

# EDUCATION & LIBRARIES

## LIBRARY DIRECTOR AND BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Robbins Library system continued as in previous years to sustain high usage by the community. The public enthusiastically attended library programs and constantly used the computer workstations for access to the Internet and electronic databases. Professional librarians at the Reference Desk, in the Children's Room and at Fox Branch assisted the public in meeting their informational needs through the library's book and periodical collections and with electronic resources. Residents also accessed the library collections and databases from home. The library system received sufficient funding to maintain existing services although the Robbins Library continued to be closed on Thursday mornings and Sundays.

### Accomplishments

#### *Customer Service*

The library implemented the Customer Service grant received the previous year. Staff attended several in-house workshops on various aspects of customer service including communication, phone etiquette, and sensitivity training for working with people with disabilities. The grant also provided funding for new public relations materials including an updated borrower brochure and floor map. An information kiosk for library announcements and new displays for the newspaper collection and the distribution of materials by local organizations were purchased. Financial assistance for this special project was made possible with Federal funds from the Institute of Museum and Library Services administered through the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners.

#### *Technology*

The public computers were in constant demand and frequently people needed to wait for these. The library expanded access to library catalogs, online databases and the Internet through the installation of a public wireless network. Funding was through the Friends of the Robbins Library and Board of Library Trustees with a connection provided by Comcast. A time management system for the public PCs was also implemented to more equally distribute computer resources. People can sign up for computer use and be notified at the central station when a computer is free for them. Users are automatically logged off after forty-five minutes which frees up the computers for people who are waiting. The computer network in the Children's Room was also upgraded.

Robbins Library joined with several other libraries in the Minuteman Network to make downloadable audio books available to Arlington residents. Hundreds

of digital audiobooks titles were made available including fiction, non-fiction, young adult literature, and the award-winning Pimsleur language series. After setting up an account from home, residents can access the audio library from any computer twenty-four hours a day seven days a week. Downloading is available without any special software on the computer or portable audio player.

#### *Programs/Outreach*

Library staff continued outreach to the community including an open house for English Language Learners (ELL) and participation in the Chamber of Commerce Business Forward program and the Asian Arts Festival in cooperation with the Arlington Center for the Arts. The ELL collection continued to be expanded with books, videos, CDs, and audiotapes to assist speakers of several foreign languages in their efforts to master spoken English. In November an open house was held to acquaint people with the collections and the services of the library. In May the library offered a display on Asian arts including popular films from India, China, and Japan plus books on origami, calligraphy, kites, folk crafts, Chinese porcelain, religious art, Manga, and children's books. In June the library again served as a program site for the Chamber of Commerce's Business Forward and offered workshops on business databases.

The library established a Young Adult Advisory Board to assist with planning services and programs for middle and high school students. The very energetic committee met several times and made a list of all the programs they would like the library to offer for their age group. They also planned an Oktoberfest celebration for young children which was very successful. The committee will continue to meet on a monthly basis.



Arlington residents enthusiastically participated in the fourth annual Arlington Reads Together program which promotes closer ties among community members through reading the same book and coming together at book discussions and other programs. *Mountains Beyond Mountains* by Tracy Kidder chronicles the efforts of Paul Farmer to cure infectious diseases and to bring lifesaving tools and modern medicine to some of the world's poorest populations. Farmer began in Haiti with a single clinic and expanded his work through the funding of the Boston-based public charity, Partners in Health (PIH).

The library was fortunate to have Dr. Serena Koenig, a clinician from PIH, speak at Town Hall in November on her experiences in Haiti. Students in their junior year at Arlington High School read *Mountains Beyond Mountains* as their summer reading requirement and two students were so motivated by the book that they formed a club to raise money for PIH. The Board of Selectmen and the School Committee held discussions on the book and a group of students participated in a sharing session with three staff members from PIH. Other programs included discussions of several books at the Robbins and Fox libraries, movie night, Haitian Festival with Yanvolu Drumming and Dance Ensemble, Haitian storytelling, arts and crafts, food, displays in the library, and thematic booklists for adults and children. The Community Read project is sponsored by the Board of Library Trustees, Friends of the Library, and the Diversity Task Force of Vision 2020.

This year there was increased participation in the library's annual summer reading program for children, young adults, and adults.

### **Services for Adults and Young Adults**

Adults and young adults of middle and high school age utilized the services provided by the librarians in the Adult Services Department for school, work, and personal life. The library continued to staff the Reference Desk whenever the library was open to the public and tried to provide two librarians whenever possible during busy hours. Twenty-two online databases were provided through the library's participation in the Minuteman Library Network and the Metrowest Regional Library System with municipal funding for fifteen others. With the public workstations in almost constant use, the staff assisted patrons in the use of the Internet and electronic databases and with troubleshooting equipment. The library recorded 66,092 visits to its web site.

