

New Bedford High School Evening Extension Class of 2020 celebrate with curbside commencement

New Bedford High School Evening Extension celebrated its 57th annual commencement and first Virtual Graduation on Thursday evening, June 10. Eighty-four graduates received their credentials in a curbside ceremony held in the circular drive of New Bedford High School's main entrance. Graduates queued up along Hathaway Boulevard in their decorated vehicles to pick up their hard-earned diplomas from a receiving party of faculty, district and city officials.

Observing social distancing guidelines, enthusiastic graduates with face masks arrived at assigned intervals and remained in their vehicles to receive diplomas and certificates as their teachers and staff cheered them on with signs, balloons, waves and thumbs-up at the festive outdoor ceremony. Graduates hailed from New Bedford, Acushnet, Canton, Dartmouth, Fairhaven, Fall River and Flushing, New York.

The NBHS Evening Extension Virtual Graduation Ceremony will air on June 11 on the New Bedford Public Schools Adult Education webpage: adulthood.newbedfordschools.org

Thomas Anderson, Superintendent of New Bedford Public Schools congratulated the graduates, noting this "unique time in our lives has truly tested your perseverance and will power. I am proud that you stuck with it – and this diploma is a collective achievement for you, your family and those closest to you. Set your goals and pursue them with passion and the desire to make a difference in this world. Now more than ever your voice and strategic focus is needed to cultivate the

change and create a more equitable society that benefits all people. When we prepare ourselves, like you have, and have passion for what we are doing, there are no limits on what each of you can achieve.”

Rosemary Wilde, Principal of NBHS Evening Extension noted the day “marks a new beginning, a steppingstone on the journey to new dreams and accomplishments. Today, this class will begin a new life on the road to fulfill new goals in a world of ‘new normals.’ Despite the obstacles during the pandemic, graduates, you demonstrated that you are ready to overcome roadblocks encountered along your journey. You’ve proven that you are prepared to alter your course to reach your destination and the attainment of future hopes and dreams.”

Salutatorian Andrea Fernandes in her address to classmates recalled how her son inspired her in achieving her diploma. “I started thinking about going back to school when my son started school. I remember helping him with his homework and constantly reminding him of just how important school was for him. That’s when I started questioning myself. How can I sit here and tell my son that school is so important and that he needs to stay in school when I did not? Last year, I sat down and told him that I did not finish school. I explained that I was going back to high school to earn my diploma, and then going to college to earn my degree. He was not only my motivation, but my inspiration as well. I did this for myself, but also to show my son just how important school really is. I am proud of myself for making it here tonight. It was not easy, but I did it. This accomplishment of mine consisted of going to class right after long 8-hour workdays, just like many of my classmates. I stand here tonight hoping to serve as an example that anyone can do it. It is never too late.”

Several members of the Class of 2020 shared their thoughts on graduating. Dandan Zhang noted his diploma will allow him “to fulfill my dream of attending college.” Aarron Barbosa expressed appreciation of the second chance provided by the

NBHS Evening Extension program. "Thank you for providing me the opportunity to go back and erase a part of my life that was always a regret of mine." Of the program Larissa Hansen said, "It was an amazing experience – all of the students encouraged and supported each other."

Principal Wilde concluded by summing up the achievement of the Class of 2020. "In the face of the challenges, our graduates succeeded to fulfill their goal as they were required to change overnight from face-to-face classes to remote and online learning and communications systems. They stepped up their game and are now celebrating this victory."

New Bedford

Diploma: Josue Acosta, Darwin Alvarez, Laray N. Amado, Benjamin David Amaral, Cerinea Andrade, Kineisha Michelle Arce, Cameron R. Batista, Jackson J. Berry, Kaileigh Elizabeth Blessing, Madison Taylor Rae Bozzi, Alicia Cardoso, Daysha Le DeFreitas, Amaya Lynn Dejesus, Olguimarie DejesusDelgado, Kelsey Shannon Mariah Deschenes, Michael DeSouza, Lamina Faye Durarte, Shayn T. Elgar, Andrea Marie Fernandes, Dennisse E. Garcia, Amanda Garcia Coj, Kenny Joel Gonzalez, Zakya D'Shae Grace, Reed S. Gustafson, Larissa Mariah Hansen, Devin John Heroux, Darrell J. Holmes, Elaudiz Johan Jimenez, Kyla Lyn Johnson, Joshua Julian Koloba, Ashley Lacen Osorio, Armando Martinez, Zachary Ty Medeiros, Mariah Mercedes Mejia-Maalouf, Bouchra Msatfi, Darlene Mujica-Carrasquillo, Kayce Carol Nooth, Alicia Oliver, Carlos C. Reis, Moises Antonio Renderos Melendez, Iraine S. Rivas, Ava Victoria Rodriguez, Derek Santiago-Ortiz, Catia Milene Silva, Kevin Simas, Candace Marie Sylvia, Ricardo Jorge Tiniguar, Yukizia Torres, Angellis Marie Vazquez, Marissa Lynn Vieira, Tracy L. Walker, Alexander Amaral Wasilewski, Avis Williams, GladysLee Ranell Williams, Trinity Vieira, Jun Xiang Zhang.

Certificate: Dylan Bigos

Acushnet

Diploma: Vanessa Cahoon, Guilan Dong, Sofia Adelaide Harney,

Ava Victoria Rodriguez.

Canton

Diploma: Aarron Barbosa

Dartmouth

Diploma: Felicia DeMoranville, Matthew Ryan Magan, Mitchell Clayson Noble, Sabrina Elisabeth Skeffington.

Fairhaven

Diploma: Liping Lin, Emily Jade Murphy, Harley Dee Oliveira.

Fall River

Diploma: Jason Lee

Flushing, NY

Diploma: Dandan Zhang