4440. WWW address: <http://www.cyberhighway.net/~phil/blumenfd.html>

and Tech Prep), postsecondary institutions, area labor/management committees, the Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training, teacher unions—PFT, service delivery areas (8), and private industry councils. . . .

These six teams will provide a governing umbrella to spawn more localized SWAT teams within each of our twenty-nine intermediate structures. This process was started in August, 1994, and further developed in June, 1995. The formal plan will be implemented during the 1995/96 year.

A second concern was the role of the industrial resource centers. Each of the seven regional IRCs has a school-to-work coordinator to work with employers and educators. The primary focus of the IRCs will be twofold: (1) to organize employers and employer associations relative to the total school-to-work effort (2) to develop and promote state technical skills standards and portable credentials. While the initial emphasis of the IRCs was specifically on manufacturing, those school-to-work coordinators have expanded their horizons to look at all of our occupational clusters. There is strong evidence to indicate their movement into the areas of health, graphic communications, human services, and transportation.

Finally, a long-term strategy is evidenced by the integration of school-to-work components/activities in the required strategic plans of all school districts and AVTSS. This commitment demonstrates a long-term strategy which we believe exceeds a strategy of state legislation and unfunded mandates.

This strategy clearly outlines our commitment to an industry-driven, community-based, grassroots systems development for a statewide system of school-to-work development and implementation. (p. I-i)

The application for federal implementation funds for the first year in the amount of \$6,478,400 was signed by Pennsylvania's Secretary of Education, Eugene W. Hickok, June 16, 1995. By the year 2000, the state will have received almost \$28-million in implementation grants from the U.S. Departments of Education and Labor. Obviously, the people of Pennsylvania have had no say in the matter. They're going to get federally funded school-to-work whether they like it or not.

Some of that federal money will be used to develop CD-ROM-based career development systems; field testing of prototypes; staff development training; studies by Penn

State University College of Education and Temple University to define competencies needed for school-site mentors and work-site mentors; the development of quality assessment indicators for benchmarking; a school-to-work pre-service teacher training program developed by Penn State College of Education; the development of a Gateway Assessment Certificate — Certificate of Initial Mastery.

Educational Philosophy

Is there a philosophy of education behind all of this? If there is, it varies greatly from traditional views of education. Thomas Jefferson advocated a system of public education as a means of ensuring the survival of our free form of government. He wrote:

If a nation expects to be ignorant and free, in a state of civilization, it expects what never was and never will be.

Lillian Smith, the novelist, wrote in 1969:

Education is a private matter between the person and the world of knowledge and experience, and has little to do with school or college.

Booker T. Washington said in 1895:

There is no defense or security for any of us except in the highest intelligence and development of all.

Ronald Reagan wrote in 1976:

Education is not the means of showing people how to get what they want. Education is an exercise by means of which enough men, it is hoped, will learn to want what is worth having.

Supreme Court Justice James Clark McReynolds wrote in 1925:

The fundamental theory of liberty upon which governments in this Union repose excludes any general power of the State to standardize its children by forcing them to accept instruction from public teachers only. The child is not the mere creature of the state; those who nurture him and direct his destiny have the right, coupled with the high duty, to recognize and prepare him for additional obligations.

But perhaps the best statement on the goals of traditional education was made by Vice Admiral Hyman Rickover before a Congressional committee in 1962:

[A] school must accomplish three difficult tasks; first, it must transmit to the pupil a substantial body of knowledge; second, it must develop in him the necessary intellectual skill to apply this knowledge to the problems he will encounter in adult life; and third, it must inculcate in him the habit of judging issues on the basis of verified fact and logical reasoning. . . . [The school's] principal task . . . is to develop the mind. . . . Far too many of our teachers do not possess the intellectual and educational qualifications that would permit them to offer such a course of studies. There is an easy way out, and many of our schools are using it. They teach simpler things that are easy to teach, easy to learn, and more fun besides—how to be lovable, likable, and datable, how to be a good consumer. These aren't subjects you can grade, the way you can grade mathematics or sciences or languages, but they are good for hiding the ignorance of both teacher and pupil.

