

**THE SCHOOL BOARD OF BROWARD COUNTY, FLORIDA
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT**

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January 14, 2008

TO: School Board Members

FROM: Katherine Blasik, Ph.D., Associate Superintendent
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VIA: James F. Notter
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SUBJECT: SCHOOLWIDE UNIFORM PROGRAM STATUS REPORT, 2006-07

The present status report presents a short history of the research on school uniforms in the United States and documents the history and current status of school uniform programs in Broward County Public Schools (BCPS). Data related to safety incidents, stakeholder perceptions, demographics, discipline, and attendance in BCPS uniform schools, as compared to non-uniform schools, are presented. More than 68% of BCPS elementary schools and 65.9% of BCPS middle schools had a mandatory school uniform program in 2006-07. Three alternative centers also had mandatory uniform programs.

Quantitative data suggest that there were no differences in attendance, discipline, and incidents in uniform versus non-uniform schools. Qualitative data document stakeholder perceptions of increased parental support, increased safety, reduced bullying, increased fairness, and various other advantages in uniform schools. Data comparing compliance with uniform programs in uniform schools with compliance with the District's Dress Code in non-uniform schools suggest that there are few differences in consequences for non-compliant students or in the burden on school staff for the management of compliance issues. Questions or comments concerning these analyses should be addressed to **me at 754-321-2470 or Dr. Russell Clement, Director, Research Services at 754-321-2500.** This report may be accessed via the Research Services Web site (http://www.broward.k12.fl.us/research_evaluation/ResearchServices.htm).

JFN/KAB/RWC:gks
Attachment

cc: Executive Leadership Team
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Principals

The School Board of Broward County, Florida
Schoolwide Uniform Program Status Report, 2006-07



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January 2008

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The School Board of Broward County, Florida
Schoolwide Uniform Program Status Report, 2006-07

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The School Board of Broward County, Florida
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Executive Summary

Since the mid-1990s, researchers have investigated the effects of school uniforms on a variety of variables. This status report presents a short history of the research on school uniforms in the United States and documents the history and current status of school uniforms in Broward County Public Schools (BCPS). Data related to safety incidents, stakeholder perceptions, demographics, discipline, and attendance in BCPS uniform schools, as compared to non-uniform schools, are presented.

More than 68% of BCPS elementary schools and 65.9% of BCPS middle schools had a mandatory school uniform program in 2006-07. Uniform and non-uniform schools varied only slightly in demographic composition. At the elementary level, non-uniform schools had a slightly larger percentage of White students than did uniform schools. At the middle school level, uniform schools had a larger percentage of Black and Hispanic students and students who qualified for free or reduced-price lunch (FRL) compared to non-uniform schools.

Data related to attendance and incidents in BCPS reflected no differences between uniform and non-uniform schools at either the elementary or middle school levels. Non-uniform elementary schools have a slightly higher percentage of external suspensions and a slightly lower percentage of internal and AES suspensions than uniform elementary schools. Non-uniform middle schools have a lower percentage of external suspensions but a higher percentage of internal and AES suspensions than uniform middle schools.

Customer survey data indicate that, at the elementary school level, respondents in uniform and non-uniform schools responded in similar fashion. However, a higher percentage of elementary teachers in uniform schools than in non-uniform schools reported agreement with the statement: "Parents assist when behavior or academic problems occur." At the middle school level, a higher percentage of teachers in uniform schools reported feeling safer at school than did teachers in non-uniform schools. A higher percentage of teachers in non-uniform schools reported a perception that students bully one another compared to teachers in uniform schools, while a higher percentage of teachers in uniform schools reported a perception that rules are applied fairly to all students and that students feel accepted at school.

The perceptions of BCPS principals regarding their experiences with Uniform Programs and Dress Code Policies at their respective schools were assessed through an online principal survey. More than 1,700 uniform exemptions were granted in BCPS uniform schools, mostly at the elementary level. In the uniform schools, compliance is highest at District centers, followed by middle and elementary schools, respectively. In non-uniform schools, compliance with the District's Dress Code shows the opposite pattern of results wherein compliance is highest at the elementary level, followed by middle schools, and centers, respectively. The assignment of consequences related to uniform program and dress code violations was similar in uniform and non-uniform schools at both school levels. Perceptions of the amount of time that school staff spend managing uniform and dress code compliance are similar in uniform and non-uniform schools across both school levels. Principals at all school levels reported a perception that uniforms have a positive impact across a number of factors.

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Introduction

The issue of school uniforms in public schools has been a hot topic for a number of years with parents, educators, politicians, and researchers taking part in the discussion. In 1996, President Clinton suggested that school uniforms might reduce gang violence in the schools (Clinton, 1996). Since that time a number of researchers have investigated the effects of school uniforms on a variety of variables.

