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His Excellency, Babajide Sanwoolu
Governor, Lagos State,
Secretariat,
Alausa, Lagos

Dear Mr. Governor,

OPEN LETTER - RE: TAX CLEARANCE REQUIREMENTS FOR FREE WAEC REGISTRATION FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS STUDENTS

Recent reports indicate that the Lagos State Government (LASG) has stated that students enrolled in state-run public secondary schools will only be entitled to free WAEC registration if they can provide the tax clearance certificates of their parents or guardians.

While I fully support legitimately enforcing tax compliance, this particular policy raises serious concerns. Education is a fundamental right, and access to essential examinations like WAEC should not be conditional on the financial status or tax documentation of a child's parents or guardians. This approach risks penalizing students for circumstances beyond their control, potentially shutting the door to opportunities that could transform their lives.

As I have consistently advocated, Lagos should provide truly free formal, technical, and vocational education for all children in public schools up to the senior secondary certificate level, with the only exception being those who can and voluntarily choose to pay. This is not just a progressive policy; it is a necessary investment in the future prosperity, security, and stability of our state. LASG itself communicates that it has a policy of free education up to Secondary School Level. Even the Federal Government has announced its intention to redefine basic education as 12 years of primary and secondary education combined.

The requirement of tax clearance for WAEC registration appears to be a case of being penny wise and pound foolish. In the long run, denying students who cannot pay, access to WAEC registration will have far greater economic and social costs. While ensuring tax compliance is important, it should be pursued separately from education policy, ensuring that no child's future is held hostage to revenue collection.

This policy is unjust and misdirected. At a time when Lagos should be strengthening its commitment to inclusive policies that will drive broad-based development, this move risks deepening inequality and pushing the most vulnerable students further behind. I strongly urge the government to reconsider and uphold the principle that every child, regardless of background, has unimpeded and full access to senior secondary education including WAEC examination. It is also in our collective mutual interest to do so.

Funso Doherty