

School Uniforms Committee and Survey Results

Should our school district have school uniforms? This is a question that has been debated in many school districts over the years. Last fall several parents and community members approached the Policy Board Standing Committee asking if the district would consider the concept. The Policy Committee then formed the School Uniform sub-committee, and asked for volunteers to serve on this committee to explore the school uniform subject.

Currently the committee consists of Board of Education members, faculty, parents, community members, and administrators. They are Rob Walker, superintendent, Neil Riggs, social studies teacher, Steve Poston and Scott Burre, Junior High principals, Tim Welker, Lara Culver, Jeff Faulkner, and Lisa Wells, community members, Nathan Conrad, LHS principal, Amy Eyman and Kathy Kittredge, board members, and Debby Rockwood, school social worker. The contact information for the committee members is available on our website so that you can contact a member with your thoughts on the subject.

From the very first meeting, Superintendent Rob Walker stressed that our focus on this issue should be three criteria: One, do school uniforms increase academic achievement? Two, do school uniforms increase safety? And, the third and a very important criteria to consider in these difficult economic times, is that the cost factor must be neutral – that is, our recommendation must not cost the district any additional money, and preferably not cost parents any additional money either! We are initially focusing on grades 6-12, however the elementary grades may be considered IF our research indicates a need for school uniforms may exist at this level too.

Over the last few months, members have spent time gathering information from other districts and looking at available research on the school uniform subject. We have had some lively discussions! Because the Elementary and Secondary Counseling school climate grant survey was due to be administered in the spring, Debby Rockwood offered to add some questions to that survey about school uniforms to get feedback from staff, students and parents. We have compiled those results.

There were four survey groups: A Parent Survey, a Teacher survey, an Elementary Student survey given to all 3rd -5th elementary students, and a Junior High/LHS survey given to all those school's students. All four surveys had the same three questions about school uniforms which are below. These were answered on a 5 answer scale, from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree." The results of the school uniform questions are as follows:

Parents:

I think we should have school uniforms:

Strongly Agree	15.48%
Agree	12.90%
Neutral	25.14%
Disagree	15.26%
Strongly Disagree	19.15%

School uniforms would improve academics:

Strongly Agree	10.10%
Agree	16.25%
Neutral	25.63%
Disagree	21.90%
Strongly Disagree	15.64%

School uniforms would improve safety:

Strongly Agree	9.33%
Agree	15.42%
Neutral	25.80%
Disagree	22.67%
Strongly Disagree	15.59%

Teachers:

I think we should have school uniforms:

Strongly Agree	21.39%
Agree	22.89%
Neutral	29.35%
Disagree	11.94%
Strongly Disagree	9.45%

School uniforms would improve academics:

Strongly Agree	12.94%
Agree	33.33%
Neutral	30.85%
Disagree	10.45%
Strongly Disagree	6.47%

School uniforms would improve safety:

Strongly Agree	9.95%
Agree	25.37%
Neutral	38.81%
Disagree	12.94%
Strongly Disagree	7.96%

Elementary Students:

I think we should have school uniforms:

Strongly Agree	18.27%
Agree	6.58%
Neutral	12.35%
Disagree	10.50%
Strongly Disagree	48.74%

School uniforms would improve academics:

Strongly Agree	8.43%
Agree	9.91%
Neutral	16.57%
Disagree	22.71%
Strongly Disagree	38.39%

School uniforms would improve safety:

Strongly Agree	14.94%
Agree	11.39%
Neutral	19.67%
Disagree	19.01%
Strongly Disagree	31.88%

Jr. High/High School Students:

I think we should have school uniforms:

Strongly Agree	8.43%
Agree	4.31%
Neutral	10.25%
Disagree	8.19%
Strongly Disagree	61.65%

School uniforms would improve academics:

Strongly Agree	7.16%
Agree	4.43%
Neutral	12.80%
Disagree	16.38%
Strongly Disagree	51.27%

School uniforms would improve safety:

Strongly Agree	6.98%
Agree	5.58%
Neutral	12.01%
Disagree	15.84%
Strongly Disagree	52.37%

The comments on the surveys were interesting and can't all be included here, but here is a sampling: "I went to a private school. I wore school uniforms. I saw fights, people were failing, and I didn't feel safe." "I think we should have uniforms because then the principal won't have to get people in trouble any more for wearing ripped jeans and shorty shorts. And so people would follow the law. And other people won't make fun of our clothes. I like this idea." "If you fell out of a window, clothes aren't going to save you. (drew two pictures of a kid falling out of a window with and without a uniform...same result)." "I want to see what the school uniforms would look like." "We should have uniforms because it would keep us safe." "We should dress in our own style and express ourselves. Aren't school uniforms worn every single day,

wouldn't it become more dirty more commonly. It is very fun at Cedar heights, and I have not been bullied at all, that I know of. School is the safe place, isn't it?"

The school uniform committee will continue to meet and make a recommendation to the Policy Committee in a few months. We welcome your input! See our website for contact information.