

THE INNOVATIVE PRINCIPAL AND RECORD KEEPING FOR EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The paper examined the role of innovative principals on records keeping strategies for educational development in Nigeria. The paper however, xrayed the concepts of innovative principals, record keeping strategies, features of innovative principals, types of records keeping in Nigerian education and the strategies for keeping the records for enhancing educational development in Nigeria. It was concluded that records keeping strategies by the innovative principals aid effective records keeping in Nigerian educational development. It was recommended that the principals should integrate innovative ideas such as digital records for enhancing educational development in Nigeria.

Introduction

Record keeping is an important activity in schools. School records are copies of proceedings of actions, events, or other matters kept by the school manager. School records could be viewed as authentic register or documents of official accounts of transactions or occurrences, which are persevered in the school office. It allows consistency and coherency to be established in the system. It is important to note that every principal in the system is duty bound to keep records of his professional activities. This cuts across, academic and non-academic staff: - teachers, examination officers, admission officers, disciple master, form masters, food masters, games masters, health masters, head of school and their assistants, secretaries, purchasing officers, ministry officials.

An innovative principal has the responsibility of seeing to the smooth running of the secondary school. A number of factors are responsible for the extent to which the principal succeeds depends, among others, on the record that he is expected to keep. These records help to provide information about the school, and decision making and assessment of progress of the school. The law requires that some of these records are kept in school while others are not but an innovative principal should keep all records as they are useful in decision making.

An innovative principal must have accurate information to help in assessing meaningful the progress of the school. All school records are important, must be complete and made available when need arises. The principal must ensure that the school records are devoid of exaggerated reports or untrue statements. When records are not kept at one level, it may affect the system at another level. Therefore care should be taken to ensure that one keeps an adequate record of his duties.

Different records are kept in different ways, books and formats. This makes it imperative for you to study the pattern of your records in line with accepted standards and to keep yourself informed of new innovations. Some people keep very good records of their activities, but most often cannot supply the records when they are needed. It is one thing to have records; it is another to keep them safe. You will discover that some records over the years have been exposed to insects, rain, dust, fire and other destructive elements.

It is with a view to making us understand the needs for proper and safe record keeping that this paper seeks to look at the importance or relevance of record keeping, types of record and their formats, updating and safekeeping of records. The principal should note that when he fails to keep records, he is in actual sense destroying the system instead of helping to build it.

Educational record keeping practices however, vary substantially by size of institution and sophistication of administrative practices. They also vary as students move along the continuum from preschool towards secondary education, because, the role of educational institutions vary along the same continuum.

Reports cards, conferences, and parent teachers associations are all devices by which principals are held directly accountable to parents, students and the society at large. An innovative principal is expected to make and keep more records about students today than ever before. Here people participate in making and keeping education records, and more people outside the educational system want access to them for other than educational purposes. The emphasis on educational record keeping has shifted from reporting progress to parents and supplementing personal contact in instructing and making decisions about students to serving not only as a

management tool but also as a means of justifying an educational institution's actions and budget, and as a surrogate for personal contact with students.

As a student moves from one point to another in the education system, his path is blazed by records concerning his performance, his behavior, and his own and then often his family's circumstances. These records are created by an innovative principal mainly to record the students' progress, to help make decisions about him, and to improve the effectiveness of the educational programmes that the school provides.

The mission and role of an innovative principal are kept determinants of its record-keeping practice. The mission of an innovative principal should therefore be to care for and nurture students so as to lay a solid foundation for academic tasks they will confront in secondary education.

Problems Militating against Efficient Record Keeping by Principals in Nigeria

Some of the reasons why some principals fail to keep records include:

- i. Lack of Record books or materials
- ii. Improper orientation
- iii. Inadequate training and knowledge on record keepers on the use of information from records
- iv. Poor supervision
- v. Laziness or untimely supply of records
- vi. Lack of commitment
- vii. Ignorance of the dangers of not keeping records
- viii. School records keeping practices are often anachronistic and institutional interests tend to overshadow the interests of students and parents in the collection, use and dissemination of education records.
- ix. There is no incentive to devote the time, energy, or money to update substantially modify record keeping practices, thus the demand for curriculum reform, improvement of service delivery and cost reduction (Imboden,1980)
- x. Lack of criteria for relevance or propriety creates privacy problems.

