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KAMPALA. The performance of the 2017 Primary Seven candidates was slightly better than that of 2016 according to the results released by the Uganda National Examinations Board (Uneb) yesterday.

The Uneb executive secretary, Mr Dan Odongo, said the overall performance of the candidates improved by about 4 per cent from 87.02 per cent in 2016 to 90.9 per cent in 2017.

The number of candidates registered in 2017 was 646,190, an increase of 5,247 from the 640,833 that sat in the previous year.

"This year 571,252 (90.9 per cent) candidates passed the PLE compared to 541,089 (87.02 per cent) the previous year. Overall, therefore, in terms of numbers, more pupils qualify to join the post primary institutions than the previous year," Mr Odongo said.

Like the previous year, Social Studies was the overall best performed subject with 14.4 per cent distinction pass with an improvement of about 4 per cent from the 10.3 per cent in 2016.

A slight improvement was registered in Science from 7.0 per cent distinction pass in the previous year to 9.7 per cent in 2017.

The two best performed subjects also registered a slight improvement in the credits recorded by the candidates. For instance, the credit passes in SST in 2016 were at 73.1 per cent but have now raised to 83.4 per cent. Relatively for Science, the credits increased from 61.8 per cent the previous year to 66.1 per cent in 2017.

The overall performance in English and Mathematics, however dropped in what Uneb said was due to problems with candidates failing to use their knowledge in problem solving or express themselves freely.

"In both English and Mathematics, performance was poor in questions where candidates were required to apply knowledge in problem solving solutions or express themselves freely. Candidates were more comfortable with questions that are direct and based on recall," Mr Odongo said.

In English, performance dropped significantly at distinction from 11.5 per cent in the previous year to 4.5 per cent in 2017 whereas Mathemat-

2017 UGANDA NATIONAL EXAMINATIONS BOARD subject grades than 2016



Jubilation. Benjamin Ssekidde Baagala of Global Junior School in Mukono District celebrates with his teachers. Baagala scored Aggregate 4. PHOTO BY JOSEPH KIGGUNDU

ics dropped from 4.5 per cent to 2.3 per cent.

In Mathematics, the candidates recorded more credits in 2017 with 49.7 per cent compared to 40.0 per cent in 2016. But in English, the credits dropped the same way the distinctions did. The credits for 2016 were at 63.6 per cent compared to 54.4 in the 2017 PLE release.

Uneb also revealed that the overall failure rate in 2017 was 9.1 per cent dropping from 13.0 per cent in the previous year. This means the number of candidates joining post primary education this year will be higher than those of last year.

However overall, the number of first grades reduced from 63,400 in 2016 to 57,198 in 2017. The number of second grades increased from 251,787 in 2016 to 293,977 this year.

Speaking to *Saturday Monitor* yesterday, the National Secretary for Federation of Non-State Education Institutions (FEDEI), Mr Patrick Kaboyo, said there is not yet a reason to celebrate the performance because much

as there was overall improvement, the number of first grades reduced.

"About the grades, yes and no because when improved performance is recorded and posted, it should be holistic in order to compare the current and previous release. The number of distinctions has improved but you continue seeing the number of poor performing districts increasing. There is nothing to celebrate," Mr Kaboyo said.

He added that there is need for the local leaders across the country to come up with serious interventions to support the technical teams in en-

RECOMMENDATION

On what should be done to ensure that there is a significant improvement in performance, FEDEI National Secretary, Mr Patrick Kaboyo says there is need for Uneb and the National Curriculum Development Centre to focus on helping candidates to get knowledge which they can apply in everyday life instead of cram work.

suring that the learners are exposed to better environments to be able to compete fairly.

Ms Mary Nakabugo, the Uganda country manager for UWEZO programme under Twaweza East Africa, said that there is need for an assessment on whether the skills attained by majority of the candidates who passed in second, third and fourth grades can match those of their counterparts in first grades.

She added that it is possible that those in first grade performed better in questions that need recall hence attaining fewer skills than those who struggled with the problem solving questions that might have taken a lot of their time.

Speaking about the continuous dominance of boys over girls, Ms Nakabugo said: "The boys are more competitive in terms of speed whereas girls take time to produce quality work."

Uwezo is an initiative that aims to improve competencies in literacy and numeracy among children aged 6 to 16 years in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda.