

KIMBERLY PAULK- BOARD WELCOME

Thank you, Dr. Cowlshaw, and good morning to you all.

On behalf of the Providence Day School Board of Trustees, some of whom have joined me today on the stage, I'm thrilled to welcome families, friends, and especially our graduating seniors to Commencement!

There's something very special about Commencement day. It's a day that is not just about goodbyes but about beginnings, and the transformation of our seniors into Providence Day alumni.

I was thinking about today as I attended the fifth grade graduation last week. As I watched the students walk across the stage it occurred to me that many of the life lessons learned in Lower School will serve you well in your journey going forward - but there are five things in particular that I hope you will carry from here in your hearts.

First - ask for help when you need it. Most people are truly happy to lend a hand.

Give help when you see someone else in need. Remember kindness.

Find your people. The ones you want to hang out with on the playground. These are people who are honest and loving critics when you need them to be, but your biggest fans always.

Find joy in small, unexpected moments, like you did here at PD when you suddenly remembered it was Bang bang shrimp or quesadilla day. Appreciate the first flowers you see in bloom next spring, or a 24-hour coffee shop when you really need one.

Remember that you're on a path of discovery. There will be challenges. You've met them before. Your family and friends who are here today remember when you went from sneakers with velcro flaps to actual shoe laces that tie. Seriously - if you can master that, you can handle anything!

As young adults standing at a threshold with choices and paths in front of you, it's time to find YOUR path. It won't be the same as the person sitting next to you and that's the beauty of it.

Remember that "Always a Charger" is not a slogan, it is a truth. You will always be a part of this family.

And now - I'm honored to introduce another member of our family, our incredible commencement speaker.

Joining us today to celebrate the Class of 2022 is Dr. Amina Ahmed, the Chief Medical Director of Pediatric Infectious Diseases at Levine Children's Hospital. Dr. Amed is a Providence Day Alumni Parent to Annabal and Julia Henegar from the Class of 2019.

For over 20 years, Dr. Ahmed has been an active clinician, teacher and researcher. She is a member of several professional organizations, including the Society for Pediatric Research.

Dr. Ahmed has received numerous awards, including being named one of the “Best Doctors in America. She has also been named as a Top Doctor by Charlotte Magazine, and received the Pinnacle Award from Atrium Health, the American Academy of Pediatrics Academic Service Award, the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Child Health Recognition Award, and the J.C. Parke Award for Excellence in Pediatric Teaching.

Dr. Ahmed’s research includes National Institutes of Health-sponsored trials focused on antiviral treatments, and tuberculosis research sponsored by the CDC. She has been one of the most knowledgeable and influential voices in the region regarding Covid-19 impacts on children, and she has led one of our nation’s few studies on the effectiveness of remdesivir as a Covid treatment for children.

Dr. Ahmed received her medical degree from The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and we are so pleased that she is here to speak with us today. Please welcome, Dr. Amina Ahmed!