

REPUBLIC OF KENYA
COUNTY ASSEMBLY OF MACHAKOS

OFFICIAL REPORT

Tuesday, 9th April, 2024

The House met at 11.05 a.m.

[The Deputy Speaker (Hon. Stephen Mwanthi) in the Chair]

PRAYERS

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Good morning, Hon. Members

(Quorum Bell rung)

Clerk at the Table, we may now proceed. Hon. Brian, have your seat. Hon. Brian, we know Hon. Constance has just walked outside, we have quorum. She has already signed in the biometric.

Hon. Joshua Mwonga (Masinga Central, WDM-K): Mr. Speaker, I am rising under Standing Order 30(2) which talks about quorum. It is not the number of Members who have signed in the biometric machine but the physical number of Members in the chamber at that particular time. This being a House of order, Mr. Speaker---

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Confirm that is what the Standing Orders are saying.

Hon. Joshua Mwonga (Masinga Central, WDM-K): Yes, we can confirm. Get me a copy of the Standing Orders. It is not by biometric, Mr. Speaker. We have been in this House and there has not been a biometric machine; so, the Serjeant-at-Arms or the Clerk makes a physical count of the Members who are inside. This being a House of order, we should follow the Standing Orders to the letter and we have no quorum, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Brian Kisila (Makutano/ Mwala, M CCP): Mr Speaker, if we are going to allow the House to proceed without quorum, then the House becomes an illegality. We do not have quorum and signing in the biometric does not give us the right and Mr. Speaker, I am not becoming a blocker in the process. I am just saying people should do their work. I am happy the Majority Whip is here; the Minority Whip is not even here and the deputies too. It is the high time this House starts doing business as it is supposed to do. If you want to rule against us that we have quorum, then we will have no choice but to say that you are going against the Standing Orders which are governing this House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Deputy Speaker: It is the same orders that bar Members from walking out when the bell is being rung. We have two Members who have walked out. If it means following the Orders to the letter, then that needs to be done.

Hon. Mbili Ndawa (Matuu, MCCC): Point of information, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Hon. Minority Leader.

Hon. Mbili Ndawa (Matuu, MCCC): Thank you, Hon. Speaker. I want to inform to the House that we have quorum as we talk.

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Clerk at the Table, confirm that.

(Quorum was confirmed)

PAPER LAID
THE CPSB ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2023

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Under this one, we have Hon. Nicholas Nzioka to come and lay the paper.

Hon. Nicholas Nzioka (Machakos Central, WDM-K): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Hon. Speaker, I wish to lay the following Paper on the Table of the Assembly today, Tuesday 9th April, 2024; the Annual Report of the County Public Service Board for the year 2023. Thank you.

(The Paper was laid on the Table)

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Majority Leader. The Paper has been committed to the Committee of Labor, Public Service and ICT.

MOTION
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS OF MACHAKOS COUNTY
BURSARY FUND FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE, 2022

(Hon. Johana Munyao on 12.03.2024 Morning Sitting)
(Resumption of debate interrupted on 12.03.2024 Morning Sitting)

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Hon. Members, this motion had been moved and before I invite Members to debate, let me invite the mover take the House through the highlights of the report.

Hon. Ruth Kamau (Nominated, CCU): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will not read the whole report but the highlights starting with the background information.

Hon. Speaker, the Audit report on the Financial Statements of Machakos County Bursary Fund for the year ended 30th June, 2022 was received in the Assembly on 19th April 2023 pursuant to Article 229 (7) of the Constitution that states that audit reports shall be submitted to Parliament or the relevant County Assembly. It is good to note that the Auditor General presented

the report to the Assembly four months late, contrary to the provisions of Section 48 (1) of the Public Audit Act 2015 that requires the Auditor General to audit and report on accounts audited six (6) months after the end of the fiscal year in question.

On receipt of the audit report, it was committed to Public Accounts and Investments committee pursuant to Standing Order 185(2)(b) and (c) and the report is a Qualified opinion. This means the financial Statements present fairly and comply with the Public Finance Management Act, 2012 and the County Governments Act, 2012.

The Committee on Public Accounts, while exercising its mandate as provided in Standing Order 185, invited the Accounting Officer of the Department of Education and conducted interrogation on the audit report on October 2023. This is as per the provisions of Article 226(2) of the Constitution that provides that the Accounting Officer of a County public entity is accountable to the County Assembly for its financial management.

