

# EDUCATION & LIBRARIES

## LIBRARY DIRECTOR AND BOARD OF TRUSTEES

### Mission

The Robbins Library is a vital community center that connects people with traditional and technological resources for life-long learning, intellectual pursuits, and leisure. The library responds to citizens' needs with services and activities in a welcoming setting built on a history of free and equal access to information for all Arlington residents.

### Usage

The library recorded the highest circulation in its history in fiscal year 2009 (FY09). Over 300,000 thousand people visited the Robbins Library while others from home remotely accessed the wealth and variety of resources offered. As in the previous year, citizens increasingly relied on the library for its free services in this time of economic crisis. The public of all ages enjoyed library programs, computer workstations for access to the Internet and electronic databases were in constant use. Job seekers utilized the computers for resume writing, employment opportunities, and online job applications. 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. Although the Robbins Library continued to be closed Thursday mornings, the public enjoyed Sunday afternoon hours funded through private donations. The library recorded increases in programs offered, program attendance, interlibrary loans, and reference transactions. Library staff worked diligently to meet the demands of the increased usage despite a job freeze that left positions unfilled for part of the year in the Children's, Adult Services, Circulation, Branch, and Administrative departments.

### Accomplishments

#### Strategic Planning

In the beginning of 2009, the Library Director and Board of Trustees embarked on a comprehensive planning process to develop a strategic plan that would be both realistic and aspirational within the limited financial resources of the Town. The Board determined that the optimum way to plan for the future was to utilize the services of a consultant, the New England Library Information Network, to assist with focus group sessions, staff brainstorming sessions, and the identification of community needs. In the spring of 2009 the Library convened a series of focus group meetings with Arlington residents, library trustees, and library staff to uncover the evolving needs of community members and the role of the library in the future. Their contributions set the

foundation for a new vision and strategic directions for the Robbins Library. Library administration and staff will work on a variety of initiatives beginning in July 2010 to achieve its goals for the next three years. The approval of the plan by the MA Board of Library Commissioners in December 2009 maintains the library's eligibility to receive Federal grant funding.

The strategic plan focuses on four ambitious goals and outlines a series of activities and projects developed by the library administration to fulfill these objectives:

Improve awareness and support of the Robbins Library through effective outreach, communications, programs, and partnerships that reflect community needs and interests and enrich the lives of Arlington residents.

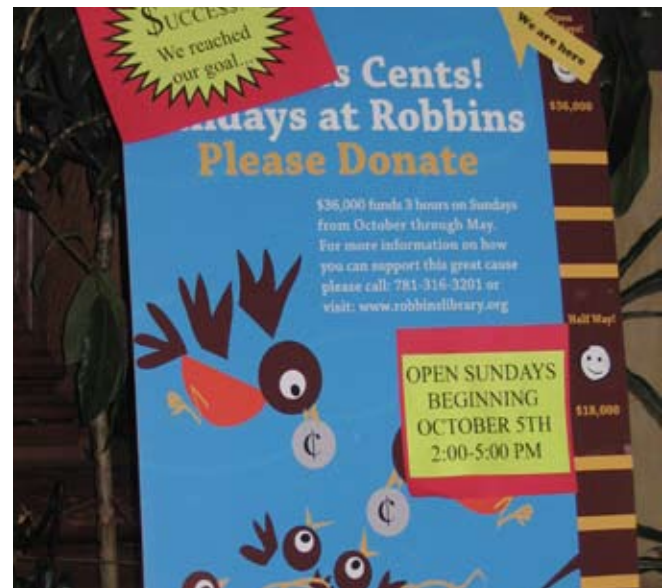
Ensure that library programs, services, and collections reflect community needs, interests and expectations for all ages and groups.

Ensure that the physical library continues to provide a welcoming and useful environment.

Provide technologies that expand the library's capabilities to provide resources, programs, and services to the Arlington community.

#### Sunday Openings

The Board of Library Trustees and the Friends of the Robbins Library for the second year conducted a successful fundraising campaign to be open on Sunday afternoons. The library is grateful for the generosity of over 250 individuals and businesses in the community for the funding to provide the Sunday hours from October 2009 to May 2010. These hours are a very convenient time for families and individuals to utilize the library's vast resources and continue to be popular.



Fundraising for Sunday Openings

# EDUCATION & LIBRARIES

## *Expanded Services and Building Enhancements*

Library staff expanded on efforts to reach several targeted groups. Outreach to the business community included co-sponsorship of events with the Chamber of Commerce, posting to a local businesses blog, creation of an online newsletter, and providing one-on-one reference assistance for local business owners. The library implemented the second phase of the federal Library Services and Technology Grant that expanded the collection of materials for English Language Learners. Library staff continued to meet with the Young Adult Advisory Committee to plan programs and made improvements to the Teen area to make it more visually appealing. New signage was installed throughout the library to improve way finding and make the collections more accessible.

