

EDITORIAL

Stop this obsession with four and rankings

The minister of Education and Sports, Janet K. Museveni, last week released the Primary Leaving Examinations (PLE) results for 2025, and once again, the debate is on who got the most fours, and who did not.

Most of Kampala's top elite schools did not register as many pupils with aggregate four as they are used to, while unexpected schools in the countryside had dozens of pupils pass with four, five and six.

Does that then become the only indicator of which schools are 'good' and which ones are not?

Parents are losing sleep all over again, because their children scored a two-digit score, where they expected a four, and school administrations are being put on the spot by parents, to explain what

happened.

The highly commercialized education sector has blinded stakeholders to the holistic approach to studying, which should no longer rely on points scored, but more on skills learnt and rounded pupils leaving.

The ministry of Education's move to change the secondary school curriculum to give more focus to skills building should have been enough message to primary schools to adjust their obsession with aggregate four – in order to attract more clients – and concentrate on putting out well rounded pupils that can adjust to the demands of a new world order.

In this day and age, for parents to harass a pupil for scoring Aggregate 13 is unreasonable. A genuine aggregate 13 is better than a crammed/coached aggregate six. And not everyone is going to score aggregate four, anyway.

With proper counselling and guidance in schools, we should no longer be traumatizing and stigmatizing children for not getting

the first grade points their parents wished – and paid – for.

One, there are many more options for good secondary schools, and there is no need to scramble for the 'top ten' schools every pupil dreams of joining.

Two, with the new secondary school curriculum, children that have not excelled in particular subjects, now have a chance to engage in the extra-curricular skilling lessons that could be life-shaping for some students. Parents just need to find those schools.

The obsession with rankings and fours has led schools astray, forgetting that physical education, music, dance and drama, IT, as well as social clubs are just as instrumental to a child's development as what that child learns off a chalkboard.

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