Board Policy Equity Lens Tool

Title of board policy being reviewed:

JFCA-Student Dress and Grooming

Describe the purpose of this policy:

The purpose of this policy is to establish expectations for student dress and grooming that maintain a safe and non-disruptive learning environment while recognizing the primary responsibility of students and families. It sets parameters to prevent disruption and protect health and safety, while allowing the district to establish standards for voluntary representation activities.

What is your experience with this policy:

Dress and grooming policies are common in educational settings and can support safe learning environments when implemented equitably. Experience shows that clarity, consistency, and bias-awareness training are essential to prevent disproportionate enforcement and to ensure that student dignity and cultural identity are respected.

What is the plan to communicate this policy to staff, students, and/or families? What is the plan to communicate this policy to linguistically diverse students and their families?

Is this policy:

Easy to locate for staff?

This policy and a summary of this policy will be available on the MESD web page. The summary of this policy is also available on the MESD website in Spanish, Chinese, Russian, Somali, and Vietnamese and, upon request, the summary and/or policy may be translated into other languages.

Accessible to students and families?

This policy and a summary of this policy will be available on the MESD web page. The summary of this policy is also available on the MESD website in Spanish, Chinese, Russian, Somali, and Vietnamese and, upon request, the summary and/or policy may be translated into other languages.

Included in onboarding, intake, or other training?

This policy will be communicated to staff through inclusion in the student and employee handbook. The policy will also be posted on the district website for easy access.

Clear and easy to understand?

> The policy is brief and generally clear in outlining two primary conditions: disruption and health/safety concerns. However, terms such as "disruption" may require consistent administrative interpretation to ensure equitable enforcement and avoid subjective application.

People

How are people affected positively or negatively by the policy? What potential barriers might people encounter? What barriers might be reduced by this policy?

> The policy supports a focused learning environment and promotes safety. It also affirms family responsibility in student appearance.
>
> Potential negative impacts may arise if enforcement is inconsistent or influenced by implicit bias, particularly regarding hairstyles, cultural dress, religious attire, or gender expression. Without clear guidance, students from historically marginalized communities may experience disproportionate discipline or exclusion.
>
> When implemented equitably, the policy can reduce barriers related to unsafe attire while preserving student dignity and cultural expression.

Can you identify the racial or ethnic groups affected by this policy, program, practice, or decision? Do you know the potential impacts to these populations? If you don't know, how will you find out?

> Dress and grooming policies have historically had disproportionate impacts on Black students (particularly regarding natural hairstyles), students of color, religious minorities, and students expressing gender identity or cultural identity through dress.
>
> If applied without culturally responsive awareness, enforcement could unintentionally

reinforce disparities. Ongoing review of discipline data disaggregated by race, gender, disability status, and other demographics can help identify disproportionate impacts.

Were these populations involved in any way, at any point in the development, implementation, and evaluation of this policy? If so, when and how?

The policy reflects longstanding district governance standards. Continued implementation should include opportunities for student and family input, particularly from culturally and linguistically diverse communities, to ensure expectations respect cultural, religious, and identity-based expression.

What priorities and commitments are communicated by this policy?

The policy communicates a commitment to maintaining a safe and orderly learning environment. It also signals that participation in voluntary representation activities may require additional standards. Implicitly, it prioritizes safety and minimizing disruption.

To advance equity, implementation must also reflect commitments to student dignity, cultural responsiveness, and nondiscrimination.

Place

What kind of positive or negative environment are we creating?

What are the barriers to more equitable outcomes? (e.g. mandated, political, emotional, financial, programmatic or managerial)

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The policy creates an environment focused on safety and minimizing disruption. However, if enforcement is subjective, it could create an environment where certain students feel disproportionately monitored or targeted.

Barriers to equitable outcomes include implicit bias, unclear definitions of "disruption," inconsistent enforcement, and lack of cultural competency training. Financial barriers are minimal, but managerial and training barriers may exist.

Power

How is the power of decision-making shared with those it affects?

How have you intentionally involved the communities affected by this policy, program, practice, or decision?

The policy places primary responsibility with students and families, acknowledging their role in decision-making about dress and grooming. However, authority ultimately rests with the district in determining disruption or safety concerns.

To strengthen shared power, implementation can include student voice, family engagement, and transparent communication about expectations and enforcement practices.

Process

Does the policy, program, or decision improve, worsen, or make no change to existing disparities?

Does it create other unintended consequences?

The policy itself is neutral in language; however, its impact depends heavily on implementation. Without clear guidance and monitoring, dress and grooming policies can contribute to disproportionate discipline for students of color, LGBTQ+ students, or students expressing cultural or religious identity.

Unintended consequences may include exclusion from instructional time or extracurricular participation due to subjective interpretation of standards.

Plan

How will you reduce the negative impacts and address the barriers?

Negative impacts can be reduced by:

- Providing staff training on implicit bias and culturally responsive practices.

- Clearly defining what constitutes "disruption" and "health/safety threats."

- Monitoring enforcement data for disparities.

- Ensuring religious and cultural accommodations are honored.

- Establishing clear, restorative responses rather than exclusionary discipline.