

School Leader Speech

Austin Philie

Good afternoon, Mr. and Mrs. McCusker, faculty, staff, guests, and Cardigan brothers. My name is Austin Philie. I am here today with four of my good friends to speak to you about an important role in our community: School Leader—a position of honor and respect.

As we sit here today on this remarkable spring day in this wonderful place of gathering, we are focused on next year and who will be the ones to lead us in our journey. First, let's take a moment to thank Cedric for his fine work and ongoing leadership this year, as well as all the other leaders, titled or not. Without the 9th-grade leaders and all they have taught me, I would not be standing in front of you now.

When I think about School Leader, I think of what it means to the Cardigan community as a whole, not to me alone. Leadership is a concept that is sometimes hard to explain because it can mean many things to many people. Leadership occurs in the classroom, on the field, in the dorm, and many more places.

To me, a great leader is not someone who never makes mistakes, but someone who is willing to take chances and do what is right, regardless of the outcome. I believe that a successful and worthy leader possesses the following qualities:

Humility.

Serving and Helping others.

Living and Leading by example.

Having a positive attitude, and

Always striving to do their best.

Let me tell you more about what these principles mean to me:

Humility—Humility is not about being recognized or having a title; it's what you do and how you recognize others that is important.

Service is something that should always be on our minds as we represent Cardigan, both here on campus and everywhere we go. It is what we are taught here at Cardigan and it is our responsibility to serve our school and community.

Helping others means being there for your classmates and listening to what they say, and knowing that it is your responsibility to provide support, friendship, or solutions without judging them.

Living and Leading by example. As Jim Elliot puts it: "Wherever you are—be all there." And as Mr. McCusker constantly reminds us, "Be where you are when you are there," live the moment you are in, be the first one to offer a helping hand, encourage others to get involved, and be upbeat and energetic.

Positive attitude. A true leader sees the good in others and carries a great attitude wherever they go. There will always be difficult times, but those who can stay positive and make others around them positive are the ones who will lead through those times.

Lastly: **Always doing my best...** it's something that I've heard for most of my life. My parents always used to say, "Always give your best effort and that is all anyone can ever ask for." A great leader cannot do any more than his best—give everything he has in everything he does. These all add up to a person of character, integrity, energy, and enthusiasm... The Cardigan School Leader.

I believe that I can really make a difference if I were school leader at Cardigan. I have been on campus since I was a small boy, running around chasing my brothers. Over the

years, I realized Cardigan could be a special place for me. I respect the traditions, and I am so thankful for the opportunities I've been given. Those opportunities mean everything to me, and they carry a great responsibility. A responsibility to the faculty who teach us and care for us, a responsibility to the staff who feed us and make sure our dorms are clean and safe, a responsibility to others who have attended Cardigan before us, and most importantly, a responsibility to our classmates and friends. I can't think of a more important place in my life.

If I were elected school leader, it would be my honor to represent my classmates, teammates, and friends from the entire school. This upcoming year is a year where Cardigan will experience change. Mr. and Mrs. McCusker will be planning for their next adventure, and we will welcome a new Head of School to The Point. I will work hard to help with this transition and be sure to uphold the traditions, values, and positive impact that the McCuskers and the Cardigan faculty have made here at our home away from home. While change seems scary, it happens all around us.

At Cardigan we are extremely fortunate to be here today, in this chapel, at this school, on this spectacular piece of land, surrounded by the people who we care about most. While many of the boys in this chapel will never see each other again, I will always remember what each person did for me and learn from each and every one of you. I will think about the Dawn Climb, the Polar Bear Club, the competitive sports environment, and the challenging academics at Cardigan...how I adjusted to dorm life and the friendships I have developed with all of you, the Cardigan family. I will remember the faculty and coaches who have set an example for each of us. All of these experiences have helped to shape me and remind me how lucky I am to be here. They have also given me the tools to be an effective leader.

In closing, I again want to thank all of you, along with my fellow candidates. It is a privilege to be in front of the community with each of them. It is a privilege to speak to all of you today, and if given the opportunity, it would be a privilege to be your school leader next year. Thank You.