

**HB**

**30**

# ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

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## REPRESENTATIVE BETTYE DAVIS DISTRICT 21

### MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Senator Lyda Green, Chair  
Senate Health, Education & Social Services Committee

**FROM:** Representative Bettye Davis *BD*

**DATE:** March 27, 1996

**RE:** HB 30: Relating To A Dress Code For Public Schools

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I am writing to request a hearing for HB 30 in the Senate Health, Education and Social Services Committee at your earliest convenience. Attached please find a copy of the most recent version of the bill, sponsor statement, zero fiscal note and backup materials.

# FISCAL NOTE

No. 2

Bill Version: HB 30

(H) Publish Date: 2/16/96

STATE OF ALASKA  
1996 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Revision Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: School Dress Code

Sponsor: Representative Bettye Davis

Requester: Representative Bettye Davis

Department Affected: Education

BRU: Executive Administration

Component: Commissioner's Office

COMPONENT SERIAL NO. 185

**Expenditures/Revenues:**

(Thousands of Dollars)

OPERATING	FY 97	FY 98	FY 99	FY 00	FY 01	FY 02
PERSONAL SERVICES	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
TRAVEL						
CONTRACTUAL						
SUPPLIES						
EQUIPMENT						
LAND & STRUCTURES						
GRANTS, CLAIMS						
MISCELLANEOUS						
<b>TOTAL OPERATING</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>

<b>CAPITAL EXPENDITURES</b>						
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<b>CHANGE IN REVENUES</b>						
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**FUND SOURCE**

(Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts						
1003 GF Match						
1004 GF						
1005 GF/Program Receipts						
Other						
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>

**POSITIONS:**

FULL-TIME						
PART-TIME						
TEMPORARY						

Estimate of current year (FY96) impact: \$ 0.0

**ANALYSIS:** (Attach a separate page if necessary.)

Passage of this legislation will have no fiscal impact on the Department of Education.

Prepared by: Kimberly Homma, Special Assistant

Phone: 465-2803

Division: Commissioner's Office

Date: January 19, 1996

Approved by Commissioner: [Signature]

Shirley Holloway, Ph.D.

Agency: Education

Date: January 19, 1996

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## REPRESENTATIVE BETTYE DAVIS DISTRICT 21

### SPONSOR STATEMENT

#### **HB 30: An Act relating to a dress code for public schools**

HB 30 would provide an important discretionary tool for school districts to use in improving the health and safety of students and teachers. The bill is supported by the Association of Alaska School Boards, the Anchorage School District and the Kodiak Island Borough School District.

HB 30 is a response to gang-related behavior. Gangs in Alaska, as in the lower 48, use clothing to communicate. In the Kodiak schools, for example, there have been violent fights involving weapons as a result of who is wearing what colors. Uniforms go a long way toward providing a neutral coat of arms for children whose clothing might otherwise make them targets.

The president of the Association of Alaska School Boards has said that:

To address some of the manifestations of these problems, schools must be given the tools to establish policies which promote optimum educational environments and protect the health and safety of kids and teachers. In our opinion, HB 30 does this.

Adopting a school uniform policy would be voluntary under HB 30. Additionally, parents would have the ability to exclude their children from wearing uniforms. It has been the experience of school districts in other states, however, that few students have chosen to opt out of these very successful programs.

In Charleston County, S.C., for example, where nearly half the public schools have adopted voluntary uniform policies, educators praise their leveling, egalitarian effect. The students take pride in their studies, viewing school as a place of work rather than just somewhere to hang out with friends.

In the Long Beach, Cal. school district, which includes 56 elementary and 14 middle schools, adopting a school uniform policy reduced physical fights by 51%, assault and battery cases by 34%, and suspensions by 32%. In a recent nationwide survey of 5,500 secondary school principals, 70% said they believe uniforms would reduce violence.

HB 30 also requires that a school district, in order to require students to wear uniforms, must first determine that financial resources are available to assist economically disadvantaged students. It has been the experience of many parents that providing three uniforms per year for a child is far less expensive than purchasing fashionable clothing.

# ASSOCIATION OF ALASKA SCHOOL BOARDS

312 West 11th Street, Juneau, Alaska 99801-1510 • Tel (907) 586-1083 • Fax (907) 586-2995

*Advocates for Alaska's Youth*



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**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**  
Carl F. N. Rose

March 11, 1996

The Honorable Bettye Davis  
Alaska State Capitol  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Representative Davis:

Alaska's school districts can spend thousands of dollars averting litigation due to the fact that Alaska statute neglects the issue of dress codes in schools.

Unfortunately, today's problems are being brought into the schools. This requires that schools be given the tools to establish policies which promote optimum educational environments and protect the health and safety of kids and teachers. HB 30 provides language which allows school districts to avoid expensive litigation brought by attorneys who pursue the notion of constitutional conflicts related to school dress codes.

AASB encourages you to support HB 30 - "An Act relating to a dress code for public schools." This bill protects the health and safety of Alaska's children, maintains and empowers locally elected officials, could save school districts the time and money expended by litigation, and has a zero fiscal note attached. This bill helps schools.

Thank you for your commitment to the health and well-being of Alaska's children.

Sincerely,

Carl F. N. Rose  
Executive Director

RECEIVED

MAR 12 1996

AASB.....

CORRESPONDENCE

# ASSOCIATION OF ALASKA SCHOOL BOARDS

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*Advocates for Alaska's Youth*



March 11, 1996

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Ans'd.....

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### DIRECTOR

Earl F. Rose

The Honorable Bettye Davis  
Rm. #430  
Alaska State Capitol  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Representative Davis:

On behalf of all Alaskan school districts, thank you for initiating HB 30. Because of your commitment to the health and safety of Alaska's children, you addressed the statutory need to empower local boards of education to implement school dress codes. Your work has brought this issue to the forefront.

As you are well aware, nationally, dress codes have achieved dramatic results in the lives of kids. Last year, one urban school district, (with 56 elementary and 14 middle schools), adopted a policy which reduced physical fights between kids by 51%, assault and battery cases dropped by 34%, and there were 32% fewer suspensions. In this district, like the language of HB 30, parents have the option of excusing their children from the requirement. So far, only a small proportion of parents have exercised this option.

Unfortunately, today's problems are being brought into our schools. To address some of the manifestations of these problems, schools must be given the tools to establish policies which promote optimum educational environments and protect the health and safety of kids and teachers. In our opinion, HB 30 does this.

This bill represents a straight forward approach to providing schools with the necessary tools to educate our children in a safe and productive environment. Thanks for your advocacy on behalf of Alaska's children and schools.

Sincerely,

Norm Wooten  
President

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## AASB Position Paper HB 30, An Act Relating to a Dress Code for Public Schools

Currently there is nothing in Alaska statute which prohibits public school districts from adopting and enforcing student dress codes in public schools.

AASB believes that appropriate dress and grooming contribute to a productive learning environment. Alaska's public school students are expected to give proper attention to personal cleanliness and to wear clothes that are suitable for the school activities in which they participate. Furthermore, student's clothing and grooming styles must not present a health and safety hazard to the wearer or others nor should it distract from the educational process.

AASB supports legislation which would:

- continue to allow each public school district to adopt a dress code;
- provide guidelines to public school districts who wish to adopt school uniforms; and
- help the public school districts avoid the potential constitutional conflicts, which have arisen in other states, when local boards of education adopt policies establishing dress codes and/or school uniforms.

AASB supports the efforts of the legislature to provide local boards of education with the tools necessary to protect the health and safety of the students and/or teachers of the district. If local families, community members and educational leaders feel that the quality of education could be increased with the institution of a school dress code or uniform, then the law should support the efforts and desires of that district.



