

Good afternoon and welcome to the commencement ceremony for the Cedar Cliff High School Class of 2024. I ask now that you please silence all cell phones and other electronic devices. *Pictures and videos are allowed, but please make sure to tag me (@k2wkramer on instagram)!*

Please rise, and gentlemen remove your caps, for the singing of our national anthem, which will be performed by our exceptionally talented senior members of the Cedar Cliff Chamber Singers.

<National Anthem is performed>

Please be seated while the JROTC color guard leaves the floor.

<Pause for Color Guard to leave the floor.>

It is my pleasure to welcome you all: administrators, the board of school directors, faculty, staff, students, friends and family, and the Class of 2024 to The Pennsylvania Farm Show Complex for the 2024 Cedar Cliff High School commencement ceremony. My name is Kaylee Kramer, and I am honored to be your Master of Ceremonies.

As we move through today's proceedings, I want us all to take the time to reminisce and reflect on the memories made over the last four years, and really let ourselves appreciate how far we have come. When we began High School, as bright, starry-eyed freshmen,

it was through the crusty screens of our often unreliable Chromebooks. During this period of our education, we had to experience and overcome many challenges.

For example, we had to learn how to navigate and submit assignments online. In some classes, the curriculum was set up in such a way that we essentially had to teach ourselves full lessons. And probably the strangest of all, we were constantly being mask-fished by our peers. Our imaginations were working overtime to fill in the blanks. You think you know someone, and then you see the rest of their face.

And, if I'm being entirely honest, there are still some of you I don't recognize. So, it's nice to meet you!

Anyway, the point I'm trying to get across is that freshman year was more of a trial run. It wasn't until sophomore and junior year that we really got to experience high school in all its glory. And while some factors were difficult to encounter, we overcame each hardship with perseverance and only a few complaints here and there. Now today, in this moment, we get to celebrate the outcome of all that hard work.

Class of 2024, we have had our ups, and we have had our downs, but I wouldn't trade my time in high school for anything. To quote lyrical genius, philosopher, and tortured poet, Dr. Taylor Swift: "take the moment and taste it, you've got no reason to be afraid.... You can face this."

Congratulations Class of 2024.

Thank you.

<Pause>

It is now my pleasure to introduce the district administration seated on the

platform:

DR. TODD STOLTZ, Superintendent of Schools

<Applause>

And, would the rest of the cabinet and administrative team of the district please stand to be recognized?

<Applause>

I would also like to recognize the board of school directors.

First, Mrs. Heidi Thomas - President of the School Board

<Applause>

Additionally, I invite the rest of the West Shore School Board to rise and be recognized.

<Applause>

Thank you all for your presence today and your involvement in this ceremony.

The teachers in attendance today have been by our side from the uncertainty of Covid to the mundanity of long school days, the entire time pushing us to succeed. It is a privilege to have them here to support us one last time as we celebrate our graduation. I ask that all Cedar Cliff High School teachers present today please stand as we recognize them for their dedication to their students and for creating a strong foundation for us all. Without their devotion in their classrooms, none of this would have been possible. I am sincere when I say thank you.

<Applause>

Our first speaker today will be heading to **Guilford College** to study **creative writing** and continue her athletic career in **Volleyball**. If you ever find yourself in North Carolina looking to meet her, you can find her working on her debut novel by the

nearest fountain. Ladies and gentleman, your saluatorian, **Vivian Cavataio**

<Applause>

Viv speaks

<Applause>

Thank you, **Vivian**.

This year's valedictorian plans to study **government** at a little school known as **Harvard University**. He also plans to fall in love with the heir to the Belgian throne. And if that doesn't work out, he will run for president. Either way, we wish him all the best for his future, and also request an invite to the royal wedding or the White House. Your valedictorian, **Caleb Masshardt**.

<Applause>

Caleb speaks

<Applause>

Thank you, **Caleb**.

At this point in our ceremony, I call forward **Mr. Josh Curtis**, Cedar Cliff Assistant Principal, who will recognize those who received Senior Awards this year.

<Award winners stand to be recognized>

<Applause>

Thank you, **Mr. Curtis** and congratulations to all of the award winners.

I now call upon **Dr. Kevin Fillgrove**, principal of Cedar Cliff High School, for the presentation of the class.

<Dr. Fillgrove presents the class>

<Dr. Stoltz accepts the class>

<Diplomas are awarded>

After 13 years of education, we are celebrating this milestone together. Would the graduates please rise? **[Raise arms to class]**

Our educational course at Cedar Cliff High School is now concluded, and to symbolize the completion of our high school careers, the end of a very important step in our lives, and the introduction of a new one, I now ask that all graduates follow my lead as I move my tassel from the right to the left side of my cap.

[Move tassel from right to left]

<Pause>

Congratulations, Class of 2024!

