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### What Does It Mean To Be A Northview Chief?

Throughout the great country that is the United States, there probably exist a hundred more small towns, and in those towns are a thousand more small high schools just like this one. Enrolled in each of those schools are passionate young people, who feel that their school is the best, that their community is the most caring, that their academic and athletic performances are the most outstanding. These students likely also share a strong sense of pride in their schools, and in their communities, just as many of those who attend Northview High School do. Maybe some of their mascots are Chiefs or Indians, or their school colors are garnet and gold. In these respects, most people would argue that Northview High School certainly isn't unique.

As a freshman at Northview High, I was one of those people. The sense of pride that I should have felt in my peers, and more importantly, in my school, may as well have been nonexistent. To a first-year student, the notion of pride in my school and classmates, or what being a Chief really meant, rarely crossed my mind—typically only when another individual brought up the idea. Not only was I apathetic, but I also felt somewhat of a sense of resentment towards high school. My own negative mentality plagued me for three years, and impacted much more than simply the pride I felt in my school, and in those around me. In all actuality, it was more harmful to my grades and to my overall motivation, than to anyone around me. As I grew, and witnessed the beauty and the empathy that my school was capable of bringing forth through its students, the bitterness was replaced by a sense of belonging, and I came to the realization that the indignation I felt for my school was simply a reflection of the uncertainty and doubt I felt

in myself. As a senior student at Northview, I can say for certain that I've ascertained not only a much more positive attitude towards my school, and myself, but also a deeper understanding of what being a Chief means, than I ever thought possible three years ago.

From our artistic students to our athletic students, each of us is unique. No two students share exactly the same qualities. Each of us share different goals, entertain different interests and hobbies, and live different lives. Even so, Northview students and teachers alike are, undoubtedly, a family, and accept one another regardless of their differences, or their flaws. I've watched tragedy after tragedy befall some of the most amazing people I've ever met, and each time, have been reminded that Northview Chiefs care for their own. Each of us feel a strong sense of empathy for our peers. Following every unforeseen circumstance—whether a classmate passes away, one of our own happens to undergo complications during a medical procedure, or a teacher loses a spouse or loved one—I have watched our students and teachers stand in solidarity with one another. I have seen students grieve, pray, and cry together, and have watched staff organize fundraisers and benefits for those in need. Northview students and teachers alike have sacrificed their own time and effort countless times, to ensure that those around them, those in need, were taken care of. Likewise, I have watched my peers succeed, and have seen an immense amount of encouragement put forth from our teachers and students alike. Those who are struggling, whether their tribulations consist of a personal matter, or an educational one, are never mocked or ridiculed by their peers or instructors. Rather, if they fall behind, they are lifted up, and those around them take every measure to ensure that they have the ability to keep up before continuing onwards.

Emotions aside, our school's educational nature is just as admirable as its students'

integrity. Some students see Northview High School as a basic learning environment. These students attend school for nearly seven hours a day, and then they leave for home. They neglect to take anything with them, other than the simple language, science, and arithmetic they learn during the day. The truth is, Northview High School teaches more important matters than these. As the Greek philosopher Aristotle wisely stated, "Educating the mind without educating the heart is no education at all." Both students and teachers at Northview uphold this ideology. Each teaches the other more than simple core subjects. Teachers who are impassive and stoic learn sentiment, and students who are close-minded learn tolerance and acceptance. This openness to compassion is likely the result of our students' sheer willingness to sympathize with one another, and our close-knit community.

It goes without saying that many are not fortunate enough to share the bond that many of our students and teachers share with one another. Along with those schools who are too large to adequately include all of their students, there are also students enrolled in our own school, who do not understand the significance of being a Chief. These students may be young, and the reality of how lucky they are to attend such an amazing school may not have set in yet. Others simply may not care. Even students who have felt a sense of pride in their school from the beginning often take it for granted. Those of us who had to learn what it means to be a Chief feel a different sort of pride, though. For us, the lesson resonates much deeper, and for so many of us, our school gave no direct reason to be proud of being a Chief. Instead, we learned through observing the compassion our peers showed us, and each other. Through that compassion, we have discovered that being a Northview Chief is much more than attending school, and being awarded a diploma after four years. Being a Northview Chief means to be empathetic, compassionate, and proud,

not only of one's school, but of one's community, and oneself. Being a Chief is integrity. More than any of those things, being a Northview Chief means to be part of a family. It is my wish that every student will recognize the gravity of being a Northview Chief, and can grow to feel a sense of belonging, a sense of pride, and a sense of purpose.