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IEA PRESS RELEASE

Ghanaians Blame Double-Track System for Declining Education Quality, Support Borrowing to Build More Schools – IEA Poll

The Government of Ghana introduced the Free Senior High School (SHS) policy in 2017 to ease financial burden to secondary education and ensure that every child has the opportunity to access secondary education. The policy resulted in a sharp increase in enrolment, placing considerable pressure on the country's existing school infrastructure. At the same time, the increase in enrolment also put pressure on the student-teacher ratio at the secondary school level.

In response to the growing pressure on school infrastructure, the Government introduced the Double-Track System in some senior high schools in 2018. Under the system, students are divided into two groups that take turns attending school. This arrangement enabled more students to be accommodated within existing school facilities despite limited infrastructure capacity.

While the Double-Track System helped the government accommodate the rapid increase in SHS enrolment, concerns remain about its implications for the quality of education. To gauge public perceptions of the system, the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA), Ghana, conducted a nationwide poll on the impact of the Double-Track System on SHS education and public support for the Government's plan to borrow funds to construct additional school infrastructure and ultimately phase out the system.

The poll surveyed 1,062 respondents across all sixteen regions of Ghana. Two key findings stand out:

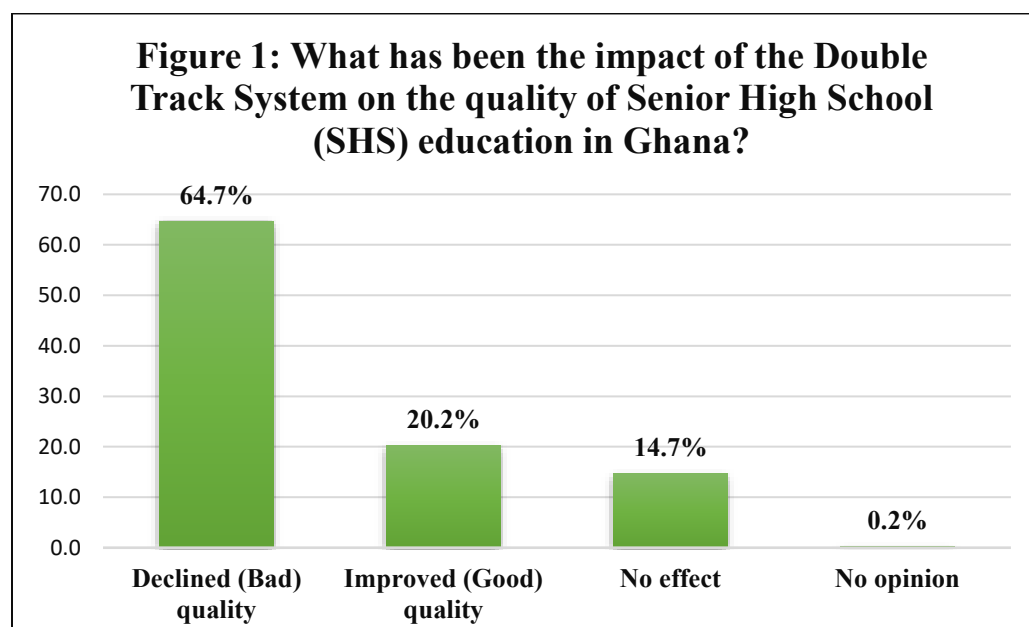
- **64.7% of Ghanaians believe the Double-Track System has had a negative effect on the quality of SHS education.**
- **54.3% support the Government's intention to borrow funds to construct additional SHS infrastructure and eliminate the Double-Track System.**
- **Among those who believe the Double-Track System has reduced education quality, 60.8% support borrowing to build additional SHS infrastructure while 38.4% do not.**

Majority of Ghanaians Say Double-Track System Has contributed to declining Quality of SHS Education

The Government introduced the Double-Track System eight years ago as a temporary measure to expand access to secondary education in the face of inadequate SHS infrastructure nationwide.

Although the system enabled more students to access secondary education, the poll suggests that many Ghanaians believe this expansion in access has come at the expense of education quality. A majority of respondents (64.7%) said the Double-Track System has declined the quality of SHS education in the country (Figure 1).

By comparison, only 20.2% of respondents believe that the system has improved the quality of secondary education, while 14.7% said it has had no effect and 0.2% expressed no opinion.

