

SENATE, No. 1309

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

INTRODUCED JUNE 6, 1996

By Senators INVERSO and LESNIAK

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 further  
13 finds that to assist in controlling the environment in public schools, to  
14 facilitate and maintain an effective learning environment, and to keep  
15 the focus of the classroom on learning, school districts should be  
16 specifically authorized to implement uniform clothing requirements for  
17 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 three  
27 months notice to the parents or guardians of the students. The specific  
28 uniform selected shall be determined by the principal, staff, and parents  
29 of the individual school.

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

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37 c. A dress code policy adopted pursuant to this section shall not  
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's  
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  
25 policy with less than three months notice to the parents or guardians  
26 of the students. Any specific uniform selected would be determined  
27 by the principal, staff, and parents of the individual school.

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

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

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44 Permits a school board to adopt dress code policy.