



**MINISTRY of EDUCATION
YOUTH & INFORMATION**

STATEMENT

By Senator, the Hon. Ruel Reid

Minister of Education, Youth and Information

On 2017 Grade 4 Literacy and Numeracy Results

October 6, 2017

Mr President, I am pleased to share with this Honourable Senate the results of the Literacy and Numeracy tests which were sat by students at the grade four level of primary education in June of this year.

The preliminary results showed that in 2017 , 84.6% of all the candidates sitting the Grade 4 Literacy Test received a level of **mastery** which represents a 5.5 percentage points increase over the 79.1 per cent recorded last year. This is the first time this percentage has been achieved. A total of 37,894 students - 19,002 males and 18,892 females sat the exam on June 21.

The Numeracy test also recoded an increase in mastery levels attained moving from 58.9% in 2016 to 66% this year, which represents a 7.1 percentage points increase.

The Literacy Test is comprised of three sub-tests:

- Word Recognition

- Reading Comprehension
- Writing

The Word Recognition and Reading Comprehension components were administered as an objective type test, while the writing skills component was administered as a subjective test.

Students are assigned literacy levels in this test as follows:

- **Mastery:** Students who have attained mastery on all three sub-tests
- **Almost Mastery:** Students who have mastered one or two sub-tests
- **Non-mastery:** Students who have not mastered any of the sub-tests

Mr. President, further analysis of the data shows that 11.1 % of candidates achieved an **almost mastery** literacy level and 4.3% of candidates were assessed as having a literacy level of **non – mastery**.

Of the total number of students who achieved mastery in the Literacy Test, 78.5% were male and 90.8% were female. On the other hand, in terms of non - mastery, more males achieved this level than females (2.1% difference).

There was a slight increase in the number of students sitting the exams this year in the public schools with 33, 270 this year as against 32, 525 last year. Within the public system, there was an 80.6 % mastery pass rate as against 77.5 % last year.

Students' performance in two of the three sub-tests (Reading Comprehension and Writing Task) had an increase in the percentage of students mastering when compared to the previous academic year, 2016.

These two areas saw an increase of 2% and 6.4% respectively. Students' performance in Word Recognition decreased marginally by 1.1% when compared 2016.

The sub-test that had the lowest mastery rate among the students who sat the Grade Four Literacy Examination in 2017 was the writing task (88.3%). This was also the case in 2016 sitting of the same test.

NUMERACY

Mr. President, The General Achievement in Numeracy (GAIN) test was administered on Thursday June 22, 2017. A total of 37,848 students at the primary level of education sat the examination for the first time (18,977 males and 18,871 females).

Of the total number that sat the examinations this year, 66.9% received a level of mastery. This represents an increase of 7.1% when compared to students' overall mastery of numeracy in 2016. Also, 25.1% of students achieved an almost mastery numeracy level and 7.9% of students received a numeracy level of non – mastery.

The data show that mastery of numeracy from 2014 to 2017 has fluctuated over the period. However, an increase was seen between 2016 and 2017. The change in mastery of numeracy in 2017, of 7.1 percentage points above the previous year's average, is therefore significant.

Mr President, the General Achievement in Numeracy Test (GAIN) comprises six strands:

- Number Operation
- Number Representation

- Measurement
- Geometry
- Algebra
- Statistics

Overall Mastery on the GAIN test is defined by combining the six (6) named strands into the three (3) components set out below:

- Number Operation & Number Representation
- Measurement & Geometry
- Algebra & Statistics

Students are assigned mastery levels on this test as follows:

- Mastery: Students who have attained mastery on all three components
- Almost Mastery: Students who have attained mastery on one or two components
- Non-mastery: Students who have not mastered any of the components

The strand combination that had the highest mastery rate among the students who sat the Grade Four Literacy Examination in 2017 is Number Representation & Number Operation (84.7%). Students also preformed well in Measurement & Geometry and Algebra & Statistics, attaining mastery level of 78.1%.

Regional performance

Throughout all six regions, female students outperformed male students in terms of overall attainment of mastery on the numeracy test. Regions 2 and 3 had the greatest percentage difference between the two genders obtaining mastery – a

14.5% and 14.3% difference respectively. Region 1 had the least percentage difference (12%) between male and female students.

Girls also outperformed boys in the literacy tests. Throughout all six regions, the female students outperformed the male students in terms of overall attainment of mastery the literacy test. Region 5 had the greatest percentage difference between the two genders obtaining mastery – a 15.1% difference. Region 1 had the least percentage difference (11.2%) between male and female students. Over 90% of students in all regions obtained a mastery of the word recognition sub-test of the literacy test, while 85% of students in all regions obtained a mastery of the reading comprehension sub-test.

Mr President, we should put these results in the context of performances over the past nine years.

The data show steady to significant improvement with minor fluctuations since 2009.

NATIONAL PERFORMANCE GRADE 4 NUMERACY TEST 2009 – 2017

YEAR	NATIONAL MASTERY Level %
2009	45.4
2010	41.6
2011	49
2012	54.3
2013	58
2014	57.5
2015	63.6
2016	59.8
2017	66.9

Table Showing Students' Mastery Level in Grade Four Literacy Test (G4LT) 2009 – 2017

Year	National Mastery Level %
2009	70.1 %
2010	67 %
2011	71 %
2012	74 %
2013	76.2 %
2014	77.4 %
2015	86.5 %
2016	79.1 %
2017	84.6 %

Mr President, we commend all the schools administrators, teachers and parents who worked very hard to help our children do well in these exams.

Special commendation is in order also to the Ministry of Education teams that organised and conducted workshops to help prepare the teachers and the students through mock exams.

We are pleased with the improved results. We do recognise that there are areas that require greater attention and we will so attend to those weak areas identified.

The Grade 4 Literacy and Numeracy tests results are indicative of the positive trend shown this academic year in other national tests such as the GSAT and external exams such as CSEC, CAPE City and Guilds.

We believe the programmes and policies that are put in place to help with funding and general support to the school population are helping to drive the improvements.

The Ministry team will continue our efforts to achieve better results across the education system.

Mr President, I thank you

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