



**National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB)  
Annual Report 2004**

## **Contents**

Meeting Our Statutory Obligation	3
Making a Difference - Our Functions and Mission	4
Members of the National Educational Welfare Board	5
Chairperson's Statement	6
Chief Executive Officer's Review	8
Operations Review	9
• National Service	9
• Developing Education Services	13
• Building a Community Based Organisation	16
• Research and Communications	17
Appendices	
I. School Attendance Data, 2003-2004	18
II. Members of School Implementation Group	21

## **MEETING OUR STATUTORY OBLIGATION**

*The Board shall not later than the 31<sup>st</sup> day of March in each year prepare and submit to the Minister a report on its activities in the immediately preceding year and the Minister shall, as soon as may be, cause copies of the report to be laid before each House of the Oireachtas.*

Education (Welfare) Act 2000

## **MAKING A DIFFERENCE - OUR MISSION AND FUNCTIONS**

*The mission of the National Educational Welfare Board is to ensure that each child attends a recognised school or otherwise receives an education and to take all necessary steps to achieve this objective and to advise Government on any related matters.*

### **Functions of the Board**

The principal function of the Board is to ensure that every child in the State attends a recognised school or otherwise receives an education.

The Board also has an advisory and research role in the formulation of Government policy on school attendance and education provision.

The Board will deploy educational welfare officers at local level throughout the country. These officers will work in close co-operation with parents, teachers, school managers, community bodies and other relevant agencies to promote regular school attendance and prevent absenteeism and early school leaving.

One of the key roles of the NEWB is to act as an advocate or support for a child, parent or guardian if there is a difficulty with school attendance or educational welfare.

The Board will establish a register of children being educated outside of recognised schools (e.g. in the home) and will assess that education in accordance with guidelines issued by the Minister to ensure that it reaches a minimum standard.

The Board will establish a register of young persons of 16 and 17 years of age who leave school early to take up employment and will make appropriate arrangements for their continuing education and training in consultation with providers and employers.

### **Education (Welfare) Act 2000**

The Education (Welfare) Act 2000 provides a comprehensive new framework for promoting regular school attendance and tackling the problems of absenteeism and early school leaving.

The Act repeals the previous school attendance legislation and provides for the raising of the school leaving age to 16 years or the completion of three years' post primary education, whichever occurs later.

The Act provides for the establishment of the National Educational Welfare Board as the single national body with responsibility for encouraging and supporting regular school attendance.

## **MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL WELFARE BOARD**

The members of the National Educational Welfare Board in December 2003 were:

- Dr. Ann Louise Gilligan (Chairperson), St.Patrick's College, Drumcondra
- Mr Eddie Ward, Chief Executive Officer
- Sr. Eileen Randles, School Management Organisation
- Ms Fionnuala Kilfeather, National Parents Council
- Mr Don Mc Cluskey, Teacher Unions
- Mr Donal O'Connor, Educational Welfare Officers
- Mr Gerry Mangan, Department of Social & Family Affairs
- Dr. Tony Crooks, Area Development Management Ltd.
- Mr Brendan Callaghan, Department of Justice, Equality & Law Reform
- Mr Gus O'Connell, FÁS
- Mr Richard Dooley, Department of Health & Children
- Mr Gearoid Ó Maoilmhichil, Voluntary Bodies
- Mr Ian Murphy, Department of Education & Science

## **CHAIRPERSON'S STATEMENT**

2004 was the year in which the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB) really started to make its mark amongst communities throughout the country. During the year, I had the benefit of attending the regional launches of our offices in Cork, Galway, Tallaght and Navan, and was delighted to hear the positive feedback regarding the work of our Educational Welfare Officers. Even though the majority of them had only been in their jobs for less than a year, they had forged strong working relationships with local schools, community representatives and others working with children and young people.

One of the huge benefits of attending these local launches was having the opportunity to listen to the views of parents. It was more than apparent that so many of them recognised the value of education and wanted to do everything they could to ensure that their children attended school.

But perhaps my most memorable impression of the local launches was of the young people who attended and their thoughts on school and education. At our Galway launch, we heard what local children said about school. One pupil said "it is a fun place to be and it is an important place to make friends", while another said that "it is for learning and using your talents that help you find a job you really like". When they were asked to describe their feelings about being absent from school, one said she felt bad because "it is hard to catch up", another said he felt "worried, that I would miss out".

The views expressed by these young people serve to reinforce the message that the NEWB strives to deliver to parents and guardians around the country - that the value of an education cannot be over emphasised. It gives children the very best start in life by equipping them with social and knowledge skills and fostering within them the desire and ability to question and interpret the world.

