

# PROVISION AND MANAGEMENT OF FACILITIES IN SECONDARY EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

*Mrs. Nnennaya Ihiam*

## Abstract

The responsibility of making appropriate material resources available to the Secondary Schools may devolve on the government. Certainly, the management and use these resources for the accomplishment of the educational purpose rests with the school principal. School buildings, equipment and supplies cost a great deal of money. Therefore, they should be adequately managed and cared for. Moreover, the health of the students can be affected by a poor quality of custodial services. The storage and distribution of school supplies and equipment must also receive adequate attention. With regards to the receipt of school supplies, a sound system of accountability for what is delivered must be guaranteed. It is also important to protect and preserve school records. Their importance is so great that often the law requires a long period of time for their preservation. School libraries are as important as the school records and must be carefully managed. It is suggested that in planning a school library, attention should be given to its size, scope of collection, housing, staffing, and equipment. The collection of books need not be too elaborate initially but must be determined by the local conditions and resources and built up and improved upon as occasion arises. The management and maintenance of school vehicles is another crucial area. Safety of the transportation system should be aimed at, and regular repairs and adjustments must be made to prevent mechanical deterioration.

## Introduction

Facilities are those factors which enable production workers to achieve the goals of an organization. Facilities are plants (buildings), equipment, material and so forth. In a simple direct form, facilities are things the workers need to make their production efforts noticeable (Egbe, 2001). School facilities are the operational inputs of every instructional programme. The school is like a manufacturing organization where plants and equipment must be in a top operational shape to produce result. Government policies on school facilities vary. In some cases the parents of students -are expected to buy textbooks needed, and in others the government provides them free. Library books are generally expected to be bought from public funds, which are usually too limited to support an effective library service. Sometimes governments take upon themselves the planning, constructing, and equipping of school buildings with little or no consultation with the school staff who use them. Whatever the government policies may be, it is the duty of the principal to manage, maintain in good order the textbooks, records, furniture, equipment, buildings and grounds entrusted to his care (Edem, 1987).

Programmes of instruction have their specific demand for facilities. The Nigerian educational system places much emphasis on academic and technical programmes requiring specialized facilities. Educational production facilities are elements that are necessary for teaching and learning, such as building, laboratory equipment, machinery, furniture, electrical fixtures and water. In recent years, the Nigerian educational system has witnessed tremendous growth especially in student enrolment. This situation calls for adequate provision and maintenance of appropriate school building and facilities in order to ensure effective teaching and learning situation.

The discussion in this paper essentially focuses on

- a) buildings and grounds.
- b) storage and distribution of supplies and equipment.
- c) protection of school records.
- d) administering school libraries.
- e) operating and maintaining transport facilities.

## Buildings and Grounds

Billions of naira have been spent in the construction of school buildings, purchase of equipment, machineries, and furniture to enhance teaching and learning but very little thought has ever been given

to the maintenance. Investment in school buildings involves a great deal of capital outlay and therefore the proper care of these buildings is a very important administrative task. Again the health of the students and teachers who occupy them may be affected by the amount of care that is taken. This should include those routine activities which ensure the daily smooth running of the school like clearing the buildings and grounds, distributing supplies, and locking and unlocking classrooms, offices, and stores. There should also be schedules of work showing what is to be done, by whom, at what time of the day and under whose supervision.

Maintenance should also include the repairs of furniture, equipment, and fixtures and the interior and exterior painting of all buildings. The school buildings and the compound should be made to look as attractive as possible. There seems to be no culture of school facilities maintenance in Nigeria. The lack of culture is neither restricted to the public school system nor to tertiary institutions, but there is abundant evidence to show that, federal and state institutions or parastatals are usually neglected.

Government needs a maintenance policy for secondary schools. This will no doubt help administrators not only to focus on irrelevant administrative Issues but on programme viability and success. There are unfinished buildings all over the educational institutions, equipment bought for secondary schools by the Federal Government in the early 1980's are still wasting away in their original crates, Osadolor (2000). In building renovation, it is necessary that the historical information about the building is kept to guide future maintenance. Duze and Agbulu (1988) indicate that every building in a school should have the following (a) name of building (b) room number, (c) drawing plans application number, (d) walling materials, (e) year of construction (f) total cost of construction (g) building contractors. It is important to keep information on routine checks to ensure that adequate maintenance is undertaken form time to time. Oyesola (2000) also states that in planning for school buildings and facilities certain characteristics or qualities are worthy of consideration. These are

i The school plant must be functional. This is saying that the school plant must satisfy the aspirations or the set objectives of the school. It must be capable of allowing varying and flexible instructional activities, which are consistent with the implementation of the instructional programme.

