

A COMPARISON RESEARCH STUDY ON THE USE OF SCHOOL UNIFORMS
AND GRADUATION, ATTENDANCE, AND SUSPENSION RATES IN EAST
TENNESSEE

by

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Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

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ABSTRACT

William Elihue Gouge. A COMPARISON RESEARCH STUDY ON THE USE OF SCHOOL UNIFORMS AND GRADUATION, ATTENDANCE, AND SUSPENSION RATES IN EAST. (Under the direction of Dr. Carol Mowen, Adjunct Professor) School of Education, July, 2011.

Graduation rates in Tennessee are 8 points below the state goal of 90%. Implementation of a school uniform policy may be a way to improve these rates by giving students increased school structure. The purpose of this quantitative, causal comparative study was to examine whether a significant difference exists in graduation, attendance, and suspension rates between a school that has a school uniform policy and a school that does not. Two public high schools in East Tennessee, one with and one without a school uniform policy, with similar demographics were compared. A second comparison was made after the implementation of a school uniform policy in one of the schools. Factors that promote successful implementation of a uniform policy for students, parents, and the community to accept the change to school uniforms were examined. The results of the study showed that a school uniform policy had a positive significant effect on improving the graduation rate of a rural school in East Tennessee when compared to a school of similar demographics. However, there was no significant effect on student attendance or suspension rates. The second comparison demonstrated a significant improvement in graduation rates at the same school after the implementation of a school uniform policy but no significant effect on attendance and suspension rates.

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I dedicate my life and work to the Lord Jesus Christ. He is my Savior, and I am glad that he saved my soul. My favorite Bible verse, John 14:6, says, “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” I give Jesus all the honor and praise for His great mercy.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Public education is a pillar of American society. All children within U.S. borders—regardless of race, religion, gender, or citizenship—are given the opportunity to learn. In 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed into law the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) to provide states with federal dollars for the fight against poverty. In 2001, President George W. Bush reauthorized this law through the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act to keep children from being left behind in their education. The goal of NCLB is to bring more accountability reform to schools; therefore, all students must reach certain benchmarks on academic proficiency tests. If students in a school or school district do not meet academic proficiency requirements and other performance measures, the school or district may be put on a list that indicates they are not making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Reported data are characterized by (a) disability, (b) limited English proficiency (LEP), (c) economic disadvantage, (d) gender, and (e) ethnicity. If a subset of the student population does not demonstrate evidence of AYP over several years, then consequences may be applied and corrective measures taken to improve the school or school district (Tennessee Department of Education, 2010).

Leaders of schools and school districts across the country are looking for methods to improve their schools. Requiring that students wear school uniforms may be one of the factors that can improve a school or school district. God implemented a dress code for Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden as He replaced their aprons of fig leaves with coats of skin (Gen. 3). This Biblical example shows the importance of appropriate dress,

and our God demonstrated His supremacy in leadership since the aprons that Adam and Eve had sewn together were insufficient to cover their nakedness. This example also shows that the ways of God are right and sufficient, but the ways of man are the ways of death (Prov. 24:25). It is because of man's fall that Christ came and died on the cross to cover our sin. When we call on Jesus to save our soul, we are covered by His blood; God sees us as if we had never sinned because of what Jesus did on the cross (Heb. 9). This is the supreme covering, and shows the necessity of the right covering.

Research on significant connections between school uniforms and graduation, attendance, and suspension rates produced beneficial information to school systems searching for means for making educational improvements. In the current study, schools in East Tennessee (see Appendix A) with similar demographics were compared based upon their school uniform policies. Each school's report card on the Tennessee Department of Education website reports demographics about the school and its graduation, attendance, and suspension rates. These schools in East Tennessee were called to determine if they had a school uniform policy (see Appendix B). Student populations, ethnic diversity, as well as free and reduced lunch percentages were the pertinent demographics for this study.

The review of the literature demonstrates the history and impact of school uniform policies. This type of policy creates a level playing field for student education: Regardless of family income, all students look the same and, therefore, should be treated the same at school. God's Word proclaims in Ezekiel 27:24 that merchants would trade rich apparel held in cedar chests to the children of Israel. These clothes did not look the same as other clothes as they were blue with embroidery and bound in cords. This

concept of fashion and trend-following still fills America's public schools. It is often easy to tell which students' families have money and which ones do not by the clothes that students wear. School uniforms create a more level playing field.

Many Christian schools and other non-sectarian private schools have utilized a school uniform policy for years, and current research indicates that public schools can benefit from school uniform policies as well ("Benefits of School Uniforms," 1999; Boutelle, 2008; Chen, 2008; DaCosta, 2006; Konheim-Kalkstein, 2006; Mancini, 1997; U.S. Department of Education, 1996; Walmsley, 2011; West, Tidwell, Bomba, & Elmore, 1999). Matthew 2 tells the history of wise men who came from the east to find the Governor that would rule Israel. These men were known to be different, apparently because of their attire, speech, and gifts that they brought to see Jesus. King Herod was troubled—and all of Jerusalem with him—because of these wise men. The way a person appears in public causes an internal reaction as well as makes an impact on others.

In addition, the internal confidence that comes from looking nice and being ready to take on what is ahead is a trait many students may need. When people look their best, those around them may be affected by their appearance. For example, the wise men found the chief priest and scribes and demanded of them where Christ would be born, and they were told to go to Bethlehem of Judaea. Furthermore, teachers may treat students differently if one looks better or has better clothes than other students, but a school uniform policy helps give everyone a fair chance of education without the bias of family income. Arguments are made for and against uniforms, and research shows that the role of leadership is vital to a successful implementation of a school uniform policy (Mancini 1997; Pakhare, 2007; Sasson, 2009). The literature also demonstrates that the courts of

the United States have primarily supported public schools when they implement a school uniform policy (Anderson, 2002; Walsh, 2008).

Problem Statement

In 2007, 2008, and 2009, the average graduation rate in Tennessee was 82%. In 2009, 199 schools were on the high priority list for not meeting AYP (Tennessee Department of Education, 2010). Educational leaders are searching for programs or techniques that can improve their graduation rates by at least 8%. The purpose of this study was to compare graduation, attendance, and suspension rates to determine if there was a significant difference between a public high school that requires school uniforms and a demographically similar public high school that does not require school uniforms. Another comparison was made of the public high school that had school uniforms before and after policy implementation. In other words, School A was compared to School B, and in the second comparison, School A was compared to itself before and after school uniform implementation.

Requiring school uniforms may increase the number of students who graduate by giving them needed structure. Attendance may also improve when students have guidelines that foster positive behaviors, and suspensions may decrease when teachers and administrators help students with the transition to the professional demeanor that comes from a successful school uniform policy. Appearance has an important influence on those around us, as Scripture indicates. In 1 Samuel 16:7, God was about to have Samuel anoint David, a shepherd boy without many distinguishing characteristics, to be King. He did not have great stature, nor did he have fancy clothing; however, God told Samuel that man looks on the outside appearance, but God looks on the heart.

Furthermore, several sources endorse school uniforms as one possible measure to help school systems decrease behavior issues and boost school security (Chen, 2008; U.S. Department of Education, 1996). A study by Draa (2005) found that at six public schools in large cities in Ohio, school uniforms had enhanced student (a) graduation, (b) behavior, and (c) attendance rates.

This study compared specific school data from the state of Tennessee website to determine if there was a significant connection between school uniforms and graduation, attendance, and suspension rates. The schools were contacted to determine if they had a school uniform policy and how many seniors they had for specific years. If the school that requires school uniforms had higher graduation and attendance rates and a lower suspension rate than those that did not require uniforms, then it is likely that other schools will be able to implement a school uniform policy with success. If the results showed no difference in graduation, attendance, and suspension rates between schools that had school uniforms and those that did not, then administrators and policy makers may be wise to search for other strategies to improve their schools. Psalms 89:47 reminds us of how short our time is on earth. King David, the writer of Psalms under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, was known to be a man after God's own heart, and he reminded us of how precious time is to our life. Research can help school leaders find plans that work for the given situation and not waste valuable time on interventions that are not proven.

Research Questions and Null Hypotheses

In examining the significant differences between school uniform policies and graduation, attendance, and suspension rates, this study answered the following research questions:

Research question 1. Is there a significant difference between school uniform policies and graduation rates in demographically similar high schools?

Null hypothesis (H_01). There is no statistically significant difference between school uniform policies and graduation rates in demographically similar high schools.

Research question 2. Is there a significant difference between school uniform policies and attendance rates in demographically similar high schools?

Null hypothesis (H_02). There is no statistically significant difference between school uniform policies and attendance rates in demographically similar high schools.

Research question 3. Is there a significant difference between school uniform policies and suspension rates in demographically similar high schools?

Null hypothesis (H_03). There is no statistically significant difference between school uniform policies and suspension rates in demographically similar high schools.

Research question 4. Is there a significant difference between school uniform policies and graduation rates before and after the implementation of a school uniform policy?

Null hypothesis (H_04). There is no statistically significant difference between school uniform policies and graduation rates before and after the implementation of a school uniform policy.

Research question 5. Is there a significant difference between school uniform policies and attendance rates before and after the implementation of a school uniform policy?

Null hypothesis (H_05). There is no statistically significant difference between school uniform policies and attendance rates before and after the implementation of a

school uniform policy.

Research question 6. Is there a significant difference between school uniform policies and suspension rates before and after the implementation of a school uniform policy?

Null hypothesis (H_0 6). There is no statistically significant difference between school uniform policies and suspension rates before and after the implementation of a school uniform policy.

Professional Significance of the Study

School administrators are under pressure to make AYP under the NCLB Act. However, this pressure does not compare to the pressure our Savior went through on the cross for the salvation of all who will repent. Hebrews 12:2 says, “Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God” (King James Version [KJV]). Jesus endured the cross, despised the shame, but finished the work of Calvary. Now, the entire world has the opportunity to have eternal life. The pressure administrators feel must be kept in perspective if right interventions for improvement are to be administered. The focus of the NCLB Act is school improvement based on (a) accountability, (b) flexibility, (c) research-based education, and (d) parent options. High schools (i.e., grades 9-12) must meet performance benchmarks in math, English, and graduation rates under NCLB. Grades 3-8 must meet the performance benchmarks in math reading and attendance rates. If a school does not meet achievement standards for 2 years, that school is put on a high priority list (Tennessee Department of Education, 2010).

The following student groups and subgroups are considered each year for AYP status: (a) Whites, (b) Hispanics, (c) African Americans, (d) Native Americans, (e) Asian/Pacific Islanders, (f) the economically disadvantaged, (g) students with disabilities, and (h) English language learners. If a school misses the same goal for the federal benchmark for 2 years, it is placed on a high priority list. Schools or districts that are at risk of being on the high priority list are alerted by the Tennessee Department of Education, which offers additional support and assistance. If a school did not meet one or more benchmarks for 1 year, then that school is considered a target school (Tennessee Department of Education, 2010).

Many factors must be considered when attempting to measure successful implementation of a school uniform policy. Legal ramifications in dealing with challenges by parents and the community were reviewed in the literature, as were leadership in the educational setting and the perseverance necessary for school uniform implementation. Leadership strategies are part of the design for successful school uniform policy implementation. Christian leaders specifically should remember where they were before they called on Jesus to help their mind to remain focused on the task at hand. Lamentations 3:21 says, “This I recall to my mind, therefore have I hope” (KJV). Leadership must see the big picture, understand the objective that is to be attained, and communicate those goals to the stakeholders.

Overview of Methodology

This quantitative study employed a causal comparative design to demonstrate the significant connections between school uniform policies and school graduation, attendance, and suspension rates. The schools under study were two rural schools in East

Tennessee: one that required school uniforms and a geographically and demographically similar school that did not require school uniforms. The statistics being compared were the archival data of graduation, attendance, and suspension rates that are stored on the Tennessee Department of Education website. A Z-test was employed to determine significance with the Z value and P value being considered.

Definitions of Key Terms

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). A measure of a school's or school system's ability to meet required federal benchmarks with specific performance standards from year to year (Tennessee Department of Education, 2010).

Administrators. Directors of schools, including (a) principals, (b) supervisors, and (c) assistant principals (Tennessee Department of Education, 2010).

Attendance rate. The average number of days students attend school compared to the average number of days students are enrolled (Tennessee Department of Education, 2010).

Attendee. A student who is present and attending school.

Charter school. An elementary or secondary school in the United States that receives public money but has been freed from some of the rules, regulations, and statutes that apply to other public schools in exchange for some type of accountability for producing certain results that are set forth in each school's charter. As an alternative to other public schools, charter schools are not allowed to charge tuition since they are part of the public education system (Christensen, 2007).

Dependent high school. For the purpose of this study, a school that requires school uniforms.

Enrollment. The total number of students registered to attend classes at a specific school.

Free or reduced lunch. A program that provides free or reduced meals at school to children from families who meet certain income criteria (Tennessee Department of Education, 2010).

Graduation rate. A federally required benchmark that calculates the percent of on-time graduates with a regular high school diploma. GED and special education diplomas are not allowed to count as a regular high school diploma under regulations from the U.S. Department of Education (Tennessee Department of Education, 2010).

High priority school/school system. A school/school system that has missed the same federal benchmark for more than 1 consecutive year (Tennessee Department of Education, 2010).

Independent high school. For the purpose of this study, a school that does not have a school uniform policy.

No Child Left Behind (NCLB). A law implemented during the 2002-2003 school year that requires all students to be proficient in math, reading, and language arts by 2014 and to meet graduation and attendance standards (Tennessee Department of Education, 2010).

Rural. Portions of the country where the population density is less than urban areas; often includes areas where agriculture is practiced.

School uniform. For the purpose of this study, khaki pants and a polo shirt, at minimum.

Suspension rate. Based on the amount of time a student is not allowed to attend school for a period not greater than 10 days and remains on the school rolls (Tennessee Department of Education, 2010).

Urban. Densely populated areas with vast human features, such as (a) high rise buildings, (b) sidewalks, (c) industries, and (d) interstate highways.

Z-test. Compares random sample and population means to determine if there is a significant difference.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Administrators and decision makers need strategies to improve high school graduation, attendance, and suspension rates. An effective approach to achieving the desired structure needed for school improvements may be found in school uniform policies. School leadership with the ability to discern practical interventions can determine through research if school uniforms are a sensible solution for improving their specific schools.

Theoretical Framework

Moral absolutism and social cognitive theories provide the theoretical framework for this study of school uniforms. Moral absolutism adheres to the way of moral right as declared by an accepted document, in this case the Bible, not on the situation being presented in given circumstances. This study was based on the premise that morality is defined by the Bible, not by the trends or beliefs of society. Social cognitive theory advocates that learning comes by imitating observed actions. In other words, children emulate the behaviors that they observe.

Moral absolutism theory. Clothing is mentioned throughout the Bible: Adam and Eve with the aprons of fig leaves, the coats of skin made for them by God, the coat of many colors worn by Joseph, to sackcloth put on by Jacob after he received the news of the death of his son, the priests and their robes, David with armor that was not proven, etc. In the New Testament, Jesus was wrapped in swaddling clothes, which was a sign to the shepherds. John the Baptist was known for his clothing of camel's hair. These

illustrations show the significance of the right clothes for the specific circumstances and indicate the importance of considering school uniforms

God's Holy Word is the one eternal thing on which we can put our mortal hands. The Bible is God's fixed focal point of reference in a world that is always changing. While the Word of God is forever settled in heaven, all people have opinions about the issues of life. Isaiah 53:6 says, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" (KJV). Christians must set self aside and view the world through the lens of the Bible. A key verse for the researcher's worldview is 1 Peter 3:10-11:

For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it. (KJV)

There is only one God; however, He manifests Himself in three persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. His way is perfect. We as people are not perfect because of our sin. Romans 3:10 teaches, "There is none righteous" (KJV).

