

Class Speaker Speech

Family, friends, faculty, guests and my fellow classmates, my name is Aidan Koczela and as the class speaker I represent the class of 2021. Today i stand here with you as an athlete, thespian, musician, chess club, mathlete (just kidding!) and a student of the senior class of Hoosac Valley High School. Well, I think if there is one thing I've learned from three years in Mrs.P-A's class, it's how to write a thesis statement. So here it goes, my class, the class of 2021 is guaranteed to be successful because of our consistent perseverance, our bright hope, and our ability to adapt.

Webster's dictionary defines perseverance as "continued effort to do or achieve something despite difficulties, failure, or opposition." When I think about perseverance in connection with this class, I think about how we continued, day after day, through all the zoom classes, seeing only half our class in school for most of the year, and trust me, with this class size half of us looks pretty small. Whether it was Jess Isbell politely telling us to turn on our cameras everyday or being split up into cohorts A and B, this class has seen it all. Of course this attitude of perseverance didn't just begin this year. We have been working through difficulties and failures since we began as freshmen. Games lossed, positions not awarded, grades less than we thought, or felt we deserved, roles not received, and yet these opportunities have taught us something- That we will never know who came at the bottom of all our kahoot games...side bar it was almost always me.

Where there is perseverance there will always be hope. Hope we heard Katey Perry's Firework blaring through the halls on our way to Mr.Mahar's freshman bio class or hope that the soccer boys never dye their hair blonde again. Hope came in many

forms for our class. The goals in this class are high and therefore, so are our hopes that we will achieve them. I for one am hopeful that my college will not have a powerschool app my mom can check, but seriously, we are the hope for the future. This class is filled with scholars, athletes, artists, and accomplished individuals that will always be remembered here, and will continue to make memories all over the world.

Through all the good, the bad and ugly we held our heads tall and made sure Covid-19 and everyone else knew we weren't putting our heads down.

Perhaps the largest obstacle we have all had to overcome this last year has been adapting to living during a global pandemic. It greatly affected everyone, but this hasn't been the only time the students of this class have had to adapt. We have been adapting since the first day of high school. It's hard to believe that at one point we were scared freshmen walking through the halls for the first time, but we all had a bit of fire inside us. We were going to make goals, stick to them, and adapt in whatever way we needed, to make sure these goals were met with success. The 41 of us you see sitting here today is not the largest class that's graduated, but as they say, the smaller the dog the bigger the bark. We made sure everyone in this school heard our roar and told them the classic story of the underdogs defining the odds and that is just what we did

If I can remember one specific thing from this past year it's a quote from F. Scott's Fitzgerald's book *The Great Gatsby*, I hope I can remember this it was only from two weeks ago, the quote comes from the narrator at the end of the book when he says "So

we beat on, boats against the current.” That’s us we are the boats against the current we have overcome something no one saw coming and I think that says a lot about us.

Perseverance, Hope, Adaptation. the key components that make up the class of 2021, my peers, my friends, my family. This has been a difficult year for everyone and I want to take this opportunity to thank the Hoosac Valley administration, faculty and staff, our friends and families for their support and care to help us overcome even the biggest of obstacles.

To my peers up here with me today, we did it. We made it through the storm, but there will always be a little hurricane inside us. Thank you.