VALEDICTORIAN SPEECH

FOR

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“There is always one moment in childhood (**Do you want to say adolescence instead of childhood?**) when the door opens and lets the future in.” Those words were given to us by the English author Grahame Greene and today we, the senior class of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ High School fulfill his prophecy. Friends, family, teachers and administration, the class of 2016 is about to cross the finish line as we participate in these commencement exercises and although none of us in this graduating class would be here without the love, support, and guidance of all of you, this ceremony marks the moment that will open the virtual door to the future. My fellow classmates and I have done our best to learn our lessons and tomorrow begins a new era for us, the next generation of this community, this country, and this planet.

Throughout the past four years our class has worked together as a team. We entered our freshman year with tentative steps. Although we were not quite sure of our footing or the paths we would ultimately take, through friendship and partnership with each other, the faculty, and our advisors, our legs became stronger, our study grew more focused, and our collective and individual missions have slowly but surely been identified and revealed. We have had the privilege of attending a small and special school. While those that may not know us might have thoughts that our educational experience has been somewhat limited, I think my classmates and I would wholeheartedly agree that because of the size of the class, our scope has actually been more focused. We are all the product of a highly specialized and tailored curriculum and as each one of us crosses the threshold today, we have firm foundations to guide and inform us as we take our places in the world. I am so proud to be a part of this class, one in which everyone participates fully, recognizes opportunities, and takes advantage of all that is offered in order to learn and grow and gather priceless experience. All of these opportunities for knowledge and experience have supported us in being able to remain competitive among students from larger and possibly more anonymous campuses.

To all of my fellow classmates, we did it!! The hard work has paid off and each one of us is that much stronger for what we have accomplished. We’ve excelled in our academic initiatives (**Do you want to give one or two examples of awards or recognition by individuals? If so you can do that here**). \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ achieved \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and we are so proud of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Our victories in throughout many sports such as football, softball, volleyball, and basketball brought us section championships. We have had the distinction and honor to have several students serve as region and section FFA officers. Some of us have even taken college classes… a true sign that we are on a meaningful path to build a strong and solid future

As we complete our high school careers here at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ High, it is fitting that we are outdoors. We’ve progressed from the shelter of our familiar classrooms and we gather here open – to greet the **NEW**: to change, to experience, and to new adventures. It is in the unknown that we will find ourselves and our destiny. We have the tools and the skills to discover our paths and follow them. As the road gets steep… and it will… remember what we’ve learned and never forget that you can achieve whatever you set your mind to do. Dr. Seuss may have been known for being a children’s book author but he had a brilliant mind as well. He said, “Only **you** can control your future.” It has also been said that if you don’t think about your future, you can’t have one.

As we leave here today we must remember that although we have each other and our families and other friends, **WE** are our own best friends, our most devoted cheering sections, and our most capable companions. We must remember to always stretch ourselves further than we might imagine is possible. It was Robert Browning who said, “A man’s reach should exceed his grasp….” As we have found in high school, it is when we think we can’t do something that we must prove to ourselves that we **CAN**. **NOTHING** is impossible as long as we have the inner strength, determination, and will to succeed. And I **KNOW** we all have that… I have seen it shine in each one of you!

Tomorrow is a new day and as we go forth in new directions both literally and figuratively… some will go to Oklahoma while others will seek their future in Texas and some will explore other destinations throughout California, and some will go even further, remember the words of Mahatma Gandhi who said, “You must be the change you wish to see in the world.” It is now **OUR** turn to inherit the future. It is our turn to take on the responsibilities within our families, communities and beyond. I am so thrilled for all of us and I am inspired by the roads that lie ahead. Whether they are known or unknown right now, soon those roads will lead to the challenges and opportunities that will form our adult lives. We will approach those twists and turns with enthusiasm confidence and a thirst for knowledge and experience….all valuable assets we learned to cultivate here at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Congratulations fellow classmates and thank you to everyone who has supported us to find our strengths and build our foundations! Thank you all!