

2013 -- H 5893

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2013

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A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION - SCHOOL COMMITTEES AND SUPERINTENDENTS -
STUDENT DRESS CODE POLICY IN THE CITY OF CENTRAL FALLS

Introduced By: Representatives Silva, and McLaughlin

Date Introduced: March 19, 2013

Referred To: House Health, Education & Welfare

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 16-2 of the General Laws entitled "School Committees and
2 Superintendents" is hereby amended by adding thereto the following section:

3 **16-2-33.2. City of central falls - student dress code.** – Findings of fact. The general
4 assembly finds and declares the following:

5 (1) The children of the city of Central Falls have the right to an effective public school
6 education. Both students and staff of the primary, elementary junior and senior high school
7 campuses have the constitutional right to be safe and secure in their persons at school. However,
8 children in many of our public schools are forced to focus on the threat of violence and the
9 messages of violence contained in many aspects of our society, particularly reflected in gang
10 regalia that disrupts the learning environment.

11 (2) The adoption of a school-wide dress code policy in Central Falls is a reasonable way
12 to provide some protection for students. A required dress code policy may protect students from
13 being associated with any particular gang. Moreover, by requiring a school-wide dress code
14 policy, teachers and administrators may not need to occupy as much of their time learning the
15 subtleties of gang regalia.

16 (3) To control the environment in public schools, to facilitate and maintain an effective
17 learning environment and to keep the focus of the classroom on learning and not personal safety,
18 schools need the authorization to implement dress code requirements for our public school

1 children.

2 (4) Many educators believe that school dress significantly influences pupil behavior. This
3 influence is evident on school dress up days and color days. Schools that have adopted a school
4 dress code experience a "coming together feeling," greater school pride, and better behavior in
5 and out of the classroom.

6 **16-2-33.3. Mandatory Central Falls school-wide dress code policy.** – (a) The
7 governing board of the Central Falls school district shall adopt a reasonable school-wide dress
8 code policy that requires pupils to wear a school-wide uniform and prohibits pupils from wearing
9 "gang-related apparel." Each plan shall be promulgated and approved by the governing school
10 board of the school district. Individual schools may include the reasonable school-wide dress
11 code policy as part of its school safety plans as required by this chapter. The Central Falls school
12 district may adopt different school-wide dress code policies for different schools and grade levels.

13 (b) In formulating a school-wide dress code policy, the district shall seek out and
14 consider recommendations and comments from the principal, staff, parents and guardians, and
15 members of the student body of the individual school. The school-wide dress code policy need
16 not be a specific form of dress or "uniform" per se, but shall take the form of a code which
17 provides students with several options or selections within different categories from which to
18 choose.

19 (c) A school-wide dress code policy shall not be implemented with less than six (6)
20 months notice to parents and the availability of resources to assist economically disadvantaged
21 pupils.

22 (d) The governing board of the city of Central Falls school district shall provide a method
23 whereby parents may choose not to have their children comply with an adopted school-wide dress
24 code.

25 (e) Every policy adopted pursuant to this section shall include a provision that no pupil
26 shall be penalized academically or otherwise discriminated against nor denied attendance to
27 school if the pupil's parents chose not to have the pupil comply with the school dress code policy.
28 The governing board of the city of Central Falls shall continue to have responsibility for the
29 appropriate education of those pupils.

30 (f) A policy adopted pursuant to this section shall not preclude pupils that participate in a
31 nationally recognized youth organization from wearing organization uniforms on days that the
32 organization has a scheduled meeting.

33 (g) The school-wide dress code policies required by this section shall be promulgated and
34 adopted on or before January 1, 2015. Provided, the implementation of the policy shall be delayed

1 up to six (6) months after January 1, 2015, in order to comply with the provisions of subsection
2 (c) herein.

3 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF

A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION - SCHOOL COMMITTEES AND SUPERINTENDENTS -
STUDENT DRESS CODE POLICY IN THE CITY OF CENTRAL FALLS

- 1 This act would mandate a school-wide dress code policy in the city of Central Falls.
- 2 This act would take effect upon passage.

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