<Applause>

I ask now that the audience please rise and join in the singing of the Alma Mater, led by once again, the senior members of the Cedar Cliff Chamber Singers.

Please honor our class by remaining at your seats until all the participants in today's ceremony have recessed out of the complex.

<PAUSE>

On behalf of the senior class of 2024, I thank you very much for attending the commencement ceremony. Have a wonderful day!

<Alma Mater and Recessional>

Vivian Cavataio: 2024 Salutatorian

Good afternoon and welcome to our administrators, school board, faculty and staff, and families.

On behalf of the class of 2024, I'm honored to have the privilege to speak in front of you today.

To my fellow graduates, congratulations on such an outstanding high school career. Only each of you know how hard you have worked to get to this moment, and you should be so proud.

For anyone who knows how much I love quotes, it will come as no surprise that I begin with one of my favorites. I heard these words once from a character on my favorite TV show, shoutout to any One Tree Hill fans in the crowd, she said...

"Every song has a coda, a final movement. Whether it fades out or crashes away, every song ends. Is that any reason not to enjoy the music?"

In life, everything we do comes to an end whether we want it to or not. We went to kindergarten in the am wave and it ended by the pm. We entered elementary school as first graders learning to spell and in the blink of an eye we said goodbye from fifth grade as masters of rocket math... the most intense learning game ever known to mankind. Gone were the days of class parties, school-wide assemblies, and legendary field days like Classics Day and the Bulldog Trot. We no longer had to be on our best behavior in fear that our clip would get moved to red.

All the Rossmoyne kids can look back knowing that pretty much every sport we played at recess was put to an end, whether it was because Mrs. Valentino ended up with a face full of tanbark, (Hey, Talan!) or because we needed an ambulance after a "**little**" football incident. And while I can't speak for all the other elementary schools in the district, if you guys were as crazy as we were then I'm sure that statement remains true for you too.

Vivian Cavataio: 2024 Salutatorian

Then middle school came, no more recess, and we had almost three full years before it suddenly took a turn. A two-week break turned into a transition to virtual high school, and before we knew it,

we were sitting here today in our caps and gowns awaiting the moment they hand us our diplomas and we walk out of here one last time.

So how did we get here? Did we enjoy the music? Did we listen to the song until the very end? And now that it's over, what song comes next?

Over the past couple of months, each of us have been faced with one of the biggest decisions we've had to make in life up to this point. A decision that shapes our futures as soon as we walk out that door. Another chapter of our lives draws to a close and we prepare to say our hardest goodbyes.

Goodbye to the teachers who inspired us in and out of the classroom, goodbye to the parents and loved ones who have been there every step of the way, and goodbye to the friends we've grown up beside, even more so to the friends who appeared in our lives at a time when we needed them most. We've said goodbye all our lives without ever knowing what adventure was next in store.

In the midst of it all, the one thing we have to look forward to from all of these bittersweet endings is the opportunity for a new beginning. A chance to start fresh in a new light. A chance to discover ourselves and the people we aspire to become in our futures.

Moreover, it's a chance to hit play on a new song and enjoy the music that's to come along the way.

Vivian Cavataio: 2024 Salutatorian

One of the beautiful things about being human is that we all have something special to us on a level no one else can understand. It's important to hold onto these special things. And then again, sometimes it does come time to start fresh and try something you've never done before. As a firm believer in everything happens for a reason, I encourage you to trust that the future has something in store for us all. Make of it what you will. Choose to find the best in every situation and soak in the moment while you have it. Life has already added to our queue, and the song we thought we were going to be listening to isn't what always plays next.

Half of the time things don't work out the way we had hoped for. And most of the time they work out even better than we had imagined.

To the class of 2024, I challenge you to make the most of your new beginning. Discover what makes you happy and never sacrifice that at the expense of pleasing others. Take a chance in life and dive into the unknown. Play your favorite song on repeat but listen to a new one every once in a while, who knows maybe by the end of the year it will be your #1 on spotify wrapped.

Embrace your fresh start, cherish the journey, and never forget to enjoy the music.

As Natasha Bedingfield says best, "Today is where your book begins, the rest is still unwritten."

Thank you.

Caleb Masshardt: 2024 Valedictorian

Before I begin, Dr. Fillgrove has me under a strict time limit, so I brought a little something to keep me on track.

Good afternoon administrators, members of the School Board, teachers, staff, family, friends, and most importantly, the Class of 2024. I am deeply honored to be standing before you today. I would first like to thank everyone here in this room. Each of you, through your role in this community, has demonstrated a vested interest in the graduates sitting before you - in our legacy, our dreams, and our futures. For that I am truly grateful.