Staff created book and audiovisual displays to highlight the collections and assist citizens in their pursuit of life-long learning. A summer reading club for adults and young adults was again offered with a raffle for gift certificates funded by the Friends of the Library. Many local organizations also took advantage of the library's exhibit space in the lobby to publicize their or-

ganizations and to present informational displays. Adult Services staff selected materials to increase the English Language Learning collection and actively promoted these as well as expanding the Chinese language collection. Staff also offered services to the business community by participating in Business Forward, offering a workshop on business databases, hosting a breakfast for Chamber of Commerce members, and sponsoring a workshop on How to Prepare a Successful Loan Package. Packets with information for new residents to the town were compiled and distributed by the Adult Services Department. With the new Speed Read collection, residents had the opportunity to browse this small collection of new and popular materials for which there was a significant demand. Staff decorated the walls along the Mass. Ave. stairway with art prints to promote their availability for public borrowing. Adults were encouraged to participate in the library's celebration of National Poetry Month by attendance at the open mike session in the Reading Room, display of poetry books, and the booklist of favorite library staff poems.

Young adults in grades six through twelve continued to make use of the facility and services. The Reference Desk staff assisted students with class assignments and bibliographic instruction. Young adults enjoyed several programs appealing to that age group including a book group for middle school girls, domino physics, Latin-African drum program, and an author visit at the Ottoson Middle School. Young adults also participated in the National Poetry Month celebration with an incredibly moving and inspirational open mike event at which twenty teens read their original poems after listening to the music of a high school jazz-fusion band. Artwork from Arlington High School was displayed in the Young Adult area of the library throughout the year. In June the first meeting of the Young Adult Advisory Committee was held. The library staff coordinated with both Arlington High School and the Ottoson Middle School on the summer reading lists. Teenagers participated in the summer reading program and had the opportunity to win raffle prizes funded by trust funds and local businesses.

The Community Room and Conference Room were used by eighty-five local organizations for a total of 677 meetings. In addition, the two study rooms were in constant demand by students and tutors. The Local History Room was used eighty-nine times by researchers with Independent Research Cards.

### **Services for Children**

Children from infancy to fifth grade enjoyed the materials and programs offered by the Children's Department. Materials included books, magazines, books on tape, music and spoken word on cassette, video-cassettes, CD-ROMs, puppets, and educational toys. Children and parents participated in 296 activities at

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the Robbins and Fox Libraries including storytimes in English and foreign languages, sing-a-longs for infants and toddlers, craft times, craft fair with the Recreation Department, toddler programs, animation workshops, and various performances. The Children's Department participated in Poetry Month with open mike poetry readings, a poetry wall to display students' writing and favorite poems, and Poetry in Your Pocket. Students could pick up a poem in the Children's Room and if a volunteer bard approached a child and asked them if he had a poem in his pocket and the child showed/read the poem, he would receive a book from the library.

This year several children and library staff marched in the Patriot's Day Parade dressed as their favorite literary characters. The library cooperated with the organizers of the sister city of Teosinte project who did a story and craft program. Over 1,000 children participated in the summer reading program with a theme of What's Buzzing. Funding from the trust funds, Friends of the Library and local businesses enabled children who participated to choose a free book to keep and to win small prizes. The children's librarians offered assistance to children, parents and teachers in researching homework assignments, and for general use of the book collection and the Internet. The public continued to request the very popular graded and subject booklists that are updated annually by library staff and several new booklists were prepared. The library continued to prepare Quick Pick boxes with thematic picture books to assist parents who do not have time to browse the shelves.

The library is very fortunate to have the Anne A. Russell Children's Educational and Cultural Enrichment Fund which sponsors many special programs for children that could not be afforded through the municipal budget. In 2006 these included a magic show and workshop, author visits, Arlington Philharmonic Concert, domino physics, pirate's life, crafts, Colonial Day, bugs science, picnic concerts, African drumming, knitting, Haitian Festival, international games, musical theatrics, and poetry. The fund also finances the very popular infant-toddler sing-a-longs. The Russell Fund continued to provide kindergarten packets to children to introduce them to the library and baby bundle packets to new parents with information on library services for infants and toddlers.

The public and school libraries continued their cooperative efforts, although the lack of elementary school librarians continues to negatively impact this partnership. The public library maintained collaboration with the schools through letters to teachers, assignment support for teachers and students, extended loan periods for teachers, library tours, preparation of curriculum kits, and suggestions for the summer reading lists. The children's librarians at the Robbins and Fox presented book talks in the schools and instruction for classes

at the library. The Russell Fund continued to sponsor authors chosen by the elementary schools to visit their facility. As in previous years, the library considered the needs of the curriculum frameworks when selecting materials for purchase. The Children's Department sponsored a program at the library for parents with children entering kindergarten in conjunction with the School Department and English Language Learners. The library was delighted to be presented with a fantastic mural of children's storybook characters made by the Arlington High School Advanced Ceramics students.

## **Edith Fox Library and Community Center**

Children and adults in East Arlington continued to enjoy the services that a branch library provides. The municipal budget funded the three days that the library was open. In February, Page Lindsay retired after almost twenty years of dedicated service. Children and parents enjoyed story times, lap-sit programs, sing-a-longs, craft programs, and the summer reading club. Elementary and nursery schools brought classes to the library for stories and instruction. All ages enjoyed the monthly book displays that highlighted the collection and exhibits from community groups and the schools. The new branch librarian re-organized the collections, upgraded the configuration of the computers and re-decorated. Several programs were also introduced in the evenings with a small but enthusiastic audience and more will be held next year.

