



To the Point of No Return

April 11, 2011. Getting to this point has been a long journey. For the last few years, thousands of teachers and parents have called for action against No Child Left Behind. Books, letters, editorials, and petitions were written. Hundreds of blogs launched in protest. Sadly, many devoted teachers resigned or retired in silent protest as a result of what is happening in classrooms all across America. Teachers, parents, and communities are asking for better schools and asking to be accepted as partners in directing the change in their own schools. These voices are not being heard.

With abundant worry for our children and their future, the campaign for a D.C. March began with a small group of K-12 teachers and parents. These “nobodies” spent thousands of hours learning to network, building a coalition, and trying to organize a march. Driven by the consensus that public education has been de-valued as well as the thought that “perhaps common, every-day-teachers and community members could descend upon D.C. and win respect for Public Education,” this citizen-coalition set the date for July 30, 2010.

The group decided to informally declare July 30th as National Support Public Education Day with the goal of inspiring the "common, faceless teachers, parents, and community members" and asking them to unify into a single voice that would finally be heard.

While plans for the march were in the works, attacks on public education expanded. Many individuals and groups responded to the growing crisis. They comprise a long list, all playing a part in furthering this movement. In time, it became evident that the deadline for a 2010 March in D.C. was too short. The march was not abandoned, but moved to July 30th, 2011 thus giving it the time it needed to grow.

At the same point in time, Professor Jesse Turner began his historic walk from Connecticut to Washington D.C., carrying and sharing his message that “Children are More than Test Scores.” A welcome was organized with American University serving as the host. The response was so overwhelmingly positive that a second event, a conference style teach-in was planned for the next year corresponding to the timeframe of the march in D.C. The American University group joined with the original march-organizing group, forming the first formal coalition. The structure of the 2011 D.C. event, as we now know it, was born.

The fall of 2010 proved to be critical to this effort; as new members joined, others dropped; the group defined its goals and priorities, and focused its efforts. Key volunteers stepped up, agreed to "take charge" of committees, set their goals, and pushed the event and the movement forward in an organized manner. The foundation was poured. It solidified as this body of people organized for a purpose — meeting the definition of an organization. This organization was born and held together by the movement that created it. This movement comes from every one of you who acts on behalf of public education.

Websites were built. Structure put in place. National virtual meetings held. Order formed out of randomness. And today, there is this movement called Save Our Schools March and National Call to Action. Events are scheduled. The conscious need for this organization has gathered steam and impressive endorsements. This triad of movement, action, and organization is important, for each side supports the other. And the need for public actions in support of public education will not end with the sunset of summer.

We have an educational crisis. It is caused by those who are mining public education for profit, stripping its resources from our core and using its gold to build their own greedy empires. Against the limitations of the law, countless teachers, staff, and parents work to serve our children. These unacceptable policies are accepted and used to dredge dollars away from our communities and into the coffers of predatory education investors. Fostered by politics, this is public school privatization.

Those who control the message control the minds. Those who control the minds control the future.

That is why this movement exists. Our country is founded on the ideal that informed consent is essential; our country should no longer allow itself to be controlled by greed and corruption — let's stop it at our school doors. We are witnessing a grave injustice. Without stopping this wrong, without restoring critical thinking and creative problem solving to our curriculum, and without preserving, protecting, and improving our public educational system, our country is doomed.

It is that serious.

This movement blossomed because of the depth and complexity of its history and the experiences of its participants, in addition to the way *diverse directions* eventually merged into a unified force. It is now time to speak with **ONE VOICE**. Let's lead schools in a new direction. For the sake of society and our children, join this **National Campaign to Support America's Public Schools**.

**July 30th
Washington D.C. and Across the Nation**