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## **EDUWATCH STATEMENT ON WASSCE 2023**

On Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> September 2023, the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) completed the conduct of the 2023 West African Senior School Certificate Examinations (WASSCE). Following our monitoring of the conduct of the examinations, we wish to make the following statements:

### **Questions security**

We welcome the collaboration between the National Intelligence Bureau (NIB) and WAEC, facilitated by the Ministry of Education. This has significantly enhanced the security of WASSCE questions.

We however note some security breaches, leading to the circulation of questions for Social Studies 1, Biology 2 and Further (Elective) Mathematics 2 papers on social media about 45 minutes ahead of the scheduled time for the examinations. **While appreciating the swift investigations leading to the arrest of the culprits, we call for an expedited prosecution with outcomes made public.**

### **WAEC's reports of arrests at exam centres**

We welcome the arrest of persons arrested by WAEC and security agencies for alleged collusion with candidates to cheat at some examination centres. **A successful prosecution and publishing of outcomes is critical to building public and stakeholder confidence in the fight against examination malpractice and fraud.**

### **Escalation in Examinations Centre Fraud**

Due to the enhanced questions security, the strategy of cheating networks has intensified at the examination centres, especially where external supervisors are absent. Questions were solved by some recalcitrant teachers and transmitted via WhatsApp platforms to candidates at some centres. Other schools had answers written on boards for students to copy, with students paying as much as GHC 1,000. **While this is not new, the**

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**escalation requires a renewed response by strengthening examination centre external security.**

### **Inadequate capacity of WAEC to deploy WAEC external supervisors to all centres for all papers**

By 2022, WAEC had the capacity to deploy its own external supervisors to only **20 per cent** of WASSCE Centres at a given time. As submitted by Eduwatch in its 2021 and 2022 WASSCE monitoring reports, the use of Ghana Education Service (GES) staff as supervisors is a major flaw in the security arrangement of WASSCE. This is because many of them have vested interests in the outcome of the examinations and are potentially in Conflict-of-Interest. The number of GES staff arrested over the years for colluding with candidates to cheat affirms this position. **The Ministry of Education must resource WAEC to recruit adequate Non-GES External Supervisors at every centre during every paper.**

### **WAEC external monitors**

WAEC's Roving Monitors approach to augment the deficits in their capacity to deploy stationed WAEC external supervisors is innovative. We condemn the instances where monitors were denied/delayed entry into examination centres to buy time and conceal evidence of cheating at examination centres. **All school heads/owners cited by WAEC for preventing their monitors from entering in real time must be sanctioned by the GES and the National Schools Inspectorate Authority with outcomes published.**

### **The GES Code of Conduct and the fight against Exam Fraud**

Examination malpractice is major misconduct under section 3.32 (Public Examinations) of the GES Code of Conduct, with sanctions ranging from suspension, reduction in rank/salary to dismissal. It is noteworthy that, acts that constituted examination malpractice in the past have evolved into today's brisk businesses of examination centre collusion, where some students pay up to GHC 1,000 to some teachers for supervised cheating. With teachers at the centre, it is obvious the sanctions regime provided by the GES Code of Conduct is not deterrent enough. **There is the need to**

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**escalate the sanctions regime to an outright dismissal. This would be the boldest ethical statement of the GES leadership against the participation of staff in examination malpractices and fraud.**

### **Urgent need to amend the WAEC Act**

As far back as 2021, WAEC submitted at a stakeholder convening in Koforidua hosted by Parliament, with the Ministry of Education, Security Agencies and GES in attendance that, the sophistry in today's examination malpractice and fraud was fast overtaking the deterrent relevance of the WAEC Act, 2006 (Act 719). The sanctions regime provided in the Law is significantly outdated, whereas the scope is too constricted to provide a responsive legal framework for a credible examination. This makes the pursuit of adequate sanctions/successful prosecution of examination malpractices/fraud culprits very challenging. **The Ministry of Education must prioritise the amendment of the WAEC Law.**

### **Conclusion**

Eduwatch commends the collaboration between the Ministry of Education, NIB, WAEC and the Ghana Police Service to ensure a credible WASSCE 2023. The commitment of the Ghana Police Service and the Judiciary is even more crucial for ensuring the expedited prosecution of all those arrested for various acts of examination malpractice and fraud.

**Accra, October 9 2023.**