

STANDARD SCHOOL ATTIRE: RESEARCH, ANALYSIS & RECOMMENDATIONS

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NOTE ABOUT THE AUTHOR

This report was researched and authored by Charles Badger, a Nashville public schools alumnus, 2007 graduate of Hillsboro High School, with an International Baccalaureate (IB) diploma. Badger was the lone student and lone "No" vote on the Standard School Attire Study committee, appointed by Director of Schools Dr. Pedro Garcia. The report that follows was personally delivered to Dr. Garcia and the School Board by the author, it served as the official "Minority Report" from the SSA committee.

Badger served as parliamentarian of the Inaugural Inter-High Director's Student Advisory Council to Dr. Garcia, as well as student-body president of Hillsboro High in the 2006-2007 year. He was also Captain of the Forensic/Debate team, lead prosecutor on the Hillsboro mock trial team, active in the Hillsboro Youth-in-Government team, and News Editor of the school newspaper—*The Hillsboro Reaction*, where he frequently editorialized on the standard attire controversy. One of Badger's columns was published on the editorial page of *The Tennessean*. Currently he is studying Pre-Law/Philosophy at Berea College in Berea Kentucky, ranked for twelve years by *U.S. News and World Report* as the #1 school in the South to earn a Bachelor's degree.

The report was compiled during the authors' senior year at Hillsboro and presented to the board and administration in April before the vote. What follows is largely the same report with a few updates and new information added since, but no original information was removed or altered. As a note on wording, the committee on which the author served is referred to in this report as "The Standard School Attire Committee", "the Standard Attire Committee," "SSA Committee," or sometime, simply "the committee."

ABSTRACT

This report has been compiled in response to the recent proposal for standardized school attire in all Metro-Nashville schools. It is the hope of this author that this report will provoke a thoughtful discussion about the ramifications a standardized school attire policy could potentially pose for Metro schools.

Central to the proposal for standardized school attire is the claim that standardizing students dress would reduce crime, gang and illegal drug activity in schools and improve the learning experience. This is especially true in the case of high schools, proponents argue. Furthermore, advocates of the policy claim it will reduce absenteeism, increase test scores and grades, reduce distractions to the learning process and improve the overall school climate.

This report does not argue that these claims are false; but, simply that they are not supported by data. This report points out four central facts:

- (1) Although the preponderance of crime, illegal drug and gang activity take place at the high school level (juxtaposed to elementary and middle schools), the policy of standardized school attire is virtually completely untested at the high school level. It is for this reason that the author proposes, if the School Board insists upon going forth with this standardized dress policy, it should be phased in, progressively. Starting the policy at the elementary level and phasing it in tier-by-tier would be preferably to a wholesale policy implantation, K-12, all at once.
- (2) There is no evidence that standardized dress policies reduce crime, violence, or drug and gang activity in schools. There is a comparable paucity of evidence that such a policy reduces absenteeism and tardiness and improves test scores, grades and overall academic performance. As the BBC puts it, "There has been no evidence **anywhere in the world** to show there is a connection between uniforms and standards," of performance.¹ Proponents cite a small number of school districts where certain unfavorable statistics decreased following the implementation of standardized dress. This report will demonstrate that simply because one event followed another, it does not mean that the first caused the second to happen. A reduction in crime, gang and drug

activity, following standardized dress is not weighty enough evidence upon which to conclude that a causal relationship exists.

- (3) To the extent that standardized dress does affect crime, gang and attendance rates, other factors are present and could well be the cause of the reduction. This report will cite two possible alternate causes of better student behavior:
 - a. Specific policies implemented during the same time as standardized dress in relevant school districts, and;
 - b. The existence of what psychologists and social scientists call "The Halo effect."
- (4) The degree to which statistics from other school districts are relevant and applicable to Davidson County-Nashville Schools is, at best, minimal.

The culmination of these points will cast doubt on the degree to which uniforms are a vehicle to improved safety conditions and academic performance in Metro-Nashville public schools.

LACK OF APPLICABILITY

*"While other school districts in the United States may infer usefulness from the Long Beach United School District study, they cannot draw conclusions from their study because the results cannot be generalized to other school districts within the United States...Too often, those in control of policy change within schools make decisions based on data results that are not [applicable] to their specific population. Policy makers discover the information and apply the findings to their situation, not understanding the information is not applicable to their school district."*²

I begin where the *Abstract* concluded—the lack of applicability of statistics from other school districts. The Committee studying the standardized dress policy for Metro-Nashville schools relies heavily upon statistics from Long Beach United School District (LBUSD) in Long Beach, California. Standardized school attire (SSA) advocates point to this district as a success story in implementing a standardized dress policy. The Long Beach district conducted an internal "study" assessing the purported effect its new dress code had on student behavior. This "study" is the one which Dr. Wilson references in the above quote. The LBUSD study reports that the Long Beach schools experienced a:

- 51% reduction in "fights"
- 74% reduction in "sex offenses"
- 50% reduction in "weapons offenses"
- 34% reduction in "assault and battery offenses"
- 18% reduction in "vandalism"
- and a 36% reduction in "overall school crime"

These decreases have come since the LBUSD implemented its SSA policy in 1994. The question policymakers must ask (rather than assume) is this: is the reduction in the above statistics due to the student dress policy? Joe Palumbo, a principal in the LBUSD, says it best, "Just slapping clothes on kids won't improve a school..."

Even the official spokesperson for the Long Beach Unified School District, Public Information Director Dick Van Der Laan admitted, “**We can't attribute the improvement exclusively to school uniforms...**”³ But Van Der Laan goes on to add rather smugly, “...but we think it's more than coincidental.” Well, this author, for one, is glad that Mr. Van Der Laan “thinks” uniforms reduce violence, but ought public policymakers create district-wide policies based upon what Mr. Van Der Laan, or any one person “thinks?” He admits he is not sure of the assertion, but he has a hunch. Is it sound decision-making to craft public policy based on someone's hunch? Just because it's enough evidence for the Long Beach district, does not mean it should be enough for policy makers here in Nashville.

This brings us back to Dr. Wilson's analysis. Set aside for a moment, the questions of how valid the LBUSD statistics are. Dr. Wilson makes the point that even if they are valid for the LBUSD, this does not mean they will be valid for Nashville. The statistics “...while useful for LBUSD in determining the impact of school uniform dress code on decreasing violence within *their* district, cannot be generalized to other school districts...,” Dr. Wilson writes.

UNTESTED AT THE HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL

One reason the statistics from Long Beach and elsewhere are not applicable is due to the nature of the policy proposal here. Our policymakers are considering a district-wide standard attire policy for all three tier levels—elementary, middle and high school. However, SSA is largely untested at the high school level. As Loren Siegel, Director of the Public Education Department for the American Civil Liberties Union points out, “virtually every uniform policy in the country” applies only to elementary and/or middle school students, not to high school students, despite the fact that uniforms are portrayed as a way to curb teenage violence.

A July 2006 GreatSchools, Inc. article notes:

“Experts say that the number of middle and high schools with uniforms is **about half** the number of elementary schools. Why, if uniforms are intended to curb school violence and improve academics, are they not more prevalent in middle and high schools, where these goals are just as important as they are in elementary schools?”⁴

That's a good question. Professor Dennis L. Evans of the University of California at Irvine's Department of Education wrote in the October 1996 issue of the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) Bulletin:

“To begin with, the programs that have gained parental support, media attention and thus, political advocacy are, **for the most part, found in elementary schools** where the age of the children dictates that the problems school uniforms allegedly solve do not exist to any significant degree in the first place.”⁵

Thus, Professor Evans concludes, “school uniforms simply don't work at the high school level”. A Michigan State University study arrives at the same conclusion. The research conducted by K. Seamon, J.

Schultink, and A. Slocum, reached the same conclusion as Dr. Wilson and Professor Evans. They found that "...uniforms are not effective on a high school level."⁶

Two high school administrators declined to institute standard attire in their schools because of the potential downside. Sherwood C. Dees, superintendent of Limestone Community High School District 310 in Bartonville, Illinois considered standard attire for his district and published his findings in the July/August 2002 edition of *The Illinois School Board Journal*, he writes: "Current studies show no significant correlation has been made between requiring uniforms and variables such as attendance, substance abuse, common behavior problems and academic achievement." Thus he rejected the policy, after concluding that, "the remedy of requiring school uniforms **far outweighs the problems it would intend to solve.**"⁷ In Brooklyn, NY, Loreen Princz, J.D., Legal Studies Director & Dean of Students at The High School for Public Service found the same, "lack of empirical evidence to prove whether or not the uniforms are increasing or reducing the violence," and thus rejected SSA for her school as well.

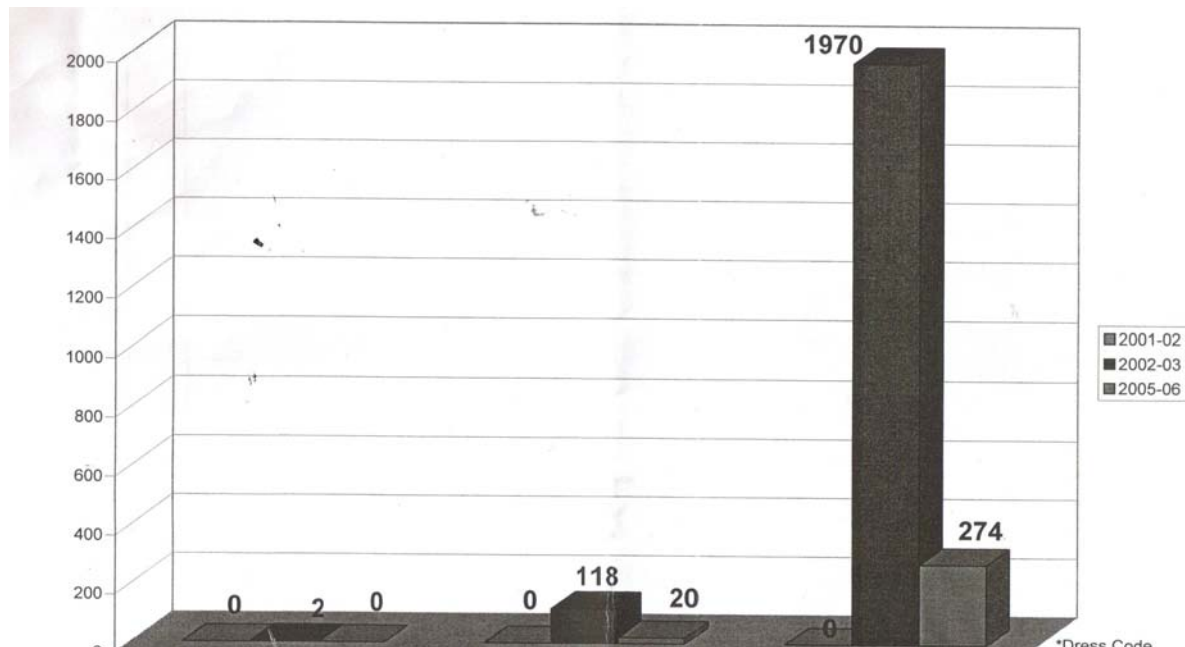
Even a supporter of the policy, in California—Principal Paul C. Loesch—offered the following advice to fellow principals, in *Principal* magazine. "**Don't depend on uniforms alone to improve behavior**; incorporate them as part of a larger initiative,"⁸ if you must, that is.

