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THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL HEAD IN FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION IN GHANA

(Modified version of paper presented at a seminar on school
management and financial administration for heads of newly opened
SSS and newly appointed heads of old Senior Secondary
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ABSTRACT

A very crucial aspect in the head's administration of a school is his financial management. Sound financial management results in efficient utilization of resources and succeeds in raising the development of the school.

Many of the heads of schools in Ghana do not, unfortunately, have the opportunity to pursue a basic course in financial administration prior to their appointment as heads. This paper attempts to discuss certain fundamental principles and practices in financial management, knowledge of which heads urgently require.

The paper discusses the role of the head as School Business Manager and the efforts he has to make to obtain extra funding for his school. It raises pertinent issues that guide effective preparation of budget estimates and touches on the head's responsibilities in important fiscal control measures.

It is hoped the paper will be of some benefit to heads and prospective heads of our schools in Ghana.

Introduction

The head of a school performs a number of administrative functions.

His success as an administrator, leader and manager of the school is assessed in terms of the efficiency with which he performs these functions. His performance sets the tone and quality of the school. This is exemplified by the observation of the Commonwealth Secretariat (1993): "it is widely recognised and agreed that one of the key factors influencing school effectiveness is the nature and quality of the leadership and management provided by each school head" (p.v).

Of all the functions that confront the head, the role he plays in financial administration is the most crucial, critical and, perhaps, the most important. The head's entire operation as an administrator is hinged on an adequate provision of funds and their effective disbursement to cater for the work programme of the school. Resources are scarce relative to the demand for them. It has been the common remark by many statesmen

and economists that "educational expenditures, and thus costs, have been rising over the years," as Akongbou (1987), for instance, points out, "and it is therefore necessary to know the factors that are responsible for this increase and how it can be controlled" (p.74). For this and other reasons, heads experience much strain and anxiety about what funds will be released to them to enable the work programme of their institutions proceed as planned. They hardly obtain the funds they actually need for the activities of the schools to be carried out. Any amount released to their schools must be carefully and appropriately utilized not just because public opinion is always critical about how school funds are expended, but mostly because the best possible returns are expected to come out of available funds.

The role of the head in financial administration is therefore a very crucial one and the head has to strictly adhere to the financial regulations as they apply to his school. To be an efficient manager, the head has to equip himself with sufficient knowledge of and acquire competence in financial management.

The financial administration of the school head covers a number of important aspects. In this paper, only some of the most pressing issues that constantly recur in the head's financial administration are discussed.

School Business Manager

The head of an educational institution is considered the School Business Manager. As his major responsibility, he has to work towards the procurement and effective disbursement of funds and facilities which are essential for carrying out the work programme of the school. He has to make extra effort to obtain the required funding and he needs to adopt the right procedure which will enable him to succeed in obtaining the funds he requires. Considering the head of an educational institution "as a school planner and finance manager," the Commonwealth Secretariat (1993) strongly advises that the head "should take an active rather than a passive role in determining, mobilising and acquiring financial resources" (p.10). It is in such a way that the head is "more likely to ensure the effective implementation of your school programmes" (p.10).

Funds for the activities of the school come from various sources. Normally the Central Government makes a variety of financial provisions to the schools in the form of :

- payment of salaries of teachers and the non-teaching staff
- payment of grants for expandable and non-expandable equipment

- payment towards the construction and maintenance of school plant and provision of pavillions in some cases
- provision and maintenance of school vehicles
- subsidization, in some cases, of the feeding cost of pupils
- Health maintenance of staff and pupils.

These Government grants and fees collected from pupils/students are the normal sources of funding the school. The head has to explore other avenues for funding. Some financial assistance could be obtained from the District Assembly.

The responsibility of Local Authorities (Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies) in Ghana in the provision and maintenance of school buildings, school furniture and the supply of teachers' textbooks and stationery have been documented since the publication of the Education Act of 1961 (McWilliam, 1962, pp.111 & 112). The inability of these Local Authorities to effectively play their role in the provision of educational resources is reflective of the difficulty they experience in obtaining funds for their operation.