The school-to-work philosophy holds that it is unnecessary to fill the minds of students with knowledge or facts that they may or may not use. The student should only be taught what is necessary to prepare him or her to serve the state and the economy. In other words, all spiritual content and much of history and the study of literature and the classics are to be removed from education and replaced by the practical skills needed in the workplace. The Pennsylvania school-to-work contract states:

School-to-Work is a set of comprehensive efforts schools will use to ensure that all students understand the needs and requirements of the

workplace, and that all students are equipped to function effectively in that workplace. Regardless of whether students want to go to work immediately after high school, or go on to postsecondary training or college, sooner or later most will enter the workforce. Therefore, it is essential that schools convey to all students the expectations of the workplace and skills necessary to function effectively therein.

Clearly, students with differing talents and interests will require different STW experiences. For example, students who are interested in pursuing technical careers might enter a formal work-based learning program, such as youth apprenticeship or tech prep, which would include integrated academic and vocational instruction designed to equip them to meet both academic standards and skills standards in the career pathway area of interest. Other students who expect to enter college would not necessarily enter a work-based learning track (although they certainly could do so), but would participate in a set of experiences which might include basic information on industrial sectors, work readiness skills, rotation through a field experience or internship in a career area of interest, and mentoring by an adult in that occupation.

Many other possibilities exist, and innovative approaches will be devised in each of Pennsylvania's school districts based on their local circumstances. Regardless of the final shape of the program, the essential requirement is that all students are equipped to seek, gain, and maintain employment. As a result, our youth will have enhanced career options and earning potentials and our employers will have a skilled and motivated workforce. (p. 1)

Where in all of this is the kind of education that produces young independent entrepreneurs who want to create their own businesses? Where in all of this is the kind of education that nourishes a budding intellect, that brings the young mind in contact with the great minds of the past, that produces the kind of free spirit which is an essential component of the American character? Since when is it the duty of the public school to serve industry instead of the individual? Not all of us want to become compliant, obedient workers who can "function effectively" in the workplace.

The goals of the Pennsylvania school-to-work system are:

1. To strengthen the Pennsylvania economy by providing organizations with a predictable supply of highly skilled workers.

2. To enhance the career options and earning potential of youth by building an industry-driven, competency-based, school-to-work system that encourages and enables students to attain world-class academic and skill standards.

3. To develop a statewide school-to-work system that directly links school and work experiences and is built upon and integrates the strengths of the Commonwealth's existing education and training programs. (p.3)

It is well known that only in a totalitarian system is education linked directly to the workplace. Traditionally, the purpose of education is to transfer to the younger generation the knowledge, wisdom and values of previous generations. That is how the values of the past are kept alive in the future. There would be no ancient religious traditions today if each succeeding generation were deprived of the cultural links to the past. What school-to-work will do is slash and burn the cultural bridges to the free society given to us by our Founding Fathers.

World Class Fraud?

The so-called "world-class academic standards" iterated in the contract are never explained in any detail. The people of Pennsylvania must accept it all on faith. Do these world-class standards address the issue of how children are to be taught to read? Do these standards include a knowledge of the Bible, the Declaration of Independence, the U.S. Constitution? Do these standards include an objective, chronological history of the United States and Western Civilization? Do these standards include reading the great classics of Western literature? What is to be feared in school-to-work is the wholesale elimination of cultural values from the public education system.

What is also to be feared is the all-inclusive, totalitarian nature of the school-to-work system. Nobody is to be excluded. In America you supposedly can be whatever you want to be, and parents can supposedly educate their children in the manner they see fit, even if it conflicts with the public school curriculum. But under school-to-work all of that will change. You will be what the government wants you to be. There will be an illusion of choice to maintain the illusion of freedom, but the government will have your complete, detailed record in its computer from day one and will be influencing you from day one so that you will most likely be steered in the direction the government wants you to go. As school-to-work architect Marc Tucker wrote in his famous 18-page letter to Hillary Clinton in 1992:

What is essential is that we create a seamless web of opportunities to develop one's skills that literally extends from cradle to grave and is the same system for everyone — young and old, poor and rich, worker and full-time student. It needs to be a system driven by client needs . . . guided by clear standards that define the stages of the system for the people who progress through it, and regulated on the basis of outcomes that providers produce for their clients, not inputs into the system.

Tucker's use of the phrase "web of opportunities" is quite revealing. According to Webster's New World Dictionary (Third College Edition), a web is "a woven or spun network of a spider," "a carefully woven trap or snare," an intricate "pattern" or "interconnection of elements." It certainly doesn't connote openness or freedom or escape. In the case of school-to-work it most definitely suggests "a carefully woven trap or snare."

