*Text of the Address by*

*His Excellency*

**Dr. Kayode Fayemi, CON**

*Governor, Ekiti State, Nigeria*

on the occasion of the

**COMMISSIONING OF THE BANJI AKINTOYE MODEL COLLEGE**

at

Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State

*Thursday, October 15, 2020*

**Protocols,**

1. It gives me great pleasure to be here today for this historic occasion of the official commissioning of the Banji Akintoye Model College, Ado-Ekiti which is one of the four Model Colleges initiated by our Administration. The new Colleges are named after Four of our illustrious sons who have made the State proud in their chosen career and their contributions to Ekiti State are invaluable.
2. This Commissioning of this College gladdens my heart, because after our inauguration in October 2018, one of the issues that became our serious concern was education. What we met on ground was nothing to write home about and as a government, we swung into action. Most of the schools, especially in Ado Ekiti were over populated while many of the pupils studied sitting on the floors in dilapidated classrooms. It was very clear that something needed to be done to right the obvious wrongs. The creation of these new schools, therefore, was a dream come true for the pupils and teachers, even more for the government.
3. Today's event cannot have come at a more auspicious moment than now that all hands are on deck to turn around basic infrastructure in public schools and improve access to free qualitative education among children of school age in our state. Today's event is also a clear manifestation that the concerted efforts of our administration to provide conducive teaching and learning environment in public schools with a view to repositioning the basic education sector in the state for greater efficiency have started yielding fruits.
4. You would recall that the introduction of education tax, as well as the neglect of the basic education sector and indeed the entire education sector in the past greatly eroded the gains made during the first tenure of our administration.
5. One is therefore not surprised that our State which had one of the highest enrolment figures in Nigeria in 2014 had slid to the one with the least enrolment in the South West zone by the time my administration came back to office two years ago.
6. As a first step towards addressing this problem, you will recall that my Administration within the first few days of assuming office in October 2018 issued Executive Order 001 of 2018 which outlawed the payment of fees and levies in all public Primary and Secondary Schools in the State.
7. Our administration has also in the last twenty-four months introduced multiple efforts to tackle the challenges directly or indirectly militating against access of children to free qualitative basic education in the State. These include:

* the payment of all outstanding Counterpart Funds running into Seven Billion Naira to UBEC from 2015 to 2019,
* provision of instructional materials to schools,
* payment of regular Running Grants to all public Primary and Secondary Schools in the State,
* massive reconstruction and rehabilitation of school infrastructure and construction of additional school buildings
* as well as the provision of conducive teaching and learning environment in schools.

Other steps taken include:

* Introduction of the School Feeding Programme in primary schools,
* regular capacity building programmes for teachers,
* payment of teachers’ salaries as and when due
* and fostering greater synergy with development partners and the Universal Basic Education Commission and the Federal Ministry of Education amongst others.

1. Today's event is further proof that our collaboration with UBEC is yielding the desired result as information at my disposal indicates that we have over 790 projects ongoing across the length and breadth of the state at various stages of completion.
2. The Model Schools we are inaugurating today were specifically designed to decongest secondary schools around and within Ado Ekiti, the state capital, as well as open up the areas for urban development as most schools in the outskirts of the state capital were established in the early 80s and thus could not cope with the current population growth.
3. The four schools which we named after prominent leaders of the state are designed as one-storey 18 classrooms edifices each with 32 toilets with a chemistry, biology and physics laboratories, as well as an ICT/ laboratory and home economics laboratory. Other facilities provided in the one storey edifices include: a large examination hall, Staffrooms, Administrative offices, Perimeter fencing, a football pitch, a basketball court, parking space and water treatment plant amongst others.
4. As we inaugurate the block of classrooms for use today, I want to state emphatically the commitment of my administration to making our schools more attractive to children of school age through the introduction of pupil friendly initiatives as well as the teaching of practical agricultural. entrepreneurship and sporting activities that would make our pupils have all round skills during the new academic session.
5. It gladdens my heart and I am fulfilled that in Ekiti State, our administration has never hidden its plans to make public Schools attractive. With this, we now have public schools that can compete favourably with the best in the Country, and indeed, our new Model Colleges are the ones to beat around here.
6. All these are in fulfilment of our promise to provide functional and qualitative education in Ekiti State. This stems from our conviction that every child deserves unfettered rights to basic education. It is therefore not by happenstance that we have committed such huge amount on education for the betterment of the pupils and the teachers.
7. To whom much is given much is expected, I appeal to teachers and pupils that would use the infrastructure that the Government has put in place in these schools to imbibe proper maintenance culture so that generations unborn can reap from the huge investment Government is committed into the Education sector.
8. Now that basic education is free and school infrastructure is being improved upon in the State, parents and guardians have no reason not to send their children and wards to school. It is the rights of these children to have at least basic education, and we as government will not allow such rights to be trampled upon. As a government, we have played our own part and we will continue to do so. It is now left for parents and teachers and even the pupils to do their own part by making the best use of this edifice. Parents should prepare their children for school at the appropriate time, help them properly and warn them against truancy. Our teachers should also be more concerned about their pupils. Grooming is an important part of education. Teach them effectively and efficiently today, and be a proud teacher tomorrow.
9. I urge our royal fathers, religious leaders, community leaders, teachers, members of the Parents/Teachers Association and School Based Management Committee, philanthropists and other critical stakeholders in the basic Education sector to join hands with the government in our quest to make public schools in the State more attractive. As a people and government, we have critical roles in making the lofty dream of education development in Ekiti State, a reality. I implore you all to see the projects as your personal projects in terms of maintenance and protection of the facilities put in them.
10. I must not end this without acknowledging those who supported us and made all this a reality. I thank you for the unflinching support for our administration.
11. On this note, it is my honour and privilege to inaugurate this Model College to the Glory of God and benefit of our children.
12. Thank you and God Bless.

**Dr. Kayode Fayemi, CON**

*Governor*