

The New Kid
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Technically, I'm still the "new kid" in this class. I was supposed to graduate high school quietly as one of hundreds, not as one of four—which honestly sounds appealing right now and certainly less scary than having to make a speech. But plans change, and two years ago I was sent to MCDS.

At first, I was terrified of my classmates—they were so close and family-like, it seemed impossible that I could ever fit in to their dynamic. But as the months passed we began to get closer and at some point last year I found myself completing their sentences during art class and comfortably storming with them during English. And just like that, I had been accepted as a part of the MCDS family.

This school gave me a place to be myself, a place where I could stand out but also fit in. Two years ago I could never have imagined myself admitting to being excited about discovering how to use an em dash in my writing, but Mr. Childs can confirm that, in fact, yes I have. Two years ago I don't think I even know what a crew team was, but today I can't imagine life without being a coxswain—whether of MCDS's unique team of four or in the future. I couldn't have imagined ever having to draw something during art class again, but I did. And as bad as my attempts may have been, I have thoroughly enjoyed it and learned a lot about art that I never thought I even would want to know. Two years ago small children running up to me would have been a cause for panic, but today I know that I will miss seeing them around every day. I never would have dreamed that I could enjoy math class. But I'm proud to say I stand before you today with no fear of entering a math room and that throughout the year I have truly enjoyed calculus.

All of these things are thanks to MCDS.

It's surprising how much a school can shape a person, and it's impossible to put into words. Yet I know that every one of my classmates here with me today—and probably many more sitting in the audience—have been touched somehow by their experience at MCDS. We chose this school, whether it started as a choice or not, because it allows us to be ourselves—to explore our interests, engage in our community, take pride in our work, and be accepted for who we are. And I know that I for one am honored to be graduating with such an amazing group of people from such an incredible school.

Y en la tradicion de MCDS, voy a terminar mi discurso en espanol. Gracias a todos que me han ayudado. Siempre estare agradecida.