Purpose of School Records

The purpose of record keeping is to ensure that accurate and proper records of students' achievement and growth during the school days are kept. Availability of information on any school matters when needed also facilitate research activities that will promote efficiency and effectiveness of school system (Durasola, 2002; 2004). To provide information to an employer of labour who may want to recruit pupils for jobs such as testimonials, transcripts, certificates and reference letters, and supply the necessary information to school inspectors is a function of school records.

Qualities of School Records

The school records to be kept by the principal must satisfy certain conditions as follows:

- School records must include complete information so as to make them reliable
- Records must be an honest representation of facts. Information must not be distorted. Events must be recorded as they occur to represent their true perspective without removal of elements of personal biases.
- Records must be easy and retrievable. Records must be recalled and the system of filing must be adequate; filing cabinets must be employed and computers may be used where necessary (Sunmola, 2008).
- Records must be useable. There is no sense in keeping useless records.
- Records must be backed up by original documents to include invoices, bills, cheque counterfoil and receipts.

The Role of Records in Decision Making

Innovative secondary school principal shares responsibility for the intellectual, social and development of students with the student's parents and with others who deal with youth, such as child welfare and juvenile justice agencies. An innovative principal pursue this broad mission of instructional services, regulate behavior, report to parents on academic performance and social conduct, diagnose students' needs, and conduct special programmes for students. These decisions could include matters such as class placement and promotion, eligibility for special educational programmes such as students with special needs.

2. Innovative principal decision making responsibilities and authorities

An innovative principal strive to cooperate with parents. The degree to which an innovative principal share authority with parents must be detailed. Parents have the option of withdrawing their children from the school if they dislike the manner in which the school exercises its authority even though parents have little ability to control decisions made by the school about their children.

3. Variations in organizational setting

Secondary education occurs in a diversity of organizational settings even though efforts are made to ensure the same standard of operation. There are variations in size; organizational complexity, types of special services offered, and intensity of involvement in economic and social issues e.g. drug use, and juvenile crime. Despite these differences in organizational settings, all schools today have some common characteristics that affect the way they collect, maintain, use and disclose information about students.

- Innovative principals should rely more on records than on personal contact in arriving at decisions.
- Record keeping problems cannot successfully compete with other demands for their time, attention and resources.

4. Creation and use of records

The content of a school records is to some extent required by state education authorities including information like child's name, birth date, immunizations and some descriptive information about family background at the time of enrollment. Grades and credits are added to a student's record. Others are health information, test scores, actions authorized by the school, parent's rights and prohibitions and family financial data. Also, records such as student's behavior and personality, social life, status, attitudes and parents behavior are necessary. Such information is kept at the school in a cumulative record.

5. Record-keeping Responsibility and Authority

It is the responsibility of an innovative principal to collect, use and disclose information about the students. Principals should not view records as his own or view the involvement of parents and students in decision about record keeping as a threat to their autonomy and an implied insult to their integrity as could be the case with a principal who is not innovative.

6. Disclosure practices

An innovative principal should have a tradition of treating records about students as "within the family" for use by the school.

1. It is an indication that there is progress in the system.
2. A defense during inspection.
3. Very vital in the case of transfer of staff.
4. A tool for effective evaluation.
5. Helps to settle evaluation.
6. A reminder of previous content.
7. Helps to settle disputes.
8. A reminder of date of events
9. Gives information about staff dealings and years of service.
10. Helps in the preparation of remuneration and benefits.
11. Helps in stock taking and further purchases.
12. Reduce suspicion.
13. Serve as a means for rewarding diligence.