As I reflect on our past and future as the Class of 2024, I picture the sand in an hourglass. Not because of the passage of time, though that is certainly on our minds here today, but because like the sand in the hourglass, we have all filtered toward the center, the in-between of a closing past and a wide open future. We began our journeys with three hundred unique dreams and expectations for our lives - I can look back to my first-grade class booklet and see the aspiring doctors, teachers, construction workers, professional athletes, police officers, firefighters - the list goes on and on. Yet as we grew alongside one another, as we experienced many of the same joys, sorrows, teachers, standardized tests, gas leaks, weird couples in the hallway, and parents who couldn't figure out the parking lot; we saw the world increasingly through the eyes of one another.

And here we have converged, one class, receiving the same diploma, celebrating our collective achievements.

But now we will venture into the great unknown - the other side of the hourglass. Some of us will push to the front and jump into free-fall. Others will take our time and ease into it. Soon we will all diverge into vastly unique journeys. Yet it is not until this moment of convergence, of knowing and celebrating one another, that we can diverge into amazing lives and careers.

Allow me to illustrate. There comes a time when every string instrument player must learn something called shifting. For those of you who are not familiar with this, imagine walking into work one day and being told that everything you've learned up until this point is not even half of what you need to know to get through the day, or in this case, the song. Simply moving the position of your hand on the instrument introduces a whole new world of music. It's revolutionary, but it's also incredibly daunting. When I first learned to shift, it was as if I was starting from square one. But as I learned to play new notes, and to play old notes in new ways, I realized something - I could not possibly be at this new level if I had not learned every note and technique I had spent the last several years mastering. I believe that it is no different with our lives. The experiences that have brought us to this moment were not distractions, but rather necessities, for our future.

As we navigate this intimidating shift into the "real world," we can look back to this moment and see that our shared journey has brought each of us to the precipice of the future we always dreamed of.

Ultimately, this moment we celebrate together is merely a pit stop in the long road trip we each call life. We started out with expansive ambitions, and we will leave today with dreams just as vast as those we began with. As we filter through the center of the hourglass, as we slow down

Caleb Masshardt: 2024 Valedictorian

for the traffic on our momentarily narrow road, I challenge you to take a look around. <PAUSE>
Embrace this moment. Soon we will be cruising along, but for now we have the chance to really *see* those around us.

These past four years have given us the opportunity to learn from one another in ways that our fast-paced futures never will. Your dream today may not be the same one you sketched in a booklet in first grade, but each of our dreams in some way reflects our time together.

In the words of the Chinese philosopher Confucius, “Where three walk together, there is always a teacher among them.” No matter where you find yourself in the next year and throughout your lifetime, you will encounter many opportunities to learn from and teach those around you, just as we have learned from one another over the past four years.

If our high school experience has demonstrated anything to us, it is that we are better because we walk this life together.

So, no matter how far from comfort you travel, no matter how much knowledge you acquire and how much success you attain, remember to always learn and teach. There will be times when your obvious is someone else’s revelation. There will be other times when your struggle is someone else’s routine. In these moments, remember that success isn’t defined by whether you are the student or the teacher, but rather by the learning that catapults us all into a better future. The bottom of the hourglass has always been open wide.

Now, because of each other, we are at its gates, ready to plunge into a future that is as daunting as it is breathtaking.

Dr. Todd Stoltz, Superintendent

Welcome Cedar Cliff Class of 2024. Today, we celebrate and applaud your accomplishments and the many reasons you have given us to be West Shore Proud!

With graduation comes excitement, relief, and perhaps ---- even a bit of fear of what comes next. Over the years, I have gotten to know some of you through various school-related activities, academic and athletic accomplishments, as student representatives on committees, and even as employees. We're very proud of you!

For some of you, the next step is clear, and for others, maybe not so much. But no matter what, from this point forward, you're all headed somewhere. Whether your plan is to be employed, enlisted, or enrolled, I'm confident you are ready to tackle the next challenge, and regardless of your path going forward, there's always one essential piece of advice I offer to you as graduates, and that is....

Set goals

If you don't have a target, you'll never hit it. Find things that you love, that you feel passionate about, that make you happy, and do more of them. It's the passion for what you do that not only feeds your soul but helps you overcome challenges, setbacks, and failures, and gives you hope for a better tomorrow.

Class of 2024, it is abundantly clear that people value living and raising a family in the West Shore community, and everything it has to offer. If you are a West Shore Alumni, would you please stand to be recognized?

Without any further ado, Dr. Fillgrove, it gives me great pleasure as the Superintendent and appointed representative of the Board of School Directors of the West Shore School District to accept the list of graduating seniors for 2024 from Cedar Cliff High School.

I do hereby certify and affirm in the presence of all assembled that each individual has met or exceeded the requirements for graduation set forth by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the West Shore School District, and is ready to receive his or her diploma.

I am pleased to present the graduating class of 2024 to the parents, family, friends, alumni, and community, and offer them our best wishes for happiness and fulfillment as they pursue their future endeavors.