

IX.B.

CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION Hartford

TO BE PROPOSED:
June 13, 2019

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:

Afani Agbeganidriassou	Manchester Adult Education
Betty Ambroise	New London Adult Education
Evan Donlon	EASTCONN Adult Education
Rudina Fusha	Foothills Adult Education
Hala Mashhour	East Hartford Adult Education
Rejean Ouellette	Cheshire Adult Education

and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

Approved by a vote of _____ this thirteenth day of June, Two Thousand Nineteen.

Signed: _____
Dianna R. Wentzell, Secretary
State Board of Education

**CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Hartford**

TO: State Board of Education

FROM: Dr. Dianna R. Wentzell, Commissioner of Education

DATE: June 13, 2019

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 2018-19 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 March 29, 2019, 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:

**Afani Agbeginiganidrissou
Manchester Adult Education**

In May 2007, Afani Agbeginiganidrissou immigrated to the United States from the West African country of Togo with her husband, 16-year-old son, 13-year-old daughter and infant son. Although none of them spoke English, Mrs. Agbeginiganidrissou understood the value of an education. In September 2010, she enrolled in a beginner ESL class and quickly established herself as a dedicated and hardworking student intent on learning English. She soon became proficient enough in English to get a position as a baker with

the local Dunkin' Donuts, working early morning hours, all while continuing to raise her family and attending ESL classes in the evening. Her outstanding work ethic and commitment were evident at home and at work. She advanced into an intermediate ESL class and was promoted from baker to crew worker, crew worker to cashier, and finally assistant manager. Mrs. Agbeginiganidrissou knew she needed a diploma to continue her career success. After six years, she transitioned into Adult Basic Education classes to help achieve her dream of earning a high school diploma. She has been accepted into the National External Diploma Program (NEDP) and upon completion, wants to serve as a U.S. Postal Service clerk. Mrs. Agbeginiganidrissou is an outstanding example of how adult education can help students live their dreams and transform their lives and the lives of their families.

Betty Ambroise
New London Adult Education

In the late fall of 2015, Ms. Ambroise arrived at New London Adult Education where she began taking a beginner ESL class. Within a year, she was participating in the intermediate class level and was chosen for the Integrated Basic Education and Skill Training (I-BEST) Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) training. While in class, Ms. Ambroise was entirely dedicated to improving her proficiency in all skill areas, as well as participating in a civics class taught once per week. She demonstrated growth in all areas of the curriculum, most notably in her ability to read, analyze and write about complex texts. She has been working as a CNA in the Alzheimer's unit in Groton, where she was recently recognized with the "Excellence in Caregiving Award" by the Alzheimer's Association Connecticut Chapter.

Evan Donlon
EASTCONN Adult Education

In 2011, Mr. Donlon began his journey at EASTCONN Adult Education as a credit diploma student eager to obtain his high school diploma. Over the years, he made small gains in earning credits, often meeting various obstacles along the way; however, his drive and determination never waned. He often needed to balance his work commitments and responsibilities with his academics. Attending classes and running his business were a difficult balancing act. Mr. Donlon is a self-employed "dock boy" utilizing physics and creative problem solving to move soaking wet docks weighing

hundreds of pounds in and out of water as the seasons change. The GED program offered Mr. Donlon greater flexibility with the class schedule, and he ultimately switched program areas. After accomplishing his goal and earning his high school diploma, he personally thanked everyone for helping him achieve his dream. He has promised to continue to support others who might be lacking motivation.

Rudina Fusha
Foothills Adult Education

In 2013, Ms. Fusha, an Albanian immigrant, came to the United States. Leaving her friends and family behind, she arrived with minimal English skills. Although a college graduate and an elementary teacher in her former country, she was unable to work as a teacher in the United States. She registered for her first ESL class at Foothills Adult Education. For the past two years, she has demonstrated her commitment and has attended nearly every ESL class. In December, Ms. Fusha was hired by the City of Waterbury as a paraprofessional and is enjoying the interactions with the students with whom she works. She is strongly committed to education and is planning to enroll into an approved teacher preparation program for certification. Her goal is to become certified as an elementary education teacher. Ms. Fusha has shown exemplary perseverance in building a new life in the United States of America.

Hala Mashhour
East Hartford Adult
Education

In 2017, Ms. Mashhour entered East Hartford Adult Education. While she learned English in her home country of Egypt, she found the language and skills required to pass the GED exam challenging. In 2018, she passed the exam and enrolled in Manchester Community College. Though she has moved on from East Hartford Adult Education, she continues to serve on its Advisory Committee as a community liaison. Ms. Mashhour is very active in the East Hartford community and has volunteered for People Empowering People, the Citizen Police Academy and the Youth Services Board. She not only wanted a diploma, but a new way of life. Through hard work and determination, she has achieved both of these goals.

Rejean Ouellette
Cheshire Adult Education

Mr. Ouellette left school in Grade 9 to work for his brother in a family-run construction business. Over the years, he learned his trade well and later went to work for another brother, also in construction. In 2003, he began his own successful company, specializing in all phases of construction. Mr. Ouellette was offered a teaching position as a carpentry instructor at one of the technical high schools in the Connecticut Technical Education Career System (CTECS). Due to not having a high school diploma, he was unable to accept the position. The experience motivated Mr. Ouellette to return to school. In 2017, he enrolled in Cheshire Adult Education with the desire and motivation to become a high school graduate. Somewhat tentative about going back to school after such a long absence, he quickly gained confidence in his abilities. With consistent effort and attendance, Mr. Ouellette received his high school diploma. He then reapplied for a carpentry instructor position at CTECS' technical high schools and received an offer. With his practical experience, there is no doubt that his high school students will learn more than they anticipate.

Prepared by: Sabrina Mancini, Education Consultant
Adult Education

Reviewed by: Glen Peterson, Division Director
Office of Student Supports and
Organizational Effectiveness

Approved by: Charlene Russell-Tucker
Chief Operating Officer