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W. Side schools in Pledge hedge

By CARL CAMPANILE *Education Reporter*

The local school board covering the Upper West Side thumbed its nose yesterday at the post-Sept. 11 Board of Education policy requiring all city schools to conduct daily pledge-of-allegiance ceremonies.

District 3, in a resolution passed unanimously, said it "opposes the Board of Education plan requiring students to recite the Pledge of Allegiance."

Instead, the eight board members said each school should determine "whether or not to recite the Pledge."

"I don't think it defies the Board of Education's policy. It's no big deal," said District 3 Chairwoman Roni Wattman.

"The schools should make the decision on whether there should be a pledge or not."

But Board of Ed President Ninfa Segarra blasted the local board for adopting an "illegal" policy.

"A school district cannot override a policy approved by the central board," Segarra said.

She said the action demonstrates another reason for abolishing community school boards.

"What they did is a poor example for young people. They're showing youngsters they don't have to comply with a legal requirement," Segarra said.

The citywide policy requires all schools to hold a Pledge ceremony, although there is no punishment for refusing to say Old Glory.

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