The support of key individuals at our regional launches also helped strengthen this message and inspire young lives. In this regard I would like to thank our special guest speakers, poet Rita Ann Higgins, actor and artist Stuart Dunne, former Meath footballer David Beggy and Cllr. Colm Burke, then Lord Mayor of Cork.

A key function of the NEWB is the development of a strong knowledge base in relation to the factors influencing school attendance. The compilation and analysis of the country's first data on school attendance was perhaps the most significant step in this direction for the NEWB in 2004. It showed that non attendance levels in the country were relatively high, particularly in schools within areas of disadvantage, where over a quarter of Post Primary school pupils missed out on 22 days a year – nearly a full month of school days.

While media attention tended to concentrate on the levels of non-attendance in disadvantaged areas, the NEWB also had to tackle the bigger picture - that non-attendance was pervasive throughout the country. In an effort to address this, our pre-budget submission outlined the need for resources in areas not currently provided with an intensive service, in addition to the urgent need for extra resources for

disadvantaged areas. By the end of the year, we received funding for an additional 10 posts, a number which will be expanded upon again in 2005.

During 2004, we were fortunate to enjoy a strong working relationship with the Minister for Children, Mr. Brian Lenihan T.D., who very kindly launched our “Don’t Let Your Child Miss Out” leaflet and our lo-call help line – 1890 363666, back in March 2004. I would like to thank the Minister and his officials for their support and advice throughout the year.

I would also like to thank the members of the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Education and Science, who met with us and were extremely supportive of our research and our recommendation that further resources were required if school attendance was to be improved.

The success of the NEWB in executing its mandate is based firmly on the commitment and expertise of its staff. On behalf of the Board I would like to thank them for their dedication and hard work in 2004. It was not an easy task to set up numerous new offices around the country, train new people and put systems in place that would ensure that schools, children and their families could be supported adequately.

I would like to express my gratitude to my fellow Board members for all their support, advice and hard work throughout 2004. I would also like to acknowledge the invaluable guidance provided by the School Implementation Group. Their hard work meant that by year end we had developed the first set of guidelines for schools on managing and reporting school attendance. I would also like to thank our CEO, Eddie Ward, for his direction and his commitment to the ethos of the NEWB.

The Education (Welfare) Act 2000 calls upon the NEWB to build a new culture of awareness among children, young people, families, schools and communities of the importance of full participation in education. 2004 marked an important step forward in achieving that goal.

Dr. Ann Louise Gilligan  
**Chairperson**

## **CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REVIEW**

The National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB) completed its first full year of national service in 2004. From the start of the year, our Educational Welfare Officers (EWO) worked intensively with children, families and schools in 6 cities and 12 towns and provided support to all other children across the country at risk of not attending school or receiving an adequate education. By the end of the year, they had dealt with nearly 18,000 new cases and closed almost 9,000. They had made over 7,000 school visits and over 10,000 home visits as well as attending 2,836 meetings with other agencies.

In March, we provided further back-up to our national service by setting-up the country's first education helpline. By the end of 2004, staff had handled over 7,000 calls, the vast majority of which could be dealt with over the phone by trained Educational Welfare Officers. The launch of the helpline was coupled with the distribution of the first information leaflet on school attendance which was sent to over 340,000 homes and every school in the country.

Critically, 2004 was the year in which the NEWB collated the country's first hard data on school attendance. The data showed that the average primary school pupil missed 12 days and the average post-primary school pupil missed 15 days. It also showed that post-primary schools with students from disadvantaged backgrounds had lower average levels of attendance.

This data backed up our strategic decision to provide an intensive service to towns and cities designated disadvantaged first. However, it also showed that absenteeism was prevalent throughout the country. Our aim for 2005 is to ensure that all areas without an intensive service in 2004 will be covered.

The NEWB made its mark as a community based service with four lively and well attended local launches. Throughout the year, our staff members were also holding their own quiet but vitally important meetings and briefings with parent groups, community groups, and schools.

It is never easy being the first to work in a new organisation. There are always going to be teething problems – new policies to develop, new systems to be tested and tweaked, not enough time in the day to get everything done, arising concerns which were never anticipated when the organisation was still a proposal on paper.

I would like to thank sincerely the staff of the NEWB for their patience and understanding, and above all, for their ability to just get on with the job. Throughout the year, they never lost sight of the fact that their greatest allegiance was to the children and families which required their support. They continued to make those important school and house visits. However, as time progressed through 2004, vital policy documents and operational systems were developed which will make the job of the EWOs a little easier as we move into 2005.