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) indicates that during the 1996-97 school year, three percent of all public schools required students to wear uniforms. Thirty-four percent of those schools had initiated uniforms during that year (1996-97), 40% had initiated their program in the previous two years (1994-95 or 1995-96), and 26% (less than 1% of the total) had a uniform program that had been implemented prior to the 1994-95 school year (NCES, 1998). In 1998, the National Association of Elementary School Principals commissioned a survey of 958 public K-8 schools in 10 states, which indicated that 11% of these schools required uniforms and, at that time, an additional 15% were considering a new program (cited in Oregon Legislative Policy, Research, & Committee Services, 1998). Brunsma (2006) noted that 11.5% of public elementary schools had uniform programs in 1998-99, and this number increased to 15.5% of public elementary schools in 1999-2000. In a 2000 publication, White noted that "nearly half of the nation's big urban school systems have adopted school uniform policies for all or some of their schools" (White, 2000, cited in Lumsden & Miller, 2002, p. 1).

This report presents a short history of the research on school uniforms and documents the history and current status of school uniforms in Broward County Public Schools (BCPS). Data related to safety incidents, stakeholder perceptions, demographics, discipline, and attendance in BCPS uniform schools, as compared to non-uniform schools, are presented. The experiences of District schools in regard to uniform programs, as gathered through a principal survey, will also be discussed.

Research on School Uniforms

A 1999 Status Report on Uniforms in BCPS (The School Board of Broward County, Florida, 1999) provided extensive coverage of the legal, theoretical, and research background related to school uniforms. The background presented in that article is summarized and updated here. In short, much of the research is contradictory. For example, some of the theoretical research cited in the 1999 report suggested that uniforms are unlikely to provide lasting benefits (e.g., Siegal, 1996; Mayo, 1933/1992), while other research avenues suggest that the impact of uniforms can, theoretically, impact on social behaviors in positive and persistent ways. Evidence for the latter comes from research on the power of expectations related to social roles (e.g., Zimbardo, 1972), in-group and out-group effects (e.g., Tajfel & Billig, 1974; Brewer, 1979), and self-fulfilling prophecies (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968). The assumption in this research is that the introduction of uniforms to the school setting can serve to support positive social behaviors that will facilitate academic efforts and reduce the impact of negative social behaviors that are obstacles to the academic goals of the school.

Attitude surveys, as summarized in the 1999 Uniform Status Report indicate that the various stakeholder groups have different perceptions, and different agendas, related to uniforms. In short, proponents of uniforms include principals who believe that uniforms decrease discipline problems and violence (Paliokas & Rist, 1996) and parents who appreciate reduced competition related to clothing and the potential cost savings of uniforms (Woods & Ogletree, 1992). On the other hand, opponents cite the perception that the effort expended in the implementation and enforcement of a uniform program draws resources from other school improvement efforts (Siegal, 1996). In student surveys, although a majority of students reported that peer pressure related to clothing is an issue, the majority are opposed to uniforms (Woods & Ogletree, 1992) and do not believe that uniforms improve security at their schools (Hernandez, 1996).

Empirical research also has been plagued by methodological issues and conflicting results. For example, the Long Beach (California) School District is said to be the first in the nation to launch a districtwide uniform program for all elementary and middle school students as a result of gang-related violence in the community (Portner, 1996). While dramatic reductions in the number of incidents were reported in that district, this was a natural experiment that was implemented to address a problem in the community and, as such, did not control for extraneous variables. Because other strategies were also employed at the same time, it is not possible to attribute the positive changes to the implementation of a uniform program (Portner, 1996; Isaacson, 1998).

A more methodologically sound study of the relationship between uniforms and school climate in two Charleston, South Carolina middle schools (Murray, 1997) was a survey study that did report positive changes in student perceptions associated with the implementation of a uniform program, but the effect sizes were small (Cohen, 1988). However, a large District of Columbia study (Zollie & Chunn, 1991) that assessed both perceptions *and* behaviors demonstrated no significant improvement in behaviors (attendance and educational attainment) despite the belief of parents, teachers, and administrators that the new school uniform program had been responsible for improvements in both. This study highlighted the importance of capturing data on both perceptions and performance.

Researchers have also noted a number of demographic differences between uniform and non-uniform schools. The NCES (1998) reported that schools with uniforms were more likely to report a higher percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch (FRL) and higher minority enrollment compared to schools without a uniform program. Similarly, Brunσμα (2006) noted that the implementation of school uniform programs was more apparent in both urban and rural areas than in suburban areas. He attributes this to the resistance of suburban parents, who have higher average socioeconomic status and education levels, to the implementation of school uniform programs. Since the release of the BCPS 1999 report, discussion of the effects of school uniforms has largely revolved around a landmark study (Brunσμα & Rockquemore, 1998) which has led to a decade of research that suggests that uniforms are not, in fact, associated with positive outcomes (Brunσμα, 2004, 2005, 2006).

In support of schools' efforts to make data-driven decisions that are in the best interests of students, organizations such as the Education Commission of the States (2007), the National Association of Elementary School Principals (no date), and the ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management (Anderson, 2002) have compiled comprehensive, non-biased resources

for school administrators. State statutes on dress codes in public schools have also been compiled (Burke, 2004) and the legalities of mandatory dress programs (Madrid & Garcia, 1999) have been explored.