The library took advantage of technology to offer several new services including the loan of mini laptops for use within the building, wireless printing to support patron/circulating laptops, electronic queuing of patrons waiting for public computer access, migration of the public computers to a faster Internet connection, and improved advertising of library events on the library website, [robbinslibrary.org](http://robbinslibrary.org). High school students also continued to offer individualized basic computer training and cell phone clinics for senior citizens.

## *Public Relations Awards*

The library received two public relations awards from the Massachusetts Library Association for the Sunday fundraising campaign and for the online children's newsletter.



*Director Maryellen Loud receives Public Relations Award from MA Library Association*

## **Services 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, through the library's participation in the Minuteman Library Network, and the Metrowest Regional Library System. Several new databases were added this year including Mango Languages, Morningstar, Health Center, and Overdrive audio book service that are compatible with iPods. With the public workstations in almost constant use, the staff assisted patrons in the use of the Internet, electronic databases, and with computer troubleshooting. The library recorded 149,634 visits to its website, an increase of 19% from last year.

Among the many monthly book and audiovisual displays that staff created to highlight the collections was the very popular foreign films display. This summer recorded the highest participation in the adult and young adult summer reading program, enhanced 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.

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. In the second year of a federal grant, Adult Services staff selected materials to increase the English Language Learning collection, offered an open house to publicize the collection and partnered with English At Large to offer conversation sessions for people learning English.

Arlington residents enthusiastically participated in the seventh annual Arlington Reads Together program that promoted closer ties among community members through reading four books on the theme of the *Lost Boys and Girls from Sudan*. The library was fortunate to partner with the South Sudanese Community Center located in East Arlington. The Center arranged for several programs including a history of Sudan, experiences shared by several of the Lost Boys and Girls, and a film documentary. Francis Bok, author of *Escape from Slavery*, one of the community read titles, spoke movingly of his experiences in Sudan and his hopes for the future. The series culminated in a cultural festival with crafts, dancing, and refreshments at Town Hall attended by over 150 people. The Community Read project was sponsored by the Board of Library Trustees, Friends of the Library, South Sudanese Education Fund, and the Diversity Task Group of Vision 2020.

## EDUCATION & LIBRARIES

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*Cow Making at Sudanese Cultural Festival*

The Community Room and Conference Room were used by approximately 100 local organizations for a total of 887 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. Several new services were offered including books on CD, Playaways and the opportunity to participate in a teen blog. Young adults enjoyed the programs planned by library staff and the Young Adult Advisory Committee, including a photography contest, financial workshop, cell phone clinic for senior citizens bookmaking, cooking, craft fair, skateboarding demonstration, reading to children, SAT practice test, Fall festival, Wii, duct tape wallet making, Manga workshop, and an author visit to the Ottoson Middle School. The highlight of the year was the Teen Battle of the Bands Concert that entertained a crowd of teenagers, children and adults on the lawn at the Robbins House well into the evening. 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, Playaways, videocassettes, CD-ROMs, puppets, and educational toys. Children and parents participated in 398 activities at the Robbins and Fox Libraries including storytimes in English and Spanish languages, sing-a-longs for infants and toddlers, babysitting workshop, celebration of National poetry month, craft times, craft fair with the Recreation Department, toddler programs, workshops, and various performances. A highlight of the year was the first ever Scrabble Tournament that matched the vocabulary skills of elementary and middle school aged children. Over 1,000 children participated in the summer reading program with a theme of Amazing Alien Adventure. 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 support for teachers and students, extended loan periods for teachers, library tours, and preparation of curriculum kits. The children's librarians presented book talks in the schools and instruction for classes at the library, as well as preparing the summer reading list titles for the elementary schools.

### **Russell Fund**

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 2009 these included: Electricity and Magnet workshop, Arlington Philharmonic Concert, several puppetry performances, animation workshop, Creature Teachers, Big Apple Circus, creative movement classes for infants, and caregivers, Spanish story times, nature, storytelling, picnic concerts, crafts fair, children's theatre, Scottish dancing, science, origami, and Chess Club. Over 300 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

# EDUCATION & LIBRARIES

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, Earth Science, local author book signing, animal program, magic show, Open Mic, Family Game Night, Movie Nights, Spanish story times, the summer reading program, recycled art, storytelling, and singing. 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. Due to a freeze on filling vacancies, the Branch made do without a department head for the majority of the year with some strain.

