

EDUCATION & LIBRARIES

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 2008, the citizens of Arlington increasingly accessed the many and varied resources offered by Robbins Library and the Fox Branch. Library use was up in the first six months of the year and rose substantially more after the economic crisis as citizens realized the advantages provided for free by the library. 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 the Fox Branch assisted the public in meeting their informational needs through the library's book and periodical collections and with electronic resources. Residents continued to avail themselves of the opportunity to access from home the library resources. Although the Robbins Library continues to be closed Thursday mornings, the public was delighted when private donations allowed the library to restore Sunday afternoon hours that were eliminated in FY2003.

Accomplishments

Sunday Openings

The Board of Library Trustees and the Friends of the Robbins Library joined forces to launch a successful fundraising campaign that raised sufficient funds to be open on Sunday afternoons from October 2008 to May

2009. The campaign was bolstered by an anonymous donor who matched each donation. Appreciation is owed to the generosity of over 140 individuals and businesses in the community. The library had been open on Sundays intermittently over the last 30 years using grant funding. Because of reductions in municipal and state funding several years ago, the Robbins Library was forced to cut back hours including Sundays. Sunday was always a very popular day with families and individuals who found that afternoon to be a very convenient time to utilize the library's vast resources. The Board of Trustees intends to continue fundraising so that Sundays can also be offered in continuing years.

Services to English Language Learners

Library staff implemented a \$12,500 Library Services and Technology Act grant to expand services to immigrants. The English as a Second Language collection was expanded with books, videos, CDs, and audiotapes to assist speakers of several foreign languages in their efforts to master spoken English. The library, in partnership with English at Large, provided group opportunities to practice English for foreign-born residents. Grant funds were also used to help recruit and train volunteers who facilitated these conversation groups at the library. English Language Learners enthusiastically attended an open house where they received an orientation to the Literacy collection, met the staff and toured the library. The library also served as a training facility for English at Large tutors and offered space for individual sessions.

New Circulation Desk

Charles L. Poulos, a local businessman, donated funds to build a new circulation desk in the lobby of the library. Mr. Poulos had been very generous to the library in the past and was a major donor to the 1992 building project.



New circulation desk dedication: (L-R) Mary Ellen Loud Mrs. & Mr. Charles Poulos, and Diane Poulos Harpell

For years the library had needed a new circulation desk with a low station to better serve children and persons with disabilities. In addition, the depth of the previous desk contributed to ergonomic problems for the staff. The rich dark wood, granite top, and curved design of the new desk enhances the building architecture and serves as the focal point of the library entrance and first floor. The spacious and well-designed work area assists the circulation staff in better serving the public.

Programs/Outreach

Library staff continued efforts to reach out to the community. The business community was targeted through hosting of several breakfast seminars for the Chamber of Commerce, posting to a local businesses blog, creation of business-related booklists, and one-on-one reference assistance. The library also provided individualized basic computer training for senior citizens by pairing each individual with a high school student. Other programs for adults included personal finance, investment, and the co-sponsorship with several organizations of a film series and dialogue on racial issues. The library's annual summer reading program for children, young adults, and adults continued to be popular and this year the children's librarians prepared the summer reading list titles for the elementary schools. The library continued to encourage local organizations to create displays at the library to promote their services. The library's new email alert for children's programs has proved so successful that library staff hopes to expand it to adult programs next year.

Middle and high schools students who serve on the library's Young Adult Advisory Board assisted with planning services and programs for this age group. The group helped with the children's/young adult book sale and planned a sleepover at the library. They also assisted with decorating the teen area after it was moved and re-organized.



Arlington Reads Together "Digging In America" Festival performers

Arlington residents enthusiastically read *Digging to America* by Anne Tyler as part of the sixth 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 related to the themes of the book. The novel was enjoyed by the entire community and selected by Arlington High School as a mandatory summer reading selection title for grade twelve. Community programs included book discussions at the Robbins and Fox libraries, a panel on the adoption process, cultural festival on the heritage of Iran and Korea, and stories and music on the immigrant experience. The Community Read project was sponsored by the Board of Library Trustees, Friends of the Library, and the Diversity Task Force of Vision 2020.

Service for 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. Forty-four online databases were provided with municipal funding and through the library's participation in the Minuteman Library Network and the Metrowest Regional Library System. 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 125,730 visits to its web site, an increase of 49% from last year.

Staff created book and audiovisual displays to highlight the collections and assist citizens in their pursuit of life-long learning. Adults and young adults enjoyed the summer reading program 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. Exhibits by artists and photographers enhanced the Reading Room.