In the case of the LBSD, where SSA supporters derive most of their data from, there are 12 high schools. Only one of them has standardized school attire. Even that one is a magnet school. (Source: http://www.lbusd.k12.ca.us/uniforms/article_3.asp) In short, there are **relatively no** SSA policies in place at public high schools in America. Even when they do exist at the high school level, the results are, at best, mixed. A graph showing the scarcity of standard attire in public high schools appears in Appendix A.

STANDARD ATTIRE CASE STUDIES: SOME SHOCKING DISCOVERIES

The committee tasked with studying standardized school attire in Nashville assessed the results of the policy where it has been implemented in other districts. One such district has already been discussed—Long Beach, California. Another school district that put a SSA policy in place is Memphis, Tennessee. The Committee obtained charts and graphs from the Memphis City School (MCS) district assessing the effect of its standard attire policy on the number of dress code violations, disciplinary referrals to the office, fights in school, and the attendance rate.

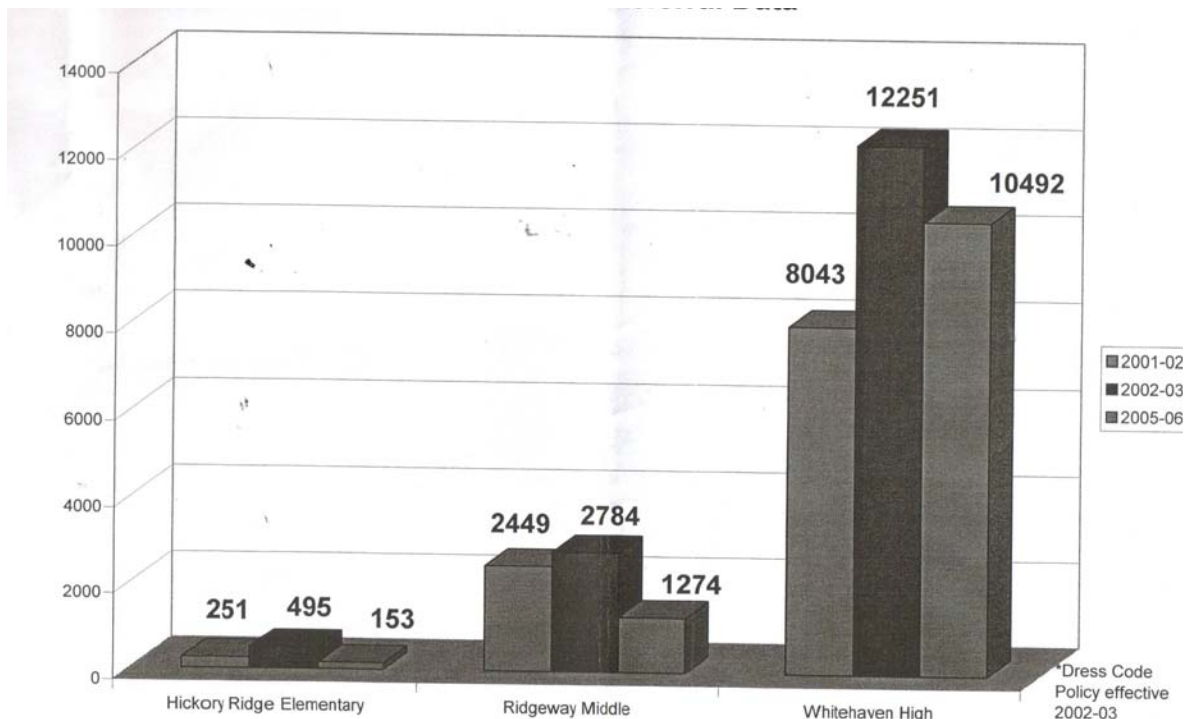
Dress Code Violations



Above is a chart obtained by the Committee, compiled by the Memphis school district. It presents data on Dress Code Violations (DCV) as the title indicates. Note the asterisk to the lower right-hand corner of the graph; the standard attire policy went into effect in the 2002-2003 School Year. According to the key on the right side of the chart, the '02-'03 year is the second bar in each tier—the darkest shaded bar. As you can see from the graph, DCV increased at every single tier following the implementation of SSA. It is also true, that at each level, the numbers decreased following the initial year of implementation. While this is true, it is more important to note that while the number decreases in the '05-'06 Year, it is still higher than it was *prior to* implementation of standardized dress.

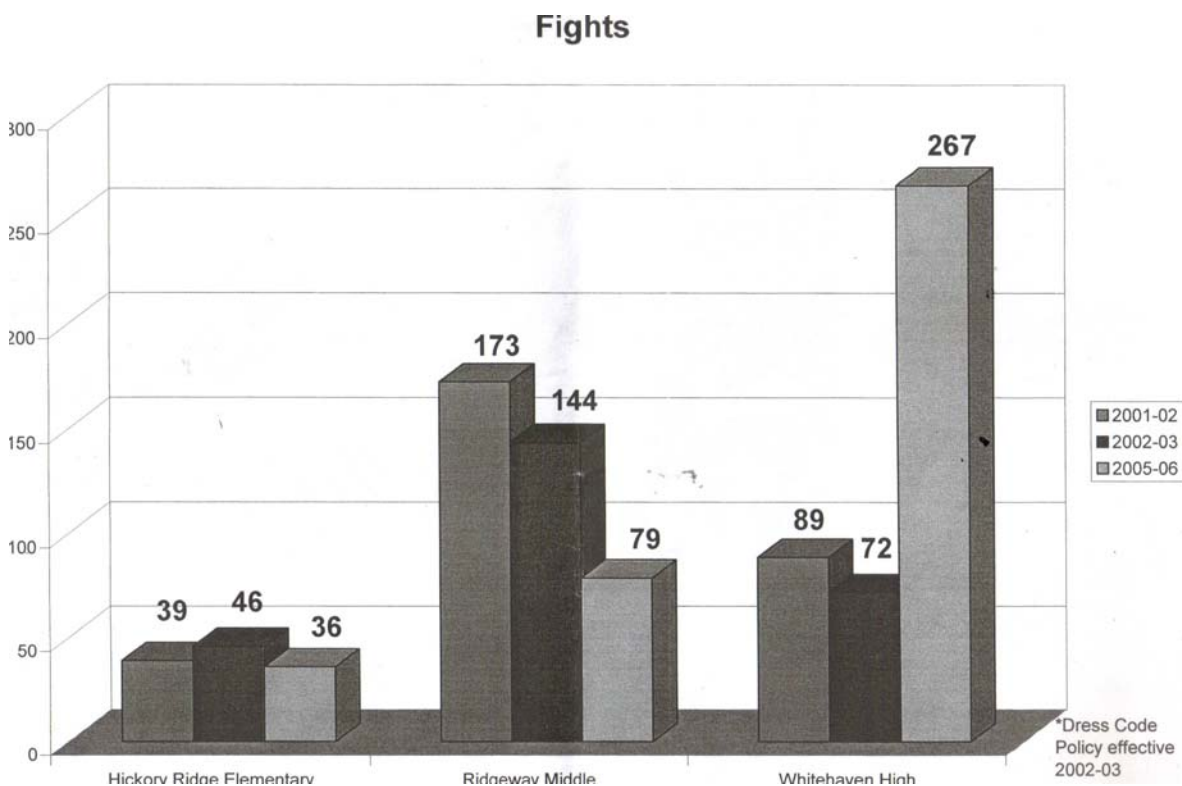
At the middle school level, DCV increased to 118 in the first year of implementation. While they did decrease to 20 in the most recent year, that is still higher than what it was prior to the SSA policy. The graph shows the same trend at the high school level. However, the increase is even more astounding. 1,970 dress code violations in the first year of implementation. Once again, while the number decreases to 274 in '05-'06, that number is still higher than it was prior to the SSA policy.

Office Referrals/Disciplinary Infractions



Observe the graph above. Here again, the same trend appears. However, most noteworthy is that the pattern trickles down to the elementary level, also. There, discipline referrals increased to nearly 500 in the first year of implementation. In middle school, the increase was to “2,784.” And in high school the number is “12,251.” That is downright startling—over 12,000 discipline referrals in one year. Keep in mind, this data is not district-wide; it’s just for one high school. That is **over 12,000 disciplinary referrals at one school**. Equally disturbing is that according to information given to the Committee, there are only about 1,987 students at Whitehaven High School. Thus, there is a shocking rate of repeat offenses.

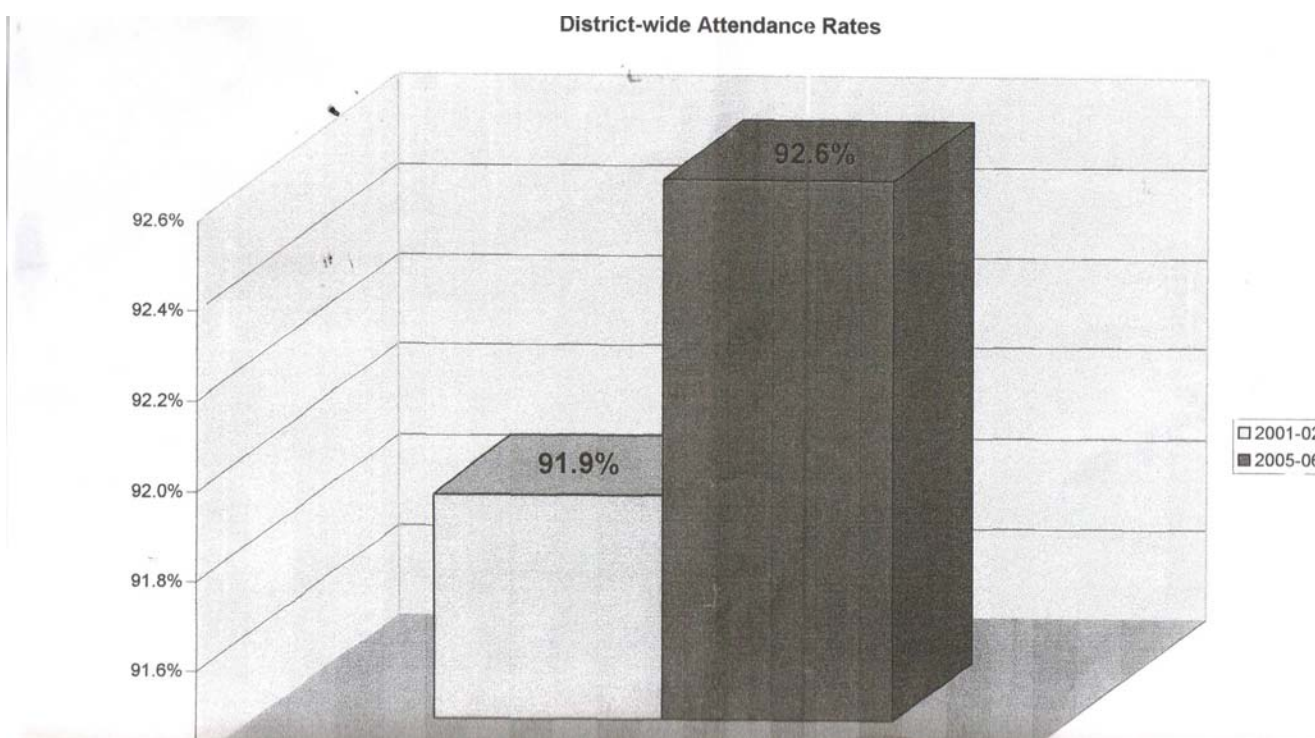
Note also, I pointed out in the previous graph of DCV, that the number in the ‘05-’06 Year, although it decreases, is still higher than pre-uniform number. In this graph of disciplinary referrals, that is not true at the elementary and middle school levels. That’s one positive aspect of these numbers. However, it does still hold true at the high school level, thus providing *further* evidence that uniforms “do not work” at the high school level, as Professor Evans put it.



