

Effective Administration of Secondary Schools in Cross River State, Nigeria: A Panacea for Academic Excellence

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Abstract: Effective and goal-oriented administration as the hallmark for academic excellence is the focus of this paper. It is not enough to keep the administrative routine in secondary schools as a doctrine but to be goal-oriented in this era of global competitiveness. Administration of schools must seek to produce quality graduates with employability skills and sustainable alacrity through effective and efficient instructional delivery and students' discipline. The paper examined the need for proper secondary school administration, the challenges of secondary school administration, and recommended the way forward to achieving a better standard of academic excellence.

Keywords: Administration, secondary school, and academic excellence.

1.0 Introduction

Any formal effort geared towards the realization of set goals using human, material and financial resources is termed administration. Administration can be a discipline concerned with facilitating the accomplishment of goals through systematic utilization of available human and material resources. School administration is defined by Omeregie (2005) as the arrangement of human and material resources and programmes available to education for the attainment of educational objectives. It holds that school administration involves a systematic utilization of available human and material resources to implementing educational programmes within the guidelines of educational policies in order to achieve the goals of education. Secondary school is the intermediate level of education which is an inevitable bridge between the primary school and higher institution. It can only be productive if there is effective and efficient management of human and material resources available to it.

1.1 Objective of Secondary School

The National Policy on Education (2008) states that secondary school education shall prepare the individuals for useful living within the society and for higher education. Over the years these objectives have experienced unsteady achievement.

This is evident in the decline in academic performance of students in the year 2014 senior school certificate examinations result released by the West African examination council (WAEC), and the poor performances of students in the Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME 2014) result. Omeregie (2005) lamented over the products of secondary schools that could neither be useful in the society nor gain admission into higher institution without the aid of parents and (compromising) teachers or forgery. Nwaka (2010) reported poor performance of students in Senior School Certificate Examination SSCE in 2009. Odia and Omofonmwan (2007) reported that 50% of secondary schools students in Benin City preferred to enroll and write final year external examinations in the remote villages and private schools they call "special centres" this magnitude of malpractice are even supported by some parents and compromising principals for pecuniary reasons and to evade failure in examinations.

1.2 The Need for Effective Administration of Secondary School

For any organization to achieve predetermined goals there must be effective and efficient leadership whose responsibility it is to plan, organize, coordinate, control, budget and report the effort of others. In the secondary school, the principal is saddled with this responsibility. Eya and Leonard (2012) see a superior (principals or instructional superior) as anyone assigned the function of helping others to improve on their instructional competence. He/she needs to be honest, objective, fair and firm. His/her charismatic disposition is a motivational strategy for success. There is serious need of capacity and professional development of school principals to meet with the ever changing demands of the school system in this age of global competitiveness.

1.3 Challenges of Secondary School Administration

The numerous challenges facing secondary school administration in Nigeria include the following:

- **Poor funding/misappropriation of fund:** There are very little funds allocated and released to principals even with the little fund some principals misappropriate the funds and this has posed a great challenge to implementation of those laudable programmes in secondary schools.
- **Poor planning:** due to inadequate data coupled with lack of experienced and qualified personnel, the planning of school programmes become poor which leads to failure to meet the set goals of secondary education.
- **Unmerited admission:** It has almost become a style that parents take pride in withdrawing children prematurely from primary three, four and five to secondary school. These innocent children neither complete their primary curriculum nor mature in age to cope with the secondary school curriculum. Those principals who compromise with them for pecuniary reasons do not only destroy the students' intellectual capabilities but also jeopardize their future academic performance. Studies conducted by Udoh-Uwah (2013) revealed that 40% of the population of 600 junior secondary one students admitted into public and private schools in Calabar metropolis ranged between 8 years and 10 years and left primary 3, 4 or 5, most of them performed poorly in core subjects (Mathematics, English Language and Science) from second term in their JSS 1 to 2.
- **Undue promotion:** It is sad to discover that many students in junior secondary school could not write their names correctly and perform grossly below average. This is evident in the junior secondary school (Basic education) certificate examination. Yet they would still be given admission into senior secondary school class. (Odia & Omofonmwan 2007). This case is prevalent in private secondary schools. It has almost become a norm that no student is asked to repeat a class for poor performance, all in the name that the cost of education of such a student is borne by the parent. When parents tend to decide for the school what class/subject a child should do, then the school has failed in her statutory responsibility.
- **Poor implementation of curriculum:** The decline in student academic performance in the 2014 senior school certificate examination result released by the West African Examination Council (WACE) has been blamed on poor understanding and implementation of the new curriculum contents by the teachers and students. Where there is no effective instructional delivery and classroom management and control with good students discipline by teachers the school system cannot give out her best.
- **Inadequate data:** Falsification of population census figures and students statistics with incomplete records of resources in school constitute serious impediment to secondary school administration.
- **Lateness:** Teachers/students lateness constitutes a challenge to administration of secondary schools in Nigeria. When a teacher arrives late at school, it takes time for him/her to organize himself to start the day's work and this would hinder effective delivery.

1.4 Improving the Administration of Secondary Schools: The Way Forward

To improve the secondary school administration is the responsibility of students, parents, teachers, principals, and inspectors from Ministry of Education as well as the community.

1.4.1 The Role of the Students

While the various stakeholders in education are doing their best to improve the standard of secondary school; the students need to understand that all is for their good and cooperate with the school while exhibiting discipline behaviour and good study habit. They must shun all manners of social vices and channel their energy toward productive venture and co-curricular activities.

1.4.2 The Role of the Parents

The parents as stakeholders in education must seek to establish cordial relationship and communication link with the school to monitor their children's conduct and academic progress while supplying every needed support as their own responsibility.

1.4.3 The Role of the Teachers

The teachers as livewires of the school must give out their best services to recompense the government for all the benefits enjoyed. Particular attention must be paid to instructional delivery, students discipline and control, subrogate parenting, as well as social works.

1.4.4 The Role of the Principal

The principal as the leader, human resources manager, implementer of educational policies and programmes, finance manager, as well as public (community) relation officer must ensure effective and efficient administration of the school. He/she must not be an armchair administrator but a seasoned and all-round leader who must supervise what he inspects and not what he expects from teachers. He/she must be a motivator, supporter of innovations, fair and firm in his discipline and exercise of his/her legitimate, reward and punishment, cohesive as

well as sapient powers. The principal must never compromise his/her work with teachers or parents

Remembering that the success and failure of the school becomes his/her responsibility.

1.4.5 The Role of the Ministry Of Education

Inspectors from ministry of education must see themselves as a veritable tool for the salvation of the school system. A strong mechanism of supervision must be set which must be made up of qualified and seasoned educationist whom according to Olorunfemi (2008) must have enough energy and good health, sound in knowledge and good in communication so as to give instructional leadership to teachers and assist them in developing and implementing an effective plan of instruction.

They must seek to assess students' progress and report findings. They must get research based pedagogies to the teachers to enhance their teaching performances. Inspection reports must be made available to teachers timely and there must be follow up inspection to ascertain the level of compliance to recommendations made during inspection.

Conclusion

An excellent academic performance and indeed sustainable development of the educational system is dependent on effective and efficient administration of secondary schools system in Nigeria. It behooves the principal as the prime actor to brace up for the challenges facing the system by employing goal oriented strategies in his administration to achieve the goals of secondary education in Nigeria. Every stakeholder must be involved to redeem the situation.

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