The ever-popular *Speed Read* collection provided the opportunity to browse this small collection of new and popular materials for which there was a significant demand. 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 Community Room and Conference Room were used by ninety-three local organizations for a total of 639 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.

Services to Young Adults

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 orientations to classes from the Ottoson Middle School. Young adults enjoyed several programs planned by library staff and the Young Adult Advisory Committee including a sleepover, mask-making, knitting, Friday night movies, cooking, photography, and writing workshop, Teen book club, duct tape wallet making, and an author visit to the Ottoson Middle School. The highlight of the year was the Teen Band Concert that entertained a crowd of teenagers, children, and adults on the lawn at the Robbins House well into the evening. Library staff visited the Ottoson Middle School to present a book talk that was very popular with students. 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.

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 349 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. Over 1,000 children participated in the summer reading program with a theme of *Wild Reads*. 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 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 sup-

port 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.

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 2008 these included Marble Machine Madness, jewelry making, Arlington Philharmonic Concert, Hamstead Players Theatre, knitting classes, creative movement classes for infants and caregivers, Japanese Kendo fighting, mask making, cooking, Spanish story times, collage workshops, nature, storytelling, picnic concerts, crafts fair, celebration of author's birthdays, scavenger hunt, children's theatre, six-part workshop on writing and illustrating a book, backyard Safari, clay workshop on African animals, drawing, animation, and Chess Club. The Children's Department celebrated National Poetry Month with a Haiku Poetry Writing workshop and card design and a performance by a teen choir of poetry by children who passed through Therein on their way to Auschwitz. Over 500 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.

Edith Fox Library and Community Center

Children and adults in East Arlington continued to enjoy branch library services on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. Children and parents enjoyed story times, sing-a-longs, craft programs, a Chinese New Year party, Baby Brunch, adult and children's book clubs, Open Mike, Family Game Night, Movie Nights, Spanish story times, the summer reading program, and a Halloween celebration. 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 including artwork from the local Wayside Youth Program, photography by a Robbins Library staff member, and work from the Thompson School Photo Club. The Branch participated in the Feast of the East Festival with bookmarks and a children's book raffle. The Branch Librarian also offered a book workshop for the Arlington Boys and Girls Club Babysitting Class.

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 18,549 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 529,738 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 \$59,907 in a state aid grant that was used for participation in the Minuteman Library Network and to purchase library materials. The library collected \$58,156 in overdue fines and lost book money that was returned to the general Town fund.

The Adult Services Department successfully implemented a federal grant to provide resources and programs for English as Second Language learners and successfully applied for a grant for a preservation survey of the collections. The Local History Room was monitored for humidity control and a proposal submitted to the Town for funding of a new climate control system.

Library staff prepared the monthly children's newsletter and the quarterly newsletter for adults to keep the public aware of services available to them. The children's newsletter for the schools was revised for better presentation of services. Other staff activities included selecting, weeding and updating the collection, responding to local history questions of which many were from out-of-state patrons, revision of the email reference form, updating the periodical list, shifting collections, creating booklists and displays, scheduling the meeting rooms, attendance at a Digital Commonwealth Conference, and processing books that need re-binding.

Administrative Projects

Library administration coordinated several special projects: specification for new signage following the relocation of the collections, installation of new carpeting, publicity for promoting the rental of the Reading Room as a function site, installation of new shelving for the music compact discs, online survey of user satisfaction with the collections, coordination of a major capital project to waterproof the basement magazine storage area and the Community Room, compilation of statistical data to participate in a nationwide comparison of

library usage, participation in the Town's financial summit and analysis of several cost saving proposals and the re-organization of the Adult Services and Children's Services staffing.

Library administration and branch staff continued to work with the Fox Revenue Study Committee to identify ways to raise revenue to make the Fox Library as self-sustaining as possible by 2011 and coordinated with the volunteers during the transition of the Thrift Shop to the first floor of the library to raise funds exclusively for branch services.

The library attempted to meet patron demands for new audiovisual materials including DVDs, music CDs, and audiobooks. Library administration presented to the Board of Selectmen the results of an in-depth study of funding for audiovisual materials and books. The study documented that Arlington's audiovisual collection ranked 9th among 10 libraries in the Minuteman Library Network and that a substantial increase in funding is required to provide an adequate collection. The Friends DVD rental collection continued to prove very successful and the proceeds from the rentals will allow for the further expansion of the collection.

