***Lean on Me* Speech**

I want all of you to take a good look at these people on the risers behind me.

These people have been here up to five years and done absolutely nothing. These people are drug dealers and drug users. They have taken up space; they have disrupted the school; they have harassed your teachers; and they have intimated you. Well, times are about to change. You will not be bothered in Joe Clark's school.

These people are incorrigible. And since none of them could graduate anyway, you are all expurgated. You are dismissed! You are out of here forever! I wish you well.

Next time it may be you. If you do no better than they did, next time it will be you. They said this school was dead, like the cemetery it's built on. But we call our East Side teams "ghosts," don't we? And what are ghosts? Ghosts are spirits that rise from the dead. I want you to be my ghosts. You are going to lead our resurrection by defying the expectation that all of us are doomed to failure.

My motto is simple: If you do not succeed in life, I don't want you to blame your parents. I don't want you to blame the white man! I want you to blame yourselves! The responsibility is yours!!

In two weeks we have a practice exam and a minimum basic skills test on April 13th. That's a hundred and ten school days from now. But it's not just about those test scores. If you do not have these basic skills, you will find yourselves locked out! Locked out of that American Dream that you see advertised on TV -- that they tell you is so easy to get.

You are here for one reason -- one reason only: To learn, to work for what you want. The alternative is to waste your time and to fall into the trap of crime, drugs, and death. Does everyone understand that? Do all of you understand me?!

Then welcome to the new East Side High!