General Observations

Hon. Speaker, after considering the specific queries on discrepancies between the trial balance and the financial statements, un-supported cash and cash equivalents, inadequate bursaries disbursed and the specific observations under each query, the committee makes the following general observations:

- a) That there was a discrepancy of Kshs. 2,316,607 between what was captured in the trial balance and the financial Statements. This amount represents cheques that were issued to beneficiaries but were not presented for payment within six months.
The Committee confirmed reasons why the said cheques were not presented for payment as follows:-
 - i. Some cheques had errors in the names of the benefiting institutions and which the management did not bother to follow up for replacement.
 - ii. There were cases of undeserving beneficiaries being issued with cheques and who in turn did not bother to submit them to their respective schools hence denying other deserving students the chance of benefiting from that bursary allocation
 - iii. The low allocation of the bursary made some parents reluctant to present the cheques for payment considering that the cheques were issued late at a time when schools had already opened.
 - iv. The low facilitation of the Ward bursary committee which is established under Section 11 of the Machakos County Bursary Fund Regulations 2019 with requisite materials to enable them administer the process of issuance of cheques to the respective institutions.
- b) The Committee, during the interrogation time, received detailed schedules to support the un-presented cheques. However, the same schedules were not presented to the auditor during the audit exercise.
- c) That an analysis on how the un-presented cheques totalling to Kshs 19,269,850 were later cleared was not presented to the auditors hence it was difficult to establish if the cheques were replaced or not and how the said amount was utilized.
- d) The budgeted bursary allocation during the financial year in question was low compared to the many bursary application received and this led to uniform allocation to the applicants in order to benefit as many applicants as possible.

- e) The allocation of uniform amount to all the beneficiaries without considering the specific needs of individual applicants makes the bursary fund not to fully serve the intended purpose of supporting the vulnerable students.

General Recommendations

Hon. Speaker, after considering the general observations stated above, the committee makes the following general recommendations:-

- a) That in order to prevent cheques from being issued to undeserving beneficiaries, the cheques should be issued in the various Ward centres where the beneficiaries were identified from and be done in an open and transparent manner.
- b) Section 16 of the Machakos County Bursary Regulations, 2019 provides for allowances payable to the Ward Bursary committee. The Department should ensure that the committee is facilitated in an open and transparent manner by transferring their allowances to their respective bank accounts.
- c) That the department, when addressing the cheques, should ensure that the institution's names are captured correctly especially where an institution has changed its name, to avoid errors in the cheques.
- d) Section 12 of the said regulations provides for the functions of the Ward bursary committee. This committee should make a follow up to confirm if the cheques are received in the respective institutions, receive acknowledgement from the school and also collect receipts for the corresponding cheques before expiry of six months.
- e) That the department should, immediately after issuance of cheques, do a bank reconciliation in order to disclose the unrepresented cheques and immediately replace them with new cheques addressed for the same beneficiary so that the targeted students benefit from the allocation.
- f) That the Accounting Officer during the time of audit should provide all information required by the auditors pursuant to Section 9 (1e) of the Public Audit Act, 2015, that gives the Auditor unrestricted access to all required information and books.
- g) That within 14 days after approval of this report, the department should forward to the auditors, bank reconciliation for Ksh. 19,269,850 for verification. Further, an analysis of the schedule showing how each of the unrepresented cheques were later cleared should also be presented to the auditors for verification.
- h) That the Machakos County bursary fund regulations should be amended to introduce systematic annual increase on bursary allocation. This is in consideration of the continued economic hardships being experienced.
- i) That the department, in consultation with all other relevant stakeholders, should formulate guidelines with clear categories of various groups of beneficiaries and the amount each category should receive as bursary.
- j) That pursuant to the provisions of Section 53 (1) of the Public Audit Act 2015, the Accounting Officer should, within 90 days after approval of this report, take the relevant steps to implement the recommendations in this report or give an explanation in writing to the Assembly why the report is not implemented.

Conclusion and Acknowledgement

Hon. Speaker, the report on financial statements of Machakos County Bursary Fund for the year ended 30th June 2022 is a Qualified Opinion. This implies that the report fairly

represents the financial position of the County Executive in the year in question. It indicates well that if the matters raised by the Committee are considered in addition to proper internal controls, compliance and observance of disclosure of information, a positive shift in preparation of good financial statements will be realized.

