

-Graduation Speech-

Hello everyone. My name is Lanie and this is the 565th draft of this speech. I wanted it to be perfect and heartfelt, but what I got was sappy and emotional. But hey, that's me. So here goes my sappy and emotional speech from the heart. When I sat down to write this, I didn't know what to say. How could I fit the best 8 years of my life into one simple speech? I go from walking into Mrs. Prieboy's classroom for my first day of kindergarten with my Minnie Mouse backpack—and my horrific bob haircut—to standing here in front of all of you on the day of my 8th grade graduation. It used to feel like we had so many more years until this day would come. But here we are, moments away from officially graduating. How crazy is that? It is incredible to think how far we have all come. It has been a blessing to get to grow up with all of these beautiful people.

One thing I have learned is that family isn't just blood relatives. Family is something that you can choose. How lucky we all are to be a part of this family; I wouldn't trade it for the world. I'm going to miss the wonderful teachers and staff members, how each and everyone of you has impacted my life in such a positive way. I hope one of these days I'll see you again when I become a D91 junior high teacher with a New York Times #1 bestselling book on how to become a teacher (props to Mr. Lindstrom).

Really, it's the little things that I will miss the most, like when my friends and I would get to run around the school doing student council things, when we would play football on the field outside not knowing what we were doing, how we would run the pep assemblies, and of course, spending hours getting ready for the dances. It's the little things that turn out to be the most important in the long run.

Together we have faced many hardships, including losing one of our fellow classmates, Noah. That was one of the hardest things I have ever experienced. Every time I talk about him I think it will get easier, but it never does. The one that won't be able to walk across this stage tonight is still with us in our hearts forever. We miss him deeply, but he will always be a part of this family we have created.

To my classmates, I am so excited to see what life has in store for all of us. Even though we might be nervous for high school, we will be just fine. I have learned many unforgettable lessons and will be able to take away many great things from my years here at District 91. When I look back I will always remember both the not so fond memories like running the mile in gym class and math—need I say more?—as well as the fond memories like laughing with my friends and teachers until our stomachs hurt. I can't thank you all enough for every minute of happiness. And now, let the adventure begin.