

## Guest Editorial

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DPI-NR 2021-28

Tuesday, June 1, 2021

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### Congratulations to Wisconsin's Class of 2021

*A guest editorial by State Superintendent Carolyn Stanford Taylor*

As Wisconsin's chief advocate for schools, I am honored to congratulate this year's graduates for achieving a tremendous milestone.

Wisconsin's Class of 2021 have used their voices to push for positive changes in their communities. They are a group who has demonstrated a unique ability to adapt and have gained many lifelong skills along the way. I am incredibly proud of the foundation they have laid, which will undoubtedly prepare them for their future as our next generation of leaders.

The past 14 months have tested students in ways not felt before. Though the familiarity of a normal school day was upended by the COVID-19 pandemic for many, students found new ways to stay engaged and motivated. Wisconsin's young people adjusted to learning remotely and persisted in doing so, despite being away from peers and facing many daily stressors. Our state's graduates were not defined by unpredictable circumstances. Instead, they responded by facing reality one day at a time, focusing on their education and making a difference.

To Wisconsin's graduates: You have developed and applied critical skills and have become better processors of information. You have renewed your sense of determination and self-motivation, and successfully used those skills to push forward toward your goals. Though many of you had to forego various traditions and rites of passage, you found new, creative ways to celebrate your accomplishments. At the onset of the recent racial and social justice movement, you used empathy and compassion to let your voices be heard, stressing the importance and value of diversity and inclusion. I am amazed at your resiliency and how you have challenged yourselves to be agents of change. I know your success will continue as you enter the next chapters of your lives, which will bring excitement, rewards, and opportunities. The impact you have made and the experiences you leave with will aid you as you address other challenges facing humanity and as you grow as role models.

(more)

As I think back on Wisconsin's Class of 2021, I am reminded of the words of author James Baldwin, who said, "Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced."

I encourage Wisconsin families, educators, and communities to join me in applauding Wisconsin's Class of 2021 on their achievement and wishing them all the best in their future.

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**NOTE:** A headshot for publication of State Superintendent Carolyn Stanford Taylor is available at <https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/statesupt/jpg/carolyn-stanford-taylor.jpg>. This guest editorial is available electronically at <https://dpi.wi.gov/news/releases/2021/congratulations-class-of-2021>.