Much of the development which took place in 2004 is due to the unstinting work of the Board, under the guidance of Chairperson Ann Louise Gilligan. I would like to thank them for their support throughout the year. I would also like to thank the

members of the School Implementation Group – your attention to detail means that we now have very workable guidelines for schools on reporting school attendance.

2004 was a groundbreaking year. It was the year in which the NEWB was put on the educational map. I now look forward to building upon our national service and to ensuring that we have even more people on the ground by this time next year.

Eddie Ward  
**Chief Executive Officer**

## **OPERATIONS REVIEW**

### **National Service**

In December 2003, former Minister for Education and Science, Mr. Noel Dempsey T.D., launched the National Educational Welfare Board and announced that the Board would be providing an intensive service in six cities – Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Galway, Waterford and Kilkenny – and 12 regional towns – Dundalk, Drogheda, Navan, Athlone, Carlow, Wexford, Bray, Clonmel, Tralee, Ennis, Sligo and Letterkenny. In addition, the NEWB would be providing a service to all children at risk of not attending school throughout the country. In effect, he was announcing that the NEWB was going nationwide.

2004 was NEWB's first full year of national service working with an increase in service delivery staff to 73. New offices in each of the intensive service locations had to be found and fitted out, staff had to be trained and acquainted with one another, school principals had to be met, new children and families had to be visited. Critically, new systems had to be put in place to ensure that operations in Galway were uniform with operations in Clonmel. In addition, communications structures had to be put in place to ensure that staff could keep in touch with one another and learn from one another even if they were located in towns as far apart as Letterkenny and Waterford.

There were, naturally, teething problems in 2004 but overall, the job of supporting schools, families and children was kept on track. By the end of the year, the EWOs had dealt with 17,878 new cases and closed 8,616. They had made 7,312 visits to schools, written 16,264 letters and made 10,185 home visits as well as attending 2,836 meetings with other agencies.

### **Local Launches**

The NEWB held four local launches in 2004. On April 21<sup>st</sup>, the focus was on Cork. A month later, on May 18<sup>th</sup>, it was Galway's turn to introduce its new service to principals, teachers and parents. After the Autumn return to school, the service was launched in Tallaght on October 13<sup>th</sup> and finally in Navan on November 30<sup>th</sup>.

### **New Leaflet and Educational Helpline**

The country's first information leaflet on school attendance for parents and first Educational Helpline were launched on March 9<sup>th</sup> by Mr. Brian Lenihan T.D., Minister for Children. The launch was also attended by pupils of Coolmine Community School in Dublin, who featured in the colourful new leaflet. 340,000 leaflets and details of the 10 digit Education Helpline number – 1890 363666, were posted to homes with children of school going age around the country.

The message at the launch was clear - Don't let your child miss out! As Eddie Ward, CEO, explained: "If children miss out on school they miss out on a lot more than just

school work - a good education gives children the best possible start in life. Research has shown again and again that children who attend school regularly are more likely to stay in school and thus are more likely to be emotionally, financially and socially secure in later life.”

The leaflet outlined the legal role and obligations of parents in ensuring that their children receive an education, with practical tips on how they could make it easier for their children to attend and enjoy school. The leaflet also outlined the services of the National Educational Welfare Board.

The Educational Helpline, which is manned from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. by trained EWOs, has proved a vital addition to the NEWB’s service. An evaluation report at the end of 2004 showed that 84% of callers had their issues dealt with by EWOs over the phone and a further 16% received specific follow-up either through personal contact by a local EWO or were referred to other support services, more appropriate to their needs. By the end of the year, staff had dealt with 7,263 calls, 70% of which had come from parents and 30% of which had come from schools. The main categories of concern on the helpline were bullying (19%), special needs (15%), refusing to go to school (15%), suspension (12%) and home education (11%). Callers also enquired about issues such as holidays, transport, moving house and rules regarding illness.

### **First National Data on School Attendance**

On October 28<sup>th</sup> the NEWB released the first-ever comprehensive report on the levels of non-attendance at Irish schools: *Analysis of school attendance data at Primary and Post-Primary levels for 2003/2004*.

The report showed a strong relationship between levels of disadvantage and levels of non-attendance. It also showed that children in rural areas have better school attendance than those in urban areas.

Eddie Ward, CEO, said that the levels of non-attendance reported by Primary and Post Primary schools were a major cause of concern to the Board. He also stressed that it was essential to compile and analyse data as the only evidence based means of developing the NEWB’s service effectively and efficiently.

