Sayville's Commencement for the Class of 2014 was held on Saturday, June 28th, at 10 a.m., on a clear day under a blazing summer sun. Even so, most “kept their cool” for the sake of the graduates who were celebrating their final hours at Sayville High School.

Enthusiastic graduates, led by Sayville Administrators and Board members, began their procession from the high school, unfurling like ribbons of purple and gold, across the green stretch of lawn and onto the red track toward the football field as the crowd of relatives and friends cheered and whistled. Processing along with the 245 graduates were more than 100 Alumni (one Alumnus was from 1938) participating in the Annual Alumni Walk.

During the ceremony, speakers shared insights, comic anecdotes, and a few sight gags to liven up the morning ceremonies. After the diplomas were awarded, a brief visit by Senator Chuck Schumer was followed by Principal Ronald Hoffer’s final words of appreciation, and then the graduates’ purple and gold mortarboards sailed upward against a cobalt blue sky.

Still showing their “True Colors” as graduating seniors, (a class theme developed during their Middle School Frost Valley Trip in 2009), the Class of 2014 had continued their “chain reaction” of paying it forward with kindness, service, and support throughout their High School careers.
Superintendent of Sayville Schools, Dr. Walter F. Schartner greeted members of the Board of Education, administrators, teachers, staff, distinguished guests, alumni, parents, grandparents, extended families, and the very special Class of 2014, I welcome you and thank you for the honor to be part of this morning’s significant occasion and to share with you the next transition in your journey.”

Superintendent of Sayville Schools
Dr. Walter Schartner

Sayville Superintendent Dr. Walter Schartner referred to his years with the graduates as their Middle School Principal, “I have been fortunate to be part of ALL THREE of your transitions. This group will always hold a special place with me since you were my last group of 8th graders moving up to the high school. As you move to the next chapter in your life, at college, at work, or in the armed services, remember the important lessons of your 13 years of education. To give a different perspective to this advice, I came by the writings of Robert Fulghum in his book entitled, All I Really Need to Know, I Learned in Kindergarten, that attempts to put our collective futures in a proper perspective and I quote:

“These are things I learned: Share everything. Play fair. Don’t hit people. Put things back where you found them. Clean up your messes. Don’t take things that aren’t yours. Say you’re sorry when you hurt somebody.”

Number one: “...procrastination is the enemy. Whether it’s an art project, an English essay, Social Studies chapter assignments, or in my case, this speech, we’ve all told ourselves we’d never leave an assignment to the last minute again. But the next week we do it all over again, again, again.”

Number two: “...laugh through the stress. The best memories, the most powerful things about this class is the humor we have...unforgettable memories that will last a lifetime.”

Number three: “...pursue what makes you happy. Put your heart into whatever makes you happy...it makes you happy for a reason...We have aspiring athletes, musicians, thespians, artists, and scientists...What would the world be like without unique people, willing to follow their passions?”

Number two: “...treat the people who you have...We can’t go back in time, but we can fully immerse ourselves in the present. In the spirit of Ismael’s mindfulness bell, take some time to think and be grateful for everything... Make every day count, because I’m sure ten years from now we’re going to be wondering where the time has gone again.”

Number one: “...value the friendships and bonds you have. We’ve all been touched by some pretty amazing people on our journeys from kindergarten to now...Whether...friends I’ve had for thirteen years, or friends I’ve made this year, you’ve all had a profound impact on me and shaped me into the person I am today.”

“...Friendships between classmates aren’t the only bonds that are valuable; I’ve learned so much from my teachers...we will remember those teachers who have taught us life lessons...Or those teachers that know you better than you know yourself... I never spoke a word the first half of the year in Mrs. Psilakis’ class unless forced to. Yet, she knew I was silently coming up with plans to take over the world...she pinpointed my ambitions with care. I’ll miss their awkward conversations and never forget how I could come to her for anything; college essay advice, advice on picking a college, this speech, and she would help me without fail.”

