



Megan Miller | President, Board of Education | School District of Beloit

June 2021 – Megan Miller Address to the Class of 2021

You are Resilient

Good morning to the Class of 2021. We are all so very proud of you for all that you have worked for and accomplished. You were persistent. You are resilient, and your presence here today is a great achievement.

Each and every one of you have worked harder than others realize. You have overcome obstacles that were sometimes visible but often invisible to friends and family. You have challenged yourself in ways that you couldn't fathom when you first walked through the hallowed halls of Beloit Memorial High School. You have built friendships and communities, won accolades, struggled, and persevered.

We Recognize and Honor You

You all stand here today to be recognized by your community for the unique value you hold and the sanctity of your lives. Today is a day to celebrate achievements and to honor the heartbreak, pain, and struggle that was part of your work and accomplishments. I would like to reflect with you about some perspective and wisdom I gained dealing with heartbreak and tragedy.

An Act of Remembrance and Love

A few days ago, I went to visit the grave where my childhood best friend is buried. She died right before finals week, our Sophomore year of high school, after suffering an asthma attack. I have gone with two other close friends to visit every year for the last twenty-one years to honor her memory and our friendship, and each year, we leave a stone. In the Jewish tradition, you leave a stone to mark your visit. Flowers are beautiful, but they die. A stone lasts forever, like the love and memory of the person you lost and the impact they have made on your life.

When I was in high school, I struggled for a number of reasons. A few days ago, when I got to catch up with people who I hadn't met since I was fifteen, I got a fresh perspective on who I was then and the person I have become. If I could go back to my high school graduation, I doubt anyone would have expected that I would be the person I am standing before you today. Writing my own story to become who I am has required me to know what to hold onto and what to let go.





Write a New Chapter

For each of you standing here today, you are about to close a chapter of your life and begin writing another. Each of you has the opportunity to turn to a fresh page. You have a choice to continue writing parts of your story and to let other parts go. You have to know what your stones are - the memories and values that will empower you to become who you want to be - and hold them close.

You have to know what to let go - the experiences and expectations that stop you from being the person you want to become. I told an anecdote about grief and loss but today is about celebration and new life. I would like to honor your lives and all of the possibilities they hold by expressing my love for each of you and sharing some of my “stones” - the things that I have chosen to hold onto that have helped me to become.

Always Let People Know How Much You Love Them

- Be resilient
- Overcoming adversity makes you stronger
- Believe in yourself
- Don't give up
- Draw your own line and decide what is worth your energy, time, and talent
- Make decisions out of hope and not fear
- Be patient with yourself
- Define success by what fulfills you and sustains you
- Make time for people you care about
- Your time is valuable
- Find love and humor in everything you do
- Find a community
- Find meaningful work
- Learn to be present and listen
- Be good to each other

Know what to hold onto and know what to let go. Keep what gives you strength, love, and purpose, and let go of what doesn't. Thank you for sharing who you are with our community. All of us here today are better because you are a part of us. You are strong, loved, and ready to write your next chapter. Congratulations, Class of 2021!

