

New Bedford's "Family Institute for Student Success" program prevails at Parker Elementary School

Ten families graduate in latest institute, surmounting challenges posed by COVID-19.

The Family Institute for Student Success (FISS) Leadership Committee and Parker Principal, Jennifer Mainelli, congratulated Parker families for committing to the FISS program despite the many challenges they face due to COVID-19. The FISS Leadership Committee also expressed thanks to the New Bedford Public Schools administration team for its support in hosting the nine-week program at Parker. NBPS is committed to strengthening the relationship between home, school and community to ensure student success.

Heading up the district's innovative outreach program, Orlenda Jackson, NBPS Lead Family Engagement Specialist, stated, "Since we started the FISS program in 2019, we have graduated over 100 families, which has directly supported over 200 New Bedford Public School students across the district. Our FISS families have experienced how the program provides the tools to assist their children and to come together as a community for their children's success. It's a collaborative effort from our recruiters, facilitators, school staff and community partners. Congratulations to all our graduates! We are working to bring FISS to every school in the district." Past FISS programs have been held at the Gomes and Hayden-McFadden Elementary Schools.

NBPS Family Institute for Student Success (FISS) is modeled after the Parent Institute for Quality Education (PIQE) of

California. FISS New Bedford was made possible by a grant from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary & Secondary Education. PIQE's mission: to provide families with the knowledge and skills to collaborate with schools and communities to ensure their children achieve their full potential. PIQE is a 501(c) (3) community-based organization dedicated to innovative educational reform by informing and motivating low-income and immigrant parents to become knowledgeable about how to navigate the school system and seek the educational opportunities available for their children. Since its inception in 1987, PIQE has graduated more than 650,000 parents and influenced the social and educational development of over 1.9 million children.

In congratulating Parker School families for their commitment to completing the nine-week institute, Principal Jennifer Mainelli noted, "Effective education is truly grounded in the strong relationship between educators and families. We can't do this work alone. I admire your resolve to complete this program, despite the many challenges you face to keep your families safe, healthy, and happy through this pandemic. Your partnership and contributions are invaluable to our school community. Thank you for your dedication and congratulations again!"

Susan Aguiar, a Parker parent and FISS graduate, explained that her desire to attend the institute started with a "desire to be involved with more family events at the school. It was a good opportunity for me to meet other parents and form stronger relationships with staff at the school. My major takeaway is that it is not just important to assist our children academically, but in other areas for them to be successful. For example, we learned about mindset and discipline; these are important skills for students to be successful in and outside of their classes."

Susanna Araujo, another parent and FISS graduate stated, "When I was asked to attend FISS, I honestly didn't even know what

it meant or what it was about. I am glad that I joined the class. There were things I never thought of, for example, the Common Core Standards. Invited parents who attend FISS gain a lot of information on how the educational ladders work for their children. There is always something new that we learn and can share amongst others.”

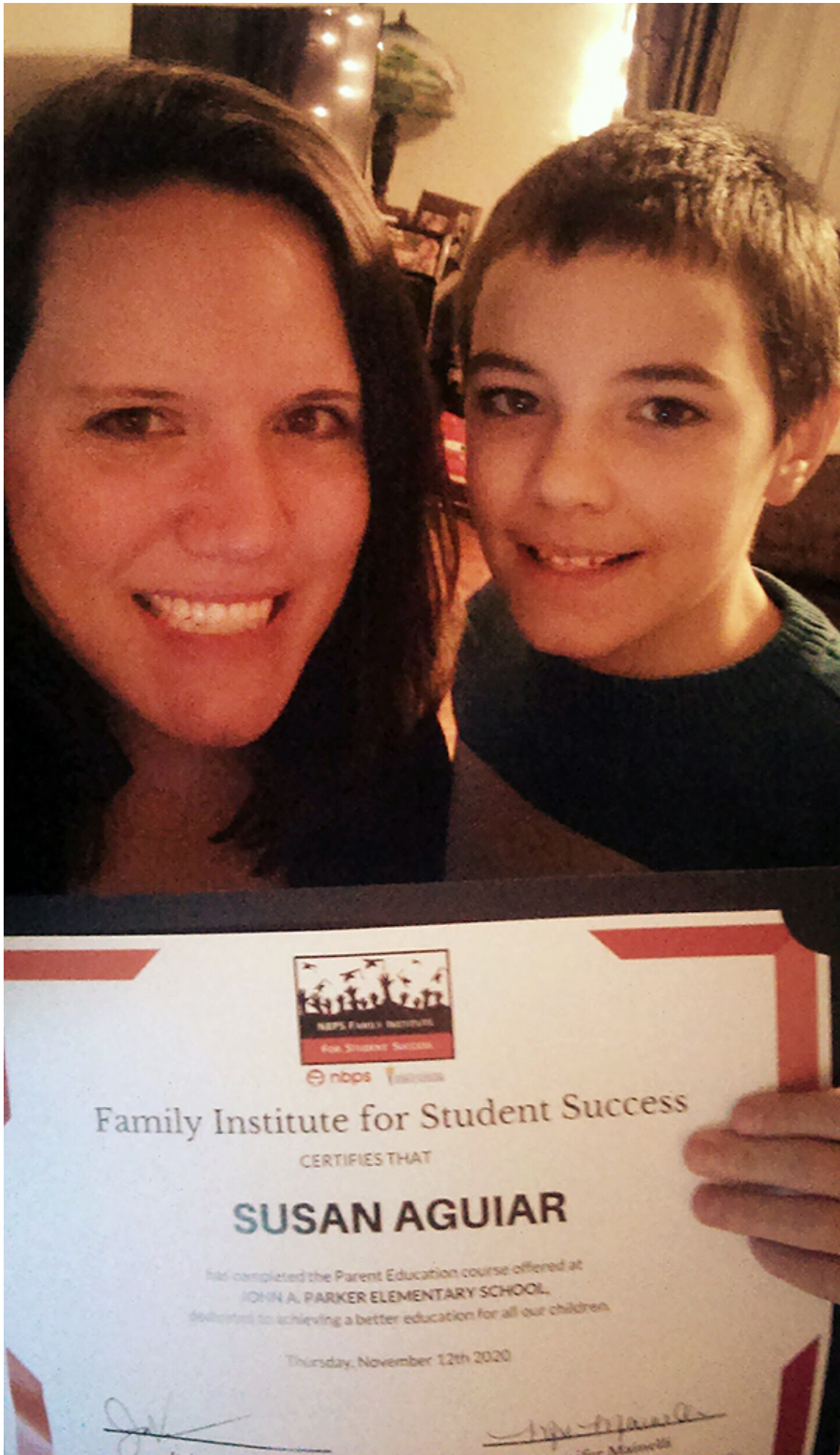
Ms. Aguiar added, “I would tell a parent that the program is a great opportunity and Parker families were so lucky to be invited. There was no judgment. I felt comfortable talking about my experiences and asking questions. The information was helpful and it helped me better understand more about my child’s education. I now know what to expect between now and when he graduates from high school.”



FISS Morgan family.



Araujo family.



Aguiar family.