Efficient Use of School Records for Effective Management and Administration of Nigerian Schools
EFFICIENT USE OF SCHOOL RECORDS FOR EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION OF NIGERIAN SCHOOLS

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Abstract

This paper highlights the obviousness of the undisputable position of school records in achieving effective management of the schools as an academic institution that fulfils the educational goals and philosophy of the nation and makes recommendations to enhance its effectiveness as an art.

Introduction

The efficient use of school records for effective management and administration of the school plant has been captured in this paper. A case for the concept of school records keeping as emphasizing the need for school records, their importance and usage is presented in the step by step explanation of what school records are, the advantages and disadvantages of various forms of record keeping and a wholesome presentation of recommendations for enhancing proper school record keeping do lead to the conclusion of how important all issues surrounding school record keeping are to the entire process of the education industry. This as discussed would focus our collective educational destiny.

The concept of school records keeping

The records of a school consists of all the books, files and electronic devices such as compact discs, hard discs, etc. which contain information relating to what goes on in a school, who is in the school as well as what types of property the school owns. Some of these records are statutory while others are non statutory. The statutory ones are those that are required by the education law. The non-statutory ones are those which the school keeps because they are needed for the smooth administration of the school.

The following types of records were identified by Aja(2003) as the statutory records, which must be kept by every post-primary school to facilitate effective administration. These may include: the admission register, attendance register, the log book time table, the scheme of work, record of work/diary, visitors book, punishment book, students academic record/dossier, inventory duty record book, announcement book, transportation and leaving certificates, minutes book, staff attendance, register, financial records, and staff records. Each of these aforementioned records would still be explained in detail.
Types of School Records

As stated earlier, there are well-over thirty school records categorized into two main groups statutory and non-statutory.

Statutory records- are those that are mandatory under the law to be kept by each school. The school system is governed by laws and regulations. This is why at both federal and state levels, education laws (or decrees and edicts under a military regime) are enacted to control and give necessary direction to the system.

Under the law, some of the following are of statutory records that must be kept by each school:

**Admission**

*Administration Register:* This is a register of admission, progress and withdrawal of students: it should contain all valid particular of the students, such as admission number, name in full, sex, name and address of parents/guardians, date of birth, previous schools attended, last class read, date of admission, records of progress, date of leaving school, reason of leaving, transfer certificate number. All the entries should be hand-written and corrections should be made in such as way that the original entry and other corrections are both clearly distinguished. It should be kept for not less than fifteen(15) years from the date of last entry.

*Attendance Register:* This is a register that is kept for each class that must be handled and administered by a form master/mistress. It contains particulars of every student until he or she leaves the school. Students regular attendance is traced here. It contains full name of students admission number, state, date of birth and computation of attendance.

*Log Book:* This book contains records of important events happening in the school. The history of the school can be compiled from this record. It should be kept under lock and key.

*Time Table:* This shows the daily activities of the school class by class, periods by period, and timing allotted to different subjects periods taught by a teacher in a week.

*Scheme of Work/Diary:* This is the aspect that breaks down the syllabus into teaching units. It is broken down into topics, performance objectives and classes. (curriculum content). It has to be kept by every teacher, to be marked and endorsed by the head teacher. It shows the anticipated plan of action of curriculum to be covered. The diary further breaks down the scheme of work into weekly records of what the teacher has taught. It should be kept by teachers, but often checked and endorsed by the head teacher.

Other statutory records would include

- The syllabus – the lesson, notes and plan
- The time book – the visitors book
- The movement book – the corporal punishment book
Non-statutory records – These are important but not mandatory. They are usually kept to assist the head in the day-to-day management of the school’s affairs. Such records which can be further classified into.

i. Academic records
ii. Administrative records
iii. Store and financial records

These may include:

i. Records of physical development
ii. Minutes books
iii. Inventory book
iv. Fees register
v. Stock book
vi. Duty roster book
vii. Staff records
viii. School calendar
ix. Health record book
x. Accounts records

According to Agera (2008) non-statutory records are records which though not specially presented by law, are kept by the schools they provide a significant source of information to both the school and the community.

In relation to the above, the school should also keep the following: education law, National policy on education, inspection report, file, approved syllabus, and lesson attendance register etc

Efficient Records keeping and usage

In order that records would be useful in the school system they must be collected and kept efficiently and these required for those who collect process and store educational records in schools. They include:

- Honesty: This means the ability of the individual to report data the way they are presented.
- Objectivity: This is when data are reported void of bias
- Commitment: This refers to a sustained zeal which an individual requires in the process of data collection
- Expertise: The individual who is to collect data needs to process the knowledge and ability to carry-out the function. He should not be a novice on the job.

- Good human relations: A pleasant disposition to people releases their hearts to you. This is necessary in order to obtain reliable information from staff, students and even their parents.

**Importance of school records**

School records are very important and many authors and researchers including Ejeh (2013) and Akpakwu (2012) have identified them to include:

1. Provision of useful information on staff and students
2. Getting school property and management organized
3. Provision of facts on important activities of the school.
4. Guiding the academic programme of the school.
5. Provision of a data bank which can prove useful to educational planners in projecting into the future.
6. Serving as sources of information to supervisors and employers of labour
7. Assisting school heads in making decisions
8. Provision of authorities information sources for referencing on staff and students of the school where needed.
11. Provision of information needed on ex-students by higher and other related institutions and employers of labour for admission and or placement.
12. Records provide a basis for the objective assessment of the state of teaching and learning in the school, including staff and students performance by supervisors and inspectors.
13. Records ensure that the school heads keep strictly to the educational regulations.