In recent years, a more effective practice of the policy of decentralization, coupled with

development of the community school idea in Ghana has placed a greater amount of financial responsibility on Local Authorities. They continue to be responsible for the provision and maintenance of school buildings, furniture and the supply of other forms of equipment for basic schools and, to some extent, for secondary schools as well, particularly in respect of the newly established community secondary schools. With financial assistance from the Central Government, such as the provision of District Assembly Common Fund recently introduced in Ghana, Local Authorities are strengthened to play their financial responsibility towards development of schools in their respective local areas.

The chief and people of the community in which a school is situated have made and continue to make significant financial contributions, either direct or in kind, to the school. Their contributions include :

- providing land for school buildings, playing grounds, school farms and gardens
- providing communal labour to carry out school development projects
- making per head financial contributions for the development of the school

- carrying out fund-raising activities to raise funds for school development
- making special gifts to the school in the form of money, furniture, a plaque, or a vehicle by former pupils in the area (as well as those from outside the area)
- providing financial assistance of various types to the school by enthusiastic and public-spirited individual community members and groups.

The role played by Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) in the finance of schools has become a living experience, particularly within the last decade or so. The construction of school blocks and science laboratories, the provision of school furniture and the supply of equipment to schools by PTAs have become a common practice in many developing countries. The PTA of the University of Cape Coast Primary School, for instance, is known to have spent close to three million cedis (¢3,000,000.00) on the rehabilitation of the school block, provision and repairs of pupils' and teachers' furniture, and the provision of doors for some classrooms which had their doors broken.

Students and their parents are the immediate recipients of direct

benefits from schools. Parents therefore contribute immensely towards their children's schooling and so have a major role to play in the finance of schools. Their contributions, in addition to services rendered to the school by the PTA, include :

- providing school resources, such as textbooks, exercise books and other writing materials in respect of their children
- paying for their children's meals in boarding houses and for lunch in respect of day students
- paying sports and games fees
- paying for a building project, such as school building, housing for staff, building a shed for project work
- providing desks or tables and chairs for their children in school
- paying teachers for extra classes
- providing pocket money for their children
- paying for children's transport
- providing for other warfare needs

(Commonwealth Secretariat, Module Five, 1993, p.4).

These financial resources and material contributions do not just flow neatly and regularly to the schools. The head can be sure of receiving funds from Government sources. He, however, has to work hard to ensure the receipt of funds from other sources. His success in obtaining extra funding depends on his foresight, sense of integrity, business acumen and a development of sound relationships between him and the school staff, students, Board members, PTA members and the local community.

As a School Business Manager, the head has the responsibility of making efficient use of funds and other resources provided for his school. He must be accountable for the expenditure of any amount of money or the utilization of any physical resource. Here also, he is likely to obtain the cooperation, assistance and support of his staff, students, Board members, the PTA and others in his efforts towards extra funding only to the extent that he maintains sound accountability of funds and other resources placed at his disposal.

Preparation of Budget Estimates

The budget involves the preparation of estimates for probable incomes and expenditures for the future. It is a work programme which translates work policy of Government into monetary terms. The budget of a school translates the work programme

of the school, as carefully planned by the head and his staff, into monetary terms. "The budget for the activities of an agency fixes the magnitude, the scope and the quality of services which government renders" (Millett, 1954, p. 202).

The preparation and submission of budget estimates constitute an aspect which is one important approach to obtaining funds to carry out the activities of the school. While the preparation of budget estimates is essential, the right approach to budget preparation could make a difference between schools which receive adequate or near adequate funding and those which receive just a little amount of funding.