Technology Projects

Several technology projects were completed this year: the implementation of a self-checkout station to ease the waiting line, installation of a new Minuteman Library Network server, new copy machine/vend printing station, and a new microfilm/reader printer.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The seven-member Board of Trustees continued its commitment to sponsor a twice-yearly author program, administer the trust funds for the optimum benefit of the community, raise private funds to augment the



Library Trustees: Standing left to right, Heather Calvin, Brigid Kennedy-Pfister, Kathryn Gandek-Tighe; Seated left to right: Katharine Fennelly and Joyce Radochia

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municipal budget and advocate for adequate staffing and delivery of essential library services. The Board approved funding in FY08 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, shelving, summer reading programs, activities for children, Community Read, author program, public relations, volunteer appreciation, and staff development. The fourth annual Arlington Authors panel was 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. It also raised private funds to restore Sunday openings from October 2008 to May 2009 and will continue this endeavor next year. Board members also participated in Town Day by staffing a table providing information on library activities and resources.

Two long-term board members resigned after more than twenty years of service: David Castiglioni and Patricia Deal. The Board is grateful to both for their dedication and hard work.



Town Day Booth

Friends of the Library

The Friends of the Robbins Library with a membership of 450, continues to assist the Robbins and Fox Branch libraries with programming, fundraising, and advocacy efforts. This vital support group raises supplemental funds for materials and equipment not provided through the municipal budget. They also sponsor the family museum pass program. Under the direction of program chairperson Terry Barry, the Friends hosted a well-attended genealogy program in February. In March, Martha Parravano of Horn Book Magazine treated a smaller audience to reviews and recommendations of good books for children. April was a busy month for Friends' activities, beginning with the second annual

Children's/Young Adult book sale, co-sponsored by the Russell Fund, with able assistance from members of the library's Youth Advisory Board. April concluded with the Friends' annual meeting following by an amazing musical event with hip harpist Deborah Henson-Conant. Attendees thoroughly enjoyed themselves and several said that they would never view or listen to the harp in the same way again. In May, Stuart Whitehurst of Skinner, Inc. appraised treasures brought by audience members in a repeat of a very popular program. On a beautiful late September day, book lovers came out in droves for the Friends' Town Day 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 continues to draw many users to the convenient location on the first floor. In November, a follow-up genealogy program was offered with the always-popular Walter Hickey of the National Archives in Waltham. In December, a wine tasting fundraiser was held in cooperation with Menotomy Beer and Wine. The Friends of the Library is fortunate to have an active Board of Directors as well as the services of Amy McElroy who continues to capably coordinate all the organization's activities.

Volunteers

Once again this year, the library benefited from the work of dedicated volunteers. The library staff is grateful for the contributions made by volunteers who donated over 3,000 hours assisting with many aspects of library operations. Bill Bradley and Margarida Mapletoft gave significant numbers of hours, as did Beverly Brinkerhoff, who coordinates the important homebound delivery program. Also deserving of special note is Anne Honeycutt who has facilitated the popular book discussion group for more than a decade. Volunteers assisting at the Robbins Library in a variety of capacities were: Diane Alexandre, Swati Bhattacharya, Monika Brodsky, Joan Caterino, Caley Chastell, David Gersh, Kim Haase, Carol Hoover, Reena Idiculla, Shibani Joshi, Morris Keesan, Aparna Khanna, Susan Leonard, 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, Mia Stange, Betty Veinot, Barbara Wagner, Marjorie Wills, Shannetta Young and Jayne Zaccagnini. Volunteers assisting with the Town Day book sale were: Susie Barbarossa, Michael and Julia Bloom, Carole Burns, Helena Christensen, Beth Ann Dahan, Andrew Fischer, Gretchen Flock, Alison Goulder, Catherine Gryniewicz, Mary Gryniewicz, Sally Hale, Jennie Hango, Kathy Jones, Peter Kelley, Helen Krikorian, Helen Leonard, Richard McElroy, Sally Naish, Ruth Norcross, Sheila O'Donnell, Annmarie Ostrowski, Judi Paradis, Jane Piechota, Ave Rongone,

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Daniel Rosen, Skye Stewart, Marcie Theriault, Greg Tighe, Wendy Watson and Tim Wilson. The library is grateful for the work of participants in the Town's Senior Citizen Community Service Reimbursement Program. The Fox Branch Library staff is appreciative of the efforts of its volunteers Joanne Burns, Susanne Dorson and Amy Weitzman.

Donations

In Fiscal 2008 citizens, businesses and organizations donated over \$86,000 for general purposes and a specific project. 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. The library is very appreciative to Charles L. Poulos for his funding of the new circulation desk. 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 and to Miriam Levine who did a poetry reading at the library in April and donated that evening's proceeds from the sale of her poetry book, "The Dark Opens."

The library received \$1,895 from the Public Libraries Fund. 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 appropriated insufficient funds for that level and discontinued the program in the future.

The Friends of the Library donated \$53,288 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, database, web site design, Community Read, raffle prizes for summer reading program, and other supplementary materials.

