



For Agassi Prep senior, a prestigious nod

She'll enter program designed to ready her for West Point appointment

By [Emily Richmond](#) ([contact](#))

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Agassi College Preparatory Academy senior Ashley Justice has been accepted by the United States Military Academy Prep School, a program designed to prepare high school graduates for appointments to West Point.

Justice is one of 35 seniors in the first-ever graduating class at Agassi Prep, a West Las Vegas charter school.

In an earlier interview with the Sun, Justice said she became interested in military service through her participation in the Law Enforcement Explorer Program with North Las Vegas Police. The discipline, structure and opportunity to serve are what made the military academy her first choice.

"It's important for everyone to do their part," Justice said. "If we don't protect what we have, anyone can come and take it away from us."

Most of the seats in the postgrad program go to enlisted soldiers serving in the Army, Army Reserve and Army National Guard. A few spots are reserved for civilian high school graduates, who must apply directly to West Point for consideration.

Rep. Shelley Berkley, D-Nev., nominated Justice for the appointment.

Of the 35 Agassi seniors, 14 have received college acceptances. The schools include UNLV; the University of Nevada, Reno; Arizona State; Humboldt State; Kentucky State; and the University of San Francisco.

Now in its eighth year, Agassi Prep has about 600 students in grades K-12. Charter schools must meet the same performance standards as regular public schools, and receive per-pupil funding from the state. But charter schools have greater leeway in staffing, instructional methods and day-to-day operations.

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The Clark County School District is again asking parents for their opinions, but this time it's online only, please.

Moving the annual parent surveys from the mail to the Internet is expected to save the district \$40,000.

Parents who would prefer a paper copy can call the Research and School Improvement Department at 799-1187. But the district hopes most people will instead log on to the district's Web site. To take part in the survey, parents will need their children's student identification numbers. Parents are asked to fill out the survey for each school any of their children attend. Families with more than one child at the same school need only complete one survey.

The results of the surveys are used to measure whether schools are meeting performance standards set by the Clark County School Board for customer service and parent satisfaction.

Parents who don't have access to computers at home or work can get to the online survey via the computers at public libraries and school campuses or at any of the district's region offices, the Greer Education Center at 2832 E. Flamingo Road or the Administrative Center at 5100 W. Sahara Ave. The deadline is April 15.

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The majority of Clark County's students struggled last year on a new math test, but teacher Dan Fitzgerald's eighth graders at Cram Middle School sailed to the top.

Fitzgerald's algebra I honors students had a 94.9 percent passing rate — the highest of all the northeast region's schools, and dramatically better than the districtwide average. His success in the classroom, and willingness to volunteer his time in support of his students, earned him the first-ever Myra Greenspun Teacher Excellence Award this week.

The award, administered by the Public Education Foundation, was created late last year by the wife of Las Vegas Sun Editor Brian Greenspun.

Fitzgerald was nominated for the honor by Cram Principal Lori Lawson-Sarabyn, who highlighted his contributions to the campus, including adding a more challenging math class to the sixth grade curriculum and doubling participation in the honors algebra class.

"He chaperones dances, tutors his students and others in math after school and attends his students' soccer and lacrosse games on the weekends to show his support and build relationships with them," Lawson-Sarabyn said in a statement. "We are extremely proud of him." Fitzgerald gets \$3,000 for his school, classroom or professional development, \$1,000 to spend as he chooses and 500 "credits" toward supplies at the Public Education Foundation's Teacher Exchange.

A Clark County School District teacher for 13 years, "Dan Fitzgerald truly embodies the spirit in which this award was created," Greenspun said in a statement. "It is my hope that this public acknowledgment of excellence in the classroom will demonstrate our community's appreciation for educators and inspire more teachers to be innovative and creative in their teaching methods."