

Looking Back Without Anger

Reflections On the Boston School Crisis

Robert Wood

After leaving the University of Massachusetts in January 1978, Robert Wood spent six months at the Harvard Graduate School of Education working on a book and considering a possible run for the United States Senate. Suggestion as to his next assignment, however, came from an unexpected source, as he describes below.

Robert Schwartz, education advisor to Boston Mayor Kevin White and an acquaintance of some years, threw me a genuine curve ball. Marion Fahey, then Superintendent of the Boston Public Schools, had a contract that was about to expire and there was a search underway for a new superintendent. Would I become a candidate?

The school situation in Boston was not new to me. I had been chairman of the Citywide Coordinating Council (CCC), a monitoring group appointed by U.S. District Court Judge W. Arthur Garrity, Jr., to track the court's series of desegregation orders issued since 1976. Judge Garrity was the presiding judge in the Boston school desegregation case, and while philosophically I was in support of his decisions and orders, I became increasingly disturbed about their specificity and feasibility.

I was not then aware of how the judicial process could play havoc in management requirements and operations, particularly for a large, politicized, disoriented, and old-fashioned bureaucracy.

I knew Boston, the political actors, and the general character of the school crisis pretty well. The idea of stepping in intrigued me, although given the intensity of public reaction, the risks seemed substantial.

By the time Schwartz talked to me, two other candidates were formally in consideration: Paul Kennedy, Director of Personnel and for many years an "insider" in the School Department, and Gordon McAndrew, Superintendent of Schools in Gary, Indiana. I told Schwartz I was game to meet with

This article is taken from the unpublished autobiography of Robert Wood who served as Superintendent of Boston Public Schools from 1978 to 1980 during the difficult period when U.S. District Court Judge W. Arthur Garrity was overseeing court ordered desegregation of schools.

the School Committee, and in mid-July of 1978 I was interviewed at a downtown Boston motel.

My basic position was that there were, in Florida terms, “a lot of alligators” in the schools, but that it was the only large city system where real integration was still potentially possible, as the majority of students were still white, and that working with the Court might expedite judicial withdrawal. I made clear my own commitment to integration, but also my goal of persuading the Court to disengage from the policy of micro-management.

Furthermore, my interest was encouraged by the recent enactment of Chapter 333 of the General Laws of Massachusetts, initiated by then School Committee chair David Finnegan. Chapter 333 increased the management authority of the Superintendent over the entire school system, including its business operations as well as academic offices, and granted the authority of the Superintendent to make senior personnel appointments.

The meeting seemed friendly but inconclusive, and I declined further comment to the media, except to respond to questions in broad generalities.

On July 19, the Boston School Committee met in open meeting and voted unanimously to appoint me, the Department’s nineteenth Superintendent and the first in sixty-six years to be drawn from outside the system.

The *Globe* headline was “A New Game with New Rules,” and the article noted that my selection (on the first vote) was “a complete surprise to many crowded in the Committee’s meeting room at 26 Court Street.” School personnel expressed their disappointment, but parents and business leaders indicated strong approval. Mayor Kevin White, whom I had known since he was Secretary of State during the 1950s, also indicated his support.

I was at my home in Boston that day and, hearing of the Committee’s decision, phoned Paul Kennedy to ask for his support. I also emphasized my respect for the members of the Department and the teachers and administrators in the field, especially given the difficult three years since the Court decree, and the large numbers of court orders that had followed.

This seemed especially appropriate given the protracted court struggle with the School Committee, in which it was found in contempt, and public protests and demonstrations that had continued throughout the city.

A former UMass colleague, Gregory Anrig, now state educational commissioner, also pledged enthusiastic support, and initiated a grant of \$100,000 to provide planning and evaluation assistance. (Later, he also overruled his own Department’s position that I was legally unqualified because I lacked state certification.)

All in all, a most favorable beginning.

There were aspects of the situation that I would come to understand only with the passage of time: I was unaware of the real constraints Judge Garrity had placed on the School Department; I had no clear appreciation of the varying levels of professional competence and the degree of politicization within the Department, the extent of patronage, and the longstanding habit of the School Committee to become involved in administrative detail, from personnel to budget. Neither did I appreciate the division of authority between the City of Boston and the Department.

My 1978 appointment to the School Department was widely applauded by the media and parents groups, and hopes and even anticipation of a rapid turnabout were high — and in reality, excessive.

I had a few weeks to settle in before schools opened, and began to test the new state law that had been widely hailed as giving me new authority — more specifically, *the* authority — to appoint two deputy superintendents.

The Complicated Business of Change Management

Clearly, a new broom was in order, and while it was one thing to clear out the detritus of an old bureaucracy, it was another matter entirely to begin again.

I needed help in charting a new course.

I set about establishing a transition process that extended through the remaining summer weeks until well into the fall. Well-recognized and able people were glad to help out, and they went to work with energy and knowledge, including parents and teachers as representatives. All together, ten transition teams were assembled to help pave the way toward a new era on several fronts, including reorganization.

I asked civil rights activist James Breeden, an African-American Episcopal priest, to help manage the transition process. Breeden had served with me as director on the Judge's Citywide Coordinating Committee, and was on the faculty at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Marcy Murningham was also enlisted, along with Mary Amato, both of whom were graduate students at Harvard's Ed School.

We arrived at a streamlined model for the central office, under the supervision of two Deputy Superintendents, one for academic affairs and one for management operations.

The transition teams helped bring to school people fresh perspectives on the business of public education, while enlightening non-Department Bostonians as to the reality and challenges of running a complicated public bureaucracy. Never before had there been such a comprehensive effort to

review and renew the Department's capabilities, demonstrating both goodwill and faith that positive change was within reach. Their work helped to inspire and build morale for what proved to be tougher days ahead, particularly on immediate problems.

I soon discovered that a new bus contract needed to be negotiated.

I also needed to find competent staff associates and assistance within the Superintendent's office.

I realized that I really knew little about the School Committee, including its chair, David Finnegan, who was known to be ambitious and probably a candidate for mayor in a year or so. Paul Tierney was Suffolk County's Registrar of Deeds, an elected office he had held for years. John O'Bryant was an African-American vice president of Northeastern University. John McDonough, the School Committee's senior member, was a member of another long-time Boston political family, with one brother I had known as a city councilor, and another who was a School Department official.

Yet Another Culture

I soon learned more directly about the Committee members.

