

# ANKIT JANAMANCHI

Hello everyone! My name is Ankit. I'm honored to be speaking today. I'd like to thank everyone for coming out to celebrate this momentous occasion.

I've got to admit that I struggled to write this speech. Every line I typed only seemed to be deleted a few minutes later. Even when Spencer locked me in the school store's storage closet to force me to finish my speech, I somehow came out with fewer words typed than I entered with.

I realized I was trying too hard to stuff this speech with dramatic language and tedious metaphors. So instead, I simply want to tell you all a story.

Once upon a time, in the mythical land of Cardinal Heights Upper Middle School, a fresh new batch of faces had just entered high school. Back then, there seemed to be no ceilings over us. Literally, half the ceiling tiles at Cardinal Heights were missing that year. It was a year of exploration and learning. For example, I learned that I should never, under any circumstances, be allowed in a woodshop again. Let's just say it's no wonder Mr. Roth retired the very next year after having me in his class. It's easy to look back on our freshman selves and laugh. As we should. Because if you can't laugh at your old self, you haven't grown beyond your old self

Sophomore year gave us some much-needed perspective and a building with noticeably less asbestos in it. For many of us, sophomore year was when we started to come into our own, figure out the type of person we wanted to be, and even start driving. Honestly, I just feel bad for the residents

of the neighborhood across the street, who had to deal with the awful parking of everyone who didn't have a parking pass. They probably had to Tokyo Drift their cars out of the driveway just to get to work on time. But coming out of that winter, we really seemed to be getting into the groove of things when, as Bo Burnham put it, "the funniest thing happened."

Now, graduates, I don't think I need to remind you of the pandemic. The last two years have been the perfect example of why the phrase "may you live in interesting times" is actually a curse. But hey, at least in 50 years, we can tell our grandkids all about the year we spent in an online school, playing Hayday on our phones instead of having normal human interactions.

But eventually, we got through it. We got to come back to essentially a normal senior year. The previous two classes were not this lucky. We came out of the pandemic swinging, with a state runner-up football team, multiple international DECA and FBLA finalists, and an award-winning Spring Musical. We are just as strong and resilient as ever; look no further than the 3 massive petitions we organized in just as many consecutive weeks. Which I'm sure admin was a huge fan of.

And so, here we are. A graduating class of Presidential scholars, entrepreneurs, D1 athletes, and leaders. Good luck living up to us class of '23. Now I don't want my speech to run too long; otherwise, they'll send me another truancy letter, so I'll leave you with this: as Walt Disney once said, "the way to get started is to quit talking and begin doing."