Hon. Speaker, the Committee on Public Accounts and Investments is grateful to your office for facilitating this committee to undertake its mandate, the County Executive Committee Member and the Chief Officer Department of Education for honouring committee invitation to respond on queries raised, the Office of the Auditor General for the advisory given, Members of the Committee and the Secretariat for commitment and effort throughout the process of report writing.

Hon. Speaker, it is therefore my privilege and pleasure, on behalf of Public Accounts and Investments Committee, to table before this Honourable House the report on Financial Statements of Machakos County Bursary Fund for the Year ended 30th June 2022 for discussion and adoption. To whom much is given, much is required. Luke 12:48. Thank you, Hon. Speaker

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Hon. Wanjiru. I now invite Members to debate the motion. Hon. Mbuva.

Hon. Charles Mbuva (Kangundo West, GDDP): Thank you, Mr. Speaker and I also thank the vice chair for PAIC for being so eloquent and putting the report so clearly. Mr. Speaker, I have listened carefully to that report and being a member of that committee, I concur that it captures the deliberations and the recommendations that were made by the committee.

Mr. Speaker, of great importance is this issue of unrepresented cheques. When the government issues bursaries, they are issued to needy students. The bursaries are meant to cushion students who would have otherwise without that support, missed classes. It defeats logic how a student who was allocated money for assistance, that cheque will lie at home for a whole year only to be discovered it is unrepresented.

When we had a thorough look and an in-depth discussion with the Executive side of Department of Education, they also brought up the issue of wrong naming of schools. Mr. Speaker, right now I do not know what has happened all over. A lot of schools which we knew in their previous names today do not exist under the same names especially the ones which are sponsored by religious organizations. That school has had another name of a saint before the name of the school and some of these names of the saints are not easy to mention so when the parents go to fill the forms, they cannot even remember the new name so they refer to the school as they have always known it, not knowing that it will have ramifications and that is one of the reasons.

Mr. Speaker, if today you visit the Department of Education I happened to be there three days ago, the main exercise going on right now even with the bursaries issued this year, is the change of names and Members will concur, all Members who were issued with cheques we are now busy receiving back cheques to bring back to the department for correction. I have been pondering how to go around this because I think we must come up with a solution, otherwise we will be issuing cheques and set another date of receiving them back. Schools are changing names for whatever known or unknown reason.

Mr. Speaker I think now the department should keep a database of the most current and updated name of the schools and I do not think it is very hard because it can liaise with the Ministry of Education and get the updated names so that even when the bursaries are applied, as

they write the names, they can themselves confirm which is the right name. This is because in this back and forth, some of the students will lose their cheques, some of the deserving students may not end up getting their cheques.

Mr. Speaker, it has also come to our attention and Hon. Members will concur, in as much as we give a lot of weight to secondary school education, we have our vocational training centers and myself I am very passionate with the vocational training centers. Mr. Speaker, I want to liken what we are doing as a government to a parent who cooks food in their house and there are some children playing in the compound and serves the children of neighbours before their children. Secondary schools are under National Government; they receive bursaries and funding from the National Government, CDF. Our vocational training centers are our own children and they rarely get any support from national government.

Mr. Speaker, I would implore my colleagues and also the ward bursary committees in considering beneficiaries, most of these kids who go to VTCs come from poor backgrounds. It is like a matter of last resort for the parents just to take the children somewhere to get some form of training. Mr. Speaker, it would be prudent that in each financial year, as we allocate budget because it has proven to be very hard to get capitation for the vocational training centers. I implore my colleagues that we use the avenue of these bursaries and allocate something to our vocational training centers so that we do not give all the money to secondary schools.

If we were to grow Machakos County, even Kenya is saying buy Kenya, Build Kenya; we should also ask ourselves, how much of these millions of money are being ploughed back to schools within Machakos County because these are resources we are also giving away. My opinion is that in this bursary, there should be a provision that the VTCs within a ward get a specified amount of money and with those few remarks, I support the report.

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Hon. Mbuva. Hon. Loyd.

Hon. Loyd Mutua (Nominated, MCCP): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to contribute to this motion. Bursaries, when it comes to education, are one pivotal area that touches me, being a beneficiary of this programme. It is not really good to have such a report as a qualified report when bursaries are meant to help the needy. It is something that should be given priority in the county because our people will grow by empowering them. Some of us are here because we were empowered by other people.