## Kodiak Island Borough School District

To the Honorable Alan Austerman,

I am pleased to know that you are co-sponsoring HB 30 regarding dress codes. This piece of legislation will add to the portfolio of interventions available to school administrators as they attempt to achieve our educational objectives in a safe, school environment. The High School parents have always appreciated your willingness to both listen to their concerns and to respond to them.

I would like to offer some insights regarding the need for an expanded set of tools to use in our efforts to help young people be successful. The problems facing administrators as they attempt to provide a safe environment for education are much different than they were twenty years ago, even five years ago. My experience as a student, teacher, assistant principal and principal at Kodiak schools has given me a somewhat unique perspective regarding these problems. Further, as president of the Alaska Association of Secondary School Principals, I have the opportunity to interact with principals from all over the state of Alaska and to share their concerns. It is safe to say that their primary concern is the increase in violence, gangs and youth crime.

Violence has reached epic proportions in Alaska schools. Elementary and Secondary principals are expelling students in record numbers for assault, weapons, gang activity, drug dealing and intimidation. Six years ago most administrators didn't know that there even was an expulsion policy. Now most of them know it by heart. I must share with you that it is with deep regret that any administrator expels a student for it represents the opposite purpose of our professional careers.


Gang activity is a phenomena new to Alaska. Most Alaskans when they hear the word gang, reminisce back to their school days... to the friends they "hung out" with on the weekend. They turned over a few outhouses and maybe raised a little "hell" from time to time but nothing serious. Hell raising was a week-end activity because most parents wouldn't let their kids run around on a school night.

It's not that way anymore. Gangs are organized groups of individuals who sell drugs, who hurt people, who intimidate people and who are not afraid of anybody or any thing. Many of them grew up on the streets of large cities and have moved to live with relatives because of problems back home. They don't leave their life behind but attempt to begin where they left off. The somewhat naive Alaskan youth are willing recruits for these people. When confronted, gang members are not concerned about our laws. It's no wonder gangs are in Alaska.

The reason they are not afraid is that our laws were designed for a different time. The isolation that protected us from the need for stricter laws is no longer protecting us. HB 30 is an important step. Gangs use clothing to communicate. It is with clothes that they identify their gang and it is with clothes that they send the message, "I am part of a gang...don't mess with me." We have had violent fights involving weapons as a result of who is wearing what colors. Sometimes the fights are between people who have never seen each other before they noticed each others clothes. Administrators need to regulate clothing as an important tool to keep the schools safe. Even if we didn't want to use uniforms, the knowledge that we have that authority, will create the peer pressure necessary to stop clothes from being used for intimidation.

Clearly, there are a number of laws that would help us in our efforts to educate our youth. I hope that you will continue to carefully explore opportunities to help intervene with at-risk kids. We need these laws, not to get rid of kids, but to help them.

If I can provide any further information, please don't hesitate to call.

  
Larry LeBou  
Director of Federal Programs and Technology  
Kodiak Island Borough School District

Copy & Distribute  
to All House  
Legislators!



Lawrence A. Wiget, Ed.D.  
Director, Government Relations/Legislative Liaison  
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(W) 907 269-2255 (FAX) 907 269-2107

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TO: REPRESENTATIVE BETTYE DAVIS

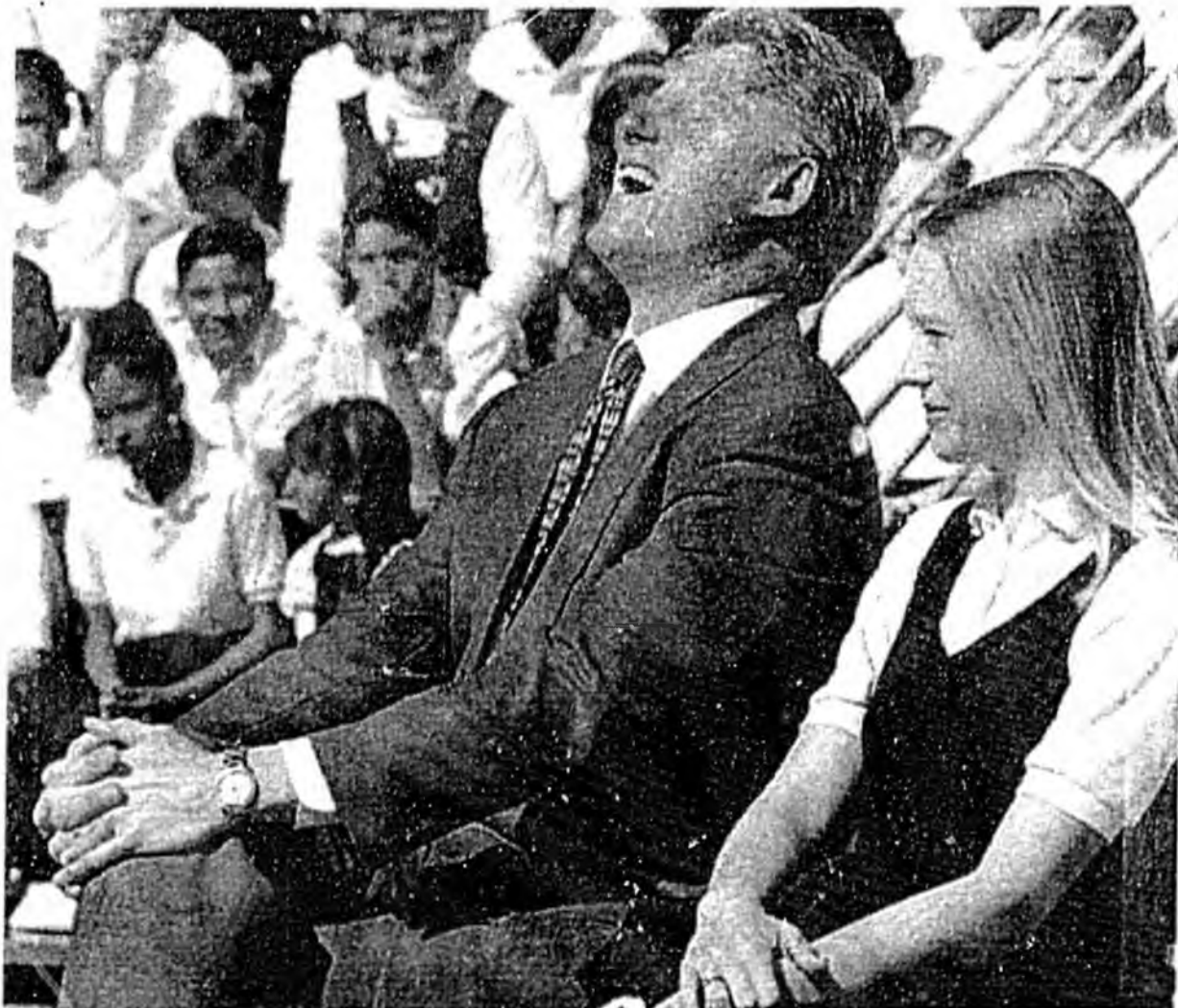
SUBJECT: ASD POSITION PAPER: HOUSE BILL 30, "AN ACT RELATING TO A DRESS CODE FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS."

DATE: JANUARY 25, 1995

For students in the Anchorage School District, the issue of student dress is covered under the ASD Statement of Student Rights and Responsibilities, Section 10, Freedom of Symbolic Expression, Student Dress Code. The Section states:

**STUDENT DRESS CODE:** Each student shall attend school clothed in a manner which is clean, not hazardous to the safety of him/herself or others, and which does not detract from the required educational environment. Students may not wear clothing or items that are associated with gangs. Students who do will be excluded from school until such time that they cease wearing the clothing or items to school or school events.

