

President's Order of Events 2024

Academic Processional

[When all students have processed in and “Pomp and Circumstance” stops playing, step up to the podium and say:]

“Good evening and welcome to the commencement ceremony for the Red Land High School Class of 2024. I ask that you please take a moment to silence all cell phones.”

[Pause for 15-20 seconds to allow people to check their phones]

“Please rise, and gentlemen remove your caps, for our National Anthem and the Pledge of Allegiance.”

[Chamber Singers will move to mic; JROTC color guard will enter and present flags. When the National Anthem is finished, face the flag, and lead the pledge.]

“I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.”

[stay standing and *wait for the entire JROTC color guard to leave* the arena... when they are at the threshold going out, you say:]

“Please be seated.”

Welcome (Prologue) by Class President

“Good evening parents, friends, family members, faculty, administrators, hour beloved Rutter ... other pets that you may have brought here with you or who are watching enthusiastically from home (smile at the camera)... OH and of course THE most important and ONLY reason we are all here... welcome to the class of 2024.

My name is Kathy Bui and I am your senior class president... no please hold your applause. (Hopeful for actual applause) Thank you I’m flattered but we need to get things moving. I am quite honored to be up here today and to be guiding you throughout this ceremony. Standing up in front of everyone is pretty surreal BUT it gives me a good look at everyone who worked SO hard for the past 12-plus years.

We've shown spirit through the Red Sea, heart through donating our time with Key Club, NHS, or Mini Thon, grit through endless hours of practice for sports and academic competitions, passion through music, theatre, or marching band, and perseverance through our preparation to further our education, join the workforce, serve in the military, or pursue a new adventure. We've pulled all-nighters to get essays done, forced mom to drive us to the store for poster boards AND glitter so we didn't miss tomorrow's due date, showed up to class holding back tears from the first heartbreak, got past loads of personal finance work or really any assignment Mr. Gonce gave us from AP Psych, got our licenses and drove our first cars and uhh maybe got into our first car accident..... But guess what, it all paid off because (PAUSE) my classmates, you finally get the chance to sit here (with attitude) and listen to me ramble before you can get your diploma (smile w/ gloat). I'm just kidding. However, I would like to mention, before I move further along, that you should take this time to reflect on how far we have come together. Starting high school during a pandemic was a different type of experience; split cohorts so you couldn't see some of your friends, Friday Zooms forcing you to stare at a screen the whole time or giving you internet troubles, ssssocial distancing so you're 6 feet from someone else, and you really can't forget those masks. I bet our athletes here are happy that we don't need to wear them during long hours of practice and intense games. Hopefully, we won't have to go through another pandemic but even the rough times shape us into who we are today.

As I look at each one of you, I whole-heartedly know that we can adjust to any obstacle thrown our way. But of course, we are not doing it alone. If there is anything you take away from your final high school days, it should be, without a doubt, that we ARE a family. All the best memories in the past 4 years have been with someone in this room, if you want to take a second to give 'em a little smile go for it, because you only get THIS moment once. Thank you."

[Pause for applause]

"It is now my pleasure to introduce the district administration seated on the platform. Dr. Todd B. Stoltz, Superintendent of the West Shore School District."

[Pause for applause]

"And, I ask that the rest of the administrative team of the district please stand to be recognized."

[Pause for applause]

“I would also like to recognize the school board seated on the platform. Mrs. Heidi E. Thomas, School Board President.”

[Pause for applause]

“Additionally, I invite the rest of the West Shore School Board to rise and be recognized. Thank you all for attending this evening and for your involvement in hour ceremony.”

[Pause for applause]

“We work diligently to bring pride and honor to Red Land, and flourish under the guidance of the professionals who are dedicated to hour success. In that spirit of the Red Land family, many of hour teachers have joined us this evening, dressed in a reflection of their academic paths and to honor hour journey as well. As they celebrate hour accomplishments, let us take a moment to thank them for their commitment to us. I ask them to stand at this time to be recognized, and I invite you all to join the class in a round of applause.”