Bursaries help to address the issue of inequality and social inclusion by providing opportunities for all children. Bursaries also provide a lifeline to those students who might otherwise be forced to abandon their dreams due to financial constraints. There is somewhere the report has mentioned that the bursaries are given evenly. When we go to our villages, there are those who can afford a bit and those who cannot afford completely. If you are giving two thousand or five thousand equally to all of them, then there are some even if you give that three thousand, it will not help them so even that bursary was not necessary to them.

Something needs to be worked on in those two committees mentioned there. Those are very important committees to help in selection of the needy students and we know how it goes on the ground, if those who are involved in issuance of bursaries, you will find those who will get bursaries are not the needy ones but those who are connected in the society. That bursary does not really help the needy. So I would pray if we are able to prioritize on forming bursary committees that are not corrupt, we involve the religious leaders so that we are able to help those who are needy to get the bursaries.

My constituency where I come from, when I was at the university, the Member of Parliament is revered to date because of how he used to issue to bursaries; taking priority to the needy. Majority of us who come from his region, a number of them have PHDs and everything through his programme of education. He said empowering a society is through education.

I will give an example how it is; in Meru it is divided in three parts, there is the part in Igembe that has miraa, middle part that does not have that kind of growing, then there is Imenti where Kiraitu comes from, that he has really empowered them in farming. This middle part here is semi-arid, where Dr. Kilemi Mweria comes from, a senior educationist globally now.

He educated people, empowered them and this is what he told them, “you learn because you do not have farm produce, you do not have the miraa the other side, go sell education.” And that’s what that part has sold to the world. If you go to Meru County, most of the elite and professors come from that region because of that empowerment. I think we can do the same by prioritizing to give the bursaries to the right people. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Speaker: Thank you Hon. Loyd. Hon. Constance.

Hon. Constance Mbula (Nominated, MCCC): Thank you, Hon. Speaker. The issue of bursaries is very important. It is supposed to go to the needy but that is not the case. Hon. Speaker, I must say that I am not a beneficiary because my times there was nothing called bursary but my mother used to take maize to schools and they deduct my school fees from there and that was a big trial in those days. Today we have bursaries to keep the children who are unable to pay to learn but it is the other way round.

Mr. Speaker we must do something very, very seriously. We are the people who make laws and we are the people who break those laws. I want to say that I sat in Machakos County bursary fund for five years with Mheshimiwa Munyaka and we tried, although we used to give two thousand which was not taking a child any further and I stood and asked the whole county to consider if we have to give a child bursary, give that child bursary from form one to four because when that child drops at form one or two we have lost that money and we have lost that child. What have we done? Will that child recover?

The bursary fund issue is something we need to look at on a very, very serious note and as some of us have said, it is very true; it does not help the needy. The needy is five percent, I can assure you. Ninety five percent as we move or as we came, could be 85 or 95, the ones who benefit, because you find teachers are the ones who get bursaries, chiefs get bursaries.

I will give you an example and it is a very bad one. In my village there was a time it used to be hung somewhere in the chief’s office and so you go check whether your child has gotten bursary, and we used to go there. You look at it, and you find chiefs, headmasters’ children and the needy ones do not get. Let me tell you the truth of the matter; those ones for the chiefs and teachers went nuts after school. Some of them are collecting papers in the villages now and the poor ones got jobs and they are comfortable, so I am pleading with you Members, when we are distributing bursaries, let us do the needful and we shall move our county further. Thank you Hon. Speaker.

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Thank you Hon. Constance, Hon. Anastasia then Minority Leader.

Hon. Anastasia Mutevu (Nominated, WDM-K): Thank you, Hon. Speaker. I want to give my input on bursary issuance in cases where a school has benefited more than one student and has been issued a cheque. My take is these bursaries should be taken to schools to avoid mishandling of cheques because we have got so many instances that when a parent is given the cheques, they get lost on the way and most students do not benefit.

To add on what Hon. Loyd has given on the flat rate of issuance of bursaries, I think we should come up with a good strategy on identifying the needy students, not giving a flat rate of three or thirty-five. These students have special needs and special cases. So I think this committee can come up with good strategy of identifying the needy students based on their needs. Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Thank you so much, Hon. Anastasia. Hon. Minority Leader.

Hon. Mbili Ndawa (Matuu, MCCC): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Before I make my contribution, we have a visitor in the gallery and it is a normal practice when we have visitors in the gallery we are informed who they are so we can be sure that we are secure. So I would request that you tell us who the visitor is so that we can be able to continue doing our work.

