

**NATIONAL SENIOR SECONDARY EDUCATION COMMISSION (NSSEC)**

**No. 14 Yobe Close, Maitama, Abuja**

**The National Senior Secondary Education Commission Act, 2023: The Role and Responsibilities of the States and the FCT**

**By**

**DR. IYELA AJAYI, Fnim, Fimc**

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

Being A Paper Presented during the Capacity Building Workshop for Honourable Commissioners of Education in Nigeria, Organised by the NIGERIA GOVERNORS’ FORUM and NEW GLOBE, at Wells Charlton Hotel, Asokoro, 7th December, 2023.

**1.0 Preamble**

 In 2004, the Federal Government of Nigeria disarticulated secondary education and merged the junior secondary component with basic education. This led to the establishment of the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC).

 The implication of the above, was that from 2004, senior secondary education became the only sub-sector of the Nigeria education system without a regulatory and intervention agency. For instance, Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) regulated and intervened in the primary and junior secondary education sub-sector, the National Universities Commission (NUC), National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) and National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) regulated all the activities of Universities, Colleges of Education and Polytechnics respectively. These tertiary educational institutions, also, enjoyed TETFund interventions.

 Clearly, senior secondary education became the only sub-sector without an agency to regulate and provide intervention in critical areas or need.

 Without a regulatory and intervention agency, senior secondary education and Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) sub-sector suffered many years of neglect and bedeviled by a host of challenges such as decayed infrastructure, inadequate facilities, inadequate teachers, weak governance and so on.

 In an attempt to bridge the gap and reposition the system, the Federal Government established the National Senior Secondary Education Commission (NSSEC) in April 2021. On 11th May 2023, former President Muhammadu Buhari, GCFR signed the NSSEC Act, 2023 into law. This act has been gazzeted.

**2.0 Vision and Mission of NSSEC**

 **Vision**

 To reposition senior secondary education in Nigeria for global competitiveness.

 **Mission**

 To provide senior secondary graduates with life skills and relevant academic qualifications for further studies.

**3.0 Mandates of the Commission**

According to the NSSEC Act 2023, the mandates of the Commission are to:-

*(a) prescribe and enforce the national Minimum Standards for senior secondary education in Nigeria;*

*(b) formulate policy on senior secondary education subject to the approval of the Federal Government;*

*(c). develop policy guidelines for the operation of senior secondary education programme in Nigeria;*

*(d). advise the Federal Government on the funding and development of senior secondary education in Nigeria;*

*(e). implement the senior secondary education programme in Nigeria;*

*(f). present periodic progress reports, subject to the approval of the Board, on the implementation of senior secondary education programme to the President through the Minister;*

*(g). identify areas of possible intervention in the provision of senior secondary education facilities;*

*(h). collate and prepare after consultation with the relevant stakeholders, periodic master plans for development of senior secondary education in Nigeria;*

*(i). coordinate the implementation of the senior secondary education related activities in collaboration with non-governmental and multi-lateral agencies;*

*(j). collaborate with the Nigeria Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) to ensure effective research, development, implementation and monitor of curriculum for senior secondary education;*

*(k). develop and disseminate instructional materials for senior secondary education in Nigeria in collaboration with other relevant agencies;*

*(l). establish senior secondary data bank and conduct research on senior secondary education in Nigeria;*

*(m). support national capacity building for teachers and managers of senior secondary education in Nigeria;*

*(n). regulate the implementation of the safe school initiatives in senior secondary schools in Nigeria;*

*(o). collaborate with relevant agencies and organisations to promote science, technology, engineering, arts and design, and mathematics (STEAM), technical, vocational education and training (TVET) and entrepreneurial skills at senior secondary education level;*

*(p). collaborate with relevant examination bodies to monitor the conduct of external examinations at the senior secondary education level;*

*(q). collaborate with other relevant agencies and stakeholders to promote inclusive senior secondary education programmes in accordance with the provisions of this Act;*

*(r). Collaborate with state governments to coordinate personnel audit of teaching and non-teaching staff of all senior secondary educational institutions in Nigeria;*

*(s). collaborate with donor agencies and other development partners on matters relating to senior secondary education; and*

*(t). perform such functions as the Minister may determine as are necessary or expedient to ensure the efficient performance of the functions of the Commission under the Act.*

**4.0 Establishment of the NSSEC Fund**

As part of the measures to achieve the mandates above, the Federal Government is to establish the National Senior Secondary Education Commission Fund into which allocations of at least 2% of the Consolidated Revenue Fund (CRF) of the Federation shall be paid. All other monies realized from other Sources such as endowments, fund raising activities, foreign aid, local and international grants for senior secondary education shall also be paid into the NSSEC Fund.

**4.01. The Objectives of the National Senior Secondary**

 **Education Commission (NSSEC) Fund**

The objectives of the National Senior Secondary Education Commission (NSSEC) fund as spelt out in the Act are:

*(a). to provide grants to the Federal Unity Colleges, 36 States governments and Abuja, FCT for the provision of physical infrastructure for teaching and learning, instructional materials and laboratory equipment;*

*(b). to enhance Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Design, and Mathematics (STEAM), Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET), entrepreneurial skills, teacher development, instructional materials, educational inbalance, physical and mentally challenged;*

*(c). to provide support services for the training, re-training and development of academic and non-academic staff; and*

*(d). any other areas of need for the improvement and maintenance of quality standard in senior secondary education subject to the approval by the Board of the Commission*

In summary, the money in the NSSEC Fund shall be used for the development of senior secondary education in Nigeria.

