

Feasibility of a Technical High School

14th September 2008

Another private high school, another elite school or the beginning of a technical revival and the salvation for our youth?

We are all aware of our failing education system, we are all aware of the shuffling going on in the education ministry, but we have not seen and are not likely to see change to our education system for four years and then it is just a shuffling of paper and a concerted effort to teach to “standard tests” and compare our students with “average students”. First of all, how are these standard tests devised and by whom? And secondly what is an average student, when we know our children and students develop and mature at different rates, is this all for real??? Standardized testing covers a very narrow section of education when we all want our students to be educated with a broad view of the world, industry, business, the arts and prepared for a career in the real world.

Unless we come to terms with the reality of the situation and what we want the outcome to be, we will be unable to solve the problem and we do have a problem, it is not passing standardized tests but learning information that prepare our students to become useful and participative citizens.

We have a problem to motivate our students again after being turned off by the “pipeline” education system which has failed.

Facts are that Career Academies keep more students in school and have less dropouts, Career Academies graduate students that earn more in their first nine years of their working life than other schools. Career Academies do not have a higher percentage of students going into higher education or two year college, further education is dependent upon the way in which students have been prepared and motivated for their careers.

So using the facts as they are presented and using the research of the past ten years, a system of education has been adapted to ensure students have a “rounded education”, a system where they can learn and gain experience in industry to enable them to make an educated decision about their career. A standard of education that is required by industry to enable Bermudians to join with an insight to their career, a career path and most likely an employer that is involved in the education of their future employees.

We are using a system of education that utilizes twelve months of the year instead of cramming information into nine months.

We are serious that students can graduate and proceed into higher education via the university or two year college route.

So if we have so many problems with the “conventional” educational system, and we know from the good old “Tech” days that a technical school works for 90% of students attending why have we not tried it again???

It is estimated that there are about 0.5% of Bermudians with an apprenticeship and trade in the Island at this time, so the remainder of those “tradesmen” are either not indentured tradesmen or are foreign nationals or guest workers. That is a scary thought when we have more technical equipment and technology on the Island by about 600% than when “Tech” was open, and no-one “qualified” to maintain it??? No wonder we want a NEW hospital, no wonder we have so many guest workers, no wonder when something breaks down we replace it with new!!

Is a Technical School Feasible? It is absolutely a necessity and I ask why we have to wait? Do we even have to think about why we need one, it is time we put our own tradesmen to work our own expertise to solve our own problems.

Give our own people the power to control the future of the Island, put the pride back into our workforce and enable our own workforce to rise to management positions. The politicians keep harping on the “Independence” theme, yet we have no means to maintain our Island ourselves, we are at the mercy of guest workers and those “tradesmen” from dubious origin in third world countries whilst our workforce are doing menial labouring jobs are we for real??? Can we afford to continually send our ill-prepared youth overseas to gain qualifications that neither meet our needs nor build the self esteem in our youth? Have you asked why they were sent overseas instead of training them where we can control the standards and outcomes at home?

Please read the proposal for a Technical High School we want to hear your comments, your feelings and what you really think.