



**Town of Arlington, Massachusetts**  
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## **School Committee Minutes 08/02/2010**

*Approved by School Committee September 28, 2010*

### **Arlington School Committee Regular Meeting Minutes**

**Monday, August 2, 2010**

**at**

**5:30 p.m.**

**Meeting to be held at the  
Dallin Elementary School Library  
185 Florence Avenue  
Arlington, MA 02476**

#### **Present:**

Mr. Joseph Curro, Chair, Ms. Leba Heigham, Vice Chair, Ms. Cindy Starks, Secretary, Mr. Thielman, Dr. Kirsi Allison-Ampe and Mr. Judson Pierce.

Dr. Kathleen Bodie, Superintendent, and Ms. Karen Fitzgerald, Administrative Assistant.

Excused Absent: Mr. Joseph Curran

#### **Public Participation**

Mr. Stephen Goodwin, 152 Newport Street expressed concern regarding class sizes at the Brackett Elementary School and other elementary schools.

Mr. Glen Thorne, Chelmsford, MA resident was a former Arlington Public Schools Dallin School student, expressed his concern over the controversy with the Pledge of Allegiance and urged the committee to put it back at the high school.

Mrs. Olga Yulikova and Mr. Siegel asked the School Committee for a waiver to allow their child to enter kindergarten on September 14. The current school policy states a child must be five years olds before August 31 to enter kindergarten but since their child turns five on September 5<sup>th</sup> the family and current teachers advocate that the child should enter kindergarten this year.

#### **Policies & Procedures Subcommittee**

Mr. Judson Pierce, Chair of Subcommittee explained that the Arlington Public Schools had no policy on the Pledge of Allegiance and after much research and discussion with other lawyers, judges and other school districts the Policy and Procedures Subcommittee created a policy concerning the Pledge of Allegiance and the Flag.

Mr. Pierce read the First Reading of Policy File JS Voluntary Pledge of Allegiance, which reads:

An American flag shall be appropriately displayed in each classroom in the Arlington Public Schools. The principal of each Arlington Public School shall ensure that every student has the opportunity to say the Pledge of Allegiance each school day if the student so desires. A student, teacher, or administrator may not be compelled to say or lead the Pledge of Allegiance or punished for not saying or leading it.

Legal References: G.L.c 71, Section 69; Opinions of the Justices to the Governor, 372 Mass. 874, 879-880 (1977), U.S.C. Title 36

**Mr. Pierce moved that the School Committee suspend the Entrance Age Policy JDB JBC for 24 hours for the purpose of allowing Alex and Olga to enter their child into the Thompson School Kindergarten on September 13, seconded by Dr. Ampe.**

**Voted: 2-4, Mr. Curro, Ms. Heigham, Mr. Thielman and Dr. Ampe voted No**

Dr. Bodie expressed sympathy to the family but stated that this is problematic for the school district. If the policy is suspended other families will be eligible to sign up for kindergarten within this 24 hour period.

The committee recommended additional research on the entrance age for kindergarten students and researching information on an appeal or waiver process.

**Ms. Starks moved to adjourn at 6:13 p.m., seconded by Mr. Thielman.**

**Voted: 6-0**

Respectfully submitted by  
Karen M. Fitzgerald  
Administrative Assistant  
Arlington School Committee/cs