When records are kept correctly, it is very clear that the system is functional, that people are working and very productive. We must distinguish between activity and productivity. It is possible to be involve in an activity and not be productive. Such an activity cannot leave any record behind. Those who are in the habit of keeping records are spared of all the tensions and confusions of the notice of the visit of supervisors or auditors. When a staff is transferred, what makes it easy for the new person to continue is the manner in which he has kept his record. Such records can provide a guide and an insight into the activities of the offices of classroom. There are cases where people do not remember the number of items purchased or approved for their use or number of times present or approval given for travels. Proper records keeping help to settle any dispute that may arise, that is why the writer agrees with a wise man who said" the shortest pencil is longer than the longest memory". Record keeping reminds us of what we have done before, when and how they were done and the result obtained; it provides ready information about remunerations and benefits which ensure equity and fairness.

Types of School Record-Keeping

There are various types of records and could be divided into two broad types. School records vary from school to school. As an innovative principal, he must be able to keep the two broad types namely statutory records and non-statutory records.

Statutory records refer to records kept in accordance with the education law and are produced on request by officials in Ministry of Education on inspection. These type of records include admission records and withdrawal register, visitor's book, attendance register, class register, movement book, punishment book, reward book, correspondence, school performance, school photo album, duty book, assembly book, national curricular on different subjects, query book and continuous assessment records. Others include staff welfare records, student leadership records, counseling/ guidance record, sports and games record file, school club/ societies, organizational chart, and disciplinary committee file.

The non-statutory records are kept for administrative conveniences. They include school stock inventory book, cash and account books, school calendar, health book, and minutes book just to mention but a few.

1. Admission Records and Withdrawal Register.

This is a statutory record that contains detailed information about update of every student admitted in the school. It provides information on the mode of admission, name of candidates, date of birth, sex, month /year of admission, class admitted into, sponsor, enrollment update or transfer/withdrawal.

Table 1: Admission and Withdrawal Register

Month/Year	Name	Class	Sex	Age	Class Progress	Withdrawal	Pupils admitted	Reason
5/01/2013	Meshach Peter	JS1	M	12yrs	JS1 JS2 JS3	SS1 SS2 SS3		
6/02/2012	Maura Musa	JS2	F	13yrs	2012 2013 2014	2015 2016 2017		

2. Visitor's Book

This book contains names of important personalities visiting the school within the school hours. The book is useful as it shows general interest shown by the community. Head of states normally sign with green, Governors with red while other visitors with blue or black biro.

Table 2: Visitor's book

Date	Name of Visitor	Time in	Address	Purpose of visit	Time out	Remark	Signature
6/4/2013	Mrs. Yop	10.15am	Tudun-Wada, Jos.	Open day	3.30 Pm	Very Satisfactory	Dung
12/8/2013	Ministry of Education	9.30 am	Plateau State Ministry of Education Studies	WAEC Registration.	3.00 Pm.	All SS3 were Registered.	Dean of
08/1/2014	Sabo Musa office Jos	8.45 am		Pupils/Teachers Supervision	3pm	Encouraging result	Chairman Zonal

3. Attendance Register for Staff

This record shows punctuality of staff to school. It consists of name of staff, time in signature and time out signature and remarks

Table 3: Attendance register for staff

Date	Name of staff	Time in	Sign	Time out	Sign	Remark
19/9/2017	Edit Paul	7:15a.m	EP	2.00pm	EP	closed
19/9/2017	Atang Atse	7:20a.m	AA	2.00pm	AA	closed

4. Class Register

Class register is attendance record that is useful in showing students who attend classes regularly and those absent. In an instance where a class teacher marks a child who is absent present and unfortunately the child dies or is involved in criminal act outside the school leading to arrest, the law or parents could force the school to account for the death or the arrest of such a student. Attendance register also helps to reveal if a student has been sick. Schools are advised to call the attendance register twice a day, in the morning and afternoon after the school break by midday. An innovative principal must have this record in the office daily.

