

Daniel, let me thank you for having me here today.

And on behalf of Mayor Carlos Gimenez, let me thank you for all the work that you, Burger King, and the McLamore Foundation are doing to further education opportunities for our young people.

I know that the main mission, and really the main passion of the McLamore foundation is to promote education around the world, and you do this by giving back to our communities through scholarships that help move people forward.

This year alone, the McLamore foundation awarded \$2.6 million in scholarships throughout North America.

This is a remarkable number! Just think of all the young men and women whose academic lives are touched by this generosity, and for this, you all deserve a big round of applause!

And while we are applauding, let's also give a big round of applause to the Burger King Scholars that are with us today!

Congratulations!

You are being honored because you are all winners and you represent the best and the brightest of Miami-Dade County.

Many of you have overcome a great deal of obstacles to get here. Some of you have had family struggles. Other have adapted to a new country, language and culture. These are all challenges that are difficult for most people to handle.

But you have not let anything stand in the way of your success. And you have done all of this while excelling in school and giving back to our community through your hard work and service. Through your achievements, you have made us all very proud. And we celebrate and honor that today.

You also deserve further congratulations because you are on your way to becoming part of the 26% of people in the entire state of Florida who have a college degree. Think about that, only 26% of the over 19 million people who live in Florida finish college.

You've heard it from your parents, you've heard it from your teachers, and now you're going to hear it from me...College is important!

Now, I'm sure you've heard many reasons why this is so, but I am going to give you a really good one, a reason that no matter what age you are, or where you come from, everyone can understand: Money.

Just last week, there was an article in the New York Times that asks the question "Is college worth it?"

The answer? Clearly!

"College is worth it, and it's not even close." When you get a college degree, you will likely make 98

percent more an hour on average than someone without a degree. 98 percent more money!

Here's another reason, and this is a really interesting one for your generation:

That same article goes on to state that "not so many decades ago, high school was considered the frontier of education." You see, people in my generation could get along just fine with only a high school degree. But it's very different for your generation.

The article concludes by saying that "as the economy becomes more technologically complex, the amount of education that people need will rise. At some point, 15 years or 17 years of education will make more sense as a universal goal. That point, in fact, has already arrived."

Let me give you some perspective on this.

Today, the amount of information in the world doubles every two years. In the next five years, it will double every 72 hours.

Not too long ago, if you were curious about something, you looked it up in an encyclopedia.

How many of you have encyclopedias at home? Anyone? Exactly!

You carry in your pocket a smartphone with more memory and power than the computers that were on the first rocket that landed on the moon. You can access information right now, all while I am up here talking.

I'm also sure that many of are anxious to update your Twitter or Instagram, because we need to connect and record moments instantly as they happen. And you can follow people on Twitter and Instagram who live half way around the world.

Your world is highly connected and it moves fast! And because of this pace, "new things" become "old things" really quickly. This is why all of you need to be prepared for careers that don't exist yet. And the best way to do this is to prepare yourselves intellectually and academically with the knowledge and skills than can be applied to the future, and a college education gives you that.

Let me add something else.

By going to college, you make Miami-Dade County a better place to live. Let me tell you how.

In the Mayor's office, one of the things we get to do is meet with people who want to open businesses in Miami.

And when business people come here, one of the first things they ask about is our education. They want to know whether the people in Miami have the knowledge and skills they need for their companies.

Imagine that in the future you have a great idea or product, and you want to start a company. Then you find out that no one has the skills or knowledge that will help you develop your idea. What would you do? If you don't find the right people, then you'll go somewhere else.

This is why we need a community where as many people as possible will have the knowledge base needed to support the jobs of tomorrow.

Let me add something further.

Odds are that someone in this room will start a great business here in Miami, and guess what? They'll need to hire the rest of you! Google, Facebook, and other big companies need people with brains. But we also want the people with brains that will create the next Google and Facebook here in Miami.

There is no reason why any one of you can't be the next great tech giant.

And here's the good news.

I have great hope for all of you. In fact, I am counting on all of you. You know why? You've come this far. And you wouldn't have made it if you didn't have the drive and desire to succeed.

You also have parents, grandparents, teachers and loved ones pushing you forward. Even Burger King is on your side! The Home of the Whopper made an investment in your future because you earned and deserved it.

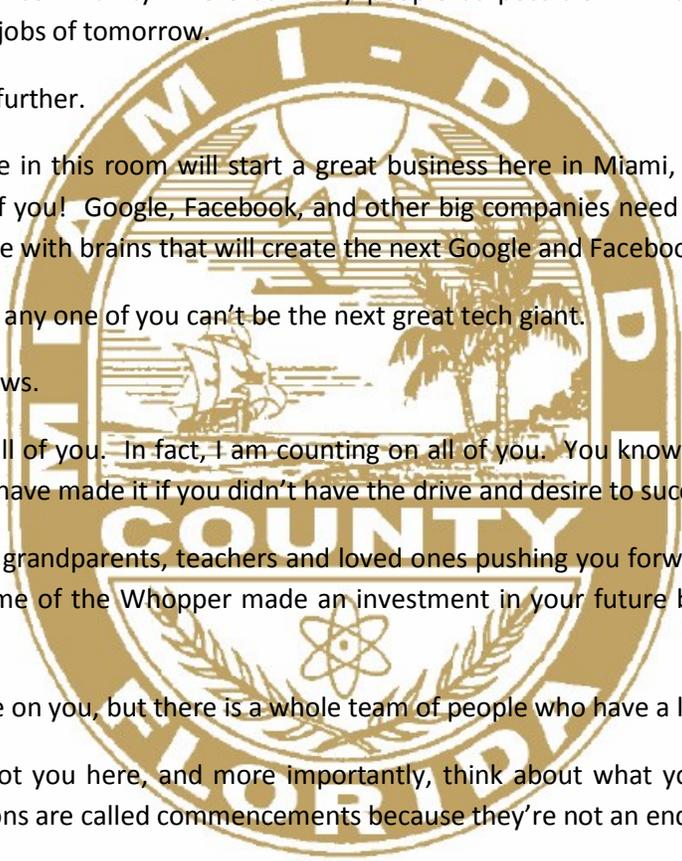
Not to put any pressure on you, but there is a whole team of people who have a lot riding on you.

So think about what got you here, and more importantly, think about what you are going to do from here on out. Graduations are called commencements because they're not an end, but a beginning.

And this is a critical time for you. You've worked hard to get to where you are today. Now you have an opportunity that not many people have, and that is obtaining a college degree. And in your own special way, you are all contributing to making our community a better place.

And that brings me to my final point.

Don't ever forget where you came from, the opportunities you've been given, and the importance of giving back. All of you have experienced the value of community service, from the giving end through



your work to help others, and on the receiving end as well. Think about all those who helped you get to today.

Someday, someone will look to you for help. I want you to be ready to give them a hand up.

So, before you leave today, make yourselves a promise.

Go out into our community, be the leaders we all need, keep studying, and most importantly, keep helping others, keep giving back, and keep doing everything you can to make Miami-Dade County a better place for everyone.

Thank you, congratulations, and God bless!

