

Paul Schlichtman

By Michael Lafleur, mlafleur@lowellsun.com

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Paul Schlichtman is described by his former colleagues -- in the Arlington Democratic political scene and on the Massachusetts Association of School Committees -- as a brilliant and articulate spokesman for public education.

Schlichtman, 55, of Arlington, is the district's coordinator for research, testing and assessment.

He says the key to the public school system is fostering a greater willingness -- particularly among voters, city councilors and City Manager Bernie Lynch's administration -- to fund public education.

Schlichtman brings considerable political experience.

He also spent three years as a math teacher in New Jersey and five years as an elementary schoolteacher in the Boston public school system. Schlichtman came to Lowell



in 2001 after serving three years as the coordinator for research, assessment and evaluation at Madison Park Technical High School in Boston.

Schlichtman first won political office in 1997, when he was elected to represent Arlington on the Minuteman Technical High School Committee. He joined the Arlington School Committee in 2001 and served two terms, ending last year. He served on the board of directors for the

Massachusetts Association of School Committees from 1998 until 2005, including a stint as board president in 2004.

Glenn Koocher, executive director of the Massachusetts Association of School Committees, said few people "understand the minutiae of the state's public policy for schools as he does."

Koocher said Schlichtman's communication skills and direct knowledge of the pressures School Committee members face are key attributes for him.

"Paul was absolutely in the right place at the right time to articulate some very difficult issues for the state population at large," Koocher said of Schlichtman's time on the school committee association. "He was formidable in standing up to the critics of public schools because he always was able to rebut the cheap attacks with correct, helpful and well structured analysis and comments. There's no mistaking the fact that he's brilliant."

Charlie Lyons, superintendent of Shawsheen Technical High School in Billerica, spent 24 years on the Arlington Board of Selectmen, including the time Schlichtman was on the School Committee.

"Paul's an articulate spokesman for education,"

Lyons said. "He's passionate about what he believes in, and he's a strong advocate for high-quality education. Paul has the intellectual capacity to be a leader. He's going to be a superintendent somewhere. The only question is when and where."