The head of a school should make sure that budget estimates are prepared and promptly submitted. The budget, reflecting the work programme of the school, gives indication of the amount of work the school can undertake during the ensuing year. It also helps the government to know the total volume of production that will be carried out in the economy, the total expenditure, and to compare the amount of possible expenditure with probable revenue. This will enable government to decide whether to give approval to the total anticipated expenditure, that is, if the probable income will match the expenditure; reduce the volume of production if total expenditure exceeds probable income; or resort to deficit financing

and approve the expenditure to be incurred even when probable income falls short of total possible expenditure. While the ideal situation is for governments to present balanced budgets, it sometimes becomes necessary for the government to embark on deficit financing. As Millett (1954) points out, some economists and statesmen "would accept the desirability, or perhaps the necessity, of an 'unbalanced' national government budget" as a way of solving the problems of "large-scale unemployment and declining levels of industrial output" (p. 207).

If some administrative agents, such as some school heads, fail to prepare and submit their budget estimates, the volume of production, that is, total amount of productive activities in the economy in the ensuing year and its corresponding total expenditure presented to Parliament by the Minister of Finance and Economic Planning, will not portray a true picture of the productive capacity of the country. The total expenditure presented to Parliament would not cover part of the productive activities that would be performed in the economy. Such a situation is likely to result in financial constraints.

To avoid unnecessary constraints or, at least, to reduce their magnitude, it is imperative that heads of institutions, like those of other administrative agencies, do prepare and submit,

through the appropriate channels, budget estimates of their organizations.

The preparation of budget estimates should not be left alone with the school accountant. It is true that the accountant will provide the detailed writing of the estimates, it is the head who, in consultation with his staff, determines the work programme of the school. It is the head who, assisted by some members of his staff, particularly the heads of department, will have to determine, for instance, the numerical strength of his staff, both teaching and non-teaching. Again the head will have to assess, for example, the amount of expendable and non-expendable equipment and all the other physical resources the school will require for the performance of its educational activities during the next academic year, to which the budget estimates relate. The budget should necessarily reflect the educational plan of the school. In the words of Adesina (1990) "the educational plan within a school budget shows the range of educational activities of the school system during the ensuing year" (p.143). The head therefore has to direct the preparation of the budget estimates. He has to be conversant with the right approach to the preparation of budget estimates. He will receive, each year, through his super-ordinate, the District/Regional Director, guidelines for preparing budget estimates. He will have to

consult other documents like the Financial Administration Decree, 1979; Financial Administration Regulations 1979; and Financial and Accounting Instructions for Secondary Schools, Training Colleges and Educational Units.

The preparation of budget estimates is further guided by certain fundamental principles, such as the following :

The principle of limitation of time.

This principle enjoins the head of an administrative agency to prepare budget estimates limited to the work programme that will be accomplished during the fiscal year. This principle underlines the necessity for administrative agencies, including schools, to prepare and submit budget estimates annually. This principle, however, applies to only recurrent (or current) budgets.

The principle of limitation of powers.

By this principle, the head has to consult and obtain approval from his super-ordinate - the District/ Regional Director - before budgeting for certain priorities which constitute a new demand for the school. For example, a headmaster/headmistress has no authority to open a new stream or convert an agricultural secondary school into a secondary grammar school. He has to submit application for approval of any such a change. If the change is effected without prior approval from the Regional

Directorate, a budget submitted in respect of the change will not receive authorization. The increase in the number of streams or change in the status of the secondary school will not be permitted and the resultant budgetary implications will not be authorized. Adesina (1990), talking about what he refers to as "the budget message" states, among other things, that the budget message "explains the materials and contents of the budget" and that "it makes a statement of the educational policy of the government with which the school operates" (p.144). The school head should carry out budgetary programmes within the limits of the educational policy of the government.

Zero budgeting. This is another principle which heads should take into consideration when preparing budget estimates. Zero budgeting is resorted to by presenting every request in the budget estimates as an entirely fresh item based on current demands of the institution. The temptation of copying everything or almost everything from a previously approved budget is not recommended. Current demands should be based on the present condition of the school, although past experience will guide the present situation. As Adesina (1990) puts it, "the expenditure plan must rely on past experiences and estimates of current costs" (p.143). It is most likely that an item or a few items

presented in previous budget estimates may be repeated in the current estimates since such requests might be pertinent now as they were a year or two ago. However, the practice of some heads making current estimates almost a photo-copy of a previous budget should be avoided. Presenting requests for the current budget as fresh demands instils in the head the responsibility of planning for the future development of the school and projecting this development on the budget. Budgets should be made to portray the future developments of administrative agencies such as a secondary schools. To show the relationship between the current and existing or past budgets, Millett (1954) points out :

To portray a realistic situation it is common practice to make administrative heads state three headings of figures in the budget estimate : the actual expenditures in the most recently completed fiscal year, the actual appropriation made for the current year, and the requested expenditure for the next fiscal year (p.216).

