

## LIBRARY DIRECTOR AND BOARD OF TRUSTEES

### Mission

Robbins Library is a vital community resource, cost-effectively providing residents with a broad range of materials, information and personalized services to assist them in leading satisfying lives in a complex world.

The library provides information and answers to questions on a wide variety of topics related to work, school, and personal life through print, online databases, the Internet, and other resources; it helps patrons develop skills to find and evaluate information sources effectively.

The library nurtures the love of reading in children and provides materials and services which support formal learning and the desire for personal growth and development for people of all ages.

The library offers a high quality collection of current materials to meet residents' desires for leisure reading, listening and viewing, and for recreational and cultural enrichment.

The library creates a welcoming and inviting environment for accessing library resources, interacting with others in the community and attending community meetings and events.

### Usage

In 2007, the citizens of Arlington increasingly accessed the many and varied resources offered by Robbins Library and the Fox Branch. The public of all ages enjoyed library programs; they 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. A growing number of residents availed themselves of the opportunity to access from home the library assets.

Unfortunately, in FY2004, the library was forced to cut back its operating hours per week including the very popular Sunday time and Thursday mornings due to budgetary reductions. Patrons have regularly inquired since then as to when hours will be restored.

### Accomplishments/Awards

#### *Online Database Training for the Public*

The library implemented the federal Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) database-training grant received the previous year. Robbins Library staff offered training sessions on many of the library's research databases to the general public, after-school students, Otis Middle School parents, "baby boomers", seniors,

young adults aged 11-15, and members of book discussion groups. The grant also funded several programs for the public on "Revitalizing Retirement," "Keeping Mentally Sharp" and "Book Club Cookbook." A projector and new microphone/sound system was financed through the grant and a donation from the Friends of the Library. Financial assistance for this special project was made possible with Federal funds from the Institute on Museum and Library Services administered through the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners.

#### *Public Relations Awards*

The library received two public relations awards from the Massachusetts Library Association for its logo, "Arlington Reads Together" which promotes the community read program and for the new borrower brochure. A panel of independent judges from the public relations, press and library fields judged the entries on graphic design, originality and presentation.

#### *Receipt of a Grant for English Language Learners*

Library staff successfully applied for a \$12,500 LSTA grant to expand services to immigrants. The library, in partnership with English at Large, will provide more English as Second Language materials (books, DVDs and CDs) and opportunities to practice English for foreign-born residents. Grant funds will also help recruit and train volunteers who will be facilitating conversation groups which will be held at the library. The program will be implemented in 2008.

#### *Improved Access to Collections*

This year the library embarked on an ambitious project to re-locate collections to better meet user needs. Citizens had frequently complained that the new book collection was located in an out-of-the way area among the fiction collection. New shelving was purchased to move the new books to the Reading Room at the entry of the library. The very popular audiovisual collection was re-located from the third floor to the Reference Room on the main level. Other collections that were shifted for easier use were the Children's, large print, and paperback collections. Library staff with the assistance of volunteers moved the entire adult book and audiovisual collection. The public was very enthusiastic with these new shelving arrangements, which were funded with trust funds and private donations. New carpeting, financed through the town's capital budget, was installed in the public areas. Staff areas will be done in future years as needed.

#### *Town Employee of the Year Award*

Adult Services Librarian Nancy Gentile was recognized as Town Employee of the Year by the Arlington Chamber of Commerce for her services to the business community.

## *Library Trustee Appointed State Commissioner*

Francis R. (Frank) Murphy, a resident of Arlington and member of the Robbins Library Board of Trustees, was appointed by Governor Deval Patrick to serve on the nine-member Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners. This Board is the agency of state government with statutory authority to organize, develop, coordinate and improve library services throughout the Commonwealth.



*Swearing in of Francis R. Murphy as a member of the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners by Town Clerk Corinne Rainville.*

## *Website*

To better inform the public about collections and services, the library website was redesigned with input from a staff committee and funding from the Friends of the Library for a website designer. The new, streamlined, site is built on an easy-to-update content management system. Upgraded capabilities include generation of booklists, program registration and online donations.

## **Programs/Outreach**

Library staff continued efforts to reach out to the community through a presentation to students attending a local vocational program, hosting of seminars for the Chamber of Commerce Business Forward program, collaboration with the Friends of the Drama, partnering with English at Large, orientation for the Arlington Historical Society, participation in the 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration of the Town, and letters to local organizations encouraging them to create displays at the library to promote their services. The English as a Second Language 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.

Library staff continued to meet monthly with the very energetic Young Adult Advisory Board who assisted with planning services and programs for middle and high school students. This group helped with the children's/young adult book sale and with a Harry Potter Party for children.