Ii It must be safe. School buildings and facilities must be located in such a way as to provide ready and easy access to students, teachers and the community. A situation where students have to cross railways or highways to get to school should be avoided. Poorly constructed buildings in terms of using poor quality material or non-adherence to specifications are dangerous to all users. Routine and preventive maintenance is a pragmatic way to ensure that facilities and equipment are serviced regularly and that they attain their maximum life span by preventing a breakdown before it occurs. Arubayi (1995) affirms that school buildings are likely to last several years when preventive maintenance culture is adopted.

f) iii The school plant must be helpful to the students, staff and all other users. The school buildings and facilities must help in facilitating school programmes as well as the community needs. Each component, that is each building, must be designed to meet some specific purposes and must be planned in such a way that it's use does not constitute a nuisance to others. For example, the school workshop or football pitch should not be constructed near the school library. The football pitch should be constructed in such a place that the community could use the facility without interference with other components in the school.

o) iv The physical environment of the school enhances the creation of a feeling of pride in the staff and students. Therefore, school buildings should be attractive and psychologically helpful. In other words, the school plant must be aesthetically appealing thereby making learning easier.

V It must provide easy access to all users and easy access for maintenance purposes. Also, the school plant must be of such simple structures as to make its maintenance economically reasonable. The characteristics mentioned above should be achieved only through the effort of a well-planned school plant.

### **Storage and Distribution of Supplies and Equipment**

Generally, the management of supplies and equipment in schools allow the local purchase of some items as authorized by the Ministries or the Boards of Education, the receipt of other items from the agents of the Ministries or the Boards, and their recording, storing and distribution (Edem, 1987). These functions require the adequate accounting of all receipts and payments, by responsible persons. In a school where a qualified and officially recognized bursar is employed full-time, the management of school equipment and supplies can form part of his work. In other schools, the principals, may find it necessary to handle the work themselves, helped by assistants they may be authorized to act as recorders and distributors of supplies to the users. In this case it may be necessary to maintain two

stores, one maintained as a central warehouse and managed by the principals themselves and the other by their assistants.

When a large quantity of good is purchased or received, it must be stored for use at the point of need, and inventories and other control records kept. The receiving process involves (i) signing for the delivered goods by the principals or by other authorized persons, and (ii) the entries of the received items on the appropriate record. There is an advantage in providing central storage space separately for consumable, non-consumable, and custodian supplies. Depending on its size, a school may have storage space in each of its main school buildings. The distribution of the needed items to the users must be done expeditiously, and therefore their requisition and purchase require advanced planning.

### **Protection of School Records**

School records must be protected from fire hazards and deterioration. Their importance is so great that often a long period of time is prescribed by law for their preservation. Records tell the history of a school by serving as historical sources of useful information to the principal's successors and to outside researchers.

Moreover, they offer a basis for objective evaluation and appraisal by inspectors. It is most important therefore that they should be properly kept and preserved. Poorly kept records provide a distorted and misleading picture of a school's past.

Records have been classified into four principal categories as follows:-

- i Vital records which usually cannot be replaced without destroying their original value,
- ii Important records which are replaceable at considerable expense,
- iii Useful records whose destruction will cause some inconvenience but which can be easily replaced,
- iv Non-essential records which should later be destroyed to conserve storage space.

This classification brings into focus the risks that may be involved in the event of loss and thus the need for adequate protective measures and security. Obviously, all the categories, except the non-essential ones require insulation from fire and protection from destruction by inspection. If feasible, therefore they should be preserved in insulated record containers or stone brick enclosures. In Nigeria, most statutory records fall into the vital records category and are:

- i The register of admission and withdrawals which contain details of each student's progress.
- ii The register of attendance.
- iii The log book in which are entered, as they occur, the introduction of new books or courses of instruction, school visitors, including governors and inspectors, absence; illness, or neglect of duty by a member of staff, or any special events or circumstances affecting the school which may, for the sake of future reference, or for any other reason, deserve to be recorded, etc.

Other statutory records which can only be replaced at considerable expense include (i) the education law (ii) the school's scheme of work (iii) the school general timetable and (iv) copies of the class timetable exhibited in each classroom.

Non-statutory school records can be similarly categorized into four main types. For example, teachers' lesson notes, mark books, students' cumulative folders, minutes of teachers' conferences and correspondence files are all vital records.

