

For Immediate Release

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Poor 2025 WASSCE Results Would Dangerously Push Over 220,000 Failed WASSCE Students Toward Illegal Mining (Galamsey) As Free SHS Crisis Persist – YAFO Institute Warns

The YAFO Institute releases this presser in response to the 2025 WASSCE results, which show significant declines in student performance in key core subjects. The poor outcomes – especially the high failure rates in **Core Mathematics** and **Social Studies**, as highlighted by the Minister of Education, Honorable Haruna Iddrisu – align with our findings on the unintended effects of the Free Senior High School (Free SHS) policy.

According to the results, **only 48.73% passed Core Mathematics**, while **Social Studies fell to a 55.82% pass rate**. These represent hundreds of thousands of students who cannot meet tertiary admission benchmarks. This marks the lowest recorded performance in four years and a reality check for Free SHS Policy that has occasioned unintended consequences.

The Institute's peer-review study, [*"Counting the Costs: The Unintended Consequences of Ghana's Free Senior High School Policy on Household Poverty."*](#) documented the early warning signs that have now materialized. The research identified several structural factors undermining learning quality:

- Overcrowded classrooms due to increased enrolment
- Insufficient infrastructure and teaching materials
- Reduced contact hours under the double-track system
- Poor academic performance
- Poor feeding of students and starvation
- Additional financial burden on parents

These systemic and unintended consequences of Free SHS Policy have now translated into weakened academic performance nationwide as has reflected in the 2025 WASSCE results. What is dangerous is the fact that over 220,000 failed WASSCE Students are likely to join the workforce of illegal mining to deepen the country's environmental challenges as unemployment rate hikes.

This dangerous trajectory requires urgent policy actions. The YAFO Institute recommends as follows;

1. Undertake a comprehensive review of Free SHS Policy to involve more private schools and with focus on delivering quality education and not just access to education.

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2. Undertake national audit of SHS Infrastructure, teacher availability, feeding and learning resources.
3. Restoring and conduct frequent end of term exams for secondary students across all levels and releasing timely terminal reports to students.
4. Develop a strong monitoring and evaluation structure to routinely evaluate the impact of the Free SHS program, utilizing data to make well-informed modifications to policies and practices.
5. Abolishing of the double track system in secondary school education
6. Adhering to calls to standardize schools across the country to ensure equitable distribution of resources and infrastructure as well as involving private sector partnership in the educational sector to alleviate infrastructure challenges, easing overcrowding in public schools as well as creating jobs.
7. A review of school list (prospectus) to verify their indispensability and cost-efficiency, hence reducing superfluous costs for parents.

“Ghana must not accept the poor performance in the 2025 WASSCE results as normal. The results show that the Free SHS Policy reform is no longer optional – it is urgent and students who are unable to progress has the potential to feed galamsey workforce.” Stated by Nathaniel Dwamena, President of the YAFO Institute.

Free SHS remains an important social intervention. However, without addressing its implementation failures, the programme risks delivering mass access to education without delivering actual learning.

- The End -

Note to Editors

YAFO Institute spokespeople are available for further comment. [Click Here](#)

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