This sinful nature came as the result of the fall of man in the Garden of Eden. Genesis 3:1 says that the serpent was "more subtle than any beast of the field" (KJV). Satan came to Eve in the form of one of the creatures of the garden. "Hath God said . . . ?" (Gen. 3:1) are a few of the words the devil used to deceive Eve (KJV). She and Adam ate of the forbidden fruit, and after they did so, they both knew that they were naked. Just seconds earlier, they were innocent and did not know they were naked, but the tree of knowledge brought the realization of a need for covering their bodies.

Not long after they finished their leaf aprons, they heard the voice of God as He walked in the garden in the cool of the day. It was a familiar voice that they had heard many times, but this time fear was in their heart, as Genesis 3:10 says that they “hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God” (KJV). Adam and Eve learned that their fig leaves were not enough to cover their nakedness. They also realized that they could not hide from God since He was their Creator.

They began to make excuses for their sin, but Romans 2:1 says, “Thou are inexcusable, O man” (KJV). Genesis 3:21 says that “God make coats of skins, and clothed them” (KJV). This action was God’s dress code for Adam and Eve after their fall. The coats of skin were made possible by the sacrifice of an innocent substitute. They were the ones that deserved to die, but God made a substitute sacrifice.

These coverings were a type of what the Lamb of God did for the entire world. Men, women, boys and girls can come to Jesus and be born again, and their sin can be forgiven because of His sacrifice at Calvary. After we are born again, Titus 2:14 says we should be “a peculiar people, zealous of good works” (KJV). Salvation is by grace, a gift of God (Rom. 6:23); however, after we have been converted, we should live according to the morals and values taught in the Bible to demonstrate our faith in Christ. These illustrations give the Biblical direction for school leaders to consider when implementing a school uniform policy.

Social cognitive theory. Social cognitive theory describes how behaviors are learned. Learning is comprised of (a) individual learning styles, (b) rigorous and relevant curriculum, and (c) a supportive network that includes tutoring, technological support, and family support. Individual learning styles, such as visual, auditory, and kinesthetic,

are all part of an ideal classroom. A teacher should instruct students using more than one method. For example, verbal instruction should occur for auditory learners and would require techniques such as lecture expression of the material. The teacher would then need to add visual aids of various types to help visual learners learn the material and to reinforce it for auditory learners. Furthermore, most students benefit greatly any time they can be actively engaged in hands-on learning; thus, kinesthetic teaching enhances the verbal and visual presentation of material. Jesus was the greatest teacher, as illustrated in Mark 11:17. Jesus used a modeling technique to get the money changers out of the temple where people should have been praying. Jesus modeled to us how to pray in Luke 11:2; after Jesus modeled how to live, He expects people to live for Him. Romans 12:1 states that it is our “reasonable service” (KJV) to live godly lives and to follow Jesus’ teachings as given to us through his Word. If students have an opportunity to apply information learned to a real-life situation, the information will become part of their long-term knowledge base (Ali & Saunders, 2006).

Social cognitive theory also includes self-regulation or self-efficacy. If the administration, teachers, students, and the community embrace a school uniform policy, then the climate of learning may be enhanced. School uniforms may be a way for students to gain confidence in their appearance, which may also promote learning in the classroom and enhance the learning climate. Behaviors can be changed if students are sufficiently encouraged to overcome barriers, such as self-doubt, that influence personal and environmental factors. When teachers model a desired behavior, students gain the confidence needed to complete tasks on their own (Ali & Saunders, 2006; Gibbons & Borders, 2010). This study is specifically centered in the schools of East Tennessee,

which are populated primarily by rural Appalachian youth. Independence runs deep in the hearts of these students, and they need the help of adults to help visualize productive futures. School uniforms may be a way to help students feel good about themselves as teachers, parents, administrators, and the community direct students to school improvement.

History and Impact of School Uniform Policies

The practice of requiring public school students to wear school uniforms began during the 1990s. Proponents argued that school uniforms led to (a) better academic performance, (b) higher attendance rates, (c) lower crime rates, and (d) improved discipline. There is a need for students to behave while at school in order to learn the material being presented. The Bible teaches in 1 Chronicles 19:13 that people should behave themselves valiantly; however, few Christians in public schools model this type of behavior.

Opponents to school uniform policies have argued that requiring school uniforms violates students' rights, has no effect on school violence, and has no direct bearing on academic achievement (Dussel, 2005). Research on this topic has addressed many issues, including the effectiveness, or lack thereof, of school uniforms on violence prevention, finances, and school climate ("Benefits of School Uniforms," 1999; Boutelle, 2008; Chen, 2008; DaCosta, 2006; Konheim-Kalkstein, 2006; Mancini, 1997; U.S. Department of Education, 1996; Walmsley, 2011; West, Tidwell, Bomba, & Elmore, 1999).

In 1986, Cherry Hill Elementary School in Boston became the first U.S. public school to adopt and enforce a school uniform policy. The policy was adopted for the purpose of reducing clothing costs and curbing social pressures. A newsletter entitled

Communicator, published by the National Association of Elementary School Principals in 1996, quoted Cherry Hill Principal Geraldine Smallwood as reporting (a) increased attendance, (b) reduced suspensions, (c) less frequent fighting, (d) increased test scores, and (e) improved school performance after students began wearing school uniforms. This type of school improvement began a wave of interest in school uniform policies in public schools (DaCosta, 2006; Konheim-Kalkstein, 2006).

In 1995, Long Beach, California, became the initial large urban school district to mandate school uniforms for kindergarten through eighth grade. As other schools followed suit by adopting school uniform policies, 37 state legislatures empowered local districts to determine their own policies. School districts began adopting school uniform policies because research indicated that they (a) prevented violence, (b) improved school climate, and (c) helped parents save money (Konheim-Kalkstein, 2006).

However, the results of school uniform policies have met with skepticism. The research and sources of the skeptics may not be the most scholarly, but to maintain balance these voices should be heard. Job 31:5 says, “Let me be weighed in an even balance, that God may know mine integrity” (KJV). Furthermore, Proverbs 10:8 says, “The wise in heart will receive commandments: but a prating fool shall fall” (KJV). When we see statistical data research, we should be able to correctly discern the findings.

Specifically, the claims of violence prevention and improved climate have been contested by Brunσμα (2006), who declared that these assumptions are without merit. The key to success in schools is highly related to family earnings, according to Brunσμα, which is itself related to race and urbanization. Brunσμα’s assertions were supported by Public Broadcasting Station (PBS), which asserted that school uniforms were simply a

contagious fashion trend. PBS claimed that from coast to coast, public school systems are contemplating the implementation of the “old private school initiative” (“School Uniforms,” 1999). The use of the term *old private school initiative* tends to show a bias against school uniforms.

A more recent source, the website Education Bug, substantiated PBS’ claim that school uniforms may just be a trend, reporting that 60% of public schools in Miami, Florida; 80% of public schools in Chicago, Illinois; and 95% of public schools in New Orleans, Louisiana, require school uniforms (“Public School Uniform Statistics,” 2010). PBS did report a few of the beneficial attributes of a school uniform policy, however, noting that students’ focus in school should be on learning the curriculum of specific courses, not on who has the latest style of sneakers or who is following the hottest fashion trend (“School Uniforms,” 1999). This idea of school improvement through the implementation of a school uniform policy continues in areas of discipline, academics, and school culture.

Discipline. Under the direction of President Bill Clinton, the federal government demonstrated an understanding of the improvements in discipline to be gained from implementing a school uniform policy. In his inaugural address, President Clinton claimed that school uniforms could benefit public education (“Public School Uniform Statistics,” 2010). Specifically, President Clinton claimed that requiring students to wear uniforms “would help promote security in schools and would be safe attire for children. The school uniform could protect children from exterior violence. As simplistic as it may seem, the argument was effective in propagandizing uniforms in public schools” (Dussel, 2005, p. 192). Genesis 6:11 teaches that violence is associated with corruptness. Noah

had to deal with a society with much violence, as people's imaginations were continually on evil. Noah was faithful to preach for 120 years, and the violence and evil imaginations of humanity were judged by God, who destroyed the world with a flood. Bible believers need to support interventions that work to eradicate violence in schools.

Although school uniforms may have been originated from Catholic schools and English schools, isolated American school districts used school uniforms prior to the 1990s; however, President Clinton's speech was a catalyst for a nationwide school uniform movement. It was under Clinton's administration that the *Manual for School Uniforms* (U.S. Department of Education, 1996) was developed to help schools address growing violence in public schools, especially gang-related violence. Gangs often have signature colors that they wear, which can create difficulty in schools. Colors of clothes have had varied meaning throughout history. The accusers of Jesus put a scarlet robe on him while they mocked him (Matt.27:28) because a robe was a symbol of a king. They also put a crown of thorns on His head and a reed in His hand and then bowed their knee as if He were royalty. What those mockers did not know is that Jesus is King of Kings and Lord of Lords and will one day rule this world with a rod of iron (Rev. 19:15). He will return triumphantly on a white horse, and the saints will be with Him, riding on white horses, clothed in fine line, white and clean. The white clothes are a symbol of how our soul is washed clean when we ask Jesus to forgive us of our sin and by faith believe that His death on the cross was payment for our sin.

Similarly, but in a negative fashion, certain clothing colors can indicate gang affiliation and create a dangerous school environment for students. Implementing a school uniform policy in schools could help reduce the number of violent crimes and

prevent children from being beaten up for their clothes or for wearing a certain color. They could also be protected from having their clothing stolen. School uniforms that have a school logo and are the same color are particularly favorable to help provide a safe environment. When outsiders are in the building of a school that has a uniform policy, it is easy to identify them by their clothes, especially if the policy only allows one color shirt to be worn. Furthermore, wearing baggy clothing to school and concealing weapons or other illegal items can be quite easy. If a school uniform policy were put in effect, this problem could be eliminated (“The Benefits of School Uniforms,” 1999).

The notion of identification is also supported from the Bible. Elijah the Tishbite was known to carry a mantle. This clothing identified him as the man of God. Elisha, his understudy, requested a double portion of the anointing of God on his life (2 Kings 2:9). Elijah let him know that this request would be granted if Elisha witnessed the departure of Elijah. As the Lord took Elijah to heaven in the whirlwind, Elisha saw his going away and the mantle of Elijah fell to Elisha (2 Kings 2:13). The mantle of Elijah that Elisha now had demonstrated the power of God on his life and identified Elisha as the man of God.

According to Dussel (2005), a key issue behind school uniform initiatives is “the disciplining of bodies” especially because of safety concerns (p. 193). The theory is that uniforms provide a measure of “control” over students’ bodies, especially those of young males who might be gang members and, therefore, resist uniform policies and thereby self-identify their gang status. Dussel maintained that this policy applies especially to males of minority ethnicities: “In the case of US schools, there are clear links between the disciplining of bodies and the racial dynamics that are central to its political imaginary”

(p. 194). Although Education Secretary Richard Riley did not confirm Dussel's racial argument, he did support the "three Rs"— (a) reading, (b) rating (putting "violence chips" into TVs), and (c) regime (school uniforms and discipline)—as much as the traditional "three Rs" of reading, writing and "arithmetical" (Dussel, 2005).

As school uniforms were investigated as a possible remedy to growing violence, other benefits of a school uniform policy were revealed. Namely, classroom management and student discipline improved with implementation of a school uniform policy (DaCosta, 2006). Delphina Brisco, principal of Milliones Middle School in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, described her school as characterized by mayhem before the implementation of a school uniform policy, as competitiveness over sneakers and clothes was intense. According to Brisco, uniforms reduced distractions and shifted students' focus to their studies, rather than their attire (Mancini, 1997). In addition, such policies reduce the probability that teachers will play the role of dress code police in the classroom and have to determine if a skirt is too short or a blouse too low. It should be the teacher's job to teach, not police student dress, and a school uniform policy can be a constructive characteristic of school improvement ("Benefits of School Uniforms," 1999).

Although school uniforms have been a mainstay of private schools, claimed Chen (2008), California public schools began their implementation in 1994, when the school district of Long Beach, California, where President Clinton made his appeal, implemented a school uniform policy. Later that year, a new school uniform policy in the Long Beach District was credited with a 36% decrease in crime and a 51% decrease in violence in the district; fights and muggings at school decreased by 50%, while sexual

offenses were reduced by 74%. Five years later, crime in the district had dropped by 91%, suspensions were down by 90%, sex offenses were down by 96%, and vandalism had decreased by 69% (Dussel, 2005).

These types of statistics are widespread around the country. For example, at Ruffner Middle School in Norfolk, Virginia, the number of discipline referrals decreased by 42% once school uniforms were enforced. Subsequently fueled by these statistics, more public schools across the country are implementing school uniform policies (Chen, 2008). When an intervention works, a leader should not be too prideful to implement it simply because someone is already using it. John 12:26 says, “If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will *my* Father honour” (KJV). To follow something that works is not a negative trait. Pride should be put aside by administrators in order to implement a proven intervention.

A study by Christensen (2007) showed that school uniform requirements were the only operational difference between traditional public schools and public charter schools concerning safety, policy, and staff. The Center on Reinventing Public Education (CRPE) showed great interest in the areas of discipline and safety in charter schools as compared to those same challenges in traditional school settings and explored this issue with data collected from the Schools and Staffing Survey in 2006. The Schools and Staffing Survey, which provides a reliable survey of elementary and secondary schools in the nation, contained data from public school teachers and principals in regard to ideas about the security of the school and frequency of behavioral situations. Charter schools were also part of the public schools research, and that data could be evaluated independently. The key findings of the Christensen study were as follows: (a)

Comparisons between traditional public schools and charter schools are complex because of the differences of their structure; (b) both charter and traditional public schools have security problems with threats to people and property; (c) traditional public school teachers and principals report security issues more often than do charter school teachers and principals; (d) the only distinguishing factor between the traditional public school and the charter school was that the charter school had a school uniform policy requirement (Christensen, 2007).

Enforcing rules consistently supports the structure that must accompany a school uniform policy. The assertive discipline that Canter (2006) proposed enables educators to implement a strong classroom management program that provides excellent structure. Rewards and consequences are part of Canter's plan for assertive discipline. Discipline must be present in the classroom for students to gain understanding. Job 36:10 says, "He openeth also their ear to discipline, and commandeth that they return from iniquity" (KJV). Discipline is a Biblical concept that needs to be present in all schools in order for teaching and learning to occur.

The assertive discipline technique described by Canter (2006) can be a helpful tool for teachers. If a teacher does not have discipline or some type of classroom management technique, then very little learning is taking place. Teachers must see their role as preparing students to thrive in society, not just teaching course content. Outstanding citizens should result from the assertive discipline program. With this perspective in mind, Biblical manners can be part of the moral concepts in teaching students to behave. Canter maintained that recognizing the good behavior of students is crucial to assertive discipline, as is consistently recognizing and supporting them when

they behave appropriately. According to Canter, the only reasons that students obey the rules are because they believe that they will get rewarded for compliance or understand that they will receive consequences for disobedience.

Assertive discipline is used by teachers because they say that it is easy to learn and use and, in general, is successful (Canter, 2006). These student management techniques have been beneficial since the early 1990s. Teachers can modify specific techniques to meet their immediate needs. For instance, some teachers of older students often do not write students' names on the board when rules have been disobeyed since recording a verbal warning on paper can be just as effective. This program comes highly recommended for teachers or for systems that want a structured student behavior plan (Canter, 2006; Dussel, 2005).

Academics. School uniforms can play a role in creating an academically motivating climate. For example, research has documented that school uniforms influence teacher expectations of students. Harold Adams, a counselor at Dale Middle School in Anaheim, California, fought to implement a school uniform policy because he wanted his students to stop fighting due to jealousy of their peers' clothes. Teachers expected better behavior and reported improvements in academic achievement (Mancini, 1997).

