

# Govt releases GH¢47.13m for 2024 BECE

## — Minister

**By Sevierious Kale-Dery &  
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**T**HE Ministry of Finance has released GH¢47.13 million to the West African Examinations Council (WAEC), giving the council a lease of life

towards the conduct of the 2024 Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE).

The amount is about half of the GH¢95.83 million the government owed WAEC for fees in the conduct of previous examinations and will enable the examination body to proceed with the BECE to be conducted from Monday, July 8 to Monday, July 15, 2024.

The Minister of State at the Ministry of Finance, Abena Osei-Asare, confirmed this to the *Daily Graphic* last Friday.

The Head of Public Relations of WAEC, John Kapi, also confirmed the release the same day and expressed the hope that given the

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urgency of the need, some expedited service would be attached to the processing of the payment through the Government Integrated Financial Management System (GIFMIS) into WAEC accounts.

"It will be sufficient," he said, when asked whether the amount released would be sufficient for the successful conduct of the examination.

"We have to draw a scale of preference and give priority to the conduct of the examination and pay off a little of our indebtedness while we put on hold payments we have to make to our suppliers," Mr Kapi explained.

### Other interventions

Mrs Osei-Asare, who is also the Member of Parliament for Atiwa East in the Eastern Region, said: The earlier amount of GH¢93 million the WAEC quoted included fees for the 2024 West African Senior School Certificate Examination which is not ready yet".

She said the Ministry of Education had requested GH¢87.6 million for the BECE.

"The Ministry of Education has requested for GH¢87.6 million for the BECE exams and other related matters. According to them, what they need now to enable WAEC to conduct the exams is the GH¢47.13 million and the government has released that".

"The rest will have to do with the marking. After the exams, the actual amount for payment to examiners involved in marking and other ancillary services related to the exams will also be known and then we can release that too," Mrs Osei-Asare added.

### Priority

After confirming the release in a separate interview, the Head of PR of WAEC said the release of the amount was currently being processed through GIFMIS.



• Abena Osei-Asare, Minister of State at the Ministry of Finance

"What we have now is a warranty for the cash and we are hopeful that the process through the GIFMIS would be expedited to facilitate the smooth conduct of the examination", Mr Kapi said.

"Even though the process through GIFMIS sometimes can take more than a week, we believe some urgency would be attached to this one," he said.

Mr Kapi said WAEC was ready for the deployment of the examination materials, expressing the hope that by July 4, the materials would have started moving outside Accra.

He, therefore, gave an assurance that when the processes were done and the cash was with WAEC, "the examination will be conducted as scheduled."

"Once the money matures, we will be able to conduct the BECE certainly," the WAEC head of PR added.

Mr Kapi explained that the current amount would not cover the marking, script checking and the release of the results.

He expressed the confidence that the remaining amount would be released promptly to enable the council to honour its obligations to its suppliers.

"As we speak, there is still GH¢698,000 arrears for the conduct of BECE 2023 and we are trusting that this too will be factored into the remaining amounts to be released," he added.

### Timelines

Asked about the timelines for the payment of the examiners, Mr Kapi said once they finished marking, the marks were keyed in to determine the number of scripts marked.

"So, we tally that in addition to the little allowances to be added, depending on your status - whether you are an assistant examiner, a team leader or chief examiner - and once Audit is able to audit and Finance approves it, we print the voucher out and within a week, they are paid," he explained.

Last year, however, the WAEC Head of PR said things did not go that way, "because there were a number of things that did not go right and so, we are hoping that this time around they will heed to our request".

"This time around, we are begging that we are given the money to enable us to work," Mr Kapi added.

### Background

Last week, WAEC expressed fears that it might not be able to conduct the 2024 BECE as scheduled if funds were not released.

It said as of last week, out of a total of GH¢95.83 million required for the conduct of the examination, only GH¢23

million had been made available.

In what appears to be a slip, the Majority Chief Whip, Frank Annoh-Dompfeh, told the House last Friday that the government had released a substantial amount of GH¢80 million to the WAEC for the conduct of this year's BECE.

He cited Mrs Osei-Asare as confirming the payment to the Majority leadership, saying "Mr Speaker, we are told a significant amount has been released."

### More urgent issues

Mr Annoh-Dompfeh disclosed that during a debate on the National Service Authority Bill, 2024.

During the debate on the bill, which is being considered under a certificate of urgency, the National Democratic Congress (NDC) MP for Bole Bamboi, Yussif Sulemana, urged the House to pay attention to more urgent matters.

He told the House that there were

"very important" bills such as the Affirmative Action Bill that should rather be taken under a certificate of urgency.

"We are not doing it but rather we are

talking about something that, in my opinion, can wait while we deal with these ones that go to the core of women development".

Mr Sulemana also stated that currently WAEC had been complaining that it did not have the money to conduct the BECE exam which the House must pay more attention to.

"We do not see that to be urgent and we do not see it as an issue that we should address immediately; what we are talking about is taking the National Service Authority Bill under a certificate of urgency when BECE will be written soon," he averred.

He, therefore, urged the House to exert pressure on the Minister of Education to be more interested in raising money for WAEC to be able to conduct the BECE exam "for our children rather".

### Not all money paid

Contributing, the Minority Chief Whip, Kwame Govers Agbodza, contradicted the Majority Chief Whip's assertion that the government had released GH¢80 million to WAEC.

He also cited Mrs Osei-Asare to have told the leadership verbally that she had worked on some money to be released in two tranches to WAEC.

"What I heard her say, without any evidence, was that some money was paid to WAEC yesterday and some would be paid today and it is about GH¢40 million and so if you pay GH¢40 million you are just halfway," Mr Agbodza said.

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