

DALLIN SCHOOL DEDICATION
MARCH 12, 2006

Good afternoon.

On behalf of my School Committee colleagues Sue Sheffler, Suzanne Owayda, Marty Thrope, Paul Schlichtman, Susan Lovelace and Sean Garballey, I am pleased to congratulate the Dallin community on the opening of this beautiful new school.

We have rebuilt five of our elementary schools, and we are mindful today that we have two more to do.

Today we say thank you to the citizens of Arlington and to the many volunteers and community leaders who made this new building possible.

Two of our current School Committee members, Suzanne Owayda and Marty Thrope, served on the Permanent Town Building Committee during the planning and construction of this facility. We thank you for the hours you both spent making sure this building met our Town's high standards.

We recognize and thank former School Committee members Bill Carey, David McKenna, Carolyn Simmons, Janice Bakey, Kathy Fennelly, Denis Sullivan, Joani Lamachia, Mike Healey, Pat Worden and Barbara Goodman for the work they did to make this day possible.

We are most grateful as well to our former Superintendent, Kay Donovan, whose leadership made the rebuilding of our schools, and the Dallin in particular, a reality. Without Kay, Arlington's rebuild would not have been possible.

We are standing in this stunning new facility because the citizens of Arlington believe in education and were willing to raise their own taxes to ensure that the children of the Town could attend first rate schools.

The debt exclusion campaigns were led by several current and former elected officials including Barbara Goodman, Dennis Sullivan and Janice Bakey from past School Committees; Alan Tosti and Charlie Foskett from the Finance Committee; former Town Treasurer John Bilafer; former Selectman Charlie Lyons, and the current chair of the Board of Selectmen,

Jack Hurd. We thank each of you for your leadership of these campaigns. As one of the co-chairs of last year's override, I know your job was not easy.

It has to give us all pause that the children of many of the citizens of Arlington who supported the debt exclusion efforts studied in the old Dallin or the old Brackett or another older building and never had a chance to experience our new facilities. Taxpayers, some of whom live on fixed incomes, voted for the rebuild in order to help other people's children enjoy the benefits of a quality education.

So, how can a school community repay such overwhelming generosity?

Well, I would suggest that the Dallin School community says thank you by doing what it has always done and that is continue to be a close-knit community that forms children to be lifelong learners. Adhering to the Dallin school's four pillars – caring, communication, cooperation and respect, is a way to say thank you. These pillars tell us what a special place the Dallin is, and they are signs of welcome to children and parents who will attend the Dallin in the years to come.

These four pillars represent the spirit of the faculty of the Dallin as well. There are too many teachers to mention, but I want to recognize Mrs. Jastremski and Mr. Chicarello who have devoted many years to this school and whose love for the children of Dallin is expressed by their outstanding teaching. By simply being the wonderful teachers they are, they and the rest of the staff say thank you every day to the citizens of Arlington.

Another way for the Dallin to thank Arlington is by continuing to be a place with a very involved parent community. Your principal, Dr. Raemer, tells me every time she turns around she bumps into parent volunteers helping in a classroom or the library, working in the lunch room, lending a hand with move into the new building, accompanying children on field trips, or raising money for school activities. The annual pancake breakfast and end of year picnic represent a tradition of parents from this neighborhood showing their commitment to the school.

The Dallin also says thank you by continuing its community service work. Every year students from Dallin collect canned goods and clothing for homeless people at the Pine Street Inn. And you've been involved in

recycling and other service projects. This is good work, and we know it will continue.

But, perhaps the most important way to express thanks is for all of us to follow the example of the citizens and volunteers who supported the rebuild efforts. As I said a minute ago, many of them knew their children would never benefit from a rebuilt school. Some never had children in the Arlington schools. Why did they vote yes? Why were they so generous? I think it is because people in our town care about each other and because they want Arlington's children to receive the best education possible.

There is a great lesson for all of us in the thousands of acts of selflessness that led to this new building.

And that is we are all called to give back to our community, especially if we are lucky enough to live in a town like Arlington and to attend a beautiful school like the Dallin.

It has been said that of those to whom much has been given, much is expected. Children of the Dallin School, you have been given the chance to study in a brand new building. What the generous people of Arlington ask is that you do your very best in school, study hard, and use your gifts, your talents and your good fortune to make this community and maybe one day another part of the world a better place.

The best way to say thank you, my friends, is to give back to Arlington and to the world.

Congratulations, Dallin School. We are happy you are in this new building, and we know you will bring it to life every day with enthusiasm, caring, academic achievement, and a commitment to serve others.

Thank you.