

PETITION FOR THE COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF THE CAREER PROGRESSION GUIDELINES (CPG)

Presented by FREDRICK OTIENO (TSC No. 986372)

Through KUPPET Homa Bay Branch for onward submission to the Teachers Service Commission

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This petition seeks a fundamental review of the Career Progression Guidelines (CPG) governing teachers employed by the Teachers Service Commission. While the objectives of professionalism, accountability, and competency-based advancement are commendable, the practical implementation of the framework has generated widespread concern among teachers. Many educators perceive the current system as heavily dependent on limited vacancies and competitive interviews, resulting in prolonged stagnation despite years of dedicated service, positive performance records, and continuous professional development. The petitioner proposes a return to a predictable progression structure in which teachers automatically advance after every three years of satisfactory service within a grade, while competitive interviews are reserved for administrative positions beginning at the level of Deputy Principal or Deputy Head Teacher.

BACKGROUND

The teaching profession occupies a unique position in Kenya's development agenda. Teachers are responsible for curriculum implementation, learner assessment, mentorship, co-curricular development, and the successful implementation of educational reforms. Career progression systems should therefore motivate excellence and reward commitment. The introduction of the Career Progression Guidelines in 2018 was intended to create a structured pathway for advancement. However, many teachers now believe that progression has become uncertain, highly competitive, and disconnected from years of service and accumulated experience.

THE PROBLEM OF CAREER STAGNATION

One of the most significant concerns arising from the current framework is prolonged career stagnation. Teachers who have served diligently for many years often remain in the same grade despite meeting professional expectations. In many cases, additional qualifications, strong performance records, and institutional contributions do not translate into predictable advancement. The result is growing frustration among teachers who feel that the profession no longer offers a clear pathway for career growth. A progression framework should inspire teachers to remain committed to long-term service rather than create uncertainty regarding their professional future.

WHY AUTOMATIC PROMOTION IS NECESSARY

The petitioner submits that professional progression and leadership selection are separate concepts and should be treated differently. Professional progression should recognize

experience, competence, continuous service, and professional growth. Leadership selection should identify individuals with management and supervisory capabilities. For this reason, teachers should automatically progress after every three years of satisfactory service within a grade, provided they meet performance and professional conduct requirements. Such a system would restore predictability, improve morale, reward commitment, and reduce unnecessary competition among teachers performing similar responsibilities.

INTERVIEWS SHOULD BEGIN AT ADMINISTRATIVE POSITIONS

The current practice of subjecting teachers to competitive interviews for progression through ordinary teaching grades has contributed significantly to perceptions of unfairness and stagnation. Interviews are appropriate where positions involve administrative authority, supervision of staff, budgeting responsibilities, institutional management, and strategic leadership. The petitioner therefore proposes that competitive interviews commence only at administrative positions beginning with Deputy Principal, Deputy Head Teacher, and equivalent leadership offices. This would allow teachers to progress professionally while preserving merit-based competition for management positions.

RECOGNITION OF ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS

Teachers invest considerable personal resources in obtaining higher academic qualifications. Degrees, master's qualifications, doctoral studies, and professional certifications contribute to improved instructional quality and educational leadership. The current framework should provide meaningful recognition of such achievements. Academic advancement should attract additional promotion points, salary recognition, and opportunities for accelerated progression. A system that fails to recognize academic growth discourages innovation and continuous professional development.

CLASSROOM TEACHERS DESERVE A DISTINCT CAREER PATH

Classroom teachers constitute the backbone of the education system. Yet many perceive that meaningful advancement increasingly depends upon leaving the classroom and pursuing administrative roles. This creates an unintended message that instructional excellence is less valuable than management. The petitioner proposes the establishment of a classroom teacher career pathway that allows highly effective educators to advance professionally based on pedagogical excellence, mentorship, curriculum innovation, and learner achievement without necessarily becoming administrators.

EQUITY AND FAIRNESS

Teachers serve under vastly different circumstances across Kenya. Some work in hardship areas, marginalized communities, remote regions, and institutions with limited resources. These teachers often shoulder responsibilities extending beyond normal classroom instruction. Career progression policies should recognize such realities. Fairness does not always require identical treatment; rather, it requires recognition of differing challenges and contributions. The Commission should therefore incorporate mechanisms that acknowledge service in difficult environments.

PRAYERS

The petitioner respectfully requests the Teachers Service Commission to: (1) abolish competitive interviews for non-administrative promotion grades; (2) adopt automatic promotion after every three years of satisfactory service within a grade; (3) reserve competitive interviews for Deputy Principal, Deputy Head Teacher, Principal, Head Teacher, and higher administrative positions; (4) recognize master's and doctoral qualifications through direct career progression benefits; (5) establish a classroom teacher career pathway; (6) prioritize teachers who have stagnated for more than six years in one grade; (7) publish annual promotion targets and statistics; and (8) institutionalize regular consultation with teacher unions on career progression reforms.

CONCLUSION

The teaching profession deserves a progression framework founded on fairness, predictability, transparency, and recognition of service. Automatic progression after every three years would restore confidence among teachers while interviews limited to administrative positions would preserve merit-based leadership selection. The petitioner therefore urges KUPPET Homa Bay Branch and the Teachers Service Commission to give these proposals serious consideration in the ongoing review of the Career Progression Guidelines.

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