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June 10, 2026

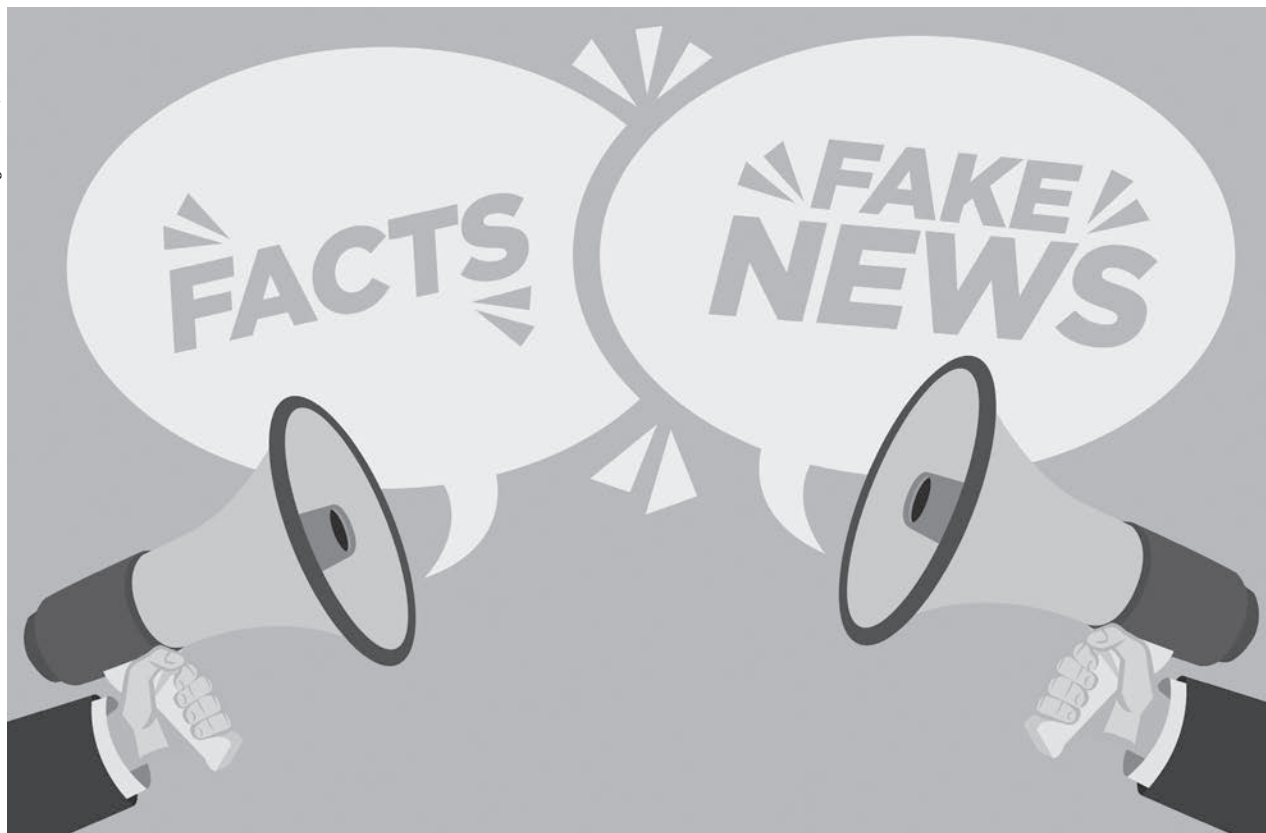


CARL RUSSO/Staff photo

Whittier Valedictorian Jayda Love-Rooney Jatoba of Newburyport gives her address at the Class of 2026 graduation ceremony May 28.

# A finish line and a beginning

2026 graduation ceremonies celebrate students' accomplishments, look forward to future



## Looking to combat fake news?

Here are some resources to help you determine if what you've read is true:

» **Politifact** is the Pulitzer Prize-winning fact checking operation run by the nonprofit Poynter Institute. The site fact-checks statements by politicians and debunks myriad Facebook hoaxes.

<https://www.politifact.com/>

» **FactCheck.org**, run by Annenberg Public Policy Center, performs much of the same tasks, and also let's you ask questions of the fact checkers. An example question: Did the Supreme Court rule that it is illegal to take the oath of office with anything but the Bible? (The answer is no.)

<https://www.factcheck.org/>

» **Snopes** is the original fact-checking website. Use the site's search bar to get to the bottom of political statements, viral videos and urban myths.