Table 4: Class Attendance

S/No	Adm.No	Name	Days				
			Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri
1	00024	Yop Dalyop	√√	√√	√√	√√	√√
2.	00025	Atse Atang	00	00	√√	√√	√√
3	00026	Asanatu Adik	√√	00	√√	√√	√√
4.	00027	Lami Abdullahi	√√	√0	√√	0√	00
5.	00028	Peace Livinus	√√	0√	00	√√	√√

5. Movement book

Staff movement book is a record that shows the whereabouts of staff who report in the school for duty but for good reasons have to move out of the school during working hours so that no authority is put under undue pressure. This record include date, name of staff, time out , reasons for moving out of the school, time in, signature of staff, remarks/ signature.

Table 5: Movement Book

Date	Name of Staff	Time out	Reason for Moving out of School	Time in	Signature of Staff	Principal Remarks	Signature
1/3/2013	Simi Audu	11.00 am	Hospital for Health Condition	12.20 pm	SA	Permitted	DB
2/2/2013	Isa Abdul	10.30 pm	Ministry of Education	1.00 pm	IA	Permitted	DB

6. Punishment Book

This shows record of offences and nature of punishment administered, name of offenders, class and sex. This book is kept by the principal. The keeping of this book helps to protect the child from being punished anyhow by the teacher. It also helps to protect the teacher from parents or community members on the way and manner teachers punish students. This information, if documented could help the principal in taking the necessary steps to solve the problem (Gnagey, 1971; Oyedeji, 1988; 1990)

Table 6: Punishment Book

Date	Student's Name	Sex	Age	Class	Offence	Punishment	By whom	Remarks/Name
11/3/2018	Ali Yaro	M	12	JSS2	Truancy	Weeding the School	Principal	Satisfactory DB
							Compound for one day	
15/3/2015	James Lar	M	14	SS1	Theft	Suspended for 2 weeks	Disciplinary Committee	DB

7. Correspondence files

A school must have updated and well-kept correspondence files on

1. Ministry of Education (MOE)
2. Zonal Inspectorate of Education (ZIE)
3. Parents Teachers Association (PTA)
4. School Board of Governors (if any)
5. School Finances, account and auditing
6. Old students Association
7. School Club and Societies
8. School Statistics
9. School Disciplinary Committee
10. Security in the school and so on.

The content of all correspondences must be paged appropriately for easy references.

8. Reward Book

This book shows the records of those who have been given awards and the nature of such awards. For example, sports, quiz, debate, essay writing and so on. These awards could be internal or external. The record should include date of the award, name and number of recipients, items given. Include records of certificates given, prizes given during speech and prize giving day.

Table 7: Reward Book

Date	Name	Class	Sex	Internal or External	Nature of the Reward	Event of the reward	By whom	Remarks/Signature
5/4/16	Joy Mang	JS2	F	External	Mini Essay Competition	PRTV Mgt	Well Deserved	Award
5/8/16	Audu Ali	JS3	M	Internal	Best overall Student	Speech & Price	School Authority	Encouraging Reward Giving Day

9. Correspondence

This is record received from external bodies like the Ministry of Education, non-governmental and from individuals. The date collected and who received it should be documented.

10. School time table

There should be a timetable prepared for the whole school, kept in the office of the principal. Class by class time table is copied from the master time table. The purpose of the time table is to regulate the activities in the school. The time table should indicate when classes will begin, when the school closes for the year. This is a difficult task, as such, the principal must appoint competent teachers who are experienced for this task.

11. Record Diary or Work.

It is a special book designed for the purpose of recording subjects and contents in the class, date and week within any given term. The subject contents are broken into units that are teachable, for example

Week: 8

Class: JS2

Date: Week Ending 18/08/2018

Subject: English Language

Topic: Formal letter writing

12. Lesson plan records

This includes the record of submission of lesson plan for marking showing name of teacher, date, subject, topic and signature..... It is prepared to contain daily preparation of the teacher for the different subjects to be covered and the activities to be carried out for each day. The lesson notebook serves as an aid to the teacher in the course of teaching as he cannot rely completely on his memory.