“...bonds with our families are probably the strongest. I can’t fail to mention my older brother Stephen, who definitely didn’t tell me to add him to my speech and express the positive influence he’s had on me throughout my whole life. (Hd.) But seriously, I owe some motivation to being in the same AP Psych class in 10th grade, and wanting to beat him on every test. Moreover, I have to thank my parents for being my number one supporters since day one. They have somehow dealt with me through all my stressed out, unpleasant moods. As cliché as it is, they really are my inspiration to succeed. As much as I want to please myself, I want to please them as well. Nobody can get through life alone. I hope you all take the time to think about those people who’ve made your time...special...”

“It’s crazy to think that after all this time...this is only the beginning; the beginning of the rest of our lives...Some of us looking to become engineers, some of us looking to defend our country, some of us aspiring to be lawyers, some of us looking to end up right back in a high school teaching, etc. The one thing that I’ve had difficulty with, and that I want us all to do, is to embrace change.”

“...laugh through the stress. The best memories, the most powerful things about this class is the humor we have...unforgettable memories that will last a lifetime.”

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IMITATING SENATOR CHUCK SCHUMER, LIAM BEGAN HIS
ANIMATED ADDRESS BY SPEAKING FROM A CLEVER
PHOTO. IT IS A TRIBUTE TO A GREAT SPOKESMAN.

“Good morning! I’ve come to our school’s
graduation for the past few years to help
sell water, to burn in the sun,
(as many of us are today) and
to take notes from Senator
Schumer and his presentation
in case I was to ever be put in
this speech-giving situation,
and even though he isn’t here
today, I think I’ve found the key to success. You see
this speech here? (rips up speech!) (school) That’s
what I think of it! Now that I’ve had my adrenaline
rush of the day and enacted the sure-fire successful
speech ritual, I will read to you Copy Number 2 of
what I have prepared....

...I’m here to inform you today, the Class of
2014, that it’s all over. That’s right, done! Our time
here is done, and after today, we’re the Class of
it-doesn’t-really-matter-anymore.

The initial reaction may be a Booohoo! Oh, no!
High School is over! But our passing is a strikingly
beautiful, yet personally terrifying process. Every
moment of our lives has led to now, our literal
graduation. Every person, every place, and
everything, has brought us here, to the now, and
our impending future. Despite ...challenges..., we
persevered with inner strength...the aid of those
around us...we conquered these unique foes of
adolescence. We did it! Go us.

However, what happens after today? Where do
we go from here? ...Today, I’d like to share what
I think may be the key to living for tomorrow,
whilst valuing the past. But I’ll get to that later,
because I’ve got a 5-minute slot to fill, and I’d hate to
disappoint....

...what do we want out of tomorrow? Truthfully,
this is a dangerous question. I asked myself
this question, say, mid March, and it led to a
downward spiraling existential crisis where I had
no idea whether I wanted to be an actor, a chemist,
a writer, or a runaway, completely abandoning
everything I’ve ever known. Even now, I still don’t
know, I mean, all I’ve ever been is the kid who was
just good at studying. Personally I don’t think that
merits a speech, but I digress. This leaves me and
us all, with a profound question with which to
start. What do we want out of tomorrow?

I think that it’s ok not to have that answer. I
mean I’m 18. We’re all 18, give or take a few
of your summer birthdays. Given the miracles
of modern medicine, we have a possible 80 years
ahead of us. We’re only 20 percent done! We may
not know what we want to do with our lives yet,
but that’s ok....

What isn’t ok, however, from here on out,
is idleness.... We can’t wait for our wants of
tomorrow to come to us, like watching from
ashore as the ship named “Destiny” leisurely
sails by. Some reality I need to share; that ship
doesn’t pull up. In fact, the only way we’re getting
on that ship is if we’re swimming out into those
seas, screaming for it to throw down a ladder and
climbing aboard. Some may call you a pirate for
stealing that boat, but I’d like to call you proactive
for steering your own destiny

...We must be fighters for our fates, not simply
commentators, always posting with I wish and
Wouldn’t that be greats and not doing anything
about it...I think we’re all done with wishing,
ready to seize the day. Did I just mention Carpe
Diem? Oh man!