The researcher has noticed that in some settings, emphasis is placed on the internal or spiritual portion of people rather than external appearances. However, what is on the internal will make itself manifested on the external (Luke 6:45). Fads and fashions of the world may change, but the Word of God is forever "settled in heaven," says Psalm

119:89 (KJV). When students are trained to emphasize education more than fashion, the climate of the school setting is focused on academics.

Many studies have claimed that school uniform policies improve academic achievement (Boutelle, 2008; Chen, 2008; Christensen, 2007; Mancini, 1997; U.S. Department of Education, 1996), while others have maintained that school uniform policies do not improve academic achievement (Brunsma & Rockquemore, 1998; Dussel, 2005). However, qualitative research is needed to allow practitioners and policymakers to hear the impressions of teachers who are in the midst of implementing school uniforms because interwoven variables of school climate are difficult to reduce to numbers in a quantitative study (Huss, 2007).

School culture. The Bible backs up the notion that society has a problem with some people thinking that they are better than someone else. Psalms 18:27 says, “For thou wilt save the afflicted people; but wilt bring down high looks” (KJV). The high looks that the Bible speaks about can make people feel bad who have not had the same opportunities that their peers may have been fortunate to have. Students do not control where they are born, or who their parents may be, but leaders can find interventions such as a school uniform policy to bring everyone to the same level. This may not solve all the problems for our schools, but it may bring help to some that need it.

Contemporary schools have a “regime of appearances,” which refers to the aesthetics of the school. These aesthetics might include (a) classrooms matching the design or shape of the outer part of the school building, (b) the use of technology in each classroom for instruction, (c) the implementation of a school uniform policy, and (d) the geometric positioning of shapes, people, and objects (Dussel, 2005). Dussel (2005)

approached the materialization of school uniforms as part of this “regime of appearances,” focusing on Argentina and the United States.

White smocks worn at the start of the 20th century in Argentina established a homogeneous, austere atmosphere at school. Teachers, principals, and others claimed that they began the notion of a school uniform policy by keeping students in clean, affordable, and autonomous attire (Dussel, 2005).

Egalitarian discourse has been enormously influential in Argentina. It is not surprising, then, that the adoption of white smocks supposedly had prophylactic bases, such as to prevent germs and bacteria from spreading throughout schools. In his “Instructions to school principals and teachers in relation to school hygiene,” the health inspector Genaro Sisto mandated daily inspections of students, furniture and the school setting. White smocks should be seen as a protection against the outer world, a defense set by the school to sanitize and cleanse its students. (Hesapcioglu & Meseci Giorgetti, 2009, p. 186)

Furthermore, a hygienic “connection” was made between the white smocks students wore with doctors’ smocks, since the two “uniforms” are identical in Argentina. In addition,

physical education became a distinct school discipline by the end of the nineteenth century. In a school hygiene textbook, for example, gymnastics figures among the contents. This education of the body is also at the basis of the persistence of white smocks as the specific code for schools. (Hesapcioglu & Meseci Giorgetti, 2009, p. 189)

This particular school dress was also part of a trend in Argentinean schools that involved experimentation with teaching techniques, school organization, and overall school reform.

Several people claimed credit for the white smock policy in Argentina's public schools, which was eventually extended to include school staff:

Antonio Banchemo, a 6th grade teacher in 1906, reported that he promoted the use of white aprons for the teacher and for the students in a central school in Buenos Aires, in order to avoid the contrast between wealthy children and poor children.

Hesapcioglu & Meseci Giorgetti, 2009, p. 182)

Other goals for the policy included eliminating competition over dress among staff and correcting personal hygiene issues among students. The white smock policy became so ingrained into the Argentinean psyche that the smocks were seen as symbols of egalitarian public schooling, "democracy, health and decency, to the point that it became unthinkable to dress differently in schools without feeling that important achievements were being threatened" (Hesapcioglu & Meseci Giorgetti, 2009, p. 195).

In the United States, school uniform policies emerged from different ideologies than those in place in Argentina. Although Americans pride themselves on diversity and independence, school uniform policies have existed for decades in both public and private schools. Originally, in the United States, "uniforms were used for the schooling of minorities (Native Americans, women) as a way of rigorously training unruly bodies and of learning other aesthetic and bodily dispositions" (Hesapcioglu & Meseci Giorgetti, 2009, p. 179). Dussel (2005) established a further connection between ethnicity and school uniform policies in the United States:

Ethnic difference has had great implications in the political system, the social structure and education. There was, until the 1960s, at least in the southern states, a segregated school system for African-Americans and white Americans. People tend to think that, given this diversity and individualism, school uniforms never existed in American schools. But, despite this widespread opinion, there have been several experiences of uniform code policies both in public and private schools. (p.191)

Private schools, where more economically advantaged students attended, typically adopted

a specific code that is called the “preppy look”: khaki or gray trousers, worn with Oxford shirts with button-down collars in white or light blue. The “preppy look” has been brought to the fore as the aesthetic norm for current uniforms in public schools. (Dussel, 2005, p. 191)

However, President Clinton’s 1994 appeal for uniform policies was a turning point, as many schools took his advice to heart and instituted uniform policies (Dussel, 2005).

A school uniform intervention can instill a sense of satisfaction and pride in those students in need of structure. Other benefits include (a) character development, (b) a positive atmosphere conducive to learning, and (c) school security. In some schools, students begin to wear school uniforms the first day of school at an early age. In these schools, all students know are school uniforms, and wearing uniforms may give younger students a sense of belonging (“Benefits of School Uniforms,” 1999). The advantages of a policy that requires students to wear a school uniform are debated and the leaders of school systems must look for what is best for all students.

Parental Involvement in School Uniform Policy Implementation

Parents must be part of the uniform policy implementation to create buy-in among school staff and in the community, a process that is often fraught with difficulty and frustration, even though a Gallup Poll indicated that over 50% of parents were in favor of school uniform policies (Dussel, 2005). Sometimes dress code policies that are not related to uniforms pose the same challenges. Boutelle (2008) provided the following example of unexpected parental reaction after a student at Bear Flag Elementary School in Sacramento, California, was escorted home by the principal because she violated the dress code by wearing a micro mini-skirt and halter top that left her midriff uncovered:

“Her mother was upset with me,” [Principal Judy] Montgomery says. “She said, ‘I think she looks cute!’” In an era where some parents seem unwilling or unable to draw the “clothes” line with their children, where pop culture influences kids’ clothing choices as never before, and school safety—including gang violence—is at the top of everyone’s minds, school uniforms and dress codes can play a significant role. But what that role should be is open to interpretation and can be a source of frustration—and skirmishes. (Boutelle, 2008, p. 34)

Existing laws may complicate matters as well. For example, California Education Code 35183 gives school districts the power to regulate student attire but also gives parents the liberty to avoid compliance with school uniform policies for their children (Boutelle, 2008). Approximately 75% of parents and students typically approve of school uniform policies, according to Boutelle (2008), leaving “25 percent who don’t approve, and disapproving parents certainly influence their children’s attitudes, which add to the difficulty in administering the rule” (p. 35). Overall, school uniform policies

are simply difficult to enforce and add to an already demanding paperwork load for teachers, who must consume class time with documenting dress code infractions daily and remembering which students' parents have signed a waiver allowing their child to opt out of the dress code (Boutelle, 2008).

However, administrators have several tactics to encourage compliance among students and parents, who often have to deal with resistant children. Hebrews 13:17 teaches to obey those that have rule over you. We are to submit to authority, especially to those who watch for our souls. We must all give an account of our deeds one day, but those that rule over us must give an account on how well they ruled. If we do not obey, then we are hurting ourselves. Furthermore, Mike Gulden, principal at Barbara Comstock Morse Elementary School, in Sacramento, California, uses a humorous approach and leads by example, wearing the school uniform himself:

The reality is, there's an instructional purpose [to requiring uniforms]. I tell them, "We wear uniforms because (1) that's our policy, (2) you see me wearing it, and (3) what if your parents came in to see me in the office, and I had my shirttails hanging out and three or four layers of clothes on?" (Boutelle, 2008, p. 35)

One benefit that school uniform policies offer parents is fewer clothing battles with their children. As Walmsley (2011) noted based on her experiences in the United States and the United Kingdom,

Parents appreciate needing to buy only a few shirts, a few trousers, skirts, tights, and possibly a blazer, cardigan, or sweatshirt for the entire school year. It's actually more reasonable to do this than to buy the many clothes that U.S. parents feel they must buy. (p. 64)

Leveling the Playing Field

Socioeconomics. Supporters of school uniform policies claim that one of their benefits is reducing “clothing competition” among students (Boutelle, 2008; Walmsley, 2011). While school uniform policies of decades past often indicated that a student’s family was affluent enough for the children to attend a private school, more current policies have not carried the same perception and have actually been determined to lessen socioeconomic distinctions that could isolate poorer students. According to Principal Mike Gulden, abolition of the school uniform policy at Barbara Comstock Morse Elementary School could have negative consequences, as differences between “our needy kids and fairly well-to do kids might become magnified and polarize the campus . . . Life has enough hurdles for families and kids; I don’t think one of them should be here at school” (Boutelle, 2008, p. 36).

With a limited wardrobe also comes less expense for school clothing, another potential benefit (Walmsley, 2011). A study performed by West et al. (1999) reported that parents see school uniforms as a bargain since they allow parents to avoid fads that kindle students’ desire for designer labels. The choice of school uniforms goes from the casual to formal; however, most schools who have adopted school uniform policies have selected khakis or jeans and polo knit shirts of a solid color, which are more acceptable to parents and students than white shirts and dress pants for boys and white shirts and skirts for girls that are common in private schools. According to Kelly (2009), khakis or jeans

and polo knit shirts of a solid color appear to be more affordable as well and can be worn somewhere other than school.

In addition, obtaining a uniform may help students respect and not discriminate against each other. James 2:3 gives an example of discriminatory behavior: “And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool” (KJV). This type of cruelty may be avoided with the implementation of a school uniform policy.

However, low income families have especially felt that school uniforms would only be a financial burden (Kelly, 2009; “School Uniforms,” 1999; West et al., 1999). School uniforms may place a financial burden on families who shop at discount stores for their children’s clothes if the discount stores do not carry the required clothing items (Pakhare, 2007). In addition, Pakhare (2007) claimed that because parents would need to buy additional clothing for students to wear after school and on the weekends, the amount of money a family would spend on clothing would actually double if a school uniform policy were enacted.

While the cost of uniforms varies, several schools have implemented programs to assist families in financial need (Konheim-Kalkstein, 2006). Matthew 14:16 teaches that it is right for us to help those that are in need. When someone is in need, leaders should organize methods of support from the community to help families; this would especially apply at the beginning of the school year, when families are hit with many school-related financial burdens. Businesses, churches, and civic organizations should be considered resources to financially help those families who are in need or have multiple siblings in school. School districts have utilized financial assistance from the community when a

school uniform policy has been implemented (Kelly, 2009). This type of community involvement makes the transition to a school uniform policy easier as it demonstrates commitment to the intervention.

In addition, school uniforms might actually save parents money by lessening the pressure on students to wear trendy, expensive clothes to keep up with fashion (Konheim-Kalkstein, 2006). Schultz (2003) showed that parents who are concerned with the cost of school uniforms are demonstrating their responsibility for the education of their children. Schultz identified 10 principles of education, and the first item he lists is that “the education of children and youth is the primary responsibility of parents” (p. 20).

In sum, social interaction is a part of a student’s development, and clothing labels brings status and create a barrier to interaction with peers. However, school uniforms can create equality in the school environment and make social interactions more equitable. A school uniform policy may eliminate financial delineation and be a reasonably priced way to dress. While up-front costs may be substantial, uniforms could be handed down to younger siblings or other students since they do not go “out of style” (Konheim-Kalkstein, 2006; Mancini, 1997).

Academics. In addition to creating some measure of at least perceived socioeconomic equality, school uniforms also level the academic playing field by removing distractions that clothing can create. To enable students to have a bright future and attain well-paying job, they should learn the competencies and standards necessary at school, and fashion may be a distraction for some students. When this obstacle is removed, students can focus more on academics rather than being concerned over the latest fad (Mancini, 1997).

The Bible supports the notion of allowing students every opportunity to gain wisdom. Proverbs 1:2 says, “To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding” (KJV). Again and again, Proverbs emphasizes the need for knowledge, understanding, and wisdom. However, these precepts must become more than things we have heard or simply talk about but must be demonstrated by our behaviors. Such demonstration shows our integrity when our actions are consistent with what we say we believe. Proverbs 11:3 says, “The integrity of the upright shall guide them: but the perverseness of transgressors shall destroy them” (KJV). Leaders must support interventions that maintain basic character, such as providing all students the prospect of learning.

Assistant superintendent of educational services at Pittsburg Unified School District Linda Rondeau noted that when school uniform policies are in place, “No one is looking at shirts with graffiti or wondering if what [students] are wearing is affiliated with a gang or worrying about someone’s designer sweatshirt” (Boutelle, 2008, p. 36). In addition, students spend less time talking about who is wearing what and are less distracted by clothing that may be too revealing. Principal Judy Hunt-Brown of Maeola R. Beitzel Elementary School in Sacramento even noted that standardizing the shoes students must wear helps avoid problems related to participation in physical education activities (Boutelle, 2008).

Uniforms in Christian Schools

While the number of public school districts across the United States that require students in grades K-12 to wear school uniforms has increased because of benefits previously discussed, many Christian schools require students to wear uniforms as well

and do so for purposes far different than those of public schools. Christian education is necessary because of human traditions and worldviews that are not focused on Christ. It is this mentality that the effective leader is combating when school uniforms are proposed. Shultz (2003) defined *worldview* as encompassing one's view (a) of the nature of God, (b) of the nature of man, (c) of knowledge, (d) of right and wrong, and (e) of the future. Shultz maintained that it is important that students know the difference between a God-centered and a man-centered worldview.

In addition, utilizing a school uniform policy can foster attitudes that are essential for developing leadership qualities among students. Building leadership qualities early in life can be an asset to future endeavors. Gaining knowledge from the educational system in leadership will benefit the student and community. Commitment to persevere with the expectation of success is the attitude of an effective leader, claims Maxwell (1999). A leader's ability to achieve anything great for God begins in his or her mind, based on Philippians 4:8:

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. (KJV)

Proponents of School Uniform Policies

The decision of whether to adopt school uniforms has created a great deal of debate over the past few years. When students are required to wear school uniforms, they might feel as if they have lost their identities (Boutelle, 2008; Pakhare, 2007; Sasson, 2007), while some believe that school uniforms create equality among students. Others

believe that school uniforms can create a climate of confidence for many students, which can improve the learning atmosphere of the educational facility (Boutelle, 2008; Konheim-Kalkstein, 2006; Mancini, 1997).

Many reasons supporting school uniform policies have also been offered: (a) Uniforms help save students and parents time in the morning, (b) they stop feelings of jealousy among students, and (c) they help decrease behavior infractions. A tone is set for a proper work attitude: Teachers can focus on teaching and students on learning (Mancini, 1997; Sasson, 2009). Furthermore, the U.S. Department of Education (1996) identified the following benefits of school uniforms:

- (a) reducing violence and theft, even life-threatening situations, among students over designer clothing or lavish sneakers; (b) helping prevent gang members from wearing gang colors and insignia at school; (c) instilling students with discipline; (d) helping parents and students resist peer pressure; (e) helping students concentrate on their school work; and (f) helping school officials recognize intruders who come to the school.

According to Mancini (1997) and Lumsden (2001), school uniforms lead to students having (a) increased respect for teachers, (b) fewer distractions, (c) amplified self-worth and poise, (d) decreased overall attire costs, and (e) encouragement of team spirit.

School uniforms also improve security in that intruders are quickly spotted and students have improved conduct (Chen, 2008; Mancini, 1997; Walmsley, 2011). The Bible tells about Joseph who had a coat of many colors made for him (Gen. 37). This coat made Joseph easy to identify, even from a distance. This thought supports the notion that school uniforms make for easy identification.