At the present time the Anchorage School District does not have a dress code requiring students to wear or a uniform, nor is one under consideration. However, the District would support legislation which would allow a public school district to adopt a reasonable dress code that requires a student attending public school in the district to wear a uniform if the local school board determines that the policy is necessary for the health and safety of the students or teachers of the district.



Agence France-Press

Uniformed students surrounded President Clinton yesterday as he talked about school uniforms in California.

## PRESIDENT ACTS ON SCHOOL ATTIRE

Tells Education Dept. to Advise  
Districts on Uniform Policy

By ALISON MITCHELL

LONG BEACH, Calif. Feb. 24 — In the name of putting "discipline and learning back in our schools" President Clinton instructed the Federal Education Department today to distribute manuals to the nation's 16,000 school districts advising them how they can legally enforce a school uniform policy.

"If it means that teen-agers will stop killing each other over designer jackets," the President said in his weekly radio address, "then our public schools should be able to require their students to require school uniforms." He repeated the theme, of the voluntary use of school uniforms, in a series of appearances throughout the day, expanding on an idea he mentioned in passing in his State of the Union message.

"If it means that the schoolrooms will be more orderly, more disciplined," Mr. Clinton said, "and that our young people will learn to evaluate themselves by what they are on the inside instead of what they're wearing on the outside, then our public schools should be able to require their students to wear school uniforms."

New York Times  
Feb 25, 1996

— ADDITIONAL INFORMATION —



Anchorage Daily News

1/31/96

# 70% of principals say uniforms would cut violence

By Dennis Kelly  
USA TODAY

Seventy percent of secondary school principals think uniforms could cut down on violence, says a survey that could bolster President Clinton's efforts to push the idea.

The survey of 5,500 principals came Monday at the Na-

tional Association of Secondary School Principals convention in San Francisco.

"These principals know what it's going to take to get kids focused on learning and reducing disciplinary problems," says Rahm Emanuel, an aide to Clinton.

The survey arrives as the Education Department is set

to send manuals next month to the nation's 16,000 school districts offering legal guidance to those considering uniforms.

Clinton, who raised the issue in his State of the Union speech, argues "If it means that teenagers will stop killing each other over designer jackets," schools should be able to adopt uniforms voluntarily.

He's buoyed by examples such as schools in Long Beach, Calif., where fights dropped 51% within a year after uniforms were required.

The manual urges schools to engage parents and educators in the decision and advises that policies:

▶ Should accommodate items worn as part of religious

expression.

▶ Shouldn't prohibit expression, such as political buttons.

▶ Should consider an "opt-out" provision for parents.

"It obviously won't solve all the problems," says Michael Casserly, executive director of the Council of the Great City Schools. "But it's a step in the right direction."

USA Today  
2/27/96

## OPINION USA

# School uniforms: A way to put content over style

Students in school districts adopting such policies have shown improved behavior, better test scores and higher self-esteem.

Anyone considering the wisdom of President Clinton's push for mandatory school uniforms need look no further than Anderson, S.C., where a 13-year-old boy's insistence on wearing a Confederate-flag jacket has resulted in his suspension from school, a federal lawsuit and a colossal waste of taxpayer time and money.



**Commentary**  
By Kathleen Parker

The youth, seventh grader James Kinley, has been suspended twice in recent weeks for declining to doff his prized jacket. Sadly for those concerned about America's increasingly defiant youth, Kinley has the unwavering support of his parents.

In the cloying civil liberties-speak of his stepfather, Jim Phillips, "His rights have been violated. He's going to wear (the jacket) back until a court says he can't."

At issue is whether the school can dictate student attire. In most districts, schools may prohibit clothing considered to be "inflammatory," the definition of which seems to be up for grabs.

Clinton — both in his State of the Union address and last week while campaigning in California — cited instances in which children have been shot for their designer shoes and jackets.

The president has asked the Department of Education to distribute a manual to public schools on how to make a school uniform mandatory.

In South Carolina, where the Confederate flag flies over the statehouse and in the face

of the state's African-American population, the school-clothing issue is more political than fashionable. Legislators and citizens have been arguing for years about whether the rebel flag is a symbol of history or of racism, with opinions pretty clearly divided along racial lines.

Thus, to say the rebel flag is inflammatory in South Carolina is like saying the sun is a tad warm.

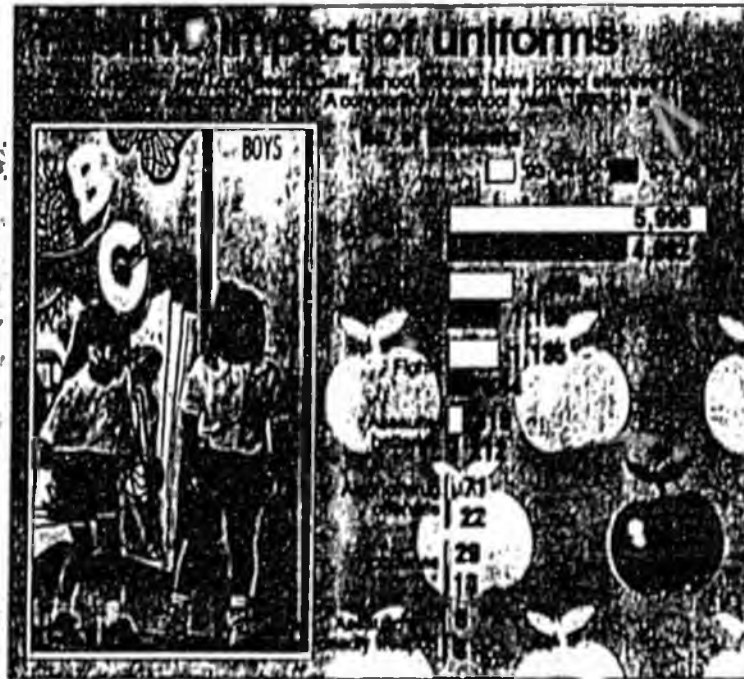
Meanwhile, it's tough to tell a kid he can't wear a jacket bearing one of his state's symbols when his own governor defends its place over the Capitol.

School uniforms at the very least would preclude Kinley-style conflicts. But we needn't rest our expectations there. As more and more schools adopt uniform policies — from Philadelphia to Seattle — educators are reporting improved behavior, better test scores, less absenteeism and higher self-esteem among students.

The prototype for uniform policies grew out of the Long Beach (Calif.) Unified School District, which in 1991 was the first school district in the nation to require uniforms in elementary and middle schools. In the academic year since, the number of fights is down by half, and suspensions have decreased 33%.

Similarly, schools are reporting fewer incidents of assault, sex offenses, robbery, drug use and vandalism, often by as much as 50% to 80%.

At the same time, academic performance



Source: Long Beach, Calif., Unified School District

is up. Test scores were so improved at one Long Beach school, Newcomb Academy, that parents camped out to get their kids on the admission list.

Not everyone loves the idea of school uniforms, of course.

Critics include the American Civil Liberties Union, which wants to protect kids' civil

liberties, though apparently only selectively. While defending the right of children to express themselves fashionably, the ACLU manages to ignore the civil rights of kids who are assaulted and sometimes killed for their duds or because they inadvertently wore gang-associated colors.

Some teens also protest, which is hardly

worth mentioning, given that teens generally protest any adult provision. More interesting are those kids who welcome uniforms as relief from pressure to keep up with expensive styles and from the contempt they feel from their better-dressed peers.

In Charleston County, S.C., where nearly half the public schools have adopted voluntary uniform policies, educators praise the leveling, egalitarian effect of uniforms. When everyone looks the same, they say, children feel better about themselves. They take pride in their studies, viewing school as a place of work rather than just somewhere to hang out with friends.