Arlington residents enthusiastically participated in the fifth 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. The Pulitzer Prize winning classic *To Kill A Mockingbird* by Harper Lee was enjoyed by the entire community and selected by Arlington High School as a mandatory title for sophomores. The Arlington Friends of the Drama offered a benefit performance of the play followed by an audience discussion and also performed selected scenes at the library. Several books discussions and a showing of the film were held at the library as well as discussions by the Board of Selectmen, School Committee, and Board of Library Trustees. The library also sponsored a poster contest at Arlington High School whereby students were invited to create posters around the themes of the book. The Community Read project was sponsored by the Board of Library Trustees, Friends of the Library and the Diversity Task Force of Vision 2020.

Participation in the library's annual summer reading program for children, young adults and adults continued to increase.

## **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 provided two librarians whenever possible during busy hours. Twenty-four online databases were provided through the library's participation in the Minuteman Library Network and the Metrowest Regional Library System with municipal funding for seventeen other databases. With the public workstations in almost constant use, the staff assisted patrons in the use of the Internet and electronic databases and with computer troubleshooting. The library recorded 82,592 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 organizations and to present informational displays. Several Arlington artists and photographers exhibited their works in the Reading Room.

Adult Services staff selected materials to increase the English Language Learning collection and actively promoted these as well as expanding the Chinese language collection. The "Speed Read" collection continued to be popular as citizens had the opportunity to browse this small collection of new and popular materials for which there was a significant demand.

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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 and offered orientation to classes from the Ottoson Middle School. Young adults enjoyed several programs planned by library staff and the Young Adult Advisory Committee including Chinese brush painting, comic book workshop, African drumming, and an author visit. Library staff visited the Ottoson Middle School to present a book talk that was very popular with students. Young adults also participated in the National Poetry Month celebration with an open mike event at which teens read their original poems. Artwork from Arlington High School was displayed in the Young Adult area of the library throughout the year. Teenagers participated in the summer reading program and had the opportunity to win raffle prizes funded by trust funds and local businesses. Multiple copies of titles on the middle and high school summer reading lists were available for students.

The Community Room and Conference Room were used by ninety-one local organizations for a total of 631 meetings. In addition, the two study rooms were in constant demand by students and tutors and the Local History Room received heavy usage by researchers with Independent Research Cards.



*Summer Concert*

### **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 and CD, videocassettes, CD-ROMs, puppets and educational toys. Children and parents participated in 295 activities at the Robbins and Fox Libraries including storytimes in English and Spanish languages, sing-a-longs for infants and toddlers, craft times, craft fair with the Recreation

Department, toddler programs, workshops and various performances. The Children's Department participated in Poetry Month with open mike poetry readings and a poetry wall to display students' writing and favorite poems. Over 1,000 children participated in the summer reading program with a theme of "Catch the Beat." 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 2007 these included storytellers, Arlington Philharmonic Concert, animal program, celebration of authors' birthdays, Chinese Folk tales, art experience for young children, science program, knitting, pirate-themed theatre arts, Teosinte celebration, babysitting workshop, crafts, picnic concerts, outdoor theatre, musical instrument making, poetry workshops, Greek myths, international and strategy games. Over 700 children and adults attended a picnic concert on the grounds of the library during the summer. The Russell Fund also finances the very popular infant-toddler sing-a-longs. The 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 library introduced several sessions of a "Baby Brunch" to welcome parents and infants to the Robbins and Fox Libraries.

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, attendance at elementary school faculty meetings, assignment support for teachers and students, extended loan periods for teachers, library tours, and preparation of curriculum kits. The children's librarians at the Robbins and Fox presented book talks in the schools and instruction for classes at the library. As in previous years, the library considered the needs of the curriculum frameworks when selecting materials for purchase.

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

Children and adults in East Arlington continued to enjoy branch library services three days a week. Chil-

dren and parents enjoyed daytime and pajama story times, lap-sit programs, sing-a-longs, craft programs, a Chinese New Year party, Baby Brunch, adult book club, the summer reading program, ghost stories, and a "Teachers are Reading" book discussion. 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. A highlight of the year was the painting of colorful murals by Arlington High School students on the windows of the building.

## 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 15,742 new items including books, magazines, music compact discs, books on CD, DVDs, CD-ROMs, puppets and educational toys. The Circulation Department checked out and returned 515,309 items to the shelves. 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 \$56,967 in a state aid grant that was used for participation in the Minuteman Library Network and to purchase library materials. The library collected \$65,821 in overdue fines and lost book money that was returned to the general town fund. Library administration coordinated several large projects: re-location of the collections, installation of new carpeting, publicity for promoting the Reading Room as a function site, and the installation of security cameras to better protect citizens, collections and the facility. Library administration and branch staff worked with the Fox Revenue Study Committee to identify ways to raise revenue to make the Fox Library as self-sustaining as possible by 2011. The Adult Services Department successfully submitted a federal grant application to provide resources and programs for English as Second Language learners. Arlington organizations were encouraged to submit information to the Minuteman Library Network's Community Information Database. All staff participated in a workshop on how to better serve customers with disabilities.

