

The Marc Tucker “Dear Hillary Letter”

The following summary is primarily direct quotes with one author comment in []. Many of the quotes are in quotation marks just to remind the reader that Marc Tucker really did write these words — exactly as presented. You are encouraged to read the entire letter.

The letter became part of the Congressional Record on September 17, 1998 through the Honorable Bob Schaffer of Colorado under the Dollars to the Classroom Act (E1819).

Marc Tucker, founder of the “National” Center on Education and the Economy (NCEE), wrote to Hillary Clinton on November 11, 1992, about “**how to advance the agenda on which you and we have all been working.**”

The Plan? “To remold the entire American system for human resources development.”

First, a vision! “Interwoven with a new approach to governing” this new system is to be “*driven by client needs,*”... “*guided by clear standards,*”... and “*regulated on the basis of outcomes*”... “not inputs into the system.”

Second, a proposed legislative agenda!

1. postsecondary training system — an apprenticeship system incorporating the idea of reforming *higher education financing*.
2. *employment security* program — a new system of labor market boards.
3. a special “inner city” program — combining the first two proposals to “raise the work-related skills of the people trapped in the core of our great cities.”
4. And advance the *elementary and secondary reform* agenda.

“The other major proposal we offer has to do with **government organization for the human resources agenda**” — “a consistent vision for a new human resources development system for the United States.”

System Elements:

Skills Development — “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. “

The Schools — common national standards, certificate when mastered “allowing” them to go to the next stage in this “**national system of education in which curriculum, pedagogy, examinations, and teacher education and licensure systems are all linked to the national standards.**” It is “a system that rewards students who meet the national standards with further education and good jobs.” **In the new system,** “there is a real — aggressive — program of public choice in our schools.” And “all students are guaranteed that they will have a fair shot at reaching the standards.” “School delivery standards are in place to make sure this happens.”

Postsecondary Education — All students who meet the new national standards “at 16 would be entitled to two free years of high school and one of college.”

“Institutions receiving grant and loan funds under this system are required to provide information to the public and to government agencies in a uniform format. This information covers enrollment by program, costs and success rates for students of different backgrounds and characteristics, and career outcomes for those students, thereby enabling students to make informed choices among institutions based on cost and performance.”

Employed and Unemployed Adults — “It is all the same system. There are no longer any parts of it that are exclusively for the disadvantaged, though special measures are taken to make sure that the disadvantaged are served.”

“All the programs receiving government grant or loan funds that come with dropouts and adults for enrollment in programs preparing students to meet the general education standard must release the same kind of data required of the postsecondary institutions on enrollment, program description, cost and success rates.”

Labor Market Systems — “All available front-line jobs — whether public or private — must be listed in it (The Employment Service) by law.”

“Wherever possible, we would have service providers compete with one another for funds that come with the client, in an environment in which the client has good information about the cost and performance record of the competing providers.”

The plan is seen “as the new way of doing business.”

OUTLINE of Marc Tucker’s goals, the main components, and an action plan for each.

“Starting with descriptions of program components designed to serve adults, and working our way down to the very young.”

Major Components of the Program

HIGH SKILLS FOR ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS PROGRAM

Developing System Standards

Create a private not-for-profit National Board for Professional and Technical Standards chartered by Congress.

It can receive appropriated funds from Congress, private foundations, individuals, and corporations. Neither Congress nor the executive branch can dictate the standards set by the Board.

The “Charter” specifies that the National Board will set broad performance standards (not time-in-the-seat standards or course standards) for college-level Professional and Technical certificates and degrees in not more than 20 areas and develops performance examinations for each. The standards assume the existence of (high school level) general education standards set by others.

Tucker notes that “*apprenticeship*” is to be proposed as “a college program” because “*parents everywhere want their kids to go to college, not to be shunted aside into a non-college apprenticeship ‘vocational’ program.*”

“*Our assumption is that the system we are proposing will be managed so as to encourage the states to combine the last two years of high school and the first two years of community college into three year programs leading to college degrees and certificates.*”

Collaborative Design and Development Program

“*Draft legislation that would offer an opportunity for those states — and selected large cities — that are excited about this set of ideas to come forward and join with each other and with the federal government in an alliance to do the necessary design work and actually deliver the needed services on a fast track.*”

The legislation would “*require the executive branch to establish a competitive grant program for these states and cities and to engage a group of organizations to offer*

technical assistance to the expanding set of states and cities engaged in designing and implementing the new system.”

“As soon as the first set of states is engaged, another set would be invited to participate, until most or all the states are involved. It is a collaborative design, rollout and scale-up program.”

The Criteria for Selection of states includes “commitment to developing an outcome- and performance-based system for human resources development system” and a “commitment to new role for employment service.”

“Develop uniform reporting system for providers, requiring them to provide information in that format on characteristics of clients, their success rates by program, and the costs of those programs. Develop computer-based system for combining this data at local labor market board offices with employment data from the state so that counselors and clients can look at programs offered by colleges and other vendors in terms of cost, client characteristics, program design, and outcomes. Including subsequent employment histories for graduates.”

“Design all programs around the forthcoming general education standards and the standards to be developed by the National Board for College Professional and Technical Standards.”

