



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

HON. ASERI RADRODRO

MINISTER FOR EDUCATION

THURSDAY 3 OCTOBER 2024

258/2024

WRITTEN QUESTION

Hon. Hem Chand to ask the Minister for Education – There are circumstances due to which some children are compelled to drop out of school. Can the Minister inform Parliament on the following –?

- (a) What is the Ministry doing to identify these students and how is the Ministry planning to assist these children;
- (b) How many students dropped out in the last 5 years (2019 to 2023) before completing primary education; and
- (c) How many students dropped out in the last 5 years (2019 to 2023) before completing Year 10?

(a) What is the Ministry doing to identify these students and how is the Ministry planning to assist these children;

The contributing factors to school dropouts are multifaceted. To identify these students the Ministry is

1. Using the information from our Fiji Education Management Information System (FEMIS) to identify :

- Frequent or prolonged cases of absenteeism as recorded in FEMIS
- Children with learning difficulties

Outside of the FEMIS, teachers, Child Protection Officers (CPO), Heads of Schools (HOS) would also capture in their counselling, school records information such as:

- History of family difficulties – including migration, living with extended family, family violence, domestic violence, single parent families.
- Children being in contact or conflict with the law

Additionally, schools may be collecting data from the Substance Abuse Advisory Council (SAAC) on students who need extra support and providing avenues to provide that support

2. To assist these students there is a need for collective effort of government agencies, civil society, churches, religious organisation, families and the ‘vanua’ in their proactive approach in assisting the Ministry of Education.

The Ministry of Education has the following provisions:

- Heads of Schools (HOS) or their designee to visit the homes and places of abode of these “at-risk” students
- Provide counselling support through the counselling HUBS in the 4 Divisions that is maintained by professional counsellors
- A new initiative of the Pacific Theological College (PTC) project initiative of “*Vakatabu*” targeting school drop-outs in the village/ community based settings
- Providing careers counselling in the communities

- Providing alternative pathways such as TVET and micro-skills training for those that prefer a skills based training
- Provision of Free Education Grant to all school age children from years 1 to 13, this alleviates the strain on parents
- Provision of Special Inclusive Education Grant (SIEG) to all eligible school age children in Special Inclusive Education Schools, this alleviates the strain on parents
- Transport assistance for eligible students
- Back to school support at the beginning of each school year for eligible students
- Provision of free textbooks
- Remission of fees and boarding fees for eligible students
- Hardship Scholarships from TSLS for economically disadvantaged tertiary students
- Scholarships for micro qualifications training tenable at our Vocational Schools
- Provision and access to extra curricular activities such as sports, cadets, Duke of Edinburgh, this balanced approach acknowledges that not all students are academically oriented, thus, these programs harness the talents and interests of students in both primary and secondary school levels.

(b) How many students dropped out in the last 5 years (2019 to 2023) before completing primary education?

2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total
802	946	924	755	1162	4,589

A total of 4589 students were identified in the Ministry’s Fiji Education Management Information System Database (FEMIS) as not been registered from 2019 to 2023 in our schools. Whilst the specific reasons for drop out or premature exit of the Education system is not captured in neat categories in FEMIS, reasons that have been disclosed at school level include but is not limited to:

1. Demise
2. Migration
3. Public school to private school movement
4. Formal employment
5. Informal employment
6. Medical condition

(c) How many students dropped out in the last 5 years (2019 to 2023) before completing Year 10?

2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total
1503	967	1054	985	1217	5726

A total of 5,726 students were identified in the Ministry’s Fiji Education Management Information System Database (FEMIS) as not been registered from 2019 to 2023 in our schools. Whilst the specific reasons for drop out or premature exit of the Education system is not captured in neat categories in FEMIS, reasons that have been disclosed at school level include but is not limited to:

1. Demise
2. Migration
3. Public school to private school movement

4. Formal employment
5. Informal employment
6. Medical condition

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