



Speech By  
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**MEMBER FOR ALBERT**

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Record of Proceedings, 27 November 2014

**EDUCATION AND INNOVATION COMMITTEE**

**Report No. 42, Motion to Taken Note**

 **Mr BOOTHMAN** (Albert—LNP) (11.15 am): First of all, I would like to thank the committee staff—Bernice Watson, research director; director, Melissa; and Carolyn for their outstanding work and the wonderful support they give to the committee members themselves. In drafting this report we visited numerous schools around Queensland. I would like to thank the teachers, the principals and the school staff for making us very welcome in their schools and helping us enormously with their point of view. I would like to make special mention of Dr Chris Sarra for the outstanding contribution he made to the committee's recommendations.

The research which was undertaken has shown clear evidence that there is a link between academic achievement and students actually attending school, which you could say is a no-brainer. When it comes down to it, in certain socioeconomic areas we see a clear disparity between school attendance rates in low socioeconomic areas as compared with higher socioeconomic areas. Ultimately, as the report found, it does come down to the responsibility of the parents. However, the committee does recognise that schools play a very, very important role in encouraging attendance.

The research literature suggests that the schools are more likely to experience success if they engage the families to promote children to actually attend school. However, the research also showed that simply focusing on attendance is not the only answer; it must also involve the curriculum itself, which must be made interesting for the children to attend to create an environment where education is potentially of interest or exciting for the student. As the report highlights, many strategies have been put in place by the department, and we certainly do thank the department for this. The good news is that the state-wide attendance rate improved in semester 1 2014 compared to the rates of 2013. Most disparaging is the attendance rates between Indigenous students state-wide versus non-Indigenous students. There is still a disparity of 7.4 per cent between the two groups, which is something we do need to focus on and make further improvements to.

I would also like to highlight some of the recommendations the committee made. Recommendation 2 states—

That advice about recording data in OneSchool, including the definitions of absence types, is promoted on an ongoing basis through the weekly schools update newsletter and the *Every Day Counts* website.

I feel that this is crucial because it further highlights to parents the fantastic opportunities their children can miss out on if they do not attend school. As an example, I would like to highlight some of the work that the Upper Coomera State College is doing and remind parents that if their children are not attending school they could potentially be missing out on these wonderful programs.

The preprep program, which is a first for the Upper Coomera State College, is a 10-week program which gives early students a clear understanding of what prep involves. It also allows them to participate in literacy and numeracy tasks and develop fine motor skills. With the Great Results Guarantee funding for Upper Coomera State College, speech and language pathologists are being employed. This utilises professional expertise. FoundationQ is a resource designed to help promote spoken language and emergent literacy. These programs are making a crucial difference for our students. If students are not participating at school every day, they are putting themselves behind and disadvantaging themselves. I do ask parents to highlight the importance of education and for their children to please attend school every day.