What We Truly Learned

I am so honored to speak in front of you all as the valedictorian of the Class of 2022. It truly is such a great honor. I want to thank everyone who has helped me reach this amazing moment. I want to thank my teachers, coaches, and classmates for pushing me to be my absolute best, and I want to thank my family for being there no matter what. I wanted to start off my speech with a question. What did we learn from high school? I’m sure we can all tell you that the equation of a line is y=mx+b and the mitochondria is the powerhouse of the cell. But what did we truly learn?

We learned how to laugh. We learned to make the best moments in high school. Like when you are at the Ranger on a field trip and all of the boys are shaking the bus. We could literally hear the bus wheels squeaking and the guys just laughing away.

We learned to be tough and resilient. COVID really affected our ability to see each other. I remember Ms. Kenny constantly telling us to put our entire face in the camera and not just the tops of our heads. And there were always those times where someone’s camera “wasn’t working” when they really just didn’t want to show their face. But we made every class fun on the online forum and made the best of it.

We learned how to deal with heartbreaks. There are always going to be heartbreaks in high school, whether that be in relationships, sports, friendships, academics, or anything else. Being ranked 1st in the state cross country meet and passing out twice at it and ending up in a hospital, now that is a heartbreak. But in my opinion, heartbreaks make the victories even sweeter. Crossing that finish line healthy, standing up on that podium, and being a PIAA State Silver Medalist was that sweet victory that I was searching for.

We learned how to work hard. We all know that taking Calculus, Anatomy and Physiology, and Chemistry in one school year was going to be difficult. Especially when you have loads of homework to do after a cross country meet or basketball game. We knew that Trigonometry just didn’t make sense. But our class wasn’t afraid of hard work. We may have complained about how much work we had, but we did it. Hard work will get you as far as you want to go in life. You may have an IQ of 160, but without any work ethic, it doesn’t mean a thing. Hard work, studying, doing your work, and putting in your best effort will lead you to success.

Finally, we learned to enjoy each other’s company. It amazes me that one day I walked into a preschool classroom and saw 20 kids that I never knew before. 14 years later, I can call all of these people my best friends. My favorite thing about our class is how close we all are. Every one of us is willing to help and talk to the other. That is what makes us so special.

Being a mustang has provided me with numerous opportunities to succeed. The Portage staff, students, and the entire community has always been there to support any event whether it be a Friday night rival football game or a Monday night Scholastic Quiz match. I am so proud that I can say I wore the kelly green and white.

To the Class of 2022, it has been a great career. I enjoyed every moment that I had with you. I’m going to miss the laughter in every single class. I’m going to miss seeing Josh do a backflip at every school dance. I’m going to miss hearing Mr. Cecere sing in the hallways during class. And I will miss seeing all of you everyday. We will always be remembered for our positive attitudes and work ethic. Our class is legendary. In fact, the Anatomy and Physiology II class of the Class of 2022 will go down as the ones who shattered Ms. Kenny’s fish tank during an ALICE drill. I know that after today, I might not see many of you again. I know that we have such a bright future. This class is full of hardworking, determined adults. We can accomplish anything that life throws at us. We have had a great time together, but now it is time to move on to greater things. I wish you all the best!