

SQUAD GOALS



Photo by Kendra Gravelle

The Coventry School Committee on Thursday recognized eight graduating seniors who plan to study education at their chosen colleges next year. Pictured from left: Abigail Medeiros, Katelyn Dove, Carleigh Killea, Julie Burgjohann, Megan Robillard, Annabella Rosa and Nathan Macomber. Not pictured: Troy Osterhout.

Town Council celebrates Coventry seniors planning to study education

By **KENDRA GRAVELLE**

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COVENTRY — Annabella Rosa had never imagined that she would one day hope to pursue a career involving children. That was, at least, until she started working at the town summer camp.

“Once I started working there and developed relationships with the kids, I found a huge passion for it,” she said.

And after looking deeper into the possibility of becoming an educator, Rosa said she grew to love the classroom environment, adding that she now aspires to “teach the younger generation.”

“I just love it,” she continued.

With plans to study education at Rhode Island College after she graduates from Coventry High School next month, Rosa was one of eight students to be recognized during a signing ceremony at Thursday’s school committee meeting. Each of the honored students in the fall will take their first steps toward becoming educators by attending



Photo by Kendra Gravelle

Megan Robillard, who plans to attend University of Rhode Island, shakes hands with Assistant Superintendent Laurie Andries during Thursday’s signing ceremony.

one of several Rhode Island Department of Education-approved programs.

“I’m honored to be here tonight to recognize our aspiring educators,” said Keri Potvin, Coventry’s 2018 District

Teacher of the Year, kicking off the brief ceremony.

The recognition award, sponsored

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by Coventry Public Schools in conjunction with RIDE and the Rhode Island Office of Innovation, was created to “elevate the teaching profession” and “shine light on the excellence and dedication of Rhode Island teachers,” Potvin said.

“The work of an educator can be life-changing,” she continued. “Teachers shape

the future, bringing the world to students and inviting them to interact and engage within their world in a meaningful way.”

Potvin was joined by past Milken Educator Award winners Lauren Hopkins and Sue Toohey Kaye, as one-by-one they called the seniors to the front of the council chambers to receive a certificate and a pin: Julie Burgjohann, who will attend Salve Regina University; Carleigh Killea, who will attend Rhode Island Col-

lege; Katelyn Dove, Nathan Macomber, Abigail Medeiros and Megan Robillard, who will all attend the University of Rhode Island; and Rosa.

Troy Osterhout, unable to attend Thursday’s ceremony, will also attend URI.

“I’m certain that the recipients of this esteemed recognition can attest to their own personal experiences that led each of them to this honorable profession,” Potvin continued.

After shaking the hands of

each recipient, school committee members took turns offering well wishes to the soon-to-be Coventry High School alumni.

“I always think what I do is pretty interesting and great until I talk to my brother, who’s also a teacher,” said committee member Luke Murray, who lauded the impact teachers have on young people.

“Good luck and god-speed,” committee member James Pierson chimed in.

“Come back to Coventry and teach.”

Katherine Patenaude, chair of the school committee, told the future educators that she “couldn’t be prouder” of them for choosing to pursue teaching.

Patenaude, who trained to be a teacher but spent just one year in the field, said she admires and respects what she called a “noble profession.”

“You’re aspiring to do the best work that can be done,” she said. “To educate our

kids and make a society that’s worth living in.”

And while each student has a unique reason for wanting to enter the education field, for Burgjohann, the decision all came down to her own experiences at Coventry Public Schools.

“I’ve had so many amazing teachers,” Burgjohann said following the ceremony. “I just want to do for kids what they did for me.”