

Marco Rubio dispenses life advice to high schoolers

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The man who lost his presidential bid stood before the graduating high schoolers on Monday morning and invoked hard-learned life lessons.

“You are going to fail. That’s going to happen,” Marco Rubio said. “Failure in many ways is a benefit, because it teaches you in ways success never can.”

The U.S. senator from Florida wasn’t talking specifically about his Republican primary campaign. But it was difficult not to think about it as Rubio gave the keynote address for the Latin Builders Association Academy, a public charter school created in part by his friend, fundraiser and former LBA president, Bernie Navarro.

“I’m incredibly excited to see what you guys are going to be doing in four or six or seven years,” Rubio told the students. “Maybe even running for president — ‘cause I lost to a developer, so you can too!”

When the room burst into applause, Rubio joked: “Are you clapping ‘cause I lost, or — ?” More laughter. He made no other mention of Donald Trump.

It was Rubio’s second appearance of the day before a teenage audience. He started Monday at Miami Edison Senior High School, speaking to mostly juniors and seniors as part of Haitian Heritage Month. They asked him about global warming, the minimum wage and college affordability. But what Rubio really wanted to do was share advice.

“This is a time of year I always like to come out and talk to people, because it’s the kind of talk I wish someone had given me in 11th or 12th grade,” he said.

Rubio stressed that he was not a good student and only an OK athlete, even though he’d been introduced as a football star at South Miami Senior High. “If you’re a stellar athlete, you don’t go to Tarkio College,” he quipped, referring to the now-defunct school that offered him a football scholarship. “I finished with a 2.1 GPA from high school in South Miami. That was a mistake.”

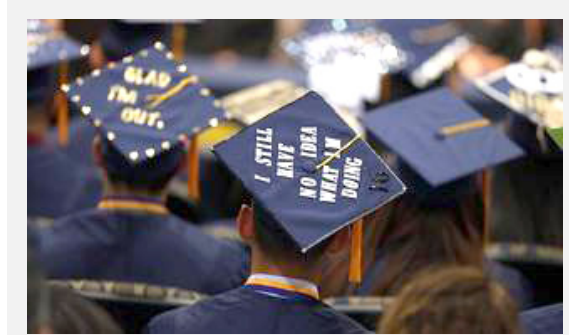
He liked to read, Rubio said, but he didn’t know how to study — or much care for it — and ended up taking longer to graduate from college because he had to take remedial courses. More years of schooling meant more debt, he noted. (To the LBA students, he added: “I love graduations. I get to wear this University of Miami cape, which cost me \$120,000 in student loans!”)

“It’s hard to imagine that when you’re 15 or 16, you make decisions that will impact you when you’re 35 or 40,” Rubio said at Edison. “The world is full of talented people. The talent is not enough. The ability is not enough.”

At both schools, Rubio urged students to be mindful of what they put on social media, to work hard to perfect their crafts, and to find jobs they love, even if they don’t pay much, so they can make fulfilling careers out of them.

Once he was finished, he told reporters he might like to return to the classroom. He taught political science at Florida International University as an adjunct professor before his presidential campaign.

“Maybe,” he said. “We’re talking about it. I don’t think we’ve finalized anything yet. I’d love to. I love teaching.”



Graduating seniors from the Latin Builders Association Academy decorated their mortarboards for commencement Monday at Florida International University.