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West Side Blowhards

Anyone who still wonders why the city schools are in such a pathetic state need look no further than the board of Community School District 3.

At the instigation of member Larry Sauer, the board this week voted unanimously to defy an edict from the central Board of Education requiring schools to conduct a daily recital of the Pledge of Allegiance.

Said Sauer: "Requiring students to blindly repeat the pledge is no different than the Taliban requiring children to memorize the Koran and repeat it by rote, without understanding why or what they are saying."

The *Taliban*? Oh, please.

Oh, that's right. District 3 covers the Upper West Side — once termed, for good reason, "Moscow on the Hudson." Condemning America is par for the course in much of that left-wing loony bin.

In that regard, Sauer exercised surprising restraint by not comparing 110 Livingston's policy to Nazi Germany.

As it turns out, District 3 has no legal right to opt out of saluting the flag. Individual students may decline to take part, as the Supreme Court has ruled, but not entire schools.

But how typical that Sauer & Co. fail to *comprehend the resurgence of patriotism* that has taken hold in this country since Sept. 11. Or the need for *encouraging* patriotic behavior in the wake of the murderous World Trade Center attacks — and the onset of America's war on terror.

The many millions of Americans who took to flying the flag or placing flag pins in their lapels — or just wearing "God Bless America" t-shirts — understand that.

Reciting the Pledge of Allegiance — and explaining what the words mean — is a perfect way to teach patriotism to children.

As for Larry Sauer & Co. — and those oh-so-politically-correct parents who support them: If they really and truly can't tell the difference between the Board of Ed and the Taliban, they need to get some help.

Quickly.

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