



President Yoweri Museveni (standing, right) addressing headteachers during the headteachers' retreat at State House Entebbe on Wednesday last week

Strong boards will improve education quality – UK expert

By Conan Businge

All schools should have strong boards of governors and management committees, if the country is to improve its quality of education, says international educationist Devon Hanson.

Secondary schools are run by boards of governors and primary ones by school management committees.

Hanson, who is a retired principal of Evelyn Academy in Brixton, UK, made the remarks, as a guest speaker at the secondary schools headteachers' retreat at State House Entebbe in Wakiso district last week.

"A good headteacher should have a strong board to guide them. The boards should also be independent in their operations, not subject to the whims of the headteacher," Hanson said.

He noted that many headteachers lack guidance during the execution of their duties, which explains why some keep underperforming. This was in his presentation under the theme *The Headteacher is the First School Inspector*.

In his view, if the headteacher is complacent and unserious, it will have a ripple effect on all the teachers and students of such a school.

"Every good headteacher should be on the ground, and should be ready to live by example," he explained.

He was speaking against the backdrop of excellent



The First Lady, Janet Museveni, being received at the Secondary School Headteachers' National Retreat at State House, Entebbe in Wakiso district last week

"A good headteacher should have a strong board to guide them. The boards should also be independent in their operations, not subject to the whims of the headteacher." Hanson

performance during his time as a school head. He flew into the country to inspire the 3,000 headteachers who had converged at State House, on the invitation of the First Lady and education minister Janet Museveni.

Hanson argued that: "All headteachers have an opportunity to make a tremendous change, by just improving the way a school is managed."

"Many people base their service delivery on the amount of money allotted to them. However, money

cannot solve all problems."

Growing up, Hanson overcame many significant challenges and obstacles of a disadvantaged neighbourhood in London. However, unlike his peers, he managed to beat the odds and has risen to the pinnacle of his teaching profession, to become one of the black men to reach secondary school headship in the UK.

While at Evelyn Grace Academy, he brought about total transformation in the school, from unsatisfactory (lowest) to good performance (highest score), within just one-and-a-half years. Prior to that, he caused an unbelievable complete turnaround at Walworth Academy within a period of four years, evidenced by a reduction in school violence, teacher and student respect, as well as improvement in academic grades; making Walworth Academy the most improved school in England at the time.

For over 28 years, Hanson has been a senior teacher and the pastoral leader of thousands of young people in South London schools, often seen outside the school within the community.

The impact of Hanson's school leadership has earned him national and international recognition from the Prime minister of the UK, secretary of state for education, and head of the Office for Standards in Education, as well as other visitors, such as the mayor of New York.