

Dear 8th Grade Class of 2022/High School Class of 2026:

It is hard to believe that during your middle school career, you didn't get the opportunity to experience a "normal" school year. Each year you were either on remote or wearing masks. Despite that, you got through middle school and did your best to forge relationships. You experienced the negatives and positives and somehow learned to navigate both to the best of your ability.

The negative was (at times) quite consuming. You came to school with masks, walked in halls with traffic poles, and lived in times of uncertainty. You were more anxious than before as you wondered if you were going to be exposed to COVID, if you would get it and have to quarantine. You even acquired more stress if a loved one became quite sick as a result. The negative continued as social media or online gaming became your outlet. Then you might begin to believe that what was on social media was always fact, whether it was about your peers or your country. You also became desensitized to the way people treated each other because the rudeness over social media became common place. The constant negativity on social media, and the fear of what the Coronavirus could bring really took its toll on all of us. As a 12-14 year old, that was a lot to absorb and deal with.

Out of that, however, came the positive. You learned perseverance and grit. You learned who you could truly call a friend and who you could trust. You learned about yourself and who you could be and should be. When back at school, you were reminded daily by parents and school adults the importance of making good decisions. You took that advice and made your mark based on where you saw yourself at the time. You sought to be the best version of yourself.

As teachers and administrators, we tried to instill in you two concepts, and we constantly conveyed to you what it meant to be a Bulldog. Everything we did and every way we treated each other had to meet two criteria. We emphatically reiterated that a Bulldog is someone who sees everyone as a person of value and that we're all connected as we are to celebrate our differences. Also, we tried to convey that a Bulldog must give to others and not look at their own personal gain, but a Bulldog must provide service to others.



You are all on the journey to fulfill those two concepts. Many of you live by those two ideals and have tried to maximize those opportunities to embody the mantra of a Bulldog. Some of you continue to be

on the journey to make those ideals a reality in your thoughts, words, and actions. Wherever you are on that path, our hope is that the journey helps you reflect on those key points as no matter where life takes you, you will always be #Bulldogs4Life.

I wish you the greatest success after middle school and am proud of your desire to be the best person you can be to yourself and others.

Best Wishes Always,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mr. D'Ostilio". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "M" and "D".

Mr. D'Ostilio