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Hon. Member, you can proceed; he is just a member of public who came to follow the proceedings and he has been following as required, so you may proceed.

Hon. Mbili Ndawa (Matuu, MCCC): Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Let me take this opportunity because the visitor has not been welcomed, to welcome you to this House, Machakos County Assembly and feel that you are in the right place. Hon. Speaker, coming back to the business before the House, the report we are debating here is a report which most of the members here were not in this House. Hon. Speaker, it is only Hon. Dominic, Caro, Constance, myself, Brian Kisila and yourself who were there because this is a report of the year ended 30th June, 2022 and you remember very well, during that time that is when the politics were at the climax.

Hon. Speaker, I want to confirm that the report before the House is the true reflection of what transpired that time. When the beneficiaries were identified at the ward level, the names were forwarded to the department, the cheques were written. Hon. Speaker, instead of doing what we are doing today, we work together so that we can make sure the cheques reach the intended destination or the target. Hon. Speaker, the cheques were brought to the wards by the then Finance Minister, and when they were brought, there was no time for Members of the County Assembly to verify whether the cheques contained the total amount.

Like in my case Hon. Speaker, the cheques were brought to a place known as Matuu fishing centre and most of my schools which had already being identified to get cheques, starting with Kwamwatu Secondary School, the cheque was missing. St. Peters Ithekethini, the cheque was missing. A school in Kithimani ward, Kambi ya Ndeke Primary School, I had identified some beneficiaries who are in that school to benefit, the cheque was missing. We tried our level best to ensure the cheques were brought back, up to date we have not managed. So I can confirm, if other wards had similar issues, that is why we can see a discrepancy of two million one hundred plus and Hon. Speaker, this is not little money.

I want to thank the current department because the way we distributed the cheques last time, every elected Member of County Assembly had an opportunity to get the cheques, verify

and confirm whether there is any cheque missing and if there is any, replacement was done so Hon. Speaker, us as elected Members of County Assembly and representatives of people, we also have a duty and obligation to ensure that if we are giving out three million per ward as Member representing Matuu people, it is my duty to ensure that the checks brought to my ward amount to three million.

I want to commend the department; the last cheques I got from the County Government of Machakos, I sat down with my PA here with a computer and myself with a calculator and we started from the first cheque to the last one. It was exactly three million. There was no single cent either less or more, it was exactly three million. I think that is the way it should go and I am encouraging other Members....yes, that is exactly what I found, three million. So, it is upon us as Members, there is a saying in English which says a change that is needed in the grandson has to begin with the grandfather and the grandmother coming downwards.

If you want other people to toe the line, let us be the first to toe the line. Machakos County Assembly is the highest decision making organ of this county and if we cannot do what is expected of us, then we do not expect other departments to do that. So Hon. Speaker, I agree with the report and request that in future, let us not have a repeat of what happened that time. Thank you, Hon. Speaker.

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Leader of Minority. Hon. Brian then Hon. Ndwiki.

Hon. Brian Kisila (Makutano/Mwala, MCCP): Mr. Speaker, I think this report, obviously, is an old report but it is bringing some key issues which we need to look at and Mr. Speaker, the biggest challenge we have is the way I have heard Members complaining that there are some undeserving Members who get bursaries. Honestly it depends on the ward because the best process of awarding bursaries is through public participation and in those public participation forums, the parameters for awarding bursaries are very clear including who gets. Once you have that criteria well spelt out in the wards, it is very easy for you to identify the needy students and ensure that they get the checks.

Mr. Speaker, this time around I think we were all here and obviously we did the right job but at the end the previous government missed the point on the final issuance, the way the cheques were issued. Moving forward, what is important is we need to ensure that we take charge of the bursary process and the best way is to have a very competent bursary committee and the bursary committee is very well spelt out and if you have a good bursary committee, you will never have these challenges because even the schools which the beneficiaries are supposed to be given the bursaries, they counter check the schools including the code of the school, so you cannot have back and forth if the committee knows their work.

