



STATEMENT ON TEACHERS' STRIKE

AN URGENT CALL FOR RESOLUTION AND SYSTEM REFORM

Introduction and Background

The nationwide strike by Ghana's pre-tertiary Teacher Unions, which commenced on 25th September 2026, has continued for 12 days, disrupting teaching and learning across the country. The industrial action follows unresolved concerns over the placement of promoted teachers on their appropriate salary scales and payment of related arrears, delays in concluding negotiations on a new Collective Agreement, and the non-operationalisation of the Deprived Area Allowance.

Eduwatch is concerned about the continuing loss of instructional time and its implications for learning outcomes and the academic calendar. Every additional day of disruption reduces instructional time and compromises children's right to education.

The impact is particularly severe for vulnerable learners who depend on school not only for teaching and learning, but also for school feeding and other essential social support services. Prolonged disruption can therefore affect both learning and child well-being, especially among children from low-income households.

Eduwatch calls on the Fair Wages and Salaries Commission (FWSC), Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Education, Ghana Education Service (GES), Controller and Accountant-General's Department (CAGD) and the Teacher Unions to intensify good-faith negotiations and agree on a credible, time-bound resolution that restores teaching and learning, with learners' interest at the centre of the process. We also call on the CAGD and GES to immediately act to ensure that all promoted staff receive their rightful compensation without further delay.

There are also important accountability questions for the FWSC. The existing Collective Agreement was due to expire in June 2026, with the Teacher Unions indicating that proposals for its review had been submitted several months earlier. This raises legitimate concerns regarding why meaningful negotiations were not concluded ahead of expiry, with industrial action becoming the trigger for greater urgency at the negotiating table.

Collective bargaining should be managed proactively, with negotiations commencing sufficiently ahead of the expiry of existing agreements, guided by clear milestones for conclusion. When delays in negotiation culminate in industrial action, it is learners who ultimately bear the cost through lost instructional time. Stronger institutional accountability is therefore required to ensure that avoidable administrative and negotiation delays do not repeatedly translate into disruption of teaching and learning.

Beyond resolving the immediate dispute, recurring challenges with promotions, payroll placement, arrears and teacher incentives point to systemic weaknesses in teacher human-resource and payroll management that require institutional reforms.

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CALL TO ACTION

1. Digitise GES and CAGD Processes

The **continued insistence by CAGD on paper-based processing** of teacher promotion and payroll documentation creates avoidable delays in placing promoted teachers on their appropriate salary scales. For a workforce of about 400,000 staff, the physical movement and manual verification of documents is inefficient, increases transaction costs and contributes to administrative backlogs.

Eduwatch recommends that CAGD, working with GES, transition to an interoperable digital process through which approved promotion records are transmitted electronically and securely for payroll action. Once a promotion has been approved and validated by GES, the information should flow electronically to CAGD without requiring further movement of physical documentation.

2. Align Institutional Functions with Education Sector Outcomes

The administrative functions of CAGD, FWSC, and the Ministry of Finance are central to translating education policy into results. While payroll integrity, collective bargaining, and fiscal discipline are essential to sound public financial management, these functions must be better aligned with sector priorities and education outcomes. A stronger results-based approach requires these institutions to recognise their shared accountability for education delivery and to coordinate decisions on payroll, compensation, workforce planning, and financing accordingly. Institutional processes should enable rather than constrain teacher deployment, retention, and service delivery.

Ultimately, institutional performance should be assessed not only by administrative compliance and fiscal efficiency, but by its contribution to education sector results: how many Ghanaian children gain equitable access to quality education and acquire the foundational knowledge and skills needed to succeed.

Eduwatch urges the FWSC, CAGD, and the Ministry of Finance to commit to aligning their administrative, workforce, compensation, and financing decisions with education sector priorities and outcomes; strengthening joint workforce planning and coordination to support equitable teacher deployment and retention; and establishing shared accountability for the extent to which institutional decisions enable effective education service delivery and improved learning outcomes for Ghanaian children.

3. Decentralise Teacher Promotions

The highly centralised promotion system creates administrative bottlenecks, particularly when large numbers of teachers must be processed through the same channel.

Eduwatch recommends that Regional Education Directorates be assigned greater responsibility for the assessment, verification and routine processing of promotions, while the GES Council maintains national oversight and approves recommendations.



Decentralisation, coupled with digitisation, and accompanied by clear national standards and accountability mechanisms, should reduce processing times and improve administrative efficiency.

4. Institutionalise an Annual Promotion Cycle

Promotion backlogs undermine teacher motivation, weaken confidence in career progression systems and generate avoidable financial liabilities through accumulated arrears.

Eduwatch recommends that GES should establish a fixed annual promotion calendar with clear timelines for applications, assessment, approval and payroll placement, and zero tolerance for avoidable backlogs. Teachers who qualify for promotion within a given year should be processed within the same annual cycle. Thus, even if only 20 teachers qualify in a year, the system should administer the relevant assessment and have the administrative capacity to process them within that cycle.

5. Make Promotion Placement Automatic and Time-Bound

Approval of a promotion should not mark the beginning of another lengthy administrative process. Delays between promotion approval and payroll placement defer remuneration legitimately due to teachers and subsequently create arrears and additional administrative costs.

Eduwatch recommends that every approved promotion should automatically trigger payroll placement within a clearly defined service standard. Teachers should also be able to track the status of their promotion and payroll placement through a digital platform.

6. Operationalise the Deprived Area Allowance

The **20 per cent Deprived Area Allowance proposal** was principally intended to strengthen teacher motivation and retention in deprived and hard-to-reach communities. However, despite the proposal being initially announced in 2009, subsequently featuring in the ruling party's 2012 and 2024 manifesto commitments, and finding expression in the existing Collective Agreement, there is still no operational framework to translate this longstanding commitment into payment.

Protracted delays in agreeing on the definition of deprived areas and eligible beneficiaries have stalled the process for close to two (2) decades. While transparent and objectively verifiable criteria are necessary, no targeting framework is likely to be perfect at inception.

Eduwatch recommends that the Ministry of Education, Teacher Unions and GES should urgently agree and validate a workable deprivation framework, with the Ministry of Finance providing the required fiscal and budgetary framework for immediate implementation. After nearly two decades of delay, largely due to disagreements over the definition and identification of deprived areas, the priority should be to operationalise the commitment, review implementation with evidence, and progressively refine the framework rather than allow the pursuit of perfect targeting criteria to cause further delays.



Conclusion

Eduwatch reinforces its calls on the FWSC, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Education, GES, CAGD and the Teacher Unions to ensure immediate payment of outstanding promotion allowances, urgently conclude the outstanding negotiations and restore teaching and learning, while committing to the institutional reforms required to prevent recurring disputes over collective agreements, promotions, payroll placement, arrears and teacher incentives.

Protecting instructional time and the right to education requires not only resolving the present strike, but also building efficient, predictable, transparent and accountable systems for managing Ghana's teaching workforce. Avoidable administrative and negotiation delays should not repeatedly be allowed to mature into industrial disputes whose greatest cost is borne by Ghanaian learners.

Accra, 7th October, 2026.