

Summer 2020

SEQUIM SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 323

Your Sequim Schools

Engage, Empower, Thrive

MISSION: Our community Inspires and prepares each student to thrive.

VISION: In connection with our community, the Sequim School District empowers staff to inspire hope and provide flexible, innovative learning opportunities in a safe and respectful environment so each student thrives.

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SPEECH MADE BY PRINCIPAL SHAWN LANGSTON 2020 GRADUATION CEREMONY JUNE 19, 2020

Ladies and Gentlemen, welcome the Graduation Ceremony for the Sequim High School Class of 2020!! Please join me in virtually rising for the singing of our National Anthem by Payton Sturm with special guest Kianna Miller signing.

Congratulations to the Class of 2020 – You made it!!

I love Sequim High School Graduation for 2 reasons

- Student Driven – get to see the talent in this class
- I usually talk about the formal celebration for the Sequim Community, but tonight is quite a bit different.

Please Welcome the Sequim School District Board Members -- Jim Stoffer, Brandino Gibson, Brian Kuh, Erik Pickens and superintendent Dr. Rob Clark.

On that note, I would like to express a massive thank you to Dr. Clark, our superintendent for working WITH us to put on the closest thing to a regular graduation as possible. I imagine most people don't realize this, but what's happening here tonight for a school our size is rare. Most schools in our area did a 'virtual graduation,' but our kids wanted to get together one more time, and we're thankful for this special night.

Additionally, I would like to thank Jamie and Joe D'Amico for their support of this event. They DO NOT want attention or accolades for this, they truly wanted the Class of 2020 to have a special event, and we are because of your support – thank you!!

Where do you begin with 2020? I know we've all seen many memes asking for do over for the year 2020. I still remember when this group were freshmen and I was standing in front of them in the Gym for Link Crew Orientation and I looked up and saw Class of 2020 on a big poster behind them and thought, how cool – perfect vision! If I could have looked into the future with my perfect 2020 vision at that time and saw March, Friday the 13th, 2020 and the Governor ordering a complete closure of schools in Washington, I might have saved more money to retire early. 2020 also makes me think of hindsight as in hindsight is 2020. If this group



could look back at this year, I'm sure they would share some massive disappointment for the way it's turned. No Spring Sports, No Operetta, No Disneyland trip for the Choir, No Senior Ball, No Scholarship Night, No Campus Day and many more. And finally, this – a Drive In Graduation for the first time in the history of SHS. The Class of 2020 is truly a Historic class!!!

What I want this audience to know about the Class of 2020 is that we have been extremely impressed with how they have handled all this. That is not to say they haven't been profoundly impacted by all that has gone on. I tried to call all the seniors and check in with them, and it was obvious in talking to so many of them that this was enormously difficult for them. Through it all, they have persevered and are sitting in their cars tonight ready to receive their diploma.

Finally, in these tumultuous times COVID and social unrest in our society, I want this audience to know that I am confident the students from Sequim High School, in this historic class of 2020, are ready to join the fight for equality and justice for all.

At the gate you received a picture that is pretty common in educational circles. It's an easy

illustration of Equality vs. Equity. It shows little kids, using their 2020 vision, watching a baseball game from behind a fence. On the left side is a picture representation of Equality. The 3 kids received equal sizes of a box to watch the baseball game, yet not all could see over the fence with their box. Some kids need extra support to see over the fence, or complete their math assignment. On the right you see a representation of Equity. The 3 boys worked together to make sure each of them was able to use their 2020 Vision to see over the fence and watch their favorite baseball team.

I am confident that the historic Class of 2020 will use their perfect vision and passion for change to add a 3rd slide to this equation. I know that this group, in their search for equity and social change, will simply tear that fence down. They are prepared to tear down the barriers in our society and create a place where all will feel welcome and appreciated. To the Class of 2020, use your perfect vision and spend your time tearing the barriers down to make this a better place for all!

Congratulations Class of 2020 – you made it!!

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Sequim School District No. 323
503 North Sequim Avenue, Sequim, WA 98382

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A Message from the Superintendent



**SPEECH MADE BY SUPERINTENDENT ROBERT CLARK
2020 GRADUATION CEREMONY JUNE 19, 2020**

Thank you for the introduction, Mr. Langston. Congratulations to the graduates of 2020.

