

PAPER PRESENTED AT THE EKITI STATE EDUCATION SUMMIT, May 4 -5
: Quality Primary Education: Issues, Options for Cost Effective Strategies and Way Forward.

Greetings etc .

I am very pleased to attend this Education Summit and to share my thoughts with you.

The Paper is titled “**Quality Primary Education: Issues, Options for Cost Effective Strategies and Way Forward**”. Essentially, some of what I would be presenting is somehow radical for now, futuristic and may not bring desired change at this summit but we need to get some ‘big picture’ across so that we can start thinking differently about our primary education and how teachers are trained in for our primary education sector. I am very sorry for being too blunt, we now have data coming from all the research and studies that primary school teaching is not as it should be and children in our primary schools are not learning a great deal from the current curriculum.

Out of the eight MDG goals, one of them is for primary education and the **Goal: is to achieve universal primary education. Target: is to ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling**

It is now generally agreed that, to measure how far we are from the Millennium Education Development Goal (MEDG), enrollment is not a good proxy for completion, and hence it is better to measure completion than enrollment for realization of MDEG target since completion of quality primary cycle is important for sustained benefits from education. As educators, we should be more interested on how many primary school aged children can read and write easily, by highest grade attained in primary school.

To achieve quality primary education goals , the issues confronting most of the states in Nigeria are somehow similar, but the menu are different (in terms of priorities, options and strategies) , and also in terms of the scope and depth, with different constraints , capacity and political will to tackle them. The bottom line is the need to enhance the quality of teaching and learning in our primary schools, through innovations (and not business as usual). This could be achieved through improvement or new ways of doing things so as to achieve an improved, better and optimum benefit (even to the poor) in a most sustainable, cost effective and efficient way (and equitable manner too). However, the challenge is that of implementation and how to develop a benchmark with clear, simple, measurable and verifiable indicators for self and external evaluation, and reach an acceptable consensus about desired quality with all relevant stakeholders.

Apart from the issue of curriculum review and planning, other related and topical issues that should be of interest to a gathering like these on improving quality of teaching and learning ranges from: equitable balance and funding of teaching and learning in schools, roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders , quality of teacher education including colleges of education in relation to the state needs, teachers professional development , lifelong learning and distance education support for teachers in school, etc. . It is the later I will like to raise areas of concern and key education policy options:

Teacher Quality could be improved, that is by emphasizing the following: Emphasis on literacy and numeracy skills and clear learning goals for pupils, pupils centered interactive teaching methods, ongoing professional development in content areas and pedagogical skills , teacher networks and resources centers, quality teacher manuals, mother tongue instruction at initial years, increased years of instruction.

Improved quality of instructional materials namely; Local teaching materials, timely and equitable distribution of low learning materials to schools and pupils, distance teachers education (for example, ICT and multi media education), curriculum revision to improve relevance.

One of the strategies to achieve quality primary education is the use improved teaching methods in our schools, the knowledge of our teachers on curriculum, use of curriculum modules, pedagogical skills and curriculum relevance , we should be able to analyze and ascertain the relevance of the present curriculum with a view to its improvement and updating. Any study or initiative to achieve this should be welcome especially for the improvement of educational standards through training, retraining and education delivery.

Issues in achieving quality primary education . Achieving quality primary schooling from the low baseline at 2000 may take longer than anticipated especially to achieve 2015 target. Some of the main issues are that, the children and teachers/head teacher are not well equipped and prepared for school, there is disconnect between policies and implementation, home and school, school and community, teachers and pupils etc. Class observation reports have also revealed several gaps in the teaching/ learning process, which can explain why student achievements are low. At the school level, the gaps include; inadequate teaching resources, teachers' guides and pupils textbooks to teach effectively, inability to communicate clearly due to a poor command of English and explain in ways that will make sense to the children , teachers' marking indicate that the pupils' work are not assessed thoroughly and constructively in order to move their learning forward, class work generally offers no challenge, furthermore teaching does not cater for the needs of different ability groups in the class, the teachers lacked the commitment and know-how to use a range of strategies to engage the children in meaningful activity and use questions and discussion to facilitate and explore children's learning.