Library staff prepared the monthly children's newsletter and the quarterly newsletter for adults to keep the public aware of services available to them. A staff committee participated in a re-design of the web site. 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, creating a computer use brochure, shifting collections, creating booklists and displays, scheduling the meeting rooms, purchase and processing of the rental book collection, attendance at a Digital Commonwealth Conference, and processing books that need re-binding. The library participated in the 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration of the Town with programs, hanging of banners, research assistance, lending of historical photographs for the Bicentennial gala, an historical booklist and displays.

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

Several technology projects were completed this year: the upgrading of the public computers in the Reference Room and the re-location of the public computer work-stations in the Reference Room for better access. In coordination with the Minuteman Library Network several new features were added to the MLN webpage including a new automated catalog and the ability to pay fines electronically. An upgrade of a MLN server is scheduled for January 2008 to address response time issues.

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The seven member 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 FY07 for reference and circulating books, books on CD, music CDs, DVD non-fiction, literacy materials, local history, art prints, children's materials, young adult books, materials for the Fox Branch, summer reading programs, activities for children, Community Read, author program, public relations, volunteer appreciation and staff development and four author programs featuring Alice Hoffman, Dan Shaughnessy, William Martin and Claire Cook. The third annual Arlington Authors panel was well received and will be held again next year. A program on the historic connections between Boston, Massachusetts Bay and Boston, Lincolnshire, England in the 17<sup>th</sup> century was presented by a local historian. 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.

The Board also sponsored the first Margaret Spengler Memorial Lecture to honor her fifty plus years of volunteer service to the town as a member of several

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governmental boards including library trustees and her contributions to numerous organizations serving youth, education and diversity. The lecture featured Jeanne Shaheen, former governor of New Hampshire.

Susan Cronin Ruderman who served as a trustee since 1998 resigned. The Board is grateful to her for her leadership and expertise with the fundraising effort. The Board welcomes Kathryn Gandek-Tighe as its new member in 2007.



*Library Board of Trustees*

*Seated (l to r): Barbara Muldoon, Katharine Fennelly, Patricia Deal  
Standing (l to r): Kathryn Gandek-Tighe, Francis Murphy, Joyce Radochia*

### **Friends of the Library**

The Friends of the Robbins Library added 81 members this year, for a total membership of 486. Increasing membership will again be a goal for the upcoming year. 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. April was a busy month for Friends' activities, beginning with the first annual Children's/Young Adult book sale, co-sponsored by the Russell Fund, with able assistance from members of the library's newly formed Youth Advisory Board. April concluded with the Friends' annual meeting, highlighted by a fascinating and enthusiastic talk/slide presentation by Richard Duffy on the history of the Arlington libraries. Even long-time employees and residents learned some new things and enjoyed the trip down "memory lane". Despite the extreme heat on Town Day, book lovers came out in droves to patronize the Friends' book sale. Many visitors also regularly peruse and make purchases from the ongoing book sale on the fourth floor of the library. The rental DVD collection has many users and a new, convenient location on the first floor. The Friends partnered with the Arlington Friends of the Drama on two occasions. A spring benefit performance of "Carousel" served as the Friends' major

fundraiser. Then, in October, the AFD presented "To Kill a Mockingbird", the library's Community Read book selection. The actors treated the near sell-out crowd to an audience participation discussion after the show as well as a separate program of scenes/discussion in the library's community room. Just in time for Halloween, the Friends welcomed storytellers Diane Edgecomb and Kate Chadbourne who presented a wonderful "adults only" program of supernatural tales, slides and music to a large group. In November, Leith Colen, editor of the "Book Bag" talked to a small, but enthusiastic audience about becoming a late-in-life avid reader. Amy McElroy continues to capably coordinate all activities of the Friends of the Library.

### **Volunteers**

The library staff is grateful for the contributions made by volunteers who donated over 2,800 hours assisting with several aspects of library operations. Bill Bradley and Margarida Mapletoft continued their dedicated service, as did Beverly Brinkerhoff, who coordinates the homebound delivery program. This program brings library materials and companionship to residents who are unable to come to the library. A fledgling group of volunteers staffed the library "greeter" table. A huge volunteer effort took place during the summer. The installation of new carpeting and an extensive re-organization of the library collections made it necessary to move over 100,000 volumes to new shelf locations. Volunteers assisting at the Robbins Library in a variety of capacities were: Diane Alexandre, Swati Bhattacharya, Monika Brodsky, Joan Caterino, Caley Chastell, David Gersh, Mary Gryniewicz, Catherine Gryniewicz, Kim Haase, Carol Hoover, Reena Idiculla, Shibani Joshi, Morris Keesan, Aparna Khanna, Susan Leonard, Page Lindsay, Ami Malia, Kentaro Marchionni, Leslie Medoff, Debbie Minns, Stephanie Norton, Akila Padmanabhan, Dave Pienta, Asha Rao, Nancy Rodriguez, Brigitte Romeo, Leon Sasky, Paulette Schwartz, Ron Sender, Ellen Shearer, I-Hwa Shiue, Angie Snelling, Mia Stange, Betty Veinot, Barbara Wagner, Marjorie Wills, Shannetta Young and Jayne Zaccagnini. The Fox Branch Library staff is appreciative of the efforts of its volunteers, Joe Cook, Michel Jackson and Joanne Burns..

