

Education Reform



*Our Pathway to
Peace & Prosperity*

Education

In regards to education, the Free Democratic Movement (FDM) recognises that both public and private schools have been largely and consistently successful in matriculating well-rounded young persons in mathematics, science and literacy, and likewise well equipped to progress into either further education or the world of work. In no small part, the countless success stories of students, who have left Bermuda's formal school system have been down to the professional and skilled teaching staff and school leadership that has served diligently over decades. Parents and families need to also be commended for the obvious and powerful role they undoubtedly play in the aforementioned success stories of our students.

The FDM is in full support of the continuation of all productive aspects of the current and past models of education provision in the country that have lead to countless success stories. The FDM is also keen to improve the rate of success of students who leave the school system and reform those areas that either need strengthening or fall below the standard that should be expected of a modern and well equipped 21st-century society like Bermuda.

Some of the areas that need strengthening are:

- The mathematical and literacy attainment of local students.
- The technical/vocational offering to local students, particularly in regard to best placing our students in the burgeoning digital and green economies necessary in the 21st century.
- The priority given to arts programs; their integration into the curriculum and the culture of our schools.
- Increased transparency of the academic performance of different schools by parents by way of a published school performance table.
- Increased competition between schools by way of the above school performance table as well as the removal of large mega schools and the middle school structure.
- Increased parental involvement in both the lives of their school-going children as well as the schools themselves.

An FDM government will:



1 Ensure that a Bermuda Teaching Standards Code will be adopted and ratified to make sure that both new teachers and those already in the system meet the professional standards needed to be exemplary in their profession.



2 Encourage all public schools to adopt an academy framework where they will be run by a Board of Governors and will be free to organize school structure, choose exam boards and seek external funding from sponsors as they see fit. Trustee boards that do well with schools will be invited to start new schools or take over poor-performing schools, including the invitation of current private school trustees to expand their portfolio and take over the running of some public schools.



3 Devolve control of how and what public schools teach away from the Department of Education and place the control of schools, and the instruction within them, into the hands of school leaders, and their teams of teachers, who know their students best and have the professional and technical qualifications to ensure their academic success.



4 The Department of Education will be downsized to ensure a compact but efficient and highly qualified unit of professionals who will continue to set and monitor minimum expectations within education; including the provision of a Bermuda National Curriculum that includes the teaching of Bermuda history through all the key stages, as well as setting expectations towards ensuring that any curriculum across subjects taught in Bermuda schools is decolonized, and emphasizes the place of Bermuda and Bermudians in its content.



5 To facilitate competition as well as to ensure smaller school sizes, middle schools will be eliminated and decentralized secondary schools will be reintroduced.



6 An independent school inspectorate will be embodied that will monitor, assess and publish the performance of schools across key performance indicators on a regular basis. Under-performing will be given the chance to improve or faced re-structuring to facilitate the improvement of school performance as needed.

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Children will enter an approved education provider at the age of 5 and be able to leave at the age of 18. Between these years, all children are expected to be in an approved education provider with such providers to be approved by the Department of Education.

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The Bermuda College will be reformed to be primarily a higher education provider providing degree-level qualifications, inclusive of both academic and technical/vocational qualifications, as well as function as the premier academic research institution on-island. This research will be across disciplines as funding allows but with a heavy emphasis on research areas that seek to address and inform those critical needs of the country going forward such energy, the environment, agriculture and food security, tourism, international business and the digital economy.

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A school voucher system will be introduced for all Bermudian students and schools that will provide parents and students with increased opportunity for students to attend the school of their choice.

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Schools are not just about academics, especially not in the narrow-minded sense of the Victorian school model. Schools are places where students have the opportunity to develop as well-rounded human beings who then are better equipped at solving the problems that the modern world faces at both the individual and collective level as well as on a local and global scale. In this vein, schools will be empowered and encouraged to have a specific focus on human development inclusive of personal, social, health and emotional education. Included in this will be increased prioritization given to creative, visual and performing arts programs, the fostering of a rich competitive sports environment within and across schools as well as with competitive opportunities external to Bermuda.

Links will be strengthened with international sporting bodies such as Carifita, Concacaf and others to ensure gifted and talented students are able to not only compete at a high level but also access the myriad of opportunities outside of sport that may arise through their sporting achievements.



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