Most spurious are arguments that uniforms are racist, singling out the gang clothing born of black urban cultures. Suffice to say, not all cultural spawnings are worth preserving. Gangs and their trappings would be among these, as would certain inflammatory symbols, maybe even the Confederate flag.

Yes, the flag's a historical symbol for many. But given its association with slavery — not to mention the "Hell no, I ain't fergittin'" bumper-sticker crowd — one could argue that the flag doesn't make every single South Carolinian's chest swell with pride. Sometimes you let things go just to keep the peace.

In that spirit, perhaps it's also time to let go of the idea that a child's "right" to express himself is more compelling than another child's right to an education in a safe environment.

In school, if nowhere else, content should prevail over style.

Kathleen Parker, whose forebears fought on both sides of the Civil War, lives in Columbia, S.C., and writes a weekly syndicated column for Tribune Media Services.

story

# School

# Uniforms

Long Beach's  
Pioneering  
Experience  
Finds Safety  
and Economic  
Benefits

BY CARLA COHN

Superintendent, Long Beach Unified School District, Long Beach, California

Two years ago, when our school system set out to become the first in the nation to require uniforms in all elementary and middle schools, much of the public school educational establishment reacted skeptically. We were told that permissive parents, civil liberties interest groups, timid legislators, and a biased news media would not let it happen.

Now that we have had 1 1/2 years of implementation with 99 percent compliance and a substantial decrease in school crime, the same establishment is asking: How did you do it?

## Board Leadership

In fall 1993, Proposition 174, a statewide voucher initiative that would have provided public funds for private and religious schools, was defeated by the voters amidst a rancorous debate about dissatisfaction with the public schools. Our school board members participated in those debates and promised the voting public that, if they defeated the measure, it would not be business as usual in the public schools.

Voucher proponents criticized large public school systems in various ways, including this faint praise and condemnation: "Even when some in-

UNTUCKED SHIRT  
Legal

BAGGY JEANS  
Legal

DARK SHOES/BOOTS  
Legal

*This high school senior would be in compliance with a dress code adopted by the Stamford, Conn., school board last fall, with the possible exception of his baseball cap, which teachers have the discretion to allow or ban. Also illegal under the new dress code are oversized metal belt buckles, multi-finger rings, and hoop earrings. The code applies to Stamford's 1200 high schools. Photo by Angel Franco. The New York Times*

dividual schools get better, the leadership doesn't have the courage to bring the reforms to the whole system."

This rang particularly true in our district because we had a highly successful pilot uniform program involving 11 of our 70 elementary and middle schools. Administrators in these schools were reporting significant improvements to school climate.

Board member Ed Eveland, a retired school administrator, took that challenge and commitment seriously. Three months after the defeat of the voucher initiative, Eveland's proposal for mandatory uniforms for all elementary and middle schools was unanimously passed by the board with a target starting date of September 1994. Individual schools were given the authority to meet with parents, teachers, and administrators to determine their own choice of uniform, incentives, compliance measures (within approved parameters), and means for providing financial assistance to indigent families.

Throughout our experience with mandatory school uniforms, the board has remained unanimous in pursuing full implementation of a policy that promises an improved learning environment and safety benefits for students. The policy also means substantially reduced clothing costs for parents.

### Promoting Safety

Last year, the Public Agenda Foundation in its survey report, "First Things First: What Americans Expect from the Public Schools," revealed that parents and community members want public schools that are "safe, orderly, and emphasizing the basics." The report suggested that a public school without a primary emphasis on student safety is fraudulent in seeking any other improvements no matter how lofty or noble their purpose may be.

At uniformed schools in Long Beach, we're making student safety a top priority. Gang clothing is virtually nonexistent. Our uniforms thus provide a safe passage for children who must negotiate their way through gang territories going to and from school. Our students clad in uniforms need not worry about gang colors and styles. They don't have to focus undue

attention upon making sure they or their parents select clothing colors or items that avoid inadvertently advertising one's self as a gang member. Uniforms go a long way toward providing a neutral coat of arms for children whose clothing might otherwise make them targets.

changing gang styles and colors. Monitoring uniform compliance in our elementary and middle schools has been more effective than trying to enforce anti-gang codes.

More importantly, our first-year results in reducing on-campus school crime following implementation of



*Long Beach Superintendent Carl Cohn meets with students at Newcomb Academy, now in its third year with mandatory uniforms. The K-8 school is so popular that 300 parents camped out overnight to get their children enrolled once it mandated a dress code. Photo by Ed Kniss/Long Beach, Calif., Unified Public Schools*

Our uniforms also allow easy and immediate identification of outsiders who do not belong on campus. Every administrator of a large school knows the potential for problems of disruption and violence when outsiders, including gang members, gain access to a school campus without a process of ready identification.

Some parents and members of the news media have asked why we didn't just stick with the vigorous enforcement of a dress code as opposed to mandating uniforms. The truth is that we have had a dress code in the Long Beach schools for three decades and in recent years had amended it to exclude clothing and articles favored by gangs.

However, as most school administrators know, gang colors and items of apparel change constantly. Successive bans against one item or color after another is like trying to hit a moving target. Uniforms eliminate the need for serial proscriptions of constantly

mandatory uniforms are impressive. Occurrences of fighting, assaults, robbery, vandalism, and weapons possession have dropped sharply from the previous year without uniforms. Overall, we experienced 36 percent fewer crime incidents districtwide in our K-8 schools.

In addition, suspensions of students at our elementary and middle schools dropped significantly. Interestingly, this also was true at our high schools, which recorded 9 percent fewer suspensions last year.

As a school system, we were not anticipating such dramatic first-year gains and we'll be working this year with our researchers to ferret out whether other initiatives or interventions contributed to such impressive results. Suffice it to say that we are both surprised and delighted by these developments.

### Learning Climate

In the past two years, our Public Infor-

mation Office has received thousands of inquiries from parents and school systems around the country asking whether school uniforms benefit only communities where gang warfare already is pervasive and out of control. Our answer is that all parts of our school system, suburban and urban, have realized substantial learning environment benefits as a result of mandatory uniform implementation. Some of our more suburban schools



*Carole Quan, deputy superintendent of Oakland, Calif., Unified Public Schools, helped implement the district's mandatory uniform policy for students in kindergarten through eighth grade last fall. Photo by N.Z. Carol/Oakland Unified Public Schools*

were pioneers in mandating uniforms precisely because they did not want urban gang influences spreading to their schools. Both minority and majority parents supported these initiatives as measures that would improve the overall learning for students, even if their children lived in relatively safe, crime-free neighborhoods.

Our teachers and parents believe that uniforms help foster a professional mindset for students. Children in uniform come to school with the attitude they are coming to school to work. School is then seen as a workplace for teaching and learning. It is

not seen as a battleground, a playground, or a fashion stage. Uniforms reinforce the expectation that school is, as it should be, a workplace for learning.

Many of our schools are reporting that they have enjoyed a noticeable decline in tardies, cut classes, referrals for discipline, and suspensions. This tangible benefit to the learning environment has created widespread enthusiasm for the uniform policy among large numbers of Long Beach parents, teachers, administrators, and business partners.

### Easy Affordability

In Long Beach, most schools opt for a uniform that consists of a white shirt, blouse or polo shirt with collar worn with navy pants, skirt, or shorts. All schools have tried to adopt uniform arrangements that respect the socioeconomic diversity of our students. In our system of 81,000 students, a little more than a third qualify for Aid to Families with Dependent Children, while two-thirds are eligible for free or reduced price lunches.