Looking Ahead

With the severe financial crisis impacting federal, state, and municipal governments and the anticipated budget cuts to all Town departments, the library will face a tremendous challenge to provide quality library services.

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. 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

- Continue commitment to maintaining the expansion of services to young adults.
- Improve of lighting within the building for access to collections.
- Continue efforts to expand and publicize library services and resources to English Language Learners.
- Continue efforts to offer services to a changing elder population.
- Prepare a long-range plan for library services for FY2011-2013.
- Gather feedback through surveys of user satisfaction.
- Formalize of ways to request newly published materials from the public.
- Employ greater utilization of technology to publicize library services.
- Increase fundraising for library materials and Sunday hours by the Board of Library Trustees.
- Continue review of options to generate revenue for library services at the Fox Branch.
- Continue efforts to keep pace with technological improvements and to provide adequate staffing to assist patrons and manage electronic resources.

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 tradition of excellence in the classroom, on the stage and on the field, continued in the 2007/2008 school year. Motivated students, great teachers, dedicated administrators, involved parents, and a supportive community made this possible. The accomplishments realized in the school district this year were all the more admirable, given the tight financial constraints.

This year continued the focus of building on past successes and moving forward on the five district goals. The results of our efforts include:

The Special Education Department completed the remaining state mandated actions to be in compliance with timelines, regulations and laws. The majority of the actions were completed during the 2006-2007 school year. The result of this work has been the development of new systems for the collection of data and the creation of more formal and consistent criteria for eligibility, services, and ending of services that are no longer needed. Teacher Assistance Teams (TAT) were effectively implemented at all levels to assess student needs and develop action plans prior to a special education referral. Administrative responsibilities in the department were reorganized to provide clearer lines of communication and supervision. A search committee consisting of teachers, parents, and administrators was formed to interview and recommend candidates for the position of Director of Special Education, culminating in the appointment of Mark Ryder to that position.

Clear expectations for what every child should know and be able to do (standards based education) continued to be refined and integrated into daily life in the classroom. District-wide common assessments in mathematics, English, and writing help teachers pace their instruction and inform them which students have mastered the skills and content and who needs further instruction. Curriculum overviews of every discipline K-12 can be accessed on the district website www.arlington.k12.ma.us.

An intensive reading initiative continued to evolve which focuses on early intervention and intensive support for struggling readers. All K-5 students were assessed three times during the school year. Data from these assessments determined the level of support for students not meeting benchmark standards. This initiative has helped many more students read at grade level.

Building upon the work of last year in which the school system, with the input of staff, parents, and community members, identified the key skills and knowledge needed by our students in the 21st century. The high school focused on incorporating these skills into every classroom. The recommendations kept in place the content we already teach, but added greater emphasis on team work, working in a multicultural global

society, hard work, communication skills, and the ability to evaluate and synthesize information. Additionally, the recommendations included an imperative to foster greater interest in mathematics, science, and engineering. Implemented changes include: incorporation of "Pre-AP" skills, such as Soapstone and Op-tic (strategies to analyze text for inferences, synthesis, and purpose) into all ninth and tenth grade courses; explicit instruction in evaluating source material in social studies classes; shared expectations and standards among English and social studies teachers on research papers; and, the constitution of teacher committees to develop teamwork rubrics, options for world language, software presentations, capstone projects for seniors, and science and engineering programs. Teachers in the Mathematics Department continued to benefit from the Focus on Math NSF grant to expand and deepen their content knowledge in mathematics.

To ensure a safe learning and working environment, a master list of health, safety, and workplace needs was developed with a phased plan to address these needs where practical. A web-based "help desk" for building maintenance was implemented. An on-line calendar was implemented to better schedule activities and events. Consistent utilization of the calendar will continue to be a goal in the years ahead.

The schools continued to work in partnership with the police, Town, and community to insure consistent and coordinated responses to inappropriate student behaviors. The diversion program started last year, which focuses on restitution and rehabilitation for first time, non-violent behavior has proven to be an effective model. We have partnered again this year with community and nonprofit organizations to provide more options for counseling services. Meeting the social and emotional needs of children is as high a priority 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. Town, school, and community-member working group continued to plan for renovating or refurbishing the Thompson and Stratton Schools. Capital funds were allocated for the facilities improvement of Thompson and Stratton schools as part of a multi-year funding plan.

As the effect of these actions unfolds, the goal to unify nine schools into one K-12 system becomes more realized, ensuring that students can more easily move seamlessly from grade to grade and from building to building. Common curriculums and expectations allow students to enter the next grade or course with similar experiences, which increases the instructional time on new material by eliminating the need to spend the start of the year getting each student to the same place. It also ensures that students receive the same great education no matter what school they attend.

