



2017 Albany High School Graduation
Speech by Interim Superintendent Kimberly Young Wilkins, Ed.D.
June 25, 2017

Thank you.

Greetings to the members of our Board of Education, to our elected officials, my colleagues in administration, our distinguished faculty members, our senior class officers, dear families, relatives, friends and most notably, the students of the Class of 2017. Good afternoon!

It is an honor and privilege to stand before you as the Interim Superintendent of the Albany Public Schools. One of the main reasons we are here is because of you, our graduating seniors. This is it. You have completed 13-plus years of education and you have reached this pinnacle moment.

Breathe...
Take a look around...
This is all for you...
This is about you...
Truly understand the significance of what you have accomplished...
Enjoy this moment.
Live in the moment.
Be present.

You have been prepared and you are ready to move on to life beyond the walls and halls of Albany High School. You have grown in your confidence and have matured, ready to confront all of the challenges that lie ahead as you pursue and work toward your dreams and goals. You are ready for all of the opportunities that await you.

I have the unique honor to have been the elementary principal to a few of you as you entered school as kindergarteners – cute, eager, a bit afraid of school; as well as many of you as you entered middle school in sixth or seventh grade – nervous, worried about changing classes, staying organized and the dreaded lockers! To see you now, poised and ready to take your next steps.

Breathe...
Take a look around...
This is all for you...
This is about you...
Look at what you have accomplished...

Enjoy this moment.
Remember this moment.
Be present.

Wynton Marsalis has a quote I want to share:

It's harder to build than destroy. To build is to engage and change. In jazz, we call progressing harmonies changes. Changes are like obstacles on a speed course. They demand your attention and require you to be present. They are coming ... they are here ... and then they are gone. It's how life comes. Each moment is a procession from the future into the past and the sweet spot is always the present. Live in that sweet spot. Be present.

Thank you! Congratulations to the Albany High Class of 2017!