

The Oyster Bay High School Graduation 2017

Opening Remarks

by OBHS Principal Sharon Lasher



Good Afternoon. Welcome. Welcome parents, grandparents; family and friends. A warm welcome to the Board of Education members, Dr. Seinfeld, Superintendent of Schools; Dr. Mulhall and Mr. Cipriani, Assistant Superintendents; Welcome to my colleagues Dr. Vacchio principal of the Vernon School and Ms. McElwee principal of the Roosevelt School; my outstanding assistant principals Mr. McCarthy and Ms. Gonzalez as well as other fellow administrators; teachers and staff of the HS. I would be remiss if I did not publically thank Mr. Tim McCarthy for all he has done to make this graduation day so spectacular. Thank you Mr. McCarthy. Special thanks to Scott Lyle and our entire custodial staff for all they have done to prepare our grounds for this beautiful ceremony.

MOST of all welcome to the Class of 2017.

From a town known as Oyster Bay Long Island...

Prior to August 2, 2016, to me, those were lyrics from a popular song. Now, as I stand before the Oyster Bay HS class of 2017, I know they mean much more. They are a feeling; a sense of pride one has from growing up in the OBEN communities and attending OBHS. Thank you for allowing me

to share in that pride. Some of you have been here for six years while others joined the class of 2017 later on. Regardless, I have quickly learned how much you appreciate where you live and where you learn. Oyster Bay High School is truly a hidden gem among Long Island schools. And to prove that point, graduates, please stand if any or your parents or grandparents attended this school. Audience members, please stand if you are a former graduate of Oyster Bay High School. Wow, look at the number of people standing; that speaks volumes. You may be seated. Returning to the community where you were raised and educated to raise your own children really says it all. Pride in the community; faith in the education system. What a wonderful legacy you have created for your families. Each of you will forever represent Oyster Bay High School and this fine community.

So what happens next? What happens next will look different for each of you. There is one common element that you each will experience and that is change. Each of you will experience change. Change in where you go to school, where you live, where you work. It has been stated that the only constant in our lives is change. What does this mean? Until now, many things have been planned for you. There will no longer be a mastery learning objective written on the smart board to guide you. You will be creating those objectives for yourself, sometimes, one day at a time. There will no longer be a quiz or an exit ticket to assess what you've done. Self-assessment will drive you. From this point on your mail will be addressed to you, not your parent or guardian. There is a message there. You are becoming an adult. Open your mail; take responsibility. Another important

change you will encounter is the realization that your parents actually do know what they are taking about. As you move more and more into adulthood, your thoughts will be more aligned to theirs, showing you that yes, maybe they were right all along. The best part of being young is that you can easily adapt to change. You have been part of a world that is constantly changing. Cell phones, game platforms, and computers, all constantly changing. Our English language has changed as well. Follow along: After graduation you will take a selfie but your friend with whom you just celebrated your two year anniversary will photobomb your pic making a duckface. You will then hurry home to binge watch your favorite Netflix series, because after all, everyone will be talking about it Monday and you don't want FOMO. But it's all ok because... YOLO. Not all of our audience members may understand this, but I know the students of the class of 2017 did! Many words in those three sentences were added to the dictionary in the last few years while you were in high school. You picked up on those quickly, demonstrating your ability to learn.

Part of all change is learning. Continue to know what you are learning., and why you are learning it. Be prepared for whatever change comes your way, and embrace it. Many of you will retire from fields that don't yet exist. We don't know what we don't know, but we do know we live in a world of change.

My generation needs you to make our changing world a better place, a safer place, a kinder place. Set your expectations high and your dreams higher. As Steve Jobs said, "The ones who are crazy enough to think they can change the world are the ones who do."

To the families of our students, I would like to thank you for being our partners over the last six years. I believe our combined efforts have produced the intelligent, passionate, insightful, caring and compassionate young men and women sitting here today. Together, we have made them college and career ready. They are ready to open their own mail, make their own good decisions and learn all they can in our constantly changing world.

To the Class of 2017: The accomplishments of the class of 2017 are outstanding. And, this is just the beginning! You have demonstrated the importance of teamwork, setting goals, hard work and never giving up. And most importantly – kindness toward others! the opportunities you will have to be a part of our world's changes are endless; grab them and go to the places we know you can. I have been truly blessed to have been your principal this year. I am sorry I did not have the opportunity to get to know more of you, but that window is far from closed. Stay in touch, keep us apprised of your journey and be an active alumnus of OBHS. You have made me feel welcomed, respected and valued. You have shown me understanding, warmth, compassion and kindness. You must never stop learning, never stop growing, and never stop dreaming. And always remember, make good decisions and live a safe, kind life. After all, YOLO! Thank you and congratulations!

Established in 2013, the “Purple Cloaks” is Oyster Bay’s very own secret society. The inaugural class of cloaks were inspired by their visit to the University of Virginia on the 10th grade college trip, and decided to bring the idea back home to Oyster Bay. The mission of the cloaks is simple, recognize students who are selfless and caring to their classmates. Every year the cloaks find ways not only to recognize these students, but to also spread joy throughout the school community. In the past, the cloaks have recognized citizens of the week, surprised teachers and administrators with balloons on their birthdays, left good morning messages and treats on desks for students entering first period, raised money for local students in need of some support and given out their yearly award at academic awards night. They do all of this, while remaining completely anonymous, until now. Each year the cloaks are revealed at graduation, and the time has come to announce the members of the 2017 Purple Cloaks. Students when I call your name please stand. Charles Collette, Sarah Collette, Kevin Duke, Courtney Kowalski, Bob Morris and Victoria Vigliotti. This year’s group would like to put their stamp on graduation by starting a new tradition. Graduates, please feel the bottom of your chairs. One of you will find an envelope with a gift card to Super Bowls of Syosset inside of it. At the end of every school year the students in the society choose the members that will continue the tradition the following year, and from what I have been told the class of 2018 is out there somewhere.