

# School records and their essence in secondary educational institutions



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Records as defined by the American Heritage Dictionary (1980), and cited by Onifade (2004), are 'information or data on a particular subject collected and preserved' This definition implies that any processed or unprocessed datum that is collected and kept for future use constitutes a 'record'. (p. 60)

On regular basis, information on school personnel (pupils, teachers and non-teachers), facilities, funds and school activities, are collected and preserved.

This collection becomes school records. School records are therefore information or data which are collected on various aspects of a school and preserved for future use. The information or data which are written manually or electronically are preserved in books, files, diskettes and other electronic materials. Mbiti (1974), summarises this concept when he states that school records include all books and files containing information on what goes on in school, who is in the school and the type of properties owned by the school.

School records include (i) A register of admission and withdrawal (ii) A register of attendance (iii) A log-book (iv) A cash book (v) A visitor's book (vi) A copy of education law (vii) Scheme of work (viii) Teacher's record of work (ix) School time-table (x) Corporal punishment book (xi) Counterfoils of transfer and leaving certificates, and (xii) Minutes book of the Board of Governors. School records serve as a bank in which information is deposited and kept with the hope of retrieving and utilizing in the future. Proper keeping of school records could enhance planning process, serve as historical record, provide knowledge on students academic performance and

facilitate schools' financial administration. It will also provide a basis for advisory and counselling services.

School records provide raw data which can be used by officials of education ministries for planning purpose. Data collected from school records on pupils enrolment and school facilities can be analysed in order to determine the number of teachers and other resources that would be needed by the school. Within the school, records would enhance planning for placement of students into higher classes. Through records, especially the log-book, the history of the school could be known.

Important events of the school are recorded in the log-book. Hence, it services as a good reference point of whoever intends to know the happening in the school. In fact, it serves as historical sources of useful information to principal's or headmaster's successor and to outside researchers' (Edem, 1982). School records also enables us know the termly and yearly academic performance of students. School managers will be able to determine the academic progress of the students and take necessary precautionary measures towards improving their academic performance.

The financial status of the school could be determined through school records. Income and expenditure of the school are entered into appropriate ledger, and this enhances accountability on the part of the school administrator. School records also provide a basis for advisory and counselling services. Teachers, head teachers and school counsellors could make use of records in order to give advice on students' academic activities.

Using school record as a management strategy One purpose a school record can serve is to assist in effective management of the school. Managers are required to keep records not only because it is a statutory duty but because of its value in improving management practices. School records can enhance managerial duty performances in the following area: (i) Planning for resource acquisition and utilization Resources such as teachers, non-teachers and students, constitute the personnel in the school. They are to be absorbed into the school in adequate quantity and quality.

Also, facilities that would be needed in the school should be determined by the administration. Records such as students' admission and attendance registers, school inventories book and teachers' register will be consulted in order to plan for acquisition of the resources. Their utilization should also be planned for when records are consulted. Time is another scarce resource which needs to be well managed in order to avoid its being wasted. School calendar, time-table and class time-table could be used to allocate programmes, curricular and co-curricular activities of the school. Planning, coordination, control and organizing of school activities could be enhanced through the use of these records.

ii) Student and staff personnel services Teachers' office accommodation and students' classroom accommodation should be provided in school. Also, teachers and students' school and classroom attendance and movement during school periods should be monitored. Another aspect of personnel services is control and modification of students' and staff behaviour. Records such as students attendance register, staff time book, staff movement book, students class records book, teachers class record book, corporal

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punishment book, staff personal file and, students personal file will be administratively relevant in this situation. As stated by Akube (1991) when people are aware that records are being kept about them, they tend to be more careful in their general behaviour. Moreover, government regulations on what to do (course content, curriculum) who do it (personnel) when to do it (time) where to do it (educational institutions) and how to do it (methodology, funding, and facilities required), are vital to school management.

These are contained in the education law and the National Policy on education which are to be kept in school. (iii) Financial management When financial transactions are properly documented and kept in records, incidence of fraud, overspending and financial waste, will be curtailed to large extent. Records such as cash book, bank account book, cheque book, account ledger and receipt for payments, are useful records for this purpose.

(iv) Improvement of instructional programme could be achieved when records such as lesson plan, scheme of work and record of work are kept. Teacher's activities could be controlled and monitored when records of what has been done and what should be done within a period are checked. The teacher could be advised, praised, encouraged and directed as appropriate.

(v) Maintenance of effective interpersonal relationship with the community and external agencies. Record such as visitors book, Parent-Teachers Association minute book and Board of Governor's book, constitute points of reference of fostering good relationship between school and external bodies, knowing their needs and getting the needs of the school across to them.

Recommendations School record may not be able to serve its purpose as a <https://assignbuster.com/school-records-and-their-essence-in-secondary-educational-institutions/>

management tool unless certain measures are taken by the school administrators. The following recommendations are therefore worthy of note. School and classroom administrators should develop a positive attitude towards record keeping. As a result of lack of commitment on the part of the administrators, some records are not properly kept while some are not kept at all.

For example, many schools including government owned ones, are not having copies of education law and national policy on education, in their schools. Records should be seen as “ a tool for attainment of school objectives, and as a routinized ritual with no useful purpose in view” (Edem, 1982, p. ). As a corollary to this teachers should have an understanding of record keeping process. At school level, a seminar on record-keeping should be held and samples of all records should be made available for teachers to see. Through this method, records such as log-book and punishment book which are usually kept in the head of a school’s office, would be seen and handled by younger teachers.

In addition, teachers should acquire knowledge on modern methods of record keeping which are made available through modern information technology. Records should be kept honestly, accurately, safely and confidentially, planning done with falsified records can not be accurate and this will not augur well for the nation’s educational development. Finally, the government and the school authorities should provide facilities that are required for record keeping. For example, record books, files, audio and visual equipment, should be provided in sufficient quantity. Storage facilities

which will enhance safety of the records from theft, mutilation, destruction and accessibility to unauthorized persons, should be provided to all schools.

Conclusion School records are meant to enhance the performance of secondary school administrators. When records are kept and utilized appropriately, execution of management functions is likely to be easy and effective. School records also enable teachers and student to be alive to their responsibilities and work conscientiously towards the achievement of educational objectives.