

School Forum on Uniform Policy
Tuesday, January 30
6:00pm

- 1) Reminder of Meeting Norms (6:00-6:05)
- 2) Review Chancellor's Regulations on Uniform Policy (6:05-6:15) - Highlights
 - a) The uniform can be as simple as a color scheme and as complicated as a blazer with a logo (or anywhere in between).
 - b) Regs explain the process that we are in the middle of (we are on step 2: school forum)
 - c) PTA may collect funds from parents to facilitate the purchase of uniforms but school personnel should NOT collect funds for uniforms.
 - d) We can say as a school that we are a uniform school, but every parent has the right to be exempt from the uniform policy by having a meeting with the school and completing a form expressing their objectives to the uniform policy.
 - e) School would have to send out information about the uniform
 - f) Schools cannot discipline a child for NOT wearing uniforms, but there can be incentives for students / classes / etc that DO wear uniform.
 - g) There should be a staff person designated for families who have financial hardships and cannot afford uniforms. No child can be denied a uniform due to financial hardship.
- 3) Review Pros and Cons about Uniforms (6:15-6:25)
 - a) This list has been compiled based on parent feedback over the years.
 - b) Pros:
 - i) Uniform could create more effective learning environments
 - ii) Could foster school pride (like a team!)
 - iii) Makes school look good
 - iv) May improve student performance
 - v) Fosters self-esteem (kids don't have to worry about clothes fitting in)
 - vi) Eliminates label competition
 - vii) Simplifies dressing - no choice!
 - viii) Uniforms are cheaper
 - ix) Teaches children appropriate dress for professional environments
 - x) Improve conduct and discipline
 - c) Cons:
 - i) It can cause arguments between families and kids (over uniform)
 - ii) Might be fostering conformity over individuality
 - iii) A uniform policy can never be mandatory anyway
 - iv) Wastes instructional time on enforcement of uniform instead of focusing on academics
 - v) It hasn't been proven by any study that uniforms actually improve student performance
 - vi) Less ability for kids to express themselves

- vii) Don't disguise poverty or wealth
- viii) Complicates dressing - fights!
- ix) Uniforms add cost because you have to buy another set of clothes
- x) Removes choice and decision-making practice
- xi) It hasn't been proven that uniforms actually teach discipline or reduce bullying.

4) Comments from Students (6:25-6:35)

a) 3rd grade comments from class discussion and writing:

- i) "I don't like to wear uniforms because I don't feel like my own self like it feels like jail."
- ii) "The uniform is so big and uncomfortable."
- iii) "No uniforms because you don't have enough time to wash it or it might not feel comfortable."
- iv) "Uniforms are itchy. It will take a long time to put them on. Everyone will look the same."
- v) "Kids start complaining that uniforms are itchy, uncomfortable and dirty."
- vi) "Uniforms will give you less freedom."
- vii) "Some students like to have freedom and it's boring to see everyone wearing the same thing. And what if you don't finish washing the school uniform?"

b) Live student comments:

- i) "I do want a uniform because people may think it's itchy but it may not actually be itchy. I want to wear one like my big brother."
- ii) Delilah does NOT want uniforms. She is concerned about washing it. She also likes to pick out her own clothes. However, she DOES like special days where she has to wear the school shirt.
- iii) "If we have uniforms we have to wash them everyday and that might be hard."
- iv) "We should NOT wear uniforms because if you get a shirt you like, you want to be able to wear it to school."
- v) "Uniforms are a waste of money."
- vi) "I DO like uniforms because in the princess movie I saw they wore uniforms at the school."

c) Ms. Cordeau's class said NO because they did NOT like the idea of having to wear the SAME thing EVERY DAY.

5) Comments from School Staff (6:35-6:45)

- a) "I'm very against school uniforms. They promote conformity of individuality, and 516 really honors being creative, and picking what you want to wear is an expression of yourself. Also many little kids don't like certain fabrics [that uniforms are often made of] rubbing against their skin."
- b) "Neither my co-teacher or I have strong opinions about the uniforms, but our students seem to be very against it. My concern is that it would create a divide

between the kids wearing the uniform and the kids that aren't (since there will most likely be some kids that don't actually wear the uniform)."

- c) "I do not have a strong opinion either way. I do worry about the enforcement and if there will be a divide between families that feel strongly about following the policy and families that feel strongly about going AGAINST the policy. But I do believe it CAN be easier. Kids picking out clothes can take a VERY long time and cause lateness. I could also imagine we wouldn't have a very restrictive uniform policy, but one appropriate for little kids."
 - d) "I also don't have a strong opinion, but I have had parents that would send their kids in uniform, and then more kids wanted to wear it to have school pride and be a part of the community."
 - e) "Bullying and teasing around clothes is not a problem here at 516. There WAS a sense of unity when we all wore the school uniform shirts as a brand new school in a trailer. And I want to do what the community wants, but enforcement IS an issue, and we would have to have a very clear plan for implementation and enforcement if we want to adopt the uniform policy, because a policy is only good if it's bought into and followed."
 - f) "I'm more against uniforms but I am not completely against them. I'd be for a spirit day a few days a month. I don't like ironing uniforms. My youngest child is VERY small and even the smallest size of the uniform looks way too big. And she hates khaki pants. Brianna is very expressive and likes her things, and doesn't want to be told what to wear. I like the idea of spirit days and having special gear. I also get worried about how much time it will take every day if kids come without uniform."
- 6) Comments from Families (6:45-6:55)
- a) "It's a good presentation of the school. PS 24 adopted it this year and it looks good."
 - b) "I've been a parent since the beginning when there were uniforms. As a parent, we are responsible for following the guidelines of the school and send our children in uniform. When they started at 516 they still had uniforms, but in the last few years they stopped wearing them. Sometimes my kids want to wear uniforms but they are the only ones and they get teased. It's also so much easier to get to dressed in the morning with a uniform. Also, on school trips, it's much easier to find kids and keep kids together if they are all wearing the uniform."
 - c) "I received a welcome letter from the school at first with the school colors and uniforms, and my son wore it and I think others wanted to wear it when they saw him in it. Also, as a mom I would buy clothing that's comfortable."
 - d) "When parents found out that a uniform policy couldn't actually be enforced, some parents had the idea of having access to uniforms or school gear."
 - e) "I do think that school pride and spirit and community are important things, but I don't think you need a uniform to create a feeling of pride or community. In my experience at a middle and high school with a uniform, we spend SO much instructional time trying to enforce the uniform and it tiring and takes away from

learning. We have a dean whose whole job is enforcing uniforms. Every year we spend SO much money as a school replenishing our own stores of back-up uniforms to give to kids who come without it. We have a lot of gear with our school logo on it, that the kids really like, but they DON'T like the uniform and it's a fight every day. I am against uniforms."

- 7) Review next steps (6:55-7:00)
 - a) PTA Vote. Most likely end of March.

Winter Carnival on Saturday!!