



June 25, 2021 - OJSH GRAD 2021 Valedictorian Speech by Cassidy Mathewson



So running the risk of being cliché, we have finally made it. Twelve years of our lives, invested in this school, in ourselves, bettering not only our education, but who we are as people. I'm going to be honest, for the past couple of years, we've been dealt a strange hand, but never have I seen a group so capable of handling the obstacles thrown our way than the one I see graduating in this 2021 school year.

So we are done highschool, what's next? The answer to this question is different for each and every person that is here today, but isn't that exciting? All we have ever known is this school, these people, with little choice as to what we can do, but now that all changes. We can leave these grounds confident that we have the ability to be who we want to be, and do what we want to do. Isn't that spectacular? Granted that's the scariest thing humanly possible, but non the less spectacular. Now I don't want to give everyone here some false impression about what is to come after highschool, it's not all going to be perfect. There are going to be bad days, bad times, sacrifices made, struggles common. But I want you all to remember the airtight logic as to why you don't quite know something that everyone else seems to know, the line "I went to school through Covid" will serve you as the perfect excuse; one I play on using frequently and unflinchingly. So if you take anything out of this highschool experience I suggest that that is it.

On a more serious note I do believe that our class is capable of handling what comes next. When I think back to a time in which the girls were still taller than the boys and how we thought we had everything figured out I can't help but see us as naive children, hardly recognizable to the full blown adults I see in my midst. Of course five years from now we'll look back once again and laugh at how we thought we had everything figured out, but that is neither here nor there. We still have a lot of growing up to do, but I believe that these twelve years have prepared us for this moment, showing us the important life skills that will be needed for success.



We aren't gonna remember all the information that we learned here, and a lot of it people will forget it quickly and never look back (except at the next trivia game when it asks whose head did an apple fall on) but what we learned in the school is much more valuable. We learn how to make connections with people, how to get somewhere on time (well some of us), how to be confident and how to show respect, all life skills that are much more valuable than any test we will ever take.

I know as a class that we could not have made it to where we are today without the unfailing help from our family, friends, teachers and administrators, all of whom molded us into the people that we are now. We cannot express the deep gratitude we feel for each and every one of you, and how you have all contributed in raising the highschool class of 2021 that is graduating today. For the small things such as a ride to school, praise for an assignment well done, or even simply a quick conversation that leaves you smiling changes days from bad to good, and changes people. We all strive to touch peoples lives the way that you have touched ours.

To the Grad class of 2021, I want to leave you with this; no one knows what they are doing, and now is the perfect time to find out. We have reached the point in our lives where we have enough skills and wisdom to make choices of our own. Don't settle into something just because it is easy or familiar- we have spent twelve years being given the tools to discover who we are, and use them in the future to do what we want to do. Make a decision because you want to make that decision, not because you think that is the only choice. I have full confidence in each and every one of you to take control and find your own success, whatever it may be. I wish all of you the best of luck in the future and can't wait to hear of all the great things that you will accomplish.



Congratulations Grad Class of 2021!