

FCTA Proposes 5% Tax on each Private School Student as school owners say, No Way

A proposal by the authorities in Abuja's department of education to charge a 5% tax on tuition fees for students in private schools is infuriating proprietors, and promises to set off anger in residents bogged down by the harsh economic terrain, worsened since President Bola Tinubu took over the reins of power seven months ago. A memo of the meeting between school proprietors and officials of the department of education and other stakeholders, seen by our reporter and tagged, **IMPORTANT INFORMATION TO ALL PRIVATE SCHOOLS**, reads thus: Good morning, noble colleagues. You might have heard that we have been holding a series of meetings with FCTA Education Secretariat and other Private School Associations on a proposed new system of charging DQA annual dues. Below is the brief for your information and reactions:

1. Education Secretariat and DQA (department of quality assurance) are proposing a new system of charging private schools annual dues as against the current system that sees schools of different categories pay fixed amounts to DQA annually between N75, 000 and N300, 000 per annum. The new system is that they will now charge 5% of the tuition fee per child every term. What this means is that if your tuition fee is N200, 000 per term, you will pay N10, 000 per child multiplied by the number of school children in your school. For instance, if you have 300 pupils, you will pay N10, 000 x 300, which gives N3, 000,000 per term and N9, 000,000 per annum as against N250, 000 such school is currently paying as annual DQA levy.

2. The last meeting we had with the Education Secretary, some of us demanded the total cancellation of such the proposed policy, and the suggestion did not go down well with the Education Secretary. He said he had expected us to appeal for a reduction from 5% rather than an outright cancellation of the policy. He then requested that another meeting be held next week between us (Abuja Joint Private School Associations) and Education Secretariat.

3. Before the proposed next meeting, we, the representatives of the Abuja Joint Private Schools Association, met yesterday ... and came up with some resolutions as will be posted shortly. Lately, the Federal

Capital Territory Authority (FCTA) has unleashed a barrage of income generating exercises that has been raising the temperament of residents. One of such is the increase of official fees to procure land, and pay others fees. The reaction from membership of proprietors association has been fast and furious, as captured below and sent to our reporter last night. They are reproduced below:

Only wicked, irresponsible and unreasonable hearts would have this idea in a time like this. It is very unfair and should be resisted please. This is just too much to handle but God in his infinite wisdom will grant our leaders the best possible way to go about it and a successful outcome. We out rightly reject such an unbelievable and dangerous weapon used only against the private education sector. It's high time we stood firm against any form of discrimination and oppression from our supposed education ministry. "5% per child per term tuition fee as annual FCT Education Secretariat/DQA due". Please throw some light on this DQA. Is this an institution of government? Do they receive salaries n subvention from government? What value does this body add to school owners? Do we need them? The annual dues of #75k we duly pay them are now inadequate. On no condition will a kobo be added to the annual due! Why are these institutions bent on the strangulation of private schools! Why can't we go to court to stop this. These people are just criminals. I want to believe leadership has been changed and the new people are coming with a devise to make money. The dues we have been paying, what have they done with it? What support has DQA given to us? They want to get 5% from our revenue but what happens to our costs of running the school? They are now shareholders or what? Even shareholders share from losses! Do they even care about the education in Nigeria? Private schools are social enterprises! To think that we have been struggling to put our schools together amidst this economic situation is worrisome and frustrating! Or they expect us to transfer the burden on the parents who are already struggling to pay? I still can't get it. They are government agency for God's sake; they should be more concerned about social benefits!

