

## **Are school candidate fairwell parties still relevant?**

Recently a travelled with a parent who was on his way to pick her daughter from school a day after their fair well party. This event was organized immediately after end of term one examination. The frustrated parent looked extremely stressed as she narrated to me the huge sums of cash she had parted with to support her daughter attend the party.

To begin with, she was required to buy a new spacious party dress, new party shoes, foot the bill for her daughters party photographs ; and above all give her a package for other miscellaneous costs. This is now the current trend in most secondary and primary schools across the country. Because schools want customers, candidates are given liberty to plan for almost whatever they want to make their party successful. Un vetted musicians are expensively hired and sometimes convoys of expensive cars like limousines paraded to lift the standard of the school. Very expensive decorations, cakes and other food delicacies factored in fair well budgets. All this bill is footed by humble parents!

This leads me into a pertinent question. Are fair well parties relevant and at what point must such parties be conducted? Some schools prefer to hold these parties at the end of first term. This would not be bad considering the fact that second term is dedicated to mock examinations and wrap up tests. Other schools prefer to conduct such parties in second term preferably after mock exams. This is of course not better because once some students have finished the mock exams, they seem to relax thinking that they are a stone's throw to Uganda National Examination Board(UNEB) or Primary Living Examinations (PLE). The worst period is conducting such parties in third term towards examinations. This makes students restless from first term to third term eagerly waiting for the grand party.

Therefore in my own opinion all parties conducted in the final year of study is a bad idea. This is because parties tend to wood wink candidates as if they have reached the apex of their academic achievement which is not always the case. Parties also exhibit financial pressures of parents who are already suffocating under pressure to pay for external mocks, registration fee for UNEB, school fees or external subject facilitators ( Resourceful persons or hired examiners).

This is my idea on to overcome this dilemma. Let schools plan to hold fair well parties when UNEB examinations have been released because of the following advantages:

- Each student has already known their ultimate fate for the next step.
- Some students would work harder so that they come back for the party when their grades are so good to avoid shame.
- Students would even foot their party bill since many would have worked in vacation
- It would enable students to stay focused on acquisition of skills and knowledge rather than spend sleepless nights planning for fair well parties.

I believe that this is the best way to train our children to be more responsible. This once adopted can be a great change for the best like the shifting of UNEB from February and march to end of the year. We can ably uplift further the image of our education system by guiding learners and adopting best strategies for when candidate parties are supposed to be held.

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