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ONcall

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Tips for your graduation speech and program

Another year is wrapping up, and graduation is around the corner. Another class of students will parade across the stage at commencement to receive their diplomas and recognition for years of dedication and diligence.

For many, it wasn't an easy journey, and the ceremony marks one of the most significant milestones of their lives to date and for many years to come. For others, it is a brief stop on a much longer journey toward their academic goals.

All students deserve to be celebrated and inspired. Graduation is a solemn and jubilant event for both the students and all of the people who supported them along the way.

An inspiring speech is an appropriate and expected part of the ceremony. Students may even contain their excitement long enough to listen to the words of wisdom from the principal, superintendent or other dignitary. If not, schools can consider posting the speech in written form or, better yet, as a video on their website for future reference and encouragement.

For subscription information, contact WSSDA at (800) 562-8927 or (360) 493-9231.

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Sample speeches

Schools are unique and speeches should be heartfelt. Original speeches are best. Tailor your words to fit the student body you have come to know over the last four years. To help you get started with your graduation speech, review excellent examples of speeches on the internet that can serve as a muse for a speech that will touch your audience and send them off with best wishes. Here are a few that may inspire:

Darien High School Graduation Speech by Principal Ellen Dunn

<https://darienite.com/dhs-graduation-speech-principal-ellen-dunn-11979>

Wellesley High School Graduation Speech by English Teacher David McCullough

“You’re not special.”

<https://thewellesleyreport.com/2012/06/wellesley-high-grads-told-youre-not-special>

Seven Motivational Graduation Speeches that will Inspire You

Speeches include university graduation speeches by David Foster Wallace, Ellen DeGeneres, Charlie Munger, Michelle Obama, Jim Carrey, J.K. Rowling, and Bono.

www.KeepInspiring.me/7-motivational-graduation-speeches-that-will-inspire-you

Speech writing tips

Start with welcomes and introductions. Be sure to recognize special dignitaries such as school board members, public officials and notable alumni.

Recognize special accomplishments. Highlight awards, total number of college credits earned in high school, scholarships or noteworthy post-graduation plans. Remind students that they are a part of this school community, and they will always share this connection to their fellow graduates. Keep the focus on this graduation class rather than the accomplishments of previous classes.

Use personal anecdotes. Share bits of wisdom that you have learned and connect it to advice for your graduates. Keep advice simple but take the opportunity to remind students about universal life lessons that will help them be successful in their work goals and as a part of a larger community.

Keep it brief. There is a lot going on during this ceremony, and students will be eager to celebrate at graduation parties. Chances are that students will not be fully engaged for all speakers. Family members may be sitting in the rain if your event is outdoors or on uncomfortable chairs if it is inside. Be as entertaining and concise as possible, and keep things moving.

Sample graduation program

The following graduation program is an example of a comprehensive high school graduation ceremony program

**McKay High School Graduation
June 8, 2018
8:00 PM, Oregon State Fairgrounds Pavilion**

PROCESSIONAL.....McKay Wind Ensemble

(Audience remain seated during processional)

Once the graduates have marched in, Rob (principal) will quiet the crowd and have them stand for the National Anthem.

WELCOME:

Rob: Good evening ladies and gentlemen. On behalf of Salem-Keizer School District, the Salem-Keizer School Board and our faculty, it is my pleasure to welcome you all to the McKay High School Graduation Ceremony for the Class of 2018.

On behalf of our **(total #)** graduates this evening, I would like to thank our McKay families and community for your attendance and support this evening.

And what a class this is. Share key data highlights to celebrate this group.

Audience.... Please stand, as we honor our country with the singing of the National Anthem by our McKay High School Concert Choir.

NATIONAL ANTHEM.....McKay Concert Choir

Rob: Thank you members of the McKay Concert Choir and Mr. Sepulveda. Graduates you may be seated.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS:

ROB: Tonight we are honored to have several special guests participating with us in tonight's commencement activities.

First... I would like to present to you School Board Marty Hayen, Director of High Schools Larry Ramirez and Linda Myers, Director of Strategic Initiatives.

Also, please welcome the McKay High School Administrators who are supporting tonight's program:

1. Ranae Quiring
2. David Wood
3. Jerimy Kelley
4. Pat Schrader
5. Dale Pedersen

Finally, I would like to personally acknowledge and thank the tremendous efforts of many of our McKay staff who have volunteered many hours to make this event possible for our graduates here at McKay.

RECOGNITION OF SALUTATORIAN/VALEDICTORIAN:

ROB: At this time, I would like to invite the Salutatorians and Valedictorians to join us on stage. All these students have demonstrated an impressive dedication to their academics and all have made us tremendously proud.

Our **Salutatorians** are students who have maintained a 3.9 grade point average through 8 semesters of course work.

Our **Valedictorians** are students who have maintained a perfect 4.0 grade point average through 8 semesters of course work.

It is my honor to present:

(List salutatorians and their bios, and valedictorians and their bios)

Thank you, students, for your effort and dedication to learning. Congratulations on your achievements. Students, you may be seated.

SENIOR CLASS SPEAKER:

ROB: Members of the graduating class have been selected as class speakers. Please welcome (Class Speaker)

MUSICAL SELECTION.....McKay Concert Choir

ROB: Thank you (Student Name). Please enjoy a musical selection by the McKay Concert Choir.

Song ends.... Thank you members of the Concert Choir and Mr. Sepulveda.

SENIOR CLASS SPEAKER:

ROB: Please welcome (Class Speaker 2)

PRESENTATION OF GRADUATES:

ROB: We are now at the part of the evening we have all been waiting for, the recognition of our graduates....

As principal of McKay High School, I am proud to announce that the students before you have met or exceeded all requirements of the Salem-Keizer School District and the State of Oregon to receive a high school diploma.

Please hold your applause until all of the graduates have crossed the state so that the audience members can hear the names of each graduate. Graduates please come forward to receive your diplomas.

(HAND OUT DIPLOMAS)

PRESENTATION OF DIPLOMAS

ROB: On behalf of the McKay staff, our McKay community and Salem-Keizer School District, congratulations Class of 2018! We are proud of your accomplishments. We thank you for your leadership and commitment to success at McKay. We wish you the best as you continue your education, transition into your careers and become contributing members of our society. Remember.... You are forever a Royal Scot!

Parents and families.... Following the presentation of graduates, we will be doing a recessional. Please keep the recessional area clear and please respect the requests of McKay staff members who are keeping the area clear. You are welcome to meet your graduate near the entrance or down on the main floor once they have completed their recessional. Thanks for your cooperation.

Class of 2018, please stand. Please move your tassels from left to right.

Ladies, gentlemen and honored guests, please stand and join me in congratulating the McKay High School graduating class of 2018!

(Students throw hats and cheer)

RECESSIONAL

Contributed by Rob Schoepper, Principal, McKay High School, Salem, Ore.