[Pause for applause]

Next, I’d like to introduce two of my classmates who will give us some words of wisdom.”

Introductions of Student Speakers by Class President

“Our first speaker is Salutatorian Brighton Pearson. Brighton is attending Penn State University, studying biological engineering. He aspires to work for an agricultural company and revolutionize the farming industry. Brighton enjoys working on cars and tractors and is currently rebuilding his tractor engine; he also enjoys cooking a variety of cultural dishes for his family.

The class Valedictorian is Gavin Bloom. After graduation, Gavin will attend Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, studying engineering. Gavin is most interested in a career in mechanical and aerospace engineering. Gavin aspires to one day work for NASA and has a goal to visit all 50 states...he has a map of the US at home and has already checked 38 states from the list. Oh, and a few European countries as well. Pretty cool. At this time, please welcome hour class speakers.”

[Speeches by Brighton Pearson and Gavin Bloom]

Epilogue by Class President

“Thank you very much, Gavin and Brighton for sharing your advice with all of us. Your lessons that growth has many stages and that we should strive to be positive and embrace confidence are valuable.

Chadwick Boseman, who played the Black Panther, spoke once at a commencement speech at his alma mater. He said “Your very existence is wrapped up in things you need to fulfill. Whatever you choose for a career path, remember the struggles along the way are only meant to shape you for your purpose.”

Sadly, he passed away at a young age but his message lives on. He left behind the message that we are on this planet for a reason, might as well pursue our purpose.

I find his words to be a personal reminder that we as a class have faced so many obstacles but have clearly overcome them because we are sitting here now ready to venture in a new direction.

I hope to remember this moment for years to come as I go down a college path, but no matter what path you choose, remember to live purposefully, learn from experiences, and most importantly, enjoy the ride. With full heart, I wish you ALL the best of luck. Thank you!”

[Pause for applause]

"Commencement awards will now be presented by Mrs. Shelly L. McGowan, Senior Class Assistant Principal."

[Speeches for Commencement award winners]

"Ms. Melissa F. Herbert, Red Land Principal, will now present the Class of 2024."

[Class presented to the Board – Ms. Herbert will introduce Dr. Stoltz in her speech]

"Diplomas will now be awarded by Ms. Melissa Herbert, Principal; Mrs. Shelly McGowan, Mrs. Jamie Snyder, and Mrs. Katelyn Jackson, Assistant Principals; and Mrs. Heather Wolfe and Mrs. Taylor Wiggins, Senior Class Deans."

[Diplomas awarded]

"Will the class members please rise and join me in the turning of the tassels."

[Tassels turned...Note: tassels go from right to left]

“Congratulations, Class of 2024!”

"Will the Class of 2024 and our guests please rise and sing the Red Land Alma Mater, led by the Senior Chamber Singers."

[Alma Mater played by the band...wait for short intro before singing...mouth the words!]

"We thank you for joining us this evening. We ask the audience to remain in the stands while the Class of 2024 exits together for the last time during the Academic Recessional."

[Exit with class]

Brighton Pearson

2024 Salutatorian

Weather the Storm

Good evening everybody and welcome to the graduation tonight. I'd like to start off by congratulating all of **you**. My peers, we've finally made it. Thank you **teachers** for educating us and also thank you parents for raising us and really for everything that you've done over all these years. Now if I think back to 2011-ish when we were just going into kindergarten I couldn't possibly imagine all of us being here today in this moment. They say time flies when you're having fun. I can say the past 12 years **have** gone by quickly, **regardless** of how much fun we've all thought they've been. But in all seriousness, the knowledge gathered, lessons learned, and personal growth that we have experienced would not have been possible without the community that is Red Land High School.

