

BFCCPS Dress Code Task Force
Meeting Minutes 5/27/2008 DRAFT

Task Force Members In Attendance: Joanne Shaefer, Heather Zolnowski, Ed Callahan, Mireille Malouf, Ann Ahnert, Anne Gilberti, Diana Stavely, Lori Clements, Michele Pearl, Jennifer Moccia, Vanessa Blinco, Carolyn Fernandez, Thomas Viveiros, Anna dos Santos, Cathy Tomaso, Kathy Urkevic

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Non Members in Attendance: Heidi WIniker, Sandy Frongillo, Amy Nicholson, Karen Dexter, Leo DeCosta, Margaret Vise, Stacey Flaherty, Cindy Sarapas, Lisa Buchhotz,

7:25pm Call to order

Michele began meeting by indicating that she and Jen Moccia continue to receive feedback from community members regarding the current dress code and their thoughts on how it should be changed. Comments were distributed to other Task Force Members to review. Michele also thanked Anne Gilberti for compiling and distributing feedback from other charter schools regarding their current dress codes.

7:30pm Anne Gilberti made motion to approve minutes from 5/27/2008 meeting.
Ed Callahan 2nd motion and all approved.

Michele indicated that feedback from the BFCCPS community regarding the dress code can be categorized three ways:

1. Current dress code is fine-don't change, tighten and enforce
2. No uniform, but rather uniformity to communicate to students and easily enforce
3. Standardized uniform

Michele address the issue of uniformity vs uniforms and her concerns about the cost of uniforms for families and the concern for the appearance of being a private school.

Leo DeCosta requested clarification of tonight's meeting and it was explained by Michele that the goal of tonight's meeting was to come as close as possible to recommendations of a dress code to be presented to the Board at the June 11th board meeting.

Leo asked for further clarification as to what the role of non-Task Force Members was at the meeting tonight and Jen Moccia explained that the Task Force wanted and encouraged community input so that when recommendations are made to the board that they are reflective of what the community wants.

Jen reiterated what was discussed at the 5/21/2008 meeting so that everyone present was aware of what was accomplished and to inform everyone that at this meeting we would use the information that was gathered from other schools to guide us in creating our own guidelines.

Ed Callahan stated that while he definitely believes that the BFCCPS needs addressed, he cautioned the group about moving forward too quickly with any drastic changes. That any major changes such as uniforms should entail careful research to help both students and parents transition into the change. He recommending fixing the current dress code to a standard we want and not to hurry it up just to get it done.

Jen did indicate that the majority of the comments from the community indicate that there's basically two options

1. Uniform or uniformity in the least
2. tighten and enforce current code

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Diana Stavely did indicate that as we address the code that we need to address the gym uniform and the non-gym uniform separately.

When ask by Heidi what the majority of the staff and administrators felt about the current dress code, Ann Ahnert indicated that she felt that they just wanted the dress code issues to end. Other staff and faculty agreed with Ann indicating that with the warm weather the dress code has been increasingly difficult to enforce and has consumed too much of their time.

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Ed suggested that in addition to enforceability, ease of use and uniformity, the students need to feel good about what they are wearing.

Anna brought up some points:

1. Whatever the Task Force recommends, they also need to consider how to implement the recommendations.
2. As the Task Force addresses the dress code, do we need to consider school identity and spirit?
3. Charter schools are often looked to as models for change and do stand out as the leaders in education so that our dress code may influence other schools to make changes.

Ann Ahnert talked about how dress codes assist with our school's identity such as at band performances but that the current code is too vague allowing for far too much interpretation.

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Lori stated that we should talk about what we should pursue and what we should not as we are not charged with rewriting the policy but rather to make recommendations to the board who will then vote on the recommendations and then request that the Governance Committee change the policy to comply with the changes.

Jen refocused the group to the five keys components that the dress code should have:

1. Accessibility
2. Flexibility
3. Enforceable
4. Ease of Interpretation

5. Acceptability

Carolyn spoke up and indicated that she's non in favor of one uniform, but strong uniformity, "tightening what we have."

Ed Callahan made a motion: "To take standardized uniforms for BFCCPS off the table for this Task Force at this time."

Anne Gilbert 2nd the motion

Unanimous vote YES

Lisa Buchholz suggested that we review current dress code and eliminate items and requested that more clarity is provided in **Section 6 The Specific Code.**

Heather says that the current dress code falls short on two points:

1. Ease of Interpretation
2. Enforceability

| Lori Clements motion to remove status quo from m current dress code

Michele Pearl 2nd the motion.

Unanimous vote YES

Lori indicated that the next step should be to clarify what uniformity is.

| Tom asked that if we don't go with uniforms, how is dress code enforceable. Discussion occurred on how with more clarity, the dress code can be enforceable without the need for uniforms.

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Michele stated that **Section 6.3.2 of the Dress Code Policy** needs the most attention and will be addressed after other sections are reviewed.

Heather requested that **Section 6.1** be sent to governance for revision to accommodate those students who wear headwear for **religious or medical reasons** (note: 5/21/08 meeting only religious accommodation was mentioned).

Michele went through each section of Section 6.3 Clothing to determine if those present felt that any changes needed to be made.

| **Section 6.3.1** No discussion or suggested changes. To include bras and underwear

Section 6.3.3 Brief discussion as to whether or not certain colored denim should be allowed but **suggested that this policy as written should remain unchanged.**

Section 6.3.4 Lengthy discussion resulting in the suggestion that the following guidelines be added to this section:

- **bra straps must be concealed**
- **tank tops should be at least two inches wide**

Ed Callahan Suggested using visuals for the clarification to the community.

Section 6.3.5 No discussion or suggested changes

Section 6.3.6 No discussion or suggested changes

Section 6.3.7 Suggested guideline to be added

- **No visible cleavage**

Section 6.3.8 Suggested that policy should indicate a specific measurement that shorts and skirts should fall above the knee with **3” being the most favored.**

Suggested that **No Athletic Wear** except on gym days should be added to this section.

Section 6.3.9

Suggestion made to include “**graphics**” in this section so that no wording or graphics are no allowed on shorts/pants or rear of any garment.

Section 6.3.10

Suggested that the Gym Uniform consists of either the white or gray gym shirt ordered through the school or a plain white, gray or navy blue shirt and navy blue or black athletic pants or sweatpants. It was also suggested that BFCCPS shirts except for field day shirts be allowed on gym days (ie after school sports shirts such as basketball and golf).

Spirit wear was also brought up as to whether it is considered appropriate gym day attire and no consensus was reached.

Section 6.3.2

Reviewed original dress from 1998 which indicated no logos, slogans or cartoon characters allowed. Discussion occurred regarding logos and Ed Callahan indicated that in the past the size of the logo could be no larger than an index card. Others indicated that the elimination of logos would help to reduce peer pressure as it relates to name brands on clothes. Cathy Tomaso indicated that regardless of the size of the logo, it still is a logo and that student are aware of and that they should be totally eliminated if we are truly concerned about the peer pressure issue.

Because of time constraints, Michele mentioned that this topic of discussion will have to continue at the next meeting scheduled for **Wednesday, June 4th at 7:00 pm**

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At this meeting the task force will finish discussing the final points of the first option of tightening the current code and will then discuss and design the second option of a unified code.

9:15pm Lori Clements Motioned to Adjourn

Anne Gilberti 2nd Motioned
Unanimous YES