## Behind the Scenes

Library staff worked diligently to offer quality services to the community. The number of items borrowed, and loaned to, other libraries 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 20,554 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 600,139 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 \$58,820 in a state aid grant. The grant was used for participation in the Minuteman Library Network and to purchase library materials. The library collected \$65,915 in overdue fines and lost book money that was returned to the general Town fund.

The Adult Services Department successfully implemented the second phase of a federal grant to provide resources and programs for English as Second Language learners and implemented another federal grant for a preservation survey of the collections.

Library staff prepared the children’s monthly and adult quarterly newsletters and the online children’s and business subscription announcements to keep the public aware of services that are available. Other staff activities included: selecting, weeding and updating the



*Reading Room Rental*

collection, responding to local history questions of which many were from out-of-state patrons, updating the periodical list, shifting collections, creating booklists and displays, scheduling the meeting rooms, working with the Minuteman Library Network on assessing new online databases and updating of records in the automated catalog, and processing books that need re-binding.

## Administrative Projects

Library administration coordinated several special projects: preparation of a new long range plan for library services for FY11-FY13, coordination of installation of new signage and carpeting, scheduling of private functions in the Reading Room to raise additional revenue, compilation of statistical data to participate in a nationwide comparison of library usage, and acknowledgement of donors to the annual and Sunday fundraising appeal. This was a particularly challenging year to maintain the quality of library services as retirements and resignations created vacancies in several departments including Administration, Adult Services, Branch, Children’s and Circulation that were not filled for several months due to the hiring freeze. Due to anticipated budget reductions in FY11, the vacant Assistant Director position was re-organized to absorb the duties of the Branch Librarian.

The library continued its efforts to meet patron demands for new audiovisual materials including DVDs, music CDs, and books on cassette and CD. A study conducted in 2008 documented that Arlington’s audiovisual collection ranked 9<sup>th</sup> 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.

The Technology Librarian improved the efficiency of library operations through several projects: data wiring and port mapping, changes to the computer room, auto-cut receipt printers configured to reduce repetitive

# EDUCATION & LIBRARIES

strain issues at the Circulation Desk, and such cost saving measures as network printing clusters, use of open source software, and paperless office initiatives.

## Board of Trustees

The seven member Board of Trustees continued its commitment to 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. Several Board members served on a Town-wide advisory committee to develop a policy for all Town trust funds. The Board approved funding in FY10 for materials for the adult, children's, young adult and Fox Branch collections. These included reference and circulating books, books on CD, playaways, music CDs, foreign language literature, local history, and art prints. Other services funded included the summer reading programs, activities for children, Community Read, author program, public relations, volunteer appreciation, and staff development. The Board conducted a mail solicitation of individuals and businesses to raise funds for the collections. It also raised private funds for Sunday openings from October 2009 to May 2010 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.

## 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 wide variety of programs: Herbal Medicine, De-cluttering Your Home, Using Your Digital Camera, Fundraising Concert, Amelia Earhart, Remembrances from Survi-



*Board of Trustees: standing left to right, Brigid Kennedy-Phister, Francis Murphy, Kathryn Gandek-Tighe, Barbara Muldoon; seated left to right: Katharine Fennelly, Joyce Radochia.  
Missing from photo: Heather Calvin*

vors of the Titanic, and author Francis Bok. In February an elegant and festive reception was held in the Reading Room to honor the volunteers who donate their time to the library. The 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, helped raise needed funds. Stuart Whitehurst of Skinner, Inc. appraised treasures brought by audience members in a repeat of a very popular program held at Town Hall in the spring. 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 December the Madrigal singers from Arlington High School entertained a capacity crowd in the Community Room with holiday favorites. 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.

## Future Goals

The anticipated 5% budget cut to the library in FY11 will result in a 20% reduction to the materials budget, decrease in eight hours per week at the Fox Branch Library, and a significant loss of part-time staff to shelve books and audiovisual materials. It is hoped that private fundraising will offset some of the loss of revenue for materials and that the Friends of the Fox Library will finance the eight hours at Fox from the funds it has already raised. If the Town appropriates insufficient funds to meet state requirements, the library could lose state aid and be de-certified. This may result in residents being denied borrowing privileges at libraries in the Minuteman Library Network.

Library administration and the Board of Trustees will continue fundraising efforts to solicit private funding for materials and hours of service and programs not afforded through the municipal budget. The library will continue its commitment to high quality children's services through the financial support of the Anne A. Russell Children's Educational and Cultural Enrichment Fund.