School Uniforms in Broward County Public Schools

Section III of the BCPS Code of Student Conduct specifies the Dress Code for students. The 2007-08 Dress Code stipulates that “Students have a right to wear stylish clothes of their choice as long as those clothes are appropriate for school, are not dangerous to health and safety, and do not create a substantial and material disruption of the school.” The code also indicates that “Students have a responsibility to dress neatly, appropriately, to be clean, and well groomed” (The School Board of Broward County, Florida, 2007a, p. 18). Consequences for violating the dress code are found in the discipline matrices for both elementary and secondary schools (The School Board of Broward County, Florida, 2007c).

In August of 1969, the School Board of Broward County adopted a Districtwide policy related to school uniforms (The School Board of Broward County, Florida, 2005). In June of 1997, the policy was revised and readopted to stipulate that any Broward County elementary school, middle school, or center was eligible to adopt a schoolwide mandatory uniform program if two-thirds of parent households vote in favor of the program (The School Board of Broward County, Florida, 1999). High schools were allowed to participate in a uniform program only if the request was initiated by students and a two-thirds vote of the student body was obtained. A mandatory uniform program could only be implemented through the District’s waiver process. Implementation of a voluntary uniform program did not require a parent vote or a waiver. Beginning with the 2006-07 school year, a waiver is not necessary for an elementary or middle school to implement a mandatory uniform program. Schools holding a waiver for a previously implemented program are required to maintain the waiver as long as the uniform program remains in place.

The current uniform policy (School Board Policy 5309) stipulates that schools that adopt a mandatory uniform program are obligated to plan and implement guidelines and procedures, offer an array of sources for uniforms, ensure that the school’s uniform choices comply with the Code of Student Conduct, make provisions for students who cannot comply due to financial constraints, inform parents each year of the school’s uniform program, and encourage compliance with the program. The District is obligated to review and evaluate the impact of the mandatory uniform program on participating schools at three-year intervals beginning with the 2007-08 school year.

Three exceptions to wearing the mandatory uniform are described in the District’s School Uniforms Policy. First, the uniforms of nationally recognized youth organizations (e.g., Boy Scouts or Girl Scouts) may be worn on scheduled meeting days. Second, special clothing or costumes may be permitted by the principal in support of school-sponsored programs. Third, parents or guardians may request an exemption from the mandatory uniform program. Schools that adopted a uniform program beginning with the 2006-07 school year are required to limit their exemptions to that of sincerely held religious beliefs. Schools that implemented a uniform program prior to 2006-07 are allowed to consider exemptions for other reasons

(e.g., freedom of expression) unless they have stipulated in their own guidelines that they will limit exemptions to that of religious beliefs. Exemption applications and an Exemption Questionnaire are posted online as a part of the District's School Uniforms Policy (The School Board of Broward County, Florida, 2005). The District's Code of Student Conduct stipulates that violations of uniform program are subject to the same consequences as violations of the dress code. Some number of schools have a voluntary uniform program sometimes referred to as a "unified uniform policy" or "unified dress code." In voluntary programs students are encouraged or expected to comply with a school's uniform program, but there are no consequences for non-participation. For the purposes of the present report, uniform schools include only those with a mandatory schoolwide uniform program.

The 1999 Status Report on Uniforms in BCPS reported that in 1998-99, 18 schools in the District had implemented mandatory uniform programs and 32 had implemented voluntary uniform programs representing, at the time, 25% ($n=50$) of the District's 200 schools. In 2006-07, the number of BCPS schools with a mandatory school uniform program has grown to 125. Three of these schools are alternative centers. The remainder ($n=122$) represent 67.8% of the District's total elementary and middle schools ($n=180$). No high schools currently have a mandatory uniform program.

Methods

Data for the current status report were derived from numerous sources. District Area Offices provided lists that identified the schools that had a school uniform program in 2006-07. Data related to the experiences of District schools in regard to uniform programs was obtained through principal surveys. District data were compared to survey responses and discrepancies were clarified in correspondence with principals. Additional data for the current report were compiled from the 2006-07 Districtwide Summary of Incidents (The School Board of Broward County, Florida, 2007b), the District's 2006-07 Suspensions Brief (expected release early 2008), and the 2006-07 Customer Survey (The School Board of Broward County, Florida, 2007d). Data related to demographics, discipline, and attendance were drawn from the Department of Research Services' Longitudinal Files which reflect data retrieved from District's Data Warehouse as of the 180th day of the 2006-07. Charter schools were not included in the analysis.

Results

Table 1 indicates that the majority of the schools with mandatory uniform programs are elementary schools (76%) and that the schools with mandatory uniform programs are distributed fairly evenly across the district with a tendency toward fewer uniform schools in the North Central Area compared to other District areas. No BCPS high schools currently have a uniform program.