### **Donations**

Citizens, businesses and organizations donated over \$35,900 to the library in Fiscal 2007. The library acknowledges 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 continued to donate the profits from the sale of his book,

“Arlington Then and Now” to the library.

The state legislature passed legislation in 2006 for a program that allowed a \$0.50 match on every eligible dollar raised by public libraries; however it only appropriated \$250,000 for FY2007 to be distributed among the qualifying libraries. The Robbins Library received \$2,623 in FY2007 (\$.0498 per dollar) as opposed to the \$26,322 it would have received under the original intent of the legislation.

The library is also grateful to the Chamber of Commerce-Taste of Arlington, the Arlington Family Connection and the Arlington Schools Foundation for making the library a recipient of their fundraising efforts.

The Friends of the Library donated \$53,882 to the library for membership to five museums, reference books, books on CD, DVDs, children’s books, local history, multicultural, materials for the Fox branch, web site design, Community Read, raffle prizes for summer reading program and other supplementary materials.

## Looking Ahead

As in previous years the library will continue to face the challenge of providing quality library services within the context of limited municipal resources. It will not be possible to restore services including Thursday morning and Sunday hours that were cut back due to reductions in the municipal budget in fiscal 2004. A recent study that compared Arlington’s municipal appropriation per capita to nine other libraries in the Minuteman Library Network ranked Arlington ninth out of ten. This limited funding will impact the library’s ability to maintain and expand its book and audiovisual collection, keep pace with technology and introduce new media.

Library administration and the Board of Trustees will continue fundraising efforts to solicit private funding for materials and services not afforded through the municipal budget. An analysis of funding from trusts, donations and the Friends of the Library shows that these funds have increased 110% since Fiscal 2003. 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.

Future activities include:

- initial preparation for a long-range plan for library services for FY2011-2013
- implementation of the marketing and promotional campaign formulated in FY2008 to insure that residents of the town are aware of all the services the library has to offer
- continued efforts to keep pace with technological improvements and to provide adequate staffing to assist patrons and manage electronic resources
- increased visibility for the fundraising campaign conducted by the Board of Library

Trustees

- recruitment of additional members for the Youth Advisory Committee and expansion of efforts to obtain feedback and suggestions from the entire young adult community
- development of a survey to measure young adult satisfaction with library services
- continued efforts to expand and publicize library services and resources to English Language Learners
- exploration of ways to fulfill the library’s mission as a welcoming center to all residents including the foreign born and non-English speaking
- improved services to “boomers” and older adults
- expansion of the library’s role as a lifelong learning center
- funding to digitize historical materials in the Local History Room to improve access
- exploration of instant messaging for reference service
- improved access to library collections through better lighting, signage and the creation of themed areas
- continued review of options to generate revenue for library services at the Fox Branch.

Library administration, staff and the Board of Trustees remain committed to maintaining high standards of service so that the library will fulfill its mission to be a vital community resource that assists residents in leading satisfying lives.

## ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The 2006/2007 school year continued the tradition of excellence in the classroom, on the stage and on the field. Great teachers, dedicated administrators, involved parents, and a supportive community made this possible. The more than 4,500 students of the Arlington Public Schools continue to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. These accomplishments are all the more admirable, given our tight financial constraints.

This year continued the focus of building on past successes, and moving forward on the 5 goals established in 2005-2006. The results of our efforts include:

- The special education department completed nearly all the State mandated actions to be in compliance with timelines, regulations, and laws. This required creating many new systems and much hard work by staff. These efforts also helped increase parent trust within the district. The special education department also worked hard to create more formal and consistent criteria for eligibility, services, and when services are no longer needed. The year ended with parents, school committee, and staff crafting a shared vision for special education in the district.
- Our efforts to create and communicate clear expectations for what every child should know and be able to do (standards based education) continue to be refined and integrated into daily life in the classroom. Clear standards have been set in math and English. District wide common assessments help teachers pace their instruction and inform them which students have mastered the skills and content.
- A very intensive reading effort continues to evolve by focusing on early intervention and intensive support for struggling readers. This has helped many more students read at grade level.
- Parents, staff, and community members helped us define what are the key skills and knowledge for our students in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The findings keep in place the content we already teach, but add greater emphasis on team work, working in a multicultural global society, hard work, communication skills, the ability to evaluate and synthesize information, and a desire to foster greater interest in math, science and engineering. A very detailed multi year plan of action was developed.
- As the growing pressures of a busy, complex world weighs on our children, the school, working in partnership with the police, town, and community, has responded. We have

created rules and expectations concerning appropriate use of “social networking” sites like My Space and Face Book. We have also created a diversion program that focuses on restitution, rehabilitation, and improved behavior for first time, non-violent offenders. Lastly, we have partnered with community and nonprofit organizations to provide more options for counseling services. Meeting the social and emotional needs of children is every bit as important as meeting the academic needs of our students.

