

Ladies and gentlemen,

If you could all settle down and make sure your phones are on silent--yes, Mr. Thompson, that means you too--we'd like to get started. First, let's clear up any rumors: no, I'm not retiring to become a rock star, despite what those air guitar performances in class might have suggested. After [number] years of teaching, I've finally cracked the code. It turns out the secret to eternal youth isn't a gym membership or kale smoothies. It's spending all day with young people while still managing to convince them that reading Shakespeare is as thrilling as the latest TikTok trend. I remember my first day like it was yesterday, mostly because the paint color of the staff room is still the same. It's remarkable how a fresh coat of paint is a lot like teaching--both can hide a multitude of chaos. Over the years, I've seen fads come and go: kids doing the Macarena, flip phones, Snapchat filters, and whatever technology the IT department assured me was vital for modern education. Look, I still can't get the projector to work without a tutorial.

During my tenure, I've had the privilege of teaching some of the brightest minds. In fact, several students have gone on to achieve fabulous things, and no, I'm not talking about how some have managed to avoid my pop quizzes for four years straight.

Now that I am retiring, I plan to put my vast experience to use. I'll be scheduling naps like they're faculty meetings and finally taking on that to-read pile. Spoiler alert: most of those books are still in their original packaging.

To my dear colleagues, you have been the best partners in crime a retiring teacher could ask for. Let's be honest, if I haven't yet taught you how to discreetly slip out of the worst cafeteria lunch sessions, have I even done my job?

Thank you for the laughter, the camaraderie, and most importantly, thank you for the memories. This isn't goodbye--it's just me graduating to the next phase. Don't worry; I promise to occasionally drop by to make sure you're keeping those overhead projectors operational.

Thank you, and good luck to all!