

## Question on Notice

No. 1466

Asked on 9 October 2008

Ms Stone asked the Minister for Education and Training and Minister for the Arts (Mr Welford) —

QUESTION: What is the Bligh Government doing to tackle chronic absenteeism and truancy in our schools?

ANSWER:

There is a clear relationship between attendance at school and student achievement. To promote the importance of being at school all day, on every school day, I recently launched the statewide Every Day Counts campaign.

The Every Day Counts campaign targets schools, parents, students and the broader community, with a particular focus on parents of Prep to Year 3 students and parents of students transitioning from primary to secondary schools.

This campaign is supported by a range of Departmental policies and guidelines to help schools further improve school attendance including a Roll Marking in State Schools Policy and the Guidelines to address chronic absenteeism, school refusal and truancy (which were released earlier this year).

Schools are also required to follow up unexplained absences with parents as soon as possible, but within three days of any unexplained absence. Schools use a range of strategies to follow up absences with parents including:

- sending SMS messages to parents
- making referrals to guidance officers if necessary
- linking families to local support services
- if required, offering flexible schooling arrangements.

The Honourable Member will be interested to know about an initiative in the Logan-Albert Beaudesert District to address absenteeism. The District is supporting schools in the use of *ID Attend* software package to help schools identify and track student absences. Features of the *ID Attend* software include real time tracking of student attendance, online in-class roll marking, lesson by lesson roll marking, tailor made roll marking scenarios to meet requirements, tracking attendance in non-class activities and letter formats for parents. Additionally *ID Attend* will send text messages to alert parents of their child's absence.

The District also works closely with Queensland Police, other government departments and local non-government organisations to support students and their families to improve school enrolment and attendance.