**5.0 The Role and Responsibilities of States and FCT**

Section 21, sub-section 2 of the NSSEC Act 2023, provides that all states and FCT are expected to comply with the following conditions in order to benefit from the Federal Government intervention funds.

**(A).** Establishment of State Senior Secondary Education Board (SSSEB) in accordance with the Act, i.e taking into cognizance of its composition and functions which must be as provided in section 23 of the NSSEC Act, 2023. For the avoidance of any doubt on the composition and functions of the State Senior Secondary Education Board (SSSEB), each Board shall have:-

 *(a). a full-time Chairman who shall be :-*

 *(i). an experienced educationist or administrator with a PhD and 20*

 *years cognate experience, and proven integrity; and*

*(ii). the chief executive and accounting officer responsible for the administration of the education Board;*

*(b). a representative each of the Ministries responsible for education and finance in Abuja, FCT or the State, not below the directorate cadre;*

*(c). representative of All Nigeria Conference of Principals of Secondary Schools in Abuja, FCT or the State;*

*(d). a representative of the Commission, not below the directorate cadre;*

*(e). three members appointed from different Area Councils in the Abuja, FCT or from the three senatorial districts in the State in rotational basis for two years; and*

*(f). the Secretary to the Education Board of the Abuja, FCT or State*

*(2). The Chairman, members and Secretary of the Education Board who are not ex-officio members shall be appointed by the Minister of Abuja, FCT or the Governor on a full-time basis*

*(3). Members of the Education Board except Area Councils or senatorial districts representative shall hold office:-*

*(a). for a term of four years in the first instance and may be re-appointed for a further term of four years and no more; and*

*(b). on such terms and conditions as may be specified in their letters of appointment.*

***5.01. Functions and powers of the State and FCT Senior***

 ***Secondary Education Boards***

*According to the NSSEC Act, 2023 the State and Abuja, FCT Senior Secondary Education Board shall be responsible for:-*

*(a). the Management of senior secondary school in the State and Abuja, FCT,*

*(b). the recruitment, appointment, promotion and discipline of teaching and non-teaching staff on grade level 07 and above;*

*(c). posting and deployment of staff, including intra state transfer;*

*(d). disbursing funds accruing to it from both Federal and State Government Source;*

*(e). setting up an effective functional monitoring and supervisory units in collaboration with Commission*

*(f). undertaking new capital projects;*

*(g). the training and re-training of teaching and non-teaching staff;*

*(h). accessing and funding of salaries and allowances of teaching and* non-teaching staff based on the scheme of service approved by the State Government;

*(i). ensuring that annual reports are rendered by heads of schools on teachers appointed to assist them;*

*(j). preparing testimonials and certificates of service for teaching and non-teaching staff whenever necessary;*

*(k). dealing with leave matters, including annual vocation;*

*(l). submission of an annual action plan of projects to be undertaken to the Commission; and*

*(m). performing such other functions as the Commission may assign to it.*

Therefore, there is the need for the domestication of the NSSEC Act 2023 in every state of the Federation including the FCT. This will require the following:-

* Drafting and passage of an Executive Bill by the State House of Assembly for the establishment of State Senior Secondary Education Board (SSSEB) with the composition and functions as provided in the NSSEC Act 2023;
* Elimination of any contradicting provision that would debar the state from benefiting from the NSSEC Funds;
* Meanwhile, it is important to point out that the NSSEC Act 2023, provides that each state and FCT should “contribute at least 5% of the total cost of projects as its commitment in the execution of projects”.

***6.0 Establishment of a separate account by the Education***

 ***Board***

Finally, it should be pointed out that the State Senior Secondary

 Education Board is required:-

(*i). to establish and maintain a separate account into which shall be paid and credited money from the Federal or State Governments or any other source*

*(ii). to disburse from the account all expenses relating to the management of senior secondary education in the state.*

**7.0. Disbursement of the NSSEC Fund**

 By the NSSEC Act, 2023, the NSSEC Fund shall be disbursed directly to the:-

 (i). Federal Unity Colleges; and

 (ii). State Senior Secondary Education Board and the FCT Senior Secondary

 Education Board.

 However, it should be pointed out that the National Senior Secondary Education Commission (NSSEC) has the power to sanction any Senior Secondary Commission Board on misapplication of previous disbursement.

**8.0. Guidelines for Disbursing, Accessing and Utilizing the NSSEC Funds**

A draft guidelines for disbursing, accessing and Utilising the NSSEC Fund has been prepared by the Commission. This will be made available after consideration and approval by the Federal Government.

**9.0 Conclusion**

 Finally, we solicit for your full support and cooperation as we, collectively, strive to reposition senior secondary education sub-sector.

**Thank you, your Excellencies and Honourable Commissioners for your time** and patience.