Dave Finnegan was indeed planning to run for Mayor, and he had made a basic assumption that reforming the schools would increase his prospects. He also recognized that the support by Boston teachers and their union would also be critical. So he intended to keep their support at all costs.

John McDonough had requested a breakfast with me prior to the Committee vote and expressed an interest in retaining a loyal friend in the Boston headquarters. Fear of being sent back to the field and the classroom was endemic. I gave the usual Washington response that "I will check it out and get back to you" after meeting that individual. (McDonough later would lobby for client support for his law firm and intercede on behalf of other Department staff.) This was the first in what proved to be a continuing flow of requests and/or demands by key Committee members.

I also learned what the *Globe* would document four years later in a 1982 Spotlight series: that the tradition of micro-management, patronage, and personal ambition were thoroughly ingrained in the Department. Both headquarters and school-based staff were regularly called into meetings where political "contributions" were levied. The patronage was focused on civil service positions: custodians, attendance officers, and secretaries. Teachers and administrators were regularly called on to contribute during elections.

In the choice of headmasters, principals, and associate superintendents, the Committee levies would reach hundreds and thousands of dollars.

Accordingly, the Committee intruded regularly in appointments and promotions to solidify their voting bases.

Indeed, the School Committee still was recognized as a springboard for higher office. Louise Day Hicks, former mayor and a major segregationist, went on to Congress. Thomas Eisenstadt had won as Sheriff of Suffolk County. Paul Tierney remained secure as Suffolk County's Registrar of Deeds because both Registrar and Committee terms were concurrent, not staggered, as was the practice, except for Atlanta, in other big American cities.

Thus Finnegan's mayoral aspirations were squarely in the Committee's tradition. (Another tradition was represented by former Committee member Paul Ellison's indictment and conviction on charges of corruption.)

As I took office, my first priority was to build a new staff. I soon learned that Finnegan had intended to exercise firm authority over key appointments. Bob Schwartz, Mayor White's able assistant, had indicated to me he would be willing to serve as Deputy for Academic Affairs, one of the two newly created Deputy Superintendent positions. Finnegan simply replied he "couldn't get the votes" and suggested Bob Donahue, an old-timer with an impressive track record. For the second Deputy, he suggested David Bernstein, a newcomer in the Department who had served as Finnegan's budget advisor, thus end-running the entrenched Budget Manager, Leo Burke. (It was Burke who reported directly to the School Committee in the pre-reform days eradicated by Chapter 333.)

Jim Breeden's assignment was to head the newly formed Office of Policy and Planning, with particular responsibilities for putting together a Unified Facilities Plan, which was a critical component of the Court's outstanding orders. (The Unified Facilities Plan involved the closing of neighborhood schools, always a contentious issue in any community but particularly volatile within a polarized Boston. The UFP, as it was called, was a lightning rod to simmering community tensions, just as the reorganization was to internal Department ones.)

From City Hall, I picked Elizabeth Cook to run the new Office of Community and Public Affairs and Peter Meade to be responsible for intergovernmental relations.

I also asked Marcy Murningham to join me as a special assistant, with primary responsibilities for proceeding with the structural reorganization initiated by Chapter 333.

Meanwhile, I invited Marya Levenson, who was both a teacher and union activist, to become a third assistant, specializing in teacher relations, curricular reform, and middle schools. In sum, I was back in a major public position, which I believed had a vital role in the successful renewal of

Boston. I had the good will and best wishes of the media, press, and general public, and a 5,000 person staff, many of whom were sullen, if not mutinous. After all, Boston public school teachers and administrative personnel had gone through five years of unparalleled distress and conflict, overseen by a Federal judge and his advisors who had embarked on a detailed implementation plan no other Federal Court had yet embraced. The present Committee had taken a genuine political risk in hiring me. At a minimum, they expected the Court to begin to disengage.

For the School Department, the outside pressures — first, of Court oversight, and then of patronage from the Committee and private contractors — was somewhat different. In the end, the reputation of the Committee as a launching pad for higher office would disappear in the first Committee election, held in 1980, following my appointment.

“It’s been a graveyard in recent years,” former Boston Vice-Mayor Edward Sullivan observed.

But competing pressures — in particular from the Federal Court, as well as the Mayor and City Comptroller — would combine to restrict executive authority.

Special Limits: The Court & City Hall

Abstractly, I knew that the Federal Court had reached the floodtide of judicial activism with its 400-plus orders and close scrutiny of School Committee intransigence in carrying out its orders. A court-created “Department of Implementation” had been established, headed by John Coakley, which carried special responsibilities to oversee the integration process.

Robert Dentler and Marvin Scott from Boston University were court-appointed consultants working full time on the Morgan case with seven lawyers formally involved in the proceedings. [*Morgan v. James* was the class action suit in which Judge Garrity ordered, in 1974, that the Boston Public Schools eliminate the segregated school system with the objective of raising the quality of education. The case was long — over 415 orders were issued — and it involved the state department of education in monitoring compliance. It was also the first time a parent/citizen group was given authority to monitor.]

In the end, attorney fees would total millions of dollars, with the Department responsible for those incurred by plaintiff counsel.

In addition to Larry Johnson, the counsel representing black parents, other parties besides the School Department with standing in the *Morgan* case included the State Board of Education, the State Attorney General’s Office, the Boston Teachers Union, the Boston Association of School Admin-

istrators, the Boston Home and School Association, a group of Hispanic parents, and the Citywide Education Coalition.

By 1978, almost five years of litigation had occurred with consequent tensions among all parties now almost predictably set. The work of four masters appointed by the court in 1975 had produced a detailed plan, which was later modified by Judge Garrity. Within the overall school system, nine area districts were authorized instead of ten, with East Boston being excluded — a controversial decision that presented unexpected management problems.

Meanwhile, I had determined that parental involvement ought to have high priority, and designated one transition team, composed of parents and teachers, to work specifically on recommendations for improvement.

The School Department was a public agency — obsolete in its most rudimentary management practices, and ripe for reform. Setting aside the judicial orders and the courts (in addition to desegregation, the Department had to comply with court-ordered and statutory requirements to implement an equitable educational program for children with physical disabilities), the system was burdened by the weight of an aging work force. Boston public school teachers generally came from Boston State College, and politically savvy principals were drawn primarily from the teaching ranks. Secretarial and custodial staffs were all too often simply patronage appointments.

It was time for a change.

