



Keewatin Patricia
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Congratulations to the Graduates!

Message from the Director of Education

An Open Letter to all Graduates of the Keewatin-Patricia District School Board

As time goes on and with each passing year, I find that with seasons and certain milestone events, it sometimes can present a bit of a challenge to write something meaningful for achievements and accomplishments, as important as graduation. The end of June in education often is synonymous with just such celebration and pride. With each year also comes new experiences for myself, the meeting of new people, and the learning of incredibly resilient stories of our students, this year's graduates...."The Class of 2016".

Over the past few weeks, I have been privileged, and perhaps more importantly humbled, by the stories that have emerged and will continue to emerge during graduation ceremonies. We all should be motivated and feel pride in our fellow Northerners, from Northwestern Ontario! I know I certainly am inspired. Last week I witnessed 36 adults graduate and cross the stage with their children and in some cases, grandchildren watching. In one case, a young mom carried her baby across the stage to receive her high school diploma. The highlight was listening to a 65 year old Valedictorian address his fellow graduates and own family...his message being "it is never too late to go back to school, and you are never too old to stop learning." What a role model for all of us!

I attended a Grade 8 Graduation in Savant Lake earlier in the week and watched three young people prepare for high school and the next four years living away from home, just so they can have a chance at what many take for granted...a high school experience and the hope for a brighter future. These kids deserve and should count on our collective support!

I was also able to participate in the always impressive high school graduations where alongside many parents and families, I saw young people receive, with a hand-shake from their principals, their Ontario Secondary School Diplomas; and with that symbolic event the trepidation of what the future now holds. My message to all graduates in Northwestern Ontario is this: if you have made it this far, then I hope you will go further. We need strong leaders in Northwestern Ontario; we need trades-people, professional people in the areas of business, law, and social services. We need teachers and educators; and we need you to remember where home is.

Living and learning in Northwestern Ontario brings with it challenges of its own, but it also defines us and our character. Living and learning here, also means leading. If you go away and leave home to continue school, remember that home is always home, and we will always be here. If you return, I encourage you to bring with you new ideas, strong vision, and the dreams that a new generation of Northern Ontario leadership can inspire.

Graduation always represents significance, in different ways for different people. For you graduates, well done. For your parents and families, gratification that you have succeeded and that new beginnings now await. For your teachers, assistants, and principals...thank you for a job well done. From myself to all of you, this day has been well earned, and I hope you will enjoy it, as you should.

Congratulations!

Sean Monteith, Director of Education



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All stakeholders create a culture of learning so that students come first.