

## **The Journey, not the Destination**

Good evening, everyone—faculty, family, friends, and fellow graduates.

I am deeply honored to stand before you today as the salutatorian of the Class of 2025.

First, I'd like to take a moment to express my gratitude to all the people who made this journey possible—the faculty and staff who challenged and inspired us, the parents and families who supported us, and the friends who helped us every step of the way. Without you, none of this would be possible.

So as we gather to celebrate this journey, I want to reflect on something we've all experienced—The journey.

For years, we've been told to keep our eyes on the prize. To aim for the finish line. To work hard, graduate, and move on to what's next. And tonight, we've reached one of those major finish lines — graduation. But I think what we'll remember most won't be the diploma in our hands—it will be journey that got us there.

We'll remember the long nights studying for bio tests. The intense kickball games in gym class. The endless math homework

from Mrs. Lutz. The basketball and football games, the field trips, and the hours spent playing games on our school laptops.

We'll remember the people who helped us along the way—the teachers who believed in us, the friends who were there to cheer us up, and the family members who never doubted us.

The truth is that the destination will always keep moving. There will always be another goal, another milestone. But if we're only chasing the next thing, we'll miss the beauty of where we are—right here. Right now.

So as we step into the next chapter—college, work, a gap year, or the unknown—I hope we carry with us more than just ambition. I hope we carry gratitude for the journey. I hope we celebrate not just what we achieve, but who we become along the way.

Because in the end, it's not about rushing to get somewhere. It's about being present in the place we're in. So let's keep walking forward and enjoy the journey ahead.

Thank you.