

IX.A.

CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION Hartford

TO BE PROPOSED:
September 2, 2020

WHEREAS, Adult education exemplifies the concept of lifelong learning with nearly ten thousand Connecticut residents in adult basic education/secondary school completion programs and nearly twelve thousand Connecticut residents in English as a Second Language (ESL) and U.S. citizenship preparation programs; and

WHEREAS, The Connecticut Association for Adult and Continuing Education (CAACE), through its CAACE Student Award, recognized six individuals who have overcome numerous obstacles and hardships to persist and succeed in adult education; and

WHEREAS, These individuals exemplify the spirit and determination necessary to achieve a goal and serve as role models to all adult and young learners in our communities; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Connecticut State Board of Education recognizes the following individuals for their accomplishments in this major adult education endeavor:

Ashia Cash	Waterbury Adult Education
Ella Sharie Evans	Valley Regional Adult Education
Tony Jackson	East Hartford Adult Education
Stacey Muszynski	Manchester Adult Education
Olger Arias Paguay	Bridgeport Adult Education
Esther Vivier	Norwich Adult Education

and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

Approved by a vote of _____ this second day of September, Two Thousand Twenty.

Signed: _____
Dr. Miguel A. Cardona, Secretary
State Board of Education

**CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Hartford**

TO: State Board of Education

FROM: Dr. Miguel A. Cardona, Commissioner of Education

DATE: September 2, 2020

SUBJECT: Recognition of the Connecticut Association for Adult and Continuing Education Student Award Winners

Executive Summary

Introduction

Adult education is an essential component of Connecticut's lifelong educational system, providing individuals with instruction in U.S. citizenship, English as a Second Language (ESL), basic skills and secondary completion. In the 2019-20 school year, nearly ten thousand individuals were enrolled in adult basic education/secondary school completion programs and nearly twelve thousand individuals were enrolled in ESL and U.S. citizenship preparation programs. In order to persist and succeed in adult education, many of these learners face substantial challenges to balance their life activities.

History/Background

The Connecticut Association of Adult and Continuing Education (CAACE) honored six individuals from Connecticut's adult education programs on June 5, 2020, for their perseverance and accomplishments. We would like to acknowledge these individuals for their efforts and recognize them as excellent examples of lifelong learning for all students in the adult education system.

Recommendation and Justification

I recommend that the State Board of Education recognize the following individuals for their accomplishments:

**Ashia Cash
Waterbury Adult Education**

Ms. Cash is a mother and full-time student who never missed a day of school and always has a smile on her face, despite the many obstacles she has faced. She feels fortunate to be in a position where she can achieve her goals and never wants to look back. Her motivating personality is palpable from the moment she boldly greets a person. Ms. Cash recently graduated from Waterbury Adult Education, but her journey has just begun. She has been accepted at Post University where she will be attending next semester.

**Ella Sharie Evans
Valley Regional Adult Education**

Despite all of the demands on Ms. Evans' time as a single mother, her nephew's guardian, and her grandmother's caretaker, she has shown extraordinary drive and determination to dedicate herself to her education. From her very first experience at Valley Regional Adult Education,

Ms. Evans was determined to earn her high school diploma. She understood the role that an education could play in the betterment of her life and the lives of those around her. She wanted to ensure that her education sets an example for her children as well. In fact, her son is now pursuing a college education.

In December of 2016, Ms. Evans began taking components of the GED test, passing Reading/Language Arts, Science and Social Studies on the first attempt. Over the next two years she attended classes and attempted the math portion of the GED test four times, passing in early 2019, and proudly became a member of the class of 2019. When she completed the GED, she was referred to the American Job Center and, through their help, obtained her Patient Care Technician certification. Today she is employed and owns her own car. Ms. Evans is a shining example of what hard work and perseverance can do for a dedicated adult learner.

Tony Jackson
East Hartford Adult Education

Mr. Jackson overcame hurdles that most cannot imagine. Today, however, he is a well-rounded, prepared and responsible learner, who appreciates his education and actively seeks out opportunities to expand his knowledge. He has shown the maturity and skills to be successful, and has done so after unrelenting obstacles and setbacks which would frustrate any learner.

Mr. Jackson sought the help he needed to get back on track to meet his goals. With this support he began to rebuild his life, renew relationships, and work towards earning his high school diploma. He learned to advocate for himself and others, and rededicated himself to his church. He began attending the East Hartford Credit Diploma Program. He thrived as a student, and made positive connections with every person he met. Mr. Jackson uses his story to help others, as a mentor for other men in his community; showing there is hope for growth, finding meaning, and creating a life that gives back to others. His understanding of the value of education encourages them to further their education.