Secondly, let Members understand it is a requirement when you get cheques, they are supposed to be taken to the schools and receipts are issued and through our offices, we are supposed to forward back those receipts to the county office. I am very proud to say, Mr. Speaker, that I am one of the practitioners of that practice and all my cheques even in the last issuance of cheques, all the receipts, I accounted for them up to the last cheque. That is the only way you can ensure that your people have gotten the cheques. The minute you give people cheques, even some can even go and change the names of the students. So, the law is very clear when you get the cheques, you are supposed to ensure that they are accounted for and our PAs take that bunch of the receipts and they are supposed to bring them back to the office here.

Mr. Speaker, my last point is on, and that is where we need to debate, the Governor has allowed us to be taking the cheques ourselves. I am not saying that some of us have not been doing the right job, but when people start driving around with cheques in their cars, you end up finding that some cheques are actually not submitted to the recipient schools. So it is upon us as Members, I do not know if the law allows us to be given those cheques, but the bursary committee, in fact in my ward once I get the cheques I take them back to the bursary committee; the bursary committee is the one which ensures those cheques are given to the respective institutions.

So Mr. Speaker, I think the report is good but it is of the old regime but this time around, I must commend the Department of Education which did a fantastic job on the last two bursaries which we have been able to give. They have done a fantastic job, so it is upon us to ensure that we follow the law and follow the procedure. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Hon. Brian. Hon. Ndwiki then Hon. Eng. Muoki.

Hon. Daniel Ndwiki (Mlolongo/Syokimau, WDM-K): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand here to support this report Mr. Speaker and maybe add something on the way of distribution of the cheques and the control of the whole exercise. Mr. Speaker, as we all know, we have the bursary committee that is entitled to identify and distribute the cheques to the needy students but the bursary committee should be very much competitive because at times we have interference from external powers, that is including ourselves the MCAs, members of the administration and friends of the MCAs and the government.

We have reports that some people try to come and interfere with the committee so it is the right of the committee to stand firm and distribute the cheques to the needy students. Like in my place Mr. Speaker, it is very hard to identify the needy students in the urban areas because Mr. Speaker, everyone who comes for bursary claims you cannot go for bursary when you are not needy. So the degree of how needy especially in urban areas, I propose that we should put some structures to see how we can identify the needy students because Mr. Speaker, at times everyone who comes for a cheque claims they cannot come for a cheque when they are not needy. So the degree to identify how needy someone is needs to be checked.

The other thing Mr. Speaker, is about the dynamics in some of those areas. You may issue a cheque and the student gets transferred. The student applied for bursary while at this school but during the time of issuance, the student has been transferred to another school. We have had those cases. So it is good that the Education committee or the relevant department checks on those factors because in my area, I had almost two cases of student transfers, so Mr. Speaker, it is also good that we check on the time of applying and the time of issuance. It should be a short time to ensure such changes have not happened because we have experienced that.

The issue of spelling that is okay; we have seen them but this time they were minimum. So I want to thank and congratulate the department for good work and we expect it to continue like that.

As I finish Mr. Speaker, I also wish to comment on the amount to be issued because if for example in my place we had over 2,000 applicants with beneficiaries of about 600, Mr. Speaker, you see the number that benefits is less than the number that applied. It is good also we empower the committee to determine because Mr. Speaker, I received a delegation in my office and they were suggesting to me that let every applicant get a cheque.

If we have the three million and applicants are three thousand let every child get one thousand so that everyone benefits, because Mr. Speaker, even if we deny this fact, the issuance of cheques has become political, Mr. Speaker, and as you know at the end of the time it will be political; we applied and we did not get, so we need also to manage that factor, so I suggest that the cheques be issued to all applicants. Whatever the number, the amount be divided to give all applicants so that everybody feels that they have received a cheque. With that, I commend the department and I support the report and work well done. Thank you.

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Hon. Ndwiki. Hon. Muoki.

Hon. Muoki wa Musila (Ndithini, WDM-K): Thank you, Hon. Speaker, for giving me an opportunity to contribute to this worthy report. I am so proud and happy today that I am told my sub-county office is being cited or the laying of the foundation is ongoing as I am speaking. Thank you and I congratulate and say thank you to Madam Governor for giving us that opportunity to have a sub-county.

I am a Member of the PAIC and I am proud to see this report of ours with a qualified opinion. The report that was done is very good and I have listened to different contributors, Mr. Speaker, and I say exactly what they have said is the right thing and I am happy for that and I do not want to repeat it. Only one thing that I would want to say that particularly pertains to the committees on the ground. Their remuneration, that is where we are having a problem today because unless other places are being remunerated differently, in my place they were being given Kshs. 2,000 for the whole exercise and this is an exercise that took a long time and even in a place like mine where we have no office or computers and had to go to the cyber cafes to do everything that was to be typed like names and the like, it was me who was paying for that.