Observe the above graph. It shows the number of fights in MCS between 2001 and 2006. This graph is perhaps the most interesting. Allow me to first draw your attention to the middle school data at the center of the graph. This is the only set of data out of the three graphs that shows what standardized school attire advocates claim—a steady reduction in fights. Note, however, this is only true at the middle school level. In the elementary school, fights increased in the first year the SSA policy went into effect. There were seven more fights when the students were in standardized dress than when they were not. What a glowing success story. Is it then appropriate to deduct from this data that standardized school attire causes *more* fights rather than *fewer* fights?

Furthermore, observe the data at the high school level. Indeed, fights decreased negligibly in the first year of implementation. However, in the following year, Whitehaven High School experienced more fights than ever—an unprecedented 267! That is exactly three times the number of fights prior to implementation of SSA. Again, I ask, are we then to conclude that standard school attire causes a **three-fold** increase in fights at the high school level? The committee quoted Whitehaven’s principal in one of its presentations to the Metro School Board as saying, fights are not a “daily problem” at his school, with standard attire. If the author’s memory serves him correctly, there are 180 days in a school year. 267 is substantially *greater* than 180, thus fights are a daily problem at that school.

When statistics from Long Beach show reductions in crime, weapons offenses, and drugs, uniform proponents say it is evidence that standardized school attire causes reduction in those statistics. However, when the proverbial shoe is on the other foot and the data show the exact opposite of what SSA proponents claim, they dismiss the findings and scoff at the suggestion that standardized dress causes an increase in fights and disciplinary referrals. However, that is precisely what the data above show. Note one final graph from Memphis City Schools.



This graph shows the district-wide attendance rate. The above data from Memphis City School shows, at best, a negligible increase in attendance with SSA. *Does a 0.7% increase warrant wholesale change in Metro school policy?* Mark Schoenfield’s graphs in Appendix B show similar Memphis data, compared to Davidson County, over the same time period. The increase looks even less impressive when compared against our current numbers here in Davidson, Co.

The committee was provided with these graphs by a Memphis principal on a visit to his school in the Fall. These graphs didn’t show what they wanted so they were trashed and Memphis was summoned to provide new graphs. Memphis did so. The committee used these fourteen new graphs in its February

presentation to the School Board. All fourteen of them are anecdotal. None of them offer hard data on the policy effects.

The Co-Chair of the SSA Committee, Principal Monica Dillard of John Overton High, challenged the authors' assertion on this matter at a committee presentation to parents at Hillsboro High one evening. The author told the gathered parents that the Memphis graphs only provided anecdotal observations of principals and teachers. I noted that none of the graphs showed decreases in fights, gang or drug activity or improvements in students grades, attendance, behavior, overall school performance, pro-school attitudes, and the like. Dr. Dillard took issue with the author's assertion, telling the audience the graphs were not anecdotal, as I claimed, and that they did in fact address the statistics I mentioned. The author handed a copy of the graphs to the distinguished committee co-chair and asked her to point out the graphs that showed such data. She was unable to do so. In fact, she did not even look. In actuality, no such data exists.

All fourteen of the graphs in questions were based on surveys conducted on principals and parents. This alone, discounts them from being regarded as empirical evidence. Further diminishing the value of those surveys, they only had a **13%** response rate from parents. (701 responses out of 6,000 surveys mailed) They even have a 77.3% response rate from principals. Which, although higher, seems rather odd for *principals*, it seems they could compel the principals to respond to the survey--they're not hard to find, after all. You can track the principals down, yet almost one out of every four didn't respond. This author finds that peculiar.

Isaac Litton Middle School, Nashville, TN:

Along with these fourteen anecdotally-based graphs, the committee presented twelve graphs from Isaac Litton Middle School. While unlike the Memphis data they are not anecdotally-based, there is a bigger problem with these charts. Litton just implemented standard attire this year. Each graph on slides 49-54 of the committee's presentation shows one bar for the 2005-2006 School Year; the second bar shows data for the 2006-2007 School Year. But, there's just one problem—the 2006-2007 isn't over! Even as I write this and as you read it, the year is still ongoing. The data was *even less complete* in February when it was presented to the School Board. Upon questioning from David Fox at the School Board meeting, Principal Hutchinson reported that the first bar represented 8 months, and the second bar represented 5 months. The data for the '06-'07 year has not been annualized. Thus, it is incomplete.

Most damning, upon examination of the numbers, we see that Litton is on pace to meet, and in many cases exceed their '05-'06 numbers. (These charts may be viewed at: <[http://mnps.org/AssetFactory.aspx?did=14930#427,55,Standard School Attire What Are the Next Steps?>](http://mnps.org/AssetFactory.aspx?did=14930#427,55,Standard%20School%20Attire%20What%20Are%20the%20Next%20Steps?>)) According to the school's own charts 8.2% of students "cut class" last year. *So far*, this year, the number is 6.2%. If this trend continues, an equal **or greater** number of students will cut class at Litton Middle School this year *with* standard attire than last year *without* standard attire. The same is true of fights which presently stand at 17.4%. Last year the number was 20.8%. Again, if that trend continues they will have an equal **or greater** number of fights this year juxtaposed to last year.

This is true of the total number of incidents at each grade level, as well. About 18% of 5th graders were involved in an "incident" last year. So far this year, it has been 15.7%. 21.4% for sixth graders were involved in an "incident" last year; and 12.5% of them were this year. 22.2% for seventh graders last year;

18.5% for them this year. And get this!...at the eight grade level, this year's number of incidents has already exceeded last year's number. Last year, 17.4% of eight graders were involved in an "incident." So far this year, 18.8% have been. That means in just over a semester Litton's eight graders were involved in more "incidents" than they were in the both semesters of the previous year, combined. Moreover, this is data collected at just past the half-way point. The number of "incidents" will continue to go up!

In the case of "inappropriate dress," the number has skyrocketed this year (just like dress code violations increased in Memphis.) It was 16.8% last year. It is 34% this year—a whopping 17.2% increase. Therefore, twice as many incident of "inappropriate dress" have been recorded in just over a semester as were recorded in all of last year. Once again, the year isn't over. The number can go only one direction from here—up. In all categories, that is precisely what they are doing. In most every case, Litton's number of offenses are on pace to exceed last year's numbers. **Therefore, from the Litton graphs it appears there will be more fights, more use of "profane/indecent language", more students "cutting class," and more instances of "disrespectful behavior" under standard attire than there were without it.** This much we can deduct. The Litton graphs also show us that there are more referrals for "inappropriate dress" and more eighth graders involved in overall "incidents." This much we can see clearly.

Long Beach, California

Adding to the list of experts pointing out the gaps in evidence establishing the link between student behavior and dress code, another scholarly article in a peer-reviewed journal makes this case. A report in *The Journal of Negro Education* gives us cause to doubt the crime statistics coming out of the Long Beach school district. The JNE notes that the State of California changed the "reporting criteria" and "definitions" for the relevant school crimes. As such, the statistics from LBUSD "have experienced revisions in interpretation and definition at the state level," ergo "the numbers alone **may not be an accurate indicator of decline or increase in these categories.**" More disturbing, The JNE found that incidents of assault with a deadly weapon have "steadily increased", rather than decreased in the LBUSD from 6 incidents in 1993 to 16 incidents in 1995, to 24 incidents by 1999.⁹ This finding is as disturbing as the results from Memphis, where *according to the district's own data*, fights **increased three-fold** with the standard attire policy. The JNE report is authored by Rebecca Lopez, Associate Professor in the Department of Social Work at California State University, Long Beach.

As we can see from the data, these negative trends were apparent in Long Beach, Memphis, and at Isaac Litton here in Nashville, after they implemented SSA policies. As one researcher points out, "...despite the claims that the improved disciplinary numbers being issued by Long Beach, California, are attributable to uniforms, **the data seem to contradict those assertions.**"

Miami-Dade & Polk Counties, Florida:

Not surprisingly, this is true of other districts also. In Miami-Dade County, Florida, Sabrina Walters, local reporter for *The Miami Herald* reported "The drastic decline [in crime] uniform supporters had envisioned did not occur."¹⁰ Researcher Darlene Williams calls the results "at best, disappointing and, at worst, alarming."¹¹

According to the Miami-Dade County Public Schools Office of Education Evaluation and Management, in middle schools, where uniforms were mandatory, fights nearly doubled from: **186** in 1996-

97 to 284 in 1997-98, an increase of 98! Fights increased at non-uniform schools as well from 152 to 201. That's an increase of 49. As the Miami-Dade County Public Schools Office of Education Evaluation and Management study concluded, "If school uniforms promoted educative behavior, as powerfully as conjectured, the incidents of safety infractions should have declined dramatically subsequent to the establishment of uniform policies..." The precise opposite happened in Miami-Dade. "This study has not proven the unequivocal effectiveness of mandatory uniforms," they concluded.

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For the record, negative statistics did decline at some of the schools with standard attire in effect in Miami-Dade. However, the same decreases were discovered at schools *without* standard attire. Comparable increases in school attendance can be seen in LBUSD schools. Attendance increased in schools with standard attire, but it also increased in schools without it.

Another Florida district, Polk County, has also instituted standard attire. There, **truancy has increased** every year since the implementation of standard attire. The local newspaper—*The Polk Co. News Chief* decries the problem in an article under the headline "School District Plans to Address Rising Truancy Problem"¹³ which topped 506 in the 1998-1999 school year. With the advent of the standard attire policy they are "already on pace" to break that record.

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Just this February in Philadelphia two students attacked a 60-year-old math teacher at Germantown High School. The teacher, Frank Burd, was tripped in the hallway by the students, hit his head on a locker, and was beaten mercilessly by a 15-year-old and a 17-year-old during a class change. Burd was beaten so severely he was left unconscious on the floor, then hospitalized with a neck broken in two places and a gash to his head. The week after the attack, Burd was still listed as in "critical" condition in the intensive care unit. He had to undergo surgery, his recovery, which is still ongoing, will take months. More than a month after the attack, Burd now wears a halo to keep his neck immobilized, as seen in the photo at right.



Above: 60-year-old Philadelphia Teacher Frank Burd after being attacked by two students in standard school attire

There is one unique thing about Germantown High school, where Burd was attacked. It's a standard attire school. That's right, two students in khaki pants and a white polo shirt viciously beat a 60-year-old teacher in the hallway of their school. The students beat the teacher because he took away their iPod.

The story was widely reported in the national and local media. A story by *The Philadelphia Inquirer* quoted Jerry Jordan, vice president of the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers as saying, "safety at Germantown High had been a continuing concern and indicative of a larger problem." "This is not new," Jordan added, "It's not just Germantown High School. It's other schools as well."¹⁴ It's a district-wide problem in Philadelphia and the whole district has school uniforms.