We have found that the average clothing cost per child in schools with a student uniform is markedly less than that in schools without a uniform program, reducing clothing costs for parents. Typical uniforms in our area will cost \$70-90 per year for a set of three. As most parents know, this amount is far less than many students spend for one item of designer clothing.

Uniforms can be obtained at local thrift stores, department stores, or uniform suppliers where families can shop for the best values. Our parents tell us that an initial modest outlay for a uniform purchase is more than offset by future savings.

The board of education has made it clear that no youngster should be penalized for failing to wear a uniform because of financial hardship. All schools are required to develop procedures and criteria to identify families in need of financial assistance.

In addition, each school designates a staff member or volunteer to help those families in need of assistance. Finally, each school works with staff members, the local school community, and business partners to identify resources for assisting families.

At the district level, the Long Beach Education Foundation and the Assistance League's Operation School Bell have raised more than \$100,000 to support uniforms for poor kids this past school year. Hundreds of other local charities and individuals have come forward to offer their support to indigent families in our school community.

### Compliance Challenges

Any school system planning to sail against the wind in setting higher dress behavior, and academic standards needs to be prepared to defend itself vigorously. The forces committed to mediocrity and the status quo are, at times, legion.

During our two-year experience with mandatory uniforms, we have had two legal challenges that, as of the end of 1995, we have successfully countered.

The first came about two years ago in federal court when a group of parents who were lawyers sought a temporary restraining order arguing that no public school system could implement a mandatory uniform policy. In denying the plaintiffs' petition, Judge Manuel L. Real of the Central District of California indicated that he could find "no irreparable injury" in the action of our board of education.

Our second and most recent legal challenge has come from a group of attorneys at the Legal Aid Foundation of Long Beach. They claim to fully support our mandatory uniform policy, but they argue we are denying poor children its benefits by refusing to make the program an entitlement one. They claim that poor families are going without food, utilities, and rental payments in order to purchase "expensive" uniforms. Their complaint demands that we provide six full sets of uniforms free to every youngster who qualifies for free or reduced price lunch.

We have no intention of complying with such an absurd request. Our community believes that poor people still have respect, dignity, and individual initiative. The last thing they need is one more government entitlement designed to foster greater dependency. Attorney Catherine B. Hagen of O'Melveny and Myers, a prominent Southern California law firm

## Some Basic Ingredients for a Mandatory Uniform Policy

If you are considering adopting a mandatory school uniform policy, you should consider whether the following five critical conditions are present in your community before going forward:

- **A stable school board**

Major policy changes that directly affect all students and parents cannot be considered when a school board is unstable or dysfunctional. Our board maintained its unanimity throughout this process, even though one school board member was elected to the city council and was replaced by a newcomer, who has shown nothing but enthusiasm for the uniform policy.

- **Supportive parents and community**

Early on in our discussions about requiring uniforms, the *Long Beach Press-Telegram* conducted a survey showing that 80 percent of parents and community members favored the idea of public school uniforms. Throughout the process parents of all races and socioeconomic levels have been very supportive, contrary to the conventional wisdom that urban school parents do not support higher dress standards.

- **Resources to defend the policy**

Too often school systems adopt a "controversial" policy without sufficient attention to the allocation of resources to defend the initiative. Nothing is worse than staving down a path to higher standards for students and then abandoning the cause at the first sign of trouble, such as a legal challenge.

- **Capable site administrators**

Although some would see this as a given, the success of any systemwide initiative depends on the ability of principals to successfully tackle a new challenge. If principals signal anything less than enthusiasm for a school uniform initiative, you will not get a high rate of compliance.

- **Community philanthropic resources**

Throughout the years, local philanthropic and service organizations have come forward to make sure that poor kids in our district have the basic necessities for school. Uniforms in Long Beach and other communities are serving as a positive vehicle for garnering additional community support for poor students.

—Carl Cohen



Students from Franklin Year Round School in Oakland, Calif., show off their uniforms. Photo courtesy of Oakland Unified Public Schools

community group or service club, the first question from the audience is always about when, not if, we will bring mandatory uniforms to our high schools. And if the audience includes some of our genuine old-timers, they will point out that Long Beach high school students actually wore uniforms in the 1930s and '40s, confirming the notion there really is little that is new in education today.

As we look to the future, we are determined to bring the safety, learning environment, and economic benefits of mandatory school uniforms to our high school students, even though

implementation will require even greater courage than we've shown so far.

One of our high school parent support groups actually is supporting implementation of a pilot uniform program at their high school for the 1996-97 school year. In the meantime, we'll be sending high school students, teachers and parents to visit high schools in San Francisco and Orange County, Calif., which are pioneering school uniforms this year.

As I look back on the past two years of this extraordinary adventure, I'm thankful to a courageous school board, incredibly supportive parents, hard-working teachers and administrators, a giving community of volunteers, and 57,000 elementary and middle school students who wear their uniforms with pride every day.

once headed by Secretary of State Warren Christopher, has agreed to represent our school system pro bono in this matter.

Another challenge that we've had to face comes from those parents who have decided to opt their child out of the uniform policy. The uniform legislation bill, which Governor Pete Wilson signed in August 1994, included a provision that required school districts to provide "a method whereby parents may choose not to have their

children comply with an adopted school uniform policy."

While our school district would have preferred a bill without that provision, we've been able to maintain an extraordinarily high level of compliance at all schools for a year and a half. School principals, parents, and classroom teachers deserve all the credit for sustaining this success over time.

### Future Prospects

Whenever I give a speech before a

## Fashioning a New School Policy

**Gangs Assaults** Continuing violence. Public schools have been in the center of this escalating maelstrom over the past few years.

Some educators looking for remedies have fastened on the notion of requiring students to wear school uniforms.

In response, several states—California, Delaware, North Carolina, Utah and Virginia—have passed legislation that gives local school boards the option to require uniforms. The laws also specify that constitutional protections and needs of the

poor be met. The California law links uniforms to school safety plans and provides for at least six months' notice to parents. The Utah law gives parents 30 days to disapprove a dress code.

Although the move is controversial, educators argue that uniforms help eliminate fights over certain kinds of clothes, especially those that are gang-related, and reduce distractions caused by students who wear things that are expensive, trendy or suggestive.

Do the policies work? They did in Long Beach, Calif. Since the student uniform policy was adopted for elementary and middle schools in 1994, there has been a 32 percent decrease in student suspensions, an 18 percent decrease in vandalism and fights are down by 51 percent.

"Look at the numbers, look at the reduction of crime," says Long Beach Principal Shawn Ashley, who now wears a uniform himself.

The Long Beach policy is being challenged in court, however, by 26 low-income parents who argue that since they cannot afford uniforms, the rule does not provide equal access to education by the poor. There is some money available to help needy students, but the group contends that it is not enough.

Phoenix, Ariz. schools also faced a court challenge on uniforms, and won. Maricopa County Superior Court Judge Michael D. Jones ruled in November 1995 that a middle school uniform rule did not violate the First Amendment freedom of choice and expression—even though the policy did not give students the option of not wearing a uniform. Jones ruled the school district decision reasonable because it adopted the policy to help eliminate gang-related clothing and put students of different socioeconomic levels on even ground.

State Legislatures  
Feb. 1996

# EDUCATION WEEK

American Education's Newspaper of Record

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ADDRESS THE NATION

## 'Dressing For Success'

### Calif. District Touts Uniforms for Putting Focus on Learning

By Jessica Fortner  
Long Beach, Calif.

Lucia Moore has been feeling especially proud lately.

And she has President Clinton to thank. In his State of the Union Address last month, Mr. Clinton praised student uniforms as a way to promote safety and discipline in public schools. Ms. Moore, the principal of Will Rogers Middle School here, felt a particular resonance in the endorsement.