A study by Draa (2005) showed that a school uniform policy caused improved graduation, attendance, and behavior rates. However, the study did not show academic improvements. Draa found an 11% improvement in the graduation rate in schools with a school uniform policy compared to the years before implementation of a school uniform policy. Schools that did not have a school uniform policy dropped 4.6% in graduation rates compared to pre-uniform years. Draa reported a 3.5% improvement in the attendance rates in four schools, but attendance rates declined in two schools. Student behavior improved as the mean expulsion rates dipped by 0.6 expulsions per 100 students during the years that school uniforms were required. According to Dussel (2005), school uniforms are “a way to construct collective identities and generate a new consensus on the need for better schooling” (p. 193).

Opposition to School Uniform Policies

As the previous section established, proponents of school uniforms have reported behavior and academic improvements among students after implementation of school uniform policies. However, reasons against school uniform policies have been offered as well, including the following: (a) Uniforms take away students’ freedom to make decisions, (b) they hurt self-expression, (c) students do not feel special and unique when wearing school uniforms, and (d) looking like everybody else is not desirable (Mancini 1997; Pakhare, 2007; Sasson, 2009).

A 1988 National Educational Longitudinal Study investigated the positive attributes claimed by school uniform support groups. The results demonstrated that discipline problems, drug abuse, and attendance were not improved by a school uniform policy and actually had a harmful outcome on academic achievement. These survey

results were contested by Christensen (2007), who found that achievement was positively affected by a school uniform policy. Additionally, Brunsmma and Rockquemore (1998) claimed that school improvement may be circuitously affected by school uniform policies with an observable and public figure of commitment. Mitchell and Knechtle (2003) also pointed to other school policies instead of school uniforms for school improvement. In other words, even when improvements occurred, they could not be attributed to dress code alone because when schools adopted school uniforms or dress codes, they also made other changes to school policies. Other interventions that may contribute to school improvements include (a) creation of parent organizations, (b) addition of security measures, (c) adoption of standards-based curriculum, and (d) an updated discipline plan.

Much of the literature on school uniforms is inundated with opinions of parents and community members who believe that school uniforms and dress codes do not have nearly the impact that some assume (Wallin, 2008). The dilemma lies in how the bulk of the research was conducted, Wallin (2008) implied. In studies in which principals or parents were asked to explain their impressions about the new dress code, they made comments such as, “Yeah, the children are behaving much better and they are more focused on their schoolwork” (Wallin, 2008, p. 2). However, when researchers calculated (a) school attendance, (b) student achievement, (c) number of fights, and (d) other indicators of good citizenship, the results were mixed. In some schools, there was no distinction between these areas before school uniforms and after school uniforms were introduced, although a few schools did show reasonable improvements in test scores and behavior (Walsh, 2008). Overall, strong school leadership is needed to balance the

variety of feelings among teachers, students, parents, and the community when implementing a school uniform policy (Mancini 1997; Pakhare, 2007; Sasson, 2009).

The Role of School Leadership

Effective leadership is necessary to implement positive change in academics through implementation of school uniform policies, which should improve graduation rates. Hackman and Johnson (2008) presented the unique characteristics of leadership as four primary definitional themes: (a) Leadership is about who you are, (b) leadership is concerning how you act, (c) leadership is regarding what you do, and (d) leadership is about how you toil with others. Attitudes and behaviors of others are modified by leadership, and leaders use symbolic communication to meet shared group objectives and needs (Hackman & Johnson, 2008).

King David was an effective leader as he conquered the enemies of Israel during his reign. As a youth, David began his public service to God when he defeated Goliath. David found the importance of the right dress code as King Saul wanted David to use his armor (1 Samuel 17:38). David did not use Saul's armor because he had not proven it. David defeated the giant in the name of the Lord (1 Samuel 17). Likewise, leaders need to know the techniques of leadership in order to effectively implement a school uniform policy. Past experience, good communication, and teamwork may be useful to effective leaders.

Management is often equated with leadership; however, leading differs considerably from managing. Perhaps the key disparity between a leader and a manager lies in the focus of each: While a manager is engaged with the status quo, a leader is more concerned with the ultimate path of the group. Leaders must be sure of those around

them to cause circumstances to result in positive consequences. In Daniel 6, King Darius allowed some of his managers to lead him in a way that he did not want to go and created consequences that he did not want to happen. The managers of King Darius could not find a way to accuse Daniel, so they convinced the king to pass a law against praying to anyone but the king. This law led to Daniel being thrown into the lion's den. King Darius came early to the lion's den the next morning and called for Daniel, and Daniel told the king that God delivered him. King Darius had those managers thrown into the lion's den, and they were consumed by the lions.

Leadership is an interactive endeavor primarily shaped by concise narrative with a planned strategy of the intended consequence. Storytelling is a priceless enhancement to abstract reasoning and analysis that should be honed and used as a tool to make a better ambiance for communication. Important types of stories include those that (a) spark action, (b) communicate who you are, (c) communicate the brand image to customers, (d) transmit organizational values, (e) foster collaboration, (f) tame the grapevine by pointing out the disconnect between rumors and reality, (g) share knowledge about problem solving, and (h) lead people into the future (Hackman & Johnson, 2008).

These improvements must be implemented effectively and with strong guidance, especially if some involved are reluctant to change. Effective leaders are skilled at sharing and responding to emotions. For example, they know how to communicate affection, approval, and excitement to followers. These characteristics are needed in the leaders who implement a school uniform policy. In addition, they know how to channel their emotions in order to achieve their objectives and to maintain friendly cluster relations (Hackman & Johnson, 2008).

Another factor that contributes to variations in leader effectiveness and is important for implementing any new policy is communication style. The style of communication by the leadership is the communication behaviors that an administrator, manager, or leader uses to interact with those that are following. The style of communication may reveal a philosophy or belief of the leader about human nature. The style of the leader may be a strategy that is designed to make best use of outcomes in a given circumstances (Hackman & Johnson, 2008).

Followers, like leaders, need to understand their own communication styles to carry out their roles successfully. The best followers are people who think for themselves and take initiative. The least desirable followers have to continually be told what to do and require constant supervision. Typical followers take direction and complete jobs on their own after being told what is expected of them. The style of the leader will ultimately reflect the desired outcome of the followers that are in a team, association, or cluster (Hackman & Johnson, 2008). King David demonstrated that he was a good follower as he was loyal to King Saul. However, his loyalty was not met with Saul's favor (1 Samuel 18). The women of Israel came out of the cities singing that Saul had killed his thousands and David had killed his ten thousands. King Saul even tried to kill David by throwing a javelin at him. David eventually fled from King Saul (1 Samuel 20), who pursued David after trying to kill him. God delivered King Saul into David's hand, but David would not raise his hand against God's anointed. David cut off part of the clothing that the king wore to show that he could have killed the king.

Hackman and Johnson (2008) taught that five primary approaches for understanding and explaining leadership have evolved: (a) the traits approach, (b) the

situational approach, (c) the functional approach, (d) the relational approach, and (e) the transformational approach. Beginning in the late 1970s, the transformational approach emerged as a new perception for understanding and explaining leadership. The transformational approach contrasts conventional leadership, labeled as transactional, with a more complex and potent type of leadership, known as transformational (Hackman & Johnson, 2008).

Kouzes and Posner (2008) spoke of the qualities that are needed for effective transformational leadership: “(a) model the way, (b) inspire a shared vision, (c) challenge the process, (d) enable others to act, and (e) encourage the heart” (p. 14). These attributes are necessary for a leader who might want to incorporate an intervention program as drastic as school uniforms. Administrators should provide an example of modest apparel, drawing on strong illustration of the importance given to one’s appearance given in 1 Timothy 2:9. Leader should model their professionalism with appropriate dress. When implementing a school uniform policy, leaders must take advantage of their ability to unify everyone affected and inspire a shared vision. Stakeholders must know the vision and understand the leadership direction that has established clear methods of reaching goals. Decision makers should challenge the process that they are implementing to ensure that outcomes are measured and meeting expectations. With a concise process, teachers, students, and the community will be able to implement the intervention with clarity. The outcome of a successful uniform policy will encourage the hearts of those participating with an effective leader.

As effective leaders implement these practices, they become more influential to those under their authority. *Power* is defined by Hackman and Johnson (2008) as the

ability to influence others. Judges 15:14 teaches about a leader with great physical power: Samson. He also demonstrated the power to influence others. He judged the nation Israel for 20 years but had some personal problems when it came to obeying God. Samson showed great physical power when he killed 1,000 men with the jawbone of an ass. Another powerful physical deed that he performed was carrying the doors of the gate of the city of Gaza—bar and all—upon his shoulders to the top of a hill near Hebron. Samson died among the enemies of God and killed more Philistines in his death than he did during his life. His death seemed to be premature, but he still had great power with God as he is listed with the heroes of faith in the book of Hebrews 11.

Leadership is impossible without power since a leader must modify attitudes and behaviors. However, influencing others does not automatically qualify as leadership; instead, power must be used in pursuit of group goals to merit leadership classification. A successful leader must have credibility. Competence, trustworthiness, and dynamism are the foundation of the leader's credibility.

Public relations with speeches and campaigns are used by public officials to influence large numbers and audiences. All levels of society are persuaded in their behaviors and attitudes by these types of schemes. Hackman and Johnson (2008) explained that excellent public relations programs have the following characteristics: (a) empowered (i.e., valued and promoted by top administration); (b) a strategic management role that helps shape directorial guidelines and direction; (c) two-way communication and unbiased associations that identify and respond to the needs of the public while fostering collaboration with outside groups; (d) principled behavior that discloses accurate information, engages in conversation, and advocates social responsibility; and (d)

empathetic structure that encourages participation and fosters the progression of women and minorities. Successful leaders recognize and respond to cultural differences by adapting their behaviors to meet cultural expectations. These traits of a leader may be beneficial to the administrator or leader who directs the implementation of a school uniform policy.

Leadership improvement is a lifelong journey. Being sensitive to people with judgment of character is necessary for ethical leadership. Joshua was great leader for the nation of Israel. Under his leadership, Israel was able to conquer its homeland. Moses had been a great leader, and now God was using Joshua to lead His people. Joshua was a loyal follower of Moses, and he declared that “for me and my house, we will serve the LORD” (Josh.24:15, KJV). Such character traits brought God’s anointing on his life, and God’s anointing caused his character traits to be enhanced even more. God was with Joshua as he was with Moses, and He sustained Joshua through many great experiences. It was Joshua and Caleb who came back from spying the Promised Land with the correct report. Joshua’s people were not used to fighting, but God was with them and they became great warriors. Perhaps Joshua’s greatest trait as a leader was a willingness to do whatever God would have him to do or to go wherever God would have him go (Joshua 1:16). Motivation with moral action must be part of the leader’s character. The effective leader will develop skills necessary and will proactively seek out leadership learning opportunities, building developmental relationships, and capitalizing on experiences (Hackman & Johnson, 2008).

Hackman and Johnson (2008) indicated that it is the leader’s duty to move the organization from crisis prone to crisis ready. Crisis readiness requires (a) recognizing

danger signs through scanning the external and internal environments; (b) identifying trouble spots or vulnerabilities; (c) developing a crisis management plan (including a crisis management team); and (d) building organizational credibility (Hackman & Johnson, 2008).

These leadership qualities may give administrators the tools needed to implement a school uniform policy effectively. Ephesians 6 teaches us about the spiritual tools needed to fight the war of faith. The emphasis of the chapter seems to be our position when we fight, and that is to stand. The leader should be candid about his or her position on issues and stand on what is right. The community needs to be informed and given the chance to be supportive to the school uniform policy. An effective leader should research the positive methods of implementing a school uniform policy and keep in mind that the administrator is central to the implementation process.

Legal Issues Surrounding School Uniform Policies

Legal issues and questions by (a) administrators, (b) teachers, (c) school board members, (d) parents, and (e) students have arisen as a result of school uniform policies.

Tinker v. Des Moines Independent High School District was a landmark 1969 case regarding student idiom through attire. Before this case, school districts did not give much consideration to the rights of students at school when making policy. During the Christmas holiday season, teenaged Tinker and Christopher students wore their black armbands to protest the Vietnam War, along with their parents. The Christopher student and the Tinker siblings were asked to remove their armbands when they wore them to school because the administration of the Des Moines school feared that they would cause disorder. However, the students refused to take off the armbands, and the principals

suspended them until after Christmas break. The Supreme Court decision concluded that the wearing of armbands was protected by the First Amendment and that, although schools have traditionally been able to limit student expression, administrators went beyond what was reasonable in this case. The principals failed to show that the forbidden behavior would substantially interfere with suitable school discipline (Anderson, 2002).

Another important decision was handed down in 2008 when the U.S Appeals Court for the 9th Circuit upheld the Clark County School District in Las Vegas that required public school students to wear khaki pants and a solid polo shirt. The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Nevada helped students in the case to claim their First Amendment rights. The 9th Circuit majority held that the policies were upheld because the uniform policy improved student achievement, promoted safety, and enhanced the school environment (Walsh, 2008).

In another case, *Canady v. Bossier Parish School Board*, the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals used a four-step test to determine if the school uniform policy was constitutional: (a) The board has the authority to make such a policy; (b) the policy promotes the interests of the board; (c) the board does not adopt the policy to censure student expression; and (d) the policy's incidental restriction on student expression is not greater than necessary to promote the board's interest. The Court decided that school officials did not violate the students' First Amendment rights by implementing a mandatory school uniform policy. The Court considered the improvement of the quality of education in public schools in Bossier City, Louisiana, and the nation and gave school systems the confidence to require school uniforms (Anderson, 2002).

Summary

In the late 1990s, many schools adopted school uniform policies. Several factors contributed to this adoption, including (a) fashion trends of the 1990s, (b) challenges of enforcing a dress code, (c) the emergence of gang activity and crime in the schools, and (d) the appeal of high priced, brand label clothing for the teen market. Faced with these obstacles, some public schools opted to implement a school uniform dress policy as a solution to combat some of the ever-present problems afflicting their systems (Brunsma, 2006; Brunsma & Rockquemore, 1998). With the implementation of NCLB, these types of improvements are needed in schools, especially in East Tennessee. When opportunities arise for improvement leaders need to act. Jesus acted when Nicodemus came to him by night in John 3 by telling him that he had to be “born again.” After Nicodemus heard these teachings, He became a follower of Jesus. Leaders must also act and encourage stakeholders to follow them based on statistical research and communication of results.

The research that supports school uniforms offers statistical details of school improvement after implementation of school uniform policies (Konheim-Kalkstein, 2006), lending credibility to the argument that school uniforms can benefit schools. At the same time, opponents of school uniforms have offered many reasons schools should not implement school uniform policies. Perhaps the most compelling argument presented for school uniforms was the lack of decision making by students when dressing for school. However, the research suggested that school uniform policies are beneficial to schools by (a) improving student attendance, (b) improving academic performance, (c)

decreasing suspensions, and (d) improving the graduation rate (Chen, 2008; Christensen, 2007; Draa, 2005; U.S. Department of Education, 1996).

Negative reception by students, parents, and communities may result from the lack of leadership necessary to implement a comprehensive school uniform policy. School leaders must face the challenges with a strong demeanor and skilled communication (Hackman & Johnson, 2008; Kouzes & Posner, 2008; Mancini 1997; Pakhare, 2007; Sasson, 2009). More specifically, the leader must be consistent in communicating with students, teachers, parents, and the community through web pages, newsletters, flyers, and the media. Communication also includes active listening. Ecclesiastes 12:13 says, “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this *is* the whole *duty* of man” (KJV). Listening must be a skill that the leader uses to start dialogue with stakeholders. These skills are the duty of the leader to master so that the process of implementation will be successful.

