

Two terms for school year needed

EDITOR: I write to add my voice to a timely and necessary conversation sparked by Jennifer Nakangubi, popularly known as Full Figure, regarding the structure of Uganda's academic calendar. Her suggestion that the school year be reduced from three terms to two, in light of the current economic pressures facing families, deserves serious public debate rather than casual dismissal.

For many Ugandan parents, the cost of education has become increasingly burdensome. Tuition fees, transport, uniforms, meals and a seemingly endless list of requirements are stretching household incomes to the limit. The existing three-term system often means that families barely recover from one term's expenses before being plunged into the next. This cycle has contributed to financial strain, debt and in some cases, interrupted education for learners whose parents simply cannot keep up.

A two-term system could offer practical relief. Fewer reporting periods would reduce the frequency of major fee payments, giving parents more time to plan and recover financially. It could also encourage schools to streamline administrative and operational costs, which are often passed on to families. If well structured, longer terms could still accommodate the full curriculum without compromising academic standards. Critics may argue that such a shift could disrupt learning or overburden students and teachers. These concerns are valid and underscore why this proposal must be carefully studied. However, other countries operate successfully with two or even fewer academic terms, suggesting that the model itself is not inherently flawed. What matters is thoughtful implementation, stakeholder consultation and a commitment to maintaining educational quality.

It is also important to address the growing perception that some schools are more profit-driven than service-oriented.

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