Now enrolled at Capital Community College, a member of the student government, and president of the music entertainment club, he shows tremendous care, compassion and dedication to his community. Mr. Jackson is an inspiration to all who know him.

Stacey Muszynski
Manchester Adult Education

Ms. Muszynski was enrolled as a credit diploma student in the Manchester Adult and Continuing Education Program. In the program's eight years of operation, no student has ever achieved so much in such a short period. She began her studies in September 2017 as a forty-seven-year old with only a few credits. Having extensive work experience, managing nail salons for over 25 years and overcoming some significant health issues, Ms. Muszynski was ready for her next challenge, earning her high school diploma.

From the beginning, each of Ms. Muszynski's teachers knew she was special. She not only did every assignment but even asked for more. She was always one of the first students to arrive and last to leave, helping mentor others and working with struggling classmates. She earned an academic achievement award for earning national certification in WorkKeys. She hopes to continue her education after graduation to become an accountant. From core academics to career and online learning, to career exploration and planning, Ms. Muszynski is a model adult learner and represents the impact that these programs can have.

Having sought out every resource that Adult Education can provide, Ms. Muszynski has found her way by utilizing each teacher, counselor, classmate, service, and tool. She is the voice and picture of adult education and how it can propel someone who returned to school after 30 years to a platform where she can reach for her dreams, and most importantly, use the skills that she learned. She knows how to plan and to do the work to get there. She will be pursuing an accounting degree from Manchester Community College in September 2020.

Olger Arias Paguay
Bridgeport Adult Education

Mr. Arias Paguay, a native of Ecuador, came to this country alone with \$200 in his pocket. He knew no one here, but quickly and instinctively learned where to network to find housing and work. He dedicated himself to the important matters that always confront a new arrival. After he found housing, he was hired by a pizza restaurant. Then he enrolled in ESL classes, ultimately received his GED. But as an example of his intense intellectual curiosity and motivation, he is still taking ESL classes as he strives to attain as much fluency as possible. He is a serious learner and his dedication to the language is a prominent feature of his vibrant intellect.

Mr. Arias Paguay also participates in his community. After only nine years in this country, he has carved out an

important niche for himself. He bought his own home, has recently married, and is a new father. He has an active, busy life, donating time to his church community, helping wherever possible, including aiding other immigrants like himself who seek to gain a foothold in this new and often challenging culture. He fully understands the concept of “giving back.” His family remains in his native Ecuador and he helps them out financially as he is able.

Mr. Arias Paguay is an extremely pleasant young man, a wonderful son to his parents in Ecuador, and a committed citizen, learner, husband and employee. He has accomplished much for himself as an immigrant in a society and culture quite distinct from his own.

Esther Vivier
Norwich Adult Education

Ms. Vivier is a student in the Adult High School Credit Diploma Program. The youngest of eleven children, she moved to the United States from Puerto Rico when she was five years old and found her early schooling to be very challenging because she was unable to speak English. Those struggles affected her ability to be successful in school. When she made her way to Norwich Adult Education many years later, she enrolled in the Adult High School Credit Diploma Program in the fall of 2018 with only a few credits. At the time she was quiet and reserved, although very motivated. She has since blossomed into a strong role model and leader. She greets and acknowledges staff and students with her special smile. She is very generous to her peers, often offers help with difficult work. She is calm, focused and organized and other students are drawn to her upbeat nature.

Today, Ms. Vivier is enrolled in both day and night classes and is also taking courses online through the Connecticut Adult Virtual High School. She has achieved straight A's since she began the credit diploma program. She has excellent attendance and promptly arrives in class ready to work. In addition, she cares for her elderly parents and in-laws while maintaining her position as a home health care worker. As a testimony to her growth and success, Ms. Vivier was nominated and received a 2020 Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendent's Award from Norwich Public Schools. As a result of managing her own personal health issues, she has decided to pursue a career in the healthcare field. She plans to enroll in the Certified Nurse Assistant Program at Three Rivers Community College in the spring. Her goal is to become a Registered Nurse in a Neonatal Intensive Care Unit.

Prepared by: Sabrina Mancini, Education Consultant
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Approved by: Charlene Russell-Tucker, Deputy Commissioner