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The Arlington Public Schools have a team of talented professionals working together towards our shared vision: All students will achieve at their full social, emotional, creative, and academic potential, and will be prepared for higher level academics, workforce success, active citizenship, and life-long learning.

District Goals 2007-2008

Approved by School Committee 11/13/07

The Arlington Public Schools are committed to helping every student achieve emotional, social, vocational, and academic success. We want every student to be ready to fully participate in life, work, and democracy in the 21st century. The goals listed below are this year's special efforts. Other aspects of system are equally important, such as the arts and athletics, and even though they are not targeted for special efforts this year, they remain a high priority.

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, internal needs assessment, and the districts special education vision.

2007/2008 activities include:

a. Meet the time lines for initial evaluation consent notifications, initial evaluation meetings, initial IEP's, and three year reevaluations. This requires a monthly tracking system. (Continuation of action from 2006-2007)

b. Implement standardized procedures for determining counseling services, teaching assistants, speech/language services and occupational therapy for students who may require these services. (Continuation of action from 2006-2007 and from special education vision).

c. Implement a thorough, documented, and effective pre-referral procedure (Instructional Support Strategies Process also known as TAT- Teacher Assistance Teams) used prior to a special education referral. (Continuation of action from 2006-2007 and from special education vision)

d. Raise the achievement in mathematics of middle school students with IEPs. (State requirement)

e. Create and implement a communication plan, both internal and external, for sharing information concerning changes in special education within the district. Include time tables and specific action steps.

f. Research and report out best practices to integrate study and organizational skills, A.K.A. executive functioning, into the core curriculum (from the special education vision).

g. Clearly define roles for special education central office, principals, team chairs, liaisons, and curriculum directors.

h. Define the target population, curriculum, entrance/exit criteria and concept for each in house special education program.

i. Conduct staff, parent and student self reflection and an independent audit of special education at the middle school (as promised in the spring).

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.

2007/2008 activities include:

Math

a. Conduct math common assessments K-8 per schedule. Collect and collate the data in a way that is quick and useful to teachers. Provide time for staff to review and discuss the data in a continuing effort to increase student achievement. (Continuation of action from 2006-2007)

b. Create with teacher input methods to provide math common assessment data to staff in a quick and useful format. (Continuation of action from 2006-2007)

ELA

c. Conduct writing common assessments K-10 per schedule. Collect and collate the data in a way that is quick and useful to teachers. Provide time for staff to review and discuss the data in a continuing effort to increase student achievement. (Continuation of action from 2006-2007)

d. Create 1 page parent friendly curriculum overviews for existing K-8 writing standards. (Continuation of action from 2006-2007)

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Reading

e. Conduct reading common assessments K-5 per schedule. Collect and collate the data in a way that is quick and useful to teachers. Provide time for staff to review and discuss the data in a continuing effort to increase student achievement. (Continuation of action from 2006-2007)

f. Pilot expanded comprehension components of tier 1 reading in grades 3-5 (Continuation of action from 2006-2007)

g. Develop plan for more formal and systemic reading instruction and support for grades 6-8.

h. Implement Foundations phonics instruction in all classrooms K-2.

Indicators

i. Implement a teacher developed system to measure academic achievement of students in math K-8 based on our teacher developed common assessments. Achievement to be measured by growth over time of individual students, not year to year comparisons of different cohorts. Achievement will also be measured based on students reaching a district set level of achievement consistent with Standards Based Education. (Continuation of action from 2006-2007)

j. Implement a teacher developed system to measure academic achievement of students in writing K-10 based on our teacher developed common assessments. Achievement to be measured by growth over time of individual students, not year to year comparisons of different cohorts. Achievement will also be measured based on students reaching a district set level of achievement consistent with Standards Based Education. (Continuation of action from 2006-2007)

k. Increase the percentage of students reading at grade level in grades K-2. (Continuation of action from 2006-2007)

l. For students starting the year below grade level, increase the number of students in grades K-2 who make more than 1 school year's progress in reading, thus allowing these students over time to reach grade level mastery. (Continuation of action from 2006-2007)

Structures

m. Review middle school schedule to determine the changes to schedule and scheduling methods to further enhance academic achievement for all students, while preserving current course offerings and remaining true to the middle school model.

n. Research best practices for providing challenge and rigor for academically able students K-8.

n. Research successful models and best practices in conjunction with the AEA options to make observation and evaluation more helpful to professional status teachers. The end goal is a voluntary plan for professional status staff to select an alternative to the traditional observation and evaluation process.

3. An Appropriate Education For a Complex World

Ensure that all Arlington graduates are well prepared for social, emotional, and vocational success.