The lesson should include

- a) General information such as topic, date, time of the day, duration of the lesson, age, sex and class.
- b) Behavioral objectives, previous knowledge, introduction, presentation, application, evaluation, conclusion and student's activities including assignment.

13. Staff files

Staff files contain application letters, interview result, letter of acceptance of employment including the condition for employment, copy of promotion letter, excuse duty letter, leave of absence, query letters and replies, awards and photocopies of all credentials.

14. Examination question/ marking scheme

The principal should keep record of a file where all past question papers and their marking schemes are kept. It is very useful record in time of emergency. This is because a times a new teacher arrives and experiences difficulty finding out what he should teach because the school does not have copies of syllabus kept in the principal office. The scheme of work breaks up the syllabus into teaching units.

15. Records of performance:

Statistics record of performance of students over the years in both internal and external examinations should be kept.

Table 8: Records of performance:

Year	Mathematics	English	Computer Studies
2015	53%	72%	79%
2017	48%	58%	68%
2018	64%	78%	93%

16. School photo album

The history of the school could be written in form of photographs. The school principal should document photographs of events relating to staff, school surroundings and exhibitions taken during school festivals such as:

- i. First year pupil's first day at school
- ii. Inter-house athletics meeting
- iii. Competitions in sports and games
- iv. Literary and debating society activities
- v. Religious group ceremonies
- vi. Cultural displays
- vii. Environmental sanitation exercise
- viii. Meeting of clubs and societies
- ix. Speech and prize giving day ceremonies

17. Duty book

This shows all the activities taking place in a school each day, events, responses, reaction and how they are handled.

18. Assembly book

This record gives detailed report of assembly activities, speeches, who conducted what, time, information passed on to the students.

19. National curricula on different subjects

The National curricula for secondary schools book series has been prepared for schools by the Federal Ministry of Education. The books series are prepared in volumes according to the subjects or disciplines.

Each subject stipulates the philosophy and objectives of the subjects, breakdown of topics, objectives, content activities, equipment, assessment and remarks. The principal should make the subject curriculum available for use by each class and subject teacher.

20. Query Book

The query book is a record of queries sent to teaching and non-academic staff. An innovative principal could send queries to any member of staff who goes late to classes, does not attend morning assembly regularly, refuses to give assignment to students regularly, refuses to carry out duty assigned by the school authority, closes from place of work before time, rude to superior, does not keep important school records, deviates from the teaching professional code of ethics like inciting students against the school or government etc. Replies to such queries should be recorded in query file and staff personal file.

Every record of query must have date, name, rank of staff, nature of query, response to query by affected staff, principal's reaction, further action taken by principal or higher authority, final action taken on erring staff, name and signature of the principal.

21. History of the school

The principal is expected to keep a documented history of the school. The history of the school contains the date of establishment of the school, record of first set of students, students' enrollment according to genders, the names of pioneering teaching and non-teaching staff, pioneering principal, assistants and their qualifications.

22. Transfer Certificate

A transfer certificate format is obtained by a student leaving one school to another from his original school, showing that such a student is not in any way indebted to the original school and that the student is of good conduct. The features of the transfer certificate should be arranged in horizontal columns to include the following:

The title of the transfer certificates should be:

TRANSFER CERTIFICATE STATE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

“ORIGINAL”

Name of pupils, name of parent, tribe, date of birth, no. in admission register, name of school, class last passed and date, final position in class, standard at present time, date of last attendances at above school, no. of attendance made this year, any fee owing, if yes, the amount, conduct, causes of leaving, list of former schools attended, date and principal's name.

23. Continuous assessment records

This record shows the students continuous assessment record sheet and broad sheet which was used by the individual teacher and the form teacher.

