

# Education ministry records better overall performance, but failures deepen concern

PHOTO BY MIRIAM NAMUTEBI

# HEADTEACHERS, DEOS FACE DISMISSAL OVER UNGRADED CANDIDATES

BY VISION REPORTERS

While many more primary school pupils are completing the end of cycle examinations than before, the number of learners who are ungraded (fail exams) has steadily increased.

This does not only mean that the candidates failed to meet the passmark, but also means they learnt so little after seven years of primary education.

It is against this background that the Government has said headteachers, district education officers and inspectors of schools whose candidates are ungraded risk dismissal from service over failure to do their work.

Going forward, the education ministry will demand a written explanation from the teachers, headteachers, district education officers and inspectors of schools where the ungraded candidates will appear.

This was announced yesterday by the First Lady and Minister of Education and Sports, Mrs Janet Museveni, during the release of the 2025 Primary Leaving Examinations (PLE) results at State House, Nakasero.

She said the ministry will, next year, demand answers where there will be many ungradable candidates in a school or schools in a local government when such a school has a headteacher, teachers, district education officer and inspector of schools on the government payroll.

"So, we need to stop lamenting about the unsatisfactory academic performance of our learners but put to task those who are at the frontline to explain

## THE PATHWAY

For those who qualified for the next level of education, Mrs Janet Museveni said the country has two pathways for them: one through secondary education, and the other through the Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET).

For secondary schools, Mrs Museveni said the Government continued to deliver on secondary school expansion by building seed schools for sub-counties that have none.

"Since 2019, we had a target of building 259 new seed secondary schools through the Uganda Inter-governmental Fiscal Transfers programme. As of today, we have so far completed the construction and operationalised 204 new seed secondary schools, while 55 others are still at various levels of construction," the First Lady said.

The constructed seed schools will accommodate many more learners, she said.

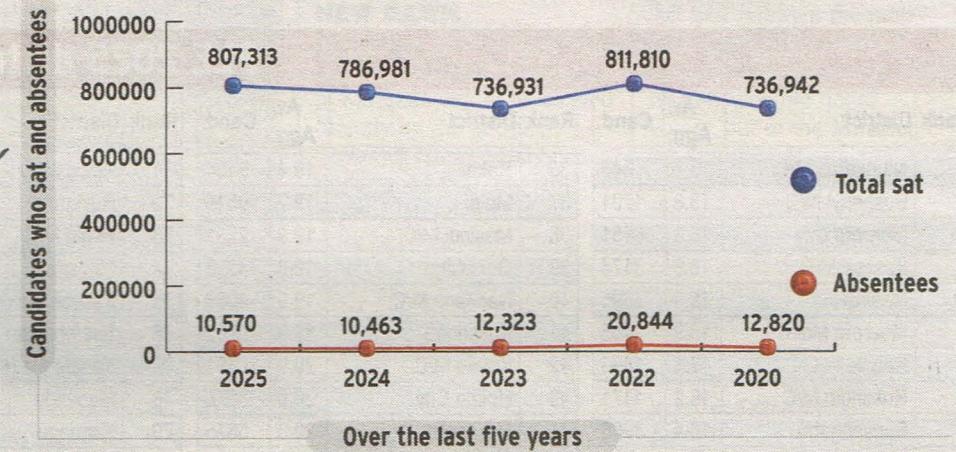
For the TVET education system, Mrs Museveni said, the Government has 42 community polytechnics in addition to about 100 privately-owned community polytechnics.

"The study duration in community polytechnics is three years, upon which the successful trainee is awarded a community polytechnic certificate that is equivalent to completion of O'level," she said.



GRAPHIC BY PHILLIP NSAMBA

## PLE 2025: Candidates who sat and absenteess



## PLE 2025 overall performance

GENDER	DIV.1	%	DIV.2	%	DIV.3	%	DIV. 4	%	UNGRADED	%
MALE	48,220	12.54%	186,638	48.54%	77,453	20.15%	37,658	9.79%	34,500	8.97%
FEMALE	43,770	10.35%	201,655	47.69%	87,773	20.76%	47,066	11.13%	42,580	10.07%

why the results are the way they are," Mrs Museveni said.

Data shared by the Uganda National Examinations Board (UNEb) shows that the number of ungraded learners has increased from 64,251 learners in 2024 to 77,080 pupils in 2025.

Under the UNEb system, ungraded candidates do not progress to the next level of education.

They have to repeat the class, which exerts pressure on the existing education infrastructure.

Relatedly, the First Lady assured the country that the Government will act

upon teachers who do not turn-up for duty. She urged the stakeholders to speak out and be vigilant against teacher absenteeism in schools.

"Why should a teacher, who is earning a monthly salary, be absent for a whole month and no single parent in that school is making an alarm about it?" Mrs Museveni said.

She added: "Teachers who continue to receive monthly pay from the taxpayers' money but are absent from duty must be asked to choose whether they want to remain in public teaching service or exit and use their skills elsewhere."

The First Lady instructed the ministry's Directorate of Education Standards to make use of the technology that the Government has invested in to monitor teacher attendance.

It should be noted that in 2018, the education ministry deployed the Integrated Inspection System for primary and secondary schools to monitor teacher attendance.

### PERFORMANCE

Data from UNEb shows that the number of candidates who qualified to progress to the next level of education increased.

Out of the 817,883

registered candidates, 807,313 of them sat for PLE, and 10,570 did not turn up.

Of the those who sat for exams, 91,990 pupils passed in Division One, 388,293 in Division Two, 165,226 in Division Three and 84,724 in Division Four.

This implies that 730,233 of the 2025 PLE candidates qualify for the next level of education, compared to 722,730 candidates who qualified in 2024.

According to UNEb, English had the highest percentage of candidates (18.5%) demonstrating higher ability levels, followed by mathematics (16.4%) and social studies

with religious education (15.9%).

Higher ability is when a candidate can remember the facts, show an understanding of those facts and be able to apply the facts in problem solving.

In addition, two-thirds of the candidates exhibited medium ability level in all the four subjects, while 16% exhibited lower ability level.

Dan Odongo, the UNEb executive director, said the candidates performed best in English, followed by integrated science and mathematics. Social studies with religious education was the worst done subject.

The selection exercise for Senior One will take place on February 12-13, and the learners will report to school for the first term on March 2.

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