CONFUSION OF CORRELATION & CAUSATION

Several times now, I have posed the question—do fluctuations in statistical data denote a causal relationship with a standard attire policy? The answer is “no.” Simply because Event B follows Event A, it does not necessarily mean that Event A **caused** Event B. The arguments in favor of standardized school attire are based largely on the premise that SSA reduces crime, violence, gang and drug activity. This argument rests on a common flaw in logic—to confuse

THE FAMILY CIRCUS



"I wish they didn't turn on that seatbelt sign so much! Every time they do, it gets bumpy."

to confuse *correlation between* two events with *causation of* an event. For instance, it is common knowledge that more people drown in swimming pools during the summertime. This is so, because due to warmer weather more people swim during the summer than in other seasons. It is also true that more people eat ice cream in the summertime, largely for the same reason—warmer weather. Both of these facts are true. Event A (drowning in swimming pools) and Event B (eating ice cream) are correlated because they both occur during the same time of year. On this basis, alone, do we then, conclude that eating ice cream *causes* people to drown in swimming pools?...Of course not. But, it is no more logical to make this assertion than it is to assume that standardized school attire *causes* students to be better behaved, abuse drugs less, and commit fewer crimes.

Observe the image “The Family Circus” cartoon. The boy observes that the flashing of the seatbelt sign and turbulence coincide. Thus, these two events are *correlated*.

On that basis alone, the boy assumes that the pilot turning on the seatbelt sign *causes* the turbulence rather than the other way around.

In the case of this boy, his flawed logic is obvious, just as the flaw is evident in the ice cream-drowning analogy. However, it is not so obvious when applied to the current subject-matter of standardized school attire and school violence. While the flaw in logic may be less obvious, it is also no less flawed and no more accurate.

Scholars and experts in the field of sociology, psychology and child development have argued the exact same points put forth in this report. Thus, these arguments are based on well-documented, scientific research conducted by professionals. One such report, which appeared in a scholarly, peer-reviewed, professional journal finds that school uniforms do not reduce crime, gang or drug activity in schools. A February 13, 1998 report in *The Journal of Educational Research* (Volume 92, Number 1, pg. 53-62) finds “...that student uniforms **have no direct effect on substance use, behavioral problems, or attendance.**”

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The authors of the report are Professor David L. Brunnsma, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Sociology at the University of Missouri and Professor Kerry A. Rockquemore, Ph.D., former Assistant Professor of Sociology at Pepperdine and Boston University, current Associate Sociology Professor at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Dr. Brunnsma and Prof. Rockquemore’s report is based on research conducted by The National Educational Longitudinal Study.

Their report looks at, among other things, the aforementioned statistics from the Long Beach, CA school district. Addressing the confusion of correlation and causation, they write, “Seemingly, the correlation between these two events [creation of a uniform and reduction in crime] is reason enough for Long Beach administrators to state that a causal relationship exists... **the argument that uniforms have caused the decrease in school crime is simply not substantiated.**”

The Brunsmas-Rockquemore study found the argument that standardized school attire impacts student behavior is “largely fueled by conjecture and anecdotal evidence.” Rather than follow actual scientific processes to prove standard attire affects student behavior, proponents largely rely on self-serving observations conducted by those whom have already implemented the policy and are now trying to justify its use.

One example of this is in Savannah, Georgia, where the local news station—CBS affiliate WTOG—quoted local principal Toney Jordan as saying, “ ‘I think uniforms are the best thing since slice bread.’ Jordan says the biggest benefit of uniforms is better academic performance. *He says* his students are paying attention more, getting into trouble less, and even though he has no definitive numbers, says test scores are up,” the article reads.¹⁶ How would a principal know that test scores are up, without data to corroborate such an assertion? The principal is not in the classroom, so how does he know “students are paying attention more,” as he claims? Fact is, a principal would have no way of knowing such information, unless he or she had data that reached that conclusion. Jordan’s assertion is, therefore, based solely on conjecture and, in all likelihood, wishful thinking. However, the case that standardized attire impacts student behavior rests solely on anecdotal “evidence” such as this. Such assertions are, as Dr. Brunsmas puts it, “simply not substantiated.”

Unlike these unsubstantiated, conjecture-fueled “studies” based on anecdotal evidence, the Brunsmas-Rockquemore study was actually scientific. While Principal Jordan, like so many others, based his statements on a personal feeling, Dr. Brunsmas actually calculated the correlation coefficient between standardized attire and student academic performance. In fact, this was the only category in which Brunsmas’s study found a positive result for uniforms. It was, in actuality, *a very slight* relationship between uniforms and standardized test achievement scores. The correlation coefficient was **0.05**, indicating a very slight possibility that a relationship exists between the two variables. Thus, Dr. Brunsmas found, standardized school attire is “**a very poor predictor**” of standardized test scores and the relationship is much weaker than its proponents purport it to be. Notice that 0.05 is much closer to zero than is to one. As such, the relationship between uniforms and behavior is **so statistically insignificant; the relationship is for all practical purposes nonexistent**. Their report concludes, “...students wearing uniforms did not appear to have any significantly different academic preparedness, pro-school attitudes, or peer group structures...than other students.”¹⁷

That report was authored in 1998, and years later Dr. Brunsmas continues to maintain that standardized school attire is not proven to improve student behavior and reduce crime in schools. Just this year, Dr. Brunsmas wrote in the *Journal of the National Association of Elementary School Principals* (Volume 85 Number 3, January/February 2006, Page 50-53), another peer-reviewed, scholarly, professional journal that, “[uniforms] have little if any impact on student behavior, achievement, and self-esteem”¹⁸

Dr. Brunsmas and Prof. Rockquemore are not alone in their findings. Dr. Richard Wilson’s study reached the same conclusion. Of the reductions in crime experienced in the LBUSD, he writes:

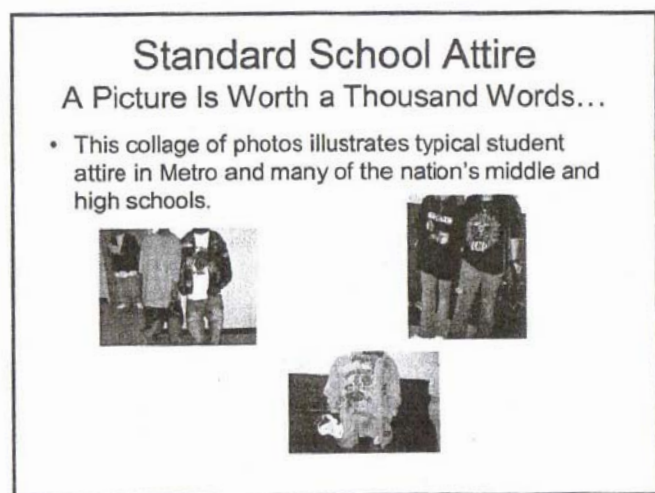
"Their findings suggested that LBUSD campuses are safer, although the study findings did not offer clear evidence that uniform dress code policies decreased violence...The study did not control for other variables that may have influenced the declines reported in their research. Moreover, **their might have been other uncontrolled variables that occurred during this period that could have influenced the declines reported in their research.**"¹⁹

Dr. Wilson also reaches a number of other conclusions regarding standard attire. He notes that, "Identifying gang members would be difficult once uniform school attire is introduced," and that, "Contrary to belief, economic differences among students are hardly blurred by the wearing of uniforms." **"No evidence exists** to support the view that school uniforms create a better academic school environment..." and he even concludes that implementing school uniforms to reduce violence is **"dangerous"** because "it provides communities with a **false sense of security.**"²⁰

In this vein, the words of Metro School Board member Mark North are instructive. North noted before casting one of the two votes against SSA that it was tantamount to dressing "bad kids" in "good kid costumes." He noted the comparison has often been made between school uniforms and professional attire in the workplace. But in the real world, as North so eloquently put it, "I'm not a lawyer because I wear a suit to the courthouse. I wear a suit to the courthouse, because I'm a lawyer." And what makes a police officer and a firefighter is not their uniforms. Because without courage and bravery, North noted, "the uniform is just a costume." And so it is with students. The idea that putting a low-performing D-student in khakis and a polo shirt will magically transform him or her into an A-student is patently absurd and totally unsupported by facts.

Professor Dennis L. Evans of the University of California, whom I also cited earlier, strikes a note similar to those of Doctors Brunsmas, Rockquemore and Wilson. The "notion" that uniforms increase academic performance "has no evidence to support it," he writes. On that point, he draws upon his extensive experience as an educator to note:

"To the contrary, in my 21 years of experience as a high school principal some of the most outlandish students, from the point of view of **my personal biases** regarding their clothing and/or hair styles, were also some of the most outstanding scholars and school leaders. The important word in that last sentence is 'some', because **kids are not 'uniform' and they are impossible to categorize by their attire.**"²¹



Despite, Professor Evans's admonition not to typecast all students into one monolithic mold, such stereotyping has crept into the discussion over standardized school attire in our own school district. Case-in-point, observe the photo at left. This is a slide from the Standard School Attire's presentation delivered to the School Board

on October 24, 2006. These photos purport to illustrate “typical student attire in Metro...schools,” according to the caption. Readers should be reminded that the author of this report is one of those students included in the broad “Metro high school students” generalization. [at the time of writing this report] As one of those Metro students, I take personal umbrage, on behalf of the vast majority of Metro students, at the suggestion that we dress in the fashion displayed. Moreover, we find it offensive to suggest that we do. The suggestion that I and all, or even most, of my peers are attired in this fashion on a daily basis is as offensive as it is ill-informed. The author showed the above photos to peers at his school and it was met with hearty laughter as student after student scoffed at the grossly misinformed assertion that we dress in the manner these photos depict. Those who believe such myths would do well to heed the words of Professor Evans, quoted above.

Speaking of which, Professor Evans echoes the same theme as Dr. Wilson. “The wearing of school uniforms will, at best, be **cosmetic** and will not change the gang mentality nor reduce the potential of anti-social, gang-related behavior on or off campus. Ironically, **the wearing of school uniforms might even make it easier to be a gang member** since school administrators would no longer be able to easily observe the trappings of the gangs.”

This is a true statement. Currently, the gang problem in Metro schools is easily recognizable as gang members are clad in their colors. If Metro schools are transformed into a sea of monolithic bodies, united by a common color scheme, gang members will blend right in with the crowd. Are we to believe that gang members will renounce membership in their gangs simply because they are forced to wear khaki pants and a polo shirt? Gangs will still be just as prevalent a force on school campuses with or without standard attire. As Prof. Evans points out, standardized school attire would actually exacerbate the problem. Principals from Memphis whom the committee interviewed admitted as much under further scrutiny from our School Board. The acknowledged that gang members simply found other ways to display their affiliations.

Even beyond the gang issue, catching wrongdoers and rule-breakers in large crowds would be more difficult as well. Currently, one could say “Hey you...In this red shirt—put that down.” With standardized school attire, school officials would be relegated to using vague generalizations like, “Hey you...In the white polo shirt and khaki pants—not you, the other one...” This alone presents a daunting task to already overextended school officials. Which brings me to the issue of enforcement.

GOOD LUCK ENFORCING THAT

It is for the above reasons that many school districts, which had previously fallen in love with the idea of standardized attire, are now getting rid of their restrictive dress policies. School districts across the country that previously had SSA are doing away with the policies, having concluded, through experience, that standard attire does not work. These schools districts include: Las Cruces, New Mexico,²² where the district dropped their policy in 2004. Other districts have done so in Florida, Kansas, New Hampshire, and at least fifty schools in California, according to *The New York Times*.²³

The same trend is taking place overseas, where schools in Great Britain are eagerly abolishing school uniforms. A 2003 BBC headline gleefully proclaims: “School Abolishes Uniform.” One British principal quoted in the article, voiced the complaint that “...[the] constant battle over uniforms **distracted** staff from the job in hand,” he said.

