



# Santa Barbara County Education Office

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## Sharing the joy of graduation

*By Dr. Susan Salcido, Santa Barbara County Superintendent of Schools*

This is it — the time of year when friends and families prepare for that very special graduation. These milestone moments, the ceremonies and celebratory parties, have already begun for many Santa Barbara County families, and in the next few weeks will continue, like a shining wave reverberating across our county, state, and nation.

As my own family prepares to drive to northern California to cheer on our niece at her high school graduation, I know that our excitement is shared with hundreds upon hundreds of families and friends throughout Santa Barbara County who joyfully celebrate their own graduates at ceremonies near and far.

We all share the thrill as we hurry to find a seat where we might catch a glimpse of our graduate walking into the stadium. And we listen with great anticipation until we hear those two magical words intoned proudly: the first and last name of our graduate. Hearing the name proclaimed from the stage is what makes it real and brings it home.

As our graduates walk across the stage proudly, gleefully, and with new-found confidence, every step they take reflects a 'thank you' to someone whose support helped make it possible. That includes family members, friends, teachers, coaches, and mentors who played important roles in reaching this day. Many of those people sit in the audience with pride, bearing witness and sharing in the joy.

In our county, we are profoundly grateful for the many partners who support our youth — organizations like the Scholarship Foundation of Santa Barbara, Partners in Education, the Boys and Girls Clubs, and Girls Inc., to name just a few. These groups strengthen the fabric of our community by providing vital resources and programs to enhance experiences for children and schools. Together, we are a community that prioritizes education, and events like graduations are reasons for a collective celebration.

For the young graduates themselves, this ceremony is the culmination of 13 years in school. For older graduates, like the veterans we honored several months ago who waited decades to receive their diplomas, the official certificate reflects a lifetime of service and holds all the more meaning because of the time span they waited to receive it.

Graduation from high school — what a source of pride for all the students, family members, and friends who take the time and make the effort to revel in the pure joy of the achievement. We all feel such deep appreciation for our graduates not only for reaching this high point, which we can relate to, but also for something beyond our own experience — for growing up in a world we cannot easily compare with our own lives. It is different. Their path is, in many ways, unlike those that have come before. This is the nature of new generations. They blaze new trails, equipped with new tools.

A high school diploma marks the end of something monumental, and heralds the commencement of something brimming with even greater promise and possibilities. We marvel at the accomplishments of our youth who have come of age in times of significant change, and a state of the world that is different from the one we entered at their age.

With resounding applause and beaming with joy, we congratulate all the graduates, far and wide, who have reached this impressive milestone.

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