## **Behind the Scenes**

Library staff worked diligently to offer quality services to the community. The number of items borrowed for library patrons from other libraries and loaned to other libraries for their patrons continued to increase. Despite the fact that the public can request items electronically, the staff must still locate the materials and process them for loan and return. The Adult Services and Technical Services Departments selected, ordered, cataloged and processed 16,036 new items including books, magazines, music compact discs, books on CD, videocassettes, DVDs, CD-ROMs, puppets, and educational toys. The Circulation Department checked out and returned 525,791 items to the shelves. The Local History Librarian received sixty-five requests for research assistance in person, by phone, by letter, and by email. The Adult Services Department continued to order various tax forms and serve as a distribution center to assist patrons in filing their state and federal income taxes. Library administration maintained all state mandated standards to receive \$56,803 in a state aid grant that was used for participation in the Minuteman Library Network and library materials.

The library collected \$64,558 in overdue fines and lost book money that was returned to the general Town fund. Library administration updated the public

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policy manual for staff. The Adult Services Department successfully submitted a federal grant application to provide training sessions for the public on the library's online databases and this will occur in 2007. Arlington organizations were encouraged to submit information to the Minuteman Library Network's Community Information Database. The online scheduling of museum passes was implemented for the public. Library staff in all departments attended the Public Library Association's National Conference that was held in Boston in order to learn about new trends in library service.

Library staff prepared the monthly children's newsletter and the quarterly newsletter for adults to keep the public aware of services available to them. Staff also updated the library's web page to keep it timely. Other staff activities included selecting, weeding and updating the collection, responding to local history questions of which many were from out-of-state patrons, updating the periodical list, shifting collections, creating booklists and displays, scheduling the meeting rooms, purchase and processing of the rental book collection, and processing books that need re-binding.

The library attempted to meet patron demands for new audiovisual materials. The Friends of the Library's DVD rental collection continues to prove very successful and the proceeds from the rentals will allow for the further expansion of the collection.

In order to raise revenue for the library, the Reading Room and lobby was made available for rentals by groups and individuals for private functions. Two very successful receptions were held this year and the library will do extensive marketing in 2007.

Maintenance of the building continued to be a high priority. Three concerns were studied this year and will be addressed in 2007: a need for better space for the new book and expanding audiovisual collections, improved exterior lighting, and moisture problems in the basement.

### Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees continued its commitment to: sponsor a twice-yearly authors program, administer the trust funds for the optimum benefit of the community, raise private funds to augment the municipal budget and advocate for adequate staffing, and delivery of essential library services. The Board approved funding in FY06 for reference books, books on tape and CD, music CDs, non-fiction DVDs, literacy and multicultural materials, art prints, young adult books, children's materials, programs for children, materials for the Fox Library, Community Read, author program, public relations, volunteer appreciation, and staff development. The public enthusiastically received the two author programs sponsored by the Trustees; Anita Diamant and Gail Caldwell. The second annual Arlington Authors panel was also very well received and will be held again

next year. The Board conducted a mail solicitation of individuals and businesses to raise funds for the collections. Board members also participated in Town Day by staffing a table providing information on library activities and resources.



*Board of Library Trustees*  
Standing (l. to r.): Patricia Deal, Katherine Fennelly, Francis Murray, Susan Cronin Ruderman, Barbara Muldoon.  
Seated: Joyce Radochia, David Castiglione.

### Friends of the Library

The Friends of the Robbins Library membership continued to grow with a current roster of 405 members. This support group raises supplemental funds for materials and equipment at the Robbins and Fox Libraries not provided through the municipal budget. They also sponsor the family museum pass program. An acquisition this year was a free parking pass for Massachusetts state parks and beaches. The winter doldrums book sale in March and the Town Day sale in September brought out book lovers and brought in much needed revenue. Many visitors also perused and made purchases from the ongoing book sale on the fourth floor of the library. The rental DVD collection is stocked with new releases and has many users.

Fundraising began early in the year with a benefit performance of Agatha Christie's *The Unexpected Guest* by the Arlington Friends of the Drama, with audience members partaking of a wine and cheese reception prior to the show. Attendees at the annual meeting in April were treated to a slide/lecture on the Boston Post Roads by Paul Hogman of the Arlington Historical Society. June brought a visit by author and librarian Jeanne Munn Bracken who entertained participants with tales of family life from her book *Some Day We'll Laugh About This*.

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An Antiques Appraisal evening in December rounded out the Friends programming. In an entertaining and informative style, Stuart Whitehurst of Skinner, Inc. evaluated "treasures" brought by audience members. The Friends hope to make this an annual event. Administrative Coordinator Amy McElroy joined the team this summer and has become involved in all Friends of the Library activities.