I want to echo the earlier thank you's to the D'Amico family

in being a vital part in making today happen. I also want to thank Shawn Langston, Vince Riccobene, Kristi Queen, Sean O'Mera, Erin Fox, High School staff and student leadership and the Senior class parents.

I often say the two toughest jobs in America are being a teacher and being a parent, we all saw that this last 12-13 weeks! Thank you to everyone who helped get us through these trying times.

WHERE YOU STARTED, WHERE YOU ARE, WHERE YOU GOING TO BE JIM VALVANO

As you look back on this year, there are disappointments that we all recognize. However, I hope you remember the good times and the good experiences you were involved in. I hope you remember as you move on into jobs college, military or whatever path you choose take the pleasant memories with you. Especially take the laughter.

As you take the next step in your life I hope you benefitted from your time at Sequim High School and the SSD. In other graduation speeches I have talked about the skill sets you have gained during your time in school. Most of that conversation centered around Math, Science, Literature or the Arts. I hope you gained expertise in those areas, but more important I hope

you learned:

1. How to build relationships: Especially with people who don't look like you and think like you
2. Empathy: Care and compassion for all people
3. Courage: To stand on your principles even when there is disagreement around you
4. Kindness: This is a word that defines itself, but we all know when we see it. Look for the good in people.
5. Collaboration: The ability to work with others and be a contributing member of the group.
6. Be happy and embrace happiness. Unhappy people suck the life out of a room.

Those are not skills in any syllabus or on any grade you received, but we need those skills now more than ever. Generations before you have not done very well with these skills set. While there may be a few models to glance over, you will need to create successful models. It is not an option it is a necessity.

All that said, I am optimistic that you are up to the challenge. You have persevered and remained diligent during these rough times. The school board, staff, and everyone in Sequim wish you the best! Your best days are ahead of you and I look forward to your contributions.

Have a great day!

VALEDICTORIAN'S SPEECH

BY SAM MAY, VALEDICTORIAN 2020 GRADUATION CEREMONY JUNE 19, 2020

Hello, Graduating Class of 2020, parents, and teachers. Given the cramped quarters and strange circumstance, I'll try to keep this brief. But first, as many of you likely have no idea whom am, I'll take the liberty of giving a short introduction of myself. I played the role of Mr. Beaker, a 90s rapper and chemistry teacher in the senior class play about two years ago. You may also know me as the guy who, along with Misha Ostrovsky, dominated the Honors English lectures Sophomore Year. If you aren't familiar with either of those things, then you probably don't know me, and that's perfectly fine, especially given that I've spent the last two school years at Peninsula College. Now that that's clear, we can begin.

Likely one of the most universal and longest-standing philosophical ideas is that of the dichotomy of control: the simple idea that there are things very much within our power to change and things that aren't, and those things within our control are what we should assign value to or be worried about the most. There's no point in occupying our time with issues completely out of our control. We individually can do very little to halt the spread of a disease across the world or keep war from breaking out, so there is no sense in assigning value, or in assigning time, to those types of thoughts. But there is sense in trying to change things in our immediate lives: our behaviors, our perspectives, the way we treat relationships, and countless others. The actions we take to influence those things in our realm of control have meaning and can be termed virtue. So, our virtue lies in how we change the things we can change. This idea has helped many people to understand and navigate the world, and it can apply to anyone.

Two primary examples of acting on things in our control are problem-solving and decision-making. Much of virtue arises from our approaches to these tasks because we have much, if not complete, control over them. So then, how should problems



be approached? How should decisions be made? Frankly, every problem and choice is different, so there aren't hard rules to be followed. However, there are some important errors we tend to make which can be avoided. One surprising example has to do with the way our own emotional responses factor into decision-making.

We are positively dreadful at guessing the intensity of our responses to particular events and choices. If you need any verification of that, you can ask any psychology professor or anyone with enough life experience to remember not regretting a choice nearly as much as they expected. The same goes for how we perceive ourselves reacting to tragedy: we expect disruptions in our lives to have catastrophic effects on ourselves, but those effects aren't nearly that severe. In fact, the average person predicts having a significantly pessimistic outlook on their future if they were to be paralyzed, but people who have had injuries resulting in paralysis are actually quite optimistic about their future.

There are choices we believe we will regret immensely. There are choices we believe will bring us immense happiness; but they won't, or at least not to the extent that we imagine. Obviously, this only applies in moderation; completely disregarding a potential emotion like, say, guilt would effectively make one a psy-

chopath, and, needless to say, that's not good. So, when having to make a decision or take a step in solving a problem, don't factor in how you expect to feel too much. Chances are, you won't regret this option as much as you expect or opting for that choice might not make you as happy as you would like. So, take caution.

