



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on November 10, 2010

## Pledge of Allegiance Sparks Unique Debate

The Pledge of Allegiance is often a controversial and, unfortunately, an unwelcome component in the public arena. Last month, on two separate occasions, guests at congressional political debates were angered by the hosts' unwillingness to begin the debates with the Pledge of Allegiance and took matters into their own hands by standing up and reciting it themselves. Most disputes regarding the Pledge of Allegiance follow similar story lines, with one group opposed to reciting the Pledge and another in support of it. In the North Collins school district of upstate New York, however, the debate over the Pledge of Allegiance takes on a unique twist.



Not concerned by any unwillingness of the school to recite the Pledge, as one would expect in such a debate, residents instead are concerned by *how* the Pledge is recited.

According to *The Blaze*, "An upstate New York school board is convening Tuesday evening and will hear community residents' concerns about the district's current policy regarding the Pledge of Allegiance." The students at North Collins Elementary School typically begin each school day by reciting the words of the Pledge of Allegiance as it is broadcast over the school's intercom system. However, the student announcer recites only the first few words of the Pledge on the intercom, stopping midway to allow each individual classroom to complete it at their own pace.

Ben Halsey, superintendent of North Collins Central Schools, explains:

From that point forward, the student [announcer] cuts out and each individual classroom continues with the full Pledge in their own classroom at their own pace. So that kindergartners can say it at the rate and speed and understanding that they are capable of. And the sixth graders who are in the building can say it at the rate and the pace and the understanding that they are capable of.

Following the Pledge, students are expected to recite the school's "character pledge" as well, only this pledge is recited in its entirety by the student announcer.

Rosemarie Tridle, a two-year member of the North Collins school board and a self-proclaimed patriot, takes issue with the method by which the Pledge of Allegiance is delivered in her school district: "If [the Character Pledge] can be said as a group, there is no excuse that our Pledge of Allegiance cannot be said as a group."

She explains, "I'm 50 years old. The way it was taught to us, we stood as a group. The entire school stood as a group when we said it, and I didn't understand every single word, but I grew to learn it."

In fact, Tridle is so angered by the issue that she has elected to resign from her position on the school board. She explained: "I can't be a part of a group that in my opinion does not respect the flag."



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*The Blaze* reports, "Tridle is not alone in her concern; over 250 people have signed a petition demanding that the school district read the Pledge of Allegiance in full each morning over the school's P.A. system."

Angered residents are planning to appear at the next school board meeting, scheduled for Tuesday, to make their voices heard.

Meanwhile, Superintendent Halsey asserts that the school board will be receptive to the concerns of the residents: "We are listening and we have given a lot of time to this issue. And we are not just casting it aside saying we are going to do it a certain way."

A school district committee is allegedly "studying the policy" and is preparing to submit recommendations to the school board by the end of the month.



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