In addition, funding will be sought to implement the service improvements identified in the strategic plan. Some specific objectives targeted for FY2011 are:

- Develop a marketing and communications plan to insure that residents are aware of all library services.
- Develop feedback mechanisms and opportunities to ensure that services reflect community needs.
- Improve the volunteer program.
- Create a comprehensive giving and fundraising plan.

# EDUCATION & LIBRARIES

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- Expand young adult participation in planning and decision-making.
- Better reflect the community in collection development decisions.
- Explore digitization projects.
- Expand technologies to empower users and enable self-reliant information services.
- Expand library programming for all ages including baby boomers and seniors.
- Create an even more welcoming and aesthetically pleasing environment.
- Create and secure funding for an updated technology plan.

## Acknowledgments

### *Donations*

In FY09 citizens, businesses, and organizations donated over \$46,000 for general purposes, materials, and opening of the Robbins Library on Sundays. 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 enhanced community life. 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 Friends of the Library donated \$82,000 to the library for Sunday hours, membership to five museums, reference books, books on CD, DVDs, music CDs, children's books, local history, language learning, multicultural, materials for the Fox branch, database, web site design, Community Read, upgrade of computer sign-up system, circulating mini-laptops, raffle prizes for summer reading program, and other supplementary materials.

### *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 4,000 hours assisting with many aspects of library operations. Beverly Brinkerhoff and Page Lindsay gave significant hours to operate the important homebound delivery program. Eric Berger conducts chess classes for children from kindergarten through sixth grade and Joan Lippman joins with the children's librarian to create musical accompaniment at the story times. Also deserving of special note is Anne Honeycutt, who has facilitated the popular book discussion group for more than a decade. Liz Eagan and Richard McElroy maintained the ongoing Friends of the Library booksale on the fourth floor.

Volunteers assisting at the Robbins Library in a variety of capacities were: Christina Alexandre, Caro-

lyn Archer, Jim Beck, Anthony Bernachi, Bill Bradley, Sandra Canzanelli, David Castiglioni, Kathy Carusone, Stephanie Chapman, Anastasia Chickering, Helen Dawit, Bertha Denirjian, Julie Frasso, Marci Goldberg, Kim Haase, Carol Hoover, Marilyn Jackson, Helen Johnson, Natasha Karim, Maurice Keesan, Ashley Lambert, Mary Lynch, Anne Macchi, Janet MacMillan, Maria Martinez, Debbie Minns, Sonia Nixon, Russell Pike, Helen Rhodes, Nancy Rodriguez, Ellen Shearer, Robin Watkins, Marjorie Willis, and Jayne Zaccaganini. The library is grateful for the work of participants in the Town's Senior Citizen Community Service Reimbursement Program.

The library also acknowledges the efforts of the following students, many of whom volunteered at the library to fulfill their community service requirements for high school: Sara Ahmed, Leonardo Almeida, Olivia Ambo, Kristina Arruda, Sophia Arnali, Hannah Colonese, Helen Dawit, Tarek Fatahi, Zack Fatahi, Morgan Hopeman, Emma Horn, Grace Hueber, Ellie Jackson, Linnea Kirby, Todd Kirkland, Justin MacNeil, Jackson Miller, Skye Murie, Daniel Rosen, Katia Swartz, Anna Vanderspek, Maggie Whited, Erik Wilke, and Ryan Wilke.

Volunteers assisting with the Town Day or Youth book sale were: Susie Barbarossa, Jamie Battell, Carole Burns, Helena Christensen, Hannah Colonsse, Amy Currul, Liz Eagan, Bonnie Echmalian, Corinne Echmalian, Jim Echmalian, Andrew Fischer, Camille Gharib, Alison Goulder, Catherine Gryniewicz, Johanna Gurland, Liza Halley, Kathy Jones, Helen Krikorian, Helen Leonard, Marian Lombardo, Richard McElroy, Sally Nish, Ruth Norcross, Sheila O'Donnell, Claire Odom, Annmarie Ostrowski, Judi Paradis, Jane Piechota, Nancie Richardson, Ave Rongone, Daniel Rosen, Jean Rosenberg, Jane Ross, Skye Stewart, Lizzie Tonkin, Wendy Watson, Tim Wilson, and Sara Yow.

The Fox Branch Library staff is appreciative of the efforts of its volunteers Joanne Burns, Susanne Dorson, and Amy Weitzman who started the children's Thrift Shop and are assisted by their many volunteers.