Now that I've probably misled many of you into believing that I don't value emotions or subjective experience, I would like to rewind to that aforementioned English class. Mr. Brouillard was our teacher at the time, and he showed Misha and I an essay, "The Loss of the Creature," that has kept me believing in the value of subjective experience these couple years. There's no way to condense thirteen pages into this short speech, but an example of its core concept might be to say that this speech is limited in value because its ideas are being filtered by my perspective, cognitive packaging, and word choice; these notions would be better discovered directly and personally. Ironically, I entirely agree with that assessment. It suffices me to say that there's an aspect of life which can't be explained with words and can't be obtained by viewing experiences in the way they're supposed to be viewed, and it's often worth seeking out. In fact, our tendency to overestimate emotional reactions can't even be applied here because you can't have expectations to experience this feeling (or "the creature," as it's called), as it's sort of a prerequisite.

Above decision making and problem solving, how to find your way and live life fully through your choices is an essential point of virtue. At the end of our Sophomore year, those of us in Mr.

Brouillard's class each wrote an essay about what it means to thrive, or truly live. My interpretation of this from back then still holds up well now, and it will be the last of my own thoughts:

Thriving is progressing in any goal... that one cares for from a serious, lifelong perspective which does not intentionally compromise life, liberty, joy, growth in maturity, character, or [obtaining] knowledge of one's self or others and is obtained and maintained by external intervention, perseverance, a strong work ethic, trust, and hope.

To a large extent, the rest of the essay is simply an attempt to clarify and defend all the aspects of this definition, but the only major point I would change now is that the goals being pursued

Continued next page

VALEDICTORIAN'S SPEECH (cont'd)

don't need to have direct long-term value, they just shouldn't be in opposition to more long-term goals.

And now, I'd like to fully conclude with a poem a certain teacher of mine held in high regard which I still have a great deal of respect for and hope I'll be able to recite from memory (with the help of some ASL):

GO PLACIDLY amid the noise and the haste and remember what peace there may be in silence. As far as possible, without surrender, be on good terms with all persons.

Speak your truth quietly and clearly, and listen to others, even to the dull and the ignorant; they too have their story. [a fitting line in a speech about life from an 18-year-old]

Avoid loud and aggressive persons; they are vexatious to the spirit. If you compare yourself with others, you may become vain or bitter, for always there will be greater and lesser persons than yourself.

Enjoy your achievements as well as your plans. Keep interested in your own career, however humble; it is a real possession in the changing fortunes of time.

Exercise caution in your business affairs, for the world is full of trickery. But let this not blind you to what virtue there is; many persons strive for high ideals, and everywhere life is full of heroism.

Be yourself. Especially do not feign affection. Neither be cynical about love; for in the face of all aridity and disenchantment, it is as perennial as the grass.

Take kindly the counsel of the years, gracefully surrendering the things of youth.

Nurture strength of spirit to shield you in sudden misfortune. But do not distress yourself with dark imaginings. Many fears are born of fatigue and loneliness.

Beyond a wholesome discipline, be gentle with yourself. You are a child of the universe no less than the trees and the stars; you have a right to be here.

And whether or not it is clear to you, no doubt the universe is unfolding as it should.

Therefore, be at peace with God, whatever you conceive Him to be. And whatever your labors and aspirations, in the noisy confusion of life, keep peace in your soul. With all its sham, drudgery and broken dreams, it is still a beautiful world. Be cheerful. Strive to be happy.

Desiderata, by Max Ehrmann

And with that, congratulations, and good luck.

Student Speaker



**SPEECH MADE BY MEGUIRE VANDERVELDE
2020 GRADUATION CEREMONY JUNE 19, 2020**

Class of 2020, the class of perfect vision, the class of a better future. We have counted down the days, hours, and minutes for this very moment. Before looking into our future's, lets reminisce on the last four years at Sequim High School.

It seems so long ago that we were all just starting our intimidating yet extremely exciting high school careers. The last four years we have struggled as a class, especially with spirit points, but we have also triumphed together. This last year is a great example; we kind of got the short end of the stick with the school closure, however, we definitely took the dub in the amazing community we created with our classmates. There will always be countless memories to look back on as we move forward in our lives.