Objective: Incorporate the knowledge, skills, and habits of mind that will best prepare our students for the 21st century into the high school experience.

2007/2008 activities include:

Implement the 21st century year 1 action plan at AHS- (Continuation of action from 2006-2007)

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

a. Incorporate "Pre AP" skills such as SOAPSTONE and OPTIC in grades 9 and 10 classes, including strategies to analyze text for inferences, synthesis, and purpose in all classes including College Prep 1 and College Prep 2. This will require professional development and support.

b. Create an interdisciplinary course study group of teachers and administrators to develop practical methods to create some interdisciplinary courses that broaden interdisciplinary thinking and analysis.

Media literacy

c. Incorporate in 9th grade social studies explicit instruction in evaluating source material.

And include one 9th grade social studies research paper that requires evaluating source material. Provide enhanced support for teachers and students via our library program on best practices for evaluating web sites and sources.

d. Grade 9 English and social studies staff to jointly develop uniform rules, standards, and expectations for research papers, including acceptable sources citations building off the work already completed. Share the guidelines for research papers between and among departments so all students are held to the same research writing expectations.

e. Implement the academic honesty policy that defines rules and consequences re

plagiarism and other issues of cheating.

Teamwork in a diverse, multicultural world

f. Train teachers to create teamwork rubrics that encourage active listening, peer evaluation, and equity and accountability for work done by each group member.

g. Create study group of teachers and administrators to review options for world languages, with emphasis on increased spoken fluency and cultural understanding.

Stress and time management

h. Increase communication between and among teachers in each department so that homework loads are more even and coordinated.

i. Provide increased mental health services via partnerships with non-profit, private practice, and third-party billing providers in the community.

Communication skills

j. Presentation software such as PowerPoint common assessment in one grade level of social studies. Emphasis on clarity of communication, not just technical proficiency. Share the guidelines and expectations presentation software presentations between and among departments so all students are held to the same technology/presentation expectations. Purchase or find equipment necessary to foster greater classroom use of PowerPoint and other computer-based presentations.

A love of learning coupled with a willingness to work hard

k. Create a study group of teachers and administrators to investigate a grade 12 cap-stone project. Issues to discuss include integration with grade 12 major paper student-selected topics, and potentially requiring interviews and public presentations. The question whether this should be a graduation requirement and what role, if any, for independent study/self-directed learning will also be investigated.

Math, Science, Technology, and Engineering expertise

l. Investigate creating a multi-year science and engineering program consisting of a series of existing courses, extracurricular activities, partnership with local universities, participation in national math or science competitions, and close teacher-student support.

Investigate other methods to expose and introduce students to potential careers in math, science, and engineering.

All areas

m. Create year 2 implementation steps.

4. 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.

2007/2008 activities include:

a. Work with AEA, curriculum leaders, and principals to create a master list of health, safety, and workplace needs and a phased plan to address these needs where practical. (Continuation of action from 2006-2007)

b. Streamline purchase order processing and provide principals and department heads with access and oversight of relevant budget lines. (Continuation of action from 2006-2007)

c. Effectively utilize the web based maintenance request and tracking system to coordinate and prioritize facilities upkeep. (Continuation of action from 2006-2007)

d. Effectively utilize the online calendar for administrators to better schedule events and activities, thus reducing conflicting events. (Continuation of action from 2006-2007)

e. Create a multi year capital plan to upgrade the facilities at Thompson, Stratton, and the High school. Implement the 2007/2008 portion of this plan. (Continuation of action from 2006-2007)

f. Pilot a cashless payment system for lunch. This goal will benefit student health, drug and alcohol use prevention, and increase operational efficiency.

EDUCATION & LIBRARIES

Other Important Areas, but not District Goals for 2007-2008

A successful school year requires much more than just meeting the 5 goals and their action steps. Many other aspects of a child's life and many other departments within the district are equally important. Listed below are other very significant ongoing efforts that are critical to the Arlington Public Schools.

Ensure that we educate the whole child, including success and appreciation in the arts, athletics, and a wide array of interests.

Retain and recruit top quality staff, including minority staff.

Provide high quality professional development and mentoring.

Provide professional development in Sheltered English Immersion (SEI).

Enact the wellness policy and provide ample opportunity for physical activity.



EDUCATION & LIBRARIES

MINUTEMAN VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL SCHOOL DISTRICT



About Minuteman

Minuteman High School is a four-year career and technical high school serving our member towns: Acton, Arlington, Belmont, Bolton, Boxborough Carlisle, Concord, Dover, Lancaster, Lexington, Lincoln, Needham, Stow, Sudbury, Wayland, and Weston as well as 47 other cities and towns in Eastern Massachusetts. Minuteman combines rigorous academics and preparation for college with relevant career and technical programs. The school also provides career development programs for adults as part of our self sustaining Community Education Program.