### **Administering School Libraries**

Most Secondary Schools in Nigeria are without sizeable collection of books, while some have only a scanty and poorly maintained library. Therefore, the operation of libraries in Nigerian Schools needs an urgent reform. The contribution of a school library to effective teaching and learning is obvious. It is an inseparable part of instruction, serving as a reading centre as well as a repository of information for both the teacher and the learner. Adesina (1990) maintains that the major objectives of school library in Nigeria should be

- i to acquire books and other materials to meet the demand of the curriculum and the needs of students and to organize these materials for effective use;
- ii to develop students' skill and resourcefulness so that they can make profitable use of the libraries and cultivate the habit of individual investigation;
- iii to encourage lifelong education through the subsequent use of library resources.

The administration of a school library service ought to be the joint responsibility of the Ministries and the Principals. The ministries must make sufficient funds available for the salaries of the school library personnel, books, equipment, and storage space. The principals are primarily concerned with

- i keeping the Ministries regularly informed about the needs of the library;
- ii providing leadership to both the staff and the students in developing a knowledge and understanding of the importance of the library; and
- iii seeing that the library facilities are maintained in good shape. In planning a school library, attention should be given to its size the scope of its book collection, housing, staffing and equipment. The library building should be accessible from all the classrooms, free from distraction and located away from road traffic. The choice of the site should permit future expansion.

The furniture should consist of tables, chairs, staff desks, catalogue cabinets and periodical stands. In many schools the employment of fully professional library staff presents difficulties. Currently, non-professionals are usually selected and assigned to library duties. One solution is the appointment of teacher- librarians and provision made for their in-service training.

### **Operating and Maintaining Transport Facilities**

State Governments in Nigeria may afford to provide secondary schools at least with a vehicle or two for field trips and excursions. Whatever the case may be, steps to minimize accidents must be taken, by paying attention to the competence of the drivers and the maintenance of the school vehicles. Maintenance and repair programmes \must be regular and thorough. Thus, repairs and adjustments must be made promptly before major damage occurs, vehicles must be examined regularly and the moral character, physical condition, and demonstrated driving ability of the driver must be scrutinized before his employment.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The primary purpose of school facilities is the sustenance of a good educational programme. Consequently, it is very necessary to design educational facilities in such a way and with such competence that would meet the educational programmes they are meant to serve.

Therefore, the design of good school facilities should adequately cater for the health, safety, comfort, convenience and aesthetically pleasing learning environment, which are good for educational development.

Provision of adequate facilities in any educational system, be it at the primary, secondary or tertiary levels, enhances learning and improves productivity. It helps in achieving the laudable objectives of secondary education programme in Nigeria. Management is the heart and soul of any given task, hence the need for proper management and utilization of the facilities by government, teachers, students and the community members to enhance teaching and facilitate learning.

The needed funds for the provision of these facilities should be the role of all and sundry, government at all levels, private investors, professional associations, teachers, NCOS, parents and students. Prompt release of budgeted fund for the facilities and prudent spending and application of such fund would make set objectives realizable. To achieve broad educational objectives of secondary education and for high productivity, adequate schools facilities must be provided and must be well managed and maintained.

### **References**

- Adesijia, S. (1990). *Educational Management*. Enugu: Fourth Dimensions Publications.
- Arubayi, E. (1995). Maintenance of School Buildings. *Data Management in Schools*. Egbe T. Ehiametalor, NERA Publications.
- Duze, M. and Fagbulu, A.M. (1988). *Record for Teachers*. Ibadan: Evans Brothers Nigeria Publishers.
- Edem, D.A. (1987). *Introduction to Educational Administration in Nigeria*. Ibadan; Spectrum Books Ltd.
- Egbe, N. (2001). School Facilities and students in Secondary Schools in Kwara State Unpublished M.

Ed Thesis University of Ilorin, Ilorin.

Ehiametalor, E.T. (2001) School Facilities Management Practice in Nigeria. Nwagwu, N.A. and Mon, Nwadian! (eds.) *Current Issues in Educational Management in Nigeria*. Benin; Ambik Press.

Osadolor, O.A. (2001). An Analysis of the Allocation and Utilization of Resources to Pre- Vocational Subjects in Secondary Schools in Edo Stale. Dissertation Submitted to the University of Benin Postgraduate School.

Oyesola, G.O. (2000). Physical Facilities and Productivity in Education. Fagbamiye, E.O. and Durosaro, D.O. (eds) *Education and Productivity in Nigeria*. Ilorin; Haytee Press.

