

# **Brendan Dillon, Class of 2020 Valedictorian**

I would like to speak on behalf of all of my classmates when I say that we are grateful recipients of a Sayville Public Schools education. To our Board of Education, Central Office administrators, and our high school administration, and all of our dedicated teachers, we are grateful for your tireless efforts in making Sayville Schools the wonderful experience that it is.

In a special way, I would like to recognize the best dressed man at Sayville High School; Mr. Schmieder. After forty-one years of service, Mr. Schmieder is retiring. We hope you know that you mattered to our school and to this community.

Lastly, I would like to acknowledge that while so many of us are going to college, in hopes of making our lives better, My good friend; Brian Velezquez, among others, will be serving all of us in the military. Thank you all for using your gifts in the service of others.

Now I'm going to give my speech that hopefully, for all of our sakes, goes by quickly. Throughout our high school careers we've learned a lot. We've developed skills that will aid us in our futures at college, and in our careers. I can't speak for all of you class, however; I feel that for a majority of my time in school I neglected to learn about something much more important than art, science, and math: How to live a life that will bring me happiness and satisfaction? This is something that is obviously less straightforward than let's say a math problem. For example, a math problem will always have one correct answer and a clear method to use in order to arrive at that answer. On the other hand, the way to live a fulfilling life has multiple different answers and even more ways to arrive at that answer. Since each person has different values and goals, finding one aspect that is universal in

people who lived lives that brought them a great sense of joy is quite difficult. However, I believe that I have found something that everyone here can agree with and benefit from to some extent.

That is to live a life so that you can look back at all you've done and smile. This isn't groundbreaking information by any means, however I feel it is something that people often overlook. I see too many people spending their lives and energy on things that they don't particularly enjoy. I'm sure that a good portion of people here either don't really enjoy what they do for a living, whether that be work or school, or have feelings of regret for something that they wish they did in the past. I know that I do. I regret letting school become the most important thing in my life. As a result of this I sacrificed spending time with family and friends. And the only tangible result from this sacrifice is a golden sash and suffering through the panic attack I'm experiencing now. And while this golden sash is very nice I'm not convinced it was worth it.

Undoubtedly, we all have goals. Many of which will require determination, discipline, and self-sacrifice to be achieved. I hope that no one here will give up their well-being and happiness in pursuit of these goals.

In Confucius' famous quote he reminds us that if you choose a job you love, you will never have to work a day in your life. While what he says is certainly true I believe it's not as simple as that. To choose an occupation that you are truly passionate about requires courage. The courage to persist when things don't go as expected, the courage to disappoint those who care about you, and the courage to find happiness and therefore success on our own terms. I wish you all the best, thank you.