*Stuart Whitehurst evaluates 'treasures.'*

### Volunteers

The library staff is grateful for the contributions made by volunteers who donated over 1,500 hours assisting with several aspects of library operations. Special recognition is due to Beverly Brinkerhoff, who continues to coordinate the homebound delivery program. She and the other program volunteers are able to bring the library to those who cannot come to it. Books, music, videos, and companionship are provided weekly to appreciative residents. Margarida Mapletoft has lent her talents to many tasks, large and small. Bill Bradley spent many hours each week shelving materials and keeping the shelves in great order. Other volunteers helping at the Robbins Library were: Carolyn Archer, Aniq Ayaz, Susie Barbarosa, Joanne Burns, John Gearin, Mary and Catherine Gryniewicz, Kim Haase, Debbie Hayes, Morris Keesan, Marion Kranefuss, Helen Krikorian, Page Lindsay, Debbie Minns, Sally Naish, Judi Paradis, Dave Pienta, Nancie Richardson, Steve Scott, Ellen Shearer, Skye Stewart, Marcie Theriault, Sophie Travis, Barbara Wagner, Wendy Watson, and YuJia Xiao. Aply assisting the Fox Branch Library staff were: Joe Cook, Michel Jackson, Gert Kovar, and Beth Lanigan. The Children's Room staff acknowledges the efforts of three Arlington High School students who volunteered this summer in the children's room: Alex Long, Katherine Smith, and Katy Wassam.

### Donations

Citizens, businesses and organizations donated over \$33,000 to the library in FY 2006. The library ac-

knowledges with appreciation these gifts which allow for the purchase of books and audiovisual materials which could not be afforded through the municipal budget. As in previous years the programs and services of the Anne A. Russell Educational and Cultural Enrichment Fund have enriched the community. The library is also grateful to Arlington resident Richard Duffy who donated the profits from the sale of his book, *Arlington Then and Now* to the library.

The Friends of the Library donated \$32,975 to the library for membership to five museums, reference books, books on CD, young adult materials, DVDs, materials and a computer for the Fox branch wireless project, raffle prizes for summer reading program, and other supplementary materials.

### Looking Ahead

The administration and staff of the Arlington Library System (Robbins and Fox) strives to provide high standards of professional service and facility upkeep. In 2007 the library will continue to face the challenge of providing quality library services within the context of limited municipal resources. Despite the successful override in 2005, the library did not receive funding to restore all services that were cut back due to reductions in the municipal budget in fiscal 2004. The Robbins Library continues to be closed on Thursday morning and Sundays. The Fox Library was restored to opening three days.

With limited financial resources, the library will continue to face the challenge to maintain and expand its book and audiovisual collection, keep pace with technology, introduce new media and provide the residents of Arlington with a high-quality contemporary library system. Library administration and the Board of Trustees will endeavor to provide funding for the continued expansion of the very popular collection of music CDs, books on CD and DVDs. The library will maintain its commitment to high quality children's services through the financial support of the Anne A. Russell Children's Educational and Cultural Enrichment Fund. Staff will continue to work with the Young Adult Advisory Committee to plan programs and services that appeal to middle and high school youth. Participation in the Minuteman Library Network will continue to provide access to the Internet and electronic databases. The library will continue to replace and upgrade network equipment, PCs and peripherals connected to the Minuteman Library Network as well as office automation as long as capital funding is maintained.

The library will use its Long-Range Plan for FY2006-2008 in formulating its goals and objectives for FY2008 and will update the plan for the following years. Future activities include: the installation of a self-check-out station for patrons to ease the pressure of long lines at the Circulation Desk, the development of a market-

ing campaign to insure that residents of the town are aware of all the services the library has to offer, provision of training classes for the public on the Internet, online databases and the catalog, encouraging feedback from the community to insure that the collection meets community needs, survey of patron interests to guide in program development, and the co-sponsorship of events with other Town organizations. The library will also continue to work with the Minuteman Library Network to explore and evaluate service enhancements. To raise additional funding, library administration will publicize the availability of the Robbins Library Reading Room for rentals when the library is closed and continue to support the Trustee's annual solicitation of private funds. The administration and Board of Trustees will explore funding opportunities to meet the community's desire for the restoration of Sunday hours. Representatives from the library will continue to work with the Town Manager and Board of Selectmen to explore ways to raise revenue to make the Fox Library and Community Center as self-supporting as possible in anticipation of the financial deficit facing the town in FY 2011.

## ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The 2005-06 school year was marked by a great deal of learning, much progress towards district goals, and difficult budget decisions. Once again the 4,500 plus students in our schools achieved at high levels academically, socially, and emotionally. These accomplishments are only possible due to the very hard work of talented and dedicated teachers and administrators.

This year brought a new approach to goal setting and measuring progress against our goals. Rather than have a multitude of small goals, the Superintendent and the School Committee set 5 major goals, with very specific actions for the year. Progress was measured monthly. This focus allowed the district to make significant progress. Results of this work include:

- The Special Education department made huge strides in improving our compliance with state-mandated timelines and improved our compliance rate in all areas. The staff also implemented over 80% of the 196 recommended changes from the Department of Education Program Review. Students with disabilities and their parents benefited greatly from all this hard work.
- The English Language Learners program (also known as English as a Second Language) was revamped and expanded. Beginning students now receive over two hours of targeted instruction each day. This speeds up their ability to spend more time in the regular classroom. In partnership with the World Language Network the district also offers a num-

ber of programs to welcome these students and their families to the community.