The report was compiled from returns sent in by principals of primary and post-primary schools following the school year 2003-4. Analysis of the data was undertaken on behalf of the NEWB by the Educational Research Centre, Dublin.

### ***Summary of Main Findings***

- Attendance is lower at Post Primary than Primary.

At primary, the average absence is 11 days out of 183. At Post Primary, the average absence is 15 days out of 167. One in ten students is absent for 20 days or more at Primary. Almost 1 in 5 students is absent for 20 days or more at Post Primary. These rates are similar to those in England.

- Attendance is lower in poorer areas.

In the RAPID cities and large towns, every Post Primary student is absent for 20 days on average. One in 4 Post Primary students misses 20 days or more. In other areas, every Post Primary student is absent for 14 days and almost 1 in 5 miss 20 days or more. In RAPID cities and large towns, every Primary student is absent for 17 days on average. Almost 1 in 4 misses 20 days or more. In other areas, the average absence is 10 days and 1 in 10 miss 20 days or more.

- Students from disadvantaged backgrounds attending rural Primary schools attend school more regularly than children attending urban schools with similar levels of disadvantage.

Average attendance in the least disadvantaged schools in urban areas is at nearly 95% (9 days absence) compared to 89.6% (19 days absence) in the most disadvantaged schools – a difference of over 5%. In rural areas, however, the attendance levels at the least and most disadvantaged schools stand at 95.3% and 94.3% respectively – a difference of just 1%. The urban/rural difference is even more pronounced in relation to the percentage of students absent for 20 days or more. In urban areas the difference between the least and most disadvantaged schools is 21.4% while in rural areas the difference is just 5%.

- The study concluded that there is a strong relationship between the levels of disadvantage in a school and the level of attendance and the number of children who miss 20 days or more. Schools with larger numbers of children from disadvantaged backgrounds tend to have greater problems with attendance.
- The study confirmed the findings of other research that attendance rates influence school retention rates and average performance in the Junior Certificate.
- All schools have a code of behaviour that is available to parents.
- Student expulsions are rare.

## **Developing Education Services**

*“The new service is a resource for both schools and families. Its success depends very much on close collaboration between the school and the EWO working together for the educational welfare of children coming to their attention.”*

- CEO Eddie Ward addressing to Principals in Galway

## **New Director of Education Services**

In February, the NEWB appointed Frank Smith as its new Director of Education Services, the main liaison with schools, parents, guardians and others concerned with the educational welfare of children and young people.

## **School Implementation Group**

The School Implementation Group (SIG), consisting of representatives of key areas of education including school management, principals, teacher unions and parents, continued to give on-the-ground support and advice to the NEWB (See Appendix II). The primary aim of the Group was to continue to ensure that the NEWB could proceed with its job in a ‘spirit of co-operation and collaboration with those most involved in education.’ In other words, it was their job to ensure that systems, procedures, and guidelines developed by the NEWB for schools in particular were practical, user friendly, beneficial and time efficient.

Throughout 2004, the SIG advised the NEWB on the best systems and procedures for recording, monitoring and reporting pupil attendance and assisted in the development of new guidelines for schools.

## **Guidelines on Reporting School Attendance and [www.schoolreturn.ie](http://www.schoolreturn.ie)**

By the end of 2004, work was completed on the country’s first ever guidelines on reporting student absences and expulsions. The guidelines provide step-by-step advice on how and when school attendance returns should be made. They also provide schools with sample letters which can be sent to parents or guardians about a child’s absence as well as notices on expulsion. In addition, the guidelines provide information on how schools can use a new website – [www.schoolreturn.ie](http://www.schoolreturn.ie) – to simplify the job of making attendance returns.

At the announcement of the Guidelines and [www.schoolreturn.ie](http://www.schoolreturn.ie) Chief Executive Officer, Eddie Ward explained: “Our new website will help schools to report data easily and at no extra cost. We know that schools are already under pressure, yet, they are obliged under law to inform us about absences. Therefore, we have developed a system which helps them fulfill their obligations in a simple and easy way and involves no financial outlay to the school. The new website can be used as a school attendance management tool by the school and we will provide support to them on using the service.”

There are four student absence reports and one annual attendance report due each year and these can be submitted online or on paper. Absence reports give information about individual students who are missing school including the reasons and any comments that the school may have to indicate its concern or otherwise.

The collated data provides a yearly comprehensive picture of school attendance in the country and is used to develop the Educational Welfare Services efficiently and according to need.