The hardest question, though, is how do we
go forth and seize the day. I think we’re all a bit
inexperienced in that respect, so I’ve come up
with my own core tenets, a threefold path to
breathing tomorrow and leaving an impact on this
world. Everything I’m about to say is completely
opinionated and subjective, so value it as you may.

STEP ONE in making tomorrow yours is go forth
and be happy. This may seem to be a given, but it’s
often forgotten in materialism. Money, luxury, and
social status all get in the way of this basic human
need in being fulfilled. If money were no object,
if we didn’t want the nicest car, and if we didn’t
need to prove anything to anyone with what are
we left? We’re left to find happiness, for no one else
but ourselves. But it’s not that simple, you may say.
How do we find what makes us happy? 
...Despite common belief, this school is not our
prison; it is our gateway to personal realization. We
were all here to discover what appeals to us and
what doesn’t, ...

But the learning curve doesn’t end at
graduation. Life is a school, and we’re lucky
enough to be presented with completely
customizable, real-world learning experience,
where we can do anything we want. We can be,
anything we want. Each of us can start our own
business, write a book, become a Chilean alpaca
farmer, or not. No one has the right to tell us no
anymore. Our lives are finally completely self-
directed. We are now bestowed with the freedom
to go forth with what makes us happy; or at least
try to find what it is that makes us happy. We can’t
waste it.

The second step on the path in my Carpe Diem
guide is limited by our time period. Although
we may have it easy, ...We have no Great War, we
have no Great Depression. Our war now becomes
a spiritual war, and that just makes our challenge
that much more important and rewarding.
So, I challenge us all, after being happy, to go
forth and be great. Be a person who everyone
would want to know. Someone interesting,
someone exciting, someone willing to face the
world before them. Every person who has or
ever will be born possesses the potential to be
extraordinary, because there is no one like you. You
are unique. You have the potential for greatness.
Prove it.

But how do we become extraordinary? How do
we become great? It’s easy, really. Once you know
what makes you happy, commit yourself to it.
Commit yourself to something, and reach your
full potential. Leave a mark in your field, be a
revolutionary, do it like no one has ever done
before. If in nothing else, be great in what you
love. And then, after that, find a new love, and
do it all over again. We’ll want to turn, and just
say to anyone: “Wow. This is cool.” But what if we
turn, and no one is there? Was any of this, aspiring
for happiness, aspiring for greatness, really worth
it then?

Here is the final and most important step
three to making tomorrow ours; on our way to
the top, we must go forth and love. I’ve always
put the greatest stock in interpersonal relations,
and truthfully, what is the point of living, without
someone to love? I’ve told you all that you
to better find something, an activity or occupation
that makes you happy and great to reach the
uppermost potential of life, but it can be a lonely,
myopic road to the top, and friendship is the
single most valuable thing in this world that makes
it all worth it in the end. Because who’s going
to be there with us when our luck turns bad?
What happens when we are not so happy? What
happens when we are not so great? I can tell you
that the purported “Go forth” attitude sure isn’t
even enough to pull us through sometimes. So what’s
left for us? Who will keep our heads held high
and legs a-moving when life becomes too much
to bear?

A friend. Maybe like many of the friends
we have here, amongst this crowd of shared
experience. Stay in touch. Keep a smile on your
face and an open ear. Break down boundaries,
and forge friendships. Who knows when you may
need one?

Now it’s over, Class of 2014, or should I say
Class of it-doesn’t-really-matter-anymore. We
step away from this life into another, where the
titles of yesterday are no longer important. All that
matters is how we make the next day ours. Strive
to be happy, strive to be great, and maybe make
a friend or two along the way. Make each passing
day more important, more fulfilling, and more
joyous than the last. Go forth and leave a history,
leave an impact, and have a little bit of fun on the
way. It’s our time. Make tomorrow count, because
each of you is unique.

And me?
Well, I was just pretty good at studying.
Congratulations, my friends!
Step into tomorrow!

COPY NUMBER 2
Before announcing the Board of Education President, Principal Hoff er welcomed the Alumni, which represent graduating classes from our high school from 1938 through 2013. “As an alumnus, your attendance is greatly appreciated and it clearly reflects your pride, your enthusiasm, and your respect for your educational experience in our district. We thank you for joining us this morning, and we encourage you to join us each and every year at this ceremony.”