In general, the following issues will therefore need to be addressed if relevance and goals of primary education are to be met. These have been identified from analysis of available state data.

Wide disparities in learning outcomes and school participation . In Ekiti State, most of the children in the 6-11 age groups are in primary school and of the age group who are in school, the share of urban and rural children in primary schools are almost the same. However, learning is with wide disparities across LGAs, and between rural and urban schools. LGAs that have high enrolments and performance tend also to be LGAs where stakeholder's participation is highest and the converse is also true: where enrolment is low overall, participation is lowest.

Poor teacher deployment practices. The national teacher pupil norm is set at one teacher to 40 children. In general, with high participation rates already, Ekiti have

sufficient numbers of teachers to enroll thousands more children for more years or more before needing additional teachers. However, there is inadequate and oversupply of teachers within some of LGAs and schools. An LGA may have sufficient numbers of teachers but they will be poorly distributed across the schools within the LGA, with urban areas being favored over rural areas. Often small rural schools will have teacher pupil ratios well below the norm because teachers have not been deployed appropriately and not on the basis of the school's total enrolment. One such example is a small rural school in Ekiti with 75 children enrolled but with five teachers plus a non-teaching headmaster.

Poor quality of teaching and learning (and environment). Learning achievements in primary schools are relatively low and the large investment in teachers' salaries is not balanced by investment in teaching and learning materials and creating a physical environment that is conducive to learning. In 1996, national assessments of primary class 4 students indicated that students could answer correctly only 38 percent of test items in life skills, 32 percent of mathematics test items, and 25 percent of English test items. The situation had not improved by 2002 when a national assessment of grade 5 students was carried out on the same curriculum subjects. Findings indicate that only 20 percent of the students were able to answer correctly more than 30 percent of the test items; and less than one percent of students were able to answer correctly more than half the test items. Research in classrooms indicates that teachers are not well equipped with basic pedagogical skills and understandings to teach well in primary schools especially at lower grade levels. Language policies are poorly implemented and children's learning is hampered by lack of appropriate textbooks and poor teaching in introducing and developing literacy, mathematics and science concepts and uses of language across the curriculum

There is a gap between the content of teacher training programs and pedagogical skills required of primary school teachers; and very few teachers have had access to regular in-service training workshops or school- based teacher development.

Despite adequate teachers in the system there is need for increased incentives in recent years for teachers to perform and improved teaching in primary schools to meet required standard. The private cost to teachers for their initial training and upgrading is demanding. Teachers and managers see no perceived benefit to classroom performance resulting from upgrading programs such as B.Ed. Any gains from formal training are lost because there has been no system of regular in-service teacher training or school-based professional development. Many primary school teachers have not participated in any in-service training or workshops since completing their initial training; nor had the opportunity since then to acquire skills in problem solving on pedagogical issues related to their immediate classroom teaching experience.

Primary teacher salaries consume a large part of local government budgetary resources and resources for education support services are extremely constrained.

The financing of primary education is not stable and teacher management practices are poor: teachers cannot be guaranteed their promotion or a school environment that is conducive to good practice of the profession. Teachers may appear to have reasonable job

security but until they feel confident that they will be paid as and when due their morale will continue to be low and their attendance at school irregular. This is the major teacher management issue to be addressed along with teacher deployment and a system whereby teachers have some say in appointment and transfer to schools and to career development opportunities within primary education.

Implications for teacher policies: Expanding the primary school system may require additional schools, probably small schools, in sparsely populated areas such as in some of the LGAs. These may require specially selected teachers who are from the communities with acceptable language and social skills. This implies different selection criteria and standards, initial training appropriate to the environment, incentive systems and teacher monitoring and support systems that are appropriate to difficult environments. Alternative forms of teacher training and teacher development would need to be considered to avoid the long training cycle of the current NCE pre service program and the time lag between beginning training, graduation and being employed. Support for school based training of teachers in some schools that attract a high share of retired and contract teachers in some LGAs may need to be considered.

