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Lupini offered Brookline superintendent job

By Paul Leighton

Staff w

BEVERLY - Schools Superintendent William Lupini has been offered the superintendent's job in Brookline, paving the way for him to accept one of the highest-paying superintendent jobs in the state.

Brookline School Committee Chairwoman Marcia Heist said yesterday that she offered the job to Lupini over the weekend. Assuming the two sides can agree on a contract, the Brookline School Committee will vote on Lupini's appointment on April 29, she said.

"I have every reason to believe it will be a vote in the affirmative," Heist said.

Lupini is away on vacation and could not be reached for comment. But he has said he would accept the Brookline job if it were offered and if terms of the contract can be worked out.

Brookline advertised the job with a salary range of \$145,000 to \$175,000. Lupini makes \$130,877 as Beverly's superintendent.

Lupini appeared destined for the Brookline job after that city's search committee eliminated the other two finalists from consideration two weeks ago, leaving Lupini as the only candidate. Brookline officials re-interviewed Lupini and visited Beverly schools last week before deciding to offer him the position.

"We are thrilled," Heist said. "We're sorry for

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Beverly but happy for Brookline."

Lupini, 44, has been Beverly's superintendent since July 1997. He was given a six-year contract extension last April, after the School Committee learned that he had been named a finalist for the superintendent's job in North Andover and decided to renegotiate his contract. But the contract contains an escape clause that allows Lupini to take another job as long as he pays a \$10,000 penalty.

In a previous interview, Lupini said the Brookline job was attractive for several reasons, including the community's diverse population and proximity to Boston. He said the city makes a strong financial commitment to its schools, promising to spend at least 50 percent of its budget on education.

The Brookline school system has nine schools, 6,000 students and a \$52 million budget. The Beverly school system has nine schools, 4,600 students and a \$37 million budget.

Lupini also cited personal reasons for applying for the Brookline job. He said being superintendent in the city where he lives can be difficult on his family. Lupini and his wife have three children, ages 7, 9 and 10, who all attend the Hannah Elementary School.

"As much as we love having kids in the system, there are many times when that is not easy," Lupini said last month when he applied for the job. "I'm the one that gets paid in the position. My wife and kids are not."

Lupini's contract requires him to give six months' notice, but Beverly School Committee President Judith Cronin called that a "negotiable item" between Lupini and the School Committee. The committee is in the middle of discussions over next year's budget.

"I don't foresee problems," Cronin said. "I know Dr. Lupini works with a very capable staff that is poised to bring the school system forward."

Cronin said she would expect Assistant Superintendent James Hayes to take a leadership role during the transition.

School Committee Vice President Michael Tallo said Lupini has left the Beverly schools "in pretty good shape."

"I'm sorry to see him go, but he's doing what he thinks is best for him," Tallo said.

Tallo said opinions about Lupini seemed to fall into "two very diverse camps."

"They either love him or they hate him," he said. "Those with children in the system generally speak very highly of him, and those who don't have children in the system have a negative view. They view him as a highly paid employee."

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