

RYAN WACHTER

Good afternoon Dr. Brotschul, the Board of Education, Mr. Finkle, Mr. Stolarick, Dr. Jones, DHS faculty, parents, and, of course, my fellow classmates. I am honored to be standing here before you to discuss the future.

Throughout my four years at Delran High School, my parents only really ever asked me to do three things: First, to always try my best. Second, to have fun. And, last but not least, for the love of God, to just PLEASE clean my room. I can say that, without a doubt, I successfully accomplished 2 of those 3 things.

And yet, as I look forward to the future, I can't help but wonder how I can continue to try my best, and to have fun, when I have absolutely no clue what may come next. Anyone that knows me knows that I like to plan things ahead; I'm not much of a spur-of-the-moment guy. So, to be standing here today, with our future looking more uncertain than ever before, it's difficult for me to talk about it. However, if there is one thing high school taught me, it is that no matter what is thrown your way, everything will still be okay. It's a silly rhyme I know, but it was my own mantra. Yeah so, we're in the middle of a pandemic right now. But take a look around: we still made it here. We refused to let

this ruin our special day and we are surely not going to let it ruin the rest of our lives. It has been a challenge but we worked together by living separately and social distancing. Yes, the economy is not looking so hot right now, but we've survived recessions before. The future may look a little bleak right now, and it may require adjustments, but what is life without challenges? I'll tell you what it is: Boring. The great rapper, Nicki Minaj, once said: "Life is a prize. But to live doesn't mean you're alive."

Now is the time for us to live like we never have before! We cannot take our lives for granted, but must continue to push forward and adapt by enjoying life in new ways. Try new hobbies, travel to new destinations, reconnect with old friends, or spend quality time with your family. Use this time to reflect on yourself, take a breath, and ponder your future goals. There may never be a time like this again, so take advantage of what this pandemic has to offer you. We can't control all these events, but we can choose how we react to them.

In conclusion, there is one thing I would like all of my classmates to take away from today, for the future, and that is to use your voice. It is the most powerful tool that you own. Use your voice to ask questions as you move towards your next step in life. For some, that next step may be

college, the military, or a career. Use your voice to speak up for what you believe in. In the past month or so, we witnessed first-hand just how much impact our voices can have when they are put to a common cause. In the future, speak up for yourself and others, or someone else will, and they may not always represent your best interests. Know that you hold the key to your future! The test drive is over now, it's your time to take the road and live life to the fullest. In the words of Walt Disney, "All our dreams can come true, if we have the courage to pursue them."

Class of 2020: Even when it felt like the entire world was against us, we continued to push forward and support one another. Thank you all for the memories and best of luck to all of you!