**BOARD OF EDUCATION PRESIDENT JOHN VERDONE**

*What a beautiful day! The past thirteen years have gone by in the blink of an eye. Your parents have saved your finger paintings that you made in kindergarten. They have proudly displayed on your refrigerator, the “A” you received on your first spelling test. They will remember the science project you worked so hard on in elementary school. Your first Middle School dance and the late nights you studied for your Math and English finals. They will remember the band and chorus practices, opening night for the plays and musicals and the games that were won and the ones that were not.*

*I have been given the opportunity to speak to the Sayville Class of 2014, and to be honest with you, each time I have been given the honor to speak at Commencement, I struggle with what words to say. But, what I did find out, never ask your teenage daughter.*

*For my first draft I did have a couple of great quotes, from Mark Twain, Helen Keller and stories of my life experiences, but I’m not going to use any today. So no quotes, no stories of my life experiences. Today is about each of you. In front of your family, friends and classmates, we will recognize each of you for your hard work and dedication that bring all of us together today.*

*Shortly each of your names will be called and you will walk up here and receive your High School Diploma. Another milestone in your lives, and then you’ll be on your way.*

*A new beginning.*

*A journey of unlimited possibilities of what to make of your future, our future, a future we now entrust to each of you with the unlimited possibilities in your search to where life may lead you.*

*And as a parent of a child that is serving our country in the United States Coast Guard, THANK YOU, to the young adults sitting among you that will be entering the military to protect the freedoms we all value all so much.*

*In closing, I do have one favor to ask, whatever path you take, please take time and spend it with family and friends, and take time to laugh.*

*On behalf of the Sayville Board of Education, congratulations to each and every one of you!*
• The graduates met and/or exceeded the academic standards: 95% of the students in the Class of 2014 will go on to further education; 99% will have earned a Regents Diploma this year.

• At the 40th Annual Scholastic Awards Program, 77 deserving students received 111 awards. These recipients wore gold- or purple-ribbon medallions at graduation.

• So far, 146 students have received academic or community scholarships that value well over $3.6 million dollars. (The amount includes $110,000 in scholarships and awards from local community organizations.) This list is incomplete since notification of more scholarships continue throughout the summer.

• Kurt Caminske, Matthew Hewson, and Shannon Wissemann were selected into the juried shows: Commended students.

• Our Visual Arts seniors participated in ten juried shows: Kara Stenberg and Emily Milano were selected into the Hecksher Museum Long Island’s Best Youth Artist Juried Competition; Esra Erdogan was awarded scholarships from Long Island University Advanced Visions, BAFFA, SAVA, and SMBA.

• In our Music Program, the String Ensemble participated at the New York Philharmonic.

• In our Theatre Arts Program, our seniors participated in Play On, The Glass Menagerie, South Pacific, and six seniors produced and directed in the “36th Annual One-Act Plays.” Five seniors earned the U.S. Achievement Academy Award, one senior received the Thespian Circle Award, and five others were inducted into the Sayville Players Honour Troupe 2014.

• In the arena of Interscholastic Athletics, 18 of 26 varsity teams were Scholar-Athlete Teams. The following teams won LEAGUE or DIVISION CHAMPIONSHIPS in BOYS: Soccer, Golf, and Football; GIRLS: Soccer, Volleyball, Golf, and Softball; SUFFOLK COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIPS: BOYS: Soccer, Golf, and Volleyball; GIRLS: Soccer, Lacrosse, and Softball; LONG ISLAND CHAMPIONSHIPS: Boys Golf and Softball.

• High School Service Organizations, Student Government, Athletes Helping Others, Key Club, Anchor Club, Tri-M, Art Honor Society, Interact Club, SWEEP, SADD, (History Club, and the National Honor Society) have once again served our community by giving back not only to local communities, but also worldwide.

Three NYSSMA All-State musicians—Robert Danzi, Heather Leahy, and Susan Mangaluz—were recognized locally, throughout the county, state, and nation. Congratulations to all of our award-winning performing groups and musicians.

