

**Senate Standing Committee on Education Employment and Workplace
Relations
QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Estimates 2011-2012**

Outcome 2 - Schools and Youth

DEEWR Question No. EW1200_12

Senator Scullion asked on 16 February 2012, Hansard page 52

**Student attendance and engagement
Question**

Keeping children in school

Mr Cook: Part of that will be the national partnership money currently in schools around low-SES and literacy and numeracy. A lot of school communities are working with their state jurisdiction to develop a range of programs to keep children in school, to engage them while they are there and, in some cases, to provide additional teachers. Some of the case study examples that we can provide will actually show that Senator SCULLION: I am keen not to weigh you under with a bunch of work, but if Mr Cook indicates that there are now schools and jurisdictions that are active in dealing with some of those, can you provide those? Ms Paul: Yes, we will.

Answer

Through the Smarter Schools National Partnerships and the Low SES National Partnership in particular, jurisdictions are implementing locally relevant strategies to improve student engagement. These strategies include the development of innovative programs, and building of partnerships outside the school, to improve educational outcomes. The full list of schools participating in these National Partnerships is available at <http://smarterschools.gov.au>.

Further information on the contribution the Smarter Schools National Partnerships have made to increasing attendance is provided at EW1199_12.

Student Engagement Case Study: MacFarlane Primary School, NT (remote)

MacFarlane Primary School is located in the regional town of Katherine, 300 km South of Darwin. Aboriginal students make up 87% of the student population which results in a highly mobile student population as students move in and out of Katherine to outlying communities. The school is involved in the Engaging Urban Students (EUS) initiative through the Smarter Schools National Partnership. Principal Jenny Henderson explains that:

“Once in town these students are sometimes completely cut off from their community networks and find it very difficult to cope in the urban setting.”

Through EUS the school enhanced their existing student support programs with the “breakfast with a mentor” program in partnership with the Smith Family, use of technology for learning and engagement and the employment of an Aboriginal Cultural Coordinator. The school reports they have experienced increased community engagement with the school, improved attendance in the target cohort to 81% in 2010 from 77% in 2009, and for students living in town camps communities attendance improved to 82% in 2011 from 62% in 2009.

Student Engagement Case Study: Balga Senior High School, WA (metro)

Located 20 kms north of Perth with 500 students from over 60 nationalities, Balga Senior High School specialises in literacy, numeracy, vocational training and lifelong learning for students at educational risk. Low SES National Partnership funding in 2011 has helped establish a transition mixed age and ability class for 19 students who are severely at risk from disengaging.

Supported by the National Partnership, the school runs the Swan Nyungar Sports Education Program, which uses sport, culture and dance to engage Aboriginal students. For Aboriginal students participating in this program, average attendance improved to 66% in 2011 from 44% in 2008.

Year	2008	2009	2010	2011
(75 students)	44%	50%	64%	66%

Please note that case studies are being progressively published on the Smarter Schools website at www.smarterschools.gov.au.