

Rockridge Secondary Graduation 2026

Staff, proud parents, family members, friends, and most importantly, the Rockridge Secondary graduating class of 2026.

Before I speak directly to the graduates, I want to offer a brief but heartfelt thank you.

To the parents and families here tonight, thank you for choosing public education, and for trusting this school and this district with your children. And to the staff of Rockridge Secondary, thank you for supporting, challenging, encouraging, and caring for these students. Graduation is a student achievement, but it is also a community achievement.

Graduates, at the start of this year, I chose a word for 2026.

Alive.

A word that felt like both a reminder and an aspiration. Stay present. Stay curious. Stay connected to what actually matters.

But when I asked Mr. Kolkea about this class, another word came to mind.

Harmony.

Not harmony as in everyone being the same. That is just one note, repeated. Real harmony is different voices, different strengths, different stories coming together to create something none of you could have built alone.

And that sounds a lot like the Rockridge Class of 2026.

Mr. Kolkea told me this is an inclusive group. A group that supports one another in the classroom and beyond it. A group

whose involvement and leadership helped create record numbers of students participating in athletics this year.

That matters.

Because participation is never just about numbers. It is about belonging. It is about making room for others. And in a school like Rockridge, with its small school feel and strong sense of community, it is about creating the kind of place where more people feel brave enough to step forward.

This class did that.

You also took on new challenges. You were part of the school's first drumline. You helped bring back a school musical for the first time in well over a decade. You learned to work in harmony with artificial intelligence, not as something to fear or blindly follow, but as something to understand, question, and use thoughtfully.

That is a class that is curious. Willing to try. Not waiting for everything to be perfectly figured out before beginning.

And very few meaningful things begin with feeling completely ready.

The world you are graduating into will ask you to adapt, to listen, to think for yourself, and to work alongside people who see things differently. Harmony will matter there too. It takes attention. It takes effort. It takes knowing when to step forward, when to make space, when to lead, and when to listen.

Now this class is heading in many directions. Thirty different Canadian post secondary schools. Seven schools in the United States. Four more internationally.

That is a remarkable reach.

But wherever you go next, you carry something from Rockridge with you. The experience of being known. Of being part of a close community. Of seeing how much stronger a school becomes when people support one another and build something together.

Your education has given you more than content. It has given you the capacity to think, to feel, to question, and to care. Learning is not just about preparing for some distant future. It is about becoming more fully yourself, right now.

So say yes.

Say yes to learning something new. Say yes to people who expand your world. Say yes to hard conversations, generous friendships, and work that matters enough to challenge you.

And say yes to staying fully alive in the life that is in front of you.

Rockridge Secondary, Class of 2026, you have been a gift to this school and to this community.

Now go find your rhythm, listen for the voices around you, and make something beautiful.

Congratulations.