Knowing that there are two key factors in successful reorganization — momentum and timing — but not recognizing that these qualities counted for little in the judicial process, on September 23, 1978, I proposed, for School Committee consideration, the first in a series of reorganization plans to further carry out the provisions of Chapter 333. Murningham set to work, and the result was a new organization chart, reflecting both the intent of Chapter 333 and the practical demands made upon the Department. Included among these plans were provisions for reconstituted offices at 26 Court Street (School Department headquarters) as well as a blueprint for nine District Superintendent offices that were intended to provide both autonomy and professional support to each of the city's elementary, middle, and high schools. Eight of the nine districts were geographically based. The ninth was citywide, incorporating the magnet schools, which themselves were nestled like islands in each of the eight local areas.

These “magnet schools” — an innovation introduced by the Federal Court in an attempt to build partnerships with educational, cultural, and business institutions — existed in a public school system already stratified along quality as well as color lines. For example, in contrast to most other schools, Boston Latin, the nation's oldest public school, has stringent entry

requirements based upon merit. Magnet schools reinforced this dual class status.

In the end, we submitted reports and proposed courses of action on three occasions — in September 1978, April 1979, and November 1979 — each time securing Committee approval

The primary principles governing the reorganization, which were approved at the first School Committee meeting in September 1978, were accountability, quality, and equity. This involved, among many things, the elimination of eighty-two positions. In effect, we were returning personnel occupying an over-staffed central office to teaching positions in the field — not a happy prospect for many who were involved.

Moreover, it was here that organizational requirements clashed head on with the Court. I had already discovered in September that the Federal Court required a formal review process, assuring affirmative action in candidate recruitment, eligibility and selection, for all non-teaching appointments — including those to the newly created senior staff positions. Probably out of deference to both the reform mandate and commitment to diversity represented by my appointment, Judge Garrity waived that requirement so that we could move forward expeditiously.

Now Plaintiffs' counsel objected, arguing that nation-wide searches previously mandated by the Court had not been carried out with appropriate recognition of majority and minority representation. To our surprise and chagrin, we began to experience what was to become an extended period of delay and argument. In every instance of proposed structural change, not only were plans subjected to internal staff review and rewrites, followed by later submission for School Committee consideration and approval, but the worksheets — containing preliminary (and often sensitive) recommendations for structural change — also ended up in Garrity's courtroom, being argued out among the many attorneys representing the nine different parties to the case. Nothing in my experience of management administration, either public or private, prepared us for this two-track change process. On one side you had hurdles to overcome throughout the highly politicized bureaucratic process; on the other you faced unprecedented obstacles, within an adversarial system, presented by formal players with whom you shared many of the same values and commitments.

We learned that every move had to be vetted by our own attorneys — at stake were bargaining agreements with the various unions, as well as our standing in the federal and state courts — in addition to the usual channels within and across the Department and its governance. Back and forth we went with our plans for reform: First to the School Committee, then to Judge Garrity's court.

By the time the Court finally agreed with the various components of the decentralization plan, which included the abolition and creation of numerous positions, five months had passed. This protracted time for court protocols gave license to disaffected school people to register their protests with the School Committee and gain exemptions from our recommendations. It largely nullified our first major reform.

The fact that the Court had returned its partial receivership of South Boston High School to the Department had only symbolic effect. Headmaster Jerome Winegar continued to behave as if his budget was only accountable to Judge Garrity, and the high school curriculum peculiarly his own. I also discovered that the decentralization and reorganization at the nine district levels required *state* court approval since the teachers union had objected. Marcy Murningham provided key testimony and staff advice in this instance.

Nevertheless, we did achieve one significant victory, if only short-lived. In spite of the various difficulties, the reorganization/decentralization process enabled us to achieve, voluntarily, court-ordered affirmative action goals in the administrative ranks for the first time in the history of the case. Fulfilling this promise involved an elaborate reworking of the court-sanctioned rating and screening process for recruitment and hiring that passed muster with the Court only after repeated filings and hearings. In the end, over 101 positions were filled, with Committee approval of personnel who were not only qualified but also representative of the diverse populations the Department served.

Now that the central and district levels had been treated, it was time to concentrate on the next and most important level: strengthening local schools and promoting school-based management reforms.

Unfortunately, we were unable to continue our progress because other forces intervened. A new School Committee was elected in November 1979, a budget crisis loomed, efforts related to the Unified Facilities Plan were floundering, the upcoming opening of the Occupational Resource Center demanded our attention, and inroads made by sullen staff to the School Committee were beginning to pay off.

We may have won the battle to achieve court-ordered desegregation goals, but we appeared to have lost the war with respect to our reform goals. We lost momentum and our timing was thrown off as a result of the two-track process of argument and approval, which may have contributed to more transparency and accountability but also incubated internal resentment and sabotage. After October's win, the reorganization process ran out of gas.

As I struggled with the sloppy fallout from our largely aborted decentralization effort, I grew more and more skeptical of the effectiveness of remedial law, as it was now coming to be known. It could pronounce and prescribe but it seemed incapable of genuine execution.

There were two absolute truths in judicial decisions I came to conclude: The lawyers would always be paid for their billable hours, and court experts would always be compensated for their advice on a per diem basis.

So far as the Garrity court was concerned, however, the worse was still to come. The Court's review and decision so far as the Unified Facilities Plan was concerned would undo months of hard work to secure a viable political consensus and partially undermine my own position as Superintendent. As the months went by I realized that neither the Court, nor its experts, nor the participating lawyers were *managers*. None had worked in large organizations, public or private, and none were knowledgeable about implementation, let alone momentum.

Street-Level Politics

If the Court provided one major new component to public management strategy and tactics, then the street level organization of the schools represented a second. Both HUD and the University of Massachusetts, which I had previously led, had the characteristics of headquarters and field units, separated by physical distance and with distinct, written, prescribed missions and responsibilities. Weberian concepts — hierarchy span of control, interchangeable assignments — dating from the early twentieth century remained operative. Optimization was still regarded as a feasible goal.

But like prisons and hospitals, schools are *flat* organizations with relatively few higher hierarchical positions and little specialization of functions. There are principals, teachers, and students, as there are wardens, guards, and prisoners — or doctors, nurses, and patients. Moreover, flat organizations are more or less self-contained — prisoners in jails, patients in hospitals, children in schools. The same people interact daily in a flat organization, as they do not in the hierarchical situations of corporations, agencies, and departments. Face to face recurrent contact is a special quality of flat institutions, in contrast to universities where faculty are differentiated by specialty, students choose different majors, and administrators are usually deprecated.