Exactly, how did standard attire “distract” teachers from the job at hand? *The Times* article gives us a clue. Their September 13, 2002 article reports, “Many public schools caught up in school uniform craze of 1990’s are giving up on it, finding that requiring students to wear **uniforms caused too many problems**; teachers say they are forced to spend ten minutes of class time each day trying to figure out who had waivers and who was breaking rules on wearing uniform...”²⁴

The irony of standardized school attire is this—one of the number one objectives proponents argue this policy will achieve is to reduce distractions in the classroom. On the contrary, accounts from teachers whom have actually had to teach students attired in standardized dress, show the exact opposite. SSA actually causes *more* in-classroom disruptions and distractions. This is true because enforcing a uniform policy is a daunting task, which some even call, “a nightmare.” Darlene Williams reports on difficulties encountered in enforcing standard attire policies.

“Some schools will not allow a stripe or trim on shirt collars or pants legs while others permit them...at a different school, a principal may base a decision on the *size* of a stripe and if the “spirit” of the policy is honored.”

“Often shades of an official color cause disagreements between parents and school staff. A school principal said, regarding shades of color, “If I had to pick the biggest problem, it would be the color blue. The (school sanctioned) navy is very dark blue . . . but we see royal blue, sky blue and jeans that are faded”

“A middle school student at Boone Middle School in Haines City was recently suspended over the color of his sweater. School administrators claimed that the sweater was black and his mother insisted that it was navy blue, an approved color. His mother contacted the manufacturer to verify that it was blue. She was told that the company did not make that particular style in black, so it was definitely blue. Despite the evidence, her son, an honor student with an excellent record, was suspended during the week of the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Tests (F-CATS).”²⁵

“One of the most egregious acts of enforcement occurred on August 12, 1999. A sixth-grade girl, an honor student, wore a school T-shirt and a pair of navy “Capri” pants which her parents had specifically purchased in accordance with the written uniform policy provided by the school. The parent reported, “When I saw my daughter, I knew instantly that something was wrong.” The mother had been called to the school and informed that her daughter’s “Capri” pants did not meet the uniform requirements. The reason the assistant principal gave was that the pants contained ‘4% spandex’. According to the uniform policy, spandex clothing is forbidden. When the mother later asked her daughter how the school official had determined the fabric content of her pants, her daughter informed her that the overzealous administrator had reached inside of the child’s pants to

read the tag. Despite calls to district offices and law enforcement, no punitive action was taken against the administrator"²⁶

Another account involves a student whose mother picked him up from school wearing a shirt that didn't belong to him with a large letter "L" written on the sleeve in permanent marker; his shorts, also not his, were too large, stained and faded. Upon questioning the child, the mother discovered that, despite her best efforts at compliance, her child's clothing was deemed in violation of the school's uniform policy. Neither she nor her husband were called to bring the child a new, "compliant" change of clothing; rather a loaner uniform was forced upon the child."²⁷

Frankly, I should think that the potential for these kinds of abuses to occur should provide a sufficient enough deterrent to going forth with a standard attire policy.

ADDITIONAL LIMITATIONS

Let's return to the case of the LBUSD. Professor Lopez's JNE report gives one reason why the statistics hold minimal value. There were "revisions" and changes in "reporting criteria" and relevant definitions at the state level, thus the statistics are not "an accurate indicator of decline or increase in crime, gang and drug activity, absenteeism, tardiness, etc." To change the criteria without a commiserate adjustment in the method used to gauge success is akin to moving the goal post in the middle of a football game or changing the scale on a graph.

Another reason the LBUSD statistics should be regarded with a great deal of caution is the expulsion rate. The expulsion rate in the LBUSD has consistently gone up since the uniform policy took effect. The 2000-2001 School Year is the most distant year for which statistics are available via the LBUSD website. In that year, 8 expulsions were ordered, in the following year, 34 expulsions were ordered, in the 2002-2003 Year 40 expulsions were ordered, in the 2003-2004 Year 61 expulsions were ordered. **That is a whopping 87% increase in the span of just four years.**

The relevance of that is this, if a school district is consistently expelling the troublemakers, those troublemakers will not be around the following year to be including in that year's crime statistics. To put it more succinctly, according to the JNE report, the LBUSD had 57 sex offenses in 1993, if they expelled all 57 of them (which we can't know because expulsion data for that year is not available), then those students wouldn't be around the following year to be included in the "sex offenses" statistic of 1994. Thus the reduction in sex offenses would **not be due to the existence of a SSA**, but the mere fact that the *sexual offenders* were expelled.

As such, it is highly misleading to present the data showing reductions in crime, sex offenses, fights, etc., without also showing the expulsion rate. It would therefore be grossly inaccurate to say the standardized school attire resulted in the reduction of those statistics. It is quite possible, and more likely, that the district simply expelled those whom committed the offenses. If all of the fighters were expelled in 1994, they would no longer be in the school district in 1995. Thus the reduction in fights from one year to the next is not a function of dress code policies, but, instead, the expulsion rate. It is *more probable* that SSA in Long Beach did not cause any fewer fights, gun offenses or gang and drug activity; instead, the high number of expulsions simply took the troublemakers out of the pool from which the statistics were gathered (ergo: the school district).

An additional limitation of crime statistics from any school district—not just Long Beach—is that whatever statistics are presented, represent only what is *reported*. There could be countless other fights, thefts, drug use and gang activity that simply don't make it into the crime statistics for whatever reason. No adults may have been present to witness the infraction and report it. Or a teacher or other faculty member may have witnessed it but viewed it too trivial or insignificant to report. Or in the cases where students were the only persons present, witnesses can be intimidated and bullied into silence. Any of these reasons, and probably a dozen others, could account for the perceived reductions in the statistical data.

How is it, then, that Long Beach school officials can continue to claim that standard attire caused a reduction in these statistics? As Marylou Tousignant writes in *The Washington Post*, "What's more, it's still unproven...that having Johnny wear a tie to school, and Susie a plaid skirt, will help them learn better."²⁸

Yet that does not stop school officials in districts that implement SSA from claiming that, and basing these assertions purely on personal observations. This is true not only in Long Beach, but other school districts that implement the policy as well. Seattle, Washington has the policy for 900 of its middle school students, according to the U.S. government's *Manual on School Uniforms*.²⁹ A principal of one Seattle middle school, Dr. John German, says, "This year [with SSA] the demeanor in the school has improved 98 percent." Wow, that's impressive! Especially considering the fact that "school demeanor" is an abstract concept that cannot be quantified into a percentage. Dr. German goes a step further than the Long Beach, CA school district. Rather than finding causal relationships in places where they do not exist, this Seattle principal creates an entirely new statistics of his own—"demeanor in the school."

Linda Lumsden, Associate Editor of the Educational Research Information Center (ERIC) Digest at the University of Oregon's College of Education points out the weakness of these kinds of poorly-supported assertions. "The weakness of anecdotal evidence is that people may attribute specific positive (or negative) effects to uniforms based on changes they observe following the implementation of a uniform policy. However, *unless other variables are controlled for*, it is possible that the changes are really the result of **other factors, not the uniforms.**" Thus it is impossible to state that uniforms caused the perceived statistical reduction. To indulge the supposition that uniforms are a "stand-alone solution to the safety concerns and discipline problems that plague many schools today" is "clearly **naïve**," Lumsden asserts.

The Seamon, Schultink, and Slocum study from Michigan State University also found that, "**Very little conclusive research exists** on student dress uniform policy" and thus, "...uniforms' relative effectiveness remains unclear primarily due to a lack of research. Research is often difficult to conduct because the implementation of school uniforms accompanies changes in personnel, curriculum, and other policies." On the reduction in crime in the LBUSD, Seamon, Schultink, and Slocum express concurrence with Dr. Wilson, Professor Evans, the Brunsmas-Rockquemore study, the JNE study by Professor Lopez and with Miss Lumsden. Seamon, Schultink, and Slocum write, "No direct correlation can be found between study results and uniforms."³⁰

Kerry A White, staff writer with *Education Week*, agrees. "...Research on the effects of school uniforms has been **inconclusive or mixed**," she writes. She too finds that much of the evidence supporters cite, "is based on anecdotal reports rather than well-designed studies." A "well-designed" study is defined as one that actually follows the scientific process and controls for variables. Many of the problems in Polk County were due to the failure of their School Board to allow student "opt out." White calls failure to allow such a provision "Draconian." She also quotes Raj K. Chopra, superintendent of Marple Newtown School District in Newtown Square, Pennsylvania, who like the school administrators cited on Page 5, rejected

SSA for his school located in the suburbs of Philadelphia. Chopra called switching to a uniform because of school fighting a “knee-jerk reaction.”³¹

Often times, the method by which this decision is made is more “knee-jerk” than the decision itself. Case-in-point: Memphis City Schools. There, the School Boards made the decision and demanded implementation a short four months later. The author of this report has been distressed to see the same lack of thoughtfulness and thoroughness in the deliberative process surrounding SSA here in Metro-Nashville. It is unfortunate that some feel the need to “do *something*” supersedes the need to do something *effective*. Standardized school attire, as all the studies indicate, has not proven to be effective at accomplishing anything other than creating a sea of monolithic color schemes in America’s schools. This author does not accept the argument that it is better to “do something—anything,” and worry about the ramifications later. We ought to be concerned with all of the details now, in order that the Board may make an informed decision. This is preferable to launching arbitrarily into policy experimentation with Nashville’s youth. Any solution to the ills of crime, gangs, truancy and the like should be a solution with a proven and demonstrable record of success. Standardized school attire does not fit that description.

The Commonwealth Educational Policy Institute of Virginia (a state with SSA in some of its school districts) agrees. According to the CEPI study, “...no long-term empirical studies have been conducted to assess the effectiveness of school uniforms or specific dress codes, the results remain anecdotal and unproven...The specific causes for the...decline in crime rates **have not been established.**” As a result, they conclude “no conclusion can be drawn concerning the impact of uniforms or more stringent dress codes on crime rates in schools.”³²

Furthermore, The Safe and Responsive Schools Project, funded by the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Special Education Programs issued a report conducted by Indiana University School of Education researchers Thad Q. Strom, Reece L. Peterson and Courtney Miller. Strom, Peterson and Miller urge policymakers to regard the pro-SSA “studies” with “caution.” They note that, “Virtually **none** of these studies used direct behavioral measures on these criteria, and most did also not account for the effects of other measures that may have been implemented concurrently. Other positive outcomes described by uniform supporters have also not been measured in many of these reports. As a result, the research support for the use of uniform policies in schools is clearly inadequate at present...[and] **Any adoption of student uniforms should be done with an awareness of these limitations.**”

Strom, Peterson and Miller’s report goes on to alert policymakers to the fact that, “...caution needs to be exercised when interpreting the Long Beach results, as the Long Beach evaluation did not identify or eliminate competing explanations for the decline, and did not indicate whether the student uniform policy was only one aspect of a comprehensive safety plan that included heightened security measures and stricter rules, or other measures. Other methodological questions exist as well. As a result, while the Long Beach data supports their use of uniforms, the study is not...conclusive.” Thus, they too conclude that “...there is **insufficient research** to support its [school uniforms] effect on violence prevention or discipline” in schools.³³

Pennsylvania-based psychologist Pauline Wallin, Ph.D agrees. She writes:

“Research *seems* to show that in schools which have required uniforms, the students’ attendance and achievement has improved, and the number of fights has decreased. Note that I said the

research SEEMS to show this. On closer examination, school uniforms and dress codes don't have nearly the impact that we assume.

