

May 29, 2020

Dear Graduate,

Congratulations on completing the requirements for graduation! Graduation is the culmination of your K-12 school experience. My hope is that you have had many positive learning experiences, and have formed many positive relationships with both students and staff. Usually here I will insert something about your graduation theme. I might have even attended your grad. Not this year. This year is truly once in a lifetime event.

You will have some interesting stories to tell your children and grandchildren. You were born shortly after the 9/11 World Trade Center terrorist attack, you didn't finish your Grade 12 year in a traditional way, and now you are graduating during a worldwide pandemic: the Coronavirus, A.K.A. COVID-19!

Although this pandemic may not have directly impacted your or your family's health and safety, it has impacted all of our lives physically and psychologically. It has also impacted your graduations: Your parents bought you a new dress, your parents got you that new suit, and you and your friends probably started talking about the after-grad party when you were in Grade 8. There was a photographer arranged, a community BBQ was planned, and your extended family was driving in to be part of the school and community celebration.

As much as everyone has tried to make your day special, it will not feel the same. You might feel ripped off. It's not fair. All of us have been impacted by COVID-19. 2020 graduates across North America have had virtual grads and various other creative forms of community acknowledgement.

My own grad was 36 years ago. I graduated with 350 students. I am in loose contact with about 3 of my classmates. I remember two things from my grad: walking across the stage bowlegged and getting a laugh, and then glow bowling. I got a nice photo. I do not want to tell you how or what to think and I cannot truly understand what you are going through. My own kids say being at home and away from friends really sucks!

However, what I do want to tell you is that your story is not ending with graduation; it is just beginning. You are creating your own narrative. Life is a series of stories and experiences. Life happens, life teaches us lessons every day and life makes us all stronger. I am so sorry that your grad was impacted by a pandemic... the entire world has been impacted. Don't let COVID-19 define your school experience. Let it be part of who you are, what makes you resilient, a piece of what you remember about graduation, but don't let it stop you from embarking on life.

You've pushed through some tough times and worked hard to get to this point. You've earned it and I would like to recognize and applaud you. Congratulations and best wishes for your next adventure!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kyle McIntyre".

Kyle McIntyre  
Director of Education