Accordingly, I found myself in an environment quite different from any I had previously experienced. School locations all fell within the forty-four square miles of Boston, all 152 of them. At the insistence of Bob Donahue, my new Deputy Superintendent for Academic Affairs, every Tuesday I paid a “surprise” visit to one or two schools, supposedly unannounced but often preceded by a tip-off.

At Department headquarters, the associations were personal and frequent, if not always friendly or outgoing. Program directors appeared or reappeared almost daily. Though I continued staff meetings as I had done at HUD and University, they were far more localized and far less lively. Simple requests to the custodial staff to wash the superintendent's office windows met initially with the response, "We contract that out."

I continued the practice that I'd begun years before at HUD, of having a "happy hour" at the close of each day, from 5 to 7 P.M. until the last in-house visitor had left. Of course, the rumor spread like wildfire throughout the system that my "martini hours" were social events. Actually, they were a source of continuing and unsolicited information. Any senior officer unable or unwilling to schedule an appointment on a given day could drop by unannounced for an informal and often personal talk.

Together with the school visits, the routine in a flat organization was different from that in my earlier assignments. The School Committee met every week instead of once a month, primarily to be eligible for expense allowances; but also to approve an extraordinary number of contracts and awards as required by archaic provisions of the statute. Typically, meetings lasted all afternoon with random and wandering comments from several of the members. Occasionally Paul Tierney would introduce a resolution of disapproval or regret about my performance, but I discovered several of them were in jest and often forgotten. Tierney refrained, however, from outright opposition to our initiatives, and later decided not to run again for a Committee slot because times had changed.

By and large, the School Committee maintained a parochial orientation. As for professional associations, the national Conference of Great City Schools was popular among members, especially when a trip to New York or the West Coast was involved. I joined Finnegan and Tierney on a couple of occasions, when friends from HUD days hosted us.

At the staff level, more common were conferences that Marcy Murningham and Marya Levenson initiated, Marcy with the lawyers as she worked on reorganization and decentralization, and Marya with special emphasis on middle schools or chronic departmental problems. Those initiatives were time-consuming to attend, and slow to take effect, but they were critical in the first year so as to try and maintain momentum.

Meanwhile, local parents' meetings were frequent, and rarely conclusive. Local social gatherings, which were frequent and pleasant, were also inconclusive. In short, in the first year, the pace was busy, the associations and acquaintances were new, the demands of court appearances and court orders never ceasing.

Judge Garrity was not the only judge we had to please. In addition to the Federal District Court, the Department was under the scrutiny of the State

court in the form of Judge Thomas Morse, who presided over the case involving educational access to children with special needs. Massachusetts was the first state in the country to declare children with disabilities entitled to a full and free education; Chapter 766, as the law was known, required local districts to provide needed educational and support services. The School Department had to report to Judge Morse to demonstrate progress in reaching both court-ordered and statutory goals.

Once I asked our chief desegregation counsel, Pete Simonds, whether or not we were accidentally in non-compliance with any of the 400-plus outstanding orders. He confessed he didn't know. "I barely have time to enter them in sequence," he said, "let alone read them." That continuing legal pressure, coupled with the promiscuous character and sandlot politics of the system, slowed the pace of reform that I was after and added to my frustration. Interspersed were occasional school disorders, racial fights, and clashes with ineffective administrators.

The worst event occurred on a Friday afternoon at a football field of Charlestown High. It was September 28, 1979. The home team was playing Jamaica Plain High School and was leading by 6 to 0 at the half. Most of the Jamaica Plain players were black, drawn primarily from Roxbury, who were assigned to Jamaica Plain as a result of the court-ordered desegregation plan.

Most of the Charlestown players were white, and drawn from a neighborhood already renowned for its raucous opposition to school busing. The Court had ordered desegregation of sports teams as well as classes.

At the beginning of the second half, while in a huddle with his teammates, Darryl Williams, an African-American from Jamaica Plain High, was shot in the neck by a sniper from the rooftop of a housing project across the street from the stadium.

The bullet left Williams paralyzed from the neck down for life.

I rushed to the scene to find bedlam. This marked the beginning of racial incidents in most of the high schools.

An evening of emergency conversations and meetings coincided with the long-scheduled dedication of the Kennedy Library. I squeezed in a half-hour for that celebration, and then returned.

The next day, there was a flood of outrage about what appeared to be a racially motivated crime, and forty-five detectives were ordered to work round the clock to apprehend the shooters. They subsequently were arrested early Sunday morning. Politicians had pontificated; there were calls for boycotts and marches in the black community.

Over the weekend, we met with headmasters and student leaders from all the high schools in what we hoped would be a calming action. I was helped

greatly by Edward Rodman, Episcopal Canon for the Diocese, who contributed planning staff and resources to hold a gathering on the Boston Common the next week. The schools remained quiet, but the damage was deep and long lasting.

Adding to the drama was the upcoming visit of Pope John Paul II three days later. The Pope's visit attracted a national and international media presence, and the day the Pope came, 1,800 protesters chanting "Justice for Darryl" marched to the South End's Holy Cross Cathedral where he was conducting a service.

By Wednesday, five days after the tragedy and two days after the Pope's visit, hundreds of high school students gathered at City Hall demanding justice for Darryl Williams and better safety in the schools. Because the city was still on edge, the Police Department showed up in force to discourage any eruptions.

Around eight that evening, Murningham and I walked over to City Hall Plaza and joined Joe Jordan, the Boston Police Commissioner. It was a remarkable sight. There was a contingent of fifty to sixty officers ringing the Plaza, mostly on horseback facing a crowd composed largely of students. With floodlights splashing onto every corner, it was an eerie scene, like a movie set. Later a police escort dropped off Murningham at her residence and I went on to the hospital where I found Mayor Kevin White in Williams' room.

Given the high level of racial tension — exacerbated by the desire of activists from Charlestown and South Boston to defend themselves against public outrage and demonstrate in downtown Boston, too — the city was prepared for violent confrontation that thankfully never materialized.

Despite the ever-present proximity of public expressions (school headquarters were almost next door to City Hall), no sit-ins or occupations of our offices at 26 Court Street occurred throughout my tenure. Occasionally, protests by teachers with signs proclaiming "Burn Wood, Not Coal," would appear. On our home stoop on Pembroke Street in the South End, Latin-American students would occasionally gather to protest.

