

BFCCPS Dress Code Task Force
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, May 21, 2008

Task Force Members in attendance: Jennifer Moccia (Co-Chair), Lori Clements, Anna dos Santos, Cathy Tomaso, Vanessa Blinco, Carolyn Fernandez, Diana Stavely, Joanne Schaefer, Anne Gilberti, Ann Ahnert, Ed Callahan, Kathy Urkevic

Non-voting members in attendance: Beth Kaplan, Christine Hughes, Kelly Meredith, Heather Zolnowski, Margaret Vise, John Neas, Virginia Lehr-LaGanke, Jennifer Lee, Mary Mackenzie, Lisa Buchholz, Vanessa Jolie, Cindy Sarapas, Alan Earls, Sandy Frongillo

Jen Moccia started the meeting expressing the community's sympathy to Mrs. Fox whose husband passed away.

Jen explained Open Meeting Laws so that everyone on the task force is aware of their purpose and how they should conduct themselves. Anna also clarified to everyone that the use of email between Task Force members to discuss of Task Force issues is also prohibited under Open Meeting Laws.

Jen read the charge of the BFCCPS Dress Code Task Force which is to review BFCCPS's current dress code and make any recommendations to the Board.

Intent is to have these recommendations presented to the Board at the June 11th Board Meeting.

Next meetings were announced

- Tuesday, May 27 at 7:15pm (the pink sheet on 5/21/2008 read 7:30pm but this will be corrected on the website)
- **Wednesday, June 4th at 7:00pm** (this was changed from original date of June 3rd due to conflicts in Members' schedules and change is reflected on school website)

Jen indicated that the goal for this task force is to get as much community input concerning the school's dress code to help form recommendations to the Board, to enable the Board to present a defined dress code to the school community prior to summer vacation.

Discussion took place about what is the purpose and objective of a dress code and what or how our current dress is code meeting that objective.

Five key points were established as guiding principles for the dress code:

1. Ease of interpretation (is it clear?)
2. Accessibility (can everyone purchase the clothes?)
3. Acceptability (is it acceptable by most members of the community?)

4. Flexibility (can it accommodate different style preferences and body types for everyone?)
5. Enforcement (by school, parents and peers)

Jen also reminded everyone that ultimately the final decision will be the Board's decision as they are charged with establishing the school's policy.

A discussion also ensued about whether or not comments sent to John Neas or Dr. O'Malley would be shared with the Task Force and it was decided that comments would only be shared anonymously as those submitting comments were never informed that it be shared with the Task Force. Anna and Cathy suggested that all names or identifying information would be redacted.

Jen read to the group **Policy No. 0009 Dress Code, sections 1.1, 5.1-5.5** to review with the group the Purpose of the Dress Code.

It was agreed that the Purpose needs some clarification and discussion took place about what else should be included in the purpose of the dress code. Lori mentioned that it tied into academic accomplishment and students should dress for this purpose. Mary Mackenzie mentioned that it would even the playing field so that individual's dress would not be distracting. Lisa mentioned how the students' dress ties into temperance. It appears to all that the current purpose is very vague and doesn't read well.

It was suggested that the purpose of a dress code should be "To clearly explain how students, parents, and staff should dress for school in order to reflect a learning environment."

From the discussion it was concluded that a good dress code is clear, consistent, modest, neat, safe, non-distracting to the learning environment and enforceable.

Faculty present were asked how often do violations occur and how are they addressed? Ed Callahan stated that in the 7th and 8th grade he addresses infractions about twice a week and that he doesn't typically have repeat offenders. Ann Ahnert indicated that she addresses female students, some of which are repeat offenders. Ed informed the group that in 7th and 8th grade, the homeroom teachers address the students individually giving male students the opportunity to wear their shirt inside out and having a box of t-shirts available to put over any inappropriate clothes. Ann expressed frustration with having to tell female students what is appropriate to wear and feels as though parents should get more involved with their children's attire.

According to Ed Callahan athletic wear such as sweatpants seem to be the biggest problem with the dress code. A discussion about what is neat and what is appropriate transpired. A lengthy debate followed about the definition of what graphics are and whether or not all shirts should be collared to be considered neat.

Some ideas from the discussion included: Elimination of athletic wear except on gym days, collared shirts or school shirts, appropriate necklines that do not reveal cleavage, shorts and skirts that are appropriate length, no play clothes, no leggings, and no flip flops. We also talked about eliminating t-shirts except on gym days.

We also discussed how current **Policy # 6.1 of Dress Code** needs to be updated to accommodate those students who wear headwear for religious purposes.

General consensus was that everyone wants a clear, consistent dress code.

Next meeting Task Force will look at options to meet criteria and then involve students.

Task Force will continue to solicit information from parents and faculty through pink sheet, website and room parents. Also, the Task Force will continue to gather information about dress code policies from other schools and workplaces.

Jen will put summary of meeting, considerations and future meeting info on school website.

Via email, Carolyn will send out same notice to all room parents, Heather to send to faculty and staff.

Meeting Adjourned: 8:50 p.m.