ART TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION OF GHANA

PETITION TO PROF. KWASI OPOKU-AMANKWA, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF GHANA EDUCATION SERVICE, ON THE ONGOING 2020 VISUAL ARTS WASSCE PRACTICAL FEES CHALLENGES IN PUBLIC SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS

The Art Teachers Association of Ghana (ATAG) commends government for being proactive in absorbing the fee associated with 2020 WASSCE (West African Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination) practical for the Visual Arts student-finalists. It is first of its kind in the history of WASSCE and, therefore, highly commendable.

However, our visits to the Senior High Schools upon commencement of the examination on July 20, 2020 revealed that monies allocation per each student for the execution of the practical works in the Visual Arts subjects was Fifteen Ghana Cedis (15GHS). Based on the demand of the questions, this money is woefully inadequate and cannot cater for even one of the four (4) Visual arts elective subjects the students pursue.

There are eight (8) Visual Arts Subjects namely Basketry, Jewellery, Sculpture, Ceramics, Picture Making, Graphic Design, Leatherwork and Textiles in addition to General Knowledge in Art (GKA) which students are required to execute practical works as part of their 2020 WASSCE final examination. These subjects are categorised into *three-dimensional* (Leatherwork, Basketry, Jewellery, Sculpture and Ceramics), and *two-dimensional* (Picture Making, Graphic Design, and Textiles). Of these two categories, each student is mandated to study two subjects from each category in addition to General Knowledge in Art (GKA). This allow students to study an average of four visual arts subjects of which they are to execute practical works.

Buying materials and tools for the execution of practical works in these four subject areas is not realistic considering current market prices. For example, the Graphic Design question demands that students print T-Shirt. In this case, the student must buy T-Shirt (which on the average costs Ten Ghana Cedis) and prepare silkscreen, buy printing ink amongst others, which Five Ghana Cedis could not be enough. This is the case in one subject out of the four subjects. This present situation has put students, Art Teachers and school Heads in dilemma because it has direct effects on the final WASSCE results of the students.

We, the Art Teachers' Association of Ghana, by this petition, appeals to Government to act immediately in finding amicable solution to this financial problem.

Besides, both first year and continuing Senior High Students require tools and materials from the beginning of each semester in pursuing the average of four Visual Arts subjects. A pilot study we conducted in public Senior High Schools indicated that schools do not received any materials and tools on these eight subjects except papers and acrylic colours.

Drawing is foundational to all the eight Visual arts subjects. This does not mean art is all about drawing. Providing only papers and acrylic colours and leaving out the chunk of tools and materials in the training of the Visual Art students is problematic. In our study it was evident that these practical subjects were in many cases thought in theoretical mode due to absence of the tools and materials. Providing these tools and materials in the training of the students help them to be self-employed after school.

We are, therefore, appealing to government to as a matter of urgency increase the practical fee paid per head regarding Visual Arts student-finalists partaking in the 2020 WASSCE (West African Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination). Government must also provide tools and materials for the continuing Visual Art students on all the eight subjects for every semester in each academic year.

Thank you.

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CC:

Hon. Deputy Minister. TVET, MoE, Accra

The Chairman, GES Council, Accra

The President, CHASS