

When first assigned the task of speaking at this ceremony I was both humbled and surprised. Not only because I was nervous about speaking in front of my peers, but also because I was at a loss of words of how to express my thoughts and emotions. As I thought about what to say, I reminisced through all the memories we shared as a group throughout our 4 year journey through the IB program.

My journey began, as did for most of you, in 8th grade at a high school information fair where I went from table to table with my parents trying to decide which specialty program was best suited for me in the long run. When I turned in my IB application I knew I was in for a long road ahead as I struggled to even pronounce, let alone spell, the word ‘baccalaureate.’

This journey was a path that was shaped by the people around us, a path that diverged in various ways, a path that was full of challenges and adventures, and a path that had its peaks and valleys. The obstacles we overcame the success we endured is due in large part to those people that shared with us their classrooms and passion for learning and while challenging us and inspiring us to excellence.

Our IB teachers are known for holding Saturday review sessions, for advising students in their academic work as well as in their college application process, and for mentoring them through extended essays. And for that I applaud all the teachers for remaining patient with us as students.

The diploma and certificates that we receive today represents the fulfillment of a serious commitment that we made to our self and the commitment our parents and family members made to us. They gave us moral support and a moral compass. Whatever we have accomplished thus far, and whatever we will accomplish in the near future, we owe in great measure to them.

To those upcoming IB students, there can only be so much advice my I can offer from my experiences. To give you the opportunity to learn from my mistakes, I would recommend stop procrastinating, but that seems like a nearly impossible task. Be open to the new and wonderful experiences IB has to offer and take advantage of every opportunity that you get.

And finally to my fellow graduates. As IB students we’ve learned more about that world in the last four years than we could have imagined. What I hope you’ve learned most of all is how much more there is to learn, and how the truly educated never graduate. From these 4 years, I believe the most valuable tool that I have acquired is having a positive attitude towards learning. The fact that we’re here today means we’ve learned one more thing: we have learned what it

means to challenge ourselves. When we chose the IB program, we chose a program that was broad and balanced, yet academically demanding.

It is here at Gar-Field where dedicated teachers inspired me to learn and develop myself to the fullest; and where my friends and I developed deep friendships by working with and helping each other. Here, teachers prepared us to be well-balanced adults with the right perspectives and values. The IB curriculum allowed us learn how to learn and how to live. Academic excellence is important, but it is not to the exclusion of everything else. Beyond excellent grades, the environment at this school allowed us to develop into leaders and team players.

The IBO strives to provide “Education for a better world”, and I am sure that you will contribute towards that goal using the tools and resources you acquired these last 4 years. It has been a long journey of struggle and hard work, moments of anxiety and joy, and learning how to manage on your own. However, in the end, those empty print cartridges and countless nights spent without sleep did pay off.

Congratulations once again, and best of luck in the future. Thank You.