Identifying problems, responding to feelings, and being respectful to those involved are all qualities of an effective leader. Communication about school uniform policies must have these qualities to ensure successful implementation. A strong communicator can set the tone for the transition, and all parties involved must be equipped and empowered with knowledge and expectations. With a leader who communicates well, students can feel at ease with the change, and parents can talk to their children about the needs the strong leader has communicated. The community will be aware of the expectations and the improvements that will result from the implemented policy, thus increasing the likelihood that the adoption of school uniforms will be successful.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

This study investigated whether graduation, attendance, and suspension rates were higher or lower in East Tennessee public high schools that have school uniform policies. The problem is that educators need strategies to improve their schools, and requiring school uniforms may be a way to increase the number of students who attend school, avoid suspension, and graduate by giving them needed structure. The school reform movement was set in full motion in 1983 with the release of *A Nation at Risk* by the National Commission on Excellence in Education (U.S. Department of Education, 1983). In 1996, President Clinton encouraged school uniforms for students across the nation (“Public School Uniform Statistics,” 2010), and in 2001, President George W. Bush signed into law the NCLB educational reform endeavor.

The dependent participant in this study was a high school in East Tennessee that requires school uniforms. A demographically similar high school that does not require school uniforms was also included. Data from the 2007, 2008, and 2009 school years (see Appendix C) from the dependent high school were compared to data from the same school years from the independent high school (see Appendix D) to find any significant differences. The dependent high school was then compared to itself to reveal significant differences before and after school uniform implementation. This study received IRB approval for this causal comparative study of school uniform (see Appendix E).

Design

This study used a causal comparative design. Recorded data of graduation, attendance, and suspension rates were gathered from the Tennessee Department of

Education website for two schools in East Tennessee. Descriptive, comparative, and inferential data analyses were used to identify any significant differences between graduation, attendance, and suspension rates at a school with a uniform policy and a school without a uniform policy.

Data Gathering Methods

The researcher investigated a school in East Tennessee that requires school uniforms and a school with similar demographics that does not have a school uniform policy. Each school has a report card on the Tennessee Department of Education website containing demographic information and graduation, attendance, and suspension rates. The data were compiled into tables, and the information was compared. The school demographics that were considered were (a) overall student population, (b) ethnic makeup, (c) male and female population, and (d) free and reduced lunch percentages.

Instrumentation

A phone script (see Appendix B) was used to call the public high schools in East Tennessee to determine if school uniforms were required and, if so, how many years the policy had been in place and how many graduates each school had in recent years. The phone script was examined by a panel of five experts in education and the dissertation committee prior to its finalization and implementation. These experts each had at least 5 years of educational experience and had a minimum of a master's degree; members of the dissertation committee all possess doctoral degrees. The experts were asked the following questions:

1. Are the phone script questions clear, concise, and appropriate?
2. Are there any validity concerns?

The Tennessee Secondary Schools Athletic Association (TSSAA) publishes a phone directory of all high schools each year, and this directory was used to find the phone numbers of the East Tennessee Schools. As previously mentioned, the following research questions guided the analysis:

Research question 1. Is there a significant difference between school uniform policies and graduation rates in demographically similar high schools?

Null hypothesis (H_01). There is no statistically significant difference between school uniform policies and graduation rates in demographically similar high schools.

Research question 2. Is there a significant difference between school uniform policies and attendance rates in demographically similar high schools?

Null hypothesis (H_02). There is no statistically significant difference between school uniform policies and attendance rates in demographically similar high schools.

Research question 3. Is there a significant difference between school uniform policies and suspension rates in demographically similar high schools?

Null hypothesis (H_03). There is no statistically significant difference between school uniform policies and suspension rates in demographically similar high schools.

Research question 5. Is there a significant difference between school uniform policies and attendance rates before and after the implementation of a school uniform policy?

Null hypothesis (H_05). There is no statistically significant difference between school uniform policies and attendance rates before and after the implementation of a school uniform policy.

Research question 6. Is there a significant difference between school uniform policies and suspension rates in before and after the implementation of a school uniform policy?

Null hypothesis (H_0 6). There is no statistically significant difference between school uniform policies and suspension rates before and after the implementation of a school uniform policy.

Ethical Considerations

Administrators are persistently looking for methods to improve their schools, especially because of the need to meet AYP as outlined in NCLB. Because of this motive, programs or interventions other than school uniform policies that are in place may affect graduation, suspension, and attendance rates.

Data Analysis

A public school in East Tennessee that had a school uniform policy was compared to a school of similar demographics in East Tennessee that did not have a school uniform policy. The data were documented from the recorded information reported to the Tennessee Department of Education regarding each school's graduation, attendance, and suspension rates. Looking for trends, the researcher then compared the data from the 2007, 2008, and 2009 school years for schools with and without a school uniform policy. A second comparison was made of the graduation, attendance, and suspension rates at the dependent high school before and after the implementation of the school uniform policy. The collected data were analyzed by comparing graduation, attendance, and suspension rates of each school, looking for any statistically significant differences between those schools with or without school uniform policies. The second comparison was made with

the 2003 and 2004 school data, which reflected a period before school uniforms, and the 2008 and 2009 school data, which reflected a period after the implementation of the school uniform policy in the dependent high school.

A Z-test was used to assess the significance of the proportional differences with consideration of the Z value and the P value. The demographics that were considered were the (a) overall student population, (b) ethnic makeup, (c) male and female population, and (d) free and reduced lunch percentages. The data demonstrate the likeness of the schools that were chosen for the research. All of the reported percentages for the dependent high school reflect a less than 3% change when compared to the independent high school. These reported percentages show the similar demographics of the two high schools. Both schools had similar student populations and are located in the same geographic area, within 36 miles of each other.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

A rural public high school in East Tennessee that had a school uniform policy (i.e., the dependent high school) was compared to another rural public high school with similar demographics that did not have a school uniform policy (i.e., the independent high school). A second comparison was made between data of the dependent high school before school uniform implementation and after school uniform implementation. Data were collected from the Tennessee Department of Education website. The measures evaluated in both comparisons were graduation, attendance, and suspension rates. The dependent high school started the school uniform policy in the 2004-2005 school year.

Overall, the results of the comparisons showed that the graduation rate was higher by 7.5% in the dependent high school that had a school uniform policy than in the independent high school that did not. However, the comparison differences were less than 3% between the schools in terms of attendance and suspension rates, which were less significant than graduation rates. The comparison of the graduation rate before the school uniform policy showed an increase of 5.7% after implementation of the school uniform policy. This increase was less significant than the comparison between two schools of similar demographics but was still significant. However, the difference in the attendance and suspension rates was less than 1%, again less significant than the graduation rate of before and after school uniform policy implementation.

Overall Findings

The demographics that were considered were the (a) overall student population, (b) ethnic makeup, (c) male and female population, and (d) free and reduced lunch

percentages. The data demonstrate the likeness of the schools that were chosen for the research. All of the reported percentages for the dependent high school reflect a less than 3% change when compared to the independent high school. These reported percentages show the similar demographics of the two high schools. Both schools had similar student populations and are located in the same geographic area, within 36 miles of each other.

Table 1 shows the demographic information for the dependent high school, and Table 2 shows the demographic information for the independent high school. The populations of the high schools were 538 and 508, respectively, as reported in 2009, and both schools served grades 9-12. The tables also report the ethnic breakdown of the high schools. Both high schools had small African American, Hispanic, and Native American or Alaskan populations, and neither high school had Asian or Pacific Islander students. The dependent high school population was mostly White (96.2%), as was the independent high school population (96.6%). Both schools had roughly the same percentage of economically disadvantaged students and similar percentages of male and female students.

Table 3 demonstrates the similarities between the dependent and independent schools. Specifically, each category is within 2% difference. Table 4 demonstrates the qualities of the dependent school before and after its implementation of a school uniform policy. The categories are within 3% difference, except in the free and reduced category, which increased 15.6%. The male and female category was not given in the archival data for the 2004 school year. However, the population of the school and the ethnic breakdown illustrate similar schools.

Table 1

Demographic Information of the Dependent High School

Ethnic Groups	No. of Students	% of Students
African American	11	02.0
Asian/Pacific Islander	0	00.0
Hispanic	8	01.4
Native American/Alaskan	2	00.4
White	536	96.2
Economically Disadvantaged	363	68.1
Gender		
Female	257	46.1
Male	300	53.9

Table 2

Demographic Information of the Independent High School

Ethnic Groups	No. of Students	% of Students
African American	8	01.5
Asian / Pacific Islander	0	00.0
Hispanic	7	01.3
Native American / Alaskan	3	00.6
White	516	96.6
Economically Disadvantaged	362	66.4
Gender		
Female	237	44.4
Male	297	55.6

Table 3

Similar Schools: Dependent and Independent Schools

	Dependent School	Independent School
Students	538	508
African American	2.0%	1.5%
Asian	0.0%	0.0%
Hispanic	1.4%	1.3%
Native American	0.4%	0.6%
White	96.2%	96.6%
Free-Reduced	68.1%	66.4%
Female	46.1%	44.4%
Male	53.9%	55.6%

Table 4

Dependent School: Before and After Uniforms

Dependent School	Before Uniforms	After Uniforms
Students	530	538
African American	0.4%	2.0%
Asian	0.0%	0.0%
Hispanic	0.4%	1.4%
Native American	0.7%	0.4%
White	98.6%	96.2%
Free-Reduced	52.5%	68.1%
Female	*	46.1%
Male	*	53.9%

*Data not available for this category in 2004.

Tables 5 and 6 show the graduation, attendance, and suspension rates for the dependent high school and the independent high school for 2007, 2008, and 2009. These rates were compared to find the favorable rates between the dependent high school that had a school uniform policy and the independent high school that did not have a school uniform policy. The graduation rates for the dependent high school shown in Table 5 showed an increase each year from 2007 through 2009, while the independent high school graduation rates, shown in Table 6, increased from 2007 to 2008 and then decreased slightly in 2009. The mean graduation rate for the given 3 years for the dependent high school was 90.4%, while the mean graduation rate for the 3 years for the independent high school was 82.9%, yielding a difference of 7.5% with the dependent high school having the higher graduation rate.

Attendance rates for both the dependent high school and the independent high school increased slightly each year from 2007 through 2009 years, as shown in Tables 5 and 6. The mean attendance rate for the dependent high school was 93.1%, while the mean attendance rate for the independent high school was 93.9%, yielding a difference of .8% with the independent high school having the higher attendance rate.

The suspension rates for the dependent high school from 2007 to 2008 decreased and then increased slightly from 2008 to 2009, as shown in Table 5. The independent high school suspension rates increased each year, as shown in Table 6. The mean suspension rate for the dependent high school was 11.1%, while the mean suspension rate for the independent high school was 8.4%, yielding a difference of 2.7% with the dependent high school having the higher suspension rate.

Table 5

Dependent High School Graduation, Attendance, and Suspension Rates

Grades 9-12 Non-Academic Indicators	2007	2008	2009	State Goal
Graduation Rate (NCLB) (%)	84.7	90.4	96.0	90.0
Attendance Rate (%)	92.5	92.9	94.0	93.0
Suspension (%)	14.4	9.4	9.5	*

*Data not available from the state for this category.

Table 6

Independent High School Graduation, Attendance, and Suspension Rates

Grades 9-12 Non-Academic Indicators	2007	2008	2009	State Goal
Graduation Rate (NCLB) (%)	79.0	85.4	84.2	90.0
Attendance Rate(%)	93.7	93.9	94.1	93.0
Suspension Rate (%)	6.4	7.7	13.1	*

*Data not available from the state for this category.

Table 5 shows the graduation, attendance, and suspension rates for the 2007, 2008, and 2009 for the dependent high school, after the implementation of the school uniform policy. Table 7 shows the graduation, attendance, and suspension rates for the dependent high school for 2003 and 2004, before the implementation of the school uniform policy. These rates were compared to show if the school uniforms policy affected these rates. The mean graduation rate for the 2 years before the school uniform policy implementation was 84.7%. The mean graduation rate for 2007, 2008, and 2009, which was after school uniform implementation, was 90.4%. The difference between the two means was 5.7%, with the higher graduation rate reported after the implementation of the school uniform policy.

The attendance rates that were reported before school uniform policy implementation were for the 2002, 2003, and 2004 school years. The mean attendance rate before school uniform implementation was 93.7%. The mean attendance rate during the 2007, 2008, and 2009 school years was 93.1%, which was after school uniform policy implementation. The difference between the mean attendance rates was .6%, with the higher attendance rate coming before school uniform policy implementation.

The suspension rates before school uniform implementation are given in Table 7 for the dependent high school during 2002, 2003, and 2004. The mean suspension rate for the given years before school uniform implementation was 11.8%. The mean suspension rate for the given years after school uniform implementation was 11.1%. The difference between the means was .7%, with the lower suspension rate coming after the implementation of the school uniform policy.

Table 7

Dependent High School Graduation, Attendance, and Suspension Rates before School Uniform Policy Implementation

Grades 9-12 Non-Academic Indicators	2002	2003	2004	State Goal
Graduation Rate (NCLB) (%)	-	88.0	81.3	90.0
Attendance Rate (%)	94.1	93.3	93.6	93.0
Suspension Rate (%)	11.4	15.3	8.8	*

-A grade was given for graduation rate but not a percentage in 2002.

*No information given from the state on goal for suspension rate.

Table 8 reports the number of (a) graduates, (b) seniors, (c) students enrolled, (d) attendees, and (e) suspensions in the dependent and independent high schools during 2007, 2008, and 2009. These data were necessary for the two proportion Z-tests in significance testing. Also for significance testing, Table 9 reports the number of (a)

graduates, (b) seniors, (c) students enrolled, (d) attendees, and (e) suspensions in the dependent high school before school uniform implementation. The Z-test is a statistical test to detect differences between means (“Z-Test for Two Proportions,” 2010). The calculator from the Dimension Research website was used for the significance testing, and the data were tested by selecting a 95% confidence level.

The second comparison was of the dependent school before and after school uniform implementation. Only 2 years of completed data were available before school uniform implementation: 2003 and 2004. In order to perform a reliable Z-test, 2 years of data were used after the implementation of a school uniform policy: 2008 and 2009. To find significance for the difference in the proportions for the graduation, attendance, and suspension rates, the data were tested by selecting a 95% confidence level.

Table 8

Number of Graduates, Seniors, Enrollment, Attendees, and Suspensions in the Dependent and Independent Schools after School Uniform Implementation at Dependent High School

Data for Two Proportion Z-tests for Graduation Rate	2007	2008	2009	Totals
Dependent graduates	113	108	111	332
Independent graduates	111	115	118	344
Dependent seniors	133	119	116	368
Independent seniors	141	135	140	415
Dependent enrollment 9-12 (n)	521	534	538	1593
Independent enrollment 9-12 (n)	531	522	508	1561
Dependent attendees	482	496	506	1484
Independent attendees	498	490	478	1466
Dependent suspensions	75	50	52	176
Independent suspensions	34	40	67	141

Table 9

Number of Graduate, Seniors, Enrollment, Attendees, and Suspensions in the Dependent School before School Uniform Implementation

Data for Two Proportion Z-tests	2003	2004	Totals
Dependent graduates	109	106	215
Dependent seniors	124	131	255
Dependent enrollment 9-12 (n)	631	530	1161
Dependent attendees	589	496	1085
Dependent suspensions	72	47	119

Analysis of Findings

Research question 1. Research question 1 asked, “Is there a significant difference between school uniform policies and graduation rates in demographically similar high schools?” The comparison of the data demonstrated that there is a significant difference between school uniform policies and graduation rates in similar high schools, as shown in Table 10. Table 10 shows the 3-year base number of 368 as the total number of seniors at the dependent high school for 3 years: 2007, 2008, and 2009. The total number of graduates, 332, was the proportion in Table 10 for the 3 years (i.e., 2007, 2008, and 2009), which yielded a 90.22% graduation rate for the dependent high school. Table 10 shows the 3-year base number of 416 as the total number of seniors at the independent high school for 3 years: 2007, 2008, and 2009. The total number of graduates, 344, was the proportion in Table 10 for the 3 years (i.e., 2007, 2008, and 2009), which yielded an 82.69% graduation rate for the independent high school.