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Lincoln Avenue Moving-Up

Principal Dr. Michele LeBlanc welcomed the assembled students and guests to Lincoln Avenue’s 2014 Moving-Up. After acknowledging the “graduating” Lincoln parents for their six years of support, Dr. LeBlanc specifically thanked the special group of volunteers from the PTA, SEPTA, and Site-Based Team, who “have given countless hours to provide programs and improve our school.”

“In Sayville schools we pride ourselves on academic rigor while building confidence in our students in order to develop the necessary skills to be heard positively and create change for the better.” Dr. LeBlanc was proud to announce that “this group’s progress measured by a number of data points in comparison with others is superior.”

In addition, while honoring the retiring Jane Cozza, whose career had come full circle, Dr. LeBlanc extolled the qualities of the “circle” for its healing power, equality, unity, and completeness. Dr. LeBlanc encouraged the girls and boys “to hold on to that Kindergarten circle, make room in your circle, expand it, and this practice can enrich you as a person, enrich your community, and enrich your world.” Dr. LeBlanc ended her address by introducing Middle School Principal Thomas Murray. During the ceremony, select Fifth-graders representing each class read personal essays about their shared experiences at Lincoln. Each student was called individually by their teachers to receive the Moving-Up certificate, followed by the naming of those students receiving special awards (see list below).

New this year was an especially entertaining dance routine to honor Mrs. Cozza, performed by a group of students (wearing face masks of the administrators and staff members that included the honoree), which had the audience laughing. Although the musical interlude was the sentimental favorite, For Just a Little While, the Moving-Up ceremony closed with an upbeat new musical arrangement (thanks to the cooperative efforts of Mrs. Cirillo and lyricist Mrs. Woerner) of Frozen’s Let It Go, aptly re-titled Let Us Go!

During the three Elementary Fifth-grade Moving-Up ceremonies, there were words of encouragement and welcome from Middle School Principal Thomas Murray along with wonderful awards, student, staff and parent recognition, as well as musical performances by the talented students. Each ceremony was followed by refreshments provided by the PTAs.

See Sayville School District website for full story and more photos.)

Sunrise Drive Moving-Up

Opening this year’s Moving-Up in their own Sunrise Drive state-of-the-art Cafeteria/Auditorium, the Fifth-graders sang the school song (composed by Mrs. Amy Baron), Sunrise Drive You Are the One, for the last time as Sunrise Drive students, which they had learned in Kindergarten.

In her Welcome, Principal Rose Castello first introduced Middle School Principal Thomas Murray, who greeted the future Sixth-graders with reassuring words. Mrs. Castello continued by proudly citing many good works performed by the students, especially noting: “This past year two young men came to me about collecting food for those less fortunate. Their initiative led to the collection of over 2,700 lbs. of food by the students at Sunrise Drive for LI Cares. Some other students sold bookmarks and bracelets outside of school and donated the funds to our Thanksgiving food baskets for local families.”

“In October our students raised over $15,000 for the American Heart Association during our annual Jump Rope for Heart. Many students daily supervise and assist in the safe arrival and dismissal of our students. Our student council members created birthday boxes for children and donated them to the Sayville Food Pantry. They also raised money and donated funds to Alex’s Lemonade Stand for childhood cancer, The Theresa Foundation for children with special needs, FOCOS an orthopedic foundation, UNICEF and St. Jude.”

List of Fifth-grade 2013-2014 Presidential Academic, Physical Fitness, and other Award Winners

Lincoln Avenue

ACADEMIC GOLD AWARDS
Cameron Batterberry
Robert Burgos
Dean Gennosa
Joseph Gollo
Adam Jones
Christian Jones
Conor McGrath
Sanjeeda Rahman
SILVER AWARDS
James Anderson
Kerr Gunther
Emily Hartman

Sunrise Drive

ACADEMIC GOLD AWARDS
Kaitlyn Menze
Brendan Meserve
Craig Messina
Alex Millwater
Jennifer O’Leary
Henry Pedisch
Alex Petruzzelli
James Schuster Jr.
Brooke Wandelt

