SECOND READING BY BOARD

po5511

Vol. 35, No. 2 - July 2026 Revised DRESS AND APPEARANCE

5511 - **DRESS AND APPEARANCE**

The Board recognizes that each student's mode of dress and appearance is a manifestation of personal style and individual preference _ and that students do possess certain individual rights, including the right to engage in expressive speech -. The Board will not interfere with the right of students and their parents to make decisions regarding their appearance, except when their choices interfere with the educational program of the schools.

Accordingly, the Superintendent shall establish such dress and appearance guidelines as are necessary to promote discipline, maintain order, secure the safety of students, and provide a healthy environment conducive to academic purposes. Such guidelines shall prohibit student dress or appearance practices that:

A. present a hazard to the health or safety of the individual student or to others in the school including by way of communicating threats of harm or depictions of harmful conduct directed at others , including depictions that are reasonably likely to or are intended to incite violence against or hatred towards others;

B. interfere with school work, create disorder, or cause or is likely to cause a material and substantial disruption to ~~disrupt~~ the educational program, including dress that promotes or depicts illegal activity, such as illegal drug use, underage alcohol consumption, or similar activities;

C. ~~illegal activity, such as illegal drug use, underage alcohol consumption, or similar activities;~~

D. **(X)** violate the District's anti-harassment policies by depicting images or messages that represent or promote discrimination or harassment on the basis of one or more protected classifications;

E. **(X)** depict or promote obscenity, pornography, or otherwise depict or describe sexual activity;

F. cause excessive wear or damage to school property;

G. prevent the student from achieving his/her own educational objectives because of blocked vision or restricted movement.

Such guidelines shall also apply to the dress requirements for members of the athletic teams, bands, and other school groups when representing the District at a public event. Where appropriate, a uniform or specific dress requirement shall be used for students when representing the District as described.

In enforcing the dress code, the following procedures shall be used:

A. the Principal shall serve as the initial arbiter of student dress and appearance within the building or at school-sponsored events or activities;

B. before taking action to enforce dress code requirements, including by requiring that a student remove, cover, or otherwise conceal the item or depiction at issue, the principal shall consider ~~determine whether~~ the expressive nature of the particular item while evaluating the application of the dress code. ~~constitutes protected speech insofar as the item independently makes a statement of a discernable nature to the observer by depiction, words, or combination of the two that does not require separate explanation;~~

~~Expressive dress may not be protected speech if it involves:~~

A. ~~obscenity;~~

B. ~~language or depictions intended to incite violence or foment hatred of others.~~

~~Dress that is protected speech may still be prohibited if it is likely to cause a substantial disruption to the educational environment. This may include dress that includes the use of vulgarity, discriminatory language including racial or ethnic slurs, negative stereotypes, violence, or other communication when the clear intent is to invoke strong reactions in observers so as to impair the ability of teachers and/or students to engage in educational pursuit.~~

In determining whether a student's dress or appearance materially interferes with schoolwork, creates disorder, or disrupts the educational program, school officials may consider the age and emotional maturity of the student audience, recent local or national events, and the unique characteristics of the school community. Decisions to restrict student dress or expression should be based on a reasonable forecast of material and substantial disruption, supported by specific facts and context, and should be documented accordingly.

No protected speech may be prohibited on the basis of disagreement by District officials with the specific point of view expressed if the topic is otherwise permitted (e.g. permitting

depictions of support for one political party, but prohibiting depictions of support for the other)

~~**[ ] Development of ( ) Dress Code ( ) Uniform Requirements**~~

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Each school shall engage in efforts to develop a dress code that prescribes certain types of dress and that identifies building-specific dress expectations. ~~The development of the dress code shall be completed using the following guidelines:~~

~~( ) invite the participation of~~

~~( ) staff~~

~~( ) parents~~

~~( ) students~~

~~in the preparation of a dress code which may specify prescribed dress and grooming practices, but may not amplify the rationale for prohibition established by Board policy;~~

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~~( ) instruct staff members to demonstrate, by example and precept, personal neatness, cleanliness, propriety, modesty, and good sense in attire and appearance;~~

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~~( ) ensure that all administrative guidelines impose only minimum and necessary restrictions on the exercise of the student's taste and individuality.~~

Students who violate the foregoing rules will not be admitted to class and may be subject to additional consequences.

If the clothing cannot be removed or concealed, the student may be sent home after contact is made with the student's parent/guardian.

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Legal
120.13(1), Wis. Stats.