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Mayor Kenney and Commissioner Ross Address CSSD Citywide Graduates

Philadelphia, PA (June 28, 2016) -- Mayor Jim Kenney and Police Commissioner Richard Ross, Jr. addressed the Commonwealth Secondary School Diploma (CSSD) Citywide Graduation, hosted by the Mayor's Commission on Literacy (MCOL), last week at the Central Parkway Library. Eighty five graduates along with their families heard welcome remarks from Mayor Kenney and the keynote address from Commissioner Ross.

"Learning is lifelong," said Kenney. "What this degree is doing for you is positioning you to do better in life."

Ross said, "We are here today to celebrate your accomplishments. You did this, you have the skills needed to achieve success."

Following Kenney and Ross, the graduates listened to the Commonwealth address by Wil Del Pilar, PhD, acting deputy secretary of postsecondary and higher education. Del Pilar described his experiences in attaining education as similar to those of the graduates and later presented them with certificates from MCOL. "We at the Pennsylvania Department of Education applaud you on the sacrifices that have gotten you to graduation. The CSSD is the first step and we hope you continue on a path to post-secondary education."

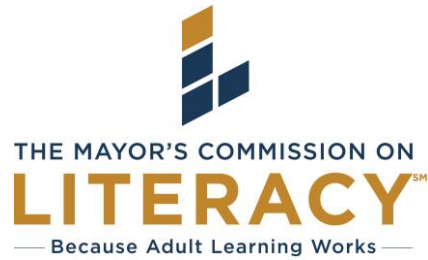
Six commencement speakers delivered brief remarks to their fellow graduates. Commencement speaker Marlon McGill shared, "Where others saw failure I saw achievement and dreams." Graduates from the Temple University Workforce Education and Lifelong Learning (WELL) program were surprised with a scholarship to transition to post-secondary education. Students have access to funds to attend one course at the Community College of Philadelphia or complement training programs in which they have enrolled. Students will receive 50 hours of College and Career Readiness Skills to prepare them for success.

In another surprise, a representative from the Office of Councilwoman Cherelle Parker read and delivered congratulatory citations to the eight graduates from 9th District.

Diane C. Inverso, executive director for MCOL, closed the graduation ceremony with acknowledgements and special remarks. "Today would not have been possible without the support from the adult education community and practitioners, who not only teach, but are dedicated to their learners and encourages them to follow their dreams."

In addition to Temple University WELL, adult education providers Center for Literacy, Community Learning Center, Congreso de Latinos Unidos, District 1199C Training & Upgrading Fund, and Philadelphia OIC participated in celebrating the graduates.

News and Community Affairs Director for iHeartMEDIA Loraine Ballard Morrill, served as emcee for the ceremony. "We commend your bravery and courage in reaching these goals and sharing your stories, they are truly inspirational." Robert Smith, region vice president of community investment for Comcast, remarked on Comcast's sponsorship of the graduation. "Comcast is proud to support the Mayor's Commission on Literacy and sponsor tonight's CSSD Graduation."



The CSSD is a high school equivalency credential available to Pennsylvania residents who do not possess a high school diploma and who have met criteria in the Pennsylvania Code. The CSSD may be achieved by passing the GED® test, or the HiSET® exam or by completing the 30 College Credit Option.

[View photos here.](#)

About the Mayor's Commission on Literacy

The Mayor's Commission on Literacy has worked to equip all adults in Philadelphia with the education they need for work, family and civic engagement since 1983. The Commission is charged to work on behalf of over 80 literacy and workforce development programs to help the estimated 550,000 adults in the City that need to develop their workforce literacy skills and who are unprepared to compete in our knowledge based economy or to complete successfully postsecondary training and education. www.philaliteracy.org

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