- The Arlington teaching staff matches the national trend of becoming younger, on average, as a wave of veteran teachers reach retirement. The workforce has shifted over the last ten years from two-thirds highly experienced (15+ years in teaching) to only one-third with as much experience. This has required us to redesign our professional development (teacher training) efforts. We are focusing on fewer topics but in much more depth. We have also greatly increased the opportunities for staff to work with colleagues and share best practices.

Our continued efforts to create a clearly defined curriculum that lets each teacher know what we expect each student to know and be able to do at a given grade level is very helpful for new staff. In addition to these content standards, we are developing assessments that allow each teacher to quickly determine what their students have mastered, what must be taught differently, and which students need extra help. One of the most exciting aspects of these standards and common assessments is that they were developed by teams of classroom teachers. This has provided much front line wisdom and has allowed teachers to shine as leaders.

Every three years the district and the teachers negotiate a new contract. Three years ago, the process was drawn out, emotional, and left both sides feeling angry, misunderstood, and undervalued. No one wanted a repeat. The union, the School Committee and the Superintendent tried something different this year called interest based bargaining. This process is more collaborative and seeks to build on our shared desire to help students in Arlington, treat teachers with respect, and compensate staff fairly within our fiscal constraints. With the help of a facilitator, the negotiations were respectful, resulted in improved district-union relations, and a contract ratified by over 75% of the teachers on the first vote.

As the world around us changes so do the Arlington Public Schools. To launch a multi-year self-evaluation of the district in light of rapid changes in technology, globalization, and life in general, we held a series of forums on education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Parents, community members, and staff have researched and discussed in depth the question, "What knowledge, skills, and habits of mind do our children need to be socially, emotionally, and vocationally successful in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?" These discussions are continuing, but already influence our day-to-day decisions. One small example of this is the increase in students traveling abroad with their teachers to Italy, France, Japan, and Germany. These trips are fully funded by students and scholarships, not the school budget.

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This year brought a new look and level of detail to the budget. Living within the 5 year stability plan (the override commitment) is important and difficult. As Special Education costs rise faster than planned, we have made hard choices to prioritize resources staying in the classroom. The budget increased professional development and reading support, and provided fair wage increases to the staff, but not without a sacrifice. A \$500,000 reduction in administrators was needed. This impacted a number of talented, dedicated people and shifted their work to the remaining administrators. This was a very difficult decision, but necessary to meet the needs of students within our limited resources.

The Dallin School opened on time and on budget. It is a beautiful school with state-of-the-art technology and an environment that improves learning and teacher teamwork.

As all these goals and actions unfold, they support a unifying theme of bringing nine very good schools together into one great K-12 district that allows students to move more seamlessly from grade to grade, and from building to building. This spreads best practices in one room and shares it with all teachers. It allows students to enter the next grade with similar experiences, thus eliminating the need to spend the start of the year getting each student to the same place. It also makes sure that students receive the same great education no matter what school they attend. Some students deal very well with the variation from grade to grade, but for others this makes the start of each new school year very difficult.

It has been gratifying to see how well the principals, curriculum leaders, grade level teachers, and departments work so well together when we give them the opportunity.

The Arlington Public Schools have a team of talented professionals working together towards our shared goal: To help every student achieve their fullest potential as a well-rounded person ready for life after graduation.

## District Goals

Approved 11/08/05

The overarching mission of the Arlington Public Schools is to support and encourage all children to reach their full academic, social, and emotional potential. By graduation, each student should be ready to succeed (at work, life, and/or higher education) in the complex 21<sup>st</sup> century based on high levels of academic achievement and a well-rounded understanding of the arts. All this must be achieved within the financial limitations agreed to in the 2005 override. The following five (5) goals/actions will help us achieve our mission.

*Why just 5 goals?* In past years a great deal of effort

and thought has produced many worthwhile goals. These goals represent important initiatives, but their great number (over 45) make them difficult to implement. By selecting just 5 goals the district can concentrate our limited time, effort, and resources. Many of these goals will continue for years.

*Whose goals are these?* These goals belong to the teachers, administrators, parents, Town, School Committee and Superintendent. The goals are based on over 100 meetings with staff, administrators, parents, students, Town officials, and advocacy groups. They reflect the thinking and priorities of all of Arlington. Available data has also been analyzed.

*What else is important?* By focusing on just 5 goals, we unavoidably fail to mention many other important aspects of a successful school system. Although much of the district's efforts will be directed to the 5 goals, many other areas will and must be strongly supported. For example:

Academic achievement and emotional health require a supportive and caring school climate. The district will continue to build upon our positive school culture by supporting the Community of Caring concept and the Open Circle conflict resolution model.

Math and English may be the pillars of learning, but they are not sufficient. A well-rounded student should have ample exposure and demonstrated skill in all the arts. Our strong programs in music, performing arts, instrumental music, and art are also pillars of good education.

In our multicultural world, Arlington's long and strong commitment to diversity must be constantly renewed and strengthened. This includes hiring, programs like Facing History and Ourselves, and other efforts.