Table 1

Number and Percentage of Schools with Uniform Programs by School Level and Area, 2006-07

	<i>n</i>	%
School Level		
Elementary schools	95	76.0
Middle schools	27	21.6
Centers	3	2.4
Total	125	100.0
District Area		
North	31	24.8
North Central	19	15.2
South	39	31.2
South Central	36	28.8
Total	125	100.0

Note. Broward Virtual Middle School was not included in these analyses.

Table 2 indicates that the majority (68.8%) of the District's 138 elementary schools had a mandatory school uniform program in 2006-07. Similarly, the majority (65.9%) of the District's 41 middle schools also had a mandatory school uniform program in 2006-07. At least one school (Ramblewood Middle) has discontinued its program in 2007-08 and one school (Stirling Elementary) implemented a new program in 2007-08.

Table 2

Number and Percentage of Schools with Uniform Programs and Without Uniform Programs by School Level

Level	Non-Uniform		Uniform		Total schools
	<i>n</i>	% of Total	<i>n</i>	% of Total	
Elementary	43	31.2	95	68.8	138
Middle	14	34.1	27	65.9	41

Note. Broward Virtual Middle School was not included in these analyses.

Demographic Data

Table 3 indicates that there were only modest differences in demographic variables at uniform schools compared to non-uniform schools. At the elementary school level, non-uniform schools had slightly higher percentages of LEP students and White students than uniform schools. Uniform schools had a slightly higher percentage of Black students than non-uniform schools. At the middle school level, uniform schools had a slightly higher percentage of students who qualify for free and/or reduced-price lunch (FRL) than non-uniform schools. Also, uniform schools had higher percentages of Black and Hispanic students and a lower percentage of White students than non-uniform schools.

Table 3

Demographic Composition of Uniform and Non-Uniform School Student Population, 2006-07

Demographic Variables	Uniform Schools		Non-Uniform Schools	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
			Elementary	
ESE	13,399	16.2	6,092	16.2
FRL	37,384	45.3	17,240	45.9
LEP	8,928	10.8	4,599	12.2
Race/Ethnicity				
Asian	2,992	3.6	1,029	2.7
Black	31,062	37.6	13,442	35.8
Hispanic	21,690	26.3	9,562	25.5
Multi	2,591	3.1	1,150	3.1
Native	173	0.2	108	0.3
White	24,065	29.1	12,260	32.6
Total Enrolled	82,573	100.0	37,551	100.0
			Middle	
ESE	4,845	12.7	2,704	13.3
FRL	16,610	43.6	7,998	39.4
LEP	2,952	7.8	1,596	7.9
Race/Ethnicity				
Asian	1,134	3.0	757	3.7
Black	15,077	39.6	6,022	29.7
Hispanic	10,271	27.0	4,889	24.1
Multi	955	2.5	552	2.7
Native	67	0.2	41	0.2
White	10,586	27.8	8,023	39.6
Total Enrolled	37,551	100.0	20,284	100.0

Attendance Data

Table 4 indicates that there were no differences in the aggregated 180th day attendance rates of non-uniform schools compared to uniform schools in 2006-07. This was true at both the elementary and middle school levels.

Table 4

Number of Students and Attendance Rates for Non-Uniform and Uniform Schools, 2006-07

Level	Non-Uniform		Uniform	
	<i>n</i>	Attendance rate	<i>n</i>	Attendance rate
Elementary	36,022	95.6	79,223	95.6
Middle	20,250	94.6	38,072	94.4

Incident Data

Analysis of group differences in incidents between non-uniform and uniform schools were calculated on data retrieved from the District's Data Warehouse on September 26, 2007, and first reported in the appendix of the Districtwide Summary of Incidents: 2004-05 Through 2006-07 (The School Board of Broward County 2007b). For the purposes of the present report, at each school level, *t*-tests were conducted for total incidents as well as for incidents categorized as

being related to Persons, Property, Alcohol/Tobacco/Drugs, and Other. Crimes Against Persons included Battery, Fighting, Kidnapping, Robbery, Sexual Battery, Sexual Harassment, Sexual Offenses/Other, Threat/Intimidation, and Bullying/Harassment. No homicides were reported. Property Offenses included Arson, Breaking and Entering/Burglary, Larceny/Theft (items valued at \$300 or more), and Vandalism (items/repairs valued at \$1,000 or more). Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drug Offenses (ATOD) included the use, possession, sale, and/or distribution of alcohol, tobacco, and/or drugs. Other Offenses included Trespassing, Weapons Possession, Disturbance on Campus, and Unclassified/Other Major Offenses. Table 5 represents that there were no statistically significant group differences in the number of incidents reported in the District's 43 non-uniform elementary schools compared to the 95 elementary schools that have implemented a mandatory school uniform program.

Table 5
Group Differences in the Number of Incidents in Non-Uniform versus Uniform Elementary Schools, 2006-07

Incident type	Non-Uniform Schools <i>n</i> =43		Uniform Schools <i>n</i> =95		<i>t</i> (136)
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	
Persons	9.5	12.3	9.6	15.8	-0.33
Property	0.8	1.1	1.0	1.4	-0.96
ATOD	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.08
Other	2.9	4.2	2.2	3.0	1.07
Total	13.2	15.2	12.9	17.4	0.11

Similarly, review of Table 6 revealed that there were no statistically significant group differences in the number of incidents in the District's 14 non-uniform middle schools compared to the 27 middle schools that have implemented a mandatory school uniform program.