"Everybody is looking for answers, and here in a district that is doing something that is working," she said. For more than a year, the 83,000-student Long Beach system has required its elementary and middle school students to dress in uniform fashion. It was the first public school district in the nation to do so.

Mr. Clinton may have had the Southern California school system in mind when, in his speech, he challenged public schools to mandate uniforms "if it meant that teenagers [would] stop killing each other over designer jackets."

Dramatic Results

Since the mandatory-uniform policy was launched on 36 elementary and 14 middle schools here in fall 1994, violence and discipline problems have decreased dramatically, a recent survey by the district shows.

From the year before uniforms were required, 1993-94, to last year, assaults and battery cases in grades K-6 have dropped 34 percent. Physical fights between students have dropped by 51 percent, and there were 32 percent fewer suspensions.

Though each school in the district can choose its own uniforms, most Long Beach students are required to wear black or blue pants, shirts, or skirts with white shirts. Nearly 60,000 K-6 students are affected by the policy.

Parents have the option of removing their children from the requirement. But, so far, only 500 parents have filed out petitions to

Continued on Page 17



The 83,000-student Long Beach, Calif., school district has required that students in its 50 elementary and 14 middle schools dress in uniform fashion since the fall of 1994. Educators in the district credit the dress code for reducing fights, increasing academic achievement, and discouraging gang members from harassing students. But some students aren't as high on the idea as their parents and teachers. "It's totally bogus," one student says.

## Summit Seeks New Focus on School Reform

### Standards, Technology Top Governors' Agenda

By Lonnie May  
Washington

The nation's governors and top corporate executives will trumpet standards and technology as medicine for what ails the nation's schools when they gather next month in New York state for an education summit.

Details of the summit began to emerge last week at the National Governors' Association's winter meeting here.

Led by Gov. Tommy G. Thompson of Wisconsin and Louis V. Gerstner Jr., the chairman and chief executive officer of IBM, summit organizers said that as of last week 27 of the governors already had pledged to attend. The March 26-27 event likely will be the most high-powered discussion of state education policy since 1989, when the 50 state governors met with President Bush and agreed to set national education goals.

But unlike at that meeting in Charlottesville, Va., state leaders will not be focused on a comprehensive list of reform targets. Next month's meeting will be a

Continued on Page 17

## State and Local Budget Writers Brace for Worst

By Robert C. Johnston and Drew Lindsay  
Washington

Uncertainty over federal funding is leading many local and state officials to use worst-case scenarios to plan next year's school budgets, anticipating at least a 17 percent cut in federal aid.

The bleak forecasts are fueling talk of pink slips and program cuts, especially in many urban and poor rural school systems where federal money pays for nearly 30 percent of school budgets. On the average, money from Washington makes up about 6 percent of school spending.

"Funding money comes school districts to function with tunnel vision," David L. Reed, the superintendent of the Detroit schools, said at a recent news briefing on

Continued on Page 17

**VETO POWER:** President Clinton pledges to veto a new budget bill if it doesn't boost education spending. Washington, Page 18

INSIDE

### A Legal First

In a first of its kind ruling, a federal judge finds that Clinton has failed to provide special services to all the state's eligible infants and toddlers with disabilities.

Across the Nation, Page 8

### An Early Warning

Georgia's state schools shut back off a stream to map state-funded pre-K programs from using materials published by a well-known early-childhood group.

State Capitals, Page 14

### Research-Center Grants Awarded

The U.S. Department of Education awards a total of \$107 million over five years to seven new national education-research centers.

Washington, Page 20

### Telling Tales Out of School

Legislators nationwide are hearing horror stories of how educators are curbing parents' rights. But what do these tales really signify?

On Assignment, Page 26

# Uniforms Get Credit for Decrease in Discipline Problems

Continued from Page 1

except their children, according to Dick Van DerLaan, a spokesman for the district.

In addition to Long Beach, a few other districts in California and across the country are testing the benefits of requiring students to come to school in color-specific, and sometimes style-specific, clothing.

The Oakland, Calif., schools began a similar uniform policy last September. And a small number of other districts—including Dade County, Fla.; Seattle, and Charleston, S.C.—allow schools to decide for themselves whether to require uniforms. (See *Education Week*, March 15, 1993.)

But Long Beach appears to be the first school system to have documented measurable success in improving student behavior.

Since students at Rogers Middle School started wearing black bottoms, white tops, and red jackets or sweaters, fights have declined by 40 percent, and academic performance has improved, school officials said.

Uniforms are an effective method of reducing unwanted behavior, she said, because the more formal clothing puts students in the right mind-set to learn.

"It's about dressing for success," said Ms. Moore, who said she wears the school uniform as a gesture of solidarity with her students. She has a selection of bright red blouses in her home closet.

Not one parent at Rogers Middle School has opted out of the plan this year, and a quick look around campus at the unbroken streams of red, white, and black shows that students are largely compliant. But there are some exceptions.

Last week, as Ms. Moore darted down the hall between classes, the former basketball coach was scolding the crowd.

"Tuck in that shirt," she called out to one disheveled teenager who was slouching against a locker. She looked disapprovingly at another whose sweatshirt was clearly purple, not red.

In addition to choosing uniform colors, each of the district's schools is allowed to choose the fabric and style of dress. One elementary school requires its people to wear ties, and a few others prefer plaid, but most stick with blue or black and white.

"This isn't a private, prep school, with a coat-of-arms and saddle shoe look," Mr. Van DerLaan said. "It's a little more California casual."

### Generation Gap

A catalyst for adopting uniforms in Long Beach was parents' fears over students being attacked for inadvertently wearing a wrong color scarf or hat that might provoke rivalry among local gangs.

The district adopted a dress code more than a decade ago that prohibits gang-related attire, as well as caps, bandanas, baggy pants, and excessive jewelry. But many felt the district had to take a more drastic approach.

When Judy Jacobs had two children attending Rogers Middle



School, she was among the organizers of the effort to bring uniforms to that school. She now has a child in a district elementary school and has remained enthusiastic about uniforms. "There are so few boundaries for kids these days, with the drug use and violence, so if we can give them some limits, that's good," she said.

The uniformity tends to bolster safety because it makes it easier to spot people who may not belong on campus, school leaders say.

Many who teach in areas where gangs are prevalent argue that students are safer walking to school when dressed in uniform.

"If gang members see one of our students in uniform, they'll leave them alone," as if they belong to a different clique, said Wilma Ferguson, who has been a gym teacher at Franklin Middle School here for 14 years.

But a large portion of the district's students aren't as upbeat as parents and teachers appear to be. And the older they get, the less they seem to like it—which may not bode well for talk in the district of extending the uniform requirement to high schools.

"It's like we're all in jail," said Hector Gonzalez, a 7th grader at Rogers.

"It's totally bogus," said Gan Luong, an 8th grader at Franklin. "If you wear decent clothes, you shouldn't have to wear uniforms."

Alicia Nunez, also an 8th grader at Franklin, complained that the regimented attire stifles her creativity. "You come to school to get your education, not for them to tell you how to dress," the 14-year-old said as she strolled across campus wearing a chameleon-colored T-shirt and jeans.

### Legal Challenge

The U.S. Supreme Court hasn't directly addressed the question of

## The Dressing Rules

The Long Beach, Calif., school district has had a dress code for more than a decade, but in 1994 it became the first in the nation to adopt a distinctive K-8 uniform policy. Though the uniforms can vary, most schools have adopted a version of the one pictured here on Franklin Middle School student Simon Gomez, 13, far right. His classmate, Doris Sander, 13, is not in uniform but is following the district's K-12 dress code, detailed below:

- Students must be clean.
- No oversized or sagging clothing.
- No open-toed shoes or sandals.
- No jewelry that could cause injury.
- No lipsticks or papers.
- No gang-related clothing.
- No hats, unless part of a school uniform or medically required.
- No sunglasses in class unless medically required.
- No bandanas, caps, gloves, or gang-related decorative items.
- No visible gang-related tattoos.