A healthy body is as important as a sound mind. Our modeling and supporting healthy decisions will continue.

## **Goal 1: Implement Special Ed and English Language Learners reforms per Coordinated Program Review.**

Under state and federal law the district has an obligation to serve students with special needs. We also have a moral responsibility to ensure that all children, including children with IEP's, reach their full potential. The Massachusetts Department of Education (DOE) has detailed a number of shortcomings and our Corrective Action Plan outlines the agreed-upon solutions. This is a multi year effort. Future years will focus more on academic achievement, collaboration between regular ed and special ed staff, and feedback from principals and staff. Given the DOE requirements and the state of our current data system and scheduling tools we must address structural problems before we can move onto

other equally important issues.

- Meet the timetable of the Corrective Action Plan. (See the district web site [www.arlington.k12.ma.us](http://www.arlington.k12.ma.us) for the full report and time table.)
- Improve central office administrative responsiveness to problems and concerns raised by parents (such as returning phone calls quickly, respect for differing opinions, etc.).
- Create a monitoring system to track compliance with time tables for initial evaluations, three year reevaluations, and staffing levels needed to provide required services.

### *2005/06 Measures & Milestones*

- Meet deadline per Corrective Action Plan.
- Obtain written feedback from Special Education PAC. (January, 2006)
- Survey special education parents regarding incremental changes in central office responsiveness. (May, 2006)
- Produce reports on meeting timelines and compliance with the Corrective Action Plan (February, 2006 and monthly thereafter)
- Provide professional development for all involved staff in writing legal IEP's and measurable goals. (April 2006)
- Implement an intensive and tiered English Language Learners program. (January, 2006)

**Goal 2:** *Implement essential standards and common assessments in math, reading, writing, science, and social studies K-12 to build upon the foundation of our standards-based education and common curriculum.*

As children move from grade to grade and school to school we must ensure a clear, logical progression of learning. Time is wasted and frustration created when students advance to the next grade without having learned similar material. Only by using a common core curriculum (essential standards) can we maximize a child's learning. Much of this work has been completed in the past few years and some is in wide use.

To ensure what is taught is actually learned, we need common assessments. This does not require more testing or standardized testing, but only coordination of existing tests, quizzes and assignments. These common assessments monitor learning and provide feedback to staff, which is invaluable when teachers share best practices. Common assessments also help establish uniform and high expectations for student mastery at each grade level.

This is a multi-year effort. The first year will focus on math and writing because they have been focus areas in the last few years. We want to implement

and fine tune this prior work. A great deal of high quality curriculum development has been completed, but widespread use has been hampered by staff turnover and limited professional development time.

- Review existing and finalize simple, clear essential standards documents, including examples of student work at various levels of mastery at each grade level.
- Ensure significant staff buy-in exists for the essential standards. This includes assuring flexibility for teaching styles and teacher passions.
- Coordinate common assessments and assessment schedule.
- Collate and share internally results from common assessments to help teachers facilitate the sharing and adoption of best practices.

### *2005/06 Measures & Milestones*

- Articulate essential standards K-9 in math and writing. (February, 2006)
- Articulate common assessments in math and writing K-9. (February, 2006)
- Conduct at least two (2) common assessments per grade K-9 in math and writing. (April, 2006)
- Collate, distribute and discuss data from two (2) common assessments per grade K-9 in math and writing. (May, 2006)

**Goal 3:** *Provide highly effective and focused professional development.*

The Arlington School District has many recently hired staff, as well as experienced veteran teachers. As is typical across the country, many teachers work in isolation. Professional development is a time and an opportunity to allow teachers to share best practices, to learn from each other, and to assure that high expectations are set equally in each classroom.

This is a multi-year effort. Since the curriculum implementation focus this year is on math and ELA K-9, this goal will also focus on these areas and build on the extensive work already done through the Focus On Math grant.

- Professional development must support key district curriculum initiatives and be useful to teachers. Professional development is only successful if it helps teachers become more effective.
- Professional development will have many layers, such as peer observation, data analysis, mentoring, looking at student work, and study groups.
- Professional development will take place at many different times. This includes during the



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school day, at faculty meetings, after school per the contract, and at other times. Professional development will expand well beyond the contractual 3 one hour blocks a month.

## *2005/06 Measures & Milestones*

- Produce a detailed year-long plan for 2005/06 that supports the 2005/06 curriculum goals (goal #2) in Math and English language arts. Science, reading, social studies and other subjects to follow in future years. (November, 2005)
- Produce a detailed year-long plan crafted by a Professional Development Committee for 2006/07, including summer work for 2006 that supports the district goals. (May, 2006)
- Report on implementation of the 2005/06 professional development plan. (January, 2006 and June, 2006)
- Conduct survey regarding relevance of professional development for staff participating in the K-9 math and English language arts professional development. (May, 2006)
- Conduct survey to confirm sharing and team work has increased for staff participating in the K-9 math and English language arts professional development. (May, 2006)
- Provide expanded mentoring support in the area of K-5 math. (June, 2006)

**Goal 4:** *Determine what content knowledge, skills, and “habits of mind” will best prepare our students for the 21st century.*

Thomas Friedman in *The World is Flat* cautions not to prepare children for a world that no longer exists. Diane Ravitch, a leading educational historian, explains that in the future “Schools must do far more than teach children ‘how to learn and how to look things up,’ they must teach them what knowledge has the most value, how to use that knowledge, how to organize what they know, how to tell the difference between accurate information and propaganda, and how to turn information into understanding.”

