

Ghana National Education Campaign Coalition (GNECC) Position on the duration of Senior High School in Ghana

The Ghana National Education Campaign Coalition, a network of over 200 CSOs, professional bodies and individuals committed to the promotion of free, quality and enjoyable quality basic education as a fundamental human right for Ghanaian children, recognize the enormous challenge confronting secondary education in Ghana, especially the issue of the duration of Senior High Education. We also recognize and indeed appreciate Governments decision to mobilize opinions on the duration of Secondary education in Ghana as a means of taking a national decision on the duration of Senior High Education in Ghana.

GNECC wishes to make the following submissions on the duration of the SHS:

- Ghana's education system has gone through a number of reviews and reforms, including the New Education Reform which instituted the four –year system for SHS. These reviews and reforms are intended to improve the quality of education in the country to meet national development aspirations. These have enabled the country to identify gaps in our educational system and the provision of quality education in Ghana.
- However, frequent policy changes in education have to a large extent denied us sufficient implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all aspects of the educational system. Ghana has not yet been realized any significant qualitative benefits in education service delivery and learning outcomes as a result of the numerous short lived reforms. This has led to wide illusions about the true intentions of reforms-political or developmental.
- The Coalition believes that the duration of the SHS is not the substantial issue, but rather key issues that bother on the quality of education delivery and outcomes as well as other related factors at both the basic and second cycle of our educational system that will address perennial challenges of failure and drop out rates at the basic and secondary levels, poor school infrastructure, quality of teaching and learning as well as supervision among others.
- GNECC remains unconvinced about the rationale for any review of the SHS system without Government coming out clearly on any additional benefits that such a revision to the educational system will bring to the Ghanaian child and parent.
- We therefore call on Government to indicate clearly how a revision of the four year SHS system will address the following challenges of senior secondary education:
 - ✓ Teacher remuneration and motivation in secondary schools.
 - ✓ Availability of adequate qualified teachers in secondary schools
 - ✓ Overcrowding in secondary school boarding facilities
 - ✓ Inadequate text books

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- ✓ The lack of computer laboratories and instructors to implement ICT programs in SHS.
 - ✓ The lack of adequate access to secondary education (especially where only 37% of BECE graduates are able to gain admission into Second Cycle Schools due to access factors)
 - ✓ The declining quality of learning outcomes in secondary education.
- We therefore call on Government to exercise caution on the intention to reverse the SHS system from four years to three years. Government should come out with a clear strategy for phasing out the four year SHS and rolling back the 3 Year system with a comprehensive risk analysis mitigation and sustainability plan.
 - The Coalition however, wishes to express gross disquiet about the pre-emptive decisions taken by Government to revert to the 3 year SHS system before the SHS forum. This position is informed by on-going processes to adopt a new education strategic plan 2010 -2020 which has been cited by the Coalition at the Ministry of Education. The Coalition wonders the purpose of the education forum if a new strategic plan reverting the SHS to three years is already in its final stages without any form of consultation with Civil Society.

The Coalition further pledges to hold Government fully accountable for its decisions pursuant to providing quality education to all Ghanaian children and youth and further calls on government to give a true meaning to Civil Society partnerships and participation in the decision making, implementation and monitoring processes of the Ministry of Education

We finally affirm our commitment to work together with Government to ensure quality basic and secondary education does not elude our children and youth.

Signed (for):

Mr. Bright Appiah
Executive Chairman

Presented to the Ministry of Education at the Education Forum on SHS duration
May, 2009
Accra

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