- The town has made a substantial investment in our school buildings, and we continue to improve and streamline the maintenance of these buildings. We also constantly assess that we are using every square foot to its fullest potential. A town, school, and community working group is making excellent progress towards renovating or refurbishing the Thompson and Stratton Schools.

All this success does come at a price. Fees and rents were raised and staff positions cut to balance the budget. This means fewer people are doing more work, at ever-higher levels of achievement. This places a great burden on the staff.

As 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 collaboratively 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, 2006-2007**

#### **Approved 11/14/06**

1. SPECIAL EDUCATION AND ELL: All special education students will achieve their full academic and social potential.

Objective: Implement Special Ed and English Language Learning (ELL) reforms per Coordinated Program Review and internal needs assessment.

2006/2007 activities include:

- Implement balance of Corrective Action Plan action items.
- Meet the timelines for initial evaluation consent notifications, initial evaluation meetings, initial IEP's, and three-year reevaluations. This will require a monthly tracking system.
- Create a monthly tracking system to monitor that all services and/ or compensatory services are provided.
- Create a standardized set of procedures documenting criteria for pre-referral, testing eligibility, recommended test instruments, cut-off scores for eligibility, recommended actions based on score ranges, common goal wording and exit criteria.
- Develop a shared vision for the future of special education in the district.
- Continue to implement the 3-leveled ELL program.

2. STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT: All students will attain high levels of academic success through the implementation of a data driven, standards based education.

Objective: Continue to implement essential standards and common assessments in math, reading, writing, science, and social studies k-12 which build upon the foundation of our standards-based education with the purpose of putting in place the necessary data to track cohorts over multiple years.

2006/2007 activities include:

MATH

- Articulate essential standards in math K-8.
- Articulate common assessments in math K-8.
- Conduct common assessments in math per schedule. Collate and share results with staff.

ELA

- Conduct 3 common assessments in writing K-8 and share results with staff.

READING

- Create common approaches to reading instruction, identification of struggling readers, and intervention for struggling readers K-5.

Indicators (numeric targets to be finalized as part of rubric setting process) The performance measures will be specific, significant and meaningful academic in-

dicators of successful learning.:

- Increase the percentage of children who are proficient in math in grades 4-10. Measurement will be based on growth over time of individual students in the district, not year-to-year comparisons of different cohorts.
- Increase the percentage of children proficient or demonstrate mastery in writing in grades K-8. Measurement will be based on growth over time of individual students in the district, not year-to-year comparisons of different cohorts.
- Increase the percentage of readers at grade level in grades K-3. Measurement will be based on growth over time of individual students in the district, not year-to-year comparisons of different cohorts. Goals will be set for each grade K-3.

3. AN APPROPRIATE EDUCATION FOR A COMPLEX WORLD: Ensure that all Arlington graduates are well prepared for social, emotional, and vocational success.

Objective: Determine what content knowledge, skills, and habits of mind will best prepare our students for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

2006/2007 activities include:

- Create a broad-based working group of staff, administrators, students, parents, and community members to prioritize and refine which 21<sup>st</sup> century knowledge, skills, and habits of mind should be emphasized at Arlington High School.
- Produce a plan to phase in the recommendations of the 21<sup>st</sup> century study group, and incorporate the first phase of these recommendations into the 2007-2008 school year budget, course offerings, and curriculum.

4. SCHOOL CULTURE: Provide a safe, healthy and positive environment for students and staff.

Objective: Create a culture and system that promotes appropriate behavior, a safe environment, and effective interventions for inappropriate behavior based on best practice.

2006/2007 activities include (focus on High School):

- Modify student handbook with input from staff, students, legal counsel, and parents to address 21<sup>st</sup> century issues such as cyber-bullying, social networking sites, etc.



- Create, in collaboration with staff, students, and parents, a common set of expectations for student behavior at the high school and appropriate, effective, and consistent interventions for inappropriate behavior. This would include alternatives to detention and out-of-school suspensions.
- Create, in conjunction with town and community resources, an effective diversion program for drug, alcohol, and other serious infractions of appropriate student behavior.
- Create, in conjunction with town and community resources, access to drug, alcohol, and mental health counseling services for Arlington students in need.

**5. WORK ENVIRONMENT TO SUPPORT TEACHING AND LEARNING:** Provide tools and systems that enable staff to focus on student success.

Objective: Improve the work environment for staff and administrators by providing tools and systems to make work simpler and more efficient, as well as improving (where practical) the physical work environment.

