

There are times when the school systems seem to be completely out of touch with the communities they are in. Our school is struggling with poor teacher parent relationships. There are a number of reasons for this. One of the main reasons is that the new principal for the middle school is new to the area. He does not have a good understanding of the community and the people in it. He is also retired from the military and tends to treat the students as if they were in boot camp. I do not mind discipline, consequences and rules, but he seems to take things to the extreme.

My son is in junior high school. He is growing so fast that we can hardly keep clothes on him. It seems like I can buy him a new pair of pants and two weeks later his ankles are showing. He is getting close to the same size as my husband, so for a few months they will be able to share pants. My son came home from school with a note from the principal stating that all the participants in the choir concert must wear black pants, white shirts and dress shoes. Anyone wearing anything else would not be allowed to sing. He included that black jeans would be allowed if they were not faded out. We had gone through this dress code for choir a few years ago. So many parents were upset about not being able to afford new clothes, that we held a fund raiser and purchased robes for the choir. I asked my son what happened to the choir robes. He said that the new principal did not like them because it took away from each person's individuality. I could not believe a man that spent most of his life wearing a uniform would be concerned about this. He told me it was no big deal because dad's black jeans fit him. I told him it was not about him getting new pants or wearing black jeans, it was the fact that the parents had pulled together as a community to purchase the robes.

I called the school. The phone rang for several rings before it was picked up. I asked to speak to the principal. I was told that he was on the phone and that there were three callers holding to speak to him. I guessed I was not the only parent upset by the note. The concert was three nights away so I told my son he needed to try on the black jeans to make sure they fit and we also had to find a white shirt with sleeves that were long enough. We made a suitable outfit out of his dad's clothes. The black jeans were a bit too long, but this was better than being too short. The next day my son came home with another note stating that the choir members would be wearing robes for the concert. Evidently the principal changed his mind after spending several hours on the telephone with angry parents.