Table 6
Group Differences in the Number of Incidents in Non-Uniform and Uniform Middle Schools, 2006-07

Incident type	Non-Uniform Schools <i>n</i> =14		Uniform Schools <i>n</i> =27		<i>t</i> (39)
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	
Total	86.1	41.0	98.4	86.8	-.50
Persons	62.1	32.7	66.8	66.1	-.25
Property	2.6	2.3	2.7	2.2	-.23
ATOD	4.1	3.1	3.9	3.5	.23
Other	17.4	14.0	25.0	22.5	-1.2

Note. Broward Virtual Middle School was not included in these analyses.

Discipline Data

Table 7 represents the suspension rates of students at BCPS uniform schools compared to non-uniform schools for 2006-07. The suspension rate reflects the percentage of students from the total enrollment, who received internal, external, and alternative to external suspensions (AES) during the school year. The rate was calculated as the sum of the unduplicated count of students who served internal, external, and AES suspensions for each school in which the

suspension occurred divided by the sum of the unduplicated count of students enrolled in that school at any time during the 180-day school year. This proportion was then multiplied by 100 to yield the suspension rate. The following table shows suspension rates for non-uniform and uniform schools by level and suspension type for the 2006-07 school year.

Table 7

Suspension Rates by Uniform and Non-Uniform Schools for the 2006-07 School Year

Level	Uniform			Non-Uniform		
	Internal	External	AES	Internal	External	AES
Elementary	1.15	0.98	0.52	0.74	1.01	0.37
Middle	13.74	10.48	6.17	17.55	7.76	8.05

Results indicate that elementary school suspension rates are considerably lower than middle school rates. At the middle school level, internal suspension rates are higher than external and AES rates. At the elementary level, there is no difference in suspensions between uniform and non-uniform schools. Non-uniform middle schools have a lower percentage of external suspensions but a higher percentage of internal and AES suspensions than uniform middle schools. These data suggest that either uniform schools are more likely to remove students from campus than are the non-uniform schools or the behavior problems of students in non-uniform schools tend to be less extreme than those of students in uniform schools.

Customer Survey Data

A number of questions were identified from the 2006-07 Customer Survey (The School Board of Broward County, Florida, 2007d) that address school climate as it may be related to uniform programs. Table 8 represents the number and percentage of respondents at elementary schools who agreed with the selected Customer Survey items. The data are presented for uniform and non-uniform schools. At the elementary school level, for most of the items selected for analyses, respondent subgroups in uniform and non-uniform schools responded in similar fashion. However, a higher percentage of elementary teachers in uniform schools than in non-uniform schools reported agreement with the statement: “Parents assist when behavior or academic problems occur.”

Table 8

Number and Percentage of “Agree” Responses to Selected Customer Survey Items at Elementary Schools by School Uniform Status, 2006-07

Item	Survey	Uniform		Non-Uniform	
		<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Teachers treat students fairly.	Student	28,331	84.0	13,036	83.9
	Teacher	4,098	99.7	1,872	99.7
	Parent	10,890	91.6	5,169	92.2
Students are safe at school.	Student	28,209	83.9	12,855	82.9
	Teacher	3,905	95.0	1,788	95.3
	Parent	10,679	90.9	5,049	91.2
Teachers feel safe at school.	Teacher	3,888	94.7	1,788	95.4
Students at school bully one another.	Student	6,757	20.2	3,120	20.3
	Teacher	1,235	30.2	570	30.6
	Parent	1,793	15.4	829	15.2
Rules are applied fairly to all students.	Student	27,285	81.6	12,573	81.3
	Teacher	3,296	80.9	1,538	82.5
	Parent	9,257	77.9	4,401	78.8
Respondents are proud of their school.	Student	28,908	85.8	13,260	85.4
	Teacher	3,825	93.2	1,747	93.1
	Parent	10,983	92.0	5,153	91.8
Students feel accepted at school.	Student	27,074	81.2	12,477	81.2
	Teacher	3,667	89.8	1,674	89.8
	Parent	11,048	92.8	5,184	92.6
Parents assist when behavior or academic problems occur.	Teacher	2,506	61.2	1,101	58.8
	Parent	9,960	84.1	4,625	83.1

Table 9 displays the number and percentage of respondents at middle schools who agreed with the selected Customer Survey items. The data is presented for uniform and non-uniform schools. At the middle school level, a higher percentage of teachers in uniform schools responded that they felt safer at school than did teachers in non-uniform schools. The percentage of teachers who reported a perception that students bully one another was higher in non-uniform schools than in uniform schools. Also, compared to teachers in non-uniform school, a higher percentage of teachers in uniform schools reported a perception that rules are applied fairly to all students and that students feel accepted at school.

