

## Tips for Writing and Delivering Your Annual Speech

It is that time of year again, the principal's address to the graduating class. Here are some points to consider as you prepare:

### Writing

- Prepare your speech. Few people speak well off the cuff.
  - To write a great speech that is well prepared, takes one hour for every minute you speak. Good speeches take less time. Poor speeches take no time at all.
- Be concise, people are not all that interested in hearing a long speech from the principal.
  - Your speech should be entertaining and/or persuasive.
- Don't ramble. Have a theme. It can have as many points as you have to make but they should all come back to the main topic.
  - Use a mind map to focus your points.
  - Start with the body of the speech. List the main points you wish to make. Add the supporting facts to each.
  - Once you have the points completed, go back and create a catchy beginning that will engage your listeners.
  - The conclusion should be a summary of what you have said. It should be memorable.
    - Know what it is you want the audience to leave thinking about, feeling, believing, doing etc. after you finish speaking.
- Be a storyteller. People remember the stories you tell, especially if it is about their children.
  - The stories should support your message.
  - A word of caution; naming some students in your speech and not others can sometimes cause resentment especially from parents.
  - If only one student is named, it should be within the context of something the class has participated in that this particular person was known for their leadership, courage etc.
- Do some research to supplement your stories and to add some interesting information related to your points.
- Use good-natured humour that relates to your audience and to the theme. Never use commercial jokes that people have probably heard before or may take offence.
- Use language that the audience will understand. If you are going to use terms that the students know but not the parents and vice versa, explain them so everyone gets the message or the humour.
  - Do not use words that you have a hard time pronouncing!

### Delivery

- Practise! Practise! Practise!
- Your speech should sound natural and that requires practice.
- Read your speech out loud until you can say it fluently without stumbling.
- Make eye contact with the audience. Each person should feel as though you are speaking directly to them.
- Smile when you speak, after all you could end up on YouTube!

### Happy Writing!

### Sharing

Consider sharing your speech writing talents with your colleagues. Send your graduation speech to Member Services Director Nelly Kelders at [nkelders@cpc.on.ca](mailto:nkelders@cpc.on.ca) and we'll create a file of speeches for future reference.