

GHANA NATIONAL EDUCATION CAMPAIGN COALITION (GNECC)

Monitoring Report on the 2021, 2022 Computerised School Selection and Placement Systems (CSSPS) and SHS1 students reporting to Schools.

In February 2022, the results of the recent Basic Education Certificates Examination (BECE) for the year 2021 were revealed. It was stated that 138 students had their subject results cancelled for examination malpractices, among other reasons, out of the results provided.

The exam drew a total of 572,167 candidates, with 287,730 (50.3%) males and 284,437 (49.7%) females participated in the examination. There were 61 candidates with visual impairment and 321 with hearing impairment among the registered candidates. In addition, 86 applicants required extra examination due to other conditions. The overall number of entries was 7.61 % greater than the 531,707 entries in 2020. In all, 18,028 schools submitted candidates for the exam, which was given out at 2,158 locations. 7,315 (1.28%) of the total number of candidates who registered were absent.

The Ministry of Education announced that the 2021/2022 Computerized School Selection and Placement Systems (CSSPS) for students into Senior High Schools (SHS) will be publicized today, Saturday, March 26. According to the Ministry, 367, 811 candidates out of the 555,353 who qualified for the placement have been placed automatically into schools of their choice. The remaining 187, 542 qualified candidates will, however, have to do self-placement to available schools since they could not be matched with any of their choices. "The 2021/2022 Computerized School Selection and Placement System (CSSPS) into Senior High Schools (SHS)/ Senior High Technical Schools (SHTS) and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Institutes, will go live on Saturday, March 26, 2022," a statement from the Ministry.

The Ghana National Education Campaign, which monitoring the Computerized School Selection and Placement System (CSSPS), conducted a desk review on the various online platforms as well as a field observation at the self-placement / resolve centre (GNAT HALL). The Desk review information were gathered from 3news.com, myjoyonline.com, Citinews.com, Ghana News Agency Portal and golearnershub.com. GNECC research team visited the resolution centre, 10 parents were interviewed.

As a result, some of our findings are included in this report, including concerns that have arisen and statements issued by the Ministry of Education, as well as how well the CSSPS has been managed by the Ministry to facilitate students placement and some of the challenges parents are encountering.

1. Concerns that have arisen are statements issued by the Ministry of Education and other stakeholders.

Our desk reviews conducted by our research team over the period reveals that;

- a. **Bulk SMS and online for verification:** The Computerised School Selection and Placement System (CSSPS) Secretariat, according to the GES, has made school

selections available by bulk SMS and online for verification. "Parents, candidates, and teachers should be aware that a bulk SMS of the schools picked will be sent to the contact numbers supplied by candidates during the school selection," stated Cassandra Twum Ampofo, Head of the GES Public Relations Unit, in a press release published on Tuesday, February 15. *Source: 3news.com*

- b. **Released of CSSPS on the 2021/2022:** The Ministry of Education announced that the 2021/2022 Computerized School Selection and Placement Systems (CSSPS) for students into Senior High Schools (SHS) will be publicized today, Saturday, March 26.
- c. **Warning by the Ministry:** 28th March, 2022, The Spokesperson of the Ministry of Education Kwasi Kwarteng has warned that persons who try to extort money from parents or candidates in the name of getting them a placement in a Senior High School of their choice will be arrested and punished. "There is the tendency for people to be exploited when they become desperate for their wards to be admitted into a particular school at all cost. Parents are to note that they are not supposed to pay money to any person to aid in school placement. The Computerized School Selection and Placement Systems (CSSPS) is purely based on merit" he emphasized.
- d. **Guardian Concern:** Mr Albert Kwame Mante, a guardian, has said his nephew who had aggregate 10 in the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) was not given first or second or third choice, rather the 5th. He said he finds this situation unusual. Speaking to TV3 on Monday March 28 at the placement resolution centre located at the GNAT Hall in Accra, he said "My nephew got aggregate 10 and he didn't get any of the the first, second and even the third choice. We were given the fifth choice. But for me I find it a bit odd that someone who got 10 could be sent to the fifth choice." *Source: 3news.com*
- e. 31st March, 2022 GES update statement
- f. **1st April, 2022, SHS Placement:** There are enough vacancies for qualified candidates – Education Ministry, *source: Ghanaweb.com*
- g. **New paper review:** on the 6th April, 2022, the Angel Morning Show in their newspaper review also indicated that visually impaired students were not placed in any school.
- h. **80% of complaints resolved:** We've resolved 80% of complaints – Education Ministry
6th April 2022 Deputy Spokesperson for the Ministry of Education, Mr. Yaw Opoku Mensah, has stated that the Ministry has been able to resolve more than 80 percent of complaints received since the commencement of the 2022 Senior High School (SHS) self-placement process. "The exercise is going smoothly as we expected, with the pace we have set for ourselves. Achieving 80 percent of the complaints which comes across the length and breadth of the country, gives a clearer indication that we are on top of our business," he said. *Source: GNA*
- i. **Private Education Coalition Press Released:** On the 7th April, 2022, the private Education Coalition through their press release stated that " Why should parents have to pay bribes (we hear figures of 10, 000GhS+) to CSSPS staff to ensure their

children get into schools, which they could rightly enter based on their unadulterated BECE scores?