2006/2007 activities include:

- Work with the AEA to create a master list of health, safety, and workplace needs and a phased plan to address these needs where practical.
- Streamline purchase order processing and provide principals and department heads with access and oversight of relevant budget lines.
- Create a centralized, web-based, maintenance request and tracking system to coordinate and prioritize facility upkeep.
- Create and maintain an online calendar for administrators to better schedule school events and activities, thus reducing conflicting events.
- Provide tools, systems, and professional development (as needed) to help support staff be even more effective and efficient.
- Review space allocation in all schools to maximize the use of building space and enhance staff working conditions including careful consideration of use of spaces for the purposes for which they were designed.
- Prepare, in cooperation with the School Facilities Working Group a report for Town Meeting.
- Submit Notices of intent to the School Building Authority for the Thompson, Stratton, and High School.

- Monitor and assess the new administrative structure.

Other important areas, but not district goals for 2006-2007:

- Retention and recruitment, including minority staff, which may include an expanded student-teacher program.
- High quality professional development per the 2006-2007 professional development and mentoring plan.
- Working with the town boards and committees to develop new plans to maintain and upgrade the Thompson and Stratton Schools
- Regular budget reporting to the School Committee.
- Social studies and science to share their plans and goals with school committee.
- Striving to also increase the number of students gaining a very high level of mastery in all subjects (including, but not limited to, Advanced on MCAS).
- Ensure that our mission is to educate the whole child, and that assessment remains a useful tool towards meaningful academic achievement, not an end in itself.

## **Special Education – A Vision of Achievement June 25, 2007**

A vision must be rooted in a set of beliefs. What follows is a summary gleaned from hours of conversations with many in the district over the last twelve months and from a series of structured conversations throughout the district. Eight visioning forums have been held with elementary staff (special ed & general ed), middle school staff (special ed & general ed), high school special ed staff, special ed parents, principals, department heads, team chairs, central office staff, advocates, and the School Committee. These forums included over 100 participants and fifteen hours of frank dialogue.

### **10 Beliefs for the Special Education Children of Arlington**

1. Nearly all special education students can be at grade level in math, English, science, and social studies. When this is not likely, we should state so explicitly, and forge common expectations with parents. In all cases, standards should be as high as possible for all students.

2. Mastery of fundamental skills, such as reading, writing, math, study/organizational skills (a.k.a. executive function skills), and the ability to socialize with peers should be a priority, starting in the early grades and continuing until students demonstrate grade level mastery.

3. Intensive targeted support, not breadth of ser-

vices, will help students achieve.

4. Not all interventions work equally well for all students. We must measure progress and try multiple strategies targeted to individual student's learning styles, until effective strategies are confirmed. All children deserve access to a range of "best practices," which requires developing a range of proven approaches and strategies.

5. Scheduling is of strategic importance.

6. Teamwork, communication, and integration between general education and special education will improve student learning.

7. Students with great needs require highly skilled staff to achieve at high levels.

8. When possible, it is better to educate students in district.

9. Special education is successful when a student is able to perform on grade level working independently and when services are no longer needed.

10. For most struggling students, general education, not special education, should be the first level of intervention.

## 21<sup>st</sup> Century Education

### Focus Points for the Arlington Public Schools

Over the last year and a half, we have discussed and researched a great deal answering the question "What skills, knowledge, and habits of mind will best prepare our students for social, emotional, and vocational success?" A grant from the Arlington Schools Foundation as well as APS money for study groups has allowed us to produce the following document, outlining which skills, knowledge and habits of mind the Arlington Public Schools will focus on over the next 5-10 years.

Happily, we have broad agreement on the key themes and needs, with one puzzling difference of opinion. Sadly, a public school system cannot address every 21<sup>st</sup> century need – at least not right away. What follows are the 7 focus areas that are both important for students in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and can be impacted by Arlington High over the next 5 years.

1. Higher-order thinking skills through interdisciplinary learning, analysis, and synthesis of information.

The 21<sup>st</sup> century will require students to think not just memorize as facts, especially as facts can be easily retrieved. The problems students and society face will be complex, and sifting through information and drawing thoughtful conclusions will be critical to work, democracy, and personal life choices.

As issues grow in complexity, they also cross over traditional subject delineations. As the world becomes more interdisciplinary, so should we.

2. Media literacy

The internet has led to an explosion of easy access to information – some accurate, and some not. Evaluating the reliability, bias, and value of information

is increasingly critical to our decision making and learning.

3. Teamwork in a diverse, multicultural world

Problems and tasks are becoming more complex, requiring diverse skill sets to work together to find solutions. Work teams are spreading across the states and the globe. Many of our students will be part of work teams, rather than individual contributors. Increasingly, members of these teams will be of many cultures, religions, races, and nationalities. The ability of our students to effectively participate in diverse groups will only grow over time.

