



105 Peavey Rd, Suite 116, Chaska, MN 55318  
952-361-4931 [www.edwatch.org](http://www.edwatch.org) - [edwatch@lakes.com](mailto:edwatch@lakes.com)

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Professor Allen Quist will speak on this subject at the [Constitution Coalition national education conference](#) in St. Louis on Friday afternoon, January 28, 2007. Call **314-878-4357** for details.]

## **Marc Tucker's New Education Initiative**

*By Allen Quist*

On December 14, 2006, Marc Tucker released his new education proposal, *Tough Choices or Tough Times*. His plan reads like a bad novel. It is mostly rhetoric, and the claims he makes are fantasy-land variety. If America adopts his plan, according to Tucker, the following will happen: No one will fail, he says; and, we can send almost everyone to college and have them do well there, Tucker insists; and 95% of our students will [be qualified for college], according to Tucker. Such wild claims are not only unreasonable, they are bizarre. Any experienced teacher knows they are utopian, at best. And does Tucker offer any real evidence his plan can improve education? He does not.

What is Tucker up to? When reading his proposal, it becomes evident that Tucker has bigger things in mind than merely helping kids learn. The heart and center of his master plan is stated on page 1, paragraph 1, of his [Executive Summary](#). Tucker there says that to compete in the world economy, the United States must adopt internationally benchmarked standards for educating its students and workers.

### **Internationally Benchmarked Standards**

Education standards mean curriculum standards, also called content standards. What would occur if our nation were to adopt international education standards? It would mean that the United Nations decides what our children will learn. Stated another way, it means the UN will determine what our children will be taught, including specifying the attitudes, values and worldview. Most every government has its own education system. The Tucker proposal transforms our education system into what is essentially a UN government system.

Can Tucker succeed in selling his radical system? He may. He is counting on business to help sell the proposal. Many of them will see the plan as a way of [certifying the same basic job skills for all the workers](#) of the world with the training done at taxpayer expense, no less. This way businesses can move skilled workers around the world the same way they move minerals, oil and technology. Tucker's new proposal, like his earlier one, also makes all education vocational (Karl Marx saw education the same way). But will it work to reduce education to being good for vocation only, to define education merely as the provider of human resources for business? It will not. Kids will figure out that their worth is being measured in terms of being assets for large corporations. They will see that they have been reduced to being cogs on impersonal economic wheels.

### **What Does It Mean To Be Human?**

Kids haven't viewed vocational programs this way up to now. Why will it change? The reason it will change is that kids have had the freedom in high school to choose either a vocational or a college-bound track. They have been free to experiment, to try different things. Some in each track change their minds and switched over to the other. That is as it should be. Under Tucker's proposal, however, students who don't pass the 10th grade test have no choice. They cannot go on to college. The door is closed. No one will be educated beyond his or her station in life. Doing so is seen as a waste of resources. Student freedom will be severely limited, and Tucker's statement that 95% will pass doesn't help, because fantasy offers no real solutions.

Under Tucker's plan even college is viewed as strictly vocational; college just prepares one for different vocations. Tucker's plan won't work because it severely limits our freedom and it defines people's worth only in terms of dollars and cents, the utilitarian philosophy of education. Kids are reduced to being resources whose lives will be directed by someone else. Kids will realize the whole philosophy of education has changed, they have become objects. Kids intuitively know they were made to be much more than that.

Kids have other aspirations: aspirations like marriage and family, aspirations like hobbies and entertainment, aspirations like understanding themselves and the world in which they live, aspirations like music, art and athletics, aspirations like freedom, aspirations like being loyal Americans, like serving in the military, like being good citizens and being good neighbors to those less fortunate. Kids have aspirations of what it means to be human. Tucker doesn't understand that. He wants to control people the same way we control iron and coal.

We need to build on our strengths, not destroy them. The strength of our economic and education systems has been the degree to which they have been free, thus providing the opportunities for people to be innovative and creative. You can't have freedom and innovation and reduce people to being controlled objects at the same time. Why doesn't the Marxist view of education work? It treats people as being less than human.

### **The Next Big Step from NCLB**

[Marc Tucker's earlier proposal in 1990](#), which he admits didn't work, provided the framework for this new plan. That proposal was largely put into effect in the Goals 2000/School-To-Work Acts passed by Congress in 1994. [School-to-work](#) spawned the requirement that students be put in a [career track by 8th grade](#). Goals 2000 shifted the decision-making authority for school content away from local school districts and states over to the federal government. It did so by establishing a de facto federal curriculum known as the national education standards. These national standards were actually a national curriculum. (See the authors book [Fed Ed: The New Federal Curriculum and How Its Enforced](#), EdWatch, 2002. For a detailed description of how the national standards have severely damaged our education program, see the authors work [America's Schools: The Battleground for Freedom](#), EdWatch, 2005.)

