

CPS success story: Lindblom students heading to Harvard, Stanford, MIT

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Faith Jones (from left) will attend the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Abisola Olawale is heading to Stanford University and Andrea Bossi [Former Murray Student] is going to Harvard University. A group of women pitched in to buy a year's supply of toiletries for them — as well as five other college-bound students at their school. | Lindblom H.S. photos

When Andrea Bossi applied to Harvard University, she didn't actually expect to get in — but she thought it would be cool to have a framed rejection letter.

Then on March 30, while the Lindblom Math and Science Academy student was getting ready to play a varsity soccer match, she clicked on her email. Thirty seconds later, she learned she'd have to make do without the rejection letter.

"I didn't scream, but my eyes leaked a little bit," said Bossi, 17, whose parents are divorced, so she divides her home life between the Roseland and Greater Grand Crossing neighborhoods.



Lindblom senior Andrea Bossi, 17, will be attending Harvard University in the fall. She is leaning towards biology as a major. | Leslie Adkins/For the Sun-Times

As DNAinfo Chicago first reported, administrators at the South Side CPS selective enrollment school have particular reason to be proud this spring. It's the first time in recent memory that a student is set to attend Harvard. Ditto for Stanford and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, said Karen Fitzpatrick, Lindblom's assistant principal. Faith Jones, 18, is heading to MIT in the fall. Abisola Olawale, who is originally from Nigeria, is heading to Stanford.

"They are just shining examples of what we've been trying to accomplish in getting our students ready for the outside world," Fitzpatrick said. "We take them when they come into our nest and prepare them to get ready to fly."

About 97 percent of students at Lindblom, located in West Englewood, are minorities and about 80 percent are low income, according to the school's website.

Jones, 18, who lives in the Washington Heights neighborhood, said she plans to study mechanical engineering at MIT. Jones said she initially was put off by a male-dominated field. Then she joined the National Society of Black Engineers in her sophomore year in high school.

"They served as role models and mentors through the college [application] process, as well as design challenges and also a competition program I was a part of," Jones said.

Bossi said she took a trip out east to see the Harvard campus in late April, when she met other incoming freshmen.

"It's really beautiful," said Bossi of the campus. "It wasn't a warm welcome. It was kind of gray and rainy. But it was really nice to be around people who were all kind of shocked to get in."