Enrollment

As of October 1, 2008, 126 high school students and 9 post graduate students were enrolled at Minuteman providing a full time equivalent (FTE) of 135 students that reside in Arlington. Minuteman offers a part time program where Arlington High School students are able to take part in elective technical training courses on a half day basis. Currently, very few Arlington students take advantage of this unique program designed to give juniors and senior the opportunity to explore career majors and still stay a part of Arlington High School. The District offers 'Post Graduate' programs to Arlington High School students who are seeking to enhance their own economic opportunity at Minuteman via skill development.

2008 Arlington Graduates and Awards

Thomas Andrews, Plumbing
Keyona Bell, Culinary Arts
Paul Blaszczyński, Pre-Engineering
Dereck Bolduc, Carpentry
Robert Cain III, Environmental Technology
Samantha Chambers, Electrical
Matthew Cody, Culinary Arts
Patrick Cooney, Graphic Communications
Justin Cornelius, Culinary Arts
Michelle Daniell, Medical Careers
Colin Donoghue, HVAC
Samantha Emeneau, Culinary Arts
Mikkel Flynn, Carpentry
Heather Gaeta, Culinary Arts
John Gamez, Electrical

Adam Goldberg, Culinary Arts
Michael Grivakis, Graphic Communications
Nicholas Guerrero, Automotive Technology
Sashi Gupta, Early Childhood Education
Patricia Kelly, Medical Careers
William Korman, Environmental Technology
Geoffrey Landskov, Computer Programming
Charles MacDonald IV, Culinary Arts
Jaclyn Malta, Medical Careers
Erica Naser, Culinary Arts

At the 2008 graduation, Thomas Andrews received the National Honor Society Award, Portfolio Award, President's Education Award for Outstanding Academic Excellence, the Bonnie J. Hilla Memorial Award, and the Minuteman Parents Association Scholarship - Trades Division Award. Keyona Bell received the National Honor Society Award, President's Education Award for Outstanding Academic Excellence, Minuteman Chapter of the National Honor Society Award, Minuteman Players Drama Club Award and the Minuteman Gourmet Club Award. Paul Blaszczyński received the National Honor Society Award, John and Abigail Adams Scholarship Recipient, Vocational Program Award, President's Education Award for Outstanding Academic Excellence, and the Minuteman Parents Association Scholarship - Science & Technology Award. Samantha Chambers was awarded the Beverly W. Lydiard Memorial Scholarship. Matthew Cody was awarded the Minuteman Gourmet Knife Kit. Patrick Cooney was a John and Abigail Adams Scholarship Recipient, and received the President's Education Award for Outstanding Academic Achievement. Colin Donoghue was a John and Abigail Adams Scholarship Recipient and received the Vocational Program Award, President's Education Award for Outstanding Academic Achievement, and the Retired Men's Club of Arlington Award. Samantha Emeneau received the Jed Dowd Memorial Scholarship. John Gamez received the Vocational Program Award. Michael Grivakis received the President's Education Award for Outstanding Academic Excellence. Sashi Gupta received the Portfolio Award and the Flowers of Tomorrow Award. Patricia Kelly was the recipient of the American Association of Grant Professionals Award. Geoffrey Landskov was the National Honor Society and John and Abigail Adams Scholarship Recipient, received the President's Education Award for Outstanding Academic Achievement, and the Arlington Rotary Club Award. Erica Naser received the Portfolio Award, President's Education Award for Outstanding Academic Achievement, Kimberly Holland Memorial Award, Minuteman Parents Association Scholarship - Commercial Services Award and the Samuel J. Nigro Scholarship.

SkillsUSA Awards – Arlington Students

Indianara Indianara Kuhl was a Gold State Medalist for Occupational Health and Safety-Multiple, Paramveer Pabla was a Bronze State Medalist for Robotics & Automation Technology, and Rebecca Rowe was a Gold State Medalist for Tech Prep Showcase in the SkillsUSA Conference.

Class of 2008 Graduate Achievement Highlights

92% graduated and entered college, became employed in their field of study, or enlisted in the US military.

100% successfully passed the state-required MCAS tests in English and Math.

60% college acceptance, 33% career bound in field and 3% military

100% of Dental graduates passed the National Dental Board examination.

100% of Early Childhood Education graduates were certified by the Department of Early Education and Care.

100% of Cosmetology graduates passed the state board examination.

Medical Occupation graduates achieved 100% in college acceptance.