The problem lies in how the bulk of the research was conducted. In studies where principals or parents were asked to describe their impressions about the new dress code, they would typically say things like, 'Yeah, the kids are behaving much better and they are more focused on their schoolwork.'

However, when researchers actually measured school attendance, achievement, number of fights and other indicators of good citizenship, the results were mixed."³⁴

Dr. Wallin (whom has been published in professional journals including *The National Psychologist*, as well as popular journals like *The New York Times* and *Wall Street Journal*.) uncovered the same negative statistics I reported in Long Beach. But, she notes, "...even where there were improvements, we can't attribute these to dress code alone. **It turns out that when schools adopted uniforms or dress codes, they also made other changes in how things were run.** For example, they upgraded their curriculum, enforced rules more consistently, added better security measures." Thus, she concludes, "merely putting navy blue blazers on school kids will not transform them into model students." Neither will putting them in polo shirts and khaki pants, which brings me to another important point.

Much ado has been made about the terms "standard school attire" versus "school uniform." In its October presentation to the School Board the Standard Attire committee explained the difference between uniform and standard attire this way. Uniforms "meet narrowly-defined criteria for conformity among all students," whereas; standard attire "designates a variety of prescribed, low-cost clothing within certain criteria," the committee explained. The essential difference there is "narrow" versus "variety." The committee is the only one that uses this definition. The term "standard school attire," is purely an invention of the district anyway, so the author supposes they could define the word any way they like, since they invented it. However, while they may define invented words however they chose, the district is not at liberty to change the definition of a "uniform." Dr. Brunsmas and most other researchers define "uniforms" as listing what students must wear, juxtaposed to a "dress code" which delineates what *not to* wear. By this definition, khaki pants and a tucked-in polo shirt would qualify as a "school uniform."

Virtually all of the other cities with standard attire understand this. Memphis calls their policy school uniforms. Philadelphia calls their policy school uniforms. Cleveland, Ohio calls it school uniforms. Long Beach, California calls it school uniforms. All of these are cities the committee cites in its presentations. All of these cities have also proactively taken steps to assist lower income students in obtaining their uniform clothing. MNPS has taken no such proactive steps, and the few steps they have taken have bared, at best, minimal fruit. The inventors of this "standard attire" term were aware that calling the policy a "school uniform," would legally obligate them to buy it for poor students. By calling it SSA they obfuscate that responsibility, and in doing so wager that the courts will agree with them.

The bigger issue however is, so what if we're talking about khaki pants and a polo or and Oxford shirt, navy pants necktie, and blazer. If the latter doesn't improve student grades and behavior, what makes

us think khaki pants and a polo shirt will? What is so magical about khaki pants and polo? Dr. Brunσμα, Rockquemore and Professor Evans's research all deals with exactly the type of clothing we are considering in Metro. Even if didn't, that would not discredit their research in any way. If putting students in Oxford shirts doesn't reduce fights; putting them in polo shirts won't either.

Lumsden's analysis brings an important element into the discussion—controlling for variables. "...whereas the Long Beach School District claims uniforms resulted in a reduction in certain forms of student misconduct and improved student achievement, **a causal relationship may not exist...** Since other changes were instituted about the same time the uniform policy was put into effect, it is difficult to determine which variables were actually responsible for the subsequent drop in misbehavior."³⁵

Control for variables is what pro-SSA "studies" lack. It is this failure to address the other mitigating factors in Long Beach, Seattle, Memphis, and elsewhere that presents the most damning evidence as to why these "studies" are not valid. Now I will discuss the other mitigating factors in these school districts and explore possible alternatives for the perceived statistical reductions.

IF IT'S NOT THE CLOTHES; THEN WHAT?

Let's look at Long Beach. There, "teacher supervision in halls was increased and new content standards were adopted," at the same time the SSA policy went into effect, Lumsden reports. The data from Long Beach cite a 36% decrease in crime, a 51% decrease in fights, a 74% decrease in sex offenses, and so on. It would be inaccurate to say that all of these reductions were do to the existence of standard attire, completely or in part.

In 2000, the district posed the question to itself: can single-gender classes boost student achievement? (See: <http://www.lbusd.k12.ca.us/public_information/2000_news_articles/n000519b.asp>) So they did just that. Long Beach has instituted a pilot program with 500 middle school girls and 500 middle school boys, going to classes in a single-gender setting all day.

Also, what constitutes "a day" is different in the Long Beach district. There, a full hour was added to the school day and an additional 20 days were added on to the school calendar. Thus, students attend school eight hours for 200 days a year. (See:<http://www.lbusd.k12.ca.us/public_information/2000_news_articles/n000310a.asp>)

They also have a D.A.R.E. program that has gotten 6,000 of its students to take a "drug-free pledge." In addition, the Governor has offered monetary incentives of up to \$25,000 to students, teachers and schools for improved academic achievement. Over \$3 million have been awarded through this program, thus far. (See:http://www.lbusd.k12.ca.us/public_information/2001_news_articles/n011019b.asp)

Fact is, the LBUSD has implemented dozens upon dozens of new policies since 1994. Any of these policies—the single-gender classrooms, the monetary incentives to students, teachers and schools, the longer school day and year—could be responsible for the LBUSD's reductions in crime, fights, and related statistics. No one can say that it was the *uniforms* that produced the statistical reductions.

In addition to these changes, I'd also note that several times the district has undergone massive changes in its administration at all levels, new administration approaches could also be responsible for the reductions in crime and gang activity. Finally, this link—http://www.lbusd.k12.ca.us/public_information/

2000_news_articles /n000204b.asp is a press release from the LBUSD listing 19 additional “reforms” the LBUSD has put in place, in addition to the SSA policy.

“It seems curious given these substantive reform efforts, administrators continue to insist that uniforms are the sole factor causing a variety of positive educational outcomes,” Doctors Brunsmas and Rockquemore point out.³⁶

Now let us analyze this logically. Take absenteeism, for example. Which policy gets more students to come to school—having a uniform or offering a \$5,000 incentive for good test scores? With respect to behavior, is a student less likely to fight if he/she is in khaki pants or if a teacher/administrator is watching him/her? In the latter, which scenario presents the greater deterrent to break the rules—wearing undesirable clothing or the threat of punishment from a school administrator? I think the answer to both of those questions is clear.

THE “HALO EFFECT”

This section will discuss other alternative explanations for the perceived reductions in crime in districts with an SSA policy. In her article, Dr. Wallin discusses the existence of the Halo effect. It is based on the fact that, “When we see one positive feature about a person, we tend to infer others. Therefore, if someone is well-dressed, we make additional positive assumptions about them...” Marc Posner, Senior Research Associate at the Education Development Center in Newton, Massachusetts, is the leading researcher in this area and chief architect of “the Halo effect” hypothesis. Posner explained his hypothesis in the May/June 1996 issue of *The Harvard Education Letter*, which is published by the Harvard Graduate School of Education. “Rather than actually changing student behavior, uniforms might change the way teachers and other adults perceive the students who wear them,”³⁷ Posner explains. In other words, reports by teachers of improved student behavior once uniforms are worn may actually be due to the stereotype that a school uniform triggers changes, rather than any actual change in student behavior. As a result, students not in uniforms are graded and disciplined more harshly than students whom *are* in uniforms.

“...a substantial body of research shows that teacher’s perceptions of students influence the way teachers treat students—and consequently the way these students behave.” Thus, it is quite likely, that this special treatment uniformed students receive actually produces increased attentiveness in class and reduce disciplinary problems. However, it is this *special treatment* based on teacher’s biased perception that produces the behavioral changes, not the uniform itself.³⁸

Posner’s hypothesis is based on research conducted by Professor Dorothy Behling of Bowling Green University who actually supports standardized school attire. Professor Behling studied the connection between student clothing and adult perceptions, she found that teachers believe that uniform-clad students behave better and do better academically than those who don’t wear uniforms. Behling’s study adhered to the following methodology: she showed teachers and administrators photos of school-aged children wearing various clothing. She controlled for variables (*which pro-SSA studies have failed to do*) like bias toward race, facial expressions, etc. by showing photos with the students’ faces not visible. Thus, she tested teacher and administrator reaction to student dress styles.

Behling’s study was conducted in a school district where students were allowed to “opt out” of wearing the uniform, provided they met certain criteria. The results of the study were that, “The fashions most favorably perceived by teachers...were described as ‘preppy’—slacks, a button-down shirt, and a

jacket or sweater for boys, and a similarly traditional style for girls." According to Posner's article, "She [Behling] found that 'jeans, particularly if they are old beat-up jeans, are perceived in a very bad light by teachers in all our studies.'"³⁹ As Posner has already established "...a substantial body of research shows that teacher's perceptions of students influence the way teacher treat students." Thus, as a result of teacher and administrators improved perception of uniformed students, "teachers and administrators adjust their disciplinary and grading standards to reflect the more positive image of uniformed students." As a result, Posner hypothesizes, student experience heightened self-esteem and self-worth and feel motivated to perform better at school, due to the more favorable attention they receive from adults.⁴⁰

This is not to say that *every* teacher in *every* school is consciously or subconsciously biased against non-uniform clad students. It is, however, a significant enough number to negatively skew the statistical data. The author of this report is gravely concerned about the potential SSA policies present for such bias and lack of objectivity to affect student behavior and achievement. Whether officials act on these biases consciously or subconsciously is immaterial.

Due to teachers and administrators' favorable inclination toward SSA policies, students attired in standardized dress are an affirmation of their preconceived notions about SSA and student behavior. School officials, by in large, anticipate that students in standardized dress will be better behaved. Subsequently, teachers and administrators apply their discipline and grading standards in accordance with their view of these students, thereby creating a self-fulfilling prophecy when the uniformed students "happen" to achieve higher grades and fewer office referrals.

This is not an unfounded hypothesis. It is supported by statistics from California where schools allow students to "opt out" of wearing school uniforms. There, students who opt-out and do not wear the uniform are reported for disciplinary infractions at an exponentially higher rate than their uniformed classmates. According to Posner's research, in one school—Parkridge School for the Arts in Corona--students who decline to wear uniforms (as California law allows them to) were sent to the office at a rate 22 times higher than that of uniformed students. Are we to believe that students living in the exact same neighborhood (perhaps next door to each other), who play on the same playground, attend class in the same classrooms with the same teachers, with virtually identical backgrounds are more prone to break the rules, simply based on what they are wearing?

Posner goes on to note the lack of hard evidence in yet another school district that instituted SSA—Washington, D.C. "One of the studies done on the effects of [school] uniforms was done in Washington, D.C. schools." Of that study, Posner writes, it "...did not produce any concrete evidence, however, that uniforms affected attendance, behavior, or academic achievement. It did reveal that 'principals felt there was something about students in uniform, especially boys with ties, that makes them behave better...," a statement that validates the "halo-effect" hypothesis.

