

Question on Notice
No. 1684
Asked on 11 November 2008

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

QUESTION:

Will he list separately, by each education district across the State, the average student attendance rates for 2006, 2007, and 2008 to date?

ANSWER:

I thank the Honourable Member for Surfers Paradise for raising this question. The Bligh Government takes very seriously the importance of students attending school each day. To this end, I recently launched the *Every Day Counts* initiative.

Every Day Counts is a statewide initiative addressing the issue of student attendance at school. The initiative is designed to change parent, community and student attitudes to school attendance. It requires the support of both parents and the community if student attendance is to be successfully addressed.

The majority of students do attend school consistently, but there is a small percentage of students who are absent for extended periods without good reason – and this is totally unacceptable.

My Department's research shows that there is a clear relationship between attendance at school and student achievement, such as in the national literacy and numeracy tests.

Schools will play a vital role in this campaign by monitoring attendance, identifying those students with attendance problems and managing this by the use of early intervention strategies.

This campaign is supported by a range of 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 (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.

However, the role of the community in supporting student attendance is strongly recognised in the *Every Day Counts* initiative. Reporting student absences has, and continues to be, an important role for community members.

The student average attendance rates for State schools by Education region for 2006, 2007 and 2008 are:

2006 - Darling Downs-South West Queensland 92%, Fitzroy-Central West Queensland 92%, Far North Queensland 89%, Greater Brisbane 94%, Moreton 92%, Mackay-Whitsunday 92%, North Queensland 91%, South Coast 92%, Sunshine Coast 92% and Wide Bay-Burnett 92%.

2007 - Darling Downs-South West Queensland 92%, Fitzroy-Central West Queensland 91%, Far North Queensland 89%, Greater Brisbane 93%, Moreton 92%, Mackay-Whitsunday 91%, North Queensland 90%, South Coast 91%, Sunshine Coast 92% and Wide Bay-Burnett 92%.

2008 - Darling Downs-South West Queensland 91%, Fitzroy-Central West Queensland 91%, Far North Queensland 89%, Greater Brisbane 93%, Moreton 91%, Mackay-Whitsunday 90%, North Queensland 89%, South Coast 91%, Sunshine Coast 92% and Wide Bay-Burnett 91%.