



## Atlanta Charter School Ditches Plan to Scrap Pledge of Allegiance

Less than a day after announcing its plan to stop reciting the Pledge of Allegiance during its morning meeting, the Atlanta Neighborhood Charter School reversed that decision.

Principal Lara Zelski announced the initial decision to scrap the pledge on the school's website in early August. The school planned to replace the pledge with a student-created document, which was to be called the "Wolfpack Chant." According to Zelski, the new chant was supposed to be "an effort to begin our day as a fully inclusive and connected community."



The decision to remove the pledge from the morning meeting seems to have been a product of a growing number of students and faculty refusing to participate in the pledge, perhaps inspired by some NFL players' decision to kneel during the playing of the National Anthem prior to games. "Over the past couple of years it has become increasingly obvious that more and more of our community were choosing not to stand and/or recite the pledge," Zelski wrote.

"Teachers and the K-5 leadership team will be working with students to create a school pledge that we can say together at morning meeting," Zelski's announcement stated. She further stated that she hoped the new Wolfpack Chant would "focus on students' civic responsibility to their school, family, community, country and our global society."

Zelski added that students who wished to do so would be allowed to say the pledge voluntarily, later in the day.

Shortly after posting the announcement, the outrage began. Social media quickly spread the rage and parents began complaining. Soon, those complaints reached the ears of Georgia House Speaker David Ralston (R) and gubernatorial candidate Brian Kemp, among others, who quickly and loudly denounced the decision.

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"I'm sure our House Education Committee will examine whether taxpayer funds should be used to instill such a divisive ideology in our students," Ralston posted online. Later, Ralston told Fox 5 Atlanta, "If the school is going to accept public funding, then I think they have an obligation to, at least, have dialogue with the community."

But another state legislator, David Drier (D), who is a parent with two children enrolled in the school, believes the uproar was much ado about nothing. "There was, probably, a poorly thought out policy that wasn't communicated well," Drier told Fox 5 Atlanta. "I think there are a couple of administrators and a few teachers that thought they were trying to be helpful by doing this. But it wasn't discussed with the



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board of directors. No one knew about it.”

Within a day, Zelski’s announcement was taken off the school’s webpage and replaced with a [statement](#) from Lia Santos, the chairwoman of the school’s governing board.

“In the past, the Pledge of Allegiance was recited during our all-school morning meeting, but at the start of the school year, the daily practice was moved to classrooms. This change was done in compliance with state law ... and aligned Atlanta Neighborhood Charter School with most other schools in the state who also say the Pledge of Allegiance in individual classrooms,” the statement of Santos read.

“However, it appears there was some miscommunication and inconsistency in the rollout. Starting next week, we will return to our original format and provide our students with the opportunity to recite the pledge during our all-school morning meeting.”

So, apparently, this was all a miscommunication, a mix-up. Maybe that’s true, or maybe this is a case of leftist school administrators testing the line, seeing how far they can go before there is pushback on their anti-American stances. The words of Principal Zelski offer some clues as to what she, at least, was thinking. A “fully inclusive and connected community,” she wrote. As noted above, she also intimated that the new “Wolfpack Chant” would “focus on students’ civic responsibility to their school, family, community, country and our global society.”

One school in Georgia sought to expunge the Pledge of Allegiance and replace it with something less patriotic, to say the least, was quickly rebuffed. So, what? one might ask.

But it’s impossible to believe that Zelski and the Atlanta Neighborhood Charter School are the only ones to have thought of doing something like this. In a red state such as Georgia, actions like these can be dispatched with a few angry phone calls and some media attention, but that won’t be the case everywhere. Parents and anyone else concerned with the education of our young need to be alert to every sneaky move that schools make in regard to dismissing our national traditions and fight them every single time.

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