



2013: The Year of Learners

Gay Thompson's speech to Parliament

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MORPHETT VALE EAST SCHOOL R-7

Ms THOMPSON (Reynell) (17:40): During the break, I was very pleased to visit the Morphett Vale East School R-7 on three successive days to help them to mark the creation of the new school following the amalgamation of the junior primary and the primary school and to celebrate their new uniforms and their new direction. Morphett Vale East recognised that, with 320 students, it was a fluke of history that they were getting different funding from the schools just down the road simply because they had a structure of junior primary and primary.

When then Minister for Education, Minister Portolesi, consulted about amalgamations, that school came on board and was pleased that it would be fair. However, it decided it would make an opportunity out of the incentives that were given to school to amalgamate and it has had a very exciting time in marking its new identity. It has a new logo, which significantly is a book with a tree of knowledge on top of it. They still want to maintain the commitment to the wisdom of the book, despite the fact that they in fact have an IT device for just about every student in the school.

The transition from the old school to the new school was symbolised by new uniforms. On Thursday, there was a visit to the school for me to see some of the students in their old green and gold uniforms and have a chat with a number of them, and then on the Friday there was a special pink and blue day to raise funds for cancer. It is sad to note that two of the girls in Year 7 have mothers who are at the moment dealing with cancer. It is breast cancer in both cases, and we all know what a tragedy breast cancer can be.

Classmates decided that they wanted to do something to support the girls, and so they asked for a special day and the leadership team decided that part of the transition was the way to go. In a school of, as I said, 320 students, the fact that they raised \$1,785.70 in support of cancer research for both breast and prostate cancer is really commendable. More important was the help and support that they showed to the two girls concerned, who they surrounded with love at the end of a special assembly.

The school, as I said, is using the creation of the new identity as an opportunity to renew itself. After celebrating 40 years as a school at the end of last year, they decided to really progress with a transformation period. After the new principal, Grant Ley, arrived, they spent a couple of years focusing on culture and wellbeing, but they have now progressed to using these as a basis for more rigorous learning. The focus now is on literacy, but particularly reading, as this underpins all that was successful in what learners do.

The new uniform is also very exciting. The principal had returned from a trip to London, where he noticed a school wearing high-visibility uniforms and was impressed by the safety and freshness these uniforms afforded. The governing council took the opportunity to incorporate a new uniform into the new culture to symbolise rejuvenation. To assist the change of uniform, governing council decided to provide two polo tops and a rugby top free of charge to all students at the school in 2013 or known to be beginning in 2014.

I wish to congratulate the principal, Grant Ley, and the assistant principal, Lindon Alvey, for the leadership that they have shown and also to thank Kerry Gifford, one of the wonderful student support officers who work in our schools, for all she did to make those three days of celebration memorable, in particular, climbing up a ladder to take a photo of all 320 students plus parents and teachers and the local member in support.

