

Thematic curriculum praised for the improved PLE performance

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Results of the 2016 Primary Leaving Examinations (PLE) released yesterday show a general improvement in performance compared to previous years, with boys holding a slight edge over girls.

The results, released by the Uganda National Examinations Board (UNEB), show that more students passed the exams with distinctions and credits in all the four subjects compared to the previous year.

For instance, in English, 11.5% of those who sat had a distinction while 63.6% passed with credits, compared with 10% and 59.7%, respectively in the year 2015.

For social studies, the number of those who scored distinctions almost doubled from 5.8% in 2015 to 10.3%, while those with credits rose from 63.7% to 73.1% over the same period.

The science exam saw a marginal decline in percentage of distinctions, from 7.9% recorded the previous year, to 7%, but an increase in credit passes from 57.3% to 61.8%.

Overall, candidates' performance was better in 2016 compared to 2015. Social Studies (with RE) was performed best (90.2%), followed by English (86.9%) and Integrated Science (85.2%).

For Mathematics, the results indicate that there were more distinctions,

but with a slight decline in overall performance, at 75.1% in 2016 against 79.5% the previous year

Out of the 622,405 students who sat the maths paper, 4.5% passed with distinction and 40% with credits, compared with 3.9% and 42.7%, respectively during the previous year.

A total of 640,833 candidates sat for PLE at 12,391 exam centres or schools countrywide on November 3 and 4. This reflects a 3.1% increase (19,432 more candidates) compared to 2015.

This year, 541,089 (87%) candidates passed the PLE compared to 517,889 (86.2%) the previous year. More pupils qualify to join the post primary institutions than the previous year.

For a candidate to pass PLE, he or she must have obtained divisional grades of 1, 2, 3 or 4, which makes them eligible to register for any post-primary examination conducted by UNEB.

In terms of distinctions, English rose from 10% to 11.5%, social studies (SST) improved from 5.8% to 10.3% while mathematics rose from 3.9% to 4.5%. Performance in Science, however, dropped by 7%.

A better performance was further recorded in divisions one and two in 2016 than in 2015. For instance, in division one, the cumulative performance rose to 10.2%, up from 8.6% in the previous year and division two from 47.6% to 50.7%.



Dan Odongo

Of the 77 candidates behind bars at Luzira Upper Prison, 69 inmates sat last year's exams and two passed with Division One, 32 in Division Two while three failed.

More girls complete primary, boys perform better overall

Of all the students who sat for the exams, 51.3% (329,190 candidates) were girls, indicating that more girls than boys (48.7%) completed the primary education cycle in 2016.

However, boys generally performed better than girls. More boys passed in division one and two compared to girls.

Candidates performed much better in English and Social Studies. While male candidates generally performed better than the female candidates, girls

BEST DISTRICTS

The top ten examination districts are:

FortPortal municipality, Entebbe municipality, Ntungamo municipality, Jinja municipality, Kabaale municipality, Masaka municipality, Mbarara municipality, Lira municipality and Masindi Municipality

WORST DISTRICTS

All the worst performing districts, except one, are from the eastern region.

They are: Buyende, Luuka, Kween, Mayuge, Kaliro, Iganga, Kyankwanzi, Bulambuli, Namutumba and Serere.

performed better in English.

Prof. Mary Okwakol, the chairperson of the UNEB, described the performance as an 'achievement' for her team, which is overseeing the process for the first time since its inauguration.

UNEB executive secretary Dan Odongo noted that this year's results had shown learners' improvement not only recorded in marks alone, but also in expressive skills such as handwriting.

"Candidates answered in full

sentences regardless of the correctness of the responses and expressed themselves better than the previous cohorts," he explained

Odongo attributed the improvement to the thematic curriculum and interventions by the education ministry to improve learners' abilities.

The curriculum, established a few years ago for Primary One to Three, allows teachers to teach basic concepts in learners' mother tongue.

1,886 results withheld

Although the exams were said to be largely leakage-free, UNEB raised concern about the trend in exam cheating, perpetrated by some teachers and in some cases consented to by parents.

This year, UNEB has withheld the results of 1,886 candidates who are under investigation for exam malpractices, a significant rise from last year's 909 candidates.

Okwakol said the board had serious concern that the majority of the suspected cases are from Kabarole district, the district with the best performance.

She also spoke against fake news spread on WhatsApp social media platform, including reports that the Uganda certificate of education grading had been changed, and a fake PLE mathematics paper the circulated in schools prior to exams.