[No Child Left Behind \(NCLB\)](#) solidified the federal government's role in controlling the schools academic program. It did so by (1) requiring all states to adopt state curriculum standards (which are mostly based on the Federal Curriculum), (2) requiring schools to eliminate achievement differences measured by adequate yearly progress (AYP), an impossible Marxist objective, and (3) requiring that the NAEP (National Assessment of Education Progress) be given in all states to ensure that states don't deviate from the fed's lead. (The NAEP is based on the Federal Curriculum.)

The education radicals complained, however, insisting that states still had too much leeway in defining their academic program. Not any more. That already-limited freedom disappears under Tucker's new proposal because it transfers the education-content authority away from local schools and states and away from the federal government over to the United Nations. Decision-making authority takes another giant step

away from the parents and local communities. The education branch of the UN (UNESCO) has already been writing curriculum and has begun to write textbooks, much of it taking place under the UN's education program known as [International Baccalaureate](#) (IB).

## UN Curriculum

What content will the United Nations decide must be taught? The UN has already made the content of its international standards perfectly clear. Required content will include education for sustainable development, as defined by its [Earth Charter](#), which includes abortion rights, gay marriage, indoctrination in Pantheism, universal disarmament, income redistribution between nations, and advocacy of all the UN environmental treaties, to identify just a few of its doctrines.

The UN's required content will also include its [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) which says that people have no inalienable rights but have only those rights the UN says they have. (This is the same view of human rights as that of Castro's Cuba.) This UN document also clarifies that education must promote the UN and all its activities and says that the UN is the highest court of appeals on all human rights issues, higher even than our own Supreme Court. The UN's required content will also include the dictates of its Treaty on the Rights of the Child which says that parents have no right to decide what their children will be taught. That right will now belong to the UN.

## The New Plan of the Same Old Gang

[Who is Marc Tucker](#)? He founded the [National Center for Education and the Economy \(NCEE\)](#), a prime force behind the 1994 federal [Goals 2000/ School-to-Work](#) education plan, which culminated in the 2002 [No Child Left Behind Act](#). In 1992, Tucker described his plan as a "human resources development system for the United States" that "extends from cradle to grave." (This is the same view of education as that held by Karl Marx.)

And who are the Tucker supporters for this radical plan? They are the same old gang that gave us Goals 2000 and School-to-Work: former Michigan Governor, John Engler; former Clinton Secretary of Education, Richard Riley; former Clinton Under-secretary of Education, Michael Cohen; former Carter Secretary of Labor, Ray Marshall; and Fordham Foundation President, Chester Finn to name a few.

How does Tucker propose to accomplish this massive shift of political power? He would:

1. Eliminate local school boards.
2. Shift teacher's employment and compensation from local boards to the state.
3. Require that students pass 10th grade tests, based on UN content standards, in order to be free to continue in a school.
4. Make free college preparatory education (based on UN content standards) available for all present workers.
5. Establish universal pre-school for all children (even though scientific research reveals that pre-school has no academic benefit past 3rd grade. Other programs are inserting the UN's curriculum into pre-school education, as well as child care).
6. Create regional development authorities that will plan economic development as well as education in areas larger than states. These authorities will be given the power to tax and will take over what little authority the states have left.
7. Have states take over teacher training which can be expected to require teachers to follow the UN value system. (Private colleges that train teachers will be out of luck. Private colleges will also lose their right to determine who may attend their colleges and who may not, because admission requirements will be dictated by, and measured by, the government.)
8. Establish merit-pay for teachers who best meet the goals of the plan.

Tucker's cost estimate for his plan is as ludicrous as the claims he makes for it. He says it will cost \$7.8 billion per year more than we are now paying. That estimate assumes that his goals, such as having 95% of students perform so well they will succeed in college, actually happen. If his fanciful objectives do not occur, the cost of the plan mushrooms to \$75 billion per year (EdWatch estimate).

### **Giving Away our Freedom**

Tucker's plan is the next big step. All of education will be geared to international standards. That means the UN sets the standards. Since the tests are geared to the standards, the UN will also dictate the content of the tests. Do teachers teach to the test? Yes they do, especially when they are paid more when students conform to the international curriculum. Tucker puts it this way, the old saw that what gets measured is what gets taught is essentially true.

Tucker adds that the course syllabi (content) and the content of any private tests need to be controlled too. His new system dictates to teachers and schools what they shall teach, and test makers, including states, are told what they shall test. In addition, the states will be told what they must teach the teachers. It will be one unified, controlled, monolithic, worldwide education system.

The Tucker initiative claims to be about education, and in a sense it is; but it is more about control. The plan is all about the question of who will run our schools. Under the Tucker plan, business becomes the customer and the UN sets the production standards and directs the show. How about the rest of us? We are the worker bees, the drones who get to provide the resources so the queen can exude her royal jelly.

*Allen Quist is adjunct professor at Bethany Lutheran College in Mankato, Minnesota. He served three terms in the Minnesota legislature and has authored three books on education: [The Seamless Web](#), [Fed Ed: The New Federal Curriculum and How Its Enforced](#), and [America's Schools: The Battleground for Freedom](#)*

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