



THE DISTRICT
YSLETA INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

CLASS OF 2020 COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY

Hybrid virtual graduations

May 27-June 5, 2020

SUPERINTENDENT SPEECH

Greetings everyone, and welcome to the virtual commencement ceremony for the Class of 2020 at the Ysleta Independent School District. It is a privilege to join with our families virtually to commemorate a once-in-a-lifetime milestone: High school graduation.

Parents, family, and friends: I understand this is an unconventional way to celebrate graduation for our seniors. But after all that has happened this year – and all that has taken place over the life of this generation – I would propose that “unconventional” is the BEST way to celebrate this remarkable group of bright, resourceful, and talented graduates.

When the members of our Class of 2020 were born, there was nothing conventional about the wounded country that welcomed them following the tragic 9/11 terrorist attacks in New York. As a country, we were saddened, stunned, and shaken – but there was no stopping the youthful promise of the Class of 2020, which would go on to witness such unconventional events as:

- The election of the country’s first African-American president;
- The appointment of the first Hispanic justice on the U.S. Supreme Court;
- And quite possibly, the most revered technological invention of all-time: **the iPhone.**

Today, as our graduates prepare to enter the world of adulthood, they have been thrust yet again into a most unconventional circumstance: A pandemic that has disrupted not only the end of their senior year, but **life** as we all know it. However, this unprecedented time of crisis has also allowed us to witness the impressive resilience, resolve, and perseverance of the Class of 2020.

Already, you have faced extraordinary circumstances. Already, you have learned to survive dramatic change, and thrive in the face of adversity. As a result, the Ysleta Independent School District is confident in its mission to send you out into the world as a successful high school graduate who is prepared to meet the challenges of today’s global economy.

In your years at Ysleta ISD, you have helped create our legacy as The District of Champions, where our high schools are routinely named among the Best High Schools in America by the *U.S. News & World Report*. Our phenomenal sports teams have brought home an astounding **FIVE** state championships in the past two years, as well as numerous individual gold, silver, and bronze medals. Our student musicians, singers, and artists are regularly recognized as among the best in the state and nation for their outstanding performances and artwork.

In typical fashion, the talents of the Class of 2020 refuse to be confined to convention. Extraordinary events have taken place over your lifetime, and they have uniquely positioned you to set a bold path for your future – one that embraces change, adversity, and opportunity without fear or hesitation.

I am reminded today of one of our greatest and most unconventional U.S. presidents, Franklin Delano Roosevelt. He survived the Spanish flu pandemic of 1918, and boldly led this country for a historic four terms, despite having polio and lacking the ability to walk or stand on his own in the last 20 years of his life. He once famously observed that throughout history, “There seems to be a mysterious cycle in human events. To some generations, much is given. Of other generations, much is expected.”

What he said next is the same message I offer you, Class of 2020: “**This** generation of Americans has a rendezvous with destiny.”

Whether your plans include a postsecondary education, a noble career in military service, or advancement in the profession of your choice, I encourage you to be the master of your destiny, not the victim. Embrace the unconventional adversity before you, and transform it into the strength you need to create the future you envision for yourselves. We wish you only the best, and we eagerly await the success you are destined to achieve.

Congratulations, Class of 2020!