



Passages Academy valedictorian addresses classmates and guests during promotional ceremony at Horizon Juvenile Center.

Deputy Mayor Dennis Walcott Keynotes Education Department Promotional Ceremony for Youth in Detention

On Thursday, June 19th, the NYC Department of Education held promotional ceremonies for secure detention students enrolled in the Passages Academy at the Horizon facility of the New York City Department of Juvenile Justice. Students were dressed in traditional purple caps and gowns at formal ceremonies featuring a NYC Recruiting Battalion Color Guard, teacher/performer Al Barbarino singing the National Anthem, and a keynote address by Deputy Mayor for Education and Community Development Dennis Walcott. A post-graduation cake and refreshment reception for friends and family was also held.

Parents and grandparents of secure detention students from the Bridges, Horizon and Crossroads Juvenile Centers participating in the ceremony were invited to attend. Family turnout and support was overwhelming. Twelve resident students participated in a choir which sang for the graduates as four other resident students volunteered as ushers to help in directing and seating friends and family. Achievement awards were presented to students who displayed exceptional aptitude in key areas. In addition, the valedictorian and salutatorian for each class made remarks before the gathered students, families, staff members and guests. In all, 16 students were recognized for their academic accomplishments and promoted to advance from the 8th grade to high school.

The promotional ceremonies were momentous experiences for the students as well as their families. At the ceremony, Deputy Mayor for Education and Community Development Dennis Walcott addressed the students by reminding them of their achievement and to realize for themselves how far they can now go. Passages Academy Principal Sydney Blair said, “We are very proud of the achievements of our students and the program we have with the Department of Juvenile Justice. We look forward to many more years of student success. We celebrate their particularly important achievement and share their parent’s joy on this occasion.”

Passages Academy provides education and academic services to juveniles in the care and custody of the Department of Juvenile Justice. The NYC Department of Education operates the schools under the supervision of Principal Sydney Blair.

