

Joy, sadness as arts school makes its picks Less than half will get a spot

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By Tracy Jan, Globe Staff | February 17, 2007

Three Boston eighth-graders put their hearts and talent into last month's auditions to enter Boston's prestigious public performing and visual arts high school. Yesterday, they got the news.

Manuel Pagan , 15, also known as Manny the Dance Guy, made it. He will enter the Boston Arts Academy as a freshman in the fall.

"My life is good," said Pagan, an aspiring music video choreographer from Roxbury who has been dancing since he was 8. "I hope this school opens a new life for me, and gives me the path to go where I want to go."

Pagan was one of 378 eighth-graders who danced, sang, acted, and played musical instruments in front of panels of judges in hopes of getting into the arts school. Only 140 made it into this fall's freshman class. Pagan was one of three aspiring artists profiled by the Globe.

The two other students profiled did not land spots at the school.

Regina Crawford , a drummer from Dorchester, said the news disappointed her.

"What am I going to do now?" the 13-year-old recalled thinking when she received the rejection letter, which broke the news gently.

"It takes courage to present your art and your work to other people in an application process like this," the letter read.

Crawford said she will continue drumming through the Berklee College of Music's free Saturday program and still hopes to start her own band. "Like I said, I'll be rich and famous by 18," she said.

Jonathan Coppola , an actor from Revere who has played dress-up since he was a toddler, said he also plans to continue taking theater classes. "I guess I would just keep trying to pursue my dream," he said, sighing. "It's not like the end of the world." ■