Much of the content knowledge our children will need throughout their lives they will learn after they leave high school and/or college. We need to be certain that we prepare students for this reality. This is a multi-year effort. The first year will focus on the district gaining clarity and agreement on what skills are most valuable.

- Document current situation.
- Create a needs assessment for student skills and habits of mind for the 21st century.
- Incorporate learning of desired skills and habits of mind into existing program.

## *2005/06 Measures & Milestones*

- Produce list of core offerings and time commitments. (April, 2006)
- Produce list of all non-core offerings, related cost, and time impact on core curriculum. (April, 2006)
- Create forums for staff and administrators to discuss enduring skills and habits of mind. (February, 2006)
- Survey parents, staff, and experts re skills needed for 21st century. (April, 2006)
- Produce document detailing desired skills and habits of mind. (July, 2006)

**Goal 5:** *Create a transparent, simple-to-understand budget, which provides both line item and programmatic detail.*

Even as the district responds to rising expectations, increasing demands of a complex world, and an obligation to serve all children, we cannot expect additional funding. We must scrutinize every dollar spent to ensure that our mission and key goals/activities don't become victims of the budget.

- Produce new document with greater clarity.
- Combine (in separate columns) grants and other revenue within the operating budget.
- Build budget person by person and activity by activity with detailed back-up.
- Develop program summaries as part of budget document.
- Shift budgeting process to a more “bottoms up” approach, allowing for significant participation by principals and curriculum leaders.
- Ensure that budget decisions support teaching, learning, students, and the district goals.

## *2005/06 Measurements & Milestones*

- Produce a budget with clearly defined line items. Provide back-up detail. (Jan. 2006)
- Calculate and present program cost summaries as well as line item detail. (Jan. 2006)
- Integrate grant revenue into budget document so that program summaries include grant funding. (Jan. 2006)
- Recommend methods to shift resources as needed to support the district goals without decreasing needed services. (Jan., 2006)
- Determine line item authority guidelines for school committee control as required by Mass General Laws. (June, 2006)
- Survey School Committee members, Town Meeting members, Principals, and Department Heads re usefulness of budget documents and the budget process. (3/06)

# EDUCATION & LIBRARIES

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## MINUTEMAN REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL SCHOOL OF APPLIED ARTS & SCIENCE

[www.minuteman.org](http://www.minuteman.org)

### Class of 2006 Graduate Achievement Highlights

- 96% of the Class of 2006 graduated into college, employed in their field of study or enlisted in the US military.
- Commercial & Human Services graduates achieved 98% placement rate with 76% en-



rolled in college, 21% employed in their field of study, and 1% in the military.

- Science Technology graduates achieved 98% placement with 81% enrolled in college, 7% employed in their field of study and 10% enlisted in the US military with 100% of Electromechanical Engineering, Environmental Science, Office Technology and Graphic Communications students attending college.
- Construction-Trades graduates achieved 92% placement rate 35% enrolled in college, 49% entering the workplace in their field of study and 8% enlisting in the US military.
- 100% of Dental graduates passed the National Dental Board examination.
- 100% of Early Childhood Education graduates were certified by the Office for Child Care Services.
- 100% of Cosmetology graduates passed the state board examination to become a licensed hair stylist.
- Medical Occupations graduates achieved 100% placement in college.
- Student speakers at the Class of 2006 graduation ceremony were Valedictorian John Pelletier of Lancaster, Salutatorian Victoria Coffey of Watertown and Class President Nicholas Radl of Stow.

### Academic Division Highlights

- Minuteman Regional High School sophomores had a 98% pass rate on the English Language Arts MCAS Test taken in May 2006.
- Thirty-eight students took advantage of college level pre-calculus and calculus courses under an articulation agreement with Middlesex Community College.
- Minuteman students on the Math Team competed strongly at all levels against academically diverse groups of area schools finishing the year ranked in first place in the state vocational conference for the third year in a row.
- A Latin course was expanded to serve the growing number of students interested in medical careers, biotechnology, and science.
- The Minuteman Players, the school's drama students, produced and performed a full production of Tim Kelley's murder mystery comedy, *Love is Murder*.
- The Special Education Department teamed with mainstream teachers to help students achieve one of the highest levels of special education MCAS pass scores in the state.
- Faculty members from English, Math, Science and several vocational fields designed a series of MCAS Science curriculum standards for use throughout each of the school's 22 vocational majors.