Such practice compels the administrative head to plan specifically for the new budget and present estimates that portray a new financial demand for the school. In Ghana, the actual appropriation made for the current year is limited to the first six months of the current year since expenditure for the whole year will not have been

made before commencement of the budget estimates preparation.

Current-expense budget and capital-improvement budget. School heads or perhaps more appropriately prospective school heads should be conversant with these two types of budgeting since they entail different modes of financing.

(i) Current-expense budget, as Millett (1954) calls it, or Recurrent Expenditure, in the words of the Commonwealth Secretariat, is a budget that concerns expenditures to be incurred in the fiscal year.

This type of budget incorporates such items as :

salaries and other benefits to administration, supervision, teaching, special services and support staff, maintenance and other operating costs in travel and communication, and scholastic materials. This is the expenditure on consumables (Commonwealth Secretariat, Module Five, 1993, p.13).

(ii) Capital - improvement budget, using the words of Millett, or Development Expenditure, as the Commonwealth Secretariat calls it, is prepared for major projects, payment for which may not necessarily be made during the fiscal year. The financing of the physical plant of the school, for

could be undertaken by a contractor through pre-financing and it may take the contractor a few years to complete the project. Total payment towards the project could be spread over a few years but not in one fiscal year.

In Ghana, a new approach to the preparation of budget estimates under the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) has been introduced since the latter part of 1998. With effect from January 1999, preparation of government budget estimates should conform to the new format.

The new approach integrates the capital-improvement expenditures and the recurrent expenditures into a unified form. The new approach compresses items 1-5 of the old format of recurrent expenditure into items 1-3, while capital budgets constitute item 4 of the new format. This new approach is adopted, it is stated, in order to bring out clearly the inter-relation that exists between the capital expenditure and the recurrent expenditure (Guidelines for the Preparation of the 1999 Budget - Ministry of Education Circular No. B/ 1/99, June 15, 1998).

[See Fig. 1 and Fig. 2 for examples of the old format and the new format respectively).

FIG.1 : Recurrent and Capital Expenditure

A : Recurrent Expenditure

ITEM	SUB-ITEM	Personal Emoluments
1		
	1	Established Posts
	2	Contract & Other Non-Est. Posts
	3	Monthly Paid & Casual Lab.
	4	Miscellaneous Allowances
	5	Rent Allowance (20%)
		Total Personal Emolument
ITEM	SUB-ITEM	T. & T. Expenditure
2		
	1	Travelling Allowance (Night Allowance, Mileage Allowance Leave Claims)
	2	Vehicle Maintenance Allowance
	3	Running Cost of Off. Vehicles
	4	Maintenance of Official Vehicles
	5	Other T & T Expenses (Air Fares, Government Transport, Railways)
		Total T.T. Expenditure

ITEM 3	SUB-ITEM	General Expenditure
	1.	Water Charges
	2.	Postal Charges
	3.	Telecommunication Charges
	4.	Office Facilities (sanitation)
	5.	Stationery
	6.	Printing
	7.	Rent (Accommodation)
	8.	Rent (Equipment)
	9.	Departmental Training
	10.	Library & Publications
	11.	Bank Charges
	12.	Electricity Charges
		Total General Expenditure

ITEM 4	SUB-ITEM	Mtce, Repairs & Renewal
	1.	Maintenance of Office Machines
	2.	Maintenance of Buildings
	3.	Maintenance of Roads & Grounds
	4.	Maintenance of Plants & Equipment
		Total Mtce. Repairs & Equipment