What substantively was occurring between school visits and court appearances was the implementation of the new district-based organizations, with 101 positions belatedly but finally authorized, posted, and filled. By October 15, 1979, we achieved our goals, and looked forward to the next stage when reorganization could culminate in better, stronger schools.

Bit by bit, we were building a new organization.

But the presence of the Court and the election of a new School Committee — along with Mayor White's initiative to reduce drastically the school

budget — would combine to usher in 1980 as a year marked by one crisis after another.

The Unified Facilities Plan & The Beginning of the End

In February 1979, Judge Garrity asked the School Department to submit a comprehensive plan for school facilities to show how desegregation would be sustained as the school population continued to decline. He ordered that a new plan, detailing how much excess space was anticipated and what this meant for closing schools, be submitted to the Court for its review by December 1, 1979. It was called the “Unified Facilities Plan,” but many parents and neighborhood partisans interpreted this as code language for “school closings,” an almost certain lightning rod for community opposition and emotion.

I assigned Jim Breeden’s Office of Policy and Planning principal responsibility for the plan, in concert with John Coakley and the Department of Implementation.

Curiously, the Court had established the Department of Implementation before I became Superintendent. This represented an intervention into internal School Department organization, although neither the Judge nor his experts, Dentler and Scott, had any prior experience or preparation for such a drastic step. The experts would later claim that no previous desegregation plan was “as comprehensive, inventive, or detailed as the 1975 Boston plan.” They would also assert that they did not “specify the machinery for implementation.” Instead, they claimed, “Judge Garrity used the resources traditionally used by the judiciary” as “attorneys, and the firms and clients, became planning agents.” Only later would the experts admit that they did not assure the validity of the data they ordered nor assess whether their information was correct. Instead, after the fact, the experts asserted that “hunches and guesswork” characterized the planning process.

In the end, the experts and the Judge conceded by hindsight that the gap between the Boston desegregation case, and the knowledge about and reform of pedagogy had not been filled. Dentler and Scott, writing later, also acknowledged that “deep ego investments” affected the process of court orders “under great cross pressures and on a tight schedule.”²

By the time the Court issued its order for the Unified Facilities Plan, I had come to understand the lack of experience and knowledge that the Court, the lawyers, and the experts brought to the task of preparing a professional plan.

I welcomed the chance to inject some of my past professional experience in urban planning, and Breeden employed two of my former MIT colleagues to demonstrate, using simultaneous equations, that our “moderate plan” fulfilled the Court’s earlier order. When I introduced the equations in court,

the Judge rebuffed my testimony. “That’s something for Dr. Einstein,” he observed. “It is not evidence.”

For the first time, I learned first-hand the difference between fact and evidence.

I wrote the final Court submission myself, in longhand. It aimed at suggesting school closings that were obviously necessary while being explicable to parents and public. I recommended closing thirteen schools instead of seventeen in the first round and a new pattern of school assignments. I proposed the concept of “beacon schools” to provide for orderly evolution.

By extension, “almost all the first plan opponents were caught off-guard,” wrote *Boston Globe* reporter John Wilpers. “The best darn plan” possible, and eventually every other party in the case agreed. Richard Kindleberger, a long-time opponent, agreed. “Wood is a master of pulling out of confusion something everybody can live with. He replaced the shotgun approach with an alternative that everyone thought would be a [unified] one.” Meanwhile, I had secured a two-to-one School Committee acceptance, with two abstentions, and the informal concurrence of the lawyers and City Hall.

But the Court turned it down. Because it did not meet the targets the Court experts had anticipated, all agreement and support for the plan dissipated in a flash.

I instructed our desegregation counsel, Marshall Simonds, to appeal to the Circuit Court. He did, and two years later, the Court upheld Judge Garrity, although it chided him for indulging in such specificity.

By then I was out of office. The Court decision had robbed me of the credibility that I could persuade the Judge to withdraw.

More Alligators and a New Committee

The efforts to reorganize and decentralize, largely the staff responsibility of Marcy Murningham, and the court interventions that almost simultaneously appeared at the Plaintiff’s initiative, largely preoccupied my time and attention throughout the remaining six months of 1979. But simultaneously, a series of other policy issues and problems were emerging. Three would increasingly preoccupy me:

The growing school deficit, and Kevin White’s increasing opposition to funding it, employing various and ingenious tactics;

The choice of a new transportation contractor after continued unsatisfactory performance in the court-ordered school busing plan;

The oversight of the large new facility for vocational education, now named the Hubert Humphrey Occupational Resource Center.

As these issues moved toward resolution in the spring and summer of 1980, I faced an entirely new School Committee that had been elected in November 1979, with two members — John McDonough and John O’Bryant — as the only holdovers from the committee that had appointed me.

New member Jean Sullivan McKeigue, sister of Kathleen Sullivan Alioto and married to a Boston school principal, seemed fairly supportive, Elvira “Pixie” Palladino, was loudly opposed to desegregation, and the views of Gerald O’Leary, were basically unknown. I gave each member a congratulatory call, and except for O’Bryant, the reception was cool, non-committal, or hostile.

In the first meeting of the newly constituted Committee, Palladino moved that each meeting begin with members and the public standing and pledging allegiance to the American flag.

Her motion passed.

She then announced that she would vote against any motion to accept funds from the federal government.

I concluded that deep trouble had begun. Clearly, we needed the votes of McDonough, who was elected chair, O’Bryant, and McKeigue if we were to prevail.

The changing climate did not go unnoticed in City Hall. For openers, Mayor White, though personally friendly, privately shifted his strategy from public support, which included complaints that the Court was bankrupting Boston. Instead, he began to strictly curb School Department expenditures, which remained under the Mayor’s authority. Now the Mayor announced that the schools were running a deficit of approximately \$10 million dollars, of a total budget of about \$195,000,000. He appointed a new auditor, Newell Cook, who set about withholding approvals for payroll payments already encumbered. By March 2, when appropriated funds ran out, Cook first threatened and then withheld funds for staff and teachers.

By June 11, battle-lines were clearly drawn.

It was not particularly easy to defend the school budget, especially given the continuing loss of enrollment, now approaching 20,000. We were, however, operating under a Boston Teachers Union contract agreement, which had been signed in September 1976 and executed on August 31, 1978, within weeks of my appointment. (The BTU was organized as Local 66 of the American Federation of Teachers.) Negotiations were still underway, and there had been no provision for layoffs, either for teachers or staff. Yet talks were still proceeding.

