

## **Rockridge Graduation Speech – Class of 2025**

Chris Kennedy, Superintendent, West  
Vancouver Schools

Good evening,

Staff, proud parents, and most importantly —  
Rockridge Secondary's graduating class of  
2025.

It is my honour to bring greetings on behalf of the 7,500 students and over 1,000 staff across West Vancouver Schools. And it's an extra pleasure to be back at Rockridge's grad — a school that never fails to impress with its character, its spirit, and the incredible people it produces. Mr. Kolkea has been telling me all year that this group is special, and while I know Mr. Kolkea is a great salesperson, I also know he is right about this.

Graduation is more than a finish line — it's a reflection point. A moment to look back at how far you've come and ahead to what's possible. You've spent years building this foundation — in classrooms and gymnasiums, on stages and in labs, through laughter and setbacks. You've grown through challenges — some global, some deeply personal — and shown resilience that will serve you long after you leave Rockridge.

Let's be honest: the world you're walking into isn't simple. Climate change, AI, shifting economies, evolving definitions of identity and justice — these are the waters you'll navigate. But I have full faith in your ability to do it. Why? Because I've seen what you've done already.

You've stood up for inclusion and equity.

You've shown leadership on issues that matter — truth and reconciliation, gender identity, mental wellness, and sustainability. You've pushed for better, not just for yourselves, but for your communities. You're not waiting your turn — you're shaping the future now.

And through all of it, you've had the support of some of the most committed educators in the country. At Rockridge, teachers aren't just instructors — they are mentors, coaches, club sponsors, and confidantes. They care deeply — and it shows. From volleyball teams to music ensembles, from Model UN to the upcoming golf provincials, from AP exams to art projects — the memories you've created and will continue to create over these last few weeks will stay with you, even as the course content fades.

Public education is a cornerstone of democracy and an engine for equity. And your success is a reflection of what's possible when a community invests in young people. So to your families: thank you for choosing public schools. And to you, graduates — thank you for making Rockridge stronger.

No pressure — but Rockridge grads tend to do big things. From top universities to start-ups, from social advocacy to scientific innovation, you are difference-makers. And the world needs your courage, your creativity, and your compassion.

So as you graduate, here's what I hope you remember:

- Stay curious. Let questions guide you more than certainty.
- Stay kind. The quiet power of empathy

changes lives.

- Stay grounded. The world may move fast — your values will keep you steady.

Class of 2025, you are part of a legacy. You carry the spirit of Rockridge with you — a spirit that's brave, thoughtful, and deeply committed to community.

Congratulations. We, the entire school community, are proud of you, we believe in you, and we can't wait to see what you do next.

Thank you.