<https://www.snopes.com/>

» **A Google reverse image search** is the best way to find out if that photo you saw making the rounds on Twitter or Facebook is real. This story from PC Magazine walks you through how to do it on your desktop or your phone.

<https://www.pcmag.com/article2/0,2817,2492468,00.asp>

» **Still need help?** Contact us at the Eagle-Tribune, and we'll get the answer for you, no matter the topic. Email editor Tracey Rauh at [trauh@eagletribune.com](mailto:trauh@eagletribune.com).



## REAL NEWS IN SCHOOLS

### How the program works

Your school can have access to local, trusted journalism from The Eagle-Tribune on a daily basis. We report on news throughout the Merrimack Valley and Southern New Hampshire, covering all things local - from schools, to sports, to government, people profiles, business, entertainment and more. You get the facts - the real news - from experienced reporters, photographers and editors you can count on at no cost to your school.

#### Here are the basics of the program:

**What is it?** The Eagle-Tribune partners with local businesses to provide free digital access to our newspaper to anyone within the school at no cost to the school. This access encourages students to value the vital news coverage being produced by The Eagle-Tribune. They will build awareness and gain critical thinking skills in the process.

**Who can participate?**

This program will benefit teachers, students, and the broader school community.

**Where does it take place?**

You can access our newspaper online. Teachers can incorporate the program into their curriculums, even having reporters, photographers and editors visit your class.

**When can we start benefiting?** As soon as we have your commitment to participate in Real News in Schools we will go to work to find a local business who wants to sponsor you. Once we have one, we will work with your IT Department to get the program up and running.

**Why is this valuable?**

There's a lot of fake news out there on social media and elsewhere. The Eagle-Tribune, founded in 1868 as the Lawrence Daily Eagle and a twice Pulitzer Prize winning publication, has a long track record of fair and accurate reporting that cuts through the misinformation.

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# Transitions, next steps, and all that's left to come

**Tom Walters**

Commentary



Life is a series of transitions: childhood to adolescence, adolescence to adulthood, student to worker, parent to grandparent ... so many more.

With aging comes retirement – the “golden years.” and along the way we hope to have found some measure of success and happiness at each stage while weathering the ups and downs of transition.

It occurs to me that over the years I drew great inspiration from my students, whether I knew it at the time or not. I believe I gained at least as much inspiration from them as they may have drawn from me, probably much more.

I also have drawn inspiration from my family – my wife and daughter – both of whom have given me immense pride for their love and for their professional successes. With sadness, we suffered a family death this past winter. But we got through it with lots of wonderful stories and cherished memories.

This year our family is celebrating our great nephew's high school graduation. He is a wonderful young man, bright and talented, and we are very proud of the person he has become. He's off to university in the fall, and while we'll miss him, we also celebrate the possibilities for him.

Another transition.

I have written in the past that this is a time for communities to celebrate the successes of their young people through commencements from institutions of higher learning and graduations from high school. The yard signs are springing up, symbols of success, pride, and accomplishment.

Yes, it's another year when students, school personnel, parents, and communities can give themselves a well-deserved pat on the



**Methuen High School Class of 2025 graduate Colin Robinson celebrates with a back flip after receiving his diploma last June.**

CARL RUSSO/Staff photo

back – a season of smiles and cards of congratulations; perhaps even for some a season to celebrate survival.

I'm sure there are students who feel as if high school was a remote island full of loneliness to be endured. But they made it not just to an end, but a beginning, one filled with possibilities.

There have been letters to the newspaper bemoaning the absence of items that appeared in the past – police logs come to mind specifically. Many crime news articles are still there to read, but I much prefer seeing the pages of *The Eagle-Tribune* filled with the smiling faces of children at some community event; or people opening a walking trail; or people sponsoring a craft fair; or other acts of community service.

A recent front-page photo depicted a beautiful wall mural painted in Lawrence by gifted artist Rob Gibbs – something



**Jean Abreu holds up his diploma on stage during a graduation ceremony for Haverhill High School last June afternoon at Haverhill Stadium.**

TIM JEAN/Staff photo

from which we can all draw inspiration should we happen by it.

Also in the paper that day was an article about a young

scholar-athlete, an *Eagle-Tribune* award nominee. Elijah Jones, a student at Whittier Tech, is planning to attend Merrimack College and study engineering.