The tradition was that the School Committee became an active participant with management, meeting directly with the unions' bargaining committee. This was unfortunate, since the American Federation of Teachers used highly paid lawyers from New York City to bargain against the Committee members, few of whom were versed in collective bargaining. Their natural disposition was to hold the line on salaries, but compensate with extreme generosity on working conditions, including class size, hours of attendance, sick leave, and compensation for extra duties.

My favorite item was the provision authorizing absences for deaths and funerals. Besides granting five days off for members of the immediate family (living in the same household), they provided one day off for the death of nieces, nephews, uncles, aunts, in-laws, grandmothers, grandfathers, grandchildren, and cousins. Funerals of friends entitled teachers to a quarter-day leave — paid, of course.

There were also provisions for paid leaves to witness ordination into religious orders, and to attend weddings of immediate family.

This solidarity affecting working conditions compounded management problems, and never addressed the genuine and truly important issue of layoffs.

When Mayor White, through his auditor, began to clamp down and withhold payrolls, my protests and those of Committee Chairman McDonough had little effect. Arguments that Newell Cook had incorrectly calculated indirect costs and expenditures for non-school purposes, as well as failing to include anticipated revenues from federal and state sources, were not acceptable. The games that were played included breaking appointments with senior staff, "accidental" or chance encounters with Cook, who often walked in to a meeting after we had been told he was "unavailable," and doctored records.

We appealed on July 8, 1980, to the State Superior Court and won, and the back payments were made. Later, an appeals court set that court decision aside, but by then the point was moot.

Though we resolved the issue by then, the time spent in the late winter and spring to calculate and recalculate budget patterns, and the toll on staff resources — particularly Bob Peterkin, David Bernstein, and Jim Lucy — was enormous. In the end, all accounts were met by the close of the fiscal year, but the energy expended and the ill feeling generated were substantial.

I tried to answer the two questions for the public: Why, with enrollment falling rapidly, did the budget keep rising? And, Why did the School Department have an apparent cost overrun this year?

I made the point that Boston schools had been chronically under funded, residing third from the bottom of twenty-one Massachusetts cities as a

percentage share in the local budget. I stressed the statutory capital outlay limitation of 3 percent of assessments was hopelessly outdated. As for the eye-catching figure of \$227 million that White had emphasized, only 53 percent of the budget came from the city. In constant dollars, the budget in 1980–81 was *down* from \$152 million to \$138 million.

Special needs, bilingual education, energy costs, and inflation were the budget breakers as the Carter years came to a close. I also pointed out that the Federal Court had enjoined us from closing twelve schools, and that the projected opening of the Occupational Resource Center added another \$5.3 million.

Failure to reconcile the two accounting systems used by the City and the School Department had produced a “phony” crisis. By March of 1980, we had, in fact, achieved a \$4 million reduction.

Contrived or not, the budget brouhaha came alongside the need for a new transportation contract. Past experiences with court-ordered busing had not been happy in terms of either performance or parental satisfaction — and, most of all, cost overruns in the amount of \$2.3 million. Just after taking office, the *Globe* reported on the problem, and I hired two consultants to advise how we could reduce the overruns. Receiving their reports in the late fall, a third consultant advised that the Committee purchase and lease back busses, and I appointed an in-house panel to review the bids then called for.

By May, there were only three satisfactory bids, and after a further review, I wrote an analysis and recommended to the Committee that we award a \$40 million contract to Educational and Recreational Services (whose parent company was known as ARA Services), and a lesser one of \$9 million to T.M.C. The memo was based on five separate meetings of an advisory committee I had established, which was chaired by John Coakley. The committee’s decision was not unanimous. I documented the pros and cons in a major memorandum to the Committee on July 14, 1980.

While my recommendation was under consideration, Chairman McDonough anonymously received a “two-inch package of allegations of misconduct and wrongdoing against the ARA,” and I asked the Department counsel to explore the allegations.

I then received a comprehensive letter from ARA in response.

McDonough, however, remained wary and called for public hearings in July. Though I believed this was unnecessary and an invasion of Superintendent’s authority, I went along, noting that Member O’Leary had moved to give the School Committee full authority to make the award.

McDonough remained wary, and proposed to rebid the contract, losing by a vote of four to one.

Ultimately, the contract was awarded after three days of special meetings.

But O’Leary’s behavior troubled me, especially after he tried to strong-arm the appointment of the Director of Safety and Security by bringing McDonough and Palladino into my office. McDonough left, Palladino remained silent, and no appointment was made. Yet I was troubled about O’Leary’s objections.

I was also surprised at a Committee meeting to see an old friend, Phil Fine, a well-known Boston lawyer, in attendance. As I greeted him, Phil was evasive in giving his reasons for being there. But other matters preoccupied me, and I did not follow up. Nor did I inquire as to the unusual number of telephone repairmen around the building.

The formal vote on a school busing contract came in August and was consistent with my recommendations.

I was relieved that the matter seemed finally settled in a professional and competent manner, putting aside the qualms of the process. They would, of course, resurface a fortnight after I had been fired.

The Last Alligator: The Appointment of the Occupational Resource Center Director

By the summer of 1980, both the city budget problem and the transportation contract issue were moving to resolution, difficult and complex as the process may have been. The *Boston Globe* headlined a John Wilpers story, “At Last Hub Schools May Be On the Road to Quality and Equality,” in particular praising the policy on school closings, even if now under appeal.

There remained the issue of the court-ordered Hubert Humphrey Occupational Resource Center still under construction, with program development still incomplete. The court’s interest in vocational education was driven by the fact that its enrollment was heavily weighted toward minorities, thus vocational education contributed to the “two-track” system that undermined desegregation. Given the entrenched power of white ethnic groups in vocational education throughout the Commonwealth — many considered vocational education a separate system entirely — and the overrepresentation of blacks among its students, the ORC came to represent the last bastion of white resistance, while to the Court and the School Department it was a critical component of genuine school system renewal.

In fact, the facility had been long delayed. Revived after Governor Frank Sargent aborted the construction of a new interstate highway through a heavily minority city neighborhood, the ORC was designed partly to aid in the rehabilitation and renewal of the area. Situated west of the new Madi-

son Park High School campus, its construction and occupation were extraordinarily slow.

The ORC was started about the same time as Madison Park was struggling to open. As described in Dentler and Scott's *Schools on Trial*, initiated by Court Order in August 1975, the ORC was designed by the court experts as "a great hub of a wheel of career exploratory, technical, and vocational instruction and job skill training." The experts had designed each "spoke" in such a way that students could participate in different programs "while keeping a base in a particular high school."