To the teachers and staff, thank you all for electing me to be a speaker here today, and for all the wonderful memories and life lessons you have shared and taught us. So, thank you to Mr. Brinkmann for making math one of my favorite classes with all the crazy random names you gave us, and to Mr. VanderVelde for teaching us that if you keep hitting a wooden ruler on a desk, it will break, to Mr. Ditlefson, that if you get into trouble it isn't the end of the world and you can bounce back even better than before. Thank you, Ms. Miller, who taught us patience is key when learning new things, to the counselors for giving each of us a shoulder to cry on when things got tough, to Dana Minard, who passed away last year, that it is important to give uncondi-

tional love to the people you surround yourself with as he did to his daughter. Thank you, Mr. O'mera, for teaching us to choose kind and include others, to Mr. Rapelje, who taught us how to fill out tax forms and save money for retirement, to Mrs. Eekhoff for preparing us for the trials of AP language and AP literature, to Mrs. Reichner, for teaching us about service above self in Interact club, and to Mr. Lippert for being an above average AP Government teacher and always having an answer. Thank you to ALL the teachers and staff for the many lessons that will stick with us as we move forward in this journey called life.

Now, to my classmates who I have had the opportunity to spend an impactful four years of high school with. This is not the graduation we were expecting, but it will be one for the history books. Not only is our graduation unforgettable, the people graduating have created epic memories that will last a lifetime. When Reid Parker spit gum into Mike McAleer's mouth from across the room freshmen year, when Jessica Dietzman dressed as It the clown for a spirit day, when the seniors transformed into spouting fountains during the senior class play, when the boys soccer team and baseball team got stuck in mud on the bus and they had to push the bus out of the mud, or how Keith Wilwert slept in every class. The time Daisy Ryan thought all freshmen were going to get trash canned on freshmen Friday, when Ryan Tolberd serenaded the entire senior class with the song "A thousand miles." We celebrated football and basketball games together and sang the fight song proudly. We stressed over scholarship notebooks and lifted each other up during class. This year's class of 2020 is elite.

As the class of perfect vision, it's now time for us to look forward, our futures are bright, and the possibilities are endless. The knowledge and lessons that have been passed down to us will become our roadmap while we continue our paths to greatness. We will be patient when new things are thrown our way, be a shoulder to cry on for others around us, we will be able to fill out tax forms, and even if we fall along the way, I know that we will get back up stronger than before, when tasked with something that seems impossible I will think back to when Reid spit the gum in Mike's mouth and I know that if Reid can do that on his first try, then I will be able to complete the job asked of me even if I initially fail. In the last four years of high school, I had the opportunity to see everyone blossom into wonderful people, there is no doubt that we will go far in life as our amazing memories motivate our next phase. The last four years have paved the road for our future, and it is going to be one heck of a ride.

Thank you, class of 2020 for all the laughs and tears, it would not have been the same without y'all.



Student Selected Speaker



**SPEECH MADE BY MICHAEL MCALEER
2020 GRADUATION CEREMONY JUNE 19, 2020**

Whats up wolves. It's an honor to be up here speaking on behalf of our awesome senior class. I assume most people would think me doing this speech would be no problem because of how much I talked at school. But believe it or not, having a ton of cars stare at you is more intimidating than you might think. I tried looking up "how to not freak out when giving a speech", and I kept coming across the one where you imagine everyone in the crowd being naked. As you would imagine that trick doesn't really apply in this setting.

As I said before, I'm a bit of a talker. If you were in 2nd period APUSH with me last year, I'm sorry you had to hear my voice as much as you did. Looking back, I'm glad my mouth was blabbing as much as it was because of the conversations I got to

have with students and faculty along the way. If I didn't talk so much, I would have never known why Mr. Younger loves Montana so much, or that Mr. Rapijle's real name is Virgil (seriously, you should ask him about it).

Although the conversations I had with my teachers were great, the lessons I learned will stay with me forever. Even though I learned a lot in terms of academics, it has been the life lessons that have stuck the most. Mr. Krogman taught me how to approach touchy subjects with sensitivity and an open mind. I also learned a lot from Ms. Miller, who on a day to day basis exemplified patience, organization, thoughtfulness, and kindness. Mr. Rapijle somehow made Chemistry a class I was excited to go to everyday. His witty and fun approach on teaching showed me that sometimes the best way to convey a complicated message is simply by dumbing it down. He also gave me an example of someone I would hope to be like when I get older. I could go for hours about how great some of my teachers are, but to dumb it down, my teachers were kind. And for that, I thank you for the positive impact you've made on our lives.