Table 9

Number and Percentage of “Agree” Responses to Selected Customer Survey Items at Middle Schools by School Uniform Status, 2006-07

Item	Survey	Uniform		Non-Uniform	
		<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Teachers treat students fairly.	Student	19,123	62.0	10,221	63.9
	Teacher	1,357	99.1	720	99.3
	Parent	2,950	78.0	1,969	79.8
Students are safe at school.	Student	18,359	59.6	9,416	58.9
	Teacher	1,133	82.7	576	79.7
	Parent	2,889	76.9	1,850	75.8
Teachers feel safe at school.	Teacher	1,186	87.0	609	84.1
Students at school bully one another.	Student	4,498	14.7	2,438	15.3
	Teacher	727	53.5	436	60.6
	Parent	537	14.4	391	16.1
Rules are applied fairly to all students.	Student	17,639	57.4	9,185	57.6
	Teacher	903	66.1	452	62.8
	Parent	2,555	67.6	1,670	67.8
Respondents are proud of their school.	Student	17,503	56.8	9,210	57.5
	Teacher	1,194	87.3	636	88.0
	Parent	3,039	80.1	1,990	80.4
Students feel accepted at school.	Student	20,040	65.6	10,408	65.6
	Teacher	976	71.8	498	69.2
	Parent	3,202	84.7	2,072	84.1
Parents assist when behavior or academic problems occur.	Teacher	684	50.1	360	49.9
	Parent	2,764	73.5	1,790	73.1

Principal Survey Data

The perceptions of District principals regarding their experiences with Uniform Programs and Dress Code Policies at their respective schools were assessed through an online principal survey. Participation was solicited from all District principals, each of whom received an e-mail with a link to the survey. The survey was designed to provide a unique question set depending upon whether a principal indicated that their school had a mandatory school uniform program in place during the 2006-07 school year. The questions related to uniform program procedures and dress code policy procedures were designed to be parallel for the purposes of comparison across the two groups. Two hundred twenty-two survey responses were received. Some responses were identified as problematic due to incorrect entries, duplicate responses, or responses that were inconsistent with District data obtained from other sources. In these instances, principals were contacted for follow-up. The final analyses included 207 valid survey responses from 134 out of 138 elementary schools (97.1% valid response rate) and 38 out of 41 middle schools (92.7% valid response rate). Responses were also received from 25 high schools, nine centers, and one agency.

Table 10 reflects the numbers and percentages of 2006-07 uniform schools at each level and indicates whether or not exemptions were limited to that of sincerely held religious beliefs. The majority of elementary schools with uniforms (78.3%) do not limit exemptions to sincerely held religious beliefs. However, the majority of middle schools with uniforms (64.0%) do limit exemptions to sincerely held religious beliefs. One center limits exemptions while two do not.

Table 10
Uniform School by Types of Exemptions Available

School Level	Limited to Sincerely Held Religious Beliefs		Not Limited to Sincerely Held Religious Beliefs		Total
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	
Elementary	20	21.7	72	78.3	92
Middle	16	64.0	9	36.0	25
Centers	1	33.3	2	66.7	3

Table 11 reflects the total number of exemptions to the uniform program that were granted in 2006-07 uniform schools at each level along with data reflecting the minimum, maximum, and mean at each school level. Elementary schools, on average, granted more exemptions than middle schools in 2006-07 (18.5 vs. 8.6, respectively). Among the three centers, only one exemption was reported.

Table 11
Uniform Program Exemptions Granted in 2006-07 by School Level

School Level	<i>n</i>	Total			
		exemptions	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
Elementary	81	1,501	0	237	18.5
Middle	23	199	0	75	8.6
Centers	3	1	0	1	0.3

Table 12 provides a summary of uniform schools' programs related to uniform vendors by school level. Only a small minority of schools require that uniforms be purchased from specific vendors. Principals of uniform schools also outlined a variety of ways that their schools make provisions for students who, by reason of financial hardship, cannot comply with the mandatory uniform program. A number of schools indicated that they provide free uniforms ($n=16$) or maintain a bank of new or used donated uniforms that are available to students ($n=68$). Other strategies that were mentioned included the provision of vouchers by the school or by uniform vendors ($n=44$), assistance through the school's parent organization ($n=34$), or assistance through community donations ($n=17$). Two schools indicated that they provide financial assistance and an additional two schools indicated specifically that their Guidance or Social Work staff members are involved in the process of distributing free uniforms to students who need them. Three schools indicated that teachers and staff have donated uniforms when necessary. One respondent noted that two schools have developed a buddy system wherein one school donates uniforms to the other.

