



Guess who's teaching: Embattled ex-superintendent gets teaching job

By Drake Lucas

Eagle-Tribune

NORTH ANDOVER - Former School Superintendent Harry Harutunian has landed a job as a long-term substitute teacher at Lynn Classical High School, earning a full-time teacher's salary at \$61,961-a-year plus benefits.

Harutunian, who left North Andover under a cloud of allegations of misdeeds in April, started teaching in the North Shore community Sept. 7 after he was hired by a longtime friend, Lynn Superintendent Nicholas Kostan.

Kostan said he is fully aware of the circumstances under which Harutunian left North Andover, but has been assured by staff at the Lynn school that he is doing a fine job.

"I've been in touch with people at the high school, and they tell me he is doing a good job there filling in," Kostan said. "That is all I have to be concerned about, how he is interacting with students there."

Harutunian did not return several calls for comment.

Harutunian resigned as head of North Andover schools in April when it was learned he had an affair with his secretary, Brenda Shea, and had given her a 29 percent raise. As part of a deal, the School Committee spent \$187,000 to buy out the remaining two years of his four-year contract.

He was recently fined \$6,000 by the state Ethics Commission for creating a job for Shea's son that was not available to other students, then back-dating a letter to cover up why the job was created.

Kostan said he has known Harutunian for six years. In 2004, Harutunian hired Kostan's wife, Kathleen, to be principal of North Andover's Thomson School. She retired at the end of the school year.

Nicholas Kostan said Harutunian's past with North Andover as well as the ethics violation and fine are not a concern for the job Harutunian is doing now.

He said Harutunian called him over the summer and asked if the Lynn school district had any jobs available. Kostan said when the long-term substitute job opened up at the high school, he asked Harutunian if he would be interested.

The job was not offered to other candidates.

"This was a last-minute thing. It happened a week before school started," Kostan said.

Kostan said he does not know how long Harutunian will teach at Classical High School, but the teacher he is replacing is expected to be out for an extended period of time.

In addition to his \$61,000 salary, Harutunian's new job could also help shore up a better pension for the

former superintendent, but by how much is unclear.

James Salvie, general counsel for the Massachusetts Teachers Retirement System, said while he couldn't comment on Harutunian's particular situation, employees can be re-enrolled and earning time toward their pension if they are teaching more than half-time in a position requiring teacher certification. This can include a long-term substitute-teaching position, Salvie said.

State pensions are based on age and years of service in education in Massachusetts. The amount is based on the person's three highest salary years. Harutunian was hired as superintendent of North Andover schools in 2003 with a salary of \$145,000. In 2004, he signed a four-year contract with the North Andover schools at a salary of \$150,000 a year.

Harutunian is 54 and could start collecting as early as next year under the state's plan.

North Andover School Committee members had little to say about Harutunian's new job.

"Good luck to him," said School Committee member William Kelly. "We've moved on and he has moved on."

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