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Met School's spirit breeding network of academic honor

Eighty-five percent of this year's graduates of the Providence high school are enrolling in college.

BY FELICE J. FREYER
Journal Staff Writer

PROVIDENCE -- Riotous applause greeted the graduates of the Met School as girls in white gowns and boys in royal blue streamed into a tent on Public Street yesterday.

"It's going to be a loud night," observed the school's cofounder, Dennis Littky, as the spirited ceremony got under way. He was pointing out only one unusual aspect of a commencement at which hugs were favored over handshakes, both a student and her mother gave speeches, and the mother's speech was in Spanish.

Teachers, rather than principals, introduced each graduate, stating where each was headed next. Eighty-five percent of them are enrolling in college, many as the first person in their family to attend college. Each graduate got cheers and applause from a crowd of close to 900 that never did fall silent.

The Met School is a network of six state-financed public schools located in Providence, but open to all Rhode Islanders, with 75 percent of the seats

reserved for Providence residents. Each student serves an internship, writes a 75-page autobiography, and completes a senior project that benefits the school or the community. One took his classmates to Nicaragua; another ran a diabetes clinic in her native Nigeria.

Elliot Washor, the school's other founder, who gamely donned a noise-shielding headset before asking the crowd to cheer yet again, said that education at the Met School is "slow but sure, ongoing and perpetual," emphasizing long-term achievement over "quick successes."

Rather than offering his own thoughts, Littky quoted from the valedictory addresses given earlier at the six schools. "When I didn't believe in myself, you believed in me," he quoted one student as saying.

The student speaker, Marieli Gonzalez, said she had previously attended Cranston High School East, which was "such a huge school you can't see the real person shine through." She

appreciated the "one-on-one communication" at the Met School. "If it were not for the Met," Gonzalez said as the audience cheered, "I would not be

going to Manhattanville College in Purchase, N.Y., on a full scholarship."

This year's class of 143 is three times larger than in previous years.

The graduates are:

Morteza Abdul-Karim
Adeola Adetayo
Remi Ahmed-Lediju
Jeremy Alper
Emmanuel Amadiz
Shawn Andrews
Alyssa Andrews
Kaitlyn Arsenault
Samenta Baltazard
Racheal Banda
Edmund Barber III
Sharae Barrett
Noam Bar-Zemer
Samantha Bey
Natasia Botelho
Eric Bourgault
Cherolyn Cabrera
Juan Cameron
Aneesah Cameron
Alexandrea Cataldo
Reinalba Claudio
Alari Couchon
Timothy Craven
Lachelle Crump
Christopher Daniel
Claudia De La Rosa
Maribel De La Rosa
Brenda Decker
Juan Delgado
David Diaz
Fernanda Diaz
Antonia Dublin
Alexander Dulude
Christopher Emery
Nelson Encarnacion
Alisa Espinal
Francisco Estevez
Brandon Fernald
Lewis Fernandez
Kelvin Flores
Theresa Forrest
April Frenette
Jathna Garcia
Grace Garcia
Jennifer Gonzalez
Jorge Gonzalez
Marieli Gonzalez
Shawn Gooding

Clarence Goodridge
Steven Guerrero
Timothy Guilbault
Brit'nee Harris
Joseph Hernandez
Laura Holt
Destinee Hutley
Yokeli Infante
Alexandria Isom
Justin Jenkins
Aisha Jones
Jesse Jones III
Le'Quise Jones-Lopez
Hubert Joseph
Celestine Kibe
Gardner Knapp
Whitney Knott
Stephen Krupka
Shaneequa Lee
Kevin Leo
Nicholas Lima
Josue Lopez
Courtney Love-Jones
Anthony Lugo
Natasha Luigui
Savik Luy
Ashley Magnus
Stephanie Malave
Alberto Maldonado
Jorge Maldonado
Yeisha Marrero
Vanessa Martinez
Briana McDonald
Ashley McKenna
Marilyn Melendez
Elizabeth Mercado
Kelsey Moan
Anthony Molina
Sancious Moore
Frederick Morales
Jessica Nazario
Crystal Nieves
Henry Pacheco
Leonel Padilla
Edwin Pena
Ambar Peralta
Giovanni Peralta
Anel Perez

Lastarsha Pettiway
Raul Polanco
Deirdre Porte
Magaly Ramos
Christopher Ransom Jr.
Camblin Reyes
Darleen Reyes
Engers Reyes
Jeremy Richardson
Kendra Robertson
Vimar Rodriguez
Alex Rogers
Luz Roman
Edgar Romero
Marilyn Romero Sanchez
Carolina Rosario
Bryan Rose
Jessica Sanabria
Israel Santana
Javgladee Santana
Jessica Santana
Eric Santos
Juan Santos
Bennett Schlesinger
Jackelyn Sierra
Lauren Smalls
Ashley Smith
Jeffrey Smith
Odyssey Smith
Loupu Stevens
Harry Stewart Jr.
Arthur Sweeney II
Paul Symonds
Darline Taveras
Kenneth Taylor
Micah Thompson
Hector Tineo
David Torres
Bethany Valentine
Priscilla Vargas
Justine Welch
David Wollenweber
Raymond Woodard