



4th January 2022

**IFEST's NEW YEAR MESSAGE
PURSUE DATA-DRIVEN TARGETED POLICY INTERVENTIONS IN THE
EDUCATION SECTOR**

The Institute for Education Studies (IFEST), wishes all Ghanaians, especially stakeholders in the education sector, a very prosperous New Year. We pray for strength and purposive direction for all and the sector at large.

IFEST wishes to bring to the attention of the managers of our education sector that, stringent efforts must be taken to make judicious use of the rich data available to the Ministry. We are convinced that the over-reliance on wholesale policies has contributed to widening the extent of inequality in providing quality education to the citizenry and therefore call for a data-driven targeted policy intervention that will help solve the challenges in the education sector, this year and beyond.

In calling for data-driven targeted policy interventions, we are advocating that the Ministry pays attention to the regional and district disparities in terms of parameters such as the Pupil-Trained Teacher Ratio (PTTR), Completion rate, Transition rate, Classrooms Needing Major Repairs (CNMR), etc. For instance, the national Net Enrolment Rate (NER) for Primary and JHS is 80.3% and 45.8% respectively with Completion and Transition rates for JHS being 77.5% and 92.5%. However, regions such as Eastern, Bono East, Savanna, and Oti are lagging behind these national averages.

Again, in terms of PTTR, Creche and Nursery schools in Ashanti, Greater Accra, Central, and Bono regions continue to record high ratios of between 90 to 110 students per teacher. This defeats the desire to strengthen the foundation of our educational system and efforts to promote Early Childhood Education in these regions.

According to Ghana Education Fact Sheet (2020) even though the Northern region has the lowest share of children with foundational reading and numeracy skills, the densely-populated Ashanti region has the greatest number of children who are not learning. The data further suggest that 63% of children complete primary education in the Volta region but only 15% of children complete upper secondary.

It is worth noting that, despite the national average for classrooms needing major repairs at the basic level of 21%, regions such as Bono and Northern record 25% and 23 %

respectively. IFEST suggests that targeted infrastructure development at the basic level should focus more on these regions to achieve the needed impact and bridge the gap of inequality in our educational resource distribution.

Also, data suggests that there is a furniture gap of 114,753 (seating) and 99663 (writing) at the pre-tertiary level with a teacher gap of 2904 in the Bono East region (EMIS 2020/21). In the Western North region, for instance, a total of 1705 teachers are needed for KG, Primary, and JHS. These statistics infers that this year our teacher recruitment and deployment strategies should be informed by data which should result in teachers being posted to regions where their services are needed.

We would also want to bring to the attention of the Ministry that, lessons should be learned from the implementation of the Standard-Based Curriculum to ensure that the roll-out of the Common Core Curriculum (CCC) is devoid of challenges. This will mean that adequate training is given to teachers and all the needed resources provided to ensure a smooth implementation of the CCC. The issue of textbooks for both primary schools and JHS should be given the needed attention this year to facilitate instructional efficiency.

IFEST would like to reiterate the fact that, literature is replete with enormous challenges that face our educational system. Fortunately, we are still on the reform agenda and hence, managers of our educational system should commit more to channel their energies in shaping the system instead of joining the citizenry to rant daily on the failures in the system.

Finally, we hope that there will be continuous engagement with all relevant stakeholders on the issues of importance and constructive criticism would be taken on board. We need to accept that, education is a very potent tool for national cohesion and development, and those with the privilege to manage it should do so, keeping in mind the consequences of decisions not grounded in research and data.

God bless us all. Hope we have a very stable, definite, and uninterrupted academic year.

Signed



Peter Anti
(Executive Director).