In fact, there is an entire article devoted to discussing "**the Halo effect**" in the October 1996 issue of the professional publication, *American Teacher* (See: <http://www.aft.org/topics/discipline/halo.htm>). They explain the hypothesis this way, "Rather than actually changing student behavior, uniforms **might change the way teachers and other adults perceive the students who wear them.**" The article poses this question, "Is there a connection between student uniforms and improved school discipline?" They answer their own question by stating, "The results *seem* favorable--less violence, vandalism and fighting, and generally better discipline--but there really isn't a large body of research to confirm the connection between uniforms and other improvements in the school environment." As a result of the Halo effect, *The American*

Teacher article argues that teachers and administrators effectively create what the article calls “an illusion” in their minds, causing them to believe the uniformed student are better behaved and more attentive, when, in actuality, they are no more inclined to display such behaviors than non-uniformed students.

There is evidence to support this hypothesis not only where Professor Behling conducted her study, but also in other places that have instituted uniforms. Let’s revisit Dick Van Der Laan’s statement. Recall the Long Beach Unified School District spokesman who said, “We can’t attribute the improvement exclusively to school uniforms, but we think it’s more than coincidental.” How is it that Van Der Lann thinks it is “more than coincidental” without any hard evidence to go on? The answer is simple. He, like so many other school administrators, had his mind made up. Uniforms reduce crime in school and improve student behavior, he is convinced. It is likely that Mr. Van Der Lann thinks to himself, ‘Why conduct a study when we already now the results?’

And what about that Seattle principal--Dr. John German, who was certain that standardized attire had boosted “the demeanor in [his] school” by “98%?” One has to wonder what is it that possesses a person to convert an abstract concept like “demeanor of the school” into a percentage. Clearly, Dr. German is convinced. He, like the others, *just knows* that SSA produces better behaved students. We have no way of knowing what Dr. German knows because his conclusion is not based on observable data, just his personal feeling.

In Baltimore, Maryland, assistant principal Rhonda Thompson said SSA “has enhanced the tone and climate of our building. It brings about a sense of seriousness about work.” Here again, two abstract concepts are used to justify the use of SSA. What unit of measurement does Miss Thompson use to gauge “tone” and “climate of the building?” How does one measure “seriousness,” or in Dr. German’s case, “demeanor of the school?” Fact is, these concepts cannot be measured. Thus, their assertions are based purely on personal feelings not supported by hard evidence.

This author is constantly amazed at the assorted array of statistics SSA proponents seek to link to SSA policies. It seems that every statistic under the sun is linked to having standardized dress, according to advocates of the policy. School Board officials in Norfolk, Virginia may win the award for most random and unrelated statistic tied to standardized dress. Officials there told the U.S. Department of Education that SSA reduced “throwing objects” (it was not limited to just in class, presumably this applied to “throwing objects” anywhere in the building) by 68% and reduced “leaving class without permission” by 47%, Norfolk officials reported. When Long Beach officials claimed a reduction in fights, they failed to mention the fact that teachers were also instructed to increase patrols of the hallways and the effect that omission has on the number of fights. Likewise, it is possible that Norfolk school officials may be minimizing the effect more teachers denying student requests to leave the class may have had on this statistic.

Finally, Posner’s article quotes then-Superintendent of LBUSD schools Carl Cohn as saying, “a uniform, if it provides a safe passage to and from school, is liberating.” However, according to an article in the August 1996 issue of *Education and Urban Society*, Long Beach, California middle school students were polled and 71.2% stated they **did not feel safer going to and from school with standardized dress.**⁴¹ So if nearly 3 out of every 4 students in the district say the standard attire does not make them feel safer going to and from school—what, then, do you call a uniform?...Certainly not “liberating.” Dare a say...ineffectual.

In the end, we must conclude, as does University of Utah Educational Psychology Professor Howard Sloan, Ph.D., that "There are far more important educational issues. People are looking for easy solutions for difficult educational problems." Dr. Sloan is Senior Fellow at the Cambridge Center for Behavioral Studies and is author of *The Good Kid Book*. He is absolutely right. In the rush to implement or in the case of Long Beach and Memphis, justify SSA, districts are overlooking mitigating factors and jumping to unfounded conclusions. As this report clearly indicates there is a serious lack of evidence establishing the link between standardized school attire and student behavior and achievement.

CONCLUSION

In the view of the author, the weighty issues laid out in this report should be more than sufficient to generate reservations in the minds of even the staunchest supporters of SSA. Between the reports of Dr. Brunsmma and Professor Rockquemore in *The Journal of Educational Research*, Dr. Wilson of Southeastern University, Professor Evans of UCLA, Professor Lopez of *The Journal of Negro Education*, Dr. Wallin, Mr. Posner, Miss Lumsdsen, researchers Strom, Peterson and Miller, and Seamon, Schultink, and Slocum, and the findings of the CEPI, it is clear there is insufficient evidence upon which to conclude that SSA will achieve anything in Metro-Nashville schools short of change in the color scheme. Several researchers, in fact, compare it to applying "a fresh coat of paint" to the exterior of a building. While this superficial change alters the appearance to an ill-informed onlooker, little is accomplished in the way of substantive, meaningful improvement in our schools. In a press conference upon releasing this report to the media, the authored compared it to putting "lipstick on a pig." Sure the pig now looks nice, "but at the end of the day you've still just got a dirty swine." The dirty swine of MNPS is the gapping disparity between the nearly 100-percent graduation rates at MLK and Hume Fogg and the less than 50-percent one at Maplewood, the low test scores, the fact that some classes don't have enough books so students have to share, the fact that the difference in preparedness level of students for college is evidence in the fact that the combined total of scholarships awarded to the 2006 graduating classes of Stratford, Maplewood, East, White Creek combined falls a million dollars short of the amount awarded the graduating class of Hillsboro that year, less than half the amount awarded to MLK's gradates, and not even a forth of the amount awarded to Hume Fogg's graduates.

The sources cited have outlined six primary limitations of the link between SSA and student behavior/achievement.

1. The effectiveness of SSA policies is untested and unproven at the high school level.
2. Insufficient evidence exists to make the claim that uniforms are responsible for reductions in crime, gang and drug activity, truancy, etc. The miniscule evidence that exists to make this case is restricted to purely anecdotal accounts and self-serving personal observations of interested parties. The parties making these claims have an "interest" in this debate due to their need to justify their use of SSA policies.

Even more biased sources than that are Land's End, Inc. and French Toast, Inc. These two uniform manufacturers and outlets conducted surveys to assess the popularity of SSA amongst parents and school administrators. That's right, uniform retailers providing statistics supporting uniforms. Not surprisingly, the results were overwhelming in support of SSA. In the case of the Land's End survey, 100% of principals supposedly supported the proposal. Clearly, these "surveys" must be dismissed out of hand, due to their bias.

Worse yet, is that MNPS's Standard School Attire Study committee utilized one such poll. It was the Cherokee CLASSROOM School Uniforms 2006 survey of National School Board Association (NSBA) members which was deceptively made it look like a poll conducted by the NSBA. It was, in fact, conducted by a uniform manufacturer. It was included in the committee's October 24, 2006 presentation to the Metro School Board (Before this author was on the committee). This survey was initially reported by the committee as having been conducted by the National School Board Association, and had glowing numbers associated with it. It was in fact conducted by a school uniform manufacturer that sent emails to 5,692 National School Board Association members, and had a 290 (5.0%) response rate which was self-selecting. Such data has no legitimate value. Some key questions had as few as 50 respondents (50 out of over 5,000!!!) and only a handful of affirmative responses, but by representing these responses as percentages, "the committee obscured their statistical meaninglessness," as Mark Schoenfield put it. When Mark Schoenfield, who later resigned from the committee due to intellectual dishonesty practices, brought this to the committee's attention they still had to be *forced* into disclosing this fact to the School Board.

3. Statistics from other jurisdictions are not necessary applicable to Nashville. It would be wrong for the School Board to import data collected on other populations and apply it here, as Dr. Wilson points out. As we can see from the conflicting data from Long Beach, Memphis, and the two Florida districts, no clear patterns emerge as a result of SSA policies. If we are to believe the questionable LBUSD data (the author advises against this), fights decreased there. However in Memphis, **according to that district's own data** (pg. 9), fights increased at the high school. As mentioned earlier, The Memphis School Board instituted their SSA policy hastily. In their rush, it is clear they committed the very fallacy that Dr. Wilson advised against. They assumed that if they imported Long Beach's SSA policy, the reduction in fights would follow. That did not happen. In reality, the exact opposite happened.
4. Correlation between SSA policies and behavior improvement is not evidence of a causal relationship between the former and the latter. Just because two events transpire concurrently, it does mean that either event was caused by the other. The one study (the Brunsmar-Rockquemore) that tested the correlation coefficient between these events found that in all areas, except one, the correlation was negative and in the one area where the correlation coefficient was positive (student achievement), the number was so close to zero, as to make it statistically insignificant. Readers should be reminded that according to the *Education and Urban Society* report, another negative impact is that students, at least in Long Beach, did not even feel any safer in schools with standardized dress.
5. Even the extent to which policy changes achieve any of the positive results supporters claim, it cannot be proven that the SSA policies are the cause. In the case of Long Beach, at least two dozen other policies were instituted shortly prior to, in conjunction with, or shortly following the initiation of the SSA policy. Thus, for all we know it was one or more of the other two dozen policies that caused the reductions in crime, weapons offenses, fights, etc.
6. SSA policy supporters cannot account for the extent to which "the Halo effect" is responsible for the change in statistical data.

Weighting the evidence objectively, there is only one logical conclusion to reach. As the BBC put it, "There has been no evidence anywhere in the world to show there is a connection between uniforms and standards," of performance.

The words of Dr. Wilson are worth reiterating, "Too often, those in control of policy change within schools make decisions based on data results that are not [applicable] to their specific population. Policy makers discover the information and apply the findings to their situation, not understanding the information is **not applicable** to their school district." Dr. Wilson's words speak directly to policymakers. Policymakers in other districts either ignored or were unaware of Dr. Wilson's admonition. Every policymaker in Nashville who reads this report (the author hopes all school policymakers will count themselves among that group) will no longer have the excuse that they were unaware of these warning signs. It is the hope of this author that policymakers will heed those warning signs. As Strom, Peterson and Miller stated, "Any adoption of student uniforms should be done with an awareness of these limitations."

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. One of the chief safety arguments SSA supporters voice, is the issue of intruders infiltrating school campuses with malicious intent. SSA is a poorly-conceived remedy to this problem. Any intruder who wanted to enter a school building badly enough could (and most likely would) simply clad him or herself in the khaki/navy pants and a polo shirt to avoid detection. These are not difficult clothing items to obtain. **Is there any evidence that shows schools with standard attire have fewer unwanted intruders than schools without standard attire?** The author is not aware of any data to that effect. If, however, the answer is (as I suspect) "no", then an SSA policy would achieve absolutely nothing in the way of preventing unwanted campus visitors.

A more logical, and likely more effective, remedy is to require more widespread usage of official school identification badges. Many Metro schools do not even issue ID badges until well into the year—three or four months after the first day. If a higher priority were placed on these badges, their usage might actually do some good. Even once the badges are finally issued, most schools do not require that they be used. The vast majority of Metro students do not use their badge after receiving it. The average student is able to enter and exit the premises, attend football and basketball games and other sporting events, utilize cafeteria and library services in their school without ever being asked for identification. If use of ID badges were extended to these situations, and others, it would do much more to solve the problem of unwanted campus intruders than an SSA policy.

