





**BRIGHTON** — Eighteen proud young tykes marked a milestone in their lives May 13 when they graduated from Brighton Preschool. Adorned in caps and gowns, the children were applauded by family and friends while walking down the aisle to receive their diplomas at the Veterans Building.

Prior to the main event, students introduced themselves in Creek and performed skits and songs, including “I am a Seminole,” led by Fred Mullins on guitar.

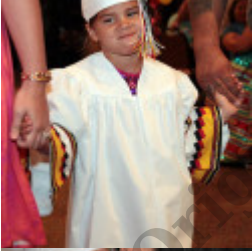
As a counselor in the Family Services Department, Mullins teaches drug and alcohol prevention tactics to children, starting in the preschools tribalwide. About two years ago, the preschoolers were learning about the letter “P.”

“I thought ‘I am a Promise with a capital P’ could be the root of a good lesson on self-esteem and character education,” said Mullins, who has been writing songs for years. The phrase made it into the song, which he later performed for Leona Tommie, the preschool director at the time, and staff. The song has been used as a de facto anthem for preschool graduations ever since.

The graduates sang the opening line - “I am a Seminole, unconquered and free” - at the top of their lungs.

After the performance, the kids changed backstage while the audience watched a slideshow of the youngsters’ lives. Graduates then walked down the aisle and held tightly to their parents’ hands but received their diplomas all by themselves.

The Brighton Preschool Class of 2015 graduates are Liam Berry, J-Wayco Billie, Ringo Billie, Melaine Bonilla, Zooey Bowers, Lindi Carter, Layda Choquette, Khoal Cochran, Walnard Fortner, Keshia Osceola-Jenkins, Marley Jimmie, Dyani Billie-Kayda, Ross Jones, Cherrish Micco, Dalayah Nunez, Karter Puente, Heidi Thomas and Jaeleejames Weimann.



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