SOURCE: Long Beach, Calif., School District



White shirt, brown, or tan shirt, buttoned and tucked in.

Short or knee pants, skirt, or shorts.

whether public schools can impose dress requirements on their students. Lower courts, however, have generally upheld school dress codes.

Last fall, in one of the first legal tests of a mandatory-uniform policy, an Arizona state judge upheld a Phoenix middle school's policy even though it does not give students the right to opt out of the requirement.

Most public schools and districts offer a parent or guardian the opportunity to excuse a child from wearing a uniform. And most do not exempt harsh criticism of students who are supposed to wear uniforms but don't.

"Students generally feel they need to exercise latitude when they put

their feet down," said Gary Marx, a spokesman for the American Association of School Administrators in Arlington, Va.

The American Civil Liberties Union of Southern California, on behalf of a group of low-income families, filed a lawsuit in state court last October against the Long Beach Unified School District, claiming that the district's uniform policy is a financial burden on poor families. The ACLU also claimed that the district has violated state law by neglecting to adequately inform parents about their right to exempt their children from the program.

The law signed in 1994 by California Gov. Pete Wilson to allow public schools to require stu-

dents also says that parents must have a way to opt out of such requirements.

The ACLU lawyers say many parents can't afford the cost of school uniforms. About 66 percent of the district's elementary and middle school students qualify for free or reduced-price lunches. The case is currently in mediation.

Hope Cavazos, who dresses three of her five children in uniforms, said she had to ask other family members to help pay for them. "I shop thrift and buy on sale, and you can't do that with uniforms," she said.

### Other Strategies

But district officials say that parents can buy the essential



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Since the Long Beach school system adopted its mandatory uniform policy in 1994, it has recorded a significant drop in behavior problems and a marked rise in academic achievement. Top left and top right, students at Roosevelt Elementary School wear their assigned outfits during their physical-education class. Under the policy, each school can choose its own colors and style of dress. Above, Stephanie Harrison, and Jennifer Corral wear different versions of Franklin Middle School's approved T-shirt.

items—a white shirt and a pair of pants—for \$25 from several area stores. In addition, many schools sell sweatshirts or shorts for \$6 each. Many local charities also provide free uniforms, backpacks, and shoes to needy students. And if parents find the costs too burdensome, Mr. Van DerLaan, the district spokesman, said, they can always opt out. A flyer explaining the right way to provide such items takes any uniform policies become effective, he said. Despite their commitment to the school-uniform policy, Long Beach officials don't view it as a panacea for discipline problems. Other efforts, such as stepped-up parent involvement and additional

have contributed to the more peaceful climate on campuses, school leaders here say. The district is continuing to evaluate the benefits of uniforms to determine whether last year's improved numbers for behavior were more than a fling in the wind. And while some Long Beach students complain that the regulations drive up overconsumption and dampen their personal style, many also see a positive side. "The good thing is people judge you on your other characteristics rather than what you wear," said Nick Duran, an 8th grader and the student-body president at Rogers Middle School. Plus, he said, it's easier to choose what to put on if

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# Suit Challenging Long Beach Uniform Policy Dropped

By Jessica Portner

The American Civil Liberties Union of Southern California last week agreed to drop its lawsuit against a California school district after the district pledged to improve the way its mandatory school-uniform program was being implemented.

For more than a year, the 83,000-student Long Beach district has required all its elementary and middle school students to dress in uniform fashion. It was the first public school system in the nation to institute a districtwide uniform policy. (See *Education Week*, Feb. 14, 1996.)

Under district policy, parents can get exemptions from the uniform requirement for their children.

## Informing Parents

But soon after the policy was put into place in fall 1994, the ACLU filed a lawsuit in state court on behalf of 26 low-income families, claiming that the policy neglected to adequately inform parents about their right to opt out of the program. ACLU lawyers also said the plan posed a financial burden on poor families who could not afford to buy uniforms for their children.

Under the agreement, the district pledged to distribute addi-

tional mailings to parents about the uniform policy as well as provide information about local charities that donate uniforms to students. District officials said charities have donated more than \$180,000 worth of uniforms to district students since the program began.

District leaders also agreed to designate an official to be an ombudsman between the school system and parents, as well as install liaisons at elementary and middle schools who can assist parents with problems and questions about the uniform code.

Both parties seemed pleased last week that they were able

to settle their differences out of court.

"We are thrilled that this has worked out, because parents will now know their rights and have help," said Ann Bradley, the media director of the ACLU of Southern California.

Dick Van Der Laan, the district's spokesman, said the decision was fair to all concerned. He said he was relieved that the plaintiff dropped their initial request to require the district to provide uniforms to each low-income student who requested them.

"That would have been a pretty substantial price tag," Mr. Van Der Laan said.

# Reno lauds school uniform policy

Associated Press

LONG BEACH - Attorney General Janet Reno brought White House encouragement Wednesday to the first U.S. public school district in modern times to make its students wear uniforms.

Reno and local officials cited a sharp drop in schoolyard fighting and crime, but some low-income parents have complained the uniform policy isn't uniform enough.

"You set a wonderful example for this country," Reno told students at Will Rogers Middle School. She promised to tell President Clinton what the school had accomplished.

"He is so proud of what you've done," she said.

The Long Beach Unified School District in 1994 began a mandatory uniform policy for its nearly 60,000 students in 36 elementary and 14 middle schools.

Fighting dropped by more than half last year from the year before, according to district figures. Suspension went down 32 percent, while crime and fighting generally were down 36 percent.

"I am convinced that uniforms can make a big difference," Reno said.

"It's a diverse nation," she told students. "But I think you're going to be seeing uniforms in more and more schools across the country."

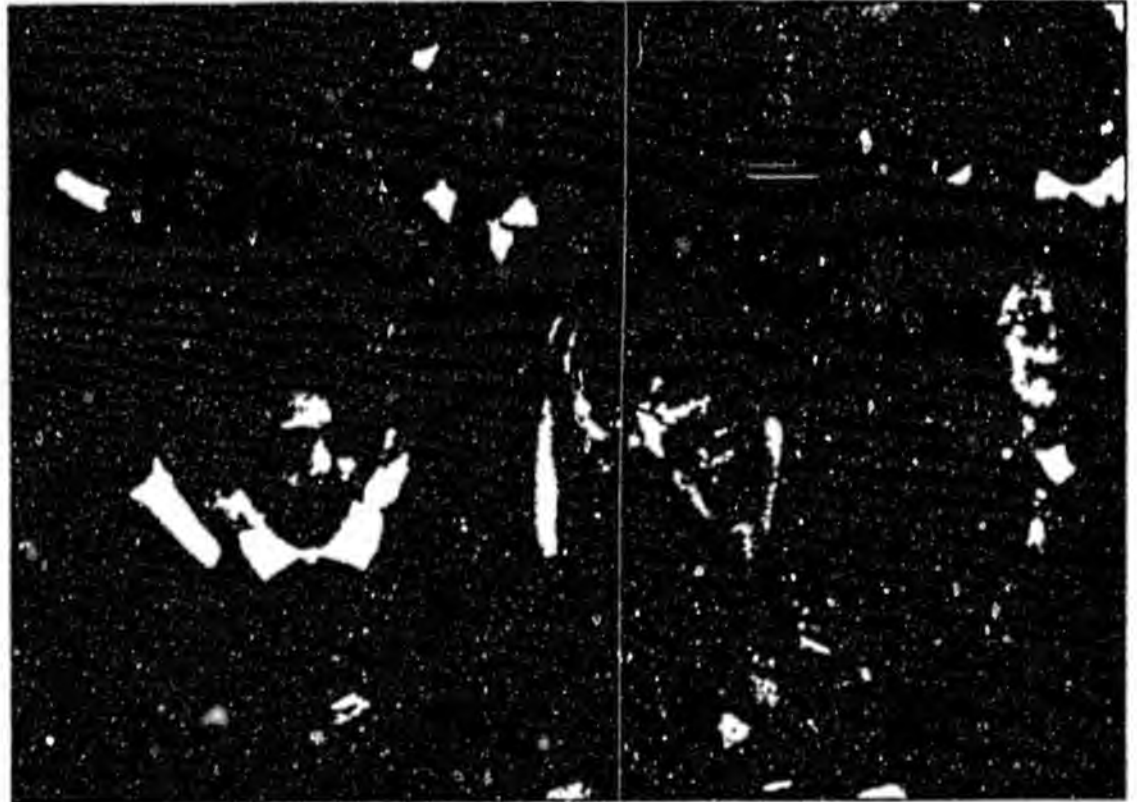
The uniform issue is one topic where the White House can find common cause with conservative Christian and other organizations pushing for school changes that include mandatory prayer and a sex education ban.