Dislocated Workers Program

“New legislation would permit combining all dislocated workers programs at redesigned employment service office. Clients would, in effect, receive vouchers for education and training in amounts determined by the benefits for which they qualify.

Any provider institutions that receive funds derived from dislocated worker programs are required to provide information on costs and performance of programs in uniform format described above.

This consolidated and voucherized dislocated workers program would operate nationwide.

Levy-Grant System

Provides funds for currently employed people “whereby front-line workers can earn their general education credential (if they do not already have one) and acquire Professional and Technical Certificates and degrees in fields of their choosing.”

The proposal is “for a 1-1/2% levy on employers for training to support the costs associated with employed workers gaining these skills.”

College Loan/Public Service Program

This subject was “not attended to” by Tucker other than to note “that our reconceptualization of the apprenticeship proposal as a college-level education program, combined with our proposal that everyone who gets the general education credential be entitled to a free year of higher education (combined federal and state funds) will have a decided impact on the calculations of cost for the college loan/public service program.”

Assistance for Dropouts or the Long-Term Unemployed

Create a new urban program that is locally — not federally — organized and administered, but which must operate in a way that uses something like the federal standards for contracting for Job Corps services.

Requiring local authorities to use the federal standards would assure high quality results.

New monies will have to be appropriated for the purpose.

Tucker goes on to comment to Hillary: “You may not know that we have put together a large group of representatives of Washington-based organizations to come to a consensus around the ideas in ‘America’s Choice’.”

“PACKAGING” OF THE IDEAS

ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION PROGRAM

Standard Setting

Legislation to accelerate the process of national standard setting in education.

“This legislation does not establish a national body to create a national examination system. We think that is the right choice for now.”

Systemic Change in Public Education

Legislation for “a comprehensive program to support systemic change in public education.”

Federal Programs for the Disadvantaged

“The established federal education programs for the disadvantaged need to be thoroughly overhauled to reflect an emphasis on results for the students rather than compliance with the regulations.”

David Hornbeck “has designed a radically new version of this legislation.”

Public Choice Technology, Integrated Health and Human Services, Curriculum Resources, High Performance Management, Professional Development and Research and Development

“One of the most cost-effective things the federal government could do is to provide support for research, development and technical assistance of the schools on these topics.”

“Existing programs of research, development and assistance should be examined as possible sources of funds for these purposes.”

“To build the restructured system will require an enormous amount of professional development and the time in which professionals can take advantage of such a resource. Both cost a lot of money.”

“There are some existing programs in the **Department of Education** whose funds can be redirected for this purpose, programs that are not currently informed by the goals that we have spelled out.”

“Much of what we have in mind here can be accomplished through the reauthorization of the Office of Educational Research and Improvement. Legislation for that reauthorization was prepared for the last session of Congress, but did not pass.”

Early Childhood Education

The president-elect has committed himself to a great expansion in the funding of Head Start. We agree. But the design of the program should be changed.

“The same kind of standard setting we have called for in the rest of this plan should inform the approach to this program.”

“PUTTING THE PACKAGE TOGETHER”

“We propose that you assemble the ideas just described into four high priority packages.”

- 1. The first would use your proposal for an apprenticeship system as the keystone of the strategy for putting the whole new postsecondary training system in place.*
- 2. The second would combine the initiatives on dislocated workers, the rebuilt employment service and the new system of labor market boards as the Clinton administration's employment security program, built on the best practices anywhere in the world.*
- 3. The third would concentrate on the overwhelming problems of our inner cities, combining most of the elements of the first and second packages into a special program to greatly raise the work-related skills of the people trapped in the core of our great cities.*
- 4. The fourth would enable you to take advantage of legislation on which Congress has already been working to advance the elementary and secondary reform agenda.*

ORGANIZING THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH FOR HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

“How to organize the federal government...” [Note: federal, not national.]

First, the President appoints a National Council on Human Resources Development charged with recommending broad policy on a national system of human resources development staffed by senior officials on the Domestic Policy Council staff of the President.

Second, a new agency is created, the National Institute for Learning, Work and Service, and assigned the functions now performed by the assistant secretary for employment and training, the assistant secretary for vocational education and the assistant secretary for higher education.

“In this scheme, the Department of Education would be free to focus on putting the new student performance standards in place and managing the programs that will take the leadership in the national restructuring of the schools. Much of the financing and disbursement functions of the higher education program would move to the Treasury Department, leaving the higher education staff in the new Institute to focus on matters of substance.”

GETTING CONSENSUS ON THE VISION

“At the narrowest level, the agenda cannot be moved unless there is agreement among the governors, the President and the Congress. Bill's role at the Charlottesville summit leads naturally to a reconvening of that group, perhaps with the addition of key members of Congress and others.”

“But we think that having an early summit on the subject of the whole human resources agenda would be risky, for many reasons. Better to build on Bill's enormous success during the campaign with national talk shows, in school gymnasiums and the bus trips. He could start on the consensus-building progress this way, taking his message directly to the public, while submitting his legislative agenda and working it on the Hill.”

Very best wishes from all of us to you and Bill.

Marc Tucker, 11 November 1992