Nearly 900 school head teachers across Rwanda have been removed from their leadership positions after a nationwide performance review found they failed to meet required standards, education officials said.

The assessment, carried out jointly by district authorities and the Rwanda Basic Education Board (REB), targeted head teachers who scored below 70 percent. In total, 890 school leaders were removed, including 349 from primary schools and 541 from secondary schools. Those affected will return to classroom teaching duties.

The Deputy Director General of REB, Dr. Flora Mutezigaju, said the review was intended to strengthen school leadership and improve learning outcomes nationwide. She said the process began with district-level evaluations before a second, more detailed assessment was conducted by REB.

“The district assessment focused mainly on the conduct and general commitment of head teachers to their work,” Mutezigaju said. “The results were then submitted to REB for further performance evaluation.”

According to REB, 5,277 head teachers were assessed across the country. Of those, 890 representing about 16 percent scored below the required threshold.

Education officials said poor conduct was the most common weakness identified among those who failed. Areas of concern included strained relations with teachers and students, ineffective problem-solving, and unprofessional behavior.

Poor management of school resources was also cited as a major factor. REB said some head teachers were found to have mismanaged government-provided resources, including food meant for students, while others were frequently absent from their schools.

Language proficiency was another challenge identified during the assessment. Although English carried fewer marks, officials said many of the dismissed head teachers struggled to use it effectively in their professional duties.

An analysis of academic performance over the past three years also showed that several schools led by the removed head teachers had recorded declining results, according to REB.

Most of those removed from leadership positions hold A2 qualifications, equivalent

to upper secondary education, and many are older teachers. Of the 5,277 head teachers assessed, men accounted for more than 3,100, while women numbered close to 2,000.

The findings were discussed Sunday, Dec. 28, during the Urubuga rw’Itangazamakuru media forum.

REB used the forum to encourage more women in the education sector to apply for leadership positions, noting that schools led by women generally performed better than those led by men.