### Science & Technology Division Highlights

- The first state-approved high school pre-engineering program entered its seventh year and graduated its third class of students, again with 100% attending college.
- Many new business/industry projects were achieved, including; Verizon supporting with after-school technology training for middle school students; Cognex Corporation of Natick providing weekly on-line interactive training on Visions Systems; GTE helping with new physics units for biotechnology; the Northeast Center for Telecommunications providing grant assistance; and a \$80,000 gift from Adept Robots for the Electromechanical Engineering/Robotics program.
- Approximately 82% of the division seniors graduating received certification in their respective area, while approximately 92% were planning to continue their education or training upon graduation.
- A team of two Pre-Engineering students placed second in the West Point Bridge Design contest – a national internet-based software design contest.

# EDUCATION & LIBRARIES

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- Minuteman is now an authorized CertiPort Testing Center for Microsoft Office Specialist Certifications.

## **Construction – Power Mechanics – Building Trades Division Highlights**

- The Automotive Technology Department won the industry's Most Outstanding Automotive Program in Massachusetts award for the sixth year in a row.
- Underclassmen created four scaled New England style homes for display at the New England Home Show in Boston. Minuteman is the only participating vocational high school in MA.
- In Landscape Management, two graduates won the two most prestigious scholarships given by the Mass Arborist Association.
- Carpentry was invited to attend the Secretary's Award for Excellence in Environmental Education as an honorable mention. This award honors individual schools, teacher and students across the commonwealth who have distinguished themselves in environmental education initiatives.

## **Commercial & Human Services Division Highlights**

- For the third year in a row, Culinary Arts students won first-place in the annual culinary competition at Newbury College and in so doing earned \$7,000 in scholarships for enrollment at Newbury College.
- As a community service project a team of junior Graphic Communications students worked with the Lahey Clinic in designing and printing a 2005 calendar incorporating artwork drawn by elementary age students who are patients in the Young Hearts clinic.
- The Cosmetology Class of 2006 had a 100% success rate when taking the State Board Exams.

## **National Honor Society**

The Minuteman Chapter of the National Honor Society proudly served the school and the community with thousands of volunteer hours maintaining a solid and diverse membership while inducting thirteen new members.

## **Overall School Highlights**

A new Freshmen Exploratory program was designed and implemented as a means to ensure that members of the Class of 2010 have a full opportunity to experience each of Minuteman's twenty-two technical programs before choosing a major. This new exploratory program runs half of grade 9 and allows students

to develop a better understanding of their talents and interests while exposing them to diverse careers.

Community Education services, including After School programs for middle school students, Adult High School services, Evening and Continuing Education courses and Summer School programs and camps, provided to member town residents continued at one of the highest participation and success levels in the state.

The Facilities Management Department completed major campus renovation and facility improvement projects including renovation of the school's Special Education administrative areas, renovation of elevators, upgrade of grades 9 & 10 Cosmetology Training Rooms, and updating of a Technical literacy Mac Lab and Training Room.

## **Minuteman Students Receive**

### *John and Abigail Adams Scholarships*

The John and Abigail Adams Scholarship provides a tuition waiver for eight traditional semesters of undergraduate education at the University of Massachusetts, the seven state colleges, or fifteen community colleges. Students qualify for the scholarship when they score in the Advanced category in either the Mathematics or the English language arts section of the grade 10 MCAS test; score in the Proficient or Advanced category on the second subject (Mathematics or English language arts); and have a combined MCAS score on these assessments that ranks in the top 25% in their school district.

The following students from Arlington were awarded the John and Abigail Adams scholarship: Louis Bowers, Karl Gibson, Molly McDowell, James Murray, and Matt Taber of Arlington.

## **Students Awarded National Merit Scholarship**

Three Minuteman Students were awarded as Commended Students in the National Merit Scholarship Program. These Commended Students are being recognized for the exceptional academic promise demonstrated by their outstanding performance on the PSAT's. Karl Gibson (Computer Technology) of Arlington was awarded the scholarship and received a Letter of Commendation for outstanding scores.

## **Minuteman Students Take Gold, Silver and Bronze Medals at National SkillsUSA Competition**

Eleven students from Minuteman Regional High School represented their school and Massachusetts at a national competition, the SkillsUSA Championships in Kansas City, MO in late June. Eight came home with first, second or third place medals and three more returned with top ranking national placements. Karl Gibson of Arlington, a junior in Computer Technology placed First in the Nation in the Computer Programming Competition. This is the first year that this competition has

been available to compete in. This was Karl's first year competing in SkillsUSA and was very excited about his success and ease in the competition. Karl will compete again next year to defend his title as a senior.

The team of Kerry McCoy, Molly McDowell, and Gina Willms all of Arlington were honored as Second Place finalists in the Tech Prep Showcase Competition. Tech Prep Showcase is a unique leadership competition where students are required to perform an act of community service and develop a detailed and rehearsed presentation following competition guidelines and concludes by making a formal presentation to a group of judges. This competition is also in it's infancy stages and has had great success from students for the past two years of its existence.

Three other students also received national standings; James Sullivan of Arlington, placed first in the state in Technical Computer Applications.

Through leadership events and competitions on the district, state and national level, the organization helps students excel in their education and future technical, skilled and service careers, including health occupations. SkillsUSA serves nearly 265,000 high school and college/postsecondary students and their chapter advisors who are professional members.