

New Rochelle High School Celebrates the Class of 2021 with Graduation Ceremonies

New Rochelle High School (NRHS) today concluded the 2020-21 school year with a graduation ceremony for over 675 students in the Huguenot Class of 2021.

For the first time in New Rochelle history, the graduation was split into two ceremonies due to COVID-19 protocols. The first graduation was held at 10 a.m., followed by an identical ceremony at 1:30 p.m. The event took place under sunny skies on an NRHS athletic field, with the twin lakes serving as a scenic backdrop.

Festivities began with faculty members wearing black gowns, leading the precession of graduates onto the field. Several speakers addressed the joyous crowd.

Dr. Alex Marrero, Interim Superintendent of the City School District of New Rochelle, said he was thrilled to experience graduation in person with the students and challenged them to “transform our lives in the future.”

Interim NRHS Principal Steven Goldberg called living through the pandemic “a defining time in our lives” and urged the graduates to make the world a better place. “As you leave this beautiful school in this supportive and nurturing community, know that we have prepared you well to become informed global citizens who are ready for robust civic involvement to fight for a world free of racism and bigotry in all forms of hatred.”

Board of Education President Rachel Relkin provided words of motivation. “You all have dreams,” she said. “It is time to take advantage of all this world has to offer.” She also spoke of the students’ journey through the New Rochelle school system and the importance of their shared experiences and the memories made.

Students also offered words of encouragement and gratitude. Salutatorian Talia Hughes thanked all who helped and supported her throughout her schooling and wished her classmates “good luck out there in the whole wide world.” Valedictorian Daniel Long spoke about the opportunity for continuous self-improvement, noting that graduation is “not an end point, but a step that enables the learning process to continue.”

Class of 2021 President Hafsah Zia challenged her classmates to ponder: “What experiences will you create for yourself? Who will you turn to in times of need? Where will you find enlightenment?” She encouraged graduates to count their blessings, “laugh a little longer” and be kind to others.

The Mayor of New Rochelle, the honorable Noam Bramson, delivered greetings to the graduates, their friends and families in attendance. Bramson congratulated the students on reaching an important milestone and urged the graduates to “Make New Rochelle proud!”

After the speeches, anticipation and excitement filled the air as graduates’ names were called and degrees were conferred.

The Leonard Talner Memorial Award was presented at the afternoon ceremony to Jared Barajas, who received \$100 and a trophy. Last week, the high school held award ceremonies honoring academic achievement, athletic achievement and extracurricular achievement.

All three ceremonies can be found on the district’s [YouTube page](#). Video of the graduation ceremonies can be found on the District webpage, nred.org. Photos of the graduation ceremonies can be found on the [City School District of New Rochelle Facebook page](#).