SILVER AWARDS
Zachary Battell
Rhyann Christiansen
Courtney Gattiano
Kayla Huisman
Mallory Kinahan
Max Llewellyn
Marissa McGrath
Meghan McLaughlin,
Samantha Young
FITNESS AWARD GOLD
Craig Messina
Alex Millwater
(photos p7, l-r)
Suffolk County NYS State Comptroller
• Emma Famularo

County Legislature
Presiding Officer
• Nathan Perez
Triple “C”

Executive Public Service Award
(presented by Suffolk County Executive Steve Bellone) • Kevin Bunk

Matthew Yonkers
Christopher Zender
Katie Zender
Matthew Zender
(photos above, middle column; l-r)
• Triple “C”

• Dominique Rinaldi
& County Legislature
Presiding Officer
• Jenna Guerra, Colin Caraher

New York State Comptroller • Hannah Blaskiewicz, Sanjeeda Rahman (below)
“These students, your children, have made a difference! A difference here at Sunrise Drive, in Sayville and to people they may never meet.”

Prior to the presentation of certificates to all the Fifth-grade students by their classroom teachers, select students were named for specific awards (see p. 6 list below) followed by the musical interlude When I Grow Up.

Principal Castello also thanked the Sunrise Drive faculty for making a difference in the lives of their students.

Addressing her Fifth-graders for the last time, Mrs. Castello praised them for learning “much at Sunrise Drive; academically, socially and emotionally. You have grown and matured, ever moving forward toward independence. Many of you have demonstrated leadership, scholarship, character, citizenship and service to others. You are well-prepared for the challenges of Middle School. Although we don’t know what jobs you will hold in the future, I know that you can critically think, evaluate, read, and write.”

Once more, the music swelled as the students performed These Years Were Ours before they marched away amid tremendous applause.

(photos right) Representing NYS Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman at Cherry Avenue, Susan Connelly (a Sayville resident) presented the Triple “C” • Christina Guiffre & Emily Rosado for their commitment to better themselves, their school, their community, for their strength of character, and their remarkable courage.

(above) NYS Comptroller • Taylor Banks, Giavanna Kolczinski, Grace Urmaza

List of Fifth-grade 2013-2014 Presidential Academic, Physical Fitness, and other Award Winners

Cherry Avenue Moving-Up

After welcoming everyone to Cherry Avenue’s Moving-Up ceremony, new Principal, Dr. Lisa Ihne, acknowledged that the special day marked the closing of another chapter and the beginning of a new one in the students’ remarkable education.

“It has been a privilege to know the students and serve as their principal.” Dr. Ihne continued, “As a Fifth-grade, they are bright, eager students, well-prepared for the next phase of their education. They have helped make my first year at Cherry enjoyable and a memorable one. I have really enjoyed getting to know each and every one of the students, and I must admit that they’re one of the most respectful Fifth-grade groups I have ever met.”

Dr. Ihne thanked the parents for sharing their children with the Cherry Avenue community, encouraged the students (as they grew older and faced new challenges) to keep communication open with their parents, and closed with heartwarming sentiments; “Believe in yourself the way I do, and nothing will be beyond your reach. Congratulations Fifth-grade class. We are so proud of you. You will be missed!”

After the Moving-Up students were presented to Middle School Principal Mr. Thomas Murray, who invited the Sixth-graders to visit the building over the summer, the Special Awards portion of the ceremony (see list below) as well as the awarding of certificates followed.

Musical interludes during the program included the students singing Because of You, written and directed by Kristi Woerner. The traditional class gift was a unique ornamental garden sculpture, presented on behalf of the parents by Fifth-grade Committee parents Lisa Walker and Jean Feather, while the slide show was a sentimental journey that amused everyone. Thanks to the special talents of music teacher Kristi Woerner, the students ended the Moving-Up ceremony with a moving performance of Frozen’s Let It Go that had been cleverly paraphrased and re-titled Let Us Go!

