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Ready for Reading

Harutunian eager to take giant step up to superintendent

By TED GRIFFITH
Times staff

BEVERLY Sitting in his office yesterday, Assistant School Superintendent Harry Harutunian beamed with satisfaction about news of his selection as Reading's new superintendent.

"I'm very excited about being superintendent there," said Harutunian, who learned yesterday morning that he'd been picked for the post. "I think it's a good match for me and a good match for them."

The Reading School Committee voted Tuesday night to appoint Harutunian to be that town's new superintendent. He said an exact starting date has yet to be set, but it will likely be in early August.

The 42-year-old father of two said he is eager to have the increased responsibility and autonomy that go along with being a superintendent.

Prior to winning the Reading job, Harutunian had applied for superintendent jobs in Lynnfield, Lincoln and Wakefield.

"There's one less person that you have to check with," Harutunian said of the benefits of being superintendent.

"No matter how much latitude you have as assistant superintendent, you still work for the superintendent."

While he is looking forward to his new position, Harutunian said he will miss working in the Beverly public schools.

He said Superintendent Lawrence Chase, the School Committee and the faculty have offered him strong support during his time here.

School Committee member Constance Krueger said Harutunian, who became assistant superintendent in 1991, will be missed.

"He's accomplished a lot since he has been here," Krueger said. "He's been really valuable."

She cited his work on revising elementary school curriculums as one of his contributions to improving the school system.

Harutunian has also found himself in the middle of a couple of controversies during his tenure. In 1992, teachers protested loudly after the School Com-



Ted Griffith photo

Assistant Superintendent Harry Harutunian is leaving Beverly to become the new superintendent in Reading.

mittee voted in a closed-door, executive session to give him a \$7,000 raise.

In addition, Harutunian headed the School Department during a tumultuous five-day teachers' strike in November 1993.

He served as acting superintendent in the fall of 1993 following the retirement of Superintendent Jean Perron. He returned to being assistant superintendent when Chase took over in January of 1994.

Harutunian said he learned a great deal from his experience in Beverly. He said handling the demands of the teachers

strike, in particular, taught him a lot.

"A strike is like getting a turbo-charged version of how to be an administrator," he said. "It thrusts you forward."

In Reading, Harutunian will head a school system of about 4,000 students — 1,000 fewer than are in the Beverly public schools. He said his exact salary has yet to be set but it will be between \$75,000 and \$85,000. He now earns \$72,000.

Prior to coming to Beverly, Harutunian worked for eight years as principal of Middletown High School in Connecticut.

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cite for the record the purpose (or purposes if there are more than one) of the executive session, and whether the governmental body will reconvene in an open meeting after the executive session is over.^{27/}

Minutes: Minutes or an equivalent record of every executive session must be kept. In terms of content, such minutes mirror those required for open meetings: they must set forth the date, time, place, members present or absent, and the action taken. (See II. C. 2. above for a discussion of these requirements.) As with open session minutes, written minutes (preferably typed) are required. Unlike the case with open sessions, however, there is no right to tape record or videotape executive sessions. In addition, minutes of executive sessions must include a record of every vote taken. All such votes must be recorded roll call votes.

Publication of Minutes: The minutes or record of every executive session become public records from the moment they are created; however, such minutes "may remain secret as long as publication may defeat the lawful

^{27/} In a recent Superior Court decision, an assistant superintendent's contract was invalidated because it was adopted during an executive session convened for the incorrect announced purpose of "collective bargaining" strategy, rather than "contract negotiations with nonunion personnel." Witwicki v. Beverly School Committee, No. 92-3038 (Essex Superior Court, Decision and Order dated Jan. 14, 1993).

Re: Dr. Harry Harutunian

OPEN MEETING LAW GUIDELINES



Middlesex County District Attorney's Office

Tom Reilly
District Attorney

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