24. Staff welfare record

This shows a record of staff names and rank, nature of welfare, contribution to welfare and the nature of distribution, commodity and loan collection and so on.

25. Students' Leadership Record

A record of student leadership showing the names of student, the period of leadership, responsibility given, student evaluation and recommendation e.g. Matilda Banje, 2017/2018 session, Health Prefect, Very hard working.

26. Counselling/Guidance Record

This record show counselling records, period of counselling, nature of counselling, student's response to counselling and record of activities carried out in school.

27. Sports and Games Record File

The curricula of sports and games are important aspects of school life. A school is expected to establish and maintain facilities for sports and games in the school. Names of indoor and outdoor games and sporting activities, facilities for games, interclass, interschool, and inter-house competition should be kept. The principal should introduce journals and magazines on sports and games especially those relevant to the games and sports.

28. Organizational Chart

The principal must have an organizational chart of the school in his office.

29. Disciplinary Committee File

A disciplinary Committee made up of some teaching staff is established to consider cases of students' misbehaviour in the school, the extent to which a student misbehaviour affects the image of the school, decision taken towards corrective measures and prevention of future reoccurrence. The proceedings or minutes of the disciplinary committee are expected to be kept neatly and securely in the file for reference.

30. School Stock/Inventory Book

This is a non-statutory record which is kept in the school in order to record account of the equipment, books and other articles bought for the school. These materials should be sent to the storekeeper who is in charge of the stores to record them in the stock book. They could be consumable stock e.g. chalk, stationery and disinfectants or non-consumable stock e.g. furniture, farm tools, games equipment, audio-visual materials. The stock book helps the principal to know what materials are available in the school, when supplies are running out, and know what to request for.

31. The School Cash and Account Book

The cash book is important because in a particular school year, a lot of money came into the school and is spent for the school assignment administration. The school realizes money from school fees, levies, sales of craft or farm products or even subvention from governments or gifts from individuals or organizations. The cash book should show both income and expenditures of the school. The principal will be able to give a good account of school transactions and prevents him from getting into problems.

32. School Calendar

This is the time table approved by the state showing opening and closing period for the school academic session. Most often it runs from September to July every year. School calendar is divided into three terms. The calendar may vary depending on state policy on school holidays and some other national events.

33. Health Book

This shows a record of first aid materials and drugs, first aid treatments, names of students, class and age, nature of illness, responses to treatment, and further recommendations.

34. Minutes of Staff Meeting Book

This is a record of all the proceeding in a staff meeting, which is normally kept by a Secretary under the supervision of the principal.

Suggestions for Improved Record Keeping

- Principals should give priority to record keeping in their schools. Where there is no fund for such records to be purchased through the Ministry of Education, internally generated funds should be used to purchase them (Ozigi, 1980).
- Principals should hold workshops with their teachers in order to educate them on the importance of record keeping as well as procedure for keeping and utilizing information retrieved from records kept.
- Principals must ensure that complete computer systems and their peripherals are provided. Back-up power supply like the generating plant must be obtained in order to ensure proper functioning of these systems. Antivirus system should be installed in every computer system and update frequently. Files could be moved into movable hard disks in order to protect them.
- Hard copy records that are confidential must be locked in cabinets.
- Computerized records must be protected with passwords for confidentiality.
- Every principal should have a "data board" containing summary of data on staff, students 'enrolment by gender and class.

Conclusion

School records can be used to assess the progress of the school. Parents know the performance and progress of their children through school records e.g. continuous assessment and report records. Records serve as reference materials for teachers, administrators and also for educational planning. The world is in the age of information and any principal who is not computer literate is as good as dead. Every school requires an effective management information system (MIS) to capture, store, retrieve, and use information speedily and appropriately for school effectiveness.

The principal who is not computer compliant should at least use MIS manually with a long term goal of learning towards computer based operation in his school. The world has reached an advanced stage of going global and the secondary school principals must never be left behind.

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