The website is confidential and is accessed only using a school identity code. It is protected under the Data Protection Act (1988-2003) and the Education (Welfare) Act 2000.

### **Children educated outside of recognised schools**

The NEWB has a statutory obligation to ensure that all children aged 6 to 16 receive a minimum education. To do so, it must also monitor standards of education where children are enrolled in private fee paying primary schools, Montessori schools or are receiving home based education.

The first step taken towards monitoring home education was to establish a register of children and then to carry out assessments of the education received, in conjunction with Home Education Network (HEN). By the end of 2004, 92 applications for registration had been received from families involving 138 children.

There are an estimated 500 children receiving home education and in its pre-budget submission, the NEWB recommended that, given the urgent demand, it would be more efficient and effective to directly employ five specialist NEWBs (one per region) to carry out assessments.

Where education is outside of recognised schools (in private fee paying primary or Montessori schools) the NEWB must also assess and monitor the standard of that education. The Department of Education and Science currently allocates inspectors to the NEWB to cover this function which covers up to 35 schools and 5,000 pupils. Again, within its pre-budget submission, the NEWB stated that it wanted to regularise and mainstream this service within the NEWB.

Throughout 2004, the Board had consultations with the Association of Independent Junior Schools, and wrote to its members concerning the new registration requirements for children attending its schools. Twenty seven of the 33 independent schools had made returns by the end of the year.

### **Support for Early School Leavers**

The NEWB also has an obligation to young people, aged 16 to 17 years of age, who leave school early to take up employment. Towards this, the Board met with FÁS and Youthreach as well as representatives of the Pathways Projects based in Kildare, Tralee and Waterford. Throughout the year, the NEWB explored ways in which it

could work in collaboration with these services and others to ensure that early school leavers had access to continuing education and adequate training.

### **Focus on Enrolment**

The NEWB played an important role in supporting children, families and schools at the centre of the enrolment crisis in Limerick just before the start of the 2004-5 school year. All children at risk of not having a school place were accommodated within the City's schools and a Common Enrolment Form was developed which would help ensure that the same situation did not occur in subsequent years.

## **Building a Community Based Organisation**

*“For the consistent poor attenders, the school response alone cannot compensate. Nothing you do in school will work if the home doesn’t get support. There has to be an inter-agency partnership approach to the problem. It is an issue of welfare, not just for the kids but for the whole family.”*

- Lucy Conway, EWO, speaking to the Irish Independent.

## **Development of Policy**

Work was finalised in 2004 on three major policy documents:

- Serving Families and Schools; A Draft Code of Good Practice
- School Attendance Notices and Legal Proceedings: Draft procedures for Educational Welfare Officers;
- Child Protection.

The Draft Code of Practice sets out guidelines on dealing with schools, parents and other agencies. The Child Protection Guidelines gives a very comprehensive overview of the various forms of child abuse and what EWOs in particular should be looking for as signs of neglect or abuse. It gives specific information on what to do if neglect or abuse is suspected and actions to be taken and procedures to be followed if there is an allegation or suspicion of child abuse by an NEWB staff member. The procedures on School Attendance Notices and Legal Proceedings are extremely comprehensive and clear. Actions to be taken by Educational Welfare Officers, SEWOs and Regional Managers are outlined in step form. The document also includes a range of sample correspondence to parents, principals and health board officials (if appropriate), as well as a standard school attendance notice report form and a sample school attendance notice.

## **Links with Other Organisations**

Throughout the year, the NEWB met with a variety of other national organisations working to ensure the educational rights of children. The Board explored ways in which further, practical links could be forged with Barnardos, the Ombudsman for Children and the Equality Authority in particular. For example, discussions took place with Barnardos about the development of parenting courses.

## **Research and Communications**

*“Because we were in the papers a lot during the enrolment issue, most people in Limerick now know about the work of the NEWB. This helps make our job a lot easier.”*

- EWO speaking on communications

### **New Research Projects**

The Research Committee of the NEWB, with the advice of research consultant, Anne Colgan, developed a research programme designed to add value to the end of year school attendance data collated and analysed by ERC in 2004. Discussions took place with ERC and the ESRI on developing this annual school return data to include the reasons for absences and patterns of non-attendance.

### **Crisis Review and Report**

An audit of potential risk areas for the NEWB was carried out by Communications Consultant Edel Hackett.

The management and protection of an organisation’s reputation and credibility is essential to its ability to win public support and influence the policy process. It is vital that nothing happens to undermine the trust of young people and their families in the NEWB so that they grow distrustful, or stop availing, of your services.