Now personally, I have participated in my share of school activities and I am truly thankful for them as I'm sure all of us are, whether it was music ensembles, sports, clubs, and much more, **but** I have also had quite a few influential experiences outside the classroom. Don't ask me how I got into it, but I've been into gardening for as long as I can remember. I started off growing just a handful of plants but that expanded into rows of crops 300 feet long, and raising chickens, and even baling some hay. Though, these are just what I see as the accomplishments, the end result of continual watering, weeding, planting, fixing broken equipment, managing pests, and dealing with unfavorable weather. I'm reminded of the speech which was given by Paul Harvey at the 1978 FFA convention that became known as "So God Made a Farmer". However, you are more likely to recognize it from the Ram Trucks commercial it was in a few years back. In summary, the commercial highlights the resilience, toughness, and strength that in this case farmers must have. **For the record**, I believe a Ford commercial would have supported the message being said about resilience, staying strong, and being prepared better, but I'd think

some of you would probably disagree. Now, it is true that God made a farmer, but he also made all the pests, diseases, draughts – pretty much you name the obstacle he made that too. He made hard-working and determined people, but he also created all of the challenges that they are put up against. What I'm trying to say is that in life you will always face challenges and it doesn't matter what you're doing, whether it's something you're passionate about or something you couldn't care less about. For instance, if I would have given up after say the first time I had a tomato plant die, I **wouldn't** be selling at farmers markets like I am today. **[Pause]** After going through 12 seasons of growth with you, I know we are all equipped for our upcoming journeys in life as stronger, more resilient people ready to face whatever is thrown at us.

Despite all the challenges, life is an adventure and adventures should be fun. However, it is up to you to make it that way. Although I am encouraging you to cherish all the time you've got, it's imperative that you push yourselves towards success. This isn't simply solving the problems presented to you. Rather, it's seeking them out in whatever you find yourself doing. I can say from experience that hardships faced in activities you are passionate about only strengthens your drive for success in that area. **[Pause]** Although I don't like to acknowledge weaknesses, understand that failures are **critical** for personal growth and improvement. And, I know that we have all experienced many failures during our time at Red Land High School, probably more here than any other time in our lives. I can think of many examples such as my poor district orchestra audition, my embarrassing tennis matches, or that physics AP test. Clearly though, by being here 12 years later, you have not let any of those failures stop you. **Just think about it**, you've already made it longer than most Ram trucks do, while facing much more than just a highway. So as you proceed onwards, continue to persist through hardships and failures as they are what makes the adventure of life enjoyable and worthwhile.

I'll leave you with this. I was once watching an interview of the celebrity chef Gordon Ramsay where he was talking about some of his training working under Marco Pierre White, another extremely hardcore, British chef whose restaurant, at the time, had earned three Michelin stars. If any of you know Gordon Ramsay then you understand why I'm not quoting him word for word, but his advice about working in an absolutely brutal kitchen environment was this: "Learn to dance in the storm. It's a great place to be because somewhere down the line there will be a storm on your radar and you'll stand strong through it." So, class of 2024, I hope you enjoy your upcoming adventures and when that inevitable hurricane, thunderstorm, or tornado hits you, **dance** through it. Once again **congratulations** everybody and thank you.

Good evening. There's a saying for when you get up in front of a lot of people that I'm sure you've all heard: “Just imagine the crowd in their underwear.” Apparently, it's supposed to help with nerves, but let me tell you, it doesn't. And, I also really don't want to picture Mr. Kerstetter like that. Now, I've never been one to write speeches or speak in front of others, so finding what to say to you all was difficult. I ended up turning back to that cliché underwear saying for guidance. And, being a high school student, I naturally wrote this the night before it was due.

Although the underwear saying itself is ineffective in practice, there is a point to it. It's a simple one, but still important: Be confident. This one small thing can be the difference between success and failure in more than just public speaking. We have just spent the last four years of our lives at Red Land, finding our likes and dislikes, meeting our best friends, but most importantly, learning. I'm not talking about your everyday high school courses, let's be honest no one wants to hear the word “Schoolology” ever again. I'm talking about the kind of learning that defines us as people. The kind of learning that shows us who we are and who we strive to be. We were learning to be confident in ourselves.

