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Written Professional Communication

Writing Assignment #5

Proposal

Topic: Improving grades by requiring school uniforms

Title of Proposal: Begin a trial period of required uniforms at Penn Hills (PH) high school to increase academic success

Executive Summary:

There are a lot of problems that revolve around school dress codes. How children treat each other, as well as financial issues for families to name a few. These issues include but are not limited to: bullying, gender inequality, lack of confidence, and just the simple cost of clothes for families who are struggling. School uniforms can address the issues in a measureable way and should be implemented in more schools. I propose to begin a 2-3 year trial period in the Penn Hills school district. We need to do this because of several concerning issues: there is a low graduation rate, high amounts of bullying, very low levels of school pride, and many families in PH who are financially unstable.

Problem Statements:

There are many problems with today's school system, such as bullying, sexism, funding/unequal financial situations, and attendance/dropout rate. But some of them can be addressed by requiring school uniforms. School uniforms have many benefits to them that include reducing bullying, helping with gender issues, increasing attendance rate, confidence, and attention on school, and can also save families money.

Decrease bullying

The first benefit that school uniforms have been shown to do is decrease bullying. Bullying is a huge issue in schools today, where one in three U.S. students say they have been bullied at school. However when all students are dressed alike, the competition between students over clothing choices can be eliminated. This also helps to eliminate the teasing of those who are dressed in less expensive or less fashionable outfits. In a survey by the National Association of Elementary School Principles (NAESP),

86% of school leaders said that uniforms make “a significant, positive impact on peer pressure,” and 64% say that bullying is reduced because of uniforms. Arminta Jacobson, who is the founder/director of the Center for Parent Education at the University of North Texas, said that uniforms put “all kids on the same playing field in terms of their appearance. I think it probably gives them a sense of belonging and a feeling of being socially accepted.” This statement can be closely related to the reason that sports teams all wear the same jersey with school logos. It can bring people together as a team with a common purpose, and increase school pride.

Gender issues and Attendance rates.

The second benefit that school uniforms can help with are gender issues. With a general dress code, it seems like a lot of young ladies are sent home over clothing. But a 2010 study by researchers at the University of Houston found that the average absence rate for girls decreased by 7% after introducing school uniforms. Another issue that is brought up with gender inequality concerning dress codes is that of unfair treatment when a code is broken. Boys with sagging pants are generally just told to put to pull their pants up, while girls who are breaking dress code are often sent to the office or sent home.

Uniforms can save families money

The third benefit that school uniforms can provide is to reduce families/parents financial burden when their children are limited to wearing one simple outfit every day. An Aug. 20, 2015 study of uniform cost in the United Kingdom found that uniforms cost parents £88.05 (apprx. \$128.79) per outfit, while out-of-school outfits averaged £113.00 (\$165.79). A national 2013 survey of 517 US school leaders found that 94% of those surveyed thought that "one of the main benefits to parents is that school uniforms are more cost-effective than regular apparel," and 77% estimated the average annual cost of school uniforms per child to be \$150 or less. Also, the competitiveness of outfits can affect parents as well. Without school uniform policies, parents may feel pressure to compete with other families by

purchasing fashionable clothes for their children. An interesting thing to note is that students also believed that the uniforms saved money. Jafeth Sanchez, a research assistant professor, and George "Gus" Hill, associate professor, designed a 49-question survey that approximately 1,350 students took during their schools' first year of implementing a uniform policy. About 50% of students strongly agreed with the statement "I think uniforms save money on clothes".

Increase confidence and keeps focus off of clothes

The fourth benefit that School uniforms can provide is a lowered attention to clothing, which allows students to focus on their school. A bulletin published by the National Association of Secondary School Principals stated that "When all students are wearing the same outfit, they are less concerned about how they look and how they fit in with their peers; thus, they can concentrate on their schoolwork." Also, 42% of students in the survey mentioned in the previous section responded to "I worry less about how others look" with "strongly agree."

My plan

The benefits of school uniforms are not limited to just these that have been mentioned. They also include a noted increase in attendance, a decrease in gang activity, an increase in school pride, and the list goes on. Because of all these benefits, I believe it is a good idea to implement a trial period of school uniforms at Penn Hills High school. With this trial period we can see if any of the studied improvements are evident in our school district. There are many different ways to address these issues. You can hold anti bullying programs or make harsher punishments for bullying. I think trying out uniforms is a better way to go about it for one main reason: high schoolers don't think lectures or programs apply to them and end up ignoring them. But with the uniform approach it may combat it in a more subtle way that the students may get on board with easier than programs.

Objectives:

- 1) Create proposal for meeting with PH school board/PTA meeting by May 1st, 2017
- 2) Convince school board to implement trial period for the 2017-18 school year
- 3) Increase average grades at PH high school by 10% by the end of 2017-18 school year

Timetable:

- 1) Have majority of research done by April 15th, 2017
- 2) Organize time and date with PTA and school board by May 1st, 2017
- 3) Create power point presentation with completed research by May 15th, 2017
- 4) Organize and pay for food a week before meeting
- 5) Present at PTA meeting on September 1st, 2017

Deliverables:

- 1) PowerPoint Presentation
- 2) Proposal for school uniforms
- 3) Uniform design ideas

Budget:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------|
| 1) PowerPoint Presentation | : \$0 |
| 2) Room | : \$0 |
| 3) Food | : \$200 |
| 4) Handout with studies done on issue | : \$0 |

Conclusion:

With the benefits to school uniforms, including but not limited to: Decrease bullying and Gender issues, Increasing Attendance rates, and Increase confidence and keeping the focus off of clothes, and saving family's money. I believe that we should go through a two year trial period of school uniforms to analyze the effects on our students and our community.

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