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Board Allows Pledge of Allegiance or National Anthem

The Madison Board of Education passed a motion early this morning that allows individual schools to offer either the Pledge of Allegiance or the National Anthem, and committed to making Madison classrooms and schools free of harassment to all students, whether they participate or not.

The Board met to hear public comments and to reconsider a motion adopted at a meeting on October 8, all in order to comply with a new Wisconsin statute requiring daily offering of the Pledge or Anthem.

The Board adopted the following motion:

The Board of Education will implement the letter and spirit of Wisconsin Statute 118.06(2) by supporting each individual school's implementation of the law by offering either the Pledge of Allegiance or the National Anthem during the school day.

The Board further strongly expresses its commitment that every student and staff member, regardless of his or her choice to participate or not, be respected and assured an environment free from harassment in any form.

Whenever the Pledge of Allegiance or National Anthem is offered, a staff member or leader will remind students that participation is voluntary. The leader will say, "We live in a nation of freedom. Participation in the pledge (or anthem) is voluntary. Those who wish to participate may stand; others may remain seated."

Approximately 1,200 persons attended the meeting, including 166 persons who registered and spoke to the Board members during the nine-and-a-half hour meeting.