

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A
MANDATORY
UNIFORM DRESS POLICY AND ATTENDANCE, DISCIPLINE, GRADE POINT
AVERAGE, AND SELF-ESTEEM

By

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(ABSTRACT)

The current belief that fashionable clothing worn to school by students influences their attitude and behavior is the major impetus behind the adoption of stricter dress policies, including uniforms (Behling, 1994). Data available in the United States do not support any specific conclusions about the effects of school uniforms (Palikos & Rist, 1996).

A mandatory uniform dress policy was implemented at an urban middle school located in southeastern Virginia. Students in the 9th grade during 1997-98, who also completed three consecutive years at this middle school from 1994-95 through 1996-97 were the participants in the study. Information was collected and analyzed using an Analysis of Variance for attendance, discipline, grade point average, and self-esteem data using an alpha of .05. The sample of 146 students included 96 Black students (48 males and 48 females) and 50 White students (27 males and 23 females). Independent

variables were race, gender, and time. Findings revealed that uniforms had a negative impact on attendance, grade point average, and self-esteem. Discipline indicators (total number of referrals, rule violations, and out-of-school suspensions) showed mixed results. The first year of uniform implementation showed a significant decline in the number of referrals, rule violations, and suspensions for study participant. During the second year of implementation, however, the trend reversed with an increase in all discipline categories exceeding the baseline or non-uniform year.