

ABORIGINAL STUDENTS, ABSENTEE RATE, NEWTON MOORE SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

**1645. Hon BARRY HOUSE to the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Education and Training:**

Further to question without notice 1168 answered on Thursday, 21 August 2003, I ask -

- (1) Given that the computerised program allows for the instant retrieval of attendance information, why were the lower school absentee rates for Aboriginal students attending Newton Moore Senior High School not provided?
- (2) What is the current absentee rate for these lower school students?
- (3) In the figures provided for absentee rates - that is, 18.7 per cent for year 11 students and 10.6 per cent for year 12 students - were Aboriginal students who had left school or had been removed from the roll included in the analysis?
- (4) If not, why not?
- (5) What are the absentee rates if these students are included in the analysis?
- (6) Has the program operated this year with a first-year graduate instead of a level 3 program coordinator?
- (7) Has an advertisement for a level 3 program coordinator been placed for 2004?
- (8) How is it intended to staff this program in the 2004 school year?

**Hon GRAHAM GIFFARD replied:**

I thank the member for some notice of this question. The answer provided by the minister is as follows -

- (1) The school had problems with running its administration software. The numbers were provided by the school using a manual count of paper records. Due to the constraints of time to answer the question, the period for which attendance records were counted was restricted to term 1, which was of 10 weeks duration, and covered only years 11 and 12.
- (2) The absentee figures for the Newton Moore Senior High School resulting from the August 2003 census, which spanned terms 1 and 2, show absentee rates of 31.5 per cent for Aboriginal students and seven per cent for non-Aboriginal students in year 8; 23.8 per cent for Aboriginal students and 8.8 per cent for non-Aboriginal students in year 9; 50.2 per cent for Aboriginal students and 14.3 per cent for non-Aboriginal students in year 10; 19.4 per cent for Aboriginal students and 8.6 per cent for non-Aboriginal students in year 11; and 9.1 per cent for Aboriginal students and 8.4 per cent for non-Aboriginal students in year 12. These figures include both explained and unexplained absences.
- (3) Yes, including those who left the school between the start and end dates of the attendance period. Those students who have extended periods of absence - that is, 15 consecutive days - are placed on the students whose whereabouts are unknown list and no longer contribute any more absences to the database. The number of students used in the absentee calculation is the average of the semester 1 and 2 figures. The figures cited above could therefore be referred to as apparent absentee rates.
- (4)-(5) Not applicable.
- (6)-(7) No.
- (8) A level 3 program coordinator has been appointed for the Follow the Dream strategy from the commencement of term 4 2003 until December 2005.