His answers to the interviewer's questions were articulate and insightful. And yes, inspiring. The legend on his coat-of-arms should be, “Don't take the easy way out.”

Elijah spoke of an inspirational role model, his uncle, who no doubt contributed to this young man's admirable successes and work ethic, both in the classroom and on the football field. Well done, young man.

I wrote a couple of years ago that, like spring itself, our communities are budding and blossoming as they cherish their uniqueness and the accomplishments of their residents, this month reflected in our graduating seniors.

Our young people are beginning to chart their life paths, planning for their careers and their personal growth to get to them. There's uncertainty and confusion, yes. That is part of life's transitions.

If we as communities have lent support, be it by way of school buildings, ball fields, libraries, concert halls, art galleries, or computer labs, then our financial commitments have been successful. We've been able to help. We hope they will have fond memories of the communities of their youth, and the people who contributed to it.

What this all means is that life takes a village. It takes all of us – families, schools, teachers, safety and government officials, all of us – to guide them toward the diverse routes we know they'll take and to develop and cultivate the unique gifts they all possess.

Choices and path to get there. That's really what life's transitions are all about.

As I wrote once before, in a graduation speech a former superintendent offered advice he got from his grandfather to the crowd.

“Always leave the woodshed a little fuller than you found it.”

That's one of my favorite quotes, and speaks to what is yet to come.

*Tom Walters is a retired music teacher and school arts administrator. Reach him at tomwalters729@gmail.com.*

# ‘We educate the whole person’

## Central Catholic celebrates accomplishments of 297 seniors



REBA SALDANHA/Photos

Valedictorian Milena Mataac is hugged by Yazmine Mateo after giving her speech at Central Catholic High School's graduation ceremony Thursday.

Central Catholic High School's graduation ceremony takes place in the school's Memorial Gymnasium on May 21.



By Jill Harmacinski  
» Staff Writer

LAWRENCE — Central Catholic High School graduated 297 students its 88th commencement May 21.

The Class of 2026 received more than 1,900 acceptances to over 255 different colleges and universities nationally and internationally (including Ivy League institutions), in 38 U.S. states including D.C. and in two countries including the United States, school officials announced.

Graduates will play college athletics, serve the least favored, and excel in professional fields including medicine, law, engineering, education, business and

more, CCHS officials said.

Most importantly, students will carry on the mission of Central Catholic throughout the world.

“Central Catholic High School makes Jesus known and loved,” the school said in a graduation announcement. “We educate the whole person for college and for life, with particular care for the least favored and those in need.”

Milena Mataac of Newbury was named valedictorian, and Amelia Phillips of Windham, New Hampshire, was named salutatorian.

Mataac plans to attend the University of Pennsylvania to study bioengineering; Phillips will be attending Northeastern University.



Kallie McCarthy smiles during Central Catholic High School's graduation ceremony May 21.



Ilanet Guerrero poses for a photo with her diploma during Central Catholic High School's graduation ceremony.

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# 415 reasons to celebrate

## Hundreds of students graduate from Andover High

By Angelina Berube  
» Staff Writer

LOWELL — Andover High School celebrated the 415 graduates of the Class of 2026 during its graduation ceremony at the Tsongas Center on June 1.

Ella Murphy and Zachary Pan welcomed the graduates, families, friends along with school and district administration to the 166th commencement of the high school.

The Andover Graduation Choir performed “The Star-Spangled Banner,” “Lift Ev’ry voice and Sing,” “America” and its rendition of “For Good” from “Wicked.” The band and orchestra played other selections like “Andover Song” during the evening.

Interim Superintendent Keith Taverna gave his remarks and presented the graduates as School Committee members handed the students their diplomas.

Class marshals were valedictorian Vignesh Jayakumar and salutatorian Anika Nagle.

Three students in this year’s class have committed to the U.S. military. Other students were recognized as members of the National Honor Society, National Art Honor Society and Tri-M Music Society.

A number of seniors were members of the Andover Robotics Club, Distributive Education Clubs of America (DECA), a distinguished scholar and an Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) scholar.

Some seniors also completed the Endorsement of Global Engagement program while others received the designation of Massachusetts Seal of Biliteracy with Distinction or the Massachusetts Seal of Biliteracy.

Chloe Ahn and Margaret Farabaugh delivered the closing remarks.

**Andover graduate Kevin Sun gives the thumbs up at the start of the commencement on Monday. Andover High School’s 166th commencement was at the Tsongas Center in Lowell.**



Andover graduate Amira Ali waves to family at the start of the commencement on Monday evening at the Tsongas Center in Lowell.