Leadership, Governance and Communication

Dr. Edward A. Bouquillon was hired as superintendent beginning the 2007-2008 school year.

A new Mission Statement was approved by the staff in March of 2008:

“Minuteman collaborates with parents, communities, and business leaders to serve a diverse student body with multiple learning styles. Through a challenging, integrated curriculum our students develop the academic, vocational, and technical skills necessary to be productive members of a global community. We value life-long learning that fosters personal and professional development in a safe and respectful environment. Minuteman is committed to preparing all students for success.”

The School Committee re-organized to include 4 sub-committees; Finance, Curriculum Instruction and Assessment, Capital and Facilities Planning, and Personnel. A taskforce was formed to review and revise all District policies.

A revised organizational chart was approved, resulting in the elimination of several administrative positions, the creation of site-based teams, clear lines of responsibility, and the introduction of Career Clusters.

A Communications Team was formed that seeks to provide a more consistent and transparent message both internally and externally regarding the new mission of Minuteman.

Curriculum and Instruction

The Art program has been restored to the Minuteman Curriculum. More than 160 students have enrolled in 3 levels of classes and a waiting list has been established. A Health class has also been established to supplement a well-rounded student education. Music will be restored.

Career and Technical programs are now aligned along 5 Career Clusters: Trade & Industrial; Human & Commercial Services, Business and Information Technology, Agriculture and Transportation and Science and Technology. Clustering allows for common core curriculum to be delivered in clusters to 9th and 10th grades students.

Since the Fall of 2008 all 9th grade students partake in daily English and Math instruction, rather than the long-established “week on-week off” schedule, thus providing consistent academic instruction in preparing for required MCAS score increases by the state department of education.

Assessment and Program Evaluation

Minuteman developed a Non-traditional Exploratory Program through which all students learn about the viability and challenges of men and women in non-traditional careers, such as Automotive Technology, Carpentry and Construction, Computer Science, and Engineering for women and in Medical Careers, Cosmetology / Barbering, and Office Technology for young men. The students learn about these careers through a series of hands-on exercises, guest speakers and alumni panelists, and field site visits to industry partners.

Minuteman is moving towards a ‘modified inclusion model’ for Special Education students. Professional development for staff continues as we implement this proven strategy.

Minuteman will be undergoing its 3rd New England Association of Schools and Colleges Decennial re-accreditation site visit in March of 2009.

Minuteman students performed very well on the 2008 MCAS: 94% pass rate in Math, 99% pass rate in English, 100% pass rate in Chemistry, 92% pass rate in Biology.

Professional Development

The Minuteman staff has prioritized two professional development topics for the 2007 – 2010 time-frame. Based upon feedback from our EQA report, several half day training sessions on summative and formative assessment methodologies are being held. In addition, the development of Professional Learning Communities is happening for 40 staff with several outside resources.

Student Access, Participation and Support

Minuteman reorganized the assignment of guidance counselors to provide incoming 9th graders with a dedicated guidance counselor. Our research had shown that many freshmen felt that they needed additional support as they made the adjustment to Minuteman.

In addition to having a dedicated 9th grade counselor, the re-assignment strategies now include counselors covering the career clusters. This provides the counselors with a more thorough knowledge of the career areas and the staff.

Minuteman offers 16 sports with three levels (Varsity, Junior Varsity, and Freshmen) throughout the school year. Over the past 7 years the number of participants has doubled in many of the sports offered. Minuteman maintains a no cut and no athletic fee policy. In addition, Minuteman students have access to more than 30 clubs and activities.

The Minuteman Parent Association (MPA) meets monthly and supports all aspects of the Minuteman community. In addition, they assist in fundraising for scholarships awarded at graduation. The goal of the MPA is to help support student access and achievement in all areas including but not limited to academic, vocational, athletic, and extra-curricular activities.

A new website is to be launched in February 2009 – www.minuteman.org

Financial and Asset Management Effectiveness and Efficiency

The Minuteman FY09 budget was passed unanimously at \$17,001,622, which represented a 1.53% increase after removing the Middle School Tech Programs. Healthcare, utility increases, as well as the NEASC re-accreditation increased the budget. Decreases in the FY09 salary budget were due to the reduction of administrators, removing the Middle School Tech Program from the full district assessment and replacing several career and technical teachers with technical assistants in programs experiencing enrollment dips.

Staff was reduced by 4.5 FTE positions in the FY09 budget. Budgets continue to be tightly managed as Minuteman seeks to 'right size' itself and reduce its per pupil expenditures.

The FY08/09 Capital funds were used for major systems repairs, implementing the approved Technology Plan, upgrading the reception area, adding a Welcome Center, relocating the IT office, and renovations of common areas.