But decisions about primary school teacher selection, appointment and deployment need to be made at local government and state levels, based on the realities of local conditions and local demands and the most efficient use of resources. Teacher recruitment and teacher deployment cannot be separated from issues of teacher salary budgets that are decisions made at local government and state levels. Other stakeholders are involved in these decisions such as the teachers' union and school managements. The location of schools, the pattern of schooling and the teacher skills that particular communities may require (such as social, cultural or linguistic competencies), all need to be taken into account, as do the incentive systems and career structures available to teachers. As communities take stronger roles in school management they too may want to have a say in the selection of teachers for their children on the grounds of language and cultural compatibility and the kind of school that they envision, as happens already in private schools. In projecting teacher demand, states will need to consider such factors as the output of colleges of education, the impact of other externalities and labor market demands, the length of the initial teacher training period and alternative routes to meet rising demand, and incentive systems for teachers in rural schools and schools in special circumstances.

The national policy that sets the NCE as the minimum standard for primary and secondary school teachers may need to be more flexible in its implementation and with clearer distinctions between what a primary school teacher needs to know and be able to do, and what is required of a secondary school subject specialist. Incentives to undertake initial teacher training programs may need to be considered along with a modular system of accreditation linked closely to school experiences, similar to the recently introduced Pivotal Teacher Training Program (PTTP) model. The content of initial teacher training and continuing in-service programs need to be more school-based in content and approaches.

Studies of primary school classrooms have identified essential skills required of primary school teachers: (a) working collaboratively with other teachers (team work) and (b) ability to organize and plan teaching that takes into account children's learning needs: such as, children working in groups and being actively involved in learning, providing children with opportunities to develop creativity and problem solving skills and acquiring language and literacy skills that enable them to learn.

School-based and teacher-led activities for improved instruction and learning are being tried out. Use of interactive classroom instruction as a means to better teaching is being piloted. Alternative forms of teacher training using distance education modalities are being developed (the PTTP). All these approaches give a much higher proportion of course time to school experience. The success of these programs will depend on the *capacities* of staff in colleges of education, teacher mentors and local supervisors to better understand teaching and learning issues in lower and upper primary classrooms and *skills* in providing collaborative support to primary school teachers through a range of teacher development and school improvement activities.

The salaries of primary school teachers are now on a par with all public servants of equivalent qualifications and for many local governments this has placed considerable burden on budgetary resources. This makes it important that teacher appointment and deployment practices adhere to the teacher pupil norms. To ensure adequate numbers of teachers in rural areas may require additional incentives. Teachers in small schools with multi-grade teaching situations need to be provided with additional training and other support.

Priorities and strategic choices. The major challenges to achieving primary education targets are to (i) increase stakeholder participation more equitably (with quantitative targets) at the same time as (ii) raising the levels of learning achieved by children at the end of primary school (qualitative targets) so that they can continue to learn and successfully complete the junior secondary school program.

Increase participation and equity. In the interest of state priorities and development, there is a strong need to focus more on redressing the imbalances in primary education participation that exist within and between schools/LGAs and between the rich and the poor. Experience in other states and elsewhere suggest that such strategies might include establishing schools close to households and selecting interested people from the communities as teachers, establishing small schools in isolated areas or communities in difficult environments, providing block grants to registered private schools; and setting up schools in the workplace in poor urban areas. All these require teachers trained appropriately and supported by adequate learning materials and professional support. Many may require additional incentives to teachers to work in remote areas. School timetabling and scheduling, language policy implementation and opportunity for regular school based in-service may help to improve quality and retention.

