

## GREAT FALLS HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION

Sunday, May 27, 2018, 3:00 p.m.

**Thank you, Mrs. Hoyer, for confirming the Class of 2018. Congratulations to you and your staff on a fine school year with many things to celebrate including this commencement.**

**Graduates, staff, and all of our guests here this evening, I am honored to be here this afternoon as the Superintendent of Great Falls Public Schools to not only present this class but also to applaud this Class of 2018 for its many accomplishments. Those accomplishments as well as information about their differentiated diplomas have been included on the insert in your program. Please know that the list is just a sample of the many, many contributions of this fine group.**

**As you review the accomplishments of this class, I hope you feel the same sense of pride that I do. There were several times throughout this year that I sat in awe of these students. I watched as they gave it their all on the field, track, gym floor, pool, course and mat. I watched them entertain crowds on the stage in the beautiful GFHS Auditorium. I watched them excel in their classrooms and win award after award at state student organization conferences and academic competitions. I have watched them support causes they care about (see if you can spot them doing that even today). I have watched this group of students represent the Bison Family and Thundering Herd in only the best of ways. This class has left its mark on our community and our future.**

**And now speaking specifically to you Graduates: I am confident in the education you have received in Great Falls Public Schools. I am confident that your diploma matters. That it opens doors for you. That it provides a pathway to success. This graduation ceremony, as long and drawn out as it might seem to be, should take a bit of time because it is the culmination of an entire body of work: 13 years of educational opportunity for you, our students. 13 years of curriculum, instruction, assessment, and learning...all with today's ceremony of celebration in mind.**

**I'm sure you are all excited for tomorrow. As you pursue your next goals in life, some of you are staying in your hometown and some of you are moving on and/or moving away. I look forward to watching those of you who stay as you continue to make our community great and I look forward to welcoming those who leave as you come back for summer vacations, holiday breaks and eventually class reunions as I know you will have stories to tell and adventures to share. And I hope you DO come back. I hope you come back to a robust Great Falls community. I hope you come back to a community that makes you proud of your roots.**

**Speaking of roots Graduates, some of you have helped a new GFHS facility take root as you sat at the table with architects and engineers to design the new Hub building and classrooms that will be constructed starting this summer. Thank you for sharing your thoughts and ideas. All of you witnessed a historic moment in Great Falls when you were juniors, with the passage of the \$98.8M bond levy in October, 2016. A significant portion of that money is about to be spent on what is now your alma mater.**

**As you can over the next two years, I hope you can witness the GFHS facility transformation. If you do, you will notice that the new building won't just pop up overnight and that the work won't be done by just one person. It will be a process done by a crew of workers. Building something worthwhile takes time and a team.**

**Like the new building, your success, measured by the diploma you are about to receive, was a 13-year process supported by a team of people. Each of you can name the people who provided the wind beneath your wings: your parents, your teachers, your administrators, your friends and your family...the people who have supported you on this challenging journey.**

**We also need to recognize and thank our local taxpayers, as they provide public funds for our public schools. We thank them for the buildings over our heads and for the learning that takes place inside them. Students and staff, please stand and applaud all of the people, including local taxpayers, for being part of the team that got you here today. (APPLAUSE)**

**Your class motto, a favorite quote of mine from Winston Churchill, says, “Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts.” I can totally attest to the fact that success is just a stepping stone and that failure is not only painful but absolutely inevitable, especially for those who are moving forward, taking risks, seeking to make things better. There is no doubt, graduates, that you will encounter both success and failure, but as you do, it will be your courage, tenacity and grit that lead you to new heights. Good luck to each one of you as you seek those new heights! I applaud you, commend you and congratulate you. (CLAP)**

**And now...**

**With the power vested in me by the state of Montana and our School Board, I hereby declare to all of you that these ladies and gentlemen, who sit before you this afternoon, have fulfilled all the requirements of the State of Montana, the Montana Board of Public Education, and the Board of Trustees of the Great Falls Public Schools. And, with the affirmation of their principal, Heather Hoyer, I hereby attest that they DO FULLY QUALIFY for the high school graduation diploma from Great Falls High School.**

**Guests, colleagues, trustees,**

**I present to you the 2018 graduates of Great Falls High School. It is now time to award their diplomas!**