# EDUCATION & LIBRARIES

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## ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS 2008/2009 ANNUAL REPORT

The tradition of excellence in the classroom, performing and visual arts, and athletics continued in the 2008/2009 school year. Motivated students, great teachers, dedicated administrators, involved parents, and a supportive community made this possible. This year continued the focus of building on past successes and moving forward on the four district goals. The results of our efforts include:

- The Special Education Department implemented 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. Plans for new and expanded programs to meet the needs of students who would need out-of-district placements otherwise were developed for implementation in the 2009/2010 school year.
- 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, [arlington.k12.ma.us](http://arlington.k12.ma.us).

An intensive reading program, which focuses on early intervention and intensive support for struggling readers, continued to evolve. All students (K-5) 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. In June 92% of students in grade 3 were reading at grade-level.

- At all levels, teachers and administrators focused on incorporating 21<sup>st</sup> century skills into every classroom. While the content of what we teach remained in place, greater emphasis on team work, working in a multicultural global society, hard work, communication skills, creative problem-solving, and the ability to evaluate and synthesize information was emphasized. Implemented changes also included: incorporation of “Pre-AP” skills, such as Soapstone and Optic (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, 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 that provides seminar, study groups, and workshop opportunities to expand and deepen their content knowledge in mathematics. Teachers at all levels benefited from programs and course offerings through our *Primary Source* membership, which was funded through a grant from AEEF. A teacher and a principal travelled to China through a *Primary Source* course. The district continued its participation in the *Teachers As Scholars Program*, which provides teachers with content-rich professional development programs. This program is funded through the federal Title 2A grant
- Kindergarten teachers engaged in an intensive self-study and document preparation for their accreditation visit from The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) during the 2009/2010 school year. They also participated in a yearlong training on developmental mathematics assessments and interventions.
- To ensure a safe learning and working environment, work was prioritized over the year to address the list of health, safety, and workplace needs. A web-based Help Desk for maintenance was implemented. An online calendar continued to be implemented to better schedule activities and events.

- 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 that was started in 2006, 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 school buildings, and continues to improve and streamline maintenance of them. A Town, school, and community-member working group continued to plan for renovating or refurbishing the Thompson and Stratton Elementary Schools. Capital funds were allocated again this year for facilities improvement at Thompson and Stratton. Efforts are underway to develop a multi-year capital plan for Stratton Elementary School. The *Statement of Intent* (SOI) for Thompson Elementary School was successfully submitted to the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA). A feasibility study with the MSBA will likely be conducted during the 2009/2010 school year to reach a decision on whether Thompson will be rebuilt or renovated.

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.

The 2008/2009 District Goals approved by the School Committee are as follows:

The Arlington Public Schools are committed to helping every student achieve emotional, social, vocational, and academic success. The goals listed below are essentially the same goals of last year but with different objectives for this year. While other aspects of the system are equally important and remain a high priority, such as the arts and athletics, they are not targeted for specific focus this year.

## **1. Ensure that all identified subgroups achieve their full academic and social potential.**

*2008 - 2009 activities include:*

- a. Raise the achievement in mathematics of middle school students with Individual Education Plans (IEP).
- b. Meet AYP in math and ELA for the "low income subgroup" at Thompson Elementary School.
- c. Increase district capacity to assure English language development and academic achievement for English learners K-12.
- d. Provide for all teachers professional development and best practices to integrate study and organizational skills (executive functioning) into the core curriculum.
- e. Provide professional development opportunities for teaching assistants.
- f. Increase our capacity to provide effective in-district instruction, programs, and services for those students with moderate to severe learning difficulties.
- g. Create a special education design team to analyze and evaluate current service delivery structures, programs and future service needs in four identified priority areas: PreK Design, Language Design, Spectrum Design, and Therapeutic Design, and to include a cost benefit analysis on proposed programs.

## **2. All students will attain high levels of academic achievement through the implementation of data driven, standards-based education.**

*2008 - 2009 activities include:*

- a. Expand opportunities for teachers to look at student work, common assessments, and data to inform and improve teaching and learning at all levels in ELA and math.
- b. Provide professional development for all middle school teachers to learn reading strategies to help students with reading comprehension in all middle school disciplines.
- c. Provide professional development for all elementary teachers to increase literacy for diverse learners (i.e. SEI, Foundations, Reading Comprehension, and Data).
- d. Create a committee to research successful models and best practices in conjunction with the AEA to make evaluation more helpful to non-professional and professional status teachers.
- e. Continue to work on the middle school schedule to further enhance academic achievement for all students, while remaining true to the middle school model.
- f. Develop a process and implementation plan to pilot K-2 and 3-5 standards based report cards.
- g. Align K-12 Social Studies curriculum with DOE



standards and integrate with ELA and Arts.

h. Pilot in each elementary school a math challenge initiative in grades 3-5 by third quarter.

i. Formalize the Teacher Assistant Team (TAT) process in all schools to address student needs.

j. 90% of the students in grades 1-3 will be at grade-level reading benchmark in June, 2009.

k. Students (percent to be determined) who are below grade level reading benchmark in June, 2008, will be at the next grade level benchmark or make one year's progress by June, 2009.

l. Develop a tool to analyze individual student progress in mathematics and writing using Arlington assessments.