A dozen children who took part in Wednesday's program told Reno they liked their uniforms.

"I feel like I'm going to work, not hanging out with my friends," said one youngster who stepped up to the microphone.

"Do you have to wear a uniform at work?" asked student Laura Perry.

"I think I would enjoy it," the at-



Attorney General Janet Reno applauds the comments of a student during a visit Wednesday to

a Long Beach middle school, where she praised the district's mandatory uniform policy.

Associated Press

tomey general replied, explaining that she wouldn't have to worry every morning about what to wear.

Children out on the playground were just as candid.

Gang symbols, particularly Rader football logos, were popular before last year, said Michael Rausch, 12. "At lunch there's no more fights," he said.

Not all the students were so positive.

"I feel that uniforms are kinda stupid, 'cause the school shouldn't make us wear what we don't want to," said Danielle Bent, 14.

Others have objected to the policy, too.

About 50 parents and students sued the district Sept. 12, claim-

ing students who couldn't afford uniforms were being harassed by teachers and administrators.

"The policy is not standard throughout the schools in the district," said Ann Bradley, a American Civil Liberties Union spokeswoman.

The district needs to make it clear to parents that they don't have to buy uniforms if they can't afford them, she said, and children who can't must be left alone.

"A lot of these kids - little kids - have been harassed by teachers who pull them out of lunch lines or stop them in the halls," Bradley said. "There come we're not sitting down at the table and finding a way to solve this problem? We didn't want to file this suit."

The ACLU and Long Beach Legal Aid were handling the plaintiffs' case.

"We don't disagree that the policy is fantastic," Bradley said. "We're saying we have to rectify this problem."

"We have numerous other ways to provide uniforms for students," countered Linda Moore, principal at Rogers. Those include the Parent Teacher Organization, a special foundation and private donors, she said.

"No student goes without one," Moore said.

"Moms tell us they can buy three uniforms for the price of one pair of designer jeans (costing \$50 to \$60)," said district spokesman Richard Van Der Laan.

# In Mass., uniforms an option

By Karen Avenoso  
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

Blazers, jumpers and kilts are already common under voluntary uniform programs in some Massachusetts public schools.

More than a quarter of Boston's 81 public elementary schools, and dozens of schools statewide, offer students a uniform option. But uniforms are not mandatory, as in the Long Beach experiment.

In Boston, 24 public schools - all but one at the elementary level - plan to adopt or have adopted an optional-uniforms policy, according to School Department officials. The 1993 Education Reform Act gives individual school councils the right to recommend allowing uniforms.

Bay State school officials said they have avoided legal problems by wording their policies carefully and always making uniforms voluntary.

Boston schools that have a uniform policy include the Trinity Middle School in Roxbury, the Paul A. Dever School in Dorchester and the Agassiz Elementary School in Jamaica Plain. At the Agassiz, Hispanic parents, familiar with uniforms from their native countries, lobbied for them three years ago, principal Alfredo Nunez said.

"They felt it gave students a sense of pride in the school and would cut down on spending and disciplinary problems," Nunez said. He said he has seen some changes, but noted that only 100 of 900 students choose to wear uniforms.

Recently, the Holyoke School Committee passed a voluntary school uniform policy, school officials there said. And in May, the John F. Kennedy Elementary School in Randolph became one of the first suburban Boston schools to offer students a uniform option.

Boston Globe

Jan. 13, 1996



Kodiak Island Borough School District  
722 Mill Bay Road  
Kodiak, Alaska 99615  
Office of the Superintendent  
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April 19, 1996

Senator Lyda Green  
Alaska State Legislature  
State Capitol (MS 3100)  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Senator Green:

At a special meeting on Monday, April 15, 1996, the Kodiak Island Borough School District Board of Education unanimously approved the following resolutions:

- Resolution #956-02, *A Resolution in Support of HB 30 -- Dress Code for Public Schools*
- Resolution #956-03, *A Resolution in Support of CS HB 354 (STA) -- Retirement Incentive Program*

Thank you for your efforts and continued support on behalf of the children of Alaska.

Sincerely,

Bruce Johnson  
Superintendent of Schools

sjc

Enclosures: Resolution #956-02  
Resolution #956-03



**Kodiak Island Borough School District**

**Resolution #956-02**

**A RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT  
OF HB 30 -- DRESS CODE FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**WHEREAS**, the State of Alaska currently provides that students may be denied admission to school for behavior which is inimicable to the welfare, safety, or morals of other students; and

**WHEREAS**, the Kodiak Island Borough School District, Kodiak Police Department and Alaska State Troopers have determined that gang activity has increased on Kodiak Island; and

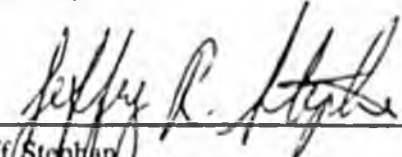
**WHEREAS**, the Kodiak Island Borough School District is currently under threat of a lawsuit from an attorney representing a Kodiak family alleging that the district's policy restricting student dress and disciplining students who are found to be in violation of the established dress code violates the State of Alaska Constitution guarantee of free expression; and

**WHEREAS**, parents and students associated with Kodiak High School and Kodiak Middle School have testified during public hearings that students dressed in gang colors/clothing have intimidated and threatened them; and

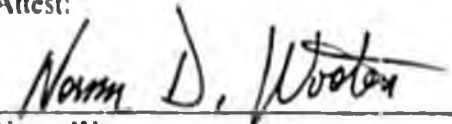
**WHEREAS**, the Kodiak Island Borough School District Board of Education on March 25, 1996, adopted a policy addressing student dress which forbids gang activity, gang presence, and indicia of gang presence or activity (including gang clothing);

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Kodiak Island Borough School District Board of Education supports the passage of HB 30, An Act relating to a dress code for public schools, establishing a school district's authority to restrict student dress if it is determined that such a restriction is necessary to ensure the health and safety of students or teachers of the district.

**ADOPTED BY THE KODIAK ISLAND BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF EDUCATION  
THIS FIFTEENTH DAY OF APRIL, 1996**

  
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Jeff Stephan  
President, Board of Education  
Kodiak Island Borough School District

Attest:

  
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Norm Wooten  
Clerk, Board of Education  
Kodiak Island Borough School District