CARL RUSSO/Staff photos



Andover High School’s 166th commencement at the Tsongas Center in Lowell.

# 'A dream come true'

## Whittier distributes 297 diplomas

By Mark E. Vogler  
 > mvogler@eagletribune.com

HAVERHILL — “It’s a dream come true for me,” Liam Burns, 17, of Haverhill, said as he closed out his speech at the Whittier Vocational Technical High School’s 40th annual commencement exercises May 29.

Burns was one of four members of Whittier’s 297 graduates to complete their High School education without missing a day of school. Jessica Eaton, Christopher McAuliffe and Kosiochukwu Onwuka also had perfect attendance.

Seventy percent of this year’s class will be going onto college. Another 27 percent have jobs lined up and 3 percent plan to enlist in the military.

This year’s graduates became the eighth class in a row to have 100 percent of students pass MCAS tests required for a high school diploma.

Jonathan Maker was the valedictorian of this year’s graduating class. Dakota Durbin was the salutatorian.

Area businessman Salvatore Lupoli waved a written copy of a commencement speech he planned to give. But Lupoli, president of Riverwalk Properties and Salvatore’s restaurant, told the crowd gathered at the stadium that he decided it would be better to speak extemporaneously “right from my heart to your ears.”

Instead of a talk about how he became a successful businessman in the Merrimack Valley, Lupoli spent about 30 minutes praising the efforts of parents, teachers, school officials and graduates.

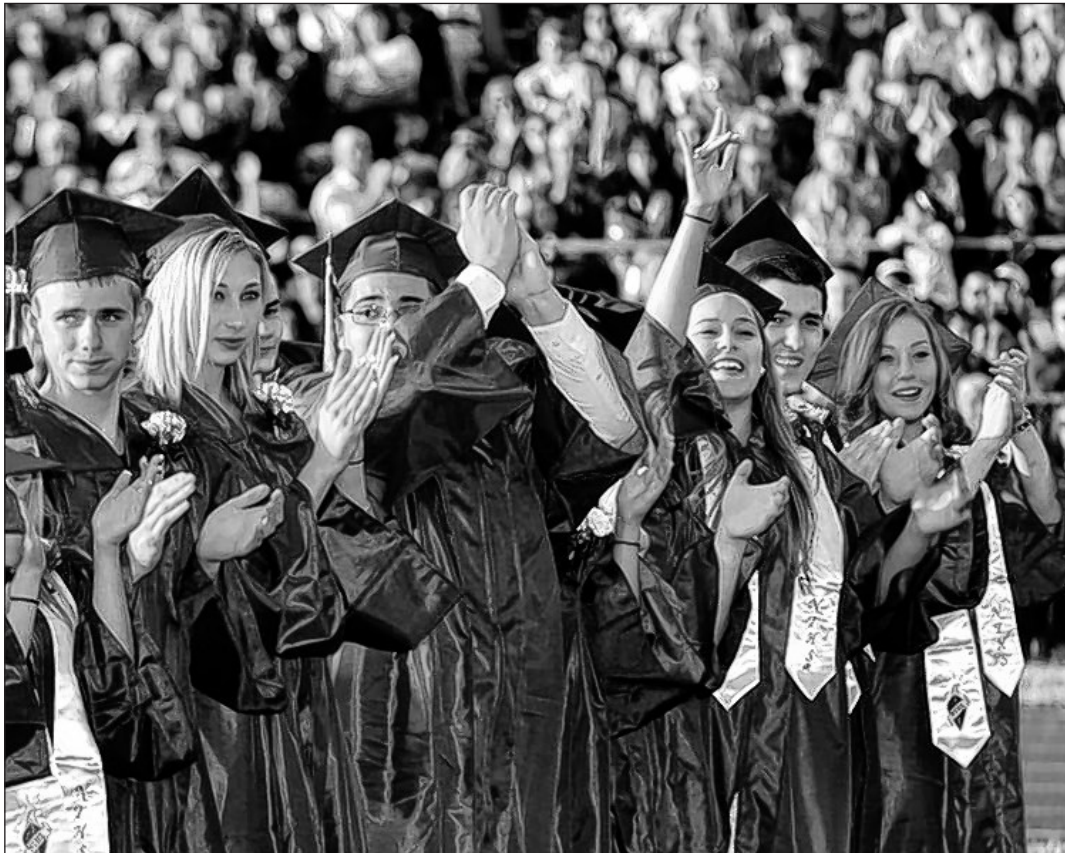
“That’s what this school is all about — quality and commitment,” Lupoli told the crowd. “Each and everyone of those kids who are going to be huge successes in life,” he said.