### **3. Provide that all Arlington graduates are well prepared for academic, social, emotional, and vocational success in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.**

*2008 - 2009 activities include:*

a. Incorporate higher order thinking skills in instruction across the curriculum.

b. Implement the research guide across the curriculum so that all AHS students receive explicit instruction in evaluating source material and incorporating that information into well-written and researched documents.

c. Use the newly developed research guide to facilitate interdisciplinary work in all courses across the curriculum.

d. Use the ICARE habits of mind statement to reinforce the school's academic expectations of integrity, communication, accountability, respect, and effective teamwork and cooperation.

e. Explore the use of Virtual High School or similar online courses to broaden the availability of course offerings in world languages, science, and other areas.

f. Provide mental/physical health and substance abuse services using both school personnel and partnerships with non-profit, private practice, and third party billing providers in the community.

g. Convene a panel of students and teachers to create a variety of options for capstone projects that enrich students' academic lives and provide service to the school and community.

h. Work with university and business partners to create new courses and develop opportunities in math, science, and technology for 2009-2010 school year.

i. Provide opportunities for students and staff to engage in ongoing physical and nutrition/health education activities, and to encourage incorporation of daily physical activity and healthy eating habits into their daily lives.

### **4. Ensure a working environment with the tools and systems that enable staff to focus on student success.**

*2008 - 2009 activities include:*

a. Streamline purchase order processing and provide principals and department heads with access and oversight of relevant budget lines. (Continuation of action from 2007-2008).

b. Build and expand district use of Power School - expand administrative capacity, and explore the use of Power School technology to effectively communicate with parents and students to improve student learning. Pilot with a few teachers.

c. Expand district use of Test Wiz.

d. Assess staff and student access to updated computer hardware and develop a plan for all schools.

e. Continue work to address items on master list of health, safety, and workplace need.

f. Create a plan to assess the effectiveness of the processing of web-based maintenance and technology requests.

g. Continue efforts to effectively utilize the online calendar for scheduling events.

h. Develop a cyclical short-term and long-term maintenance plan to address space and maintenance issues at all schools.

i. Implement a computer-based lunch payment process at AHS.

j. In conjunction with the Town officials and boards, begin to develop a ten-year facilities master plan.

k. Complete Statement of Interest (SOI) for Thompson Elementary School.

### *Acknowledgments*

Arlington Public Schools has 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.

## MINUTEMAN CAREER & TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL

### 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, 2009, 111 high school students and 20 post graduate students were enrolled at Minuteman providing a full time equivalent (FTE) of 131 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 seniors the opportunity to explore career majors and still remain at Arlington High School. The District offers 'Post Graduate' programs to Arlington residents of any age who are seeking to enhance their own economic opportunity at Minuteman via skill development.

### 2009 Arlington Graduates and Awards

- Peter Afouxenides, Plumbing
- Matthew Archer, Carpentry
- Matthew Aupperlee, Biotechnology
- Martin Barry, Environment Technology
- Zachary Bartlett, Welding
- Taylor Brennan, Carpentry
- Erik Capoccia, Automotive Technology
- Michael Costa, Electricity
- Jake Costello, Early Education and Care
- Ashley Daley, Cosmetology
- Juanita Estrada, Graphic Communication
- Patrick Femia, Plumbing
- William Ferola, Plumbing
- Katheryn Fontaine, Graphic Communication

- Kristin Gray, Environment
- Leanne Guarino, Early Education and Care
- Chelsea Hatch, HVAC
- Christopher Jones, Biotechnology
- Leo Jordan, Environment Technology
- Alicia Keeler, Graphic Communication
- Gregory Kelly, Horticulture
- Adam Lewis, Carpentry
- Nicole Marcinowski, Collision Repair
- Sabrina Morehead, Cosmetology
- Michael Moriarty, Electricity
- Carina Ortiz, Cosmetology
- Michelle Pierre, Marketing
- Benjamin Powers, Culinary Arts
- Shanon Rogers, Cosmetology
- Barnabe Romeo, Biotechnology
- Rebecca Rowe, Environmental Technology
- Merrissa Shock, Marketing
- Edward Singer, Culinary Arts
- Hardeep Singh, Automotive Technology
- Meredith Sleeper, Early Education and Care
- Katie Tyler, Health
- Victoria Vanwhy, CollisionRep
- Brendan Warren, Plumbing
- William Wright, Electricity