(ii) Select cost effective strategies to improve school quality. As states and local governments take on stronger roles in allocation of public resources for primary

education and have responsibility for mobilizing additional resources, planners will need to give more attention to examining the cost effectiveness of their strategies. This will give a more objective view as to the trade-offs that are required in all policy decisions and a tool for negotiating priorities with elected constituents as well as education administrators and managers. Two examples below from international experience provide insight into choices about how limited resources can best be prioritized to get the greatest impact on school quality.

Planners in a number of countries examined the cost effectiveness of 40 policy interventions they had implemented to improve school quality. The top five most *cost effective* interventions were, in this order: (i) assign the best teachers to first grade, (ii) enforce regulations on the official length of the school year, (iii) don't switch classroom teachers during the school year, (iv) test 10 percent of grade 4 students annually and distribute the results to teachers, and (v) decentralize school management. The first three of these interventions had very little cost but had a high impact on productivity and increase in the use of instructional time.

The four policy interventions that they assessed as having the *greatest probable impact* on improving school quality and learning achievement were, in this order: (i) provide teaching and learning materials and train teachers to use them, (ii) provide self-learning materials alone (i.e. without accompanying teacher training), (iii) provide a package of interventions to schools-at-risk including self learning materials, training in active and cooperative learning, hands on workshops, community involvement, school based management, formative evaluation and systematic testing and feedback, and (iv) pay rural teachers more and assign the best teachers to the first grade of primary school. These interventions require greater investment than those in the paragraph above and also the probability of full implementation is lower than the five most cost effective interventions. The findings indicate that before large investments are made in interventions aimed at quality improvement policy makers take care to assess the cost, what is required (institutionally) to implement and the likely impact on increasing learning.

(iii) **Assess the high budgetary cost of teacher salaries against class size, length of instructional time and teacher certification.** Increasing primary school participation rates, in some cases combined with an expanding school age population, is contributing to greater demand for additional teachers. However and in Ekiti State, where education indicators are high, policy makers can use this opportunity to shift the focus from expanding the coverage of the education system to improving the quality of education provisions and outcomes, including reducing the high proportion of over-age students, repeaters and late entrants enrolled in primary education which is the case in most LGAs.

When countries decide on their education budgets they make trade-offs between factors such as the level of teachers' salaries, the size of classes, the number of teaching hours required of teachers and the intended instruction time for students. To these Nigeria might also add the incremental salary adjustments made for levels of formal certification.

In some countries, teachers may teach for fewer hours in the day or for fewer days in the year but the budgetary compensation is linked to larger class sizes. In Chile, the Philippines and Thailand, primary school teachers have comparatively high salaries but teachers work a high number of teaching hours or have larger than average classes. In Indonesia, primary teachers have low salaries and a high number of teaching hours but these are partially offset by teachers having smaller classes. In Nigeria primary teachers now receive fairly high salaries compared to others in the region. To justify the salary outlay for this, teachers need to be aware of the statutory numbers of hours of instruction and school days in a year that they are obligated to work and school managers should be in a position to enforce this. In return, managers should be able to ensure that teachers are deployed efficiently so that no teacher is burdened with oversize classes whilst others have small class sizes. As the state juggle the demand for more primary school teachers against limited public resources they will need to consider these points.

Care should be taken in increasing teachers base salaries to unsustainable levels. Where material incentives seem a useful policy tool, offering bonuses would adjust the remuneration of teachers without altering the basic government pay scales. Such bonus systems could serve different aims, such as rewarding teachers who take on responsibilities or duties beyond statutory norms, attracting better candidates to the teaching profession, encouraging schools to improve their performance, or attracting teachers to rural locations where there is a scarcity of applications.

(iv) Develop alternative modes of initial and continuing education for teachers.

There is a need now for more primary school specialists (grade teachers who can teach across all the core subjects of the curriculum at any level of the primary school). The demand for primary school teachers will increase, especially in those states where enrollments are still very low. This may require more flexible selection criteria and alternative teacher training models that combine, to a greater degree than at present, school experience, distance education modalities and modular programs that can be sequenced towards certification and professional development courses. Continuous teacher training and school development are integral aspects of improving school quality. The more school-based training teachers have the better the result in the classroom. The school-based approaches to school improvement and teacher development could be expanded both as part of initial teacher training programs such as the PTTP and also for continuous professional development of teachers.