I found the experts' design excessively complex — an artifact struggling to keep desegregation viable as the white student minority declined. The inability of my predecessor to keep a director of the ORC encouraged me to set up a task force to simplify and make feasible the elaborate proposal the experts had devised.

I also began a search for a director, aiming especially at breaking the local vocational education tradition to which the experts had seemed committed. The search committee I established unanimously recommended Colonel Francis Nerone, a career military man from Virginia who had developed and managed the U.S. Army's highly successful vocational educational program for new recruits. His record and recommendations were impeccable, and his interview with me was especially impressive. Accordingly, on August 7, 1980, I nominated him to the Committee, as the reorganization act of Chapter 333 had provided.

The Committee, clearly frustrated by the budget tangle with Mayor White and the bus contract controversy, exploded, especially the Chair, John McDonough. He had earlier signaled his preference for an "inside" candidate and viewed Nerone as a "double dipping" Army retiree. Informally, he had commented that I seemed prejudiced against his nominee, whom I had known since visiting his high school months before.

With Gerry O'Leary insisting that the School Committee review all the Search Committee nominees, a move I resisted, the Committee refused the nomination. In anger, I left the meeting and informed a surprised Colonel Nerone and his wife that I had failed to get the three votes.

My staff argued that I should reconsider the nomination, so I arranged for a breakfast with McDonough the next day. This proved inconclusive, however, and I issued a public statement asserting the Superintendent's authority to make a single nomination under the authority granted by Chapter 333.

For two weeks thereafter, I continued an uneasy relationship with the Committee, visiting the ORC site with McDonough and continuing to prepare for September's school opening. But McDonough appeared extremely nervous, and at a School Committee meeting on August 22, intro-

duced a motion regarding my contract as Superintendent. O’Leary and Palladino concurred. John O’Bryant walked out, saying he wanted no part of a “lynching.” Jean McKeigue was my other supporter.

My reaction was more anger than surprise. Our in-house legal counsel, Mike Betcher, and other senior officers led by Bob Peterkin argued that I should appeal. But it seemed to me that the present Committee would no longer give me support, and that the pattern of contention, argument, and simple “noise” would obscure any policies I might try to introduce. So, I left a distraught and insecure staff, and went home.

The Aftermath

The public fallout from my firing was even more intense than from my resignation from UMass. The *New York Times* front page, with a picture of the Committee and me, carried the headline “School Sup’t Wood Fired on Committee’s 3-1 Vote.” My quote was, “The new committee is really old politics.”

Editorials from three papers all condemned the action: “the reckless sacking,” “The timing could not have been worse,” “One blunt word: Stupid.” The *New York Times* wrote, “Boston School Opening Clouded by Demise of Chief,” and other New England papers followed suit.

There was, however, still more drama to come.

On October 2, 1980, five weeks after my discharge, the FBI arrested Gerald O’Leary and associate, charging them with conspiracy to extort \$600,000 from the ARA company. The U.S. Attorney charged Palladino and McDonough, as well. O’Leary was eventually convicted, and McDonough was indicted but found not guilty.

That weekend, Bob Peterkin and his budget director, Jim Lucy, knocked on our South End door and then entered, chanting “*Free Gerry O’Leary*,” a humorous throwback to late 1960s political activism.

Meanwhile, I now understood why my friend Philip Fine had appeared at the Committee meeting, and why O’Leary had tried to lure McDonough and Palladino to my office to show his capacity to “deliver” a vote for the bus contract. Although some of the mystery surrounding the rejection of Nerone was removed, I still had little desire to come back to an elected Committee.

Two years later, the *Boston Globe* Spotlight Team concluded a series of twelve articles on the School Committee, and Mayor Flynn proposed — and the state legislature endorsed — a new structure for school governance. The new School Committee would be appointed, not elected.

In the interim, Paul Kennedy, my immediate successor, died of a heart attack. He was succeeded by Joseph McDonough (John McDonough's brother). Soon after, he was succeeded by another "outsider" named Robert Spillane — all within less than one year.

My connection with the School Department, however, was not over.

I spoke with Special Agents Brendan O. Cleary and John E. Gemel on October 10, 1980, and later testified before the Grand Jury at McDonough's trial in 1981. The prosecution could not establish a meeting between McDonough and Black of ARA, nor did it have the tapes of the money transfer, which had convicted O'Leary.

Altogether, thirty-two FBI agents were involved, but O'Leary was the only one consistently followed. Again, as Agent Hogan testified, "budgetary" constraints came into play.

Meantime, the Federal Court began the process of withdrawal. The District Court decision on the UFP was reaffirmed, but the Circuit Court rejected the judicial assertion of absolute oversight, declaring "The policies of local officials must be accommodated, unless they jeopardize the Court's mission to bring the system into compliance."

Two years later, the coalition painfully fashioned in 1980 had been pulled irrevocably apart, and the Circuit Court's rebuke of Garrity served little purpose.

Throughout the period from 1978 to 1980, a consent decree process occurred, with new actors. Launched with great expectations, it soon became bogged down in uncertainties concerning representation and mandate. Meanwhile, a full decade had passed since the Court entered the case, and no consensus among the parties was reached.

The difference between efforts to foster quality education and efforts to maintain desegregation was acknowledged, but no strategic plan emerged. There were divisions among the plaintiffs, as attorney Larry Johnson, loudly proclaiming his bitterness, withdrew from the case, thus creating a leadership void and signaling a shift in desegregation strategy. Tom Atkins became co-counsel, but due to his national commitments he was only able to give sporadic attention to the proceedings. Disagreements between the two lawyers left both the Court and other parties uncertain as to whose interests were being served. At issue was the definition of "desegregation": Johnson moved toward a definition based on equity of resources, rather than in terms of a desegregated setting, and was about to propose a voluntary student assignment plan.

Garrity, recognizing the confusion and impasse among the parties and already having had his wrists slapped by the appeals court, was determined to extricate himself and return authority to where it belonged — as long as

there was full compliance with his orders. By August of 1982, the Judge issued a fourteen-point draft proposal for closing the desegregation case, which met with unanimous opposition. Intended as a catalyst and a sign that he was seriously committed to disengagement, he subsequently modified his plan to accommodate parties' concerns.