In explaining his "vision" of the future, Tucker wrote to Hillary:

We take the proposals Bill [Clinton] put before the country in the campaign to be utterly consistent with the 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.

The new school-to-work education system will not only control students but it will also regulate employers through its labor market system. Tucker writes:

The Employment Service is greatly upgraded and separated from the Unemployment Insurance Fund. All available front-line jobs — whether public or private — must be listed in it by law. . . . All trainees in the system looking for work are entitled to be listed in it without a fee. So it is no longer a system just for the poor and unskilled, but for everyone. The system is fully computerized. It lists not only job openings and job seekers (with their qualifications) but also all the institutions in the labor market area offering programs leading to the general education certificate and those offering programs leading to the professional and technical college degrees and certificates, along with all the relevant data about costs, characteristics and performance of those programs — for everyone and for special populations. Counselors are available to any citizen to help them assess their needs, plan a program and finance it, and, once they are trained, to find an opening.

A system of labor market boards is established at the local, state and federal levels to coordinate the systems for job training, postsecondary professional and technical education, adult basic education, job matching and counseling. The rebuilt Employment Service is supervised by these boards. The system's clients no longer have to go from agency to agency filling out separate applications for separate programs. It is all taken care of at the local labor market board office by one counselor accessing the integrated computer-based program, which makes it possible for the counselor to determine eligibility for all relevant programs at once, plan a program with the client and assemble the necessary funding from all the available sources.

Does Governor Ridge have any idea how large and expensive a bureaucracy will be needed to carry out this plan? Has anyone bothered to calculate what all of this is going

to cost in terms of tax dollars, loss of individual freedom and initiative, and loss of true intellectual development? Here are more excerpts from the state's plan:

The STW system must be fully integrated and institutionalized as part of the public education system, through the strategic planning process. Existing resources must be used to establish and maintain the system. It also must be understood that the STW is a component not only of education reform and a new way of educating our children but also workforce and economic development. (p.2)

The STW system must be recognized as a critical component of long-term economic development efforts for the state. (p.3)

Across the Commonwealth, the effort has begun to build a mechanism for business and labor involvement in school-to-work through such things as Business Consortia for school-to-work, employer/labor leadership groups, linkages with existing business networks, and others. . . . In this way, the organization of school-to-work becomes directly tied to the business community, work-based learning experiences and education and training pathways acquire an economic development context, and a mechanism is created for influencing the structure of school-based learning experiences. (p.13)

The comprehensive statewide School-to-Work system is designed to produce systemic changes. The Commonwealth's strategic planning process is the vehicle that drives the construction of the system. (p.19)

Pennsylvania's educational reform efforts will also receive a substantial boost from the Goals 2000 legislation. The incentives for standards-setting and coordinated approaches to systemic reform contained in the act will assist us in our efforts to ensure that school-to-work programs are available to all of our students. (p.19)

Strategic planning in all school districts requires that school-to-work opportunities programs become a priority on their agenda. (p.21)

We will begin our efforts to integrate school-to-work opportunities into approximately one-third of the school districts' strategic planning process beginning in September, 1995 for 1996 implementation. In 1997, another one-third of our schools will participate

and so on until 1998 when 100% of the school districts in Pennsylvania will offer access to school-to-work opportunities.

In short, since the strategic planning process is mandatory, we intend to take maximum advantage of the opportunity to drive school-to-work transition efforts into the educational program in every public school district in this Commonwealth. (p.22)

Business and industry, teachers at the secondary and postsecondary level, and organized labor are working together to develop a curriculum framework that will integrate school with work and utilize projects and other applied methods to make learning relevant to the real world. The framework must meet all state and national standards. (p.25)

Pennsylvania 2000 is now focused squarely on the need to establish statewide standards for academic and skills training, and on building a statewide system for school-to-work transition. (p.26)

Benchmarking skills. Pennsylvania's current education reform package provides for required student learning outcomes, and a state assessment system which measures reading and mathematics in grades five, eight, and eleven, and writing in grades six and nine. These assessments increasingly stress performance, both in the nature of multiple choice items included and in the inclusion of "open ended" questions in mathematics and, of course, writing. Clearly, we have made a significant first step in establishing a system based on expected outcomes and increasingly "authentic" assessments. However, it is clear that we need to move quickly to do much more. (p.27)

