

Graduation Speech

Hello. It is an honor for me to be here tonight to bring greetings and congratulations from the school board.

As I began thinking about what I should say to you, I discovered that I could go on for hours talking about your years at (*name of school*) High School . . . about the experiences you've had which prepared you for this day and for the future. I began making notes about all the advice I should share with you and about all of the many topics I wanted to cover.

Then a friend reminded me about the fate of the famous Greek philosopher, Socrates, who lived a long, long time ago.

Socrates was very intelligent. But Socrates gave long speeches, and his friends killed him.

Since I am no Socrates . . . nor do I want to end up like Socrates . . . I will be brief and to the point.

Tonight (*number of graduates*) seniors are graduating from (*name of school*) High School. The room is packed with your friends and relatives, and every person here is proud of you . . . of your accomplishments . . . and of the goals that you have reached. If each of us were to write down a definition of a successful graduate, we would quickly discover that some of the same words and phrases would be repeated over and over again. Common themes would be – dedication, perseverance, integrity, honesty, conscientiousness, dependability and hard work.

From all of the terms used to describe graduates, the one I think should receive top billing is “winner”. Each and every one of you is a winner! You have demonstrated through hard work, dependability, conscientiousness, honesty, integrity, perseverance and dedication that you are winners. And, as a winner, you have earned the right to be proud of your achievements.

(Over)

Graduating from high school happens by design – it is not a fluke or accident.

Let's pause for a moment and consider this design. Our school district has high academic standards that you have had to meet. And we have a dedicated staff who have been there to guide you and to challenge you. Plus, you have friends and families who place a high priority on education and who have been there to assist and support you when you needed it.

Your faculty, family and friends have all made sacrifices so that you would be successful. These sacrifices have included giving you rides, vacating a room so that you could study quietly, tutoring you for a test or just being there when you needed someone to understand. They are here to share this rewarding moment with you because they have all played a part in you becoming a winner.

Seniors, please stand and join me in thanking the staff members, family members and friends without whose support you would not have reached this milestone. (*Lead applause.*)

I and the other members of the school board salute your success. You have met this challenge. Your new challenge is to continue to stretch and extend your abilities. Winners accept nothing but the best from themselves . . . and you are all winners!