But being confident in yourself is hard. It's not easy to look in the mirror and be proud of the person staring back at you. But you know what? You need to be. Red Land has given each and every one of us the opportunity to grow as individuals, to see what works and what doesn't, and to find the best versions of ourselves. As much as you might not want to hear it, this school has impacted you. Despite all of our unique experiences (even the bad ones) you still learned about yourself.

So, being confident is all you need, right? Not at all. However, it is a key part to success. Confidence is not just about throwing yourself headfirst into something and expecting the best

possible outcome, simply because you believed in yourself. Part of confidence is the countless hours spent practicing and preparing, and the many inevitable failures. In short, confidence is having grit. Like so many of you, I have filled my schedule with sports, clubs, and other activities, not to mention all the homework, and it sometimes got so busy that I would think it wasn't worth it. But as I look back on these moments, I wouldn't change a single thing.

Persevering through the two-hour practices every day after school, the early morning meetings at 7, and the sometimes hours of homework in the evenings, have all contributed to finding out who I am and being proud of that. And I know that many of you share this experience.

And I think that this is what school is really supposed to be about. Sure, it can get boring watching Mr. Winn write math equations on the board, or having to act out Romeo and Juliet in English class, but it is these little moments that really bring our high school experience together. The little things help to create the shared experiences that dictate the very bonds we've come to know and rely on. This brings me to the second point made by the underwear proverb. Don't be afraid to let loose and be a little goofy (I mean it is a saying about underwear). Try not to get so caught up in being perfect that you forget how to have fun and be yourself.

If I had to leave you all with one takeaway tonight, it would be to have confidence (Who would've guessed). Confidence in yourselves, confidence in your abilities, and confidence in the people around you. However, make sure to have the courage to be a little bit silly, to go with the flow, and to experience life. But also maybe don't rely on underwear to provide said confidence. You are all extremely capable people who will move on to do great things later in life. I truly believe that your class represents the future of society, and that future looks promising. Thank you for making the last four years memorable and congratulations!

Dr. Todd Stoltz, Superintendent

Welcome Red Land 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, Mrs. Herbert, 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 Red Land 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.

Good evening graduates, family, and friends.

It is always a privilege to stand before you with the honor of presenting the graduating class. As I watched this fine group of young men and women file past me in their cap and gown headed for the annual elementary walk, I remembered them as they entered their freshman year, varying heights, abilities, and maturity levels. Change was inevitable, some of them more significant than others, but Gavin is correct, have confidence in yourself and your abilities. I have shared my desire for you to be enrolled, enlisted, or employed when you leave us, and your potential is already shining through. We have a substantial number of graduates leaving us with credentials for a successful career and jobs in the wings, what an impressive feat. We have graduates who will champion for others, as they've enlisted into our armed forces and will be our future protectors. We have graduates that will continue on their journey of learning with an impressive list of goals that will change the future. To each of you, and in the words of Sue Monk Kidd, "Go make your big beautiful dent, and as you do so come down on the side of boldness. If you err, may it be for too much audacity, and not too little. For you really are enough. You have untold strengths and resources inside." If you find yourself on a path that is no longer one you desire to follow. Do not postpone change, as it is not failure, it is growth. My parting advice, similar to Brighton's, and in the words of Rae Drummond, "Buckle up, you have good times and rough seas ahead. It is just part of life, but enjoy the ride and laugh a lot...life is about to unfold for you in all its forms. Love, heartache, accomplishments, disappointments, ...**life is beautiful.**" Graduates, take a moment and gaze at your sleeve, let the words embroidered sink in, reflect on your personal journey to this moment. Find comfort in knowing you are a patriot for life, and you can always come home to us. It is now with great pride and pleasure that I present the 2024 Red Land High School graduating class to Dr. Stoltz and Mrs. Thomas, as I declare these graduates of the class of 2024 have met all requirements for graduation outlined by West Shore School District Policy and criteria set forth by the Pennsylvania Department of Education - including required subjects and total credits. They are therefore entitled to receive a Red Land High School diploma from the West Shore School District. Congratulations.