

Change is a constant for Class of 2026

By Logan Watson

For the 148th year, Peabody High School celebrated its best and brightest, sending the Class of 2026 out into the world with the prayer that everything they learned during their time inside those hallowed halls would help them along the journey that lies ahead.

PHS Teacher of the Year Kevin Hopper reminded the graduates to lean on their friends and family when times get tough and to remember that success is subjective.

"Perhaps you already have a plan for what you think your life is going to be like," Hopper said. "Plans are great. They give us structure and provide a map or goals to strive for. But one of the few certainties in life is that you'll continue to change, and your situation will, too."

Senior Class President Brnlee Ivy reminded her classmates that they reached this point in their lives with the help of many people, and they will need that same support moving forward.

"As life gets harder and the mental, physical and academic battles begin to feel unbearable, please don't forget to check on your people. Know that it does not make you weak to ask

for help and be kind to others because you never know the battles someone may be facing."

This year, the students and faculty at Peabody High School faced a challenge together-- the loss of a friend.

Director of Schools Tim Haney remembered Spanish teacher Angelica Voigt as not only an outstanding educator, but also an outstanding person.

"She was good. She was very good," Haney said. "She cared. She wanted things to be right. She believed in excellence, she expected her students to work hard, think deeply and do their best because she cared about preparing them for life beyond high school. She earned the respect of her students, her coworkers and this community through her dedication and the way she carried herself every day. Her absence has been deeply felt this year, but her influence remains."

Peabody Scholar Susanna Walters acknowledged the challenges that the Class of 2026 will face in the future, but encouraged them to keep moving forward.

"Just focus on being the person that shows up and does the work," she said. "You don't have



CLASS PRESIDENT BRNLEE IVY reminisces about her time at PHS. Photos by Logan Watson.



PEABODY SCHOLAR SUSANNA WALTERS encouraged her fellow graduates to face the future head-on.. Photos by Logan Watson.

to have a 10-year plan to be successful. You don't need to have your entire identity mapped out right now. You just have to be willing to keep going when things get boring or difficult."

Peabody Scholar Tucker Wheeler thanked the teachers that have helped him and his classmates along the way.

"Teachers, you are not just mentors, you are friends," he said. "You

will hear from any of these students out here that these teachers are here for these students and they want to support you along the way. You have altered our perceptions of the world and we thank you from the very bottom of our hearts for every one of your contributions to our student body."



PEABODY SCHOLAR TUCKER WHEELER thanks the teachers for the care and dedication they have shown his class throughout their years at PHS.



LOOKING AHEAD - Members of the PHS Class of 2026 stand on the threshold of tomorrow with infinite paths to explore. Photos by Logan Watson.



REMEMBERING MS. VOIGT - Director of Schools Tim Haney remembered Angelica Voigt during Friday night's commencement exercises. Voigt, respected by her students and her peers, passed away suddenly earlier this year, leaving an unfillable void in the halls of PHS.



TAYLOR HICKERSON received her diploma from her father, TSSD School Board member Clint Hickerson. Photos by Logan Watson.



2026 PHS TEACHER OF THE YEAR KEVIN HOPPER encouraged students to do their part to change the world. Photos by Logan Watson.

Congratulations Class of 2026!

We are so proud of you all. Your future is full of promise and opportunity, and we are looking forward to keeping you connected every step of the way.

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Congratulations 2026

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You did it CLASS OF 2026 congratulations

- Annetta Blue Kirk - UT Martin
- Brenlee Grace Watts - Murray State University
- Chloe Lynn Allmon - Gibson County High School
- Ally Goad - UTM
- Libby Goad - UTM
- Peggy Zoielee Burkett - Gibson County High School
- Ava Lynn Tucker - Gibson County High School
- Jaxon James Cooper Hall - Gibson County High School
- Alex King - Peabody
- Breanna Hassell - University of Tennessee at Martin

The Salem Baptist Church family is proud of our graduating seniors!