

# The Oyster Bay High School Graduation 2017

## **Superintendent's Address**

by Dr. Laura Seinfeld



Good afternoon. I am truly honored to stand before all of you, members of the Board of Education, proud parents, grandparents, family members, friends, teachers, support staff and fellow administrators, and most

importantly, you, the Oyster Bay High School graduating class of 2017.

This is a cross road for you, and for all of us who share in this very special occasion. It is a time to look back, and it is a time to look forward. Today, and in the immediate and longer term future, you will look back to Oyster Bay High School, to the Oyster Bay East Norwich Central School District, and the entire nurturing and supportive community. You will look back and contemplate what you learned, the relationships you fostered, and the support you received from so many individuals. Similarly, we have a guest in our audience today who has very fond memories of her experiences in OBHS. I ask that Elizabeth Redding Johnson, class of 1937, who graduated 80 years ago, please stand and be recognized.

In looking back, consider Oyster Bay your anchor as you sail into the known and unknown seas ahead. You are likely aware of the OBHS football team's theme of "anchor down" and the reminder that we are all anchored here in Oyster Bay. This anchor is a symbol of strength that you may need when you are facing the force of a storm. Similar to Ms. Johnson, you will look back at this anchor, your home, no matter where you are. As you reminisce, I know you join with me in thanking your teachers, your counselors and support staff, our building and district administrators, for providing so many opportunities to support your growth and learning within and beyond the walls of our schools. And you will reflect upon your families for being the incredible anchors and for all they have done to support you through calm and sometimes rougher waters. You will look back at your friends and classmates with whom you have shared so many experiences as you moved through this very special school district. Graduates, remember that we are all here as your anchors.

Wherever your journeys take you, do not forget that we are here for you, with pride, support, and love.

This is also a time to look forward, to reflect upon your goals, your dreams, your ambitions, your plans. You know from your experiences in Oyster Bay that it will take hard work, perseverance, and collaboration in order to achieve these goals. I would like to share with you some research we have learned about that may be

helpful as you consider how best to succeed in your future. The Superintendent College President Partnership is a group that has completed extensive research about how students can be most successful in their futures in college, in career, and in life. This research revealed that a rigorous curriculum such as ours in Oyster Bay-East Norwich, is the single most important predictor of readiness and success. But future readiness requires more than this academic preparation. Three factors were identified as most important. First, Cultural know-how; second, balancing multiple roles and third, help-seeking. In college or in career, you will be part of a new culture. You will need to demonstrate cultural know-how so that you can adapt to the expectations of your new environment. Listen carefully, and watch with open eyes and an open mind so that you can develop this cultural awareness. Next, it is very likely you will have more independence and greater autonomy. This means that you will need to set priorities and manage your time well. You will need to balance different roles, as student, as employee, as extra-curricular participant, as athlete, and you will have to balance these with your social roles as well. Lastly, the research revealed that a key disposition in order to meet with success in your future is help-seeking. No matter where you will be, there will be peers and adults who can help and guide you, who have answers to your questions and advice they will want to impart. But the research is quite clear; you need to seek the help and not wait for the help to come to you.

Beyond sharing an overview of this research with you, I have thought long and hard about the wishes I have for each and every one of you for your futures. I realized that a poem, credited to Mother Teresa as these words were found on the wall in her home for children in Calcutta, summarized my advice to you quite well and so I decided to read it to you today:

People are often unreasonable, irrational, and self-centered. Forgive them anyway.

If you are kind, people may accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives. Be kind anyway.

If you are successful, you will win some unfaithful friends and some genuine enemies. Succeed anyway.

If you are honest and sincere, people may deceive you. Be honest and sincere anyway.

What you spend years creating, others could destroy overnight. Create anyway.

If you find serenity and happiness, some may be jealous. Be happy anyway.

The good you do today will often be forgotten. Do good anyway.

Give the world the best you have, and it will never be enough. Give the world your best anyway.

In closing, look back at this day and all of your days and this anchor that is Oyster Bay, and look forward to the dreams you have and the hard work and dedication you will need as you give the world your best. Lastly, please remember to always choose kind. Only the best, congratulations.