



PARLIAMENT OF SIERRA LEONE

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PRESS RELEASE



MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION HEEDS TO PARLIAMENTARY SUMMONS, OUTLINES CHALLENGES IN THE EDUCATION SECTOR

Pursuant to Section 107 and paragraphs a & b of subsection 2 of the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone, following a parliamentary summon, the Minister of Basic and Senior Secondary School Education, Conrad Sackey on Thursday 08/05/2025 Conrad Sackey appeared in Parliament to explain to MPs and the general public why a huge number of pupils were dropped out of the ongoing 2025 West African Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (WASSCE), a matter that has attracted huge public interest.

Explaining to Members of Parliament, the Minister of Basic and Senior Secondary Education, Conrad Sackey described the issue as a grave concern that is seriously affecting quality assurance. He told Parliament that the ministry is tirelessly working to resolve the issues. According to the Minister, the West African Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) is a public and international examination. The Minister stated that Sierra Leone is a bit flexible when it comes to the submission of qualified candidates.

He said no member country should determine when the portal will be closed. He however said, that the ministry made had made several appeals to the West African Examination Council (WAEC) the examination body for consideration, but these appeals proved futile.

The Minister informed Parliament that schools were informed about uploading the required information, but some schools refused to comply with the procedures. He added that some schools entered the names of pupils who were not qualified and do not have the requirements to sit the exams.

In his explanation, the Minister said that the majority of the pupils who submitted their BECE results did not belong to them, which prevented entries for the 2025 ongoing WASSCE examination.

He said 892 schools complied with the deadlines, but 82 schools were unable to comply with the directives of the ministry, which led to some schools not taking the exams.

The Minister named and shamed schools that were involved in malpractices in Freetown, citing statistical evidence, backed with data.

Giving statistical evidence, the Minister highlighted figures of pupils taking WASSCE Exams. "A candidate who sat to BECE in 2020, should be in SSS 1 in 2021, but some of these pupils were submitted for entries to take the WASSCE exams for 2025, which was incorrect", he said.

The Ministry has taken the following measures to address the issue:

1. The Ministry has held engagement with WAEC to reopen the online portal and
2. The Ministry has further engaged the Gambia and Nigeria High Commissioners in order to reopen the portal for pupils in Sierra Leone

The Minister gave a relief that the government has made commitments to helping the affected students with private WASSCE. He made a disclaimer that the private exams would be only for those who are truly qualified to take the 2025 Government WASSCE Exams.

Explaining, the Minister categorically revealed that principals of secondary schools were given deadlines to upload entries for candidates for the examinations, but some deliberately failed to do so, in light of bogus and fake candidates who lacked the necessary qualifications.

During the questions and comments session, Hon. Abdul Karim Kamara said that the issues are discouraging and are really affecting parents. He added that the problem affecting schools is that principals lacked confidence to work with the Ministry in order to deliver on time.

Contributing to the debate, Hon. Alpha Fode Madie Jabbie, Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Basic and Senior Secondary Education, defended the Ministry and challenged those casting blames on the Ministry to provide evidence. He said the BRS for most pupils was fake.

He also said that the schools are refusing to comply with directives and procedures, which is causing most of the problems that are affecting the students.

Proferring solutions regarding the countless problems in the education sector, the Deputy Leader of Opposition 1, Hon. Daniel Koroma asked for more government interventions for the future of the children. He said the issue is as a result of the problems caused by schools and administrative lapses by WAEC, the examination body, and the Ministry of Education. He added that school going pupils and parents are suffering greatly and that Parliament should do something about it.

Adding his contributions to the discussion, the Acting Leader of Government Business, Hon. Bashiru Silikie said that the government is committed to making education more conducive for every Sierra Leonean. He used the occasion to call on the minister to proffer solutions for the pupils who were not able to go through the portal for entry.

Speaking on the way forward regarding the countless concerns raised by Members of Parliament, the Minister of Basic Education, Conrad Sackey said that the issues are of grave concerns and required high attention. He said that until Sierra Leone decides to take action against perpetrators of examination malpractices, it could not move forward as a nation. He also said they need to have a unique learner identity to resolve some of these issues. He revealed that the government through the Ministry of Education will pay for the Private WASSCE examination for those who are eligible but were left out of the current examinations. He said approved schools would now be gazetted to address some of the issues and that the ministry is coming up with a Bill to address all of the problems, and that the ministry needs the support of Parliament for approval. He assured that the ministry would work tirelessly to resolve the issues affecting the nation in light of education. He finally assured MPs of presenting a Bill aimed at addressing the issues.

Parliamentary and Public Relations Department

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