

TN TatemMiddle School PTA and Victor Scott Primary School PTA
COMMUNICATION MARCH
Joint Statement - April 27, 2012

Our 'Communication March' is not a demonstration of discontent with Government. It is not only about 'four Principals being rotated within the public school system' without Parental input in the decision to do so. Our actions speak to the relationship we as Parents insist upon having with our Government regarding our children's education moving forward. In so doing we have gone to great lengths to prevent our cause from being reduced to media distortion and political opportunism while our children's future along with the future of our country is at stake, at such a crucial time in Bermuda's history. It was therefore necessary to take our children from their schools, leave our jobs and risk the backlash of systemic reprisal to communicate to our Government what our voices and letters have failed to do to date.

It is the solemn disciplined nature of our actions, our demonstrated solidarity and this written clarification that we intend to speak for us. Perhaps it is not coincidental that we started at Victor Scott Primary School (formerly Central School) where so many of the decision-makers to whom our communication is directed, first availed themselves of the opportunity to pursue education to battle systemic marginalization. Our route took us past the historic PLP Headquarters at Alaska Hall representing the political struggle of Black Bermudians to attain power (to advance Bermuda's people and our society by advancing those disadvantaged within it). It led us to the building dedicated to Dame Lois Browne-Evans, Bermuda's first national hero because of her heroic struggle to advance Bermudian society by not allowing herself to be marginalized. We wound our way to the House of Assembly, the seat of the Government that we rely upon to represent the highest aspirations the people of Bermuda. As the parents of our children we step up to the challenge to safeguard their educational future to further those aspirations.

We will no longer allow ourselves to be swept aside while major decisions affecting them are made. We respect the roles of those entrusted to make such decisions to serve us. At the same time we demand respectful engagement in the process to ensure the soundness of those decisions. In this instance rotating the top administrators of our children's schools irrespective of our position undermines our parental duty of care. It is equally unacceptable that we have been treated with utter disregard after the fact; in spite of our insistence on substantively impacting the decision making process. After writing to our Government outlining that position and extending an invitation to be engaged in that process without avail; we are compelled to take to the streets with our children to convey this message.

We are mindful of the role that has been played by the Government we now face in bringing us to this point and its promise to lead us beyond it. We applaud its contribution to our empowerment as we challenge it to yield to our ambition for our children's future and the future of Bermuda. We embrace its policy to bring much needed reform to improve our schools as we challenge the way the policy is pursued. We are also mindful of the irony that it is the same Government that called for a "New Bermuda" of the 'responsible parenting' that we are committed to practicing. That is precisely why we have chosen to send our message in a demonstrably symbolic language it is supposed to understand, and to trust that it will yield to our demand.

If we have miscalculated and our Government continues to refuse to support us in this objective, it will stand exposed. And we will continue on to do right by our children by reinforcing our March with concerted action including to have its decision reviewed by the courts of law while the policy that gave rise to it is thrown to the mercy of the court of public opinion.