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**Mary Elizabeth Davis, PhD**  
Superintendent

August 17, 2020

To the Class of 2021,

You have lived what seems like a lifetime since March 13, 2020. It has been a long 157 days since the last time you were together as a class, at school, on one campus, under one roof, laughing with friends and classmates, walking familiar hallways, surrounded by the comforting presence of teachers, eating a familiar cafeteria lunch, and listening to the same morning and afternoon announcements each day. On March 13<sup>th</sup>, 157 days ago, I could not have imagined that you would be preparing for your first day of your long-awaited senior year by readying a classroom in your home instead of readying everything you would need to walk through your high school's front doors on a first day one last time.

These 157 days have given you a front-row seat to history in the making, and you will be the first graduates to lead us into the chapter that follows the heartache, grieving, anxiety, and unrest of this season. You are the senior class in a time when choosing kindness, grace, and acceptance will steer our community, state, and nation into a future that will thrive. You are the senior class that will never take one day for granted. You will always look back a second time to say goodbye, embrace a friend a little longer, and treasure the memories you make when you are with the people and at the places you value most. You will wrap up your K-12 educational journey more experienced than any class before you. And because of that, I have confidence our world is in great hands.

Much has happened over the course of the past 157 days, but the 279 days remaining until graduation day matter even more. Though things seem unfair at the moment, I believe more good, hope, and possibilities are right in front of us. I feel confident that we will find the right time and the right way to get back to normal and honor and celebrate the seniors of Henry County Schools.

Class of 2021, your destiny awaits. After what has seemed like a lifetime, these past 157 days will, in hindsight, have served to prepare you to make a difference in this world for a lifetime to come. The first step is today. Congratulations on the beginning of the most unprecedented first day of your senior year!

Sincerely,

Mary Elizabeth Davis