The audit report shows is that there is a potential for risk at all levels of the organisation, from Board level to service delivery. It also showed that many areas of perceived risk emanated from the fact that the organisation was still in its infancy and that as the organisation grew and progressed, many of the present perceived areas of exposure would be dealt with. While the issues raised within the audit were wide ranging, they could be grouped into 18 overarching categories.

The primary reason for carrying out the audit was to put in place communications mechanisms which would, firstly, help prevent a media crisis taking place, and, secondly, to help the NEWB to react quickly and coherently if a crisis did hit the papers. Practical recommendations on preparing for and dealing with a media crisis were outlined, including training, the appointment of an internal communications executive, and the establishment of a crisis working group.

## Appendix I

### Summary of School Attendance Data School Year 2003 - 2004

**TABLE 1  
RESPONSE RATE FROM SCHOOLS**

Primary	83%
Post-Primary	71%

**TABLE 2  
LEVELS OF ATTENDANCE NATIONALLY**

	<b>Primary</b>	<b>Post-Primary</b>
Attendance	94.1%  or  11 days absence on average for each student	91.3%  or  15 days absence on average for each student
Percentage of students absent for 20 days or more	10.7%  or  1 in 10	18.9%  or  1 in 5

**TABLE 3  
DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LEVELS OF ATTENDANCE IN THE LEAST  
DISADVANTAGED POST PRIMARY SCHOOLS AND THE MOST  
DISADVANTAGED SCHOOLS**

	<b>Least disadvantaged</b>	<b>Most disadvantaged</b>
Attendance	94.6%  or  average absence of 9 days per student	86.1%  or  average absence of 23 days per student
Percentage of students absent 20 days or more	8.5%  or 1 in 12	38%  or 2 in 5

**TABLE 4  
LEVELS OF ATTENDANCE IN POST-PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN RAPID  
CITY AND NON-RAPID AREAS**

	<b>Rapid* Areas</b>	<b>Non-Rapid Areas</b>
Attendance	87.8%  or  20 days absence on average for each student	91.5%  or  14 days absence on average for each student
Percentage of students absent 20 days or more	26%  or approx 1 in 4	18.6%  or approx 1 in 5

**TABLE 5**

**LEVELS OF ATTENDANCE IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN RAPID CITY AND NON-RAPID AREAS**

	<b>Rapid* Areas</b>	<b>Non-Rapid Areas</b>
Attendance	90.8%  or  average absence of 17 days per student	94.3%  or  average absence of 10 days per student
Percentage of students absent 20 days or more	23.7%  or almost 1 in 4	9.9%  or 1 in 10

**TABLE 6**

**LEVELS OF ATTENDANCE IN URBAN PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

	<b>least disadvantaged</b>	<b>most disadvantaged</b>
Attendance	94.9%  or  average absence of 9 days per student	89.6%  or  average absence of 19 days per student
Percentage of students absent 20 days or more	7.3%	28.7%

**TABLE 7**

**LEVELS OF ATTENDANCE IN RURAL PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

	<b>least disadvantaged</b>	<b>most disadvantaged</b>
Attendance	95.3%  or  average absence of 9 days per student	94.3%  or  average absence of 10 days per student
Percentage of students absent 20 days or more	6.3%	11.3%

**\*Large cities and towns covered under RAPID 1.**

**These tables are based on a report prepared by the Educational Research Centre, Dublin for the National Educational Welfare Board.**

## **Appendix II**

### **Members of the School Implementation Group 2004**

Mr Eddie Ward, Chief Executive Officer, NEWB - Chairperson  
Mr Frank Smith, Director of Educational Services, NEWB  
Ms Jill Leonard, Director of Corporate Services, NEWB  
Mr Neil Ryan, IT Manager, NEWB  
Mr Don McCluskey, Teacher unions and Board member  
Sr Eileen Randles, School Management & Board member  
Ms Sheila Nunan, INTO  
Ms Susie Hall, ASTI  
Ms Joan McLoughlin NPC- Parent Primary  
Father Dan O'Connor, CPMSA  
Ms Jacinta Stewart, IVEA  
Mr Stephen Falvey, Department of Education & Science  
Mr Sean McCarthy, TUI  
Ms Sheila Nunan, INTO  
Mr Gerry McCaul, JMB  
Ms Anne McElduff, INTO  
Ms Eleanor Petrie, NPC- Post primary  
Mr Michael Naughton, ACCS