ITEM 5	SUB-ITEM	Other Current Expenditure
	1.	Technical Education Materials
	2.	Sports & Game
	3.	Agriculture
	4.	Ad-hoc Furniture Grant
	5.	Special Subsidy on Text-books
	6.	Demonstration Materials
	7.	Assistance to Needy Students
	8.	Boarding Subsidy for Mampong Technical Teachers College
		Total Other Current Expenditure
		Total Current Expenditure

B : Capital Expenditure

Item 6	Subventions
Item 7	Renovations
Item 8	Plant , Equipment, Vehicles, Furniture
Item 9	Constructions

**FIG. 2 New Format for Preparing Budget
Estimates (1999)**

ITEM 1	SUB-ITEM	Personnel Emoluments
	01.1	Established Posts
	01.2	Non-Established Posts :
	01.2.1	Contract Appointments
	01.12.2	Daily Rated
	01.2.3	Probation
	01.2.4	Other : Part-Time
	01.3	S.S.F.
	01.4	Car Maintenance & Fuel Allow.
	01.5	Miscellaneous Allowance
		Sub-Total
2	SUB-ITEM	Administration Activities
	02.1	Utilities :
	02.1.1	Electricity
	02.1.2	Water
	02.1.3	Telecommunications
	02.1.4	Postal Charges
	02.1.5	Sanitation Charges
	02.2	Office Clearning

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ITEM	SUB	ITEM	
2			
	02.3		Office Consumables
	02.4		Printing and Publications
	02.5		Rent
	02.6		Maintenance
	02.7		Travel and Transport
	02.8		Financial Charges
			Sub-Total
3	SUB	ITEM	Service Activities
	03.1		Training and Conferences Costs
	03.2		Consultancies
	03.3		Materials and Cousumables
	03.3.1		Stationery
	03.3.2		Refreshment
	03.3.3		Uniform and Protective Clothing
	03.3.4		Printing and Publications
	03.3.5		Rent of Plant and Equipment
	03.3.6		Travel and Transport
			Sub-Total
4	SUB	ITEM	Investment Activities
	04.1		Construction
	04.2		Rehabilitation
	04.3		Plant, Equipment, Furniture and Vehicles
	04.3.1		Plant (Library Books)
	04.3.2		Equipment
	04.3.3		Furniture
	04.3.4		Vehicles :
			Sub-Total

Supplementary budget. These budgets are prepared and submitted to make requests for extra funding which might become necessary due to changing circumstances in the financial policy of the nation. For example, increases in the price of goods or upward adjustment in salaries of workers could result in the approved budget being inadequate to meet the expected expenditures. A supplementary budget covering the actual difference in salaries or estimated difference in the prices of goods will have to be prepared and submitted through the appropriate channel for the extra funding.

Budget time-table. The preparation of budget estimates, their submission and their defence usually follow a fairly exact time-table. In Ghana, educational institutions and district offices are expected to submit their budget estimates to the Regional Education Offices in September. At the Regional Office, these budget estimates are checked, collated and summarized before they are submitted to the national headquarters where similar exercises take place. Submission of budget summaries to the Minister of Finance and Economic Planning and budget defence should be undertaken according to schedule to enable appropriation measures to be enacted by mid-December. Approached in this way, operation within the new budget can begin smoothly on January 1, when the fiscal year begins.

The problem most often experienced in Ghana is that there is much delay in the submission of budget estimates from our schools and education districts. Late submission of the budget estimates results in eventual delay in the submission of budget summaries to the Minister and delay in their subsequent defence before Parliament. It therefore becomes necessary oftentimes for administrative agencies, such as schools and district/regional offices, to be made to operate on provisional estimates by the commencement of the financial year for the first or second month of the fiscal year. Heads are therefore advised hereby to promptly submit the budget estimates for their schools. It would be a great achievement in this country if it could become possible for administrative agencies to operate within the new budget at the commencement of the fiscal year.

Fiscal Control Measures

The total draft budget estimates, collated and summarized, are presented to Parliament by the Minister of Finance and Economic Planning for the necessary debate, discussion, modification and final adoption or approval by Parliament.