4. Stress and time management

Our days are becoming busier. Expectations are rising, global competition adds to life's pressures, and access to unhealthy distractions is increasing. This all adds up to more stress and a greater need to learn how to cope and manage stress.

5. Communication skills

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, communication skills were greatly valued. The importance and forms of communication continue to increase. Writing remains a central form of communication, but visual and spoken presentations are also becoming critical.

6. A love of learning coupled with a willingness to work hard

Most of what students need to know over the next 50 years, they must learn after they leave high school. Life-long learning is a reality in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and requires sustained efforts and self-motivation over long periods of time.

7. Math, Science, Technology, and Engineering expertise

Many careers and more of our personal lives will require a deeper understanding of math, science, technology, and engineering. All students will benefit from the logic and clear thinking embedded in math and the scientific method. Many students will be well served by a deep command of these subjects as the world places a greater value on these skills, even though fewer Americans are mastering them.

This focus point represents the one area of mixed opinion. Nearly all experts list mastery of math, science, and technology as one of the most critical 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. For many experts, it was the top 1 or 2 recommendation. Arlington parents and staff, on the whole, considered it less important, but not unimportant. The primary area of difference was whether these skills were needed for just a small group of students or more universally required.



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

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

### Class of 2007 Graduate Achievement Highlights

- 98% of the Class of 2007 graduated into college, employed in their field of study or enlisted in the US military.
- 100% of the Class of 2007 successfully passed the state-required MCAS tests in English and Math.
- Commercial & Human Services graduates achieved 98% placement rate with 76% enrolled 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.

### 2007 Students High Achievers

Congratulation to Juanita Estrida of Arlington, *Graphic Communications* recognized as a High Achiever this year,

### Student Performance Highlights

- Minuteman Regional High School sophomores had a 97% pass rate on the English Language Arts MCAS Test, a 94% pass rate in Math, 72% in Biology, and 100% in Chemistry taken in May 2007.

- 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 Matthew Barber's "Enchanted April."
- 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.
- The first state-approved high school pre-engineering program entered its eighth year and graduated its fourth class of students, again with 100% attending college.
- Approximately 82% of the Science and Technology 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.
- Minuteman is now an authorized CertiPort Testing Center for Microsoft Office Specialist Certifications.
- Students in Carpentry, Electrical Wiring, Plumbing and HVAC completed construction of the single family home for the Lincoln Housing Commission in Lincoln, MA.
- Underclassmen created four scaled New England style homes for display at the New England Home Show in Boston. Minuteman was the only participating vocational high school in MA.
- Electrical Wiring students completely wired two residential units in Lexington.
- Environmental Science students were 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.
- 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 enroll-

ment 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 2007 calendar incorporating artwork drawn by elementary age students who are patients in the “young hearts” clinic.
- The Cosmetology Class of 2007 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 twenty-five new members.

Congratulations to the new recently inducted members from Arlington: Thomas Andrews, Paul Blaszczynski, Katheryn Fontaine, Geoffrey Landskov, Michelle Pierre, and Rebecca Rowe.

## **Minuteman Takes Grand Prize Award at MIT-Sponsored Competition**

Three cross-vocational teams from Minuteman’s Biotechnology, Pre-Engineering and Robotics competed in a Design Challenge at the Museum of Science in Boston.

In this full-day design event, amongst teams from across New England, Minuteman’s Technology Division took home the gold medal -- winning the MIT-sponsored WINDY 500 Grand Prize Award. The teams were challenged with designing, building and racing wind-powered vehicles using only materials provided. The cars had to carry a single driver.

The Windy 500 is part of EurekaFest, a multi-day celebration sponsored by the Lemelson-MIT Program, a foundation dedicated to supporting and encouraging invention and innovation.

In preparation for the event, Minuteman’s teams competed against each other on design projects during the school day. They participated in team building exercises and analysis that was headed by Dr. Clarissa Sawyer, a corporate consultant in the field.

Members of the winning Minuteman team were freshman Ivy Smith of Medford, and Becky Cole of Arlington. The juniors were Paul Blaszczynski of Arlington, Jeff Palma of Concord, and Robin Weinstein of Weston. Students on the two other Minuteman competing teams were juniors Kevin Brown of Pepperell, Charlie Deakins of Carlisle, Chris Hansen of Medford, Dan Polansky of Dedham, Paramveer Pabla of Arlington and freshman Sean Keane of Arlington, Therese Gray-Gaudet of Medford, Eben Goldman of Lexington, Kenny March and Torri Dodge of Stow, and Eo Jin Hwang, a visiting exchange student from Japan.

The races were emceed by Ray Magliozzi, one of the Click n’ Clack Brothers of National Public Radio’s CarTalk. The Windy 500 is featured on the CarTalk website. As well, Nate and Deanne, from PBS Kids’ Design Squad television program, served as the Windy 500 hosts for the day.