What I am trying to say is if this committee of I think six people can be given good remuneration for the compilation of all the information that is needed and even bringing back the receipts and even taking the cheques to the respective schools, then we would even be doing a much better job than we are doing today. I am happy to say that according to the pioneers of the bursaries, they are saying this time round is more improved than 2022 and I wish that everyone who is going to be part of these bursaries every bit of success in it because it is changing the lives of our people. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Hon. Muoki. Hon. Katiti.

Hon. Boniface Katiti (Muthetheni, UDA): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank the committee for the input and the good report that they have given us. I have a submission that I should also make according to the report.

One, it is of great importance for the people who came up with the issue of assisting the needy children, that is an initiative that was started by the late Mwai Kibaki, because he saw there was need for our country to develop in terms of education so that the students that are needy can also access education and quality education that is also being accessed by other students from the wealthy families.

My question is, as we dispense with this issue of bursary issuing, the amount that the bursary committees are given as imprest is very low. It is too little because the maximum that they get is Ksh. 1,000 allowance per person yet we are giving three percent of the amount that is being issued in terms of bursary. For example, the last dispensation that we had, we were giving

Ksh. 3,000,000 so three percent of that amount was equivalent to Ksh. 90,000. Let us take care of the bursary committee that is been involved when addressing that bursary issue.

The report that we are talking about is of June 2022 and the period that the bursaries were being issued, the country was in a political mood and everybody was either seeking re-election or seeking to be elected. I encourage the new regime that we have now like it has done this year that the latest time that we can issue bursaries to our children should be the first term of the year. The other thing, it is said when you want to kill a forest, then get rid of the seed. It is paramount for us as a country to look for the importance of the kids; the education of the kids that benefit with the bursaries.

So many people, even the wealthy ones, come and they seduce the people who are issuing the bursaries and eventually they get awarded with those bursaries. I would encourage the people who have selected those needy children to be vigilant and it should be an open forum for them to identify the needy children and once they identify them, there should be no change of names before they come to the Department for verification. That is my submission and I support the report that the Committee has done.

Still, there was a recommendation that the Committee has done that we may have the incremental rate annually and I want to applaud the currently County Government because it has done so. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Hon. Katiti. Hon. Justus then Hon. Majority Leader.

Hon. Justus Mutuku (Wamunyu, PTP): Thank you, Hon. Speaker for giving me this opportunity. I want to thank the Committee first Mr. Speaker for giving us a very profound report in this House. .

I know as the Vice-Chair of this Committee was reading the report, she said a trial balance was a challenge. I want to affirm that there was no balancing of a trial balance without the presentation of these cheques which were presented. I want to connect with my colleagues as an accountant that those cheques unless they are brought to the department, they were not represented. The trial balance cannot balance.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker it is upon this House, Hon. Members, that we make sure these cheques when they are given and distributed to the specific schools, they are received in those schools and receipts are issued because a trial balance will lead to a balance sheet, Mr. Speaker, and without a balance sheet, the Auditor General will account the County not effective. The report from the Attorney General will come out that there are some monies which have been misappropriated in the account. Mr. Speaker, that was to shed light as a serving accountant for seventeen years in several schools.

The Constitution is very clear that the County Government tackles the Early Child Development Education (ECDE) and Technical Vocational Training Centers (TVETs). My appeal to the bursary committee, Mr. Speaker, is that when we find a student who is in TVET and is in need of a bursary, let others be held constant and if a village has four students who are supposed to go to polytechnics or TVET or vocational center, because that is our role, Mheshimiwa Mbuva went in depth to give light on that that our students in those TVETs some never got bursaries.

At this point I want to thank my sister Mheshimiwa Njagi who stood with me and made sure that one pupil from Katangi Polytechnic who hails from my Ward got a bursary. Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker.

(Applause)

That is the brotherhood and sisterhood which should be portrayed in this House. Mine was to make sure I ask my colleagues Hon. Members in this House that when we execute our duties in issuance of these bursaries, then some hiccups will not arise.

Hon. Brian Kisila who is my neighbor and good brother, alluded that we should be present when this exercise is going on. Mr. Speaker I only took back only three cheques from my Ward to the Department to change names and it is just the word Saint (St.) which one of the Hon. Members alluded in this House. When you involve yourself fully in this exercise, then some of the hiccups that we are hearing will be minimal.