At the 2009 graduation, Barnabe Romeo and Erik Capoccia received the Friends of Minuteman Award. Gregory Kelly received the Lexington Field & Garden Club, Minuteman Alumni Association Award, and the Retired Men's Club of Arlington Award. Jake Costello received the Flowers of Tomorrow Award and the DeLuca Family Award. Katheryn Fontaine received the Richard Trzepacz Memorial Award and the Edward A. Lillis Memorial Award. Leanne Guarino received the Friends of Minuteman and the Minuteman Alumni Association Award. Leo Jordan received the Minuteman Drama Club Award. Merrissa Shock received Friends of Minuteman Award. Michael Costa received Friends of Minuteman Award and the Minuteman Parent Association-Trades Division Award. Michelle Pierre and Nicole Marcinowski received the Friends of Minuteman Award. Rebecca Rowe received the Friends of Minuteman Award, the Arlington Rotary Club Scholarship, the Minuteman Principal's Award, the Mass. Association of Vocational Administrators Award, the Minuteman Attendance Award, the Minuteman Drama Club Award, the Minuteman Parent Association -Student Athlete Award, and the Minuteman Parent Assoc. N.H.S. Award. Sabrina Morehead received the Beverly W. Lydiard Memorial Award. Shanon Rogers received the Friends of Minuteman and the Fred Troisi Memorial Awards. Taylor Brennan received the Friends of Minuteman Award. Victoria VanWhy received the Friends of Minuteman Award. Zachary Bartlett received the John Hayward Memorial Award and the Bartlett PFC Bryan C. Lounsbury Memo-

rial Award. These awards are given to students of superior academic achievement and significant participation in school or community activities.

## **SkillsUSA Awards – Arlington Students**

Christine Andrews was a Silver State medalist for the Tech Prep Showcase - Human Services. David Harrington was a Silver State medalist for Plumbing. Dianna Willms was a Gold State medalist for the Tech Prep Showcase - Ind & Engineering. Leo Jordan was a Silver State medalist for the Tech Prep Showcase - Nat Resources/Ag/Food. Micah Trembly was a Gold State and National Medalist for Robotics & Automation Technology. Rebecca Rowe was a Gold State and National Medalist for the Tech Prep Showcase - Nat Resources/Ag/Food. Shanon Rogers was a Silver State medalist for Cosmetology.

## **Class of 2009 Graduate Achievement Highlights**

- 100% successfully passed the state-required MCAS tests in English and Math.
- 66% college acceptance or advanced Technical Training, 27% career bound in field and 3% military. Overall, graduates achieved a 96% placement rate.
- 100% of Dental graduates passed the National Dental Board examination.
- 100% of Early Education and Care program completers were certified by the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care.
- 100% of Cosmetology graduates that participated in the state board examination were certified.
- Health Occupation graduates achieved 100% in college acceptance.
- Rebecca Rowe, an Environmental Technology graduate from Arlington, was honored as the Massachusetts Vocational Student of the Year by the Minuteman Career & Technical High School Committee, the Massachusetts Association of Vocational Administrators, and the State Commissioner of Education.
- JonFranco Barreto, a Biotechnology student from Medford graduated Valedictorian of the Class of 2009.
- Student speakers at the Class of 2009 graduation ceremony were Valedictorian JonFranco Barreto of Medford, Salutatorian, Christopher Sproul of Stow, and Class President Alicia Ofria of Medford.

## **Leadership, Governance and Communication**

The New England Association of Schools and Colleges conducted a decennial site visit to Minuteman in March of 2009. On December 10<sup>th</sup>, the Superintendent received a letter from Paul Bento, Director of the Commission announcing our reaccreditation. The following are excerpts:

*I write to inform you of deliberations of the Commission on Technical and Career Institutions at its November 5-6, 2009 meeting, at which time the Commission reviewed the report of its decennial visiting committee dated March 3-6, 2009, and voted continued accreditation for Minuteman Career & Technical High School with a Two-Year Progress Report due February 1, 2011, and a Five-Year Focused Visit in the Spring 2014.*

*The Commission commends the administration and staff at Minuteman Career & Technical High School for the many commendations identified by the visiting committee. The Commission wishes to highlight several of the accomplishments listed by the committee, although it does so not minimizing the many good things listed in the decennial visiting committees report. These commendations are:*

*The positive school climate observed by the visiting committee and displayed by students and staff.*

