

EDUCATION WEEK OPEN DAY 2023

Good morning everyone

Today I acknowledge that we meet on the land of the Wangal people of the Eora nation and pay my respect to all Aboriginal Elders, past, present and in the years ahead and extend that respect to all First Nations people with us today.

Thank you, Daisy and Sonia, for hosting the assembly this morning as we throw open our doors to families and friends of Drummoyne PS to celebrate Education Week and the excellence that occurs every day at the school through the efforts and achievements of our students, teachers and school staff, with the support of our wonderful parents, carers and our school community.

Today, we especially welcome our grandparents and grand friends who support our families in so many ways based on their strong family values and commitment to ensure quality of life for our parents and children. Thank you for joining us today and I hope it is a very special time for you all.

Education Week this year has a special significance as the NSW Department of Education marks 175 years of public education – so this week we are focusing on learning from the past, celebrating our achievements and embracing the future with confidence.

In 1885 the Board of National Education approved a school to be built at Drummoyne and the school opened on Wednesday 7th April 1886 which makes us 137 years old this year.

The school opened with just 32 pupils and class teacher Mr William Larkin, and by the end of the month this had grown to 73. By the end of the year the total enrolment was 113. By 1893, just over 200 students were enrolled.

With the rapid growth of the suburb, 'horse buses' were being run to the city taking around 50 minutes to get there. Even now, on some days, 50 minutes is a good run!

Over the years a lot has changed, particularly around personalised learning, future focussed teaching, the integration of technology into classrooms and the development of the whole child through very sophisticated teaching and learning.

What has been ongoing though, is the steadfast commitment of the parent community to the school.

From the early years, through the Depression and World Wars and the development of a modern school in more recent times, our parents and friends have been committed to do whatever was needed to ensure the best resources and facilities for the students and staff.

A very clear example of this was throughout 1962, when the P&C funded an upgrade and remodelling of the school and records say - it looked a picture!

Then at the end of the school year around dusk, the roar of several fire engines coming up Thompson Street and the high pitch noise of sirens could be heard, and a cry rang out 'the schools on fire'!

The flames were roaring to 50 to 60 feet above the roof of the school punctuated only by the crash of the roof, as it collapsed.

Seven fire engines and crew fought the fire throughout the night to bring it under control.

At daybreak the next morning, several members of the P&C were on the scene to witness the enormity of the damage. Every item of equipment purchased by the P& C had been destroyed.

Yet, on 27th December just 5 days after the fire, an extra-ordinary P&C meeting was held in a parent's home to discuss the future of the school. By the end of the next year, both infants and primary sections of the school had been rebuilt by the Department of Education and the students and teachers were able to return from local schools.

What a remarkable achievement in 1962 that reflected the perseverance and resilience of the school community, and evident at other times throughout the history of the school, and evident today, following the challenges of the pandemic.

What a history that we are part of and how good as a community to be now also creating the future through supporting the children, teachers, parents and grand friends, to ensure that Drummoyne PS continues to demonstrate the best in public education for the next 175 years.

Thank you for joining us this morning to celebrate Education Week.