(photos right) Suffolk County Executive Steve Bellone Public Service Award (presented in person by Suffolk County Executive Public Service Award)

• Kevin Bunk

Awards

List of Fifth-grade 2013-2014 Presidential Academic, Physical Fitness, and other Award Winners

Cherry Avenue Moving-Up

After welcoming everyone to Cherry Avenue’s Moving-Up ceremony, new Principal, Dr. Lisa Ihne, acknowledged that the special day marked the closing of another chapter and the beginning of a new one in the students’ remarkable education.

“It has been a privilege to know the students and serve as their principal.” Dr. Ihne continued, “As a Fifth-grade, they are bright, eager students, well-prepared for the next phase of their education. They have helped make my first year at Cherry enjoyable and a memorable one. I have really enjoyed getting to know each and every one of the students, and I must admit that they’re one of the most respectful Fifth-grade groups I have ever met.”

Dr. Ihne thanked the parents for sharing their children with the Cherry Avenue community, encouraged the students (as they grew older and faced new challenges) to keep communication open with their parents, and closed with heartwarming sentiments; “Believe in yourself the way I do, and nothing will be beyond your reach. Congratulations Fifth-grade class. We are so proud of you. You will be missed!”

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Two Hundred sixty-one Eighth-graders processed into the auditorium for their Moving-Up Ceremony, while the Seventh-grade Orchestra played the march.

Once all had assembled, the program opened with the National Anthem, sung a cappella by the gifted Dea Ahlgrim, followed by the outstanding Jazz Band performing Earth Wind and Fire’s ‘In the Stone’, which included solo improvisations by accomplished Eighth-grade musicians. Each of these commanding musical performances raised roars of approval and applause from the audience.

During his address, Principal Thomas Murray celebrated the accomplishments of the Moving-Up students, enumerated the class statistics (see below), and praised them for their outstanding attributes. ‘John Quincy Adams once said: ‘If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader. Your actions have and will continue to inspire others to dream more, learn more, and become more... Thank you for three wonderful years.... You are a wonderful class.’

Mr. Murray concluded by having the students stand and face their parents. ‘You have learned well these past three years. Your foundation for success has been built, by your hard work and the support of your parents and teachers. You are ready to move on to the High School. Be kind to each other, treat each other well. Be there for one another. Congratulations!’

STATISTICS For the 2014 Class of 261 students ACADEMICALLY
• 93 students took & passed the Algebra Regents—36% scoring at mastery level.
• 100% passed the Integrated Algebra Exam—59% scoring at mastery level.
• 80 students took & passed the Living Environment Regents—90% scoring at mastery level.
• 100% pass rate on both of the Regents exams.
• 67 students took & passed the High School Studio in Art Class, which is 20% of the class.
• 90% of the Class is leaving with 1 High School Credit
• 36% of the Class is leaving with 2 High School Credits
• 26% of the Class is leaving with 3 High School Credits
• 30% of the Class has maintained a 90 GPA for 11 marking periods.

THE ARTS
• Our Music Program has competed around the country. NYSSMA students performed solos receiving top honors. A student was selected to represent Sayville in the Long Island String Festival. Twelve students were selected for SCMEA All-County band/chorus/orchestra groups. Seven students were selected for the All-County Jazz Festival. Twenty students achieved an A’s rating (the highest rank) at this year’s NYSSMA solo festival. The music department participated in a practice-a-thon raising over $1000 for the Harry Chapin Food Pantry.

ATHLETICALLY
• Our teams have competed hard and have enjoyed success. There have been many undefeated seasons as well as Section XI Sportsmanship Award winners.

COMMUNITY SERVICE
• For the past three years, we have had over 200 Presidential Community Service Winners – serving 30,000 hours of community service.
• You raised money to beat cancer, support our soldiers, feed and clothe the needy, and collect toys, making Christmas a little brighter.

PTA AWARDS
-GIRLS SPORTSMANSHIP MELANIE O’HOPPE
-BOYS SPORTSMANSHIP NICK GONZALEZ
-SCHOOL LEADERSHIP CODY BOSTINTO
-SCHOOL/COMMUNITY SERVICE RYAN CONNOLLY
-ACADEMIC IMPROVEMENT PAUL WELCH