(v) Improve teacher management and redefine roles and relationship. Roles and responsibilities of states and local governments for teacher management, especially for providing teachers' incentives and ensuring that teachers are paid on time is a top priority. Transparent systems of teacher appointment, transfer and promotion need to be put in place. How much of this should be State determined and what should be determined at local government or school management levels needs to be agreed with key stakeholders. A uniform state system may not be appropriate for all LGAs.

Community involvement in primary schools will need to be expanded beyond the levels of contribution for renovation and rehabilitation. The Nigerian models of community self

help projects for school rehabilitation form a good basis from which to extend the idea to school quality improvement. This could be by providing proposal-based funds to schools for school quality improvement and to clusters of schools within local governments for training funds linked to school improvement plans. These proposal-based funds for quality improvement would bring together parents, communities and teachers in common efforts to manage schools better and to improve school outcomes.

Teachers' pre-service and in-service training , retraining and professional development.

In a nutshell, the three main points I would want to get across and end this topic with are: (i) teachers are not being well prepared to teach in primary schools - the children are suffering, they are not learning. (ii) primary school teachers taking the B.Ed upgrading after NCE as a three/four year program is not adding value to their teaching and children are not learning any more effectively as a result, (iii) three /four years full time on campus to prepare new primary school teachers is a long time and not affordable in a lot of cases (for NCE or B.Ed) - alternative blends of school experience and well designed modular approaches to the NCE/B.Ed need to be developed especially for primary school teacher preparation.

We know the organizers at the summit is too far down the track to make much in the way of changes of curriculum direction at this stage, the Bank and other development partners /stakeholders will continue to work with you in coming months or years in coming up with better prepared and better trained teachers who are able to continue their professional development *specializing in primary education* so that children in primary schools in Ekiti State could learn and *enjoy* coming to school to learn.

Teachers for primary schools and teachers for secondary schools need very different kinds of training.

Secondary school teachers need to be prepared to teach at least two main subjects. They need in depth subject content knowledge of the subjects they will teach and they need to understand how adolescents learn. They need to know how to use English as the medium of instruction and to know how to teach their subjects to students who (like themselves) are using English as a Second Language (ESL or ESOL). Secondary teachers should have a degree in their two main teaching subjects and in addition some teacher training based on experiences in secondary schools.

Primary school teachers need to be trained as generalist, grade teachers and skills in use of language(s) across the whole curriculum. They need to know how to teach initial literacy in early grades in the main community/Nigerian language, they need to know how to transit in upper primary to English medium and English across the curriculum. They need to know how to link language concepts, mathematics concepts and science concepts across all subjects in the curriculum. They need to know how to organize learning in different ways - children doing individual learning tasks, children working in

groups, children being instructed effectively by the teacher using a variety of techniques. They need to know how to prepare additional instructional materials to support the textbook. They need to know how to monitor each child's learning progress and be able to plan individual, group and class work around children's progress. They need to know how young children learn and acquire literacy skills in more than one language. They need to know how to organize and manage teaching in multi-grade teaching situations in small schools as well as how to manage children of different abilities in a large class.

B.Ed /NCE teacher training programs for new teachers and B.Ed/NCE programs for practicing teachers who are upgrading their qualification need to be structured differently and have different content emphasis. New teachers are being prepared to teach in primary schools. Decisions need to be made as to what are the basics that should be included in an initial training program and what will be developed later through ongoing teacher development programs. The emphasis should be on knowledge of the primary school curriculum, teaching methods and materials, how children learn, the importance of language to learning and the methods of teaching mother tongue and English. Practicing teachers doing an NCE/B.Ed program don't need to spend the same amount of time on an NCE/B.Ed, they have teaching experience to build on and have unmet demands as to how to improve their teaching. These two different kinds of courses need to be structured and organized very differently.

