

**"Attachment 1"**

August 13, 2001

CISD School Board  
P.O. Box 148  
Crandall, TX 75114-0128

John Rouse, School Principal  
P.O. Box 430  
Crandall, TX 75114

Ref: Opt out provision from wearing school uniforms for Presley Watkins

This letter serves as a formal request to exercise my parental rights by opting-out from participation in the new school policy regarding a school uniform. The wearing of a school uniform is in opposition to my personal philosophical beliefs, which are values important to me as a parent to impart upon my children. This is a basic right, which I sincerely hope will not be denied me.

If the uniform policy is mandatory in that it does not allow opt-outs on request, it would infringe upon the constitutional rights of those who do not wish to comply. Surely the school board would not wish to act in such an irresponsible manner. It must be presumed that, as a parent, I am acting in the best interest of my child. If uniforms really do accomplish some of the goals their proponents claim, and there is strong evidence to the contrary, then the vast majority of families will comply. It is true that they will be permitting an encroachment on their constitutional rights, but it is their free choice to do so. A school board simply does not have the right to dictate that choice as stated in the Supreme Court ruling.

(a) The Fourteenth Amendment's Due Process Clause has a substantive component that "provides heightened protection against government interference with certain fundamental rights and liberty interests," *Washington v. Glucksberg*, 521 U.S. 702, 720, including parents' fundamental right to make decisions concerning the care, custody, and control of their children, see, e.g., *Stanley v. Illinois*, 405 U.S. 645, 651.

I have read major study on the "Effects of School Uniforms" conducted by the Sociology Department at Notre Dame University clearly demonstrating the negative effects on academic achievement directly attributable to schools mandating a school uniform.\* I have been told there are, but have not been able to find studies (and not opinions) which support the benefits of school uniforms. I am confident that the school board was responsible enough to have researched this issue and has a credible reference study demonstrating the benefits of a uniform policy. Therefore, I am requesting that you provide me with either a copy or a description of the source of the study used in formulating that decision.

If one is not received, I will have to assume that this matter was never properly researched and my fears will be confirmed.

Thank you and I await your prompt response regarding this matter and in the future please consider our rights as parents before instituting policies of this nature.

If a written response is not received within 14 days from receipt of this letter, I will assume that my opt-out request has been honored.

Furthermore, both my children and I have the right to be free from any and all acts of retaliation, harassment, intimidation, interrogation, or other acts of retribution by any employee or agent of the School District or Educational Institution for the exercise of any of my constitutionally protected rights, including, but not limited to, the right to direct the moral upbringing and education of my children. Meyer v. Nebraska, 262 U.S. 390 (1923); Pierce v. Society of Sisters, 268 U.S. 510 (1925). Section 1983 remedies are available to me against you and/or your employees or agents for any such wrongful acts. (42 U.S.C. §1983).

Sincerely and respectfully,

Shannon Watkins

\* Brunsmma, David L., and Kerry A. Rockquemore. "The Effect of Student Uniforms on Attendance, Behavior Problems, Substance Use, and Academic Achievement." The Journal of Educational Research, 13 Feb. 1998

## "Attachment 2"

Our objections are not based upon a specific doctrine of a religious or philosophic group that its members must not wear uniforms. However, our objections are rooted in philosophy and religion.

Our religious objections are based on passages from the Bible. Proverbs 1:8 and Colossians 3:20 emphasize parents' authority over their children. Also, Colossians 2:20 tells us not to subject oneself to regulation. Allowing a school to establish a standardized dress code for our child infringes on our biblical beliefs as to parental authority and not subjecting oneself to worldly regulations. These beliefs are clearly rooted in religion.

Our philosophical objections are based on several works of John Dewey:

In "Democracy and Education," Dewey's treatment of the problems of emphasizing conformity with external standards. Dewey states that since conformity is the aim, what is distinctively individual in a young person is brushed aside, or regarded as a source of mischief or anarchy. Conformity is made equivalent to uniformity. Consequently, there are induced lack of interests, aversion to progress, and dread of the uncertain and the unknown. We see the standardized dress code as an improper external standard.

In "Aims in Education," Dewey shows concern that educational aims cannot successfully be imposed upon material from the outside, but must flow from the intelligent practice of teaching and learning. He states that some will find their aims determined by an external dictation; their aims will not arise from the free growth of their own experience, and their nominal aims will be means to more ulterior ends of others rather than truly their own. We see the standardized dress code as an improper external dictation.

In "Philosophies of Freedom" Dewey characterizes freedom in terms of the enlargement and diversification of choices. He states that freedom functions as both a condition and a goal in moral choice. We see the standardized dress code as an interference with our diversification of choices.

In "Three Independent Factors in Morals," Dewey attacks "single principle" moral theories and identifies three independent but intertwined factors in moral decision: goods, rights, and virtues. We see the standardized dress code as an infringement on our moral rights.

In "The Good of Activity" Dewey relates his ethical theory to his theory of education, arguing that the test of moral decisions should be the extent to which they are able to liberate and enrich impulses and habits. We see the standardized dress code as an interference with our moral decisions.

These beliefs are clearly rooted in the philosophy of learning.

### **"Attachment 3"**

As I am extremely concerned with the fact that my daughter is being forced to dress like a boy, I have included another religious objection of ours based on the passage Deuteronomy 22:5. "The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment for all that do so are abomination unto the Lord thy God." This style of dress, God would not have his people adopt. Polo style shirts were designed for men. Most collared shirts are designed for men. Docker style pants were designed for men. Navy blue, khaki, black, red, white and yellow are not feminine colors. God's prohibitions are lightly regarded by all who would advocate the doing away of the distinction of dress between males and females. God designed that there should be a plain distinction between the dress of men and women, and has considered the matter of sufficient importance to give explicit directions in regard to it; for the same dress worn by both sexes would cause confusion and great increase of crime.

The standardized dress code is a style of dress in which God's order has been reversed, and his special directions disregarded. The standardized dress code attire is largely androgynous and an affront to femininity.

This belief is clearly rooted in religion.