

Should Students

The Situation:

Fairview Middle School is considering switching to school uniforms, and Principal Monica Galleano wants to hear what students think. Here are two student essays on the issue.

YES

Uniforms Would Be a Relief

BY ESTHER SPEIDEL

When Principal Galleano announced that Fairview Middle School might switch to uniforms, my initial reaction was total dread. The idea of wearing the same thing every single day sounded as appealing as eating nothing but broccoli until the end of time. But then I started to really consider the proposed change. And you know what I realized? Uniforms would be a relief.

Like many of my classmates, I spend a lot of time each morning trying to decide what to wear. Sometimes my indecision even makes me late for first period—and my mom late for work. If Fairview had uniforms, we wouldn't have to waste time worrying about our outfits. Getting dressed in the morning wouldn't lead to tardiness, and maybe we'd even get a few extra minutes of sleep and be less tired in class. This would be a win, not just for students but for parents and teachers too!

What's more, there can be a lot of stress around what you wear to school. Some kids get teased or bullied about their clothes, and we all feel pressure to wear certain styles and brands. But the fact is, some parents can't afford (or refuse) to buy trendy hoodies and expensive

jeans for their kids. If Fairview had uniforms, nobody would feel bad about not wearing the "right" clothes.

"Wearing a uniform has helped me not worry about what my peers are wearing," says Lauren Sarpong, 14, who attends a Success Academy charter school in New York City.

Lauren isn't alone. According to a study from the University of Nevada, 37 percent of students at middle schools that recently switched to uniforms reported that they worry less about their appearance than they did before they wore uniforms.

A common criticism of uniforms is that they **impede** self-expression. But there are plenty of other ways for students to show their individuality—such as their hairstyles or backpacks. And of course, students can wear what they want outside of school.

There is yet another benefit to uniforms: If we don't have to worry about clothes, we can focus more on learning. Maybe that's why about one in five U.S. public schools have made the switch to uniforms, according to the National Center for Education Statistics.

It's time for Fairview to be one of them. ●