My parents have had to hear me complain about all of the things we've missed out on as a class probably 100 times. Just in case they needed a refresher, I'm going to make it 101. We didn't get our graduation at the stadium. We didn't get to have our in person senior ball. We didn't get to cherish our last few school days at the high school. We didn't have any spring sports. We didn't watch any real sports, which I know affected some more than others (still recovering by the way). The graduating class of 2020 will always be remembered for what was taken away from us. But hopefully we can be remembered for more than that. Hopefully we can be remembered for how we bounced back. And because of the resiliency that I know this class has, I am not just hopeful, but I am confident that our class will go on to accomplish amazing things in the future.

Thank You!

A Letter from the Board

Well as we say goodbye to the 2019-2020 school year, one thing we know for sure, it was an adventure.

As we started the school year, we welcomed our new Superintendent, Dr. Rob Clark. We were extremely fortunate to find someone with Dr. Clark's background and experience to guide us into a New Year. Dr. Clark quickly jumped in, made the rounds meeting staff and students and made his presence known throughout the district and community.

We also said goodbye to 2 Board Directors in Dr. Robin Henrikson and Dr. Heather Short. It was a great pleasure working with them and under their leadership over the last 2 years. With that we welcomed 2 new board members, Larry Jeffries and Eric Pickens, both bringing past and present teaching experience to the board. To finalize our team Student Representative Payton Sturm stepped into the Senior member role and Olivia Preston joined us as the Junior Representative. Both providing active roles to the board.

The school year started out like any other, students and staff entering the class, excited and apprehensive about the new year. Our new kitchen was in full operation and providing meals for students throughout the district. The stands were packed as we all cheered our Wolves fall sports teams on. After school clubs were in action, dances went on, it was a familiar scene across the district. Then the New Year came, 2020 vision was upon us, or so we thought. We got a little snow to start off the year, took a few snow days off, and thought, hey we've been here before. But that was just the beginning.

As February rolled on, news of a new Covid 19 virus hit the world and would change the direction of not only school, but our every day lives. By mid-March we were closing the schools to in person classes and entering the world of virtual, at home learning. This was definitely not something we were prepared for, but our staff and students stepped up and found a way to make it happen. Not only were our staff and students working from home, but board meetings were held virtually as we entered uncharted territory trying to make decisions to best keep our staff and students safe while maintaining educational value.

As the school year came to a close, we had one more focus. What would we do for our seniors? They had just missed out on the last days of their school life, missed dances, missed sports, missed club events, and now graduation. The senior class stepped up, working with staff and the help of community members they made it happen. Graduation might not have been the event they had expected, but it was one they will always remember.

So, what have we learned from this, as school is about learning. I believe we learned that Sequim is filled with resilience. That in the face of the unknown, we can still find a way to make things happen. And as I watched those Seniors walk across the stage, the big thing that I learned, is we have some amazing young adults, and our future is in good hands.

Thanks for the opportunity to serve the district and community. Now into the unknown of 2020-2021.

Brandino Gibson



U-Turn Award Presentation

We started awarding the "U-Turn" Award in 2005. A motivational speaker, Keith Davis, spoke that year about how he had turned his life around and bent a bar – kept the bar in my office. Bill O'Brien said the bar reminded him of a U like a U-Turn and it would be a cool award for a Senior who 'turned it around.' In fact, last year Keith Davis came back for MLK Assembly and was blown away by the U Turn Award AND Rogers High School has stolen it away from us. Check out the plaque outside my office to see the previous 15 winners, and we're about to add a new one tonight.

THE QUALITIES OF U TURN AWARD WINNERS

1. Perseverance to hang in there and walk across this stage
2. Overcoming odds to walk across this stage
(Could be academic, could be socially, could be family)
3. Bottom line – walking across this stage was not a guarantee

I'm confident we can all agree this has been the MOST unique school year in any of our lives. When pondering the question about someone out there who was not always guaranteed to walk across the stage, the answer became pretty clear.

For the first time in the history of the U Turn award, the 2020 U Turn award winner is

The Entire Class of 2020!!



A SPECIAL THANK YOU

**to Joe & Jamie D'Amico
& Security Services Northwest!
Graduation looked incredible!**