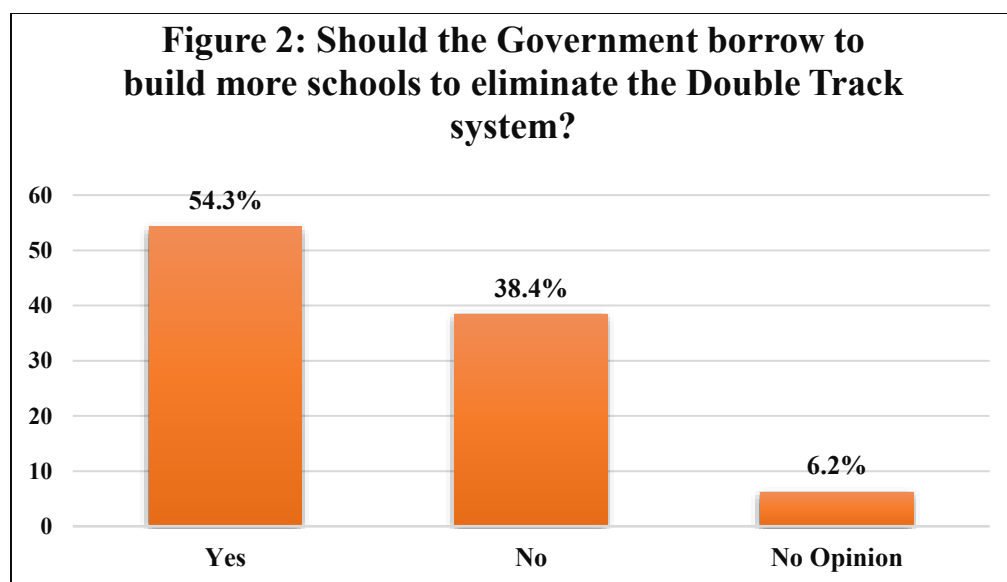


Source: IEA Socioeconomic Poll, August 2026

Majority of Ghanaians Support Government Borrowing to Build More Schools

Despite concerns about public debt, a majority of Ghanaians support the Government's proposal to borrow funds to construct additional schools and bring an end to the Double-Track System.

When respondents were asked whether the Government should borrow to build more schools and eliminate the Double-Track System, 54.3% answered yes, while 38.4% opposed the proposal and 6.2% expressed no opinion (Figure 2).

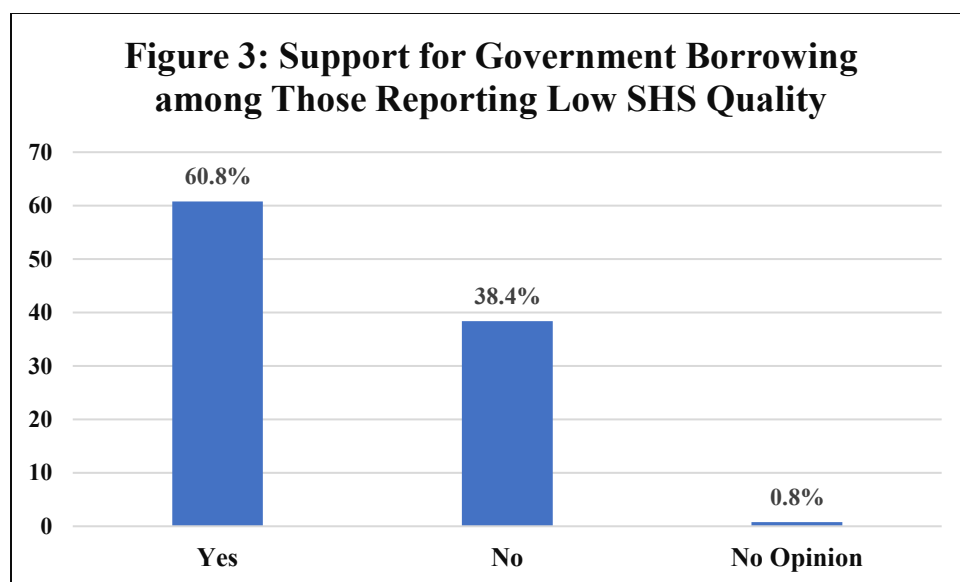


Source: IEA Socioeconomic Poll, August 2026

The relatively strong support for additional borrowing may, in part, reflect continued pressure on existing SHS infrastructure arising from high enrolment levels. For many Ghanaians, expanding school infrastructure appears to be necessary to address the capacity constraints associated with the implementation of Free SHS.

Among respondents who believe that the Double-Track System has reduced the quality of education, 60.8% support government borrowing to construct additional schools under the Free SHS programme (Figure 3). This finding suggests that a significant proportion of those dissatisfied with the quality of education see expanded infrastructure as an important means of improving the quality of secondary education.

A significant 38.4% of respondents, however, oppose borrowing funds to construct additional schools, reflecting concerns about the country's already high public debt burden.



Source: IEA Socioeconomic Poll, August 2026

For these respondents, expanding SHS infrastructure through additional borrowing could further increase pressure on public finances. They would therefore prefer the Government to explore alternative financing mechanisms for the construction of additional school infrastructure.

Key Takeaways

- 64.7% of Ghanaians believe the Double-Track System has declined the quality of SHS education.
- 54.3% support government borrowing to construct additional schools and eliminate the Double-Track System.
- Among those who believe the Double-Track System has reduced education quality, 60.8% support borrowing to build additional SHS infrastructure.
- However, 38.4% oppose additional borrowing, citing concerns about the country's public debt burden.
- The findings point to a public preference for expanding SHS infrastructure while highlighting the need for the Government to carefully consider the fiscal implications of financing such expansion through borrowing.