Table 12
Uniform Schools' Programs Related to Uniform Vendors, 2006-07

School Level	<i>n</i>	No vendors identified	Major or discount retailers	Specific Uniform Vendors
Elementary	93	9	76	8
Middle	25	6	17	2
Centers	3	2	1	0

Table 13 represents a measure of student compliance with the uniform program at uniform schools compared to the percentage of students complying with the District’s Dress Code in non-uniform schools. The table reflects the percentage of respondents who indicated that students comply at the levels of less than 50%, 60%-80%, and 90%-100%. The data are presented by school level. In the uniform schools, compliance is highest (as measured by 90%-100% of the student body) at District centers (100%) and middle schools (96.0% of respondents indicated 90%-100% compliance) and lowest at the elementary level (75.3% of respondents indicated 90%-100% compliance). In non-uniform schools, compliance with the District’s Dress Code shows the opposite pattern of results. That is, compliance is highest at the elementary level (87.8% of respondents indicated 90%-100% compliance) with lower levels of compliance at middle schools (69.2% of respondents indicated 90%-100% compliance) and centers (66.7 % of respondents indicated 90%-100% compliance). These data suggest that overall there are fewer compliance issues at schools requiring uniforms.

Table 13
Percentage of Students Complying with School Uniform Programs and District Dress Code Policies in Uniform and Non-Uniform Schools by School Level, 2006-07

School Level	<i>n</i>	< 50%	60% - 80%	90% - 100%	Total
Uniform Schools					
Elementary	93	2.2	22.6	75.3	100%
Middle	25	4.0	0.0	96.0	100%
Centers	3	0.0	0.0	100.0	100%
Non-Uniform Schools					
Elementary	41	0.0	12.2	87.8	100%
Middle	13	0.0	30.8	69.2	100%
Centers	6	0.0	33.3	66.7	100%

Table 14 compares the consequences that have been assigned to non-exempt students in uniform elementary schools when they do not wear their uniform and the consequences that have been assigned to students in non-uniform elementary schools when they do not adhere to the District’s Dress Code. Consequences for both types of infractions are stipulated in the District’s Discipline Matrix (The School Board of Broward County, Florida, 2007c). Percentages are based on the total number of responses for each group at each school level. In both uniform and non-uniform schools, parent conferences (46.9% and 42.9%, respectively) and individual counseling (21.5% and 24.3%, respectively) were the consequences cited most often by elementary school respondents.

Table 14

Summary of Consequences Related to Uniform Programs and Dress Code Policies in BCPS Elementary Schools, 2006-07

Consequences	Uniform		Non-uniform	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Detention	7	5.4	1	1.4
Educational Record Review	0	0.0	1	1.4
In-School Suspension: Less than one day	3	2.3	0	0.0
In-School Suspension: 1-5 days	1	0.8	0	0.0
In-School Suspension: 6-10 days	0	0.0	0	0.0
Individual Counseling	28	21.5	17	24.3
Loss of Extra Curricular Privileges	5	3.8	1	1.4
Parent Conference	61	46.9	30	42.9
Referral to Behavioral Specialist	3	2.3	0	0.0
Saturday School	0	0.0	0	0.0
Small Group Counseling	1	0.8	1	1.4
Student Returned to Class	10	7.7	5	7.1
Success Plan	2	1.5	2	2.9
Temporary Removal from Classroom	7	5.4	9	12.9
Time Out	2	1.5	3	4.3
Total	130	100.0	70	100.0

Similarly, Table 15 compares the consequences that have been assigned to non-exempt students in uniform middle schools when they do not wear their uniform and the consequences that have been assigned to students in non-uniform elementary schools when they do not adhere to the District's Dress Code. At the middle school level, the two consequences reported most often in both uniform and non-uniform schools were parent conferences (17.0% and 17.2%, respectively), and detention (14.9% and 19.0%, respectively).

Table 15

Summary of Consequences Related to Uniform Programs and Dress Code Policies in BCPS Middle Schools, 2006-07

Consequences	Uniform		Non-uniform	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Detention	14	14.9	11	19.0
Educational Record Review	2	2.1	0	0.0
In-School Suspension: Less than one day	12	12.8	6	10.3
In-School Suspension: 1-5 days	5	5.3	4	6.9
In-School Suspension: 6-10 days	1	1.1	0	0.0
Individual Counseling	11	11.7	9	15.5
Loss of Extra Curricular Privileges	2	2.1	1	1.7
Parent Conference	16	17.0	10	17.2
Referral to Behavioral Specialist	2	2.1	2	3.4
Saturday School	10	10.6	3	5.2
Small Group Counseling	2	2.1	0	0.0
Student Returned to Class	5	5.3	3	5.2
Success Plan	0	0.0	1	1.7
Temporary Removal from Classroom	7	7.4	8	13.8
Time Out	5	5.3	0	0.0
Total	94	100.0	58	100.0

Table 16 represents respondent estimates of the percentage of time staff spent managing school uniform compliance in uniform schools and Dress Code compliance in non-uniform schools. Data are presented by school level. The large majority of uniform and non-uniform schools at both levels indicate that staff members spend 10% or less of their time managing dress-related compliance issues. At the elementary level the percentage of schools reporting 10% or less is slightly higher in non-uniform schools. The reverse is true at the middle school level where the percentage of schools reporting 10% or less was higher for uniform schools compared to non-uniform schools.

