Namakwekwe Primary School (13),

Mr Stephen Wasaki, the head teacher

reach school. Even when they arrive, fatigue and lateness reduce the time they

has helped our pupils to p...

Teacher shortages, hunger affect Bugiri schools' performance

BY ASUMAN MUSOBYA

BUGIRI. Bugiri District leaders have blamed the poor performance of pupils in the 2025 Primary Leaving Examinations (PLE) on shortage of teachers and parents' failure to provide meals to learners.

Bugiri is consistently listed among the lowest-performing districts in Eastern Uganda.

In 2025, Bugiri District registered a total of 9,166 candidates, of which only 110 passed in first grade. The top performer was York Primary School, a private school in Bugiri Municipality, whose best candidate scored Aggregate 5. Bugiri has 140 government-aided schools, 27 community schools, and 192 private schools, with most first-grade passes coming from private institutions.

The Bugiri District Education Officer, Ms Tibiwa Masitullah, said teachers should not be blamed, adding that most schools have less than nine teachers instead of the required 20.

"We have repeatedly raised these issues with the line ministry, but they continue to advise us to wait and use the available teachers. We, therefore, need a collective effort to overcome these challenges," Ms Tibiwa said.



She also said the district, through school management committees and parents teachers associations (PTAs), recruited community teachers to fill the gaps, but some could not be retained due to payment issues.

"Schools held meetings and agreed that parents would contribute Shs2,500 to pay community teachers, but some could not afford it. As teachers, we are still exploring other ways to improve the academic performance of our children," Ms Tibiwa added.

140
GOVT-AIDED PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN BUGIRI

She also said enrolment in public schools rose from 103,212 to 105,224 pupils after the Covid-19 outbreak. She added that the district has 1,321 teachers

"Many parents have transferred their children from private schools to government-aided schools due to the economic downturn," Ms Tibiwa said.

She said parents' failure to provide meals is a critical issue, resulting in poor academic performance, and learners dropping out of school.

"We have urged parents to prioritise providing meals for their children, as advised by President Museveni, but only a few have acted on this," Ms Tibiwa added.

However, some parents told *Daily Monitor* that while schools collect five kilogrammes of maize for meals, some teachers sell it, leaving pupils at school hungry.

Mr Stephen Kyakulaga, a parent of Naminyagwe Muslim Primary School, said the government should enable public schools to set up gardens to ensure they produce food for pupils and teachers.

"Some schools, especially in rural areas, have over 10 acres of land. The government should provide them with quality seeds for planting," he said.

He said stakeholders need to work together to curb the theft of maize and other items in schools.

Ms Annet Naigagà, a parent at Ndifakulya Primary School, said: "By-laws should be passed at the lower local council to ensure all pupils receive meals, and that the Ministry of Education should intervene in the matter."

Mr Joseph Mwiwa, the head teacher of Bukakaire Primary School, said poor working relationships between teachers and parents could be a major cause of misunderstandings.

Out of the 7,246 pupils who sat for the exams in Bugiri, 219 passed in Division One, 2,982 in Division Two, 1,964 in Division Three, 1,107 in Division Four, 914 were ungraded, and 60 were absent.

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