Following Parliamentary authorization, the Minister of Finance issues a general warrant to the Comptroller and Accountant-General who, in turn, issues warrants and financial encumbrances to

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all the Ministries, authorizing them to begin the spending of their current votes. Authorization to begin spending departmental votes or execute the budget goes down the line to administrative agents, such as headmasters. The whole process involved in the execution of the budget, as Millett (1954) puts it, is what is referred to as **fiscal control** or execution of the budget. The authorized budget fixes "the general scope and magnitude of the operations of an administrative agency for a period of time, usually a fiscal year" (Millett, 1954. p.229).

The approval of the budget of the school does not automatically mean funds are immediately made available to the school. The Treasury has to issue a financial encumbrance which certifies that funds are available for spending before the head is authorized to begin spending on the new vote. It is necessary for the head of an institution to initiate request for the financial encumbrance from the Treasury.

The head of a school has to satisfy two aspects of responsibility in fiscal control measures. Firstly, he has to carry out the programme of activities within the limits of funds made available to his institution. Recurrent votes are released on quarterly allocations and expenditure should not exceed the quarterly allocation without prior authority of the Minister of Finance and Economics Planning

through the Regional Director and the Director-General. The head has to adopt strict measures towards control of expenditure. He has to institute tight measures of accountability which might mean saying "no" to operating officials in financial matters if the ideas presented for the expenditure of certain funds appear fanciful. For example, suppose the mother of a staff member of a secondary school dies at a place roughly 80 kilometres from the school. Some staff members, wishing to express their love and sympathy for the bereaved colleague, approach the headmaster, appealing to him to arrange with school funds, four 50-seater buses to convey the staff and some 180 senior students of the school to attend the burial of the late mother of their beloved colleague. A plea such as this will not be entertained by a principled and well-meaning head, in spite of the social climate surrounding the appeal. He is likely to say "there are no funds for such purposes". This is because the head has no authority to use school funds for such a purpose.

However, fiscal control measures should not involve restricting the use of funds and leaving work undone, even when funds are available. The most important aspect of the head's functions is to make sure the planned work is

accomplished, given funds, and not to place unexpected limitations on expenditure of funds to the detriment of work accomplishment.

The second responsibility of the head in financial control measures involves efficiency in the use of resources. Heads have to make efforts to obtain the greatest possible returns out of available funds. Economic use of resources must be their guiding principle at all times. Millette (1954) considers as one of the major responsibilities of the head of an administrative agency, his ability "to obtain the greatest possible return from the expenditure of authorized funds" (p.229). In like manner, Adesina (1990) points out that "in administering the school budget, the primary concern is to ensure that the results achieved by the school system justify the financial outlay" (p.145). Lewis (1952) emphasizes the same viewpoint when he states : "The economic aim of budgeting is to achieve best use of our resources" (quoted in Millett 1954, p. 224).

Funds to meet payment of capital expenditures, such as equipment, vehicles, furniture are usually released enbloc. In many cases the items are presented physically to the school in response to requests, reflecting already submitted budget estimates. The head may not have to purchase them. His control measures should be realized in the economic and efficient

use of these resources. The head is responsible for the maintenance of quality of any physical resource provided for his school.

The following aspects require special attention of the head :

Misappropriation of funds. This concept refers to the use of school funds for some other private purposes, such as for the head's own private activity. It is a criminal offence and should be strictly avoided.

Misapplication of funds. This is the practice of transferring funds meant for the performance of one activity to the performance of another activity. If, for example, funds are made available for equipping the school library, it will be a misapplication to use the funds, without authorized permission, to buy tyres and spare parts for the rehabilitation of a broken-down school vehicle. Heads must ward against any aspect of misapplication. School heads, as well as other administrative agents, are required to strictly adhere to the use of public resources as provided for in the approved budget. This is an important aspect of accountability.

Supervision in financial management. It is really necessary for the school head to exercise adequate supervision over the work of the accountant and other accounting officers of the school.

Supervision is required in a number of ways.

