

SENATE, No. 540

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

INTRODUCED MARCH 7, 1996

By Senators INVERSO and EWING

1 AN ACT concerning school dress codes and supplementing chapter 11
2 of Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes.

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4 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
5 *of New Jersey:*

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7 1. The Legislature finds and declares that many educators believe
8 that school dress can significantly influence pupil behavior and that
9 schools that have adopted dress codes, including dress codes which
10 require school uniforms and which prohibit clothing indicating
11 membership in certain gangs, experience greater school pride and
12 improved behavior in and out of the classroom. The Legislature
13 further finds that to assist in controlling the environment in public
14 schools, to facilitate and maintain an effective learning environment,
15 and to keep the focus of the classroom on learning, school districts
16 should be specifically authorized to implement uniform clothing
17 requirements for their students.

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19 2. a. A board of education may adopt a dress code policy to
20 require that students wear a school uniform if the policy is requested
21 by the principal, staff and parents of an individual school and if the
22 board determines that the policy will enhance the school learning
23 environment. Any policy adopted which requires the wearing of a
24 uniform shall include a provision to assist economically disadvantaged
25 students. The board shall hold a public hearing prior to the adoption
26 of the policy and shall not implement the policy with less than six
27 months notice to the parents or guardians of the students. No State
28 funds may be used for the purchase of school uniforms. The specific
29 uniform selected shall be determined by the principal, staff, and parents
30 of the individual school.

31 b. The board of education shall provide a method whereby parents
32 may choose not to comply with an adopted school uniform policy. A
33 student shall not be penalized academically or otherwise discriminated
34 against nor denied admittance to school if the student's parents choose
35 not to comply with the school uniform policy.

36 c. A dress code policy adopted pursuant to this section shall not
37 preclude students who participate in a nationally recognized youth

1 organization which is approved by the board of education from
2 wearing organization uniforms to school on days that the organization
3 has scheduled a meeting.

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5 3. A board of education may adopt a dress code policy to prohibit
6 students from wearing, while on school property, any type of clothing,
7 apparel or accessory which indicates that the student has membership
8 in, or affiliation with, any gang associated with criminal activities. The
9 local law enforcement agency shall advise the board, upon its request,
10 of gangs which are associated with criminal activities.

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12 4. This act shall take effect immediately.

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15 STATEMENT

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17 This bill permits a board of education to adopt a dress code policy
18 to require that students wear a school uniform if the policy is
19 requested by the principal, staff and parents of an individual school
20 and if the board determines that the policy will enhance the school
21 learning environment. Any policy adopted which requires the wearing
22 of a uniform must include a provision to assist economically
23 disadvantaged students. Prior to the adoption of the policy, the board
24 must hold a public hearing and the board may not implement the policy
25 with less than six months notice to the parents or guardians of the
26 students. The bill prohibits the use of State funds for the purchase of
27 school uniforms. Any specific uniform selected would be determined
28 by the principal, staff, and parents of the individual school.

29 Under the bill, the school board is required to provide a method
30 whereby parents may choose not to comply with the school uniform
31 policy. A student may not be penalized academically or otherwise
32 discriminated against nor denied admittance to school if the student's
33 parents choose not to comply with the policy.

34 The bill also provides that a board of education may adopt a dress
35 code policy to prohibit students from wearing, while on school
36 property, any type of clothing, apparel or accessory which indicates
37 that the student has membership in, or affiliation with, any gang
38 associated with criminal activities. The local law enforcement agency
39 is required to advise the board, upon its request, of gangs which are
40 associated with criminal activities.

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Permits a school board to adopt dress code policy.