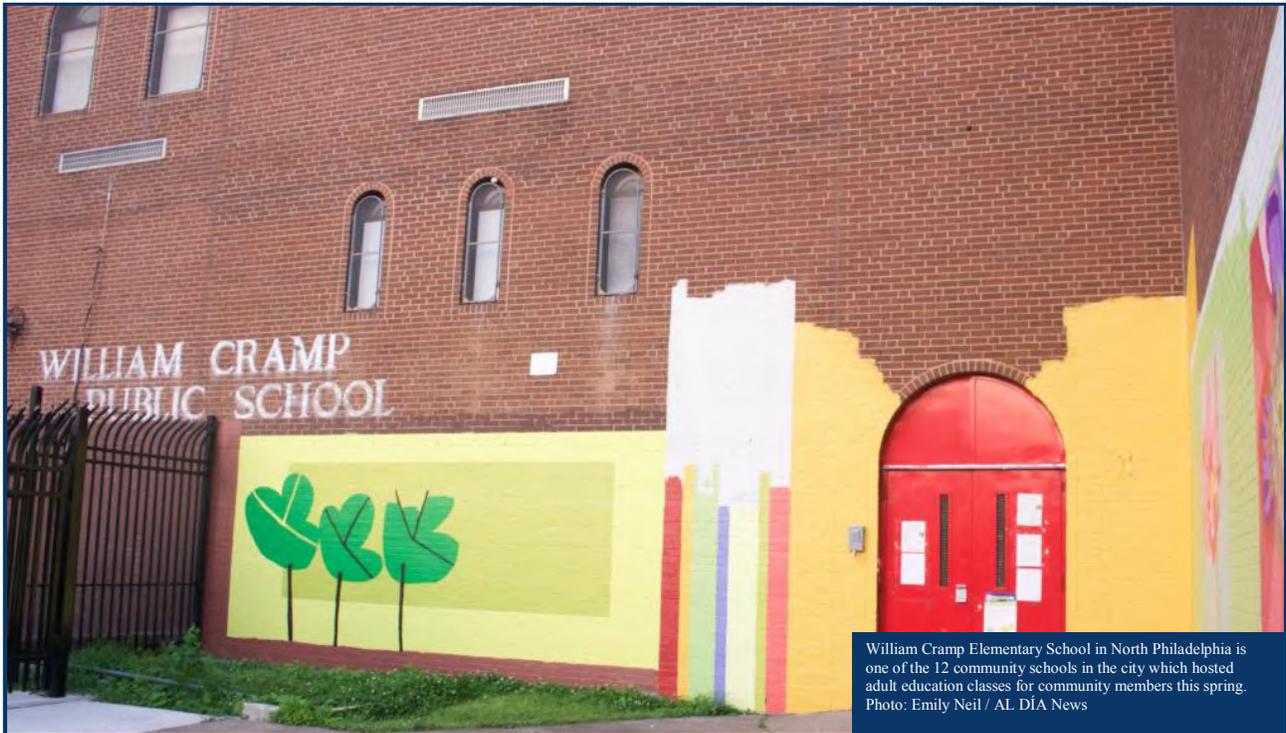


## IN THE NEWS



### Adult ed classes break new ground in community schools

A partnership between the Office of Adult Education and the Mayor's Office Of Education community schools kicked off this spring, directly providing adult ed classes for nearly 200 city residents.

Al Dia | Emily Neil | June 12, 2018



It was the last class of the spring session, and members of the adult basic education class held at William Cramp Elementary School were celebrating with cupcakes, certificates, and good wishes for the summer. But for many of the students, the class is not the end of their educational aspirations — it represents the beginning of their journey toward a high school diploma and the start of a better future.

**"It was like a long time coming. So I said I might as well go on ahead and do it while it was close by,"** said Pamela Jeffcoat, a parent at William Cramp Elementary School who is working as a home health aide but has faced barriers in advancement because she does not have her high school diploma.

For many like Jeffcoat, taking the classes necessary to prepare for the HiSET or GED test is the first step to opening up new opportunities and possibilities for career advancement.

**"It was a big improvement from when I first started up until now. Truthfully it seemed like the three months went by like that,"** said Jeffcoat, who plans to enroll in a few more classes before taking the test for her high school diploma before the end of this year.

The first session of adult learning classes at the community school, providers say, had significant traction in the community schools where the courses were made available. Nearly 200 adult learners were directly enrolled in the Adult Basic Education and English Language Learning courses offered at all 12 of the Mayor's Office of Education (MOE) community schools.

The partnership [first came about](#) due to a stated need for more adult education opportunities in on-site assessments conducted in the community schools in 2016, according to Susan Gobreski, MOE director of community schools.

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**“We forget that the adults that are here today are the kids that were failed by the system,”** said Farrah Parkes, director of education, technology, and job readiness at Lutheran Settlement House, which ran the class at William Cramp Elementary this spring after being chosen



Parkes noted the importance of the OAE and MOE community schools’ partnership in terms of investment in adult education.

**“It’s the first time in awhile that we’ve seen the city putting funds directly into adult education,”** said Parkes, explaining that though the OAE has a myriad of resources and programs for connecting adult learners to classes available to them throughout the city, this partnership has allowed them to directly allocate funding for classes and instruction available to Philadelphians free of charge.

Parkes added that adult education as a field is “mostly underfunded,” noting that there used to be over 25 agencies in the city that received funding for adult education, but in 2011 that was cut to just six.

**“A lot of those services just disappeared,”** Parkes said, adding that adult education, in addition to having a positive impact on education access and development for young people, is necessary for addressing the skills gap and lack of job readiness affecting many Philadelphians.

Tanya Ladson works as the school crossing guard at Cramp Elementary. She said that, like Jeffcoat, she had thought about taking classes to work towards her high school diploma, but finding one that was accessible in terms of time and location had been a challenge.

**“I wanted to do it awhile ago but my fear has always been math so that’s why I had never done it,”** said Ladson, who saw a post for the class on Facebook and decided to enroll.

She said that apart from being something she had wanted to do, she has taken other tests and qualified for other jobs for the City of Philadelphia that ultimately have been unable to accept her due to the requirement of having a high school diploma.

The Cramp class, though, was nearby and at a late enough time that Ladson was able to get there at the end of the working day.

For her part, Ladson said the experience in a small, supportive class environment has transformed some of the reasons she hesitated to enroll in prior years.

**“I’m not so fearful like I was before,”** she said.

The OAE will continue to offer adult education courses at each of the MOE community schools in the fall.