## **Overall School Highlights**

- A new Freshmen Exploratory program was designed and implemented as a means to ensure that members of the Class of 2011 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.
- Minuteman developed a Nontraditional Exploratory Program for Girls for the Class of 2011 through which all female students learned about the viability and challenges of women in nontraditional careers, such as automotive technology, carpentry and construction, computer science and engineering. The freshmen girls learned about these careers through a series of hands-on exercises, guest speakers and alumni panelists and field site visits to industry partners.
- New and/or updated college articulation and advance credit agreements with numerous top colleges in over 78 different courses and programs at over 17 colleges and universities.
- 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 a program of delivering “green” products to school services.

## **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 score in the Advanced category in either the Mathemat-

ics 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. Congratulations to the thirty-six Minuteman Students Awarded!

The following Arlington students were awarded: Colin Donogue, Geoffrey Landskov, John Scaduto, Jacob Smith, Patrick Cooney, Paramveer Pabla, and Paul Blaszczyński.

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

Sixteen 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. Twelve came home with first, second or third place medals and four more returned with top ranking national placements.

Karl Gibson of Arlington, a senior in Computer Technology placed Silver in the Computer Programming Competition. This is the second year that this competition has been available to compete in and Karl's second trip to Nationals. Last year, Karl was awarded first in the Nation.

The sophomore Environmental Technology team of Allison Walsh and Alice Ofria of Medford and Becky Rowe of Arlington, were also honored as Silver Medal winners in the Tech Prep Showcase Competition.

The team of junior's Christopher Hansen of Medford and Paramveer Pabla of Arlington took their skills in Robotic and Automation Technology to the national level, and emerged as bronze medal winners, placing third in the country. Chris and Paramveer's competition area, where they worked all day on Thursday to produce a medal-winning project, was directly below the sign announcing the competition, and drew many on-lookers, but the experienced team seldom looked up, concentrating on their work.

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.

### **Art and Literary Magazine Celebrates 22nd Publication**

The ink is dry on the twenty-second edition of Minuteman Regional High School's Art & Literary Magazine, and as usual, the publication contains many outstanding examples of student-generated poetry and art. This year's magazine showcases 20 poets and 13 artists.

The winners of school-wide poetry and art con-

tests provide the content for the magazine. This year, approximately 150 poems from about 80 poets were submitted. In the art contest, 40 artists submitted 70 pieces of artwork. Originality is the primary criteria used in selecting work for inclusion in the magazine, and selection committee members also try to ensure a mixture of styles.

"We really have quite an artistic community at the school," Mr. Donovan said. "We used to just get block printing, but now, it's quite a variety. We added photography to the art contest three or four years ago. This year, there are quite a few pieces of artwork done in anime style. "Anime has become very popular in the school," he said. "They had an Anime Club this year for the first time.

A third contest, open to juniors in the Graphics department, determines who designs the magazine's cover. Patrick Cooney of Arlington won this year's cover design contest. Patrick also did the magazine's entire layout.

Former Minuteman English teacher Denise R. Donovan served as the Copyright Editor, and the Graphics Coordinator was Graphics Department senior teacher Daniel Vardaro. The school's Office Technology department did the word processing. "The magazine is truly an integrated student effort," Mr. Donovan said. "By the time it's done, many students from all majors and departments have played a part in its creation."

The student artists featured in this year's magazine from Arlington are Jared Bessett-Kirton, Paul Blaszczyński and Ashley Val.

The student poets featured in this year's magazine from Arlington are Pat Cooney, Molly McDowell, Amy Rivera and Ashley Val.

### **Minuteman Celebrates First Annual Science & Technology Career/College Expo**

Minuteman Regional High School was very excited to extend an invitation to companies and colleges to participate in our First Annual Science & Technology Expo for students interested in exploring technology career pathways. The Science & Technology Expo was held at Minuteman Regional High School on March 15, 2007.

This evening was designed to allow the opportunity for companies and colleges to identify as being a partner with Minuteman, showcase products, and more importantly, share how their education in one of Minuteman's technology program lead to college and then exciting and rewarding careers. Present at this Expo were prospective students and their parents, as well as, Minuteman technology faculty, current and former technology students, parents, industry partners, and representatives from colleges/universities. Minuteman was also pleased to welcome keynote speaker Dr. Cary Sneider, Vice President of the Museum of Science Bos-

ton and the Executive Director of the National Center for Technological Literacy.

The goal of the Science & Technology Expo was to provide a program that would identify viable career opportunities in technology and how career pathways that begins in one of Minuteman's eleven technology programs could continue onto a two or four-year post-graduate program and into a rewarding business, engineering, medical, science, or technical career.

### **School Committee Recognition**

After several years of dedicated service, one member left the Regional School Committee in 2007. The entire Minuteman Regional School District thanks Linda Frizzell of Belmont for her many years of service, leadership and commitment to Minuteman Regional High School.