NCE/B.Ed initial training programs for primary school teachers need to be more flexible in their structure. To achieve quality education we certainly need to review the curriculum and parents must see that the children are learning and that the school is really making a difference in their lives and that of their immediate family and environment. For us to achieve this, it must definitely not be business as usual, we have to innovate and work towards how we can improve in the way we our children learn and teach our future teachers in an efficient and effective manner so as to make ourselves relevant again as it was in the past.

Schools improve when there is strong leadership from the Head teacher/principal and where the whole school works as a team to bring about improvement. School Based Management Committees and Community self help projects have been established in all LGAs. At the moment they are mostly focusing on rehabilitation and provision of basic furniture. In the case of the 'child friendly school initiatives' these have also begun to address improvement in teaching and learning. These models would form a good basis for whole school development programs linked to professional support and teacher development systems. The teachers union has been most proactive in recent years in improving conditions of service for teachers. It would be a good time now for the teacher associations to begin to look at teacher accountability and responsibilities and to lobby communities and local governments to ensure that classroom facilities are adequate for effective teaching and learning.

Roles and responsibilities for setting primary school performance standards and primary teachers' conditions of service need to be more clearly defined. These need to include the role of state and local governments in recruiting, appointing and deploying teachers. Career development paths linked to incentive systems and performance criteria standards are inadequate. Transparent processes need to be established for selection, promotion and

transfer of primary school teachers. And teachers, school managers and school supervisors need access to a range of professional development opportunities that focus on how children learn and what makes schools effective. To raise the quality of primary schools will require addressing many of the teacher management issues affecting primary school teachers.

The main issues that impact on teacher policies can be summarized around four key issues: (i) the need to increase demand for primary schooling and make school participation more equitably distributed, (ii) to raise school quality as measured by learning outcomes and (iii) to improve teacher management. And, most importantly within the resource constrained environment, (iv) the need for a serious review of the budgetary implications of teacher recruitment, deployment and training and the options and most effective strategies available to states and local government who will finance these.

Conclusion:

Our pupils are not doing well as expected in school and to put it more bluntly, are not adequately learning, the school and education system are both failing the students, our children are not well prepared for school (minimal attention for ECCD with the universal primary education program) and to stay in school (and learn), there is diverse variation within and between LGAs in terms of quality of teaching and learning, disconnect within and between home and school, pupils and teachers, education leadership and the led, stakeholder' perception and reality. In essence, there is need to urgently improve quality of teaching and learning in all schools and more importantly, make each school child centered and friendly and possibly, with reintroduction of extracurricular or cultural activities, sports, practical's such as in agric, sciences etc for whole child development (in Yoruba adage , Iwe kiko li ayi si oko ko ipe i.e. learning is not complete without necessary tools for farming). We should however avoid one jacket fit all for all the schools/LGAs i.e. for rural and urban schools and allow the main stakeholders to determine the value added of necessary or required activities that would quality of teaching and learning such as compulsory mental morning drills, regular home work etc. We should also avoid overloading of the curriculum and excessive testing/examination. We need to efficiently and effectively manage current/available resources and to justify / make case for additional resources for value added impact and result. We need to link resources to result/learning outcome or improved performance of pupils/teachers!. We need to improve the EMIS/data management and it is an aberration to be conducting school census every year. We need a cost effective strategies to improve quality of teaching and learning, to prepare the pupils for life next level/phase of education and lifelong learning. We need to make education system more participatory and involve all the relevant stakeholders include the NGO/CSO, private sector etc and improve incentive and demand for accountability at all levels. Finally and unlike teachers, we do not blame the soldiers for not getting results but the planners and officers. When the school is not performing we blame the teachers instead of providing better support and requirements to deliver (incentive to perform). There is no silver bullet to fix every school in Ekiti state. We need to trust our teachers and their ability to deliver, they should be rightly seen as

the solution, not the problem, when improvement is needed, the school should receive support and development. The countries that are doing well such as Singapore, South Korea, Finland etc, they all realized that improving education system begins and ends with great and better teachers. But world class education costs money! . With this education summit, it shows the government has a vision, mission and of course, the political will and will now find the most feasible and cost effective way as part of the summit outcome.