In the future, ID badge usage could become so sophisticated as to have electronic ID card readers install at every entrance of the school building. This is not unprecedented. In fact, virtually every college, university and institution of higher learning has such electronic ID card scanners to protect against unwanted intruders. In fact, upon the author's recent visit to George Washington University in Washington, D.C., not only were ID card scanners placed in front of every building, they were also outside every stairwell *inside* that building. So that the door to access the stairs would not open until a proper ID card had been swiped. Many Chicago *public* schools have this same technology in their high schools.

2. Another primary argument in support of SSA is the ease with which a student may conceal a weapon or other dangerous device under his/her clothing. Here again, SSA would do little, if anything, to solve this problem. Proposed standardized dress attire can be purchased over-sized. Student may still wear clothing three and four time too large for them. Standardized dress will not prevent that from happening. If the bagginess of the clothing is the issue, why not make a rule that all students' clothing has to fit? Oh, that's right...we already have such a rule. It's been on the books for years. It's just not being enforced.

The greater problem with the current dress code is not the dress code itself, but the lack of enforcement of those policies. Current policy outlaws sagging pants. There is absolutely nothing ineffectual or inept about that rule. The only thing ineffectual is the degree to which it is enforced. If current dress code polices were enforced it would do a great deal to eliminate the perceived need for SSA. Admittedly, enforcing the current policy is not an easy task. But as the examples of pages 16-17 show, enforcing standard school attire is not an easy proposition either. We ought to get the current policy right before discarding it and experimenting with a new one.

3. An additional solution to the weapons concealment issue is more widespread use of transparent (see-through) and mesh backpacks. Like the ID-card scanner proposal, this too, is not unprecedented. Transparent and mesh backpack usage are also mandated in Chicago public schools.
4. The author recently discussed school safety with a Metro School Resource Officer. Relative to the gang problem in Metro Schools, Resource Officers are aware of the specific gang members in the school in which they are stationed. An officer informed this author that state law (Tennessee Code Annotated) precludes School Resource Officers from telling the principal of the school in which they are stationed, whom those gang members are. Local policymakers whom are *genuinely* concerned about school safety will urge state lawmakers to revisit that law.

APPENDIX A:
The Scarcity of Standard Attire in High Schools

Table A2—Percentage of public schools reporting that students were required to wear school uniforms, by selected school characteristics: 1996–97

School characteristics	Uniforms required
All public schools	3
Instructional level	
Elementary school	4
Middle school	4
High school	(*)
School enrollment	
Less than 300	†
300–999	4
1,000 or more	8
Locale	
City	9
Urban fringe	6
Town	(*)
Rural	(*)
Region	
Northeast	1
Southeast	4
Central	2
West	6
Percent minority enrollment	
Less than 5 percent	(*)
5–19 percent	†
20–49 percent	2
50 percent or more	13
Percent of students eligible for free or reduced-price school lunch	
Less than 20 percent	(*)
20–34 percent	1
35–49 percent	2
70–74 percent	5
75 percent or more	11

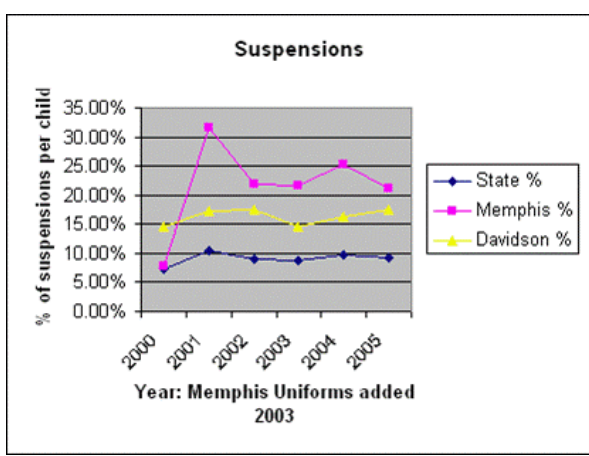
*Less than 0.5 percent.

†No cases are reported in this cell, although the event defined by this cell could have been reported by some students with these characteristics had a different sample been drawn.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Fast Response Survey System, "Principal/School Disciplinary Survey on School Violence," FRSS 63, 1997.

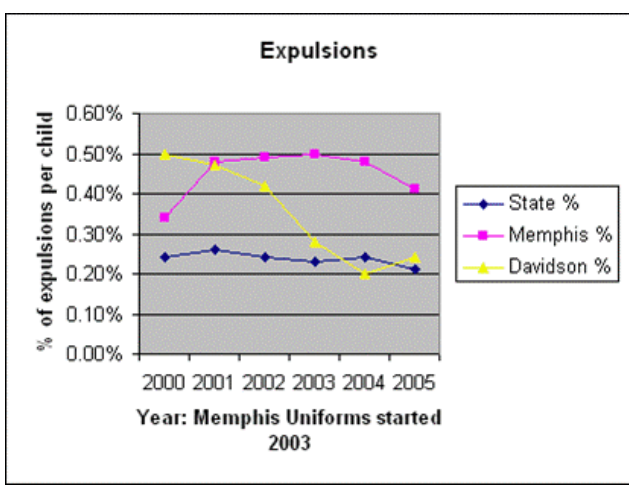
View at: <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs98/safety/ta2a2.asp>

APPENDIX B:
Schoenfield Comparison Charts



Year	State %	Memphis %	Davidson %
2000	7.40%	7.71%	14.50%
2001	10.50%	31.50%	17.20%
2002	9.09%	21.96%	17.39%
2003	8.70%	21.61%	14.65%
2004	9.80%	25.18%	16.32%
2005	9.20%	21.22%	17.59%

Year	State %	Memphis %	Davidson %
2001	0.26%	0.48%	0.47%
2002	0.24%	0.49%	0.42%
2003	0.23%	0.50%	0.28%
2004	0.24%	0.48%	0.20%
2005	0.21%	0.41%	0.24%



Mr. Schoenfield points out, "It is worth noting in the above graphs that throughout the period, Nashville has outperformed Memphis in all these measures, and consequently, even were Memphis to have a measurable improvement, there is no reason to think it would be applicable to another school district that began with numbers better than those achieved by the change."

APPENDIX C:

Interview with David L. Brunisma, Ph.D.

What appears below is the transcript of an online interview the author conducted with Professor David L. Brunisma, Ph.D. of the University of Missouri's Sociology Department on February 28, 2007. The interview was conducted to clarify some of Dr. Brunisma's research.

Charles Badger: "Dr. Brunisma, I presented your research to the other members of the committee studying uniforms for our city. There was a question about your use of the word "uniforms." Our committee has adopted the term "standard school attire." Committee members are concerned about, when you talk about "uniforms", is that also looking at parochial schools as opposed to public schools?"

Dr. David Brunisma: "My research looks at nationally representative samples and controls for school sector. My primary focus is on public schools, not parochial schools, private schools, or religious schools. My work for the past 10 years has focused on public schools – so I am not sure how they can make this leap."

CB: "They'd like to exclude your research as not relevant to our proceedings because they think it deals with parochial schools (plaid skirts, blazers, white Oxfords, ties, etc.), whereas the attire our committee is considering is khaki pants with a tucked in polo shirt. Does it make a difference?"

Dr. D.B.: "This is semantics. When the federal Department of Education asked principals (whether in 1988/1990 for the Nels data, or for the more updated 1998/1999/2000/2003 data from the early childhood longitudinal study) in the public schools whether they had a 'school uniform policy,' this is exactly what they are asking...They also ask if they had a dress code policy – I analyze both (using the 1998 study is not nearly as effective as using my 2004 book – which is much broader in scope and more up to date). Khaki pants with a tucked in polo shirt *is* a mandatory school uniform policy! Uniform policies mandate what students must wear, while dress code policies list what may not be worn. I discuss such semantics in my 2004 book – many schools and districts have altered the terms they use to avoid legal actions from parents and students – however, they are all still uniforms."

CB: "Also, one of the committee members has derided your research for being "19 years old." I pointed out that your study and book are based on the National Longitudinal Study which, while it did begin in 1988, my understanding is that it tracked the students at several subsequent points and did not conclude until 2000. I brought this to her attention and she was un-phased--the fact that it began 19 years ago, somehow discredits the findings [to committee members]."

Dr. D.B.: "Again, I think I answered this above. The 2004 book used both Nels data (which was old, yes, but allowed for initial patterns to be established where there was no published research at the time) as well as data from the early childhood longitudinal study of 1998 (which follows kindergartners into the labor force...and is more timely because elementary schools are still the most prominent sites for school uniform implementation...I stand by my rigorous analyses...also, if they found a study that was 19 years old that supported their efforts, I am not sure they would feel the same way."

APPENDIX D:
Interview with Dennis L. Evans, Ed.D.

What appears below is the transcript of a March 19, 2007 online interview the author conducted with Professor Dennis L. Evans, Ed.D., the Director of Credential and Certificate Programs at the University of California, Irvine, and Graduate Advisor to the UCI/UCLA Joint Ed.D. program.

Charles Badger: "Most researchers use the term "school uniforms." It is the term of common usage in virtually all the published research...Our committee and school administrators have cleverly selected the term "standard school attire", rather than uniforms, as a means to exclude all research evidence against the idea. Committee members dismiss such research because it deals with "uniforms", rather than specifying the khaki and polo look our school officials are talking about. What do you make of this distinction? Does it really make a difference? When you refer to "uniforms" are we talking about the same thing?"

Dr. Dennis L. Evans: "I would think that if the phrase 'school uniforms' is used by the USDE [U.S. Department of Education] and various state education codes and school district policies to describe what students must wear to school then any policy requiring students to wear khaki pants and polo shirts is legitimately described as a 'school uniform policy.' also the phrase 'standard school attire' is subject to so many possible definitions that it is almost meaningless."

CB: "Have you seen a case anywhere in the U.S. where uniforms have done any of the grandiose things proponents say they will? (i.e.: reduce school violence, improve grades, make the hallways quieter, etc.)?"

Dr. D.E.: "Where/when such claims are made there invariably is confusion regarding correlation and causation. The Brunsmar/Rocquemore research (1998) points this out (they specifically looked at Long Beach with respect to this.)"

CB: "Would you specifically comment on Long Beach, which is in your state. Most proponents, here in our city and elsewhere cite them as a model. What is your assessment of the Long Beach "model" of khaki pants and a polo?"

Dr. D.E.: "The researchers noted above pointed out that the implementation of uniforms in LBUSD coincided with several other initiatives aimed at improving student attitudes/behavior."

CB: "When I and others point out (as most researchers whom have studies the issue conclude) that there is insufficient research on which grounds to conclude that uniforms are effective, this too is dismissed...Could you comment on this? Moreover, administrators here treat the lack of evidence as a Green light for wholesale experimentation."

Dr. D.E.: "One part of the above referenced research compared uniformed Catholic schools with non-uniformed Catholic schools on several variables - the non-uniformed schools outperformed the uniformed schools on most of the variables --correlation or causation?"

"To me the most important point of this topic is what school boards/educators choose as their priorities. I think this question is especially important when dealing with high school-age students. High school should be a time when we encourage adolescents to engage in decision-making and self-expression. Schools

already have the right/responsibility to adopt dress codes that prohibit certain types of attire, gang symbols, etc. But within those parameters why wouldn't we want students to make decisions that reflect their individuality and growth toward adulthood? Perhaps your district should model those types of commitments/ responsibilities rather than enforcing standardized appearances/behavior. Public schools are extensions of the state and as such where choices are available school boards/administrators should try to avoid encroaching on individual rights. Good luck."

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