



Speech by

**Vicky Darling**

**MEMBER FOR SANDGATE**

Hansard Thursday, 6 August 2009

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## **SANDGATE DISTRICT STATE HIGH SCHOOL**

**Ms DARLING** (Sandgate—ALP) (5.52 pm): I wish to start by acknowledging some Labor friends from the Sunshine Coast in the gallery, amongst them Elaine and Bob Darling. Hi, Mum and Dad.

The Sandgate District State High School was devastated by a fire last Monday, 3 August, which completely destroyed D block. I want to pay tribute to the workers from Education Queensland and QBuild and all of the school staff and students for coming together—rallying together—after such a devastating event. I visited the school very early on Monday morning—I was there at 7 am—and already the school was full of representatives who just clicked into action to try to get the school running again. The school did have to remain closed for the day on Monday, but by Tuesday morning classes had resumed. That was only as a result of the dedication of the staff and teachers at Sandgate High.

The investigation by the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service has determined that the cause of the fire was suspicious, and the Queensland Police Service has now taken over the investigations. I can announce that four demountable buildings are now in place, and the school principal along with the facilities staff will be discussing the best way forward so that we can make sure we have a new building for students as soon as possible.

Sandgate High has a wonderful community education facility, with around 1,200 students and a diverse range of extra curricula pursuits. There is a top-class music and sports program, an enrichment program and vocational education and training, and this year the school celebrated its 50th anniversary. The school will be receiving a brand-new \$2 million science centre under the Rudd government's historic school modernisation program. It was successful in its bid to secure new funding under the Science and Language Centres for 21st Century Secondary Schools element of the \$14.7 billion Building the Education Revolution fund.

However, it was the maths block that was destroyed in Monday's fire. Last year, the Sandgate District State High School was awarded a \$1,000 development grant in the state government's highest accolade for education achievements in a state school. This was awarded for what they call their dirty maths program, which shows kids how to get their hands dirty while using maths to help solve practical problems. Teachers have noticed a huge improvement amongst the program's participants.

It was not only the maths block, though, that was destroyed. The teachers, students and staff also lost personal belongings and, following a fire, a community feels very bereaved, even violated. I thank the staff, students and parents for supporting each other through this special time. A fundraising initiative has already been started amongst local businesses in the local community, and I am very keen to offer my support to help coordinate a speedy response for the new building. I urge all school community members to be patient while the investigation and the safe removal of the destroyed building is completed.