Funso Doherty
Lagos Nigeria
email: fd@funsodoherty.org

26 April 2025

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

Dear Mr. Governor,

OPEN LETTER RE: 54.3% WASSCE FAILURE RATE IN LAGOS STATE PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

I write in reference to the submission made by the Hon. Commissioner for Basic and Secondary Education at this week's Ministerial Press Briefing, in which he reportedly revealed that over 31,000 out of 58,188 students in Lagos State public schools who registered and sat for the 2024 WASSCE failed the examination, an alarming 54.3% failure rate.

This figure is deeply troubling. In a state with a predominantly youthful population, it serves as a harsh indictment of governance outcomes over the past 26 years, spanning the current and previous administrations since 1999. It reflects a disconnect between the priorities of government and the pressing needs of the less-privileged majority.

More critically, it signals a failure of leadership to safeguard the future of the most vulnerable. Our state's long-term development depends on the strength of its education system. With outcomes like this, that future is at serious risk.

It is especially concerning when juxtaposed with the frequently celebrated growth in the state's internally generated revenue, largely powered by taxes paid by the same people now let down by the system. Governance must be measured not just by revenue growth but by how those resources improve lives.

In light of this crisis, I reiterate the following urgent calls for action:

1. Double the budgetary allocation to education from the current 7% to at least 14% within the next two to three years. Make education genuinely free up to secondary level by removing hidden barriers.
2. Prioritize foundational learning by expanding investments in primary education, which is critical to long-term academic outcomes.
3. Scale up technical education opportunities to equip students with practical skills for the workforce.

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4. Improve teacher quality and availability through better hiring practices, competitive remuneration, and consistent monitoring and evaluation.
5. Introduce standardized testing at various stages to track learning progress and benchmark against global standards.
6. Provide free, safe, and accessible transportation for all students in uniform up to secondary school level.
7. Develop a concrete strategy to reduce the number of out-of-school children and integrate them into the system.
8. Introduce tracking mechanisms to periodically measure the effects of these reforms.

Let us be clear: though long in the making, this is an emergency. If we fail to address it, the long-term social and developmental consequences will be severe and far-reaching. We must act now.

Thank you for your attention.

Funso Doherty