Statewide Advisory Council Currently, the statewide school-to-work advisory council is a committee of Pennsylvania 2000. Members include the Presidents of the Pennsylvania State Education Association, the Pennsylvania Federation of Teachers, the Pennsylvania Association of Colleges, and the Building and Construction Trades Council; the Deputy Director of the Economic Development Policy Office; the Executive Director of the Manufacturers Association; representatives of the Pennsylvania State House and Senate, and of the business and minority community; and superintendents, parents, teachers, and high school students. Primarily, this committee will advise the Goals 2000 State Improvement Panel on School-to-Work. (p.29)

. . . [W]e must do a much, much better job of demonstrating the efficacy of school-to-work pro-

grams and of stimulating local interest and buy in.

We will do this in several ways. First, in our Perkins State Plan . . . we will strongly urge school districts to expend their allocations on school-to-work transition programs. Second, . . . we will once again highlight the establishment of school-to-work transition programs as federal and state priorities. . . Finally, we will use the "bully pulpit" that is available to our Secretary of Education and our Bureau Director of Vocational and Technical Education to trumpet the importance of these efforts and to urge, in the strongest possible terms, the importance of their adoption and successful implementation at the local level. (pp.34-35)

Obviously, what we are seeing in Pennsylvania is the carrying out of a revolutionary coup d'état in the name of education reform whereby socialist regulation of the economy will be achieved by state bureaucrats with the help of federal legislation and funding. Is this what the people of Pennsylvania want? Most of them don't even know what is going on. Besides, the school-to-work program is so complex and involves so many people, departments, committees, councils, and private organizations that only a Marc Tucker and his fellow change agents can understand what it all means.

Bureaucrats as Revolutionaries

That our top educational bureaucrats are involved in this revolution is proven by a policy statement regarding school reform issued by the Council of Chief State School Officers, an organization composed of the heads of the 50 state departments of education, which says:

According to the Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce in its report, *America's Choice: High Skills or Low Wages!*, deep and revolutionary change is necessary regarding the structure and organization of production, if this country is going to maintain its current standard of living in the world economy. The organization of production in the United States needs to undergo radical changes which will result in demands for highly skilled workers at

levels never before required.

Marc Tucker, of course, is the mastermind behind *America's Choice*. Note the call for radical, revolutionary change in the way American companies produce their products, as if this were the business of government bureaucrats who can't even run government schools effectively. Marc Tucker, born in 1940 in Newton, Massachusetts, and a graduate of Brown University, has never worked for a profit-making enterprise in his life. He went from his first job in public broadcasting to a federally funded education lab, then to the U.S. Education Department, after which he moved to the Carnegie Foundation where in 1986 he produced his famous report on teaching, *A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century*. In 1987 he set up his own nonprofit ultra-liberal think-tank, the National Center for Education and the Economy, which proposed the basic agenda for Goals 2000. Listed on his Board of Trustees is Hillary Clinton, then of the Rose Law Firm. She was paid over \$100,000 for her input as a consultant. Also on the Board, is Lauren B. Resnick, Director of the Learning Research and Development Center at the University of Pittsburgh which is working on the creation of a new national examination system.

It was probably at the 1989 Education Summit at the University of Virginia, Charlottesville, where Tucker's plan was adopted by the Governors. President Bush spelled out an education reform plan in his 1990 State of the Union address very much in line with what Marc Tucker's think-tank was working on. Tucker's Center also created the National Alliance for Restructuring Education, which is helping to develop data banks and communications systems "that students can use to convey their qualifications to employers and employers can use to evaluate those qualifications." In other words, this entire school-to-work scheme is

the work of ultra-liberals who want to socialize America.

Will the people of Pennsylvania rebel against this bureaucratic coup d'état? Some are already in a state of rebellion according to the Williamsport *Sun-Gazette* of 7-28-96:

A Public School Revolt

Sugar Valley Parents, Opposed to Consolidation, Vow Not to Send Their Kids 'Over the Mountain'

Loganton — They said they would never send their kids over the mountain. And they mean it. Dozens of Sugar Valley high school students' parents are planning to home-school their children rather than send them to Bald Eagle Nittany in September, when the high school here is scheduled to be closed by Keystone Central School District.