Null hypothesis (H₀1). Null hypothesis H₀1 stated, “There is no statistically significant difference between school uniform policies and graduation rates in demographically similar high schools.” This null hypothesis was proven false as the results of this Z-test were a Z value of 2.95. The Z-test for two proportions calculator tests proportions from two groups to determine if they are significantly different from one another. The 2-Tail P value was 0.0034, demonstrating significance in the graduation proportion differences; results are illustrated Table 10.

Table 10

Z-Test for Two Proportions Graduation Calculator Results for the Dependent and Independent High Schools

Confidence Level:	95%
Group 1 Dependent	
Base size:	368
Proportion:	332 (90.22%)
Group 2 Independent	
Base size:	416
Proportion:	344 (82.69%)
Z Value:	2.949
2-Tail P Value:	0.0034(significant)

Research question 2. Research question 2 asked, “Is there a significant difference between school uniform policies and attendance rates in demographically similar high schools?” The comparison of the data demonstrated that there is no significant difference between school uniform policies and attendance rates in similar high schools. Table 11 gave the 3-year base number of 1,593 as the total enrollment at the dependent high school for 3 years: 2007, 2008, and 2009. The total number of

attendees (1,484) was the proportion in Table 10 for the 3 years, 2007, 2008, and 2009, which yielded a 93.16% attendance rate for the dependent high school. Table 11 gave the 3-year base number of 1,561 as the total enrollment at the independent high school for 3 years: 2007, 2008, and 2009. The total number of attendees (1,466) was the proportion shown in Table 11 for 3 years (2007, 2008, and 2009), which yielded an 82.69% graduation rate for the independent high school.

Null hypothesis (H_02). Null hypothesis H_02 stated, “There is no statistically significant difference between school uniform policies and attendance rates in demographically similar high schools.” This null hypothesis was proven true as the results of this Z-test yielded a Z value of 0.784. The 2-Tail P value was 0.433, which demonstrated no significance in the attendance proportion differences; results are shown in Table 11.

Table 11

Z-Test for Two Proportions Attendance Calculator Results for the Dependent and Independent High Schools

Confidence Level:	95%
Group 1 Dependent	
Base size:	1593
Proportion:	1484 (93.16%)
Group 2 Independent	
Base size:	1561
Proportion:	1484 (93.16%)
Z Value:	0.784
2-Tail P Value:	0.433 (not significant)

Research question 3. Research question 3 asked, “Is there a significant difference between school uniform policies and suspension rates in demographically similar high schools?” The comparison of the data demonstrated that there may be a significant difference between school uniform policies and suspension rates in similar high schools. Table 12 gave the 3-year base number of 1,593 as the total enrollment at the dependent high school for 3 years: 2007, 2008, and 2009. The total number of suspensions, 176, was the proportion in Table 12 for the 3 years, yielding an 11.05% suspension rate for the dependent high school. Table 12 gave the 3-year base number of 1,561 as the total enrollment at the independent high school for 3 years: 2007, 2008, and 2009. The total number of suspensions, 141, was the proportion in Table 11 for the 3 years, yielding a 9.69% suspension rate for the independent high school.

Null hypothesis (H_03). Null hypothesis H_03 stated, “There is no statistically significant difference between school uniform policies and suspension rates in demographically similar high schools.” The results of this Z-test yielded a Z value of 1.827. The null hypothesis was proven true with the 2-Tail P value of 0.0677, which was not significant in the suspension proportion differences; results are illustrated in Table 12. Figure 1 depicts the results of the 2007, 2008, and 2009 average proportion Z-test between the dependent and independent schools.

Table 12

Z-Test for Two Proportions Suspension Calculator Results for the Dependent and Independent High Schools

Confidence Level:	95%
Group 1 Dependent	
Base size:	1593
Proportion:	176 (11.05%)
Group 2 Independent	
Base size:	1561
Proportion:	141 (9.03%)
Z Value:	1.827
2-Tail P Value:	0.0677 (not significant)

2007, 2008, 2009 Average Proportions

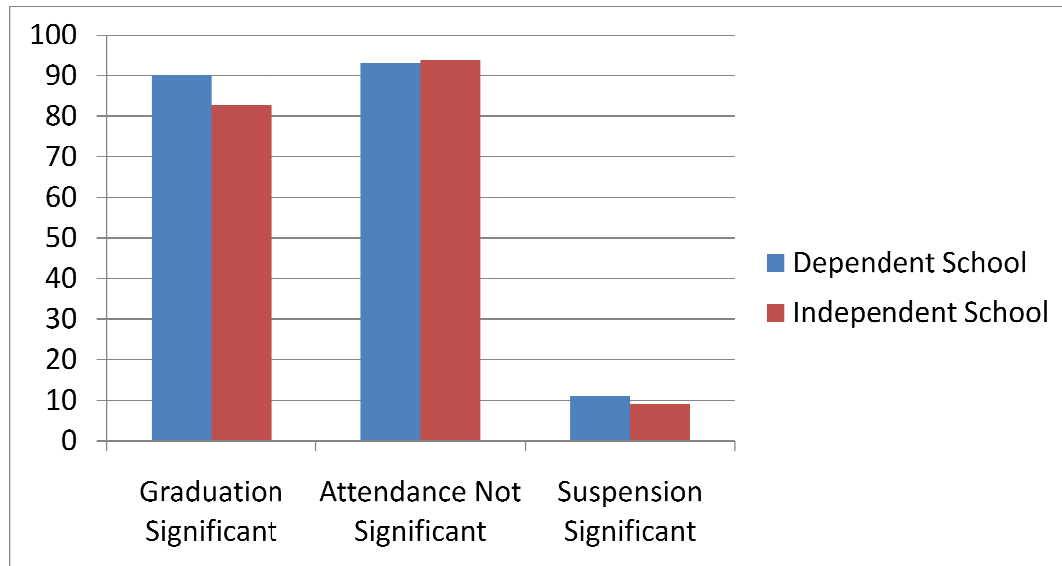


Figure 1. Results of the 2007, 2008, and 2009 average proportion Z-test between the dependent and independent schools.

Research question 4. Research question 4 asked, “Is there a significant difference between school uniform policies and graduation rates before and after the

implementation of a school uniform policy?” The comparison of the data demonstrated that there is a significant difference between school uniform policies and graduation rates after the implementation of a school uniform policy. Table 13 gave the 2-year base number of 235 as the total number of seniors at the dependent high school for 2 years after school uniform implementation: 2008 and 2009. The total number of graduates, 219, was the proportion in Table 13 for the years, which yielded a 93.19% graduation rate for the dependent high school after school uniform implementation. Table 13 gave the 2-year base number of 255 as the total number of seniors at the dependent high school for 2 years, 2003 and 2004, before school uniform implementation. The total number of graduates, 215, was the proportion in Table 13 for the years, which yielded an 84.31% graduation rate for the dependent high school before school uniform implementation.

Null hypothesis (H_04). Null hypothesis H_04 stated, “There is no statistically significant difference between school uniform policies and graduation rates before and after the implementation of a school uniform policy.” The null hypothesis was proven false, as the results of this Z test were a Z value of 2.944. The 2-Tail P value was 0.0032, which demonstrated significance in the graduation proportion differences; results are illustrated in Table 13.

Table 13

Z-Test for Two Proportions Graduation Calculator Results for the Dependent School Before and After Uniform Implementation

Confidence Level:	95%
Group 1 Dependent After Uniforms	
Base size:	235
Proportion:	219 (93.19%)
Group 2 Dependent Before Uniforms	
Base size:	255
Proportion:	215 (84.31%)
Z Value:	2.944
2-Tail P Value:	0.0032 (significant)

Research question 5. Research question 5 asked, “Is there a significant difference between school uniform policies and attendance rates before and after the implementation of a school uniform policy?” Comparison of the data demonstrated that there is not a significant difference between school uniform policies and attendance rates after the implementation of a school uniform policy. Table 14 gave the 2-year base number of 1,072 as the total enrollment at the dependent high school for 2 years (2008 and 2009) after school uniform implementation. The total number of attendees (1,002) was the proportion in Table 14 for the 2 years, yielding a 93.47% attendance rate for the dependent high school after school uniform implementation. Table 15 gave the 2-year base number of 1,161 as the total enrollment at the dependent high school for 2 years, 2003 and 2004, before school uniform implementation. The total number of attendees (1,085) was the proportion in Table 14 for the 2 years, yielding a 93.45% attendance rate for the dependent high school before school uniform implementation.

Null hypothesis (H₀₅). Null hypothesis H₀₅ stated, “There is no statistically significant difference between school uniform policies and attendance rates before and after the implementation of a school uniform policy.” The null hypothesis was proven true as the results of this Z-test were a Z value of -0.067. The 2-Tail P value was 0.9466, which demonstrated no significance in the attendance proportion differences; results are illustrated in Table 14.

Table 14

Z-Test for Two Proportions Attendance Calculator Results for the Dependent School Before and After Uniform Implementation

Confidence Level:	95%
Group 1 Dependent After Uniforms	
Base size:	1072
Proportion:	1002 (93.47%)
Group 2 Dependent Before Uniforms	
Base size:	1161
Proportion:	1085 (93.45%)
Z Value:	-0.067
2-Tail P Value:	0.9466 (not significant)
P Value:	

Research question 6. Research question 6 asked, “Is there a significant difference between school uniform policies and suspension rates in before and after the implementation of a school uniform policy?” The comparison of the data demonstrated that there is not a significant difference between school uniform policies and suspension rates after the implementation of a school uniform policy. Table 15 gave the 2-year base number of 1,072 as the total enrollment at the dependent high school for 2 years, 2008 and 2009, after school uniform implementation. The total number of suspensions (102)

was the proportion in Table 15 for the 2 years, yielding a 9.51% suspension rate for the dependent high school after school uniform implementation. Table 15 gave the 2-year base number of 1,161 as the total enrollment at the dependent high school for 2 years, 2003 and 2004, before school uniform implementation. The total number of suspensions (119) was the proportion given in Table 15 for the 2 years, yielding a 10.25% suspension rate for the dependent high school before school uniform implementation.

Null hypothesis (H_0 6). Null hypothesis H_0 6 stated, “There is no statistically significant difference between school uniform policies and suspension rates before and after the implementation of a school uniform policy.” The null hypothesis was proven true as the results of this Z-test were a Z value of 0.514 and a. The 2-Tail P value was 0.6073, which demonstrated no significance in the attendance proportion differences; results are illustrated in Table 15. Figure 2 depicts the results of the 2003 and 2004 comparison to 2008 and 2009 average proportions before and after the implementation of a school uniform policy.

Table 15

Z-Test for Two Proportions Suspension Calculator Results for the Dependent School Before and After Uniform Implementation

Confidence Level:	95%
Group 1 Dependent After Uniforms	
Base size:	1072
Proportion:	102 (9.51%)
Group 2 Dependent Before Uniforms	
Base size:	1161
Proportion:	119 (10.25%)
Z Value:	0.514
2-Tail P Value:	0.6073 (not significant)

**2003& 2004 Before Uniforms
2008 & 2009 After Uniforms; Average Proportions**

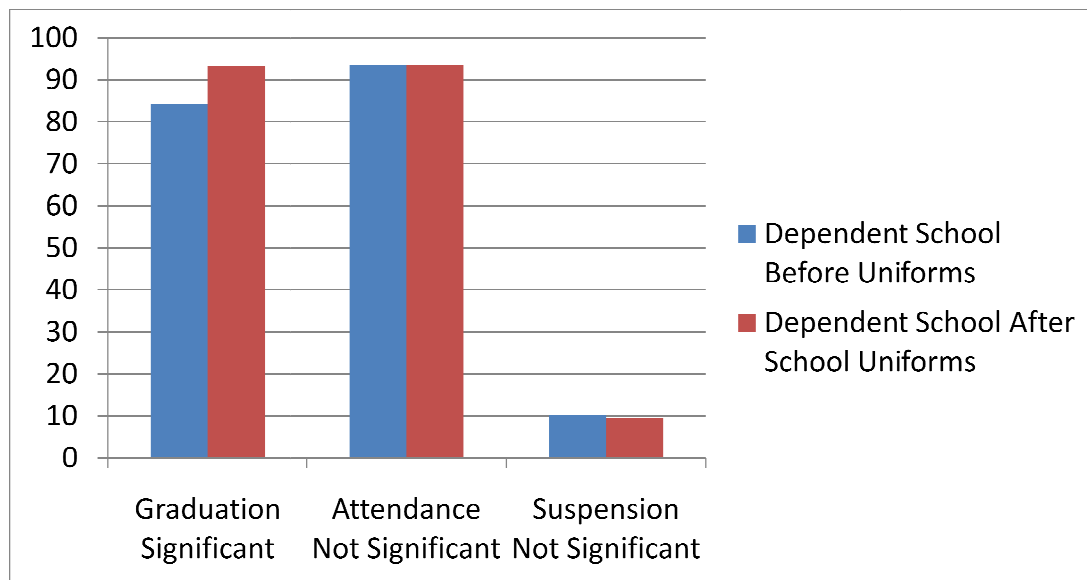


Figure 2. Results of the 2003 and 2004 comparison to 2008 and 2009 average proportions before and after the implementation of a school uniform policy.

CHAPTER FIVE: RESULTS, CONCLUSIONS, AND FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

School uniform policies have been implemented in many school districts around the United States, with mixed results. Some communities have rejected school uniforms, while others take pride in them (Sasson, 2009). These contrasts may depend on the manner in which the school uniform dress code was implemented or on numerous other factors.

The challenge is to find effective school leaders who can clearly communicate with all stakeholders regarding implementation of a school uniform policy. The type of leadership in the school may explain these contrasts. The Bible teaches that God communicates to us from the Scripture. 2 Timothy 3:16 says, “All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (KJV). In contrast, man communicates to God through prayer. Jeremiah 33:3 says, “Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not” (KJV). Both of these types of communication, Bible study and prayer, need to be used liberally especially by leaders. With the right kind of leadership, the transition to school uniforms can be made more agreeable.

The school reform movement was set in full motion in 1983, with the release of *A Nation at Risk* by the National Commission on Excellence in Education (U.S. Department of Education, 1983). The finding of the National Commission was that public education in the United States was in a state of mediocrity. In 1996, President Clinton encouraged schools to implement school uniform policies to benefit students (“Public School

Uniform Statistics,” 2010), and President George W. Bush signed into law the NCLB educational reform endeavor in 2001.

In spite of all these efforts over the last 25+ years to create better schools and educational outcomes for American students, schools are still plagued with problems. School discipline and crime, poor attendance and graduation rates, and poor academic achievement still present stumbling blocks for schools and students, even in the midst of educational reform. With the stringent penalties imposed under NCLB, the principals of America’s schools must have the capabilities to implement programs that will improve academic performance, student conduct, and graduation rates (Brunsma, 2006; Dussel, 2005; Konheim-Kalkstein, 2006). One potential solution could include the use of school uniforms.

In the late 1990s, many schools adopted school uniform policies. Several factors contributed to this adoption, including (a) fashion trends of the 1990s, (b) challenges school officials faced when enforcing a dress code, (c) the emergence of gang activity and crime in schools, and (d) the appeal of high-priced, brand label clothing for the teen market. Faced with these obstacles, some public schools opted to implement a school uniform dress policy to combat the problems afflicting their systems (Brunsma, 2006; Brunsma & Rockquemore, 1998). With the implementation of NCLB, these types of improvements are needed in schools, especially in East Tennessee.