Recommendations/Next steps:

The state need to improve the level of openness, transparency and accountability especially at school level (with participation and support at SBMC, LGEAs, SUBEB and UBEC) and opportunities for pupils and teachers to learn among themselves (as a way of improving learning outcomes and teachers performance).

Despite the challenge of bandwidth and connectivity within the country, Ekiti state could be exemplary to other states through the use of appropriate/alternative technology including e-reader and to make available all the primary textbooks online. This could also be accelerated with deployment of necessary software and hardware (ICT) for e-information, access to national and international education website/ data and with increase bandwidth for e-learning and teaching, e-library/book etc.

The state need to strengthen or establish education resource centers in each LGA (or for cluster of schools) with deployment of experienced teachers especially for TPD/in-service training for teachers especially in the following areas : ECCD, multi-grade teaching, mother tongue, English , mathematics , primary science , class room interactions etc (and including leadership and resource management for head teachers). All these could be complemented with modular and sandwich training at COEs and faculty of education within the universities. Teacher Professional Development support should also include mentoring especially for new teachers i.e. teachers could also be trained within their environment/ school, just like doctors, engineers etc. Upgrading of teachers and government sponsored in service training for teachers should be encouraged and based on the priorities of government and requirement of the teachers in the classroom as enumerated /highlighted above.

There is positive correlation between quality of teachers and their pupils performance and therefore, good primary school teachers/head teachers should be engaged and given adequate /necessary incentive and opportunity to rise up to highest level of Directorate Cadre/Grade level 16) based on performance, experience and expertise within the primary education system. The teachers' remuneration should include incentive for performance and promotion within primary teachers cadre need to be restructured. For example, teacher are not expected to spend more than 3/4 years in each grade of primary school system and possibly, another 3/4 years for mentoring of primary 1 to 3 teachers, primary 4 to 6 teachers and head teachers. Teaching in the rural areas should be part of the condition of service especially as incentive for employment and promotion.

The state should strengthening inspectorate or establishes an independent quality assurance bureau/agency and is expected to redeploy experienced teachers after meritorious service in primary school system to the bureau/agency. The CEO of the bureau/agency should report directly to the commissioner and the staff should be appropriately remunerated.

The demand for accountability with appropriate incentives at all levels of education system should be encouraged with the participation of third parties such as NGO/CSO , private sector , PTA, Community, Philanthropists, Alumni bodies etc (for monitoring and evaluation, funding among others).

The state might need to quickly carry out system assessment and benchmarking for education result (SABER) on the following: teacher management and policies, financing, and incentives mechanism with the goal of improving primary school education (including quality assurance, EMIS and ICT).

Based on the need for benchmarking for quality primary education and better service delivery, the state should urgently carry out teaching and learning assessment with similar examples in Kwara SESP and Lagos EKO. On the long run and with the objective to reward performance improvement in school/LGAs, centralized /unified promotion examination system and allowing students' repetition when they don't pass examination could be a welcome development.

The state should carry out demand driven action research study and activities on Language Literacy and Learning especially on mother tongue, multi grade and teaching of English across the curriculum with the objective of improving learning outcome, strengthening the education resource centers, ensure adequate and efficient/effective use of resources, appropriate incentives etc.

Finally and to move all these forward, effective policies need to be based on evidence about their results and about the right course of their implementation. Building of an effective M&E systems are a critical component for evidence-based policymaking. This should be central for primary education strategic choices, policy and practice, and at the core of the government agenda and effective utilization of the World Bank's new Program-for-Results (P4R) Instrument.

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