

Future Planning Ad Hoc Committee
Parent Forum on Dress Code
October 8, 2008 5:30 PM
CIBA Lecture Hall

PRESENT

Karen Howe, Chairperson
Robert Damaschi
Anita Morrison

ALSO PRESENT

Mary Alice Dwyer Hughes
Ram Aberasturia
Dorese Roberts
Marcus Oladell, IV
Hilde Mayranen-O'Brien
Hank Pawlowski, Jr.
Marion H. Martinez, Superintendent

Forum opened at 5:30 PM by Mary Alice Dwyer Hughes. Ground rules read and opening statement made by Karen Howe. Public participation invited. Nineteen individuals sign-ed up to address board members.

Comments included:

- Uniforms are expensive
- Uniforms save money
- Quality of uniforms was inferior last time schools had them
- Discipline/behavior in class not related to what students are wearing
- Uniforms save time for families in the morning
- Current dress code policy is good, enforce current policy
- Teasing about appearances would be reduced with uniforms
- Children need individuality. Children are not in the military.
- Uniforms encourage respect for self, school and community. Establish priority of education
- Uniforms are economic equalizers
- Uniforms reduce competition, promote unity in school
- Uniforms for safety—easily identify students who belong
- Uniforms/dress code should have district-wide color choices—many transient families
- Limit color choices
- Uniforms promote pride in school, similar to wearing team colors of favorite sports team
- Uniforms suppress personality development
- Students can express individuality through appearance after school hours
- Several shared personal experiences growing up in areas where uniforms were the norm

Questions raised included:

- What is the time frame for decision on dress code/uniforms?
No set time frame has been determined yet.
- Will forums be televised?
Yes, tonight was telecast live on Channel 5. Others will be as well.
- Will a survey be sent home to parents?
A survey to parents will be considered.
- Will children's opinions be considered?
Input from students is welcome.
- Are children welcome at forums?
Any students or families who could not attend tonight are welcome at other forums.
- Will there be advanced notice of coming forum dates? Some families received flyer yesterday.
Forums have been advertised on district website and through local media, letters have been sent home with students. Next forums will be on Thursday, October 16, and Tuesday, October 21, 2008.
- Will forums be announced in school newsletters?
Schools may include information in newsletters. Dates announced again.

- Can others attend the middle school and high school forums?
All are welcome at forums scheduled for 10/16/08 & 10/21/08.
- Are East Hartford schools the only ones without uniforms?
No, many districts in the area do not require uniforms. Uniforms have not been required under our district policy.
- How will a decision be made?
Information will be gathered, parents wishes will be heard, the board will come to a decision.
- Will the board consider what students want?
Students are welcome to express their opinions.

The next forums will be on Thursday, October 16, 2008 and Tuesday, October 21, 2008 at 5:30 in the CIBA Lecture Hall. Having not other members of the public who wished to address the board, the forum was closed at 7:35 by Karen Howe.

Respectfully,
Carrie Van de Berg
Secretary