

Kampala-based schools appear to be struggling to adjust to the Ministry of Education's recent shift to competency-based learning.

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The glory days of schools in the capital, Kampala, dominating the Primary Leaving Examination performances appear to be coming to an end.

Despite collectively registering a slight improvement, Kampala-based schools just managed 59 Aggregate 4s in the latest cycle of PLE results that were released yesterday.

To put the figure into context, the tally was just three more than what a single school in neighbouring Mukono District—Seeta Junior School—managed.

With inarguably some of the most expensive school fees bills, Kampala-based schools appear to be struggling to adjust to the Ministry of Education's recent shift to competency-based learning.

Consequently the collective tally of 61 Aggregate 4s that schools in the capital mustered between themselves paled in comparison to Mukono District's 85 Aggregate 4s, 67 of which were from its municipality. Elsewhere, Wakiso managed 74 Aggregate 4s.

The three districts were the best performing, with statistics released by the Uganda National Examinations Board (Uneb) showing that they registered improvements in the 2025 PLE performance compared to last year.

The Uneb score distribution shows that in Kampala City 8,340 candidates out of 31,759 who sat the 2025 PLE passed in Division One, representing 26.5 percent. Of these, 4,249 were boys while 4,091 were girls.

A total of 17,038 candidates (54.1 percent) passed in Division Two, including 7,895 boys and 9,143 girls, while 3,399 candidates passed in Division Three. The rest either obtained Division Four, were ungraded, or did not sit the examinations.

This marks a slight improvement from 2024, when 8,310 out of 31,814 candidates (26 percent) in Kampala passed in Division One. However, the number of candidates in Division Two declined from 17,436 in 2024 to 17,038 in 2025.

In Mukono District, performance also slightly improved. Of the 16,684 can-

Mukono, Wakiso set the pace with Aggregate 4s



Learners of St Philomena Junior School, Kasangati celebrate after receiving their Primary Leaving Examination (PLE) results. All 42 candidates from the school passed in First and Second grade. PHOTO/SHABIBAH NAKIRIGYA

Number of Aggregate 4

DISTRICT	Number of Agg 4	DISTRICT	Number of Agg 4	DISTRICT	Number of Agg 4
Mukono M/C	67	Rukungiri	5	Nakaseke	2
Kampala	61	Main	4	Ntungamo	2
Wakiso	51	Rakai	3	Ssembabule	2
Mukono Main	18	Gulu City	3	Entebbe	1
Nansaga M/C	14	Isingiro	3	Kanungu	1
Tororo Main	12	Kasese M/C	3	Kapchorwa M/C	1
Luweero	10	Kiruhura	3	Kiboga	1
Makindye	9	Lira City	3	Kitagwenda	1
Ssabagabo M/C	9	Lugazi M/C	3	Kitgum M/C	1
Masaka City	9	Lwengo	3	Mbarara Main	1
Mbale City	6	Budaka	2	Njeru M/C	1
Mbarara City	6	Bushenyi M/C	2	Pakwach	1
Kabale M/C	5	Hoima City	2	Rubirizi	1
Kalungu	5	Kamuli M/C	2	Rukungiri M/C	1
Kyotera	5	Kasese Main	2	Sheema M/C	1
		Mpigi	2	Total	338

didates who sat the examinations, 2,725 passed in Division One, while 8,619 obtained Division Two. The district had ranked 10th nationally in 2024 after

2,385 of 7,427 candidates passed in Division One.

Mukono Municipality registered a stronger performance, with 2,543 out

of 7,831 candidates passing in Division One, representing 32.7 percent. Of these, 1,379 were boys, and 1,174 were girls. In addition, 4,015 candidates passed in Division Two, while 700 obtained Division Three.

Wakiso District also posted improved results. Of the 41,659 candidates who sat the PLE, 9,033 passed in Division One, including 4,705 boys and 4,328 girls. A total of 22,612 candidates passed in Division Two, of whom 10,464 were boys and 12,148 were girls.

Speaking during the release of the 2025 PLE results at Nakasero State Lodge yesterday, the First Lady and Minister of Education and Sports, Ms Janet Kataha Museveni, encouraged learners who may not immediately transition to O-Level or vocational training to repeat Primary Seven in order to attain the Primary Education Cycle Certificate.

"This is evidence of the attainment of basic competencies and should not be viewed as failure," she said.

Ms Museveni noted that Uneb continued to assess mastery of knowledge and skills, in line with the competency-based learning approach adopted by the education sector.

"The examination emphasised knowledge, understanding, and application of

learning to solve problems in the community. This is the direction we are heading, to ensure learners are prepared for the competency-based curriculum at the Uganda Certificate of Education level," she said.

She urged teachers to adjust their teaching methods to meet the new demands, adding that the Ministry of Education is implementing teacher capacity-building interventions under the National Teacher Policy 2019.

However, State minister for Primary Education Joyce Moriku Kaduchu attributed weaker performance in some Kampala schools to low teacher commitment compared to rural areas.

"We are not under-marking Kampala schools. Rural schools are improving, and many teachers there are becoming more committed and determined to prove that success is not confined to Kampala," Ms Kaduchu explained.

Meanwhile, Uneb spokesperson Jennifer Kalule Musamba cautioned parents and school administrators against placing undue pressure on learners, saying PLE results should not be treated as a life-or-death outcome.

"PLE grades are graded at different levels. Divisions One, Two, Three, and Four can all lead learners to the next stage. Only ungraded candidates are advised to repeat," she said.

Mr Fagil Mandy, an educationist, told *Saturday Monitor* that the performance of Kampala-based schools remains wanting because most of them are hardly inspected.

"The inspectors don't go to see whether the minimum standards are being maintained. They don't go to see whether the teachers are teaching or not," Mr Mandy said.

The educationist also observed that there is little follow up on teachers' attendance in schools. To compound matters, he add, there is also excessive coaching in the capital.

"A lot of schools in urban areas have dropped co-curricular activities and yet those normally enhance the learners' ability," he said. "A lot of children are given a lot of homework but it does not help in itself [...] A lot of schools are making children repeat classes because they want to get the super grades. So they make the children repeat and repeat."

About the way forward, Mr Mandy said thus: "Let us inspect schools throughout the country."

He added: "Inspect the teachers to see if they are doing their work. If they are having problems, then we shall help them."

Mr Mandy also recommends that there should be "introduction of the co-curricular activities to excite the mind of the learners."