Results and Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to investigate whether the presence of a school uniform policy affected graduation, attendance, and suspension rates in rural schools in East Tennessee. Only one rural school in East Tennessee was using a school uniform

policy at the time of this study. A school of similar demographics was located so that graduation, attendance, and suspension rates between the schools could be compared. In addition, another comparison of the same measures at the dependent school was made before and after school uniform implementation.

The results of the study showed that a school uniform policy had a significant effect on a rural school in East Tennessee, specifically its graduation rate. However, there was no significant effect on student attendance or suspension rates. The attendance rate of the independent high school and the dependent high school in this study was at a minimum of 92.5%. The high attendance rates at both similar schools and the high attendance rate of the dependent high school before and after school uniform implementation may be the reason school uniforms had no significant impact on the attendance rate. The comparisons also showed a significant improvement of the mean graduation rate at the dependent high school after the implementation of a school uniform policy. If educators are looking for a way to improve the graduation rate, a school uniform policy may be a program to consider.

To improve attendance, suspension, and graduation rates, all constituents in the school and community must realize the improvements that will be gained with the implementation of a school uniform policy. Having a strong leader to put into practice the school uniform policy is necessary for successful implementation. If the leader is able to communicate with students, parents, and community effectively, then there is a greater probability stakeholders will accept the change.

Abraham was known as a man of faith, which helped make him a great leader. A great leadership characteristic is obedience to the Scripture. Genesis 21 tells about the

rivals of Abraham being afraid of the God of Abraham. Having the fear of God in a leader's life causes a meek spirit that is needed when dealing with people. Abraham was obedient to God and demonstrated his faith in Genesis 22. Abraham took his promised son Isaac to the mountain to give a sacrifice to God. He raised his hand to slay Isaac when God told him not to harm the lad. God provided a ram to be the sacrifice, just as He provided Jesus to be the supreme sacrifice for the world. Isaac became a living sacrifice, which is what Christians should be today according to Romans 12:1. This is the type of leader—a person of faith—needed in America's schools.

Effective management and leadership in the school setting are needed, especially when implementing a new school uniform policy. Having a Christian leader and a Christian community that understand Biblical teaching on modest apparel can also help in making a smooth transition to school uniforms. The Bible speaks about Gideon who demonstrated great leadership when he led the children of Israel against the Midianites and the Amalekites (Judges 7). A great victory was given to Gideon by God as Gideon obeyed the command of God.

Christian educators who work in public schools must emphasize the value of knowing Christ and the guidance that is obtained from the Word of God. When students are put in a structured environment with a school uniform policy, the attitude of the entire community is unified with the communication of the effective administrators toward school improvement. Jesus is the greatest leader and even had power in His clothes, as a woman was made whole just by touching his garment as He walked by (Mark 5:28). When He felt the healing power go out, He asked who touched Him. The woman confessed and was healed of her plague. Being known for what you are as a professional

is a characteristic that leaders should pass on to students. Jesus was known for being a miracle worker, and the woman had the faith that she could be healed if she touched Jesus. Students need to know that they can be anything they want to be if they are willing to put forth the effort, have the discipline to study, and are willing to dress for success. The effective leader will know Jesus as Savior, which will help in realization of a school uniform policy because of the positive influence on graduation and attendance rates.

The leader achieves success in the school when discipline problems are kept to a minimum as a result of succinct regulations and guidelines, with a clear knowledge of the consequences when those rules and guidelines are violated. While this concept can apply to discipline in general, it can also apply to school uniform policies in particular. Great leaders demonstrate the ultimate leadership characteristic: serving others. Jesus illustrated this trait Himself in John 13 when He washed the feet of the disciples. Peter questioned the Lord about what Jesus was doing and began to refuse to allow the Lord to wash his feet. Jesus told Peter, “If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me” (John 13:8, KJV). Peter then cooperated with the Lord as He taught the disciples and the world how to be meek and humble in service.

Relationships with the community must be built by school leaders if those who are reluctant to cooperate with necessary intervention strategies are to be motivated to do so. The relationships must be based on truth, trust, and professionalism. Mild, pleasant, and beneficial are the reactions from the community that leaders should strive to obtain. Arrogance, bitterness, and anger are not the responses that leaders need to hear from the community when interacting with the school or school system. Success is improved with

a capable and highly competent staff that vigorously pursues and engages students in the learning process, while maintaining lucid interactions with the leader.

Parent and community involvement in the school is highly encouraged and desired and also promotes a thriving environment. Immense hope for the nation's most struggling schools is offered by the implementation of a school uniform policy, which gives a prospective tool to decrease crime, improve attendance, and increase achievement. Other potential improvements include (a) civilizing student behavior, (b) increasing respect for teachers, (c) emphasizing a team spirit, (d) leaving no one behind as the whole team meets academic standards, (e) allowing families to spend less on clothes, (f) de-emphasizing differences between socioeconomic groups, and (g) removing status based on clothing.

The Bible emphasizes the importance of appropriate clothing as it proclaims that the harlot is known by her attire (Prov. 7:10). Based on the researcher's experience as a teacher, students must be held accountable to a standard of dress. Students always push the limits of the dress code, but with a clearly defined school uniform policy, teachers can teach rather than be the dress code police. Often times, a dress code offender may make it to the middle of the day before someone catches the offense; then, those teachers who did not recognize the offense may be reprimanded for the lack of dress code enforcement. Modest apparel is a Biblical teaching (1 Timothy 2:9) that should be enforced in America's schools to keep minds on studies instead of the latest fad or trend. With a school uniform policy, administrators are not put in the predicament to judge whether too much skin is showing or whether a skirt is 2 inches above the knee or 3.

Whether civil liberties may be infringed upon by school uniform policies and whether students lose the ability to make decisions about their appearance are the issues that some people raise. The Bible tells us in Daniel 3 of three Hebrew boys who had their rights infringed upon. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were accused of not bowing down to the idol that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up. The king heard the complaint and confronted the boys. They were told that they would be given the opportunity to bow down to the image after the all the music stopped. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego told the king that they would not bow to the image that he set up because they worshiped the only true God, Jehovah. The king threatened the Hebrew boys with the burning fiery furnace; however, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego said that they would not bow to the image that he set up. True to their word, the Hebrew boys did not bow to the image after the music stopped. Full of wrath, the king then ordered the furnace to be heated 7 times hotter than it had ever been before. King Nebuchadnezzar then ordered the strongest men to bind the Hebrew boys and cast them into the fire. The fire was so hot that the strong men who cast Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego into the fire were killed. The king then stood up and asked whether *three* men had been cast into the fire because he saw four men walking in the fire. The boys had not been hurt, and the fourth man looked like the Son of God. The rights of the Hebrew boys were no longer infringed upon because of their belief, but now the king wanted to promote them because of their God. Leaders should stand for what is right and not bow to the temptation of not implementing a useful intervention.

While student freedoms will continue to be debated, administrators must consider religious objections to a school uniform policy since many religions require certain types

of dress for men and women. In the United Kingdom, a decision was made by the House of Lords to determine if the religious rights of a student were infringed on under Article 9. This student was denied the right to wear a jilbab at school because of the uniform policy (Carney & Sinclair, 2006). Courts in the United States have supported the public school systems in implementing a school uniform policy. Thus, fear of the courts should not hold back the implementation of a school uniform policy.

Future Implications

Administrators or policy makers of rural schools that need to improve graduation rates can implement a school uniform policy based on documented success from this research. However, it must be noted that at the schools under study, there was no significant difference in attendance or suspension rates between the school that had a uniform policy and the school that did not. Other strategies to improve attendance and suspension rates would likely need to be implemented for improvement in these areas.

Clothes identify who we are in many cases. The choices for a school uniform needs to be a collaborative effort between the school system and all of the stakeholders. The administration should not take on the implementation of a school uniform policy without input from students, parents, and the community. The Old Testament priests were known by their clothing. Their clothes demonstrated holiness and authority in the matters of worship. The priest would use a golden bell and a pomegranate around the bottom of their robe so that they could be heard while they were in the presence of God at the mercy seat (Ex. 28:34). The priest would also have a rope around his foot so he could be pulled out from the presence of God if he were stricken dead because of sin in his life. The priest would perform the sacrifice for the sin of the people at least once each year.

This is again an example of how clothing can identify who people are and what they are doing. Jesus left His grave clothes behind when He arose from the dead to indicate to those who saw them that he had no more use for them as He paid the price for all mankind to have eternal life if they would trust Him as their Savior (Luke 24:12). These clothes represented that Jesus was alive forevermore and would never be put to death again. He came the first time as the Lamb of God to take away the sin of the world, but He will come the second time to be the Lord of Lords, the King of Kings and will sit on His father David's throne and of His kingdom there shall be no end (Luke 1:33).

In America today, it is normally private school students who utilize the value of a school uniform policy. This researcher recommends that those who are going to implement a school uniform policy to use the term *dress code* since the term *uniform* tends to have a negative connotation to students, parents, and the community. The dress code can define the school uniform to include a polo shirt of a certain color, khaki pants, and shoes that tie, for example, but not necessarily use the term *school uniform*. This communication with the stakeholders will help transition the school to a beneficial dress code.

The literature review showed that there may be other benefits that come with the implementation of a school uniform policy. Throughout the Bible people would use their clothes to show emotion by tearing them in times of mourning or distress or put on sackcloth and cover their head ashes. The high priest rent his clothes just before the crucifixion of Christ as Jesus testified of His coming in the clouds (Matt. 26:65). Rueben tore his clothes when he came back to the pit and did not find Joseph (Gen. 37:29). He and his brother came back too late to get Joseph as he was sold into slavery. His father

Jacob, known as Israel, tore his clothes and put on sackcloth when his sons told him of the demise of Joseph. While in Egypt, God began to allow Joseph to mature in the Lord. Joseph received favor of his master Potiphar. After some time, Potiphar's wife began to seduce Joseph, but Joseph was loyal to his master and would not heed to her call. Potiphar's wife then caught Joseph by his garment, and Joseph ran from her, leaving his garment behind. Potiphar's wife then accused Joseph to be the aggressor and kept his garment to use as evidence against Joseph. Potiphar had Joseph placed in prison, although he loved Joseph because the garment was known to belong to Joseph.

While Joseph was in prison, God continue to use and bless him. While there, he interpreted the dream of the butler and baker of the king. Joseph told the butler that in 3 days, his position would be restored as the king's servant. Joseph asked the butler to remember him when he was back in the king's court. The baker then asked Joseph to interpret his dream. Joseph told the baker that in 3 days he would be put to death by the king. Both dreams came to pass as Joseph interpreted. The king then had a dream of his own that none of his men could interpret. Finally, Joseph was reported to interpret dreams, and he was brought before the king. Joseph told the king his dream's meaning. As a result, the king put Joseph in charge of Egypt and gave him his ring and new attire. Egypt had 7 years of plenty, during which time Joseph stored 20% of each crop. Egypt then had 7 years of famine that spread across the land of Joseph's father. Joseph's brothers came to Egypt to buy grain, and they did not recognize Joseph, perhaps because of his clothes.

Joseph ate with his brothers and had some of the treasure from his palace placed in their packs. After the brothers were in the desert on their way home, some of the

soldiers from Egypt overtook them. Joseph's brothers rent their clothes after they bought corn from Egypt and treasure was found in their packs from the palace (Gen. 44:13).

These illustrations show that clothes are used to show feelings or passions. A school uniform policy can make students feel proud and give them a sense of belonging.

The Bible also emphasizes the need for clean clothes (Ex. 19:10). Moses was commanded of God to sanctify the people and to allow them to wash their clothes. God allowed the children of Israel to worship Him at Mount Sinai, but He expected them to be clean. When people come into the presence of God as his children, they need to be holy and clean. People have an obligation to honor God and His Word, which teaches His people to be clean and to have clean clothes when they worship Him. In the researcher's experience, students often come to school with clothes that are not clean. The circumstances that some students live in from day to day make clean clothes the least of their worries. Mom or Dad may have been put in jail the night before; the student may not have eaten a meal at home the night before. School uniforms may not help with the washing issues but can help with having decent clothes.

Clothes may have caused a man by the name of Saul shame in the Bible because he watched as Stephen was stoned just outside the city (Acts 7:58). The witnesses laid their clothes at his feet as they carried out the punishment for Stephen. Stephen was a deacon who was preaching Jesus, and for this, Saul and the Jews had him put to death. Saul was on his way to Damascus with arrest warrants in his pocket to execute other Christians who had been preaching Christ. A great light from heaven shone down on him, and Jesus saved him (Act 9). Saul's name was changed to Paul, and he began to preach Christ to all who would hear. He had to flee from the persecutions of those who

hated the name of Jesus, yet God used Paul to pen down most of the New Testament. His memory of the death of Stephen with the clothes of the executors at his feet may have given him much shame.

School uniforms may be able to reduce any shame that poor people have about the clothes they wear. The Apostle Paul caused others in his life to come to know Jesus because of his ministry, but others rent or tore their clothes to show their disapproval of his preaching Jesus and demanded that he be beaten (Acts 16:22). Public schools may be able to benefit from the use of school uniforms that have been used in private schools for many years. The public schools should not resist an intervention with the proven track record to improve their school.

Recommendations for Future Research

The researcher recommends more research on the internal workings of specific schools that have implemented a school uniform policy. Qualitative research, perhaps by way of case study, could investigate the relationships between (a) students, (b) parents, (c) educators, and (d) the community that influence successful implementation of a school uniform policy. The researcher further believes that effective leadership is necessary for successful implementation of a school uniform policy, and gradual implementation may also be helpful. Specifically, the researcher suggests starting a school uniform policy at the elementary school level and allowing it to “follow” students to middle school and high school.

Finally, providing evidence from research data can give stakeholders confidence in the accomplishments of other schools that have implement a school uniform policy.

Cooperation between the administration and the stakeholders must be in place for successful implementation of a school uniform policy (“The Benefits of School Uniforms,” 1999). If properly executed, a school uniform policy can be a strategy that allows the overall improvement of the school.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

The Counties of East Tennessee



APPENDIX B

Phone Script to Gather Uniform Response

School being called: _____ Date: _____

Hello, this is (Caller), and I am doing research on school uniforms. May I speak with the assistant principal or the principal?

Hello, this is (Caller), and I am doing research on school uniforms. Does your school have a school uniform policy?

Circle YES or NO

If YES then: *How many years has this uniform policy been in place?*

Circle 1, 2, 3, or more years.

Thank you for your input.

Good-bye.

