

July 24, 2020

Dear Members of the Class of 2020,

Good morning. I hope this letter finds you healthy & well. I've used that phrase a lot since March 12 and I truly mean it. Amidst our current pandemic and with all of the societal challenges that you have been confronted with over the past few months, I do indeed spend each day (and many nights) hoping that you are both healthy and well.

More importantly, I want to congratulate you as today is your graduation day. You have done so much and you deserve to be celebrated. I get it though. This may not be the graduation you were hoping for, but it is the graduation that members of the class of 2020 all across the country have been dealt. I know you wanted a traditional ceremony, on the last Saturday of May, with thousands of family and friends cheering you on as you sat side by side with your classmates. Because of Covid-19, what we once took for granted, unfortunately, has been torn away from us. The preventative steps that Marshfield, and school districts around the country are taking, are needed, but I fully understand they still may not sit well with you. For that, I want to extend to you my heartfelt apologies.

I try to be one of those "glass half full" people though and I cannot help but focus on the positive aspects of today. Regardless of when or how this graduation is held, or who will be in the seats, it takes nothing away from the amazing young women and men you have become over your years in the Marshfield Public Schools. Even before our last full day of in-person classes, way back in March, you were a group of seniors who came together as one, who led by example and who cared greatly about each other, about your community and about your school. That is all I can ask for as a Superintendent and you need to know that your legacy as a class was set well before a worldwide pandemic stopped us in our tracks.

Graduation gives you a chance to remember the fun things you were able to do with your classmates over the years. There's no denying you may have missed certain events this spring, but I hope you can also focus your attention on those special events that took place throughout your academic careers. Whether it was riding a bus for the first time, a school concert where you finally found the courage to sing in front of your peers or a presentation you made with your

fellow classmates at MIT, you have years and years of memories that no one can ever take away from you.

The nice thing is you are going to be able to make many more memories in the years to come. Because of what you have done at MHS, and in the years leading up to high school, you've created a foundation that will allow you to thrive in whatever you do, no matter what the next step of your journey may be. You will make new friends, expand your understanding of the world around you and continue to grow as young women and men.

While I won't be giving a speech tonight at the ceremony, I will tell you here that I have truly enjoyed getting to know you as a class. I may not know each and everyone of you the way I would like, but I've learned a lot through the interactions I have had with members of the Class of 2020. In fact, I am confident in saying that with what you have accomplished as a class, along with what you've endured this Spring, the Class of 2020 is going to forever hold a special place in the hearts and minds of your teachers, your families, members of the Marshfield community and the students who look up to you from around district.

When you sit in the stadium tonight, try and think back to the moments in your school career that made you smile. Think of that first friend you met in elementary school. Think back to that teacher you really connected with and who made learning fun. Think about your elementary Field Days, Homecoming, "One Book" reads and those special mornings (or nights) when you heard my voice because school was cancelled.

This class has talented artists, musicians, actors & actresses. You have classmates who held statewide offices and addressed students from around the country. You built kayaks, canoes and motorboats. One of you even built a wooden paddle board and let me break it in on launch day last year. You held fundraisers for those in need, ran at the "Reggie", won league championships with amazing regularity and never lost sight of the concept that "the we is greater than the me". I know you missed out on quite a bit this spring, but you have so many amazing memories and today, as you read this letter, you stand ready to make many more.

At the end of the day, I understand that you may not be thrilled with the fact that you did not get to the end your senior year the way other classes before you did. There's probably one final thing you wanted to say to one of your teachers or to a classmate you haven't been able to see

much of this spring. If I could snap my fingers and make this all different for you, I would. But as I write this, I am also happy that you have tonight to be with your friends, to be with family and to be celebrated the way a graduating class should be celebrated.

So no fancy speech from me tonight. Just a simple written message about how much this class means to me and to our community. I am thankful that you have tonight to be together and I am excited to see what you will be able to accomplish in the future. I will always remember the Class of 2020 and I will miss you all. Thank you!

Be healthy and well.

All the best,

Jeffrey W. Granatino

Superintendent