**School Record Management**

Each school has a responsibility to maintain its records and record keeping systems. Although schools will have their own methods of creating and keeping records and sharing information with staff, students, parents and the general public. They should be aware that in doing so; they need to take account of matters such as:

- The most efficient and effective way of storing records and information, in other words, paper of electronics forms.
- The confidential nature of the records and information stored.
The security of the record system
- Privacy and disclosure
- Their accessibility and to whom they are accessible.

Effective management of school records by principals depends on certain management procedures and functions such as effective supervision, creation of records, effective leadership, monitoring, provision and training of adequate personnel, record-storage and retrieval, discipline and effective communication, delegation and duty, developing record keeping skills and motivation.

It is worthy to note that, the school records management system typically involves the following eight activities

1. Creation
2. Storage
3. Update
4. Retrieval
5. Use
6. Approval and retention
7. Achieving
8. Disposal

Creation: Beginning a new record and starting to record data and information, for example creating a student record card for a new student.

Storage: Keeping the records in an organized manner so they can be accessed by authorized people but kept secure from un-authorized access loss or damage.

Update: adding new information to a record or modifying existing information in a record

Retrieval: searching for location and extracting records from storage

Use: applying for information from the records to help make management and policy decision

Appraisal and retention: determining whether and how long a record should be retained for active use or archived or disposed of.

Archiving: storing records so they can be later retrieved for use.

Disposal: discarding, deleting or destroying a record.

School records management system (S.R.M.S) has to involve various school staff to systematically record data and information about different aspects of the school operations. They use specific, predesigned school records and follow procedures that are defined by school regulations and requirement. A good (S.R.M.S) is characterized by organized classification and
filling of school records in a way that makes it easy to search, access, retrieve and use the recorded data and information.

The aforementioned, makes it clear that efficient record-keeping is a sermons professional duty. It will be tantamount to sabotage for any individual in the school to mutilate fail to keep relevant school data. This action will be seen as undermining the collective effort of school management or government towards developing the nation, educational planning and administration will be handicapped when records are not properly kept or reported in the schools.

Storage and retrieval of school records

The storing of a school record involves keeping it in a safe custody. Safe custody means records are kept in a place where they cannot be destroyed or damaged and only authorized persons have access to them.

Retrieving of a record means any authorized persons will have access to a record at the time of need. Effective storage and retrieval methods will ensure that records are easily obtained whenever they are needed.

Records can be stored in files, stores, cupboards and cabinets, tables and drawers, computers and as displays on walls and notice boards. All these have their accompanying advantages and disadvantages.

The most commonly emphasized would include use of filing cabinets and computers.

Use of filing cabinets

Filing cabinets have flat file drawers. Drawers contain metal devices to hold papers in place as well as alphabetical dividers. E.g. a drawer would have a divider for Aa to Ac followed by a divider for Ac to Ae e.t.c.

Filing is one of the important tasks in any school. If school records are not properly kept and filed so that they can be retrieved when needed, then they serve no useful function. Filing cabinet in your school has a significant impact on the effectiveness of your school keeping system.

Advantages of using filing cabinets

- Documents are easily accessible if orderly arranged.
- Protects school records from being mixed up. Filing cabinets restricts/limit access to records from invasion.
- Prevent records from deteriorating.
- Disadvantages of filing cabinets
- Low filing density
- It is very expensive to procure in some cases
- It cannot be moved easily i.e. not very portable.

Computers

Computers are the most modern and widely used machines in the storage and manipulation of information. Educational records can be inputted into the computers for future reference.

Advantages of using computer to keep school records

Computers can help to manage school records by storing information in a way that allows for rapid sorting, searching and retrieval of data. Besides, reducing the use of and handling of papers, an additional advantage of a computerized system is in helping to analyse the recorded data and quickly generate various summary statistics, performance indicators, tables and graphs and even details school management. It also provides storage facilities in form of C.D ROMs, DVD and diskettes e.t.c

With the computer record keeping can automated; facilitated informs of excel, PowerPoint, word, access, CorelDraw e.t.c. There is high rate of turnover in record keeping using the computer. Keeping records with computer is joyful and pleasant the normal method which is very tasking.

Confidentiality of information is better handled using the computer with backups rather that use of hardware copies and other manual operation.

Portable computers can serve as handy books/diaries.

Disadvantages of using computer for school record keeping

Getting more addicted to computer use may only limit interpersonal interaction

It may lead to the inflammation of sight due to radiation

Data can be lost if not properly saved due to lack of backups

Data can be infected by virus which may destroy documents

It requires special skills to handle

Irregular power supply may hinder its operation

It could be capital intensive

Recommendation
School records storage facilities should be over handled so as to safeguard them against destructive agents as well as make them meet modern requirements.

Periodic workshops should be organized to enhance staff performance in creating, organizing and keeping school records. Reward system should be strengthened by supervisory agencies so that schools and individuals who keep records well are commended and those who err are reprimanded.

A more conducive working environment should be provided for teachers especially those who are involved in record keeping. A well-furnished office accommodation in this regard.

Proprietors of schools should expedite action on the provision of computers and accompanying accessories to facilitate data management in schools record keeping.

Periodic monitoring should always be carried out by the Ministry of Education, Teaching Service Board and Area Education Office to ensure records and data conform to generally acceptable standards.

**Conclusion**

The success of the education enterprise depends on well kept day to day records of events in the school. It would be impossible to make informed decisions concerning planning and administration of schools if there are no proper records for guidance. School record keeping is a very serious professional business and must be handled as such. Government and major stakeholders in the industry should do all that is necessary to facilitate effective and efficient management of school records.

**REFERENCES**