Thank you so much for giving me this time and I am happy because of the exercise that has gone on in my Ward. It is not like Mheshimiwa Minority Leader who said Ksh. 3,000,000; mine was Ksh. 2,200,000 and I went through one by one because that is my duty as an elected Member. As an accountant I never skipped one and I made sure that those bursaries correspond with what I have in the record. Mr. Speaker, thank you so much.

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Hon. Justus. Hon. Majority Leader.

Hon. Nicholas Nzioka (Machakos Central, WDM-K): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I love the passion of Mheshimiwa Justus Mutuku. Mr. Speaker, I only have two points to state. One, out of this report, even though Mheshimiwa Minority Leader states we were not there, I think it is on the basis of such reports that institutions are able to improve and grow.

The Auditor General has scrutinized and saw that we were able to spend the bursary monies well even though there were challenges, what Mheshimiwa Kasanga is calling hiccups. I hope we learn from these hiccups and challenges and make an improvement going forward. My plea to the Hon. Members is, if the Auditor General, who has the mandate to scrutinize finances, has qualified report on the issue of bursary issuance, we minimize the politics behind bursary issuance.

If we can speak with one voice, whatever the amount that we agree on does not matter, it matters how we distribute the bursary. I know the last time we had issues of bursary there was contention. Some people said it was Ksh. 700,000, others Ksh. 2,200,000 and others said Ksh. 3,000,000. How I pray next time, and I pray that we will have more money for the bursaries, how I pray that we reduce politics. I also want to remind Hon. Members that as much as people knock your door asking for bursary, they also knock at the door of Her Excellency the Governor.

We need also to take into consideration that she went out there, looked for votes, she is also a politician and people will approach her asking for assistance to pay school fees. Allow her a little bit of breathing space so that she is also able to support the people.

Mheshimiwa Mbuva I want to tell you the good news; in the supplementary budget two that is upcoming, we have factored in capitation for youth polytechnics Ksh. 35,000,000 and TVETs at Ksh. 25,000,000. I hope Hon. Members when the time to pass the supplementary budget comes, we will be able to see it and pass it so that the pupils at that level access the support that they require. Otherwise, I want to commend the vice share and her Committee. The report was very good. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Majority Leader. I now invite the mover to come and reply.

Hon. Ruth Kamau (Nominated, CCU): Thank you, Hon. Speaker. The bursaries are a very emotive issue because it is felt that it is one way that we directly impact citizens, but I would like to plead with Members, if you ever get an opportunity to play a part on the issuance of bursaries, use your heart.

We have heard about the issue of need. It is true that there are members of the community that will approach you because you are a Member of the County Assembly. It is a perception that everybody is entitled to part of the county goodies. They take it as county goodies. Some of them do not deserve; I have a personal experience whereby my neighbor approached me to give her child bursary and I asked her if she really needed that bursary. She told me “there is no other way I’m going to have a share of the county goodies.” I told her expressly that I will not give you the bursary because you do not need it. If there is ever some kind of goodies maybe the seeds or something that I feel you need, I will give to you but for now, I will not give you.

Nowadays she does not talk to me but I am very okay with that because as we always finish these reports of the Public Accounts Committee, we say that to whom much is given, much is expected. Please let us sow seeds of goodness so that we can change the cycle of poverty. Empower even two or three people and you will reap in due season. Thank you, Hon. Members.

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Hon. Ruth.

(Question put and agreed to)

Thank you, Hon. Members. I would want to say that according to the exercise that we had lastly compared to what we had in 2021/2022, we have made a milestone. I want to believe according to what you have said here, we all need to identify the needy students. It is a good exercise if well followed using our Ward Committees that I believe are in our Wards.

If I may talk about my Ward, we have been identifying these students using our Ward villages. For example in my Ward, I have 132 villages. We call the residents as per their villages and they identify the neediest students in their small village even if they are three or four. At the end of the day, you will never walk to any of your villages and find that there is no student who got something from the County Government. I believe if we do that way, we will have all our Members of public having gotten this County cake. Thank you, Hon. Members.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. Deputy Speaker: The House adjourns to Tuesday, 9th April, 2024 at 2.30 p.m. Thank you, Hon. Members.

The House rose at 12.17 p.m.

