

The Education minister urges communities and authorities to speak out against teacher absenteeism.

BY BUSEIN SAMILU

The First Lady and Minister of Education and Sports, Ms Janet Kataha Museveni, has issued a stern warning to absentee government teachers, telling them to either commit to classroom teaching or quit the profession altogether.

Speaking yesterday while releasing the 2025 Primary Leaving Examination (PLE) results at Nakasero State Lodge in Kampala City, Ms Museveni said it was unacceptable for teachers to continue drawing salaries from taxpayers while neglecting their duties.

“Teachers who continue to receive monthly pay from the taxpayer’s money but are absent from duty must be asked to choose whether they want to remain in the public teaching service or altogether exit and use their skills elsewhere,” she warned.

She directed the Directorate of Education Standards (DES) to fully utilise government-funded technology to monitor teacher attendance and classroom teaching.

“Why should a teacher who is earning a monthly pay cheque be absent for a

Janet warns teachers against absenteeism

whole month, and no single parent in that school is making a fuss about it?” Ms Museveni asked.

The Uganda National Examinations Board (Uneb) released results for 817,883 candidates from 15,388 centres who sat the examinations last year. Of these, 522,036 candidates (63.8 percent) from 11,525 centres were Universal Primary Education (UPE) beneficiaries, while 295,847 (36.2 percent) from 3,863 centres were non-UPE learners.

At least 10,570 candidates registered for the examinations but did not turn up, slightly higher than the 10,463 absences recorded in 2024.

Ms Museveni warned that excuses would not be tolerated during future results releases, urging communities and authorities to speak out against teacher absenteeism.

“When releasing the next sets of PLE results, we must get answers as to why we have many ungradable candidates in a school or schools in each Local Government when such a school has a head teacher, teachers, an inspector of schools, and a district education officer on the government payroll,” the Education minister said.



PAIN POINT

Why should a teacher who is earning a monthly pay cheque be absent for a whole month, and no single parent in that school is making a fuss about it?” asked Education minister Janet Museveni

Although the overall pass rate slightly declined compared to 2024, Ms Museveni noted that more candidates passed in absolute numbers in 2025, calling for action to improve performance.

According to Uneb data, 91,900 candidates passed in Division One in 2025, up from 84,301 in 2024. However, those in Division Two reduced from 397,589 to 388,293, while Division Three candidates slightly declined from 165,284 to 165,226. Division Four candidates increased to 84,724 from 75,556. Failures rose from 64,251 in 2024 to 77,080 in 2025.

“We need to stop lamenting about un-

satisfactory academic performance and instead put to task those on the frontline to explain why the results are the way they are,” Ms Museveni said.

She also welcomed the increase in the number of pupils completing the primary education cycle and the reduction in dropouts, but expressed concern over the declining proportion of boys completing Primary Seven.

“Is this purely a demographic matter, or are more boys than girls dropping out of school? Either way, it is important that we find an evidence-based explanation for this trend,” she said.

The minister warned against the mushrooming of private examination bureaus, which she said distort the true purpose of learning.

“Learning is not about passing exams only but demonstrating acquisition of desired competences,” she said, adding that liberalisation of the economy could not justify malpractice.

She directed the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education and Sports to identify and close loopholes through the enforcement of existing laws or the formulation of new regulatory frameworks.

Ms Museveni praised Uneb for aligning examinations with the competency-based learning approach, noting that questions tested knowledge, understanding, and application to real-life community problems.

“This is the direction we are heading. Our teachers must adjust their teaching methods to the new realities,” she said.

She added that the ministry is implementing the National Teacher Policy 2019 through in-service and pre-service training and is reviewing the primary school curriculum to align it with the revised lower secondary curriculum.

Ms Museveni said government investment in Seed Secondary Schools has expanded capacity for learners transitioning to O-Level. Of the 259 schools targeted under the Uganda Intergovernmental Fiscal Transfers (UgIFT) programme, 204 have been completed, with 55 still under construction.

She also said the enactment of the TVET Act 2025 has strengthened technical and vocational education, creating more pathways for PLE leavers.

“The government has 42 community polytechnics, in addition to about 100 privately owned ones, which can absorb Primary Seven leavers,” she said, noting that graduates receive certificates equivalent to O-Level completion.

Senior One selection

Ms Museveni announced that the Senior One selection exercise will take place on February 12 and 13, with the first term for the 2026 Senior One cohort beginning on March 2.