APPENDIX C

Raw Data of the Dependent High School

State of Tennessee
School Report Card 2002
Page 1
High School
School System
 Director
 Principal
 Grades Served: 9-12 Students: 570
 Status: In Good Standing



Non-Academic

	2001	2002
Attendance 9-12	A	A
Dropout Cohort	A	A

D E M O G R A P H I C S	Students			
	White	589	97.7%	
	Black	8	1.3%	
	Hispanic	1	0.2%	
	Asian	0	0.0%	
	Native American	5	0.8%	
	Pacific Islander	0	0.0%	
	Suspensions		Expulsions	
		#	%	
	White	67	11.4%	0 0.0%
	Black	0	ns	0 ns
	Hispanic	0	ns	0 ns
	Asian	0	n/a	0 n/a
	Native American	0	ns	0 ns
	Pacific Islander	0	n/a	0 n/a
	Male	57	18.2%	0 0.0%
	Female	10	3.5%	0 0.0%
	Free/Reduced Price Meals		48.0%	

S T U D E N T P E R F O R M A N C E	Grades 9-12			
	Gateway		2002	
		Subject	Percent Proficient	Percent Advanced
		Algebra I	22.5%	29.2%
		Biology	48.7%	47.8%
			2001	2002
	Exit Exams			
		ACT	C	C
		SAT		
	Academics		Grade	Grade
	Writing	11 th	C	C

Tennessee Department of Education

State of Tennessee
School Report Card 2002
 Page 2

High School
School System



Grades 9-12

Academic Achievement

Gateway		
Subject	Percent Proficient	Percent Advanced
Algebra I	22.5	29.2%
Biology	48.7	47.8

	2001			2002				
Writing 11th	3.4	C	Average	3.3	C	Average	NC	3.6

3 yr. Average	2001			2002					
Exit Exams	Grade			Grade			Trend	State	Natl
ACT	19	C	Average	19.3	C	Average	NC	20.0	20.0
SAT			n/a			n/a		1115	1020

Cumulative Academic Gain/Value Added			
	Estimated	Expected	2002
ACT	19.3	19.3	NDD
Writing 11 th	3.37	3.69	Below
Algebra I	495.3	515.7	Below

Non-Academic									
	2001			2002					
	Grade			Grade			Trend	State	
Attend. 9-12	93.9	A	Exemplary	94.1	A	Exemplary	NC	92.7%	
Dropout Cohort	4.3	A	Exemplary	5.1	A	Exemplary	NC	13.9%	

Tennessee Department of Education

State of Tennessee
School System Report Card 2002
Page 3

High School
School System



Exit Exams

American College Test (ACT)			
Subject	99-00	00-01	01-02
English	18.4	19.1	20.4
Math	18.2	18.1	18.7
Reading	17.9	19.2	20.3
Science	19.3	18.5	19.5
Composite	18.6	18.9	19.8

Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT)			
Subject	99-00	00-01	01-02
Verbal			0
Math			0
Combined			0

Writing Assessment			
	99-00	00-01	01-02
4th			
7th			
11th	3.4	3.3	3.3

Page 1
(2002-2003):

General

Grades Served:	9-12	Students:	631
Status:	Targeted Assistance	Economically Disadvantaged:	53.4%
Safe School Status:	Safe		

Demographics

Student Body

	Students	
	#	%
White	622	98.6%
African American	5	0.8%
Hispanic	1	0.2%
Asian	0	0.0%
Native American	3	0.5%
Pacific Islander	0	0.0%

Suspensions & Expulsions

	Suspensions		Expulsions	
	#	%	#	%
White	95	15.3%	0	0.0%
African American	0	N/S	0	N/S
Hispanic	0	N/S	0	N/S
Asian	0	N/A	0	N/A
Native American	0	N/S	0	N/S
Pacific Islander	0	N/A	0	N/A
Male	65	19.5%	0	0.0%

Female	30	10.1%	0	0.0%
--------	----	-------	---	------

Student Performance

Grades 9-12: Academics

College Prep	2002 Grade	2003 Grade
ACT	C	C

(Note: Based on 3-year averages.)

Writing Assessment	2002 Grade	2003 Grade
Writing 11th	C	C

(Note: Based on 3-year averages.)

Gateway	2003		
	% Below Proficient	% Proficient	% Advanced
Math (Alg I)	36.0	32.0	32.0
Science (Bio I)	7.0	37.0	56.0
English (Eng II)	19.0	34.0	47.0

Grades 9-12: Non-Academics

	2002 Grade	2003 Grade	Target
Attendance	A	A	93%
Cohort Dropout	A	A	10%

+ Met Federal Benchmark

X Did not meet Federal Benchmark

<45 Fewer than 45 members, does not have to report

Grades 9-12: Federal Benchmark Summary

	English II		Algebra I		>=60% Grad
	>=95% Tested	%Prof/Adv	>=95% Tested	%Prof/Adv	
All Students	+	X	+	X	+
White	+	X	+	X	
Hispanic	<45	<45	<45	<45	
African American	<45	<45	<45	<45	
Native American	<45	<45	<45	<45	
Asian/Pacific Islander	<45	<45	<45	<45	
Economically Disadvantaged	+	X	+	X	
Students with Disabilities	<45	<45	<45	<45	
Limited English Proficient	<45	<45	<45	<45	

Did school meet all federal benchmark requirements? No

+ Met Federal Benchmark

X Did not meet Federal Benchmark

<45 Fewer than 45 members, does not have to report

Grades 9-12: Additional Federal Reporting

	English II		Algebra I	
	>=95% Tested	%Prof/Adv	>=95% Tested	%Prof/Adv
Female	+	+	+	X
Male	+	X	+	X
Migrant	<45	<45	<45	<45

Grades 9 - 12

Academic Achievement

Gateway	2002			2002 State		
	% Below Proficient	% Proficient	% Advanced	% Below Proficient	% Proficient	% Advanced
Math (Alg I)	48.0	23.0	29.0	23.0	29.0	48.0
Science (Bio I)	3.0	49.0	48.0	5.0	39.0	56.0
English (Eng II)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Gateway	2003			2003 State		
	% Below Proficient	% Proficient	% Advanced	% Below Proficient	% Proficient	% Advanced
Math (Alg I)	36.0	32.0	32.0	25.0	30.0	45.0
Science (Bio I)	7.0	37.0	56.0	5.0	36.0	59.0
English (Eng II)	19.0	34.0	47.0	13.0	35.0	52.0

	2002			2003		
End of Course	% Below Proficient	% Proficient	% Advanced	% Below Proficient	% Proficient	% Advanced
Math Foundations	54.0	33.0	13.0	57.0	34.0	9.0
English I	N/A	N/A	N/A	24.0	55.0	21.0
College Prep	2002		2003		Trend	State Natl
ACT	19.1	C Average	19.4	C Average	NC	20.1 20.8

(Note: Based on 3-year averages.)

Writing Assessment	2002		2003		Trend	State
Writing 11th	3.3	C Average	3.3	C Average	NC	3.8

(Note: Based on 3-year averages.)

Non-Academic

	2002			2003			
	Grade			Grade			Trend
Attendance	94.1	A	Exemplary	93.3	A	Exemplary	NC
Cohort Dropout	5.1	A	Exemplary	7.2	A	Exemplary	NC

Graduation Rate

	2003	State
Graduation Percent	88.0	76.0

Cumulative Academic Gain/Value Added

Gateway / End of Course	Observed	Expected	2003
Math (Alg I)	518.6	531.9	Below
Science (Bio I)	523.5	527.5	NDD
English (Eng II)	500.3	500.5	NDD
Math Foundations	497.9	530.2	Below
English I	487.6	493.7	Below

ACT	Observed	Expected	2003
Composite	19.3	19.7	NDD
English	19.8	19.8	NDD
Math	18.3	18.7	NDD
Reading	19.7	20.2	NDD
Science/Reasoning	19.1	19.6	Below
	Observed	Expected	2003
Writing Assessment	3.4	3.8	Below

College Prep

American College Test (ACT)

	00-01	01-02	02-03
Composite	18.9	19.8	19.4
English	19.1	20.4	19.8
Math	18.1	18.7	18.2
Reading	19.2	20.3	19.6
Science/Reasoning	18.5	19.5	19.4

Writing Assessment

Writing Assessment

	00-01	01-02	02-03
11th	3.3	3.3	3.3

Part I: School Profile

General: Information is for 2003-2004 school year

Grades Served:	9-12	Safe School Status:	Safe
Students (ADM):	530	Economically Disadvantaged	52.5%

Status: Target

Demographics: Information is for 2003-2004 school year

Student Body (Based on Net Enrollment)

	Students	
	#	%
White	554	98.6%
African American	2	0.4%
Hispanic	2	0.4%
Asian	0	0.0%
Native American	4	0.7%
Pacific Islander	0	0.0%

Suspensions & Expulsions (ADM)

	Suspensions		Expulsions	
	#	%	#	%
White	49	8.8%	0	0.0%
African American	1	ns	0	ns
Hispanic	0	ns	0	ns
Asian	0	n/a	0	n/a
Native American	0	ns	0	ns
Pacific Islander	0	n/a	0	n/a
Male	35	11.4%	0	0.0%
Female	15	5.9%	0	0.0%

Grades 9-12: Additional Indicators

	2003	2004	State Goals
Attendance	93.3%	93.6%	93%
Cohort Dropout	7.2%	4.9%	10%

Graduation Rate

	2004	State Goal
Graduation Percent	81.3%	90%

TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

**Report Card
2009**

School Profile

General Information				
Grades Served:	9-12		Safe School Status	Safe School
Students: (ADM) (Grade N not included)	538			

Student Body Demographics

	# of Students	% of Students
African American	11	2.0
Asian / Pacific Islander	0	.0
Hispanic	8	1.4
Native American / Alaskan	2	.4
White	536	96.2
Economically Disadvantaged	363	68.1
Female	257	46.1
Male	300	53.9

(*) = Data suppressed
due to student N count

(-) = Not
Applicable or Not
Available

(>95) =
Result is
>95%

(<5) =
Result is
<5%

**TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION
Report Card
2009**

**Attendance, Promotion, Dropout, and Graduation
Grades K-8 Non-Academic Indicators**

	2007	2008	2009	State Goal
Attendance Rate(%) (Grade N not included)	-	-	-	93.0
Promotion Rate(%)	-	-	-	97.0

Grades 9-12 Non-Academic Indicators

	2007	2008	2009	State Goal
Attendance Rate(%) (Grade N not included)	92.5	92.9	94.0	93.0
Cohort Dropout (%)	9.9	3.9	1.3	10.0
Graduation Rate (NCLB) (%)	84.7	90.4	96.0	90.0
Event Dropout (%)	1.7	.5	.0	5.0
Completion Rate (%)	-	-	-	90.0

*** Under Revision

(*) = Data suppressed due to student N count (-) = Not Applicable or Not Available (>95) = Result is >95% (<5) = Result is <5%

Tennessee Department of Education
Report Card
2009

Student Discipline

Suspensions & Expulsions

	# Suspensions	% Suspensions	# Expulsions	% Expulsions
African American	3	27.3	-	-
Asian / Pacific Islander	0	0.0	-	-
Hispanic	2	25.0	-	-
Native American	0	0.0	-	-
White	48	9.0	-	-
Female	17	6.6	-	-
Male	36	12.0	-	-
All Students	53	9.5	-	-
(*) = Data suppressed due to student N count (-) = Not Applicable or Not Available (>95) = Result is >95% (<5) = Result is <5%				

**TENNESSEE
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2008**

Student Discipline

Suspensions & Expulsions

	# Suspensions	% Suspensions	# Expulsions	% Expulsions
African American	3	50.0	-	-
Asian / Pacific Islander	0	0.0	-	-
Hispanic	1	20.0	-	-
Native American	0	0.0	-	-
White	48	8.9	-	-
Female	18	7.1	-	-
Male	34	11.3	-	-
All Students	52	9.4	-	-

(*) = Data suppressed
due to student N count

(-) = Not
Applicable or Not
Available

(>95) =
Result is
>95%

(<5) =
Result is
<5%

**TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION
Report Card
2007**

Student Discipline

Suspensions & Expulsions

	# Suspensions	% Suspensions	# Expulsions	% Expulsions
African American	2	40.0	0	0.0
Asian / Pacific Islander	0	0.0	0	0.0
Hispanic	1	25.0	0	0.0
Native American	0	0.0	0	0.0
White	81	14.2	0	0.0
Female	28	10.2	0	0.0
Male	56	18.1	0	0.0
All Students	84	14.4	0	0.0

(*) = Data suppressed
due to student N count

(-) = Not
Applicable or Not
Available

(>95) =
Result is
>95%

(<5) =
Result is
<5%

APPENDIX D

Raw Data of the Independent High School

**TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION
Report Card
2009**

School Profile

General Information				
Grades Served:	9-12		Safe School Status	Safe School
Students: (ADM) (Grade N not included)	508			

Student Body Demographics

	# of Students	% of Students
African American	8	1.5
Asian / Pacific Islander	0	.0
Hispanic	7	1.3
Native American / Alaskan	3	.6
White	516	96.6
Economically Disadvantaged	362	66.4
Female	237	44.4
Male	297	55.6

(*) = Data suppressed
due to student N count

(-) = Not
Applicable or Not
Available

(>95) =
Result is
>95%

(<5) =
Result is
<5%

TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Report Card
2009

Attendance, Promotion, Dropout, and Graduation

Grades K-8 Non-Academic Indicators

	2007	2008	2009	State Goal
Attendance Rate(%) (Grade N not included)	-	-	-	93.0
Promotion Rate(%)	-	-	-	97.0

Grades 9-12 Non-Academic Indicators

	2007	2008	2009	State Goal
Attendance Rate(%) (Grade N not included)	93.7	93.9	94.1	93.0
Cohort Dropout (%)	7.6	8.2	9.6	10.0
Graduation Rate (NCLB) (%)	79.0	85.4	84.2	90.0
Event Dropout (%)	2.0	3.6	1.3	5.0
Completion Rate (%)	-	-	-	90.0

*** Under Revision

(*) = Data suppressed due to student N count (-) = Not Applicable or Not (>95) = Result is (<5) = Result is

Available >95% <5%

**TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION
Report Card
2009**

Student Discipline

Suspensions & Expulsions

	# Suspensions	% Suspensions	# Expulsions	% Expulsions
African American	0	0.0	1	12.5
Asian / Pacific Islander	0	0.0	0	0.0
Hispanic	1	14.3	0	0.0
Native American	1	33.3	0	0.0
White	68	13.2	2	0.4
Female	26	11.0	0	0.0
Male	44	14.8	3	1.0
All Students	70	13.1	3	0.6

(*) = Data suppressed due to student N count (-) = Not Applicable or Not Available (>95) = Result is >95% (<5) = Result is <5%

**TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION
Report Card
2008**

Student Discipline

Suspensions & Expulsions

	# Suspensions	% Suspensions	# Expulsions	% Expulsions
African American	0	0.0	0	0.0
Asian / Pacific Islander	0	0.0	0	0.0
Hispanic	1	9.1	1	9.1
Native American	1	25.0	0	0.0
White	40	7.6	8	1.5
Female	16	6.4	1	0.4
Male	26	8.8	8	2.7
All Students	42	7.7	9	1.7

(*) = Data suppressed
due to student N count

(-) = Not
Applicable or Not
Available

(>95) =
Result is
>95%

(<5) =
Result is
<5%

**TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION
Report Card
2007**

Student Discipline

Suspensions & Expulsions

	# Suspensions	% Suspensions	# Expulsions	% Expulsions
African American	0	0.0	0	0.0
Asian / Pacific Islander	0	0.0	0	0.0
Hispanic	0	0.0	0	0.0
Native American	0	0.0	0	0.0
White	39	6.6	3	0.5
Female	16	5.9	1	0.4
Male	23	6.8	2	0.6
All Students	39	6.4	3	0.5

(*) = Data suppressed
due to student N count

(-) = Not
Applicable or Not
Available

(>95) =
Result is
>95%

(<5) =
Result is
<5%

APPENDIX E

IRB Approval

From: Institution Review Board

Sent: Wednesday, May 05, 2010 2:37 PM

To: Gouge, William; Mowen, Carol; Garzon, Fernando L.

Cc: Institution Review Board

Subject: IRB Approval 844.042010: A COMPARISON RESEARCH STUDY ON THE USE OF SCHOOL UNIFORMS AND GRADUATION, ATTENDANCE, AND SUSPENSION RATES IN EAST TENNESSEE

Dear William,

We are pleased to inform you that your above study has been approved by the Liberty IRB. This approval is extended to you for one year. If data collection proceeds past one year, or if you make changes in the methodology as it pertains to human subjects, you must submit an appropriate update form to the IRB. Attached you'll find the forms for those cases.

Thank you for your cooperation with the IRB, and we wish you well with your research project. We will be glad to send you a written memo from the Liberty IRB, as needed, upon request.

Sincerely,

Fernando Garzon, Psy.D.

IRB Chair, Liberty University

Center for Counseling and Family Studies Liberty University

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(434) 592-4054

Fax: (434) 522-0477