

Commencement Speech Guidelines 2025

Our 2025 Commencement Ceremony, to be held on June 1, 2025, will include one student speech.

The Theme of the Speech is one of Inspiration

The purpose of this speech is to connect graduating seniors and provide them with an opportunity to look ahead. This “forward looking” speech focuses on life beyond New Trier and how your New Trier experiences have prepared you for the future. The speech may not be more than five minutes in length. Successful speeches tend to stick close to the 5-minute mark.

Successful speakers are often storytellers, using poignant, funny, surprising, or other emotional examples to connect with their audience. The Commencement Speaker should speak from their own New Trier experiences and be inclusive of their peers' experiences; the successful speech will make every student feel included. This is an important balance to strike. A few personal examples help others relate to your speech, but an entire speech on your personal experience is not relatable. Similarly, an entire speech based on generalities or inspirational quotes has difficulty connecting with the audience. Don't be afraid to use a little humor to speak to the unique experiences of your class. Please also remember to consider families, guardians, grandparents, and siblings when developing your speech. Students should make sure to practice their speech aloud before submitting it for consideration, concentrating on delivery as well as content. A particular focus or theme works better than general platitudes. Ted Talks are great examples of short, focused speeches that can appeal to wide audiences. You can also view past years NT student commencement speeches on our [website](#). Please reference the Commencement Speaker Rubric that the committee will use to score each applicant.

Application Process (All applications submitted will be reviewed by the speech committee)

Students with questions or those interested in submitting a speech can schedule an optional ten-minute meeting with Mrs. Dubravec to discuss speech parameters. **Meetings will take place in the Principal's office between March 11 - March 21. Please email Mrs. Rasch rascha@nth.net to schedule your meeting.** **Other Information**

- Written speeches must be emailed to Mrs. Rasch **March 31 by 3:45 p.m.** rascha@nth.net
- Students will be contacted via email to present their speech to a committee that includes students, staff, and administration. This committee will determine the Commencement Speaker.
- The chosen Commencement Speaker will be notified and may be asked to provide revisions and rehearse the speech.
- Speaker may not revise speech after final approval.

Commencement Speaker Rubric

<u>Written Speech Rubric</u>	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Speech Organization <i>The speech has an intro/thesis, conclusion, and supporting paragraphs.</i>				
New Trier Connection <i>The speech emulates New Trier ideals, memories, and spirit.</i>				
Parent Relatability <i>The speech has the potential to engage parents and relatives.</i>				
Student Relatability <i>The speech has the potential to engage students and teens.</i>				
Speech Readiness <i>The speech has the polish to be easily edited or does not require major edits.</i>				
Notes				

<u>Application/Presentation Rubric</u>	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Vocal Delivery <i>The speaker demonstrates adept use of articulation, inflection, and pacing.</i>				
Nonverbal Communication <i>The speaker demonstrates the physical poise, expression, and gravitas.</i>				
Audience Engagement <i>The speaker attempts to/has points that engage the audience.</i>				
Performance Readiness <i>The speaker has the skills to perform and/or to improve their delivery.</i>				
Energy and Enthusiasm <i>The speaker shows a positive, energized image.</i>				
Notes				