In the preparation of annual budget estimates, the head does not only have to supervise the work of the accountant; he has to direct the accountant with respect to the items that have to be budgeted for in the estimates.

One important aspect that requires a very effective supervision is concerned with the writing of cheques. Before appending his signature to a particular cheque, the head should carefully make sure of the following issues :

- There should be no unduely large spaces left in-between the words indicating the amount on the cheque leaf and a line should be ruled to cover the space left after the word "only" written on the cheque leaf.
- The amount in figures should be written as close as possible to the cedi sign (¢) and the two zeros written to represent no pesewas (if there are no pesewas as it is usually the case these days) should be crossed. The uncovered portion of he cheque should be covered by double lines.
- As a rule, any alteration on the cheque must be counter-signed by both signatories , or all signatories if they are more than two, and they should use their normal signatures, not initials. If the alteration involves the need to change both the words and the figures, that cheque must be cancelled and a fresh cheque written.
- A cheque leaf that is cancelled should not be removed from the check book.
- It is important to have the counterfoil also counter-signed by both signatories (or all signatories).
- Obviously, the head should never sign a blank cheque.
- It is always necessary to make sure a cheque leaf is not taken from the back (or middle) of the cheque book. The practice of always checking whether the remaining cheque leaves are intact is highly recommended for heads to adhere to.
- The amount on the cheque should reflect the amount stated on the payment voucher which, in turn, should be supported by documentary evidence.
- It is important to make sure there are no large spaces left after the following numbers (in words) since they can be altered : six(ty), seven(ty), eight(y), nine(ty).

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- It is necessary to state that there should be at least two signatories for a school cheque (Commonwealth Secretariat, Module Five, 1993, pp.37-38).

Effective supervision and careful check must be exercised in the issue of receipts. A great deal of financial problems do arise in the area of receipts writing. Careful supervision should be extended to the proper use and storage of books of accounts, of the Book Store inventory, General Stores inventory, and the use of school vehicles. The domestic bursar requires adequate supervision in her purchases and use of consumables. Adequate supervision should be directed to food and transport services. Effective supervision of financial matters is the key to success in the head's financial management.

Other Aspects

The head's role in financial management extends to other aspects which may require brief mention.

The head has to make efforts to acquire rudimentary knowledge of accounting. This will enable him to effectively supervise the work of the school accountant. The head has to make sure of correct recording of items and all forms of entries in the accounts books. The Cash Book

and other books of accounts should be appropriately used. There should be insistence on neat cancellation of wrong entries and the re-writing of the correct entry. The head should desist from and ensure his accountant does not conform to the practice of erasing or deepening figures.

The head has to develop an appropriate procedure for the collection of fees and other monies, such as PTA dues. Indiscriminate collection of fees and other monies into a common source could result in shortages and an improper approach to accountability.

Purchasing is another crucial area which should receive the head's fullest attention. A substantial part of the school budget could be spent on fraudulent purchases and sound management must be accorded the purchase of items in the school.

Plant operation and its maintenance are issues which should demand the head's prompt attention. These are issues on which much expenditure could be borne. A careful scrutiny and foresight in plant operation and its maintenance could help to curtail unwanted and unexpected expenditures.

It is advisable the head desists from frequent use of certificates of honour.

Efforts must be made to obtain receipts for goods purchased. The use of certificates of honour should be limited to purchases for which it is not normally feasible to obtain receipts.

It is common practice for the head to delegate his authority to other members of staff for the performance and/or supervision of most of the functions discussed above, but the head's check on these issues is highly recommended

Conclusion

It is a laudable achievement for the head of an educational institution to work seriously, faithfully and honestly in the area of financial management. Sound financial management ensures efficient use of resources and contributes creditably to the attainment of institutional goals and objectives. Achievement of success in financial management results in according the head a high degree of respect from his staff, students and the entire school community. Such a situation acts towards development of discipline and sound school climates. The head should therefore exercise effective control and supervision in the financial matters of his/her institution. Funds and other economic resources should be effectively and appropriately used towards maximization of the work programme of the school.

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