

Public education system

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In the past few decades school has shifted its focus from education to fashion. Students are judged upon their shoes or jeans rather than their knowledge. Uniforms in the public education system is a great idea, not only is it cost effective, but also it gives the students a chance to concentrate on their studies and not have to worry about what to wear tomorrow. Plus the crime or violence rate drops in schools that have a uniform policy, and those that do not belong on campus are spotted quicker and easier.

Private schools have already adopted this idea as well as some schools in England and Australia. Early morning or late evening fights over what is allowed to be worn to school could come to an end if uniforms are issued in the public. The kids that come from lower class level backgrounds are the kids out there selling drugs and committing the crimes, but the money made goes to buy the latest designer jeans, just so that they are "cool" at school. A difference in the violence on school grounds has decreased in areas where school uniforms are mandatory.

Gang activity is not as high because the students can not show their colors or signs at school. Sgt. Joe Battle, a Long Beach, California juvenile officer states that, "uniforms take away the No. 1 reason that kids treat each other differently; how they look" (Ritter, 1A). Long Beach was the first public school in the nation to have mandatory school uniform policy. The crime rate there is down 76 percent, and assaults on school property is also down by 85 percent (Starr, 1). One of the reasons behind the sudden change in school policy has to do with the recent school shootings.

The most famous and talked about one was the Columbine High School. The two teens were able to bring in weapons to the school under trench coats. With uniforms this could have been prevented, because long coats are not to be worn in the school. Even the President of the United States is moving to the uniform policy. President Clinton has given speeches during his State of the Union address including that uniforms keep kids, " from killing each other over designer jackets" (Ritter, 1A). The way that the kids are dressed is more important than the grades they make.

The students are able to focus on the education rather than someone else's new clothes. Parents that were not too sure of the idea agree that there are more positives than negatives to wearing uniforms. The students are less distracted and can concentrate on the teacher. Students admit that having everyone wear the same thing is easier on them. No one worries about whether or not they wore something last week or that they don't have the name brand labels to flash around. Kids that can't afford the name brands are the ones with the lower test scores and poorer attendance.

The cost of uniforms in comparison to the latest fashion is ridiculous. For what it would cost to buy a major household appliance, two or three of the latest designer outfits can be bought. The students who don't have the money to buy all the newest clothes tend not to go to class as much because they feel they don't fit in. It used to be that the kids that wore the K-Mart or Wal-Mart brand of clothes were thought of as uncool. Uniforms don't only bring down the cost of clothes for the parents, but the school spirit is higher and the students feel a sense of unity.

The line between the poor and rich kids is brought down, the students can no longer tease on another because of their clothes as they are all dressed the same. Administrators can spot a person who does not belong on campus faster and easier if they don't have a school uniform on. Uniforms can be bought at almost any clothing store. Prices range from \$5-\$7 for shirts, \$10 for shorts and pants and \$7 for a jumper. Now compare that to \$30-\$80 for jeans and \$15-\$30 for a shirt. Majority of parents only buy two or three uniforms a school year

Students all dressed the same that is the whole idea. But there some negative aspects of this area. Psychologist Ruth Rubinstein at the Fashion Institute of New York argues that having students dress alike decreases their sense of expression or creativity. Although students can express themselves in the classroom or even wear different socks. Some days are specified for the optional dress down, where the children can wear what ever they would like. If the students have to wear uniforms then so should the teachers and staff.

How can the students be expected to follow the teachers lead if they are not in uniforms as well? This makes the whole school equal and the principals' job easier for enforcing the dress code. Some schools do have strict dress codes if a not a uniform policy. Students must wear clothing that is appropriate for a learning environment. No sleeveless shirts or offense slang or short, shorts are not allowed. Students that do not follow the rules could be suspended. Schools could go as far as to not allow skirts to be worn. Some schools have an optional uniform policy.

Most parents and students choose to wear uniforms because of At the moment many public schools are only using uniforms under a voluntary basis. With this system they hope to increase awareness of the benefits that these uniforms hold. These uniforms will help to lower budgets, school violence and help students become more accepted among their peers. Fatal accidents could be avoided with the use of uniforms in the public school system. It is not just a fast growing trend to make the school look better, but also a way to increase the chances of a more secure learning environment.