At last count, 63 more "valley" children are expected to be taught at home next year, said Lorraine Tressler, who has been working with a committee of parents gathering information and insuring all the paperwork is in order for the transition. There are only a handful already being home-schooled in this area.

The parents admit their decision is a huge responsibility and it won't be easy. Most of them hold full-time jobs and have no teaching background whatsoever. Some are single parents on fixed incomes.

They know it will cost them—both in time and money—but they feel it's worth it. They have something more important than either, they said: love for their children and support from their community and friends who are willing to pitch in to make this thing work. . . .

"My kids are worth it," said Pam Snook, who will home-school her four teen-age sons at a cost of more than \$2,000 a year. "We'll find the money. We'll find the time." Although the parents feel the closing of their high school is unwarranted . . . their biggest and most sincere concern is the trek across Interstate 80 that school buses will make to get students to Mill Hall.

"My kids mean a lot to me. My four kids would all be on the same bus. One accident could wipe out my whole family. Just Wednesday morning there were three accidents on that highway at the same time the kids would have been going to school." . . .

Tressler, who will teach her 11th-grade son, Lance, at home, said most of the parents will use the Home School Accelerated Learning System's "Acad-

emy" program, which she said is recognized by the state Department of Education as a private school program that results in an accredited diploma upon completion. The program, which costs as much as \$475 a year for high school students, provides "everything parents will need," Tressler said.

Parents have been meeting for weeks, getting information and make plans to home-school. Just last week, the committee met with a notary on hand to notarize applications for home-schooling, which need to be sent to Keystone Central by Aug. 1. . . .

The group is already discussing plans for a "learning center" so that the students can be taught together in small groups. Teachers, former teachers and others have volunteered to help and offered their homes for hands-on activities. And the group has already registered to begin an AYSO soccer program. The first practice is Aug. 19, Tressler said.

Obviously, the people of Sugar Valley are not about to play dead for the bureaucrats. While the people of Pennsylvania still have the freedom to educate their children in accordance with their own wishes, we can expect many more parents to remove their children from the clutches of Marc Tucker and his Pennsylvania change agents.

Our Last Issue

It is with great regret that I announce that this is the last issue of the Blumenfeld Education Letter. For over ten years, my publisher, Peter Watt has faithfully published and distributed the Letter at great expense to himself. The time and effort he put into this modest enterprise is a tribute to his dedication to the important cause of educational sanity. He desires to be relieved of the burden. At no time has the newsletter been a money-maker. But both he and I felt that such a newsletter was needed to inform the public. Fortunately, there are now other conservative publications on education available to the public. Here is a list of those that I have been receiving:

Education Reporter, published monthly by Eagle Forum Education & Legal Defense Fund, 7800 Bonhomme Ave., St. Louis, MO 63105, 314-721-1213.

National Monitor of Education, P.O. Box 402, Alamo, CA 94507, 510-945-6745.

The Christian Conscience, published monthly by Iowa Research Group, Inc., P.O. Box 17346, Des Moines, Iowa 50317-0346.

Educational Freedom Report, published by The Blum Center for Parental Freedom in Education, Marquette University, P.O. Box 1881, Milwaukee, WI 53201-1881, 414-288-7040.

The Education Liberator, published by the Separation of School & State Alliance, 4578 N. First #310, Fresno, CA 93726, 209-292-1776.

The Parents' Perspective, published by PA Parents' Commission, P.O. Box 73, Johnstown, PA 15907, 814-255-1719.

The Psycho-Education Report, published by psychologist Steven Kossor, Box 105, Exton, PA 19341, 610-383-1432.

Grey Matter, published by Parents Advocating Great Education, P.O. Box 923, Colleyville, TX 76034.

Legal-Legislative Update, published by Family Protection Ministries, 910 Sunrise Ave., Suite A-1, Roseville, CA 95661.

Michigan Alliance of Families Newsletter, P.O. Box 241, Flushing, Michigan 48433.

Update, published by Kansas Education Watch Network, P.O. Box 483, Wichita, KS 67201, 316-685-5664.

Education Newslines, published by NACE/CEE, P.O. Box 3200, Costa Mesa, CA 92628.

Chalcedon Report, Published by Dr. R. J. Rushdoony, P.O. Box 158, Vallecito, CA 95251. Deals with the relationship of Christian faith to the world.