



YORKTOWN CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Dear Parents;

Over the past few weeks, I have had many opportunities to think of you as your children prepare to graduate from Yorktown High School. Last week I had the chance to address the parents of children entering kindergarten at French Hill School on kindergarten orientation day. I remember thinking to myself how lucky you are to have your children just starting out on their educational journey. I asked them how they felt today and, as you might expect, their answers varied: nervous, happy, anxious, uncertain, proud, etc. I wondered, if I had a chance to ask you the same question about your child going off to college, how similar your responses might sound.

My wife and I have reached that point in our lives known as “empty nesters.” I never liked the term when I was a young parent and now that we are there, I truly don’t like the term. All of those things that I vowed that I would never miss, school plays, meetings, band recitals, dance recitals, games, sleepovers, awards nights, art festivals, I miss terribly. As a matter of fact, there are times that I wish I could simply turn back the hands of time and wait with excitement for the card and the gift that were handcrafted for me by my children in elementary school.

As you prepare to begin or complete the empty nest phase in your lives, I know that you are running through the gamut of emotions that the kindergarten parents so astutely shared. The wonderful child that you have raised, cared about and loved is getting ready to leave the nest. You have given him/her roots, wings, values, knowledge of the world and he or she is prepared for the flight from your nest. Now comes the tricky part - it is time to let go and to believe that you have done and given everything that you could to make them ready for the next phase of their lives. It is too bad that no one prepares you for their flight. I suppose that is why I am thinking about you today. It will be a little bumpy for you at first. You’ll miss the loud music, constant talk at the table, outings to the mall, the comings and goings of friends, the drama of day to day living with teens. It will all change and, like everything else, you will adjust to their new beginnings and to yours as well.

Sometimes I think back on my wife and I going to college. Life was simpler back then and, of course, going away to school was not an option in our circles. As a matter of fact, both my mother-in-law and mother thought it was perfectly normal to commute four hours a day. My wife and I read every English anthology written on that commute to school. When we graduated and got married we

lived in the apartment upstairs from my in-laws where we paid cheap rent until we could afford to buy the house across the street and, we did. How different that world was from the world today, not better, not worse, just different.

Take this summer to enjoy some time with your grown child. Make sure that you take the opportunity to tell him/her how proud you are of his/her achievements. Say those words that we all long to hear at least once a day, "I love you." Start planning for how much more exciting the holidays will be because he/she will be coming home. Sometime, when you have a chance, stop, relax and congratulate yourself. You did a good job; you raised a child who will make a difference in the world.

[I have enclosed a favorite poem of mine by Linda Sackett-Morrison.](#) I hope that you will like it too. Make sure that it is on the list of things to pack for the dorm room wall. Good luck to you and to your precious child.

With warmest regards,

Ralph Napolitano, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools.

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enc.

**These Special Wishes
Are Just for You**

When you close your eyes at the
end of each day,
I wish you contented and peaceful sleep.

When you are fearful or uncertain,
I wish for warmth and light
to surround you.

When you dream,
I wish you soaring images and
endless possibilities.

When you wake each morning,
I wish you the joy of anticipating
a beautiful day ahead.

When you face problems,
I wish you boundless strength
and courage to guide you.

When you walk along your path,
I wish you lasting friendships
to brighten your way.

Most of all, I wish you love...
to fill your heart
and make your world complete.

- Linda Sackett-Morrison