

PASS EDUCATION BILL NOW... COALITION CALLS ON GOVERNMENT

The Ghana National Education Campaign Coalition and the Northern Network of Education and Development (NNED), has called on government to ensure the urgent passage of the Education Bill before the end of the Kufuor Administration. The education bill has been at the cabinet level for consideration for over two years.

This was contained in a statement issued during the Education Sector Annual Review, under the auspices of the Ministry of Education Science and Sports (MOESS), held at the M-Plaza Hotel, Accra, from 4-7 July 2008. The Education Sector Annual Review is an annual sector dialogue platform at which Government, Civil Society and the Donor Community meet to appraise the performance of the Education Sector in the previous year and make policy recommendations to the MOESS for the future. The Coalition was represented by GNECC members from the various regions, as well NNED.

The Coalition observed that one of the major reasons for the falling standards in basic education was the absence of an effective supervisory mechanism to ensure teachers conform to the highest standards required of them. This, according to Mr. Bright Appiah, Executive Chair of the Coalition, has resulted in teacher absenteeism, poor instruction, and pupil absenteeism, among other problems. One of the provisions of the draft Education Bill is for the setting up of an autonomous national inspectorate board which will be responsible for supervising the Ghana Education Service at the district, regional and national levels. Internal oversight bodies like the District Monitoring and Inspectorate Teams have, over the years, failed to provide adequate supervision of teachers. The continuous delay in the passage of the bill, however, is a serious hindrance to affecting this change.

Another aspect of the bill crucial to the improvement of the basic education sector is the guarantee of income tax relief to teachers who accept postings to rural areas. This will give such teachers the incentive to make the required sacrifices.

Apart from the passage of the Education Bill, another recommendation made by the Coalition was for the Ghana Education Service taken concrete action on teacher deployment, which has hitherto been skewed in favour of urban communities.

On the Capitation Grant, the Coalition observed that delays in the disbursement of the grant and the inadequacy of the amount, were two key issues affecting the smooth operation of the initiative. It therefore recommended that Government increase the amount of the Capitation Grant to reflect the level of inflation, based on a bi-annual review of economic trends. Furthermore, in order to improve the disbursement of the grant to rural areas, it was deemed essential to decentralize the system to minimize delays

Below is a tabulation of the key issues and recommendations as contained in the Position Paper presented by the Ghana National Education Campaign Coalition to Government during the National Education Sector Annual Review 2008.

Access to Education

Key Issues	Policy Demands (Recommendations)	Responsible Agency
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capitation Grant not released on time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government/Policy makers must ensure that the full amount of the Grant for each term, not piece-meal, should be released 2 weeks before the beginning of each term. • Gov't should step up efforts at decentralizing disbursement of the grant. 	MOESS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are too many over-aged children in mainstream education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government should ensure the creation of access classes for over-aged children (above 12 years) to prepare them to be integrated into the upper primary level of education. 	GES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of infrastructure for Kindergartens (Kgs) in the country 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government should expedite action on the provision of infrastructure for all Kgs in the country. • Government should come out with a policy on what facilities should go into the establishment of Kgs to enhance monitoring. 	MOESS/GES/DA

Quality of Basic Education

Key Issues	Policy Demands (Recommendations)	Responsible Agency
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government policy on recruitment of youth as teaching assistants (NYEP) Bloated class sizes render teaching and learning ineffective Unequal concentration of trained teachers in the urban areas Passage of the Education Bill 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GES should develop a policy and provide resources for training those employed as Community Education Teaching Assistants under the National Youth Employment Program. Proper coordination between GES and the employment agencies is necessary. MOESS/GES should as much as possible follow the guidelines on class size for primary schools (PTR-35/1). GES should follow the laid down posting procedures to ensure that teacher deployment is skewed towards rural areas. Gov't should speed up work on the passage of the Education Bill to ensure its passage by December 2008. Gov't should remove all quotas placed on admissions into Teacher Training Colleges to increase the number of trained teachers. 	<p>MOESS</p> <p>MOESS/GES</p> <p>GES</p> <p>MOESS/ Parliamentary Select Committee on Education</p>

Education Financing

Key Issues	Policy Demands (Recommendations)	Responsible Agency
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the Capitation Grant; create a threshold for rural schools; minimize the delays in the release of the CG, and improve the management of the grant. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government must increase the CG and also review amt. bi-annually taking into consideration inflation. Government should create a threshold for rural schools to promote equity. <p>Jasikan District</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2007, last tranche not received at the beginning of May 2008. Only one tranche instead of two had been received as at May 2, 2008. <p>Ashanti Region</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The last tranche of 2006/2007 CG representing 30% , was released at the end of 1st term 2007/2008. 	<p>MOESS</p>

	<p>Central Region</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2006/07, only part of 3rd tranche was released by the end of 3rd term. • In 2007/08, no tranche released in 1st term., only that of 2nd term tranche received. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distance Learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government should give subsidies to teachers undertaking these programmes. 	MOESS/GES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financing of Science based courses to increase enrolment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Half scholarship to all students taking science and TVET programmes from SHS to tertiary level. 	MOESS/ GES