



8<sup>th</sup> December, 2021

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **THE NATIONAL STANDARDIZED TEST (NST) SHOULD NOT BE CONDUCTED IN HASTE**

The Institute for Education Studies (IFEST) has observed the obvious confusion that is engulfing the maiden NST. The announcement of the conduct of the NST was made in June 2021 by the Minister of Education and it was scheduled to initially take place in November and then subsequently shifted to December. The fact that the Ministry of Education (MoE) and the Ghana Education Service (GES) could not use six (6) months to plan for this is a clear indication of outright dereliction of responsibility and hence teachers and pupils should not be made to suffer.

IFEST can state categorically that, MoE and GES are inadequately prepared to conduct the NST because of the following reasons:

1. The pilot test conducted by WAEC revealed varied challenges which have been communicated to the Ministry.
2. The printers selected to print the question papers and the scannable answer sheet as at 24<sup>th</sup> November have indicated to the Ministry that, upon being commissioned, they will need a month to fully carry out their activities.
3. The lack of sensitization and communication lapses which have been a challenge even for WAEC have not changed.
4. Fundamentally, the original mode of conducting the examination which was supposed to be school-based have been change to cluster based which brings to the fore issues such as:
  - a. proximity of school or home and exams centres.
  - b. the security of the learners and in the event that they will be transported, who pays for their transportation?
  - c. anxiety level of learners due to change of environment and others.

IFEST would want to further remind MoE and GES that, the complete change in the modalities has the potential of defeating the original intent of the NST. The NST is supposed to be a diagnostic test aimed at identifying basically the extent of learning poverty and also identify if the set standards in the standard-based curriculum are being achieved to enable education planners propose prescriptions to help mitigate the identified challenges. Consequently, any attempt to change the modalities and rush through the process will defeat the purpose of the NST.

IFEST therefore reiterate the fact that, the extension of the academic calendar is needless and will inconvenience teachers, parents and the pupils. We wish to advise the MoE and GES to suspend the conduct of the NST in its current form to a later date in January. This will enable teachers adequate time to orient the pupils on all aspects of the test.

We also call for the reversal of the cluster system to the original idea of a school-based test. Finally, we wish to appeal to the Ministry of Education to use this opportunity to resource NaCCA to enable them fulfil their core mandate as an assessment entity building on their previous experiences in the conduct of the previous National Education Assessment (NEA).

It must be stated that, the Ministry of Education and the Ghana Education Service will be held responsible by all other stakeholders in the event that things go wrong, if they do not heed to these cautioning.

Signed



Peter Anti

(Executive Director).