*Administrative efforts to provide leadership in developing plans needed to initiate a comprehensive improvement project for the facility.*

*The articulation of the school's Mission Statement and Goals into learning experiences for Students.*

*The enthusiastic and committed staff.*

*The Commission also focused on several visiting committee recommendations that are of particular concern and to which the school should pay particular attention as it strives to reach excellence. These recommendations are:*

*Address all health and safety recommendations detailed throughout the report.*

*Continue to work toward funding and implementing the facility renovation project.*

*Develop and implement new and additional strategies to recruit students to take advantage of the excellent educational opportunities available.*

*Continue to work toward greater integration between academic and vocational/technical program instructors."*

The complete NEASC Report is available at [www.minuteman.org](http://www.minuteman.org).

The Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) and Treasurer Tim Cahill announced Minuteman's inclusion in the Career & Technical Education Building Program, providing \$100M to 10 Career & Technical Schools for renovation and repairs. MSBA invited Minuteman to the Feasibility phase of a renovation project (visit [www.minuteman.org](http://www.minuteman.org) for more information.)

The Minuteman ESCO project upgraded and retrofitted a number of the school's energy-using building systems with cutting-edge technology and implemented a series of energy efficiency strategies that will trim Minuteman's energy use as much as 50% and generate equivalent savings on the school's energy bill. Upon completion of \$5,000,000 worth of work which included new boilers, chillers, electrical switch gear, lighting upgrades and weatherization Minuteman saves 57% of our water; 44% Gas and 22% of our electrical bill. This results in savings of about \$275,000. In addition, annual energy savings is being used to pay for the improvements, thus no cost to our member communities.

## 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. Minuteman has reinstated music as a formal elective course and performance outlet after a hiatus of over twenty-five years. The purpose is to assemble a comprehensive music and performing arts program and attending graduation requirements during the next four years. Our expectations include the development over time of a diversified course of instruction that will feature traditional course work (chorus, theory, instrumental instruction and performance) as well as activities that reinforce the relationship between musical knowledge and skill and our technical majors, including electronics and computer programming as well as recording and sound engineering. Minuteman has added a full-time Reading Specialist position that combines classroom teaching with consulting responsibilities. Reading skills improvement is a school-wide goal. The Reading Specialist oversees our computer-assisted remedial reading lab, co-teaches developmental English classes, and provides specific reading services per students' Individualized Educational Plans (IEP). In addition, he will share his expertise in collaboration with all academic and career and technical departments to improve curriculum delivery through the active application of reading strategies and study skills. Minuteman has reinstated the full-time position of licensed School-Adjustment Counselor. The position is supported by Special Education grant funding and it allows for the provision of counseling services

to students in response to needs articulated in their Individualized Educational Plans (IEP).

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

Since the Fall of 2008 all 9<sup>th</sup> 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 underwent its 3<sup>rd</sup> New England Association of Schools and Colleges Decennial re-accreditation site visit in March of 2009 and Minuteman will remain an accredited High School.

Minuteman students performed very well on the 2009 MCAS: 92% pass rate in Math, 100% pass rate in English, 95% pass rate in Science & Technology.

## 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 9<sup>th</sup> grade students with a dedicated guidance counselor. Our research has shown that many freshmen need additional support as they made the adjustment to High School.

## EDUCATION & LIBRARIES

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In addition to having a dedicated 9<sup>th</sup> 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 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, [www.minuteman.org](http://www.minuteman.org), launched in September 2009.

### **Financial and Asset Management Effectiveness, and Efficiency**

The Minuteman FY10 budget was passed unanimously at \$17,496,001, which represents a 2.91% increase without taking into account the cost of the Middle

School Tech Programs. A portion of the increase was due to rising health care costs and utility costs.

Budgets continue to be tightly managed as Minuteman seeks to 'right size' itself and reduce its' per pupil expenditures.

A new financial management software system was implemented to improve the efficiency in the Business Office as well as a restructuring of staff. A new Director of Business and Operations position was hired with the impending retirement of two separate administrators. This position oversees all areas of non-instructional support services provided to the school and will continue to improve efficiency in all of these areas.

The FY10 Capital funds were used for major systems repairs, continuing to implement the approved Technology Plan, upgrading the main entrance mall area of the school, relocating the vocational coordinator office, renovating and relocating the Early Education Child Care Center, renovating of hallway areas and the cafeteria space, upgrading the pool heating systems, upgrading the graphic arts classrooms, physical education classrooms, and fitness room for students, refurbishing the tennis courts, relocating the maintenance office, renovating classroom space for a new music room and barbering room, and relocating and installing the student made welding horse at the front entrance of the school.