Meanwhile, the State Board of Education offered to take on monitoring responsibilities, thus affording the Court "the opportunity to untangle itself from the sticky web of party opposition and judicial responsibility." By then, the School Committee had changed again, this time electing two black members. Its composition and attitude were different from the Committee that had fired me. Indeed, a more favorable political climate, widespread support for ending the Court's active jurisdiction, and the Judge's clear commitment to disengagement set the stage for a new chapter in the department's history of race and schooling.

Reflections*

In *The Children of Light and the Children of Darkness*, Reinhold Niebuhr warns of the difficult conflict between self-interest and general interest. He reminds us that the scriptures teach that children of darkness, "are in their generation wiser than the children of light . . . because they understand the power of self-interest." The latter are also casual and careless in fashioning the means to achieve their ends.

In the case of the Boston schools, the children of light are guilty of more than their chronic inability to grasp the power of self-interest. The attention they devote to the institution is no more than marginal. While they express their moral indignation through judicial proceedings or on camera and in the press, they place the school problem close to the bottom of a long agenda. . . .

Meantime, those whose self-interest lies in the schools are working full-time, singleminded, responding to the power of self-interest.

Since [my time with the Boston Schools] I have found myself drawing some explicit conclusions about policymaking and implementation, conclusions that have much application beyond the Boston school case.

In brief, my observations came to this: Where the procedures of remedial law are applied today to the operations of governmental service organiza-

* *This conclusion is taken from Robert Wood's article "Professionals at Bay," which appeared in the Journal of Policy Analysis and Management, 1, no. 4, 454-468 (1982). It is reprinted here with permission.*

tions, such as school systems, we need to acknowledge the emergence of three prime actors in the process: the courts, the unions, and the constituencies.

Remedial law, applied in the federal courts, has only come to flower in the past few decades. In the foundation case, *Brown v. the Board of Education*, decided in 1954, the Supreme Court sought goals that were comparatively simple in substance. It was addressing principally the racial compositions of school, school consolidation, and transportation. Considerable discretion was afforded district courts and administrators. The fact that most southern systems operated on a countywide basis further simplified implementation. But courts orders in the 1970s in such cases became increasingly complex especially in the north and west. They were widened to consider issues of educational quality as well as equity; and they probed deeply into matters of day-to-day management. In Cleveland, Denver, and St. Louis, for example, but especially in Boston, “shadow” school systems literally appeared: monitors alongside policymakers, experts alongside administrators, carefully selected parents’ groups alongside the general constituency. Except for the option of receivership, each of the courses of intervention the courts chose interjected new patterns of administrative complexity and made accountability next to impossible.

The union in public service organizations provided another dimension. The basic contacts with the unions prescribe and restrain professional behavior, sharply limiting if not replacing management direction. Grievance and arbitration procedures challenge managers’ decisions at every level: the performance of an individual teacher, the use of sick and vacation leave, the deployment of specialists, the development of curricula. The arbitration procedures that are provided for in such contracts stand alongside the courts in limiting and diffusing managerial choice and accountability.

Finally, the participatory democracy that was born in the community action programs of the 1960s has empowered the constituencies, students, and parents alike, and has bestowed legitimacy on their demands. The distinction between advising and demanding has been blurred. Expectations have been raised to unrealistic levels, creating aspirations — as in the case of bilingual education — that are well beyond the power of any system to deliver. Consequently, program evaluations are guided by unrealistic standards, widening the gap between expectation and reasonable performance.

What these three new actors share in common is their insensitivity to resource limitations. Court orders for the most part have been indifferent to the problems posed by austerity; unions have exacted their concessions in work rules; parents have acted like any consumer without a direct user charge.

Despite that fact, policy analysis and management continue to hold the premise that rationality — in the sense of seeing a mission through from formulation to execution — still prevails. That proposition is increasingly dubious today. A kind of rationality exists; but it is essentially a political one. It calls for compromising, not optimizing; for enhancing a power base, not carrying out a program. Today, the skills required for managerial survival are not the classical skills of oversight and direction. Tools such as cost-benefit analysis, microeconomics, quantitative decision-making remain useful; but only at the margin. The critical skills are political: coalition-building, consent-inducing, image-projecting, compromising, and waffling.

So . . . under the existing rules of the games, trust among a chief executive officer and other senior members of a large public institution, president to cabinet, superintendent to district superintendents, is probably not sustainable. Professional behavior at middle management levels in the strict sense of the executing orders is even more improbable.

In 1970, I called for the return of professionalism and a new sensitivity to the role of plain ethics in government, the rejection of what Edward Banfield called “private-regarding” aims for carefully formulated “public-regarding” ones. I suggested the professionalization of the public service, instead of the teams that were being headed by political lawyers, academic economists, and neighborhood leaders, recruited for a brief spell in the Washington bureaucracy.

Given the evolution of our process of governance since then, I confess I was dead wrong about how that process could best be managed today. The “amateurs” are irrevocably in place. At every level of government, the skills required are not those of solving problems, but accommodating the objectives of the new participants. The central problem is to cope with different claimants who assert they have an equal if not superior legitimate right to decide, but who accept no responsibility for the outcome.

Afterword

To understand the legacy of Bob Wood's superintendency, you have to fast forward to 2005. Today, among urban school reformers nationally, Boston is viewed as a national model. Tom Payzant, the current superintendent, has been in place for a decade, longer than any other big-city superintendent. Other superintendents nationally envy Boston's political stability, its continuing base of support from business and civic leadership, and the steady evidence of improvement in its schools.

How did this transformation happen? There were three critical reforms that made it possible; all were heavily influenced by the fallout from Bob's demise as Superintendent. The first important reform happened thirteen months after Bob's tenure, when the next "outside" superintendent, Bud Spillane, was appointed. The business and higher ed leadership, now understanding just how vital professional leadership is to the success of an urban system, quickly stepped forward and put in place two new support structures, the Boston Compact and the Boston Plan for Excellence, which still provide crucial political and financial support for the schools. The second reform, and the most important, was the governance reform pushed through by Mayor Flynn, replacing the elected school committee with an appointed one and once and for all creating a more unified and accountable governance structure for the school. And finally, as part of the comprehensive Education Reform Act of 1993, the legislature further strengthened the personnel powers of the superintendent, again with at least one eye on Bob's experience in Boston.

So the real verdict on Bob's superintendency, in my view, has to be made on the basis not simply of what he managed to accomplish in his two short years, but by the lessons others drew from his experience, and by the reforms subsequently enacted to ensure that his successors would be given a better shot at success. Not a bad legacy, in my view.

— *Robert Schwartz*