2. How effective the CSSPS has been managed by the Ministry to facilitate students' placement?

a. Timely Release of information

Our observation of the desk review indicates that the release of information by the Ministry and GES has improved very well this year 2021/2022 the Computerized School Selection and Placement Systems (CSSPS) compare to previous years. The ministry main strategy is to release press statement on the CSSPS. Some of the information released includes; Bulk SMS and Online Platform for verification, Announcement of the released by GES, Announcement for Students to report to their various schools. The Ministry also established a call centre with a toll-free number, 0302987654 has also been set up to address related concerns. The sole piece of information that concerned parents and guardians was the student reporting date, which stated that pupils should report on April 4, 2022. Parents and guardians believe that the time allotted to prepare their children for school reporting was insufficient.

b. Effective communication

With our observation as reported by the various online news portals we visited. We can also indicate that the communication deployed by the Ministry of Education and Ghana Education Service (GES) have been so far so good during the period. Some of the communication gives data as to number of student placed and those not place, specific numbers to the issues resolved at the placement centres. The communication relieves the unnecessary pressures that could have generate controversies by given assurance that all the students will be placed. It also calm parents and guidance down and follow the necessary process. According to the myjoyonline.com, Mr. Yaw Opoku Mensah said this in an interview with the Ghana News Agency (GNA) on the side-lines of the SHS self-placement ongoing at the GNAT Hall in Accra. He assured parents and guardians that the over 555,000 students would get their schools of choice. The Deputy Spokesperson entreated parents to remain calm, saying, they would ensure that the last person is placed before the process ends".

c. Resolution Centre

According to Mr. Yaw Opoku Mensah, "This process is free and fair with team of officers from the Ghana Education Service, TVET service, and the Free SHS secretariat who are here to offer services. So, you do not need to bypass these platforms and go looking for someone to solve the issues for you at a fee,"

Our observation at the self-placement centre reveals that the issues behind the SHS placements range from; students not getting placements, the desired school due to financial issues, distance, and residential status i.e. day to boarding or vice versa; re-entry into senior high school and the technical and vocational institute is also addressed at the Ghana National Association of Teachers. We also observed the procedures for addressing student issues, where authorities and personnel greeted guests and answered any questions they

had regarding the process. The documents required for the process are the printout of the result slip or the printout of the selected schools with grades. Behind the printout, you write out these details, Reasons, two to three schools, residential status, program, and telephone number. The process continues as the necessary changes are done by the officers.

However, Madam Nana Afrah Sika, the Deputy Coordinator of Free SHS, said they were not able to reach some parents via phone because the contact numbers they provided were not effective. She said some students also did not come with their “real” parents and advised parents to accompany their wards to the Centre themselves and not through intermediaries.

3. Some of the challenges parents are encountering.

Some parents and students in an interview with the GNA were happy with the smooth running of the process. Alfred Asante, a parent, said his ward has been placed in a school in the Central Region but they live in Accra, so he wanted the school to be changed to Accra. Madam Sarah Sarpong, another parent, also wanted a change in school for her ward due to distance. Nicholas Mensah said he had three wards, two of them had been made day students, whereas, one had not been placed and wanted those placed to be made boarders and the other, placed in the school of his choice. *Source GNA*

However, during our interview with some of the parents and guardians at the resolution centre when visited. The following are some of the challenges;

- a. There have been concerns regarding the placements with some accusing the System of bias.eg my nephew got aggregate 10 but didn't get 1st, 2nd or 3rd choice, rather 5th – Guardian.
- b. We also observed that some of the parents and guardians were not able to fill the forms at the resolution centre which they required support. The research team supported some of them to fill the forms.
- c. Some of the parents, siblings, and guardians were frustrated over the financial loss spent on transportation, time spent revisiting the centre, and were emotionally and psychologically stressful.
- d. Some of the parents and guardians were concern that they don't even know the deadline for the resolution process.

To conclude, we noticed that the management of the 2021/2022 Computerized School Selection and Placement Systems (CSSPS) have improved very well compare to previous years but still need some change considerations to make the process free ,fair and convenient for all.