CARL RUSSO/Staff photo

Salutatorian Niuris Maria Laguard of Haverhill gives her address. Whittier Regional Vocational Technical High School celebrated the Class of 2026 graduation ceremony May 28.

Whittier Regional Vocational Technical High School graduates applaud their ceremony Thursday night.



Whittier senior class president Liam Burns of Haverhill, who has perfect attendance, gives his graduation address.



CARL RUSSO/Staff photo

Andover graduate Hazel Faulkner is congratulated by a faculty member at the end of the commencement on Monday.



REBA SALDANHA

2026 Brother Florentius Award winner Hannah Harrington walks through a line of past recipients during Central Catholic High School's graduation ceremony in Lawrence.



CARL RUSSO/Staff photo

Maryery Jimenez holds up her diploma with a smile at the Whittier Regional Vocational Technical High School Class of 2026 graduation ceremony May 28.



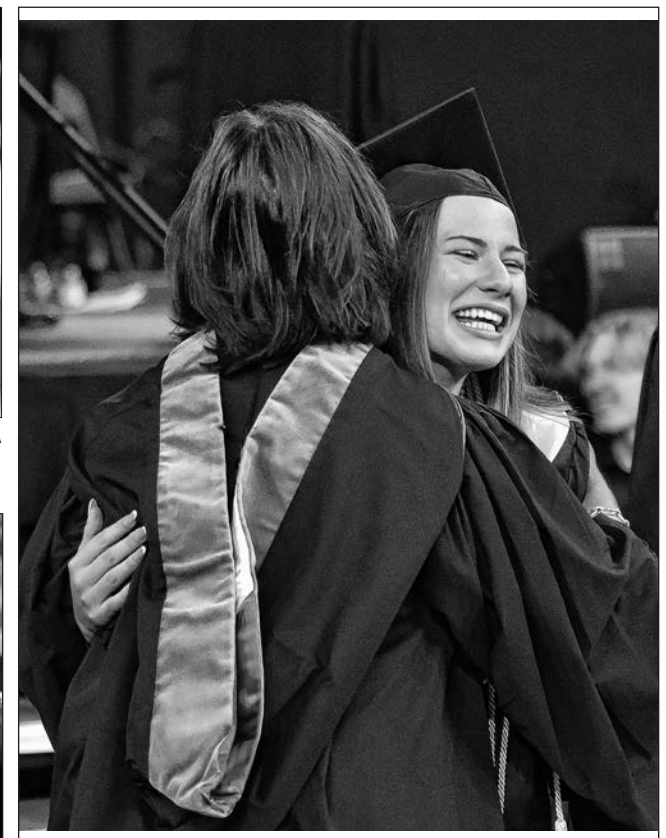
REBA SALDANHA

Kamil Cabrera receives his diploma from Jodi Linehan Kriner, president of Central Catholic High School.



CARL RUSSO/Staff photo

Andover High School graduate Haley Murphy is congratulated by Principal Jimmy D'Andrea after receiving her diploma on Monday night.



CARL RUSSO/Staff photo

Andover graduate Lyric Bartleson is congratulated after receiving her diploma at the Andover High School 166th commencement at the Tsongas Center in Lowell.



CARL RUSSO/Staff photo

**Class marshals Vignesh Jayakumar, left, valedictorian, and Anika Nagle, salutatorian, lead the graduates at the Andover High School 166th commencement at the Tsongas Center in Lowell. 6/0<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>2026**



CARL RUSSO/Staff photo

**Andover High School's 166th commencement at the Tsongas Center in Lowell. 6/0<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>2026**



CARL RUSSO/Staff photo

**Andover High graduate Ava DeLuca accepts her diploma from Shauna Murray, chair of the School Committee, on Monday evening.**



CARL RUSSO/Staff photo

**Katerina Green blows a kiss while showing her diploma to family. Whittier Regional Vocational Technical High School celebrated the Class of 2026 graduation ceremony May 28.**



REBA SALDANHA

**Lucy Irwin accepts the Outstanding Female Athlete Award from Athletic Director Zac Blazak during Central Catholic High School's graduation ceremony.**



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