

PRESENTATION OF THE CLASS

Mr. Keith Kolar, President of the Sayville Board of Education

On behalf of the Board of Education I'd like to welcome everyone to our most unique graduation ceremony. I extend this welcome to members of our central administration, to our high school administrators and faculty, and most importantly, to our graduating students and your family.

I specifically would like to take a moment to thank our families for their patience and support throughout this unprecedented school year. Getting through this type of year does not happen without a spirit of cooperation between our educators, families, and most importantly, the effort of our students.

It is safe to say as far as a senior year goes, there has not been a Sayville High School class that has collectively faced more adversity than the class of 2020. Taking on these adversities and eventually accepting them, we can only imagine has been anything but easy. Facing these many disappointments head-on and making it to this point is even more reason for celebration. We as a school district and a community are extremely proud of you as you should be of yourselves.

As you reflect on this past year, there are many lessons that you may be able to take away from it. For one, many of you may not have realized just how much you actually enjoyed waking up at 6:00 am and going to school. Distance learning has highlighted for us that school is not only about doing work with a pencil and paper on a desk. School offers us opportunities to learn through our interactions among different people with different ideas. It naturally allows us to foster a level of acceptance for each other. Having a level of acceptance for one another during these times has never been more important. As a whole, society appears to be losing some level of acceptance. Whether it is accepting our race, our careers, our colleges, or even our political affiliations, society appears to be losing sight of what makes us all the same. We are all human and yearn to be happy and accepted. The more inclusive we are, despite our differences, only stands to fuel the happiness we desire and will collectively make us stronger.

Naturally in the coming months and possibly few years, each one of you will reflect on your years in high school and recall the wonderful moments and possibly even some that were less than wonderful. What may not come as naturally for some of you is self-reflection. Taking a look within yourself and asking yourself a few questions:

Could you have done anything better? Did I confront adversity with positivity? Was I always accepting of others and their differences? These are questions only you will be able to answer. These are also questions that if you continue to ask yourself will only stand to help you grow as a person.

The experience of graduating high school is one of the most significant ones of your life. Although significant changes like this can create uncertainty, however it may also offer an opportunity to reset and make improvements within yourself. Take these changes as an opportunity to make the world a better place.

As you move forward in this next chapter try to understand who you were, who you are, and who you want to be. Surround yourself with people who will nourish your ambitions and do your best to nourish others. As Plato said: "People are like dirt. They can either nourish you or help you grow as a person or they can stunt your growth and make you wilt and die."

On behalf of the Sayville Board of Education I wish each and every one of you the best of luck in all your future endeavors. I am confident that each one of you will make us all and yourselves extremely proud.