



River Valley Local Schools

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May 31, 2022

After the RV Graduation Ceremony held at Marion Veteran's Memorial Coliseum on May 27th some members of our community shared concerns regarding the alumni speaker's address. In response to those concerns, the following email was sent to the graduates and their parents:

May 28, 2022

Class of 2022 Graduates and Parents,

River Valley Local Schools would like to issue the following statement regarding the 2022 River Valley High School Graduation Ceremony:

As with all alumni speeches in past ceremonies, the speech was not reviewed by anyone on the RV Administrative team or Board of Education. Any views expressed by the speaker during his commencement speech reflected his personal beliefs. He was not speaking as an official representative of River Valley Local Schools.

In cooperation with the River Valley Board of Education, the River Valley Administrative team will be reviewing our processes for future ceremonies. Above all else, we want to ensure our students, families, and guests receive a high-quality program focusing on the accomplishments of our graduating class.

Congratulations to the Class of 2022, and we wish you the best in the future!

Thank you,

RV Administration

The alumni speaker was not a member of the River Valley staff and he was not speaking as an official representative of River Valley Local Schools. In the interest of transparency and clarity for our stakeholders, we have also included a transcript of the alumni speech below. At River Valley Local Schools we value all students, staff, and members of the Viking community.

**Thank you,
Adam Wickham
Superintendent**

Below is a transcript of the alumni speech given at the 2022 River Valley Graduation Ceremony:

“We are sending you into places that we cannot go. It is currently some people’s thoughts to be in vogue to diminish or play down biblical principles. It is what established us, it is what continues to establish us through the years. Everyone in every country in this planet lives by calendar that was based on 2022 years ago, it was established by Jesus Christ, and we need to remember that. I promise any time you spend learning God’s word will not be subtracted from your life.

Continue to learn. Ask yourself questions whether it’s in class or self-instruction. Ask yourself how can if the the wind’s coming out of the south can you take a sailboat south? Ask questions like that. I promise any time spent learning will not be subtracted from your life.

Friends and family. Choose a spouse, I suggest. I also strongly suggest to make sure to choose biblical principles, you know a male with a female and female with a male. Choose your friends. It ends up that we all have multiple friends and I like to think of a ,a good friend, a really good friend, and I’ve got a, I’ve got a test for that. If I am locked up in a foreign jail and if I make a phone call I have some friends that say, “Oh, we’ll pray you.” I have some friends that say, “Oh that’s a shame, um, when you get out, when you get home, come and see us and we’ll have lunch.” But I have a couple friends, that you can call them and they say, “We will come, we will get you out.” Those are good friends. I promise anytime you spend in close relationship will not be subtracted from your life.

Assist others. I want you to assist others both professionally and privately. It ends up that I have made my career on assisting others and it has done as well, some people even pay us. And it ends up that the mindset is always to help others whether you’re being paid for it or not, whether it’s personal or not. Personally, I suggest that you try to help the, the widow, the orphan, the person with multiple problems that can’t ever pay you back. I promise time assisting others personally and professionally will not be subtracted from your life.

The last thing is I want you to make sure to enjoy yourself and have fun. Competence is right beside arrogance, but make sure that you don’t cross over. I want you to be competent and I want to be comfortable in what you do and I want you to make other people feel comfortable. Personally, I like to do like Ronald, President Ronald Reagan did, and he normally used levity and jokes. I personally like to use them in first person and I always start a project meeting or a board meeting off with some type of levity. And it ends up that yesterday I was at Applebee’s and as I’m sitting there in walks a very helpful skeleton. He comes in and sits right beside me. And he said, the server comes over and asks what he would have and he says, “I’d like to have a beer and a mop.” That’s a Jim McGuire statement. They um, I try to make fun of myself and that also I try never to make fun of other people and I think that would help out extremely.

One last thing it ends up that with special dates in the year that you can take advantage of that, one of those is April Fools Day, April 1. It ends up that, I’ll give you an example, one April fools we had three toddlers that were in the bathtub at the same time. Amy had her hand full at the time. I go downstairs, I take ketchup, I put over my arm and I, I come up screaming. I says, “Oh I broke a window and the glass cut me and I can’t stop the bleeding.” And the little kids are going, “Oh daddy, oh daddy.” So I stumble in, I flip around, I fall down and my red ketchup arm falls in the bathtub. The water immediately turns red. It ends up that, it ends up that all the commotion and the chaos you can imagine, and then what happens as soon as it lowers just a little bit, I said, ‘April fools day.’ And it is precious to know that laughter. Thank you very much.”