Table 16

Estimate of the Percentage of Time Staff Spend Managing Uniform and Dress Code Compliance in BCPS Uniform and Non-uniform Schools by School Level, 2006-07

Percentage of time spent managing Dress Code/Uniform Compliance	Uniform		Non-uniform	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
	Elementary			
10% or less	79	84.9	36	87.8
15%-30%	11	11.9	3	7.3
35%-45%	2	2.2	2	4.8
50% or more	1	1.1	0	0.0
Total responses	93	100.0	41	100.0
	Middle			
10% or less	22	88.0	10	76.9
15%-30%	2	8.0	2	15.4
35%-45%	1	4.0	1	7.7
50% or more	0	0.0	0	0.0
Total responses	25	100.0	13	100.0

Table 17 depicts the perceptions of respondents from uniform schools regarding the positive and negative impact that uniforms appear to have in their respective schools. Respondents were encouraged to select all options that apply. Percentages are based upon the total number of responses at each school level. At both the elementary and middle levels, respondents reported the perception that uniforms have a positive impact on a number of factors, except reducing absenteeism. At the elementary level, respondents in uniform schools most often reported improved school spirit/pride, cost savings for parents, and behavioral improvement as positive impacts. At the middle level, respondents most often reported increased safety, behavioral improvement, reduced competition, socioeconomic equalization, and cost savings for parents as positive impacts that uniforms have at their respective schools. A small percentage of respondents, across elementary and middle school levels, reported the perception of negative impacts related to increased burden on staff to monitor compliance, the difficulty of implementation a uniform program in a school, and an increased burden on parents to acquire mandated uniforms.

Table 17

Number and Percentage of Respondents' Perceived Impacts of School Uniforms, 2006-07

Perceived impacts	Elementary		Middle		Centers	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Positive Impacts						
Increased safety	64	11.2	23	13.5	3	15.0
Behavioral improvement	72	12.6	22	12.9	3	15.0
Increased self-esteem	56	9.8	17	9.9	3	15.0
Improved school spirit/pride	80	14.0	19	11.1	2	10.0
Academic improvement	32	5.6	14	8.2	2	10.0
Reduced competition	69	12.0	22	12.9	1	5.0
Cost savings for parents	77	13.4	21	12.3	3	15.0
Reduced absenteeism	2	0.3	3	1.8	0	0.0
Socioeconomic equalization	65	11.3	22	12.9	3	15.0
Negative Impacts						
Increased burden on staff to monitor compliance	29	5.1	6	3.5	0	0.0
Implementation is difficult	21	3.7	1	0.6	0	0.0
Increased burden on parents to acquire mandated uniforms	6	1.0	1	0.6	0	0.0
Total responses	573	100.0	171	100.0	20	100.0

Conclusions

More than 68% of BCPS elementary schools and 65.9% of BCPS middle schools had a mandatory school uniform program in 2006-07. Uniform and non-uniform schools varied only slightly in demographic composition and differed not at all in attendance and incidents at either the elementary or middle school levels. Patterns in suspension data across uniform and non-uniform schools across school levels suggest that there are no differences in discipline at the elementary level that can be related directly to uniform programs. At the middle school level, however, non-uniform schools showed a lower percentage of external suspensions but a higher percentage of internal and AES suspensions than uniform middle schools. These data suggest that either uniform schools are more likely to remove students from campus than are the non-uniform schools or the behavior problems of students in non-uniform schools tend to be less extreme than those of students in uniform schools.

Customer survey data indicate few differences in perceptions between uniform and non-uniform schools. However, elementary teachers in uniform schools report a perception of greater parental support when behavior or academic problems occur compared to elementary teachers in non-uniform schools. At the middle school level, a higher percentage of teachers in uniform schools reported feeling safe at school compared to teachers in non-uniform schools. A higher percentage of teachers in non-uniform schools reported a perception that students bully one another compared to teachers in uniform schools, while a higher percentage of teachers in uniform schools reported a perception that rules are applied fairly to all students and that students feel accepted at school.

The data gathered from principals suggest that uniform and non-uniform schools differ little in issues related to uniform/dress code compliance, the assignment of consequences for uniform

program and dress code violations, and the perceptions of the amount of time that school staff spend managing uniform and dress code compliance are similar in uniform and non-uniform schools across both school levels. Principals at all school levels reported a perception that uniforms have a positive impact across a number of factors.

On the whole, quantitative data on attendance, discipline, and incidents suggest that there are few advantages realized in uniform versus non-uniform schools. However, qualitative data did register stakeholder perceptions of increased parental support, increased safety, reduced bullying, increased fairness, and various other advantages in uniform schools. Data comparing compliance with uniform programs in uniform schools with compliance with the District's Dress Code in non-uniform schools suggest that there are few differences in consequences for non-compliant students or in the burden on school staff for the management of compliance issues. That is, there appears to be no objective advantage or disadvantage to the implementation of a mandatory school uniform program. Rather attitudes concerning uniforms held by the various stakeholder groups determine the perceived benefits of these programs. The School Board of Broward County, Florida provides for local control by allowing the stakeholders of each school to decide whether a mandatory uniform program is appropriate for its community.

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