

**Text 18** What do you think about school uniforms?

# SCHOOL UNIFORMS? Think Again!

At Tuesday's meeting of the school committee, Superintendent Russell made his position clear. He wants the children in our city's public schools to wear school uniforms.

"Uniforms make life easier for families," he said. Parents do not have to decide what kind of clothes to buy for school. And, it's easier to get ready for school each day.

"Uniforms help children feel better about themselves," he added. Children from families in need wear the same clothes as children from rich families. Uniforms make it easier for children of different backgrounds to make friends.

His suggestion sparked a lively debate. Two committee members, Stan Oakley and Mae Stokes, said they thought it was a good idea. Mr. Oakley suggested that the schools would look much neater. Children's behavior might even improve.

Others were not so sure. "Is there a problem now?" asked Gary Washington. "I wasn't aware that this was an issue."

Indeed, what is the issue? What problem is our superintendent trying to solve? Would children really feel better about themselves if they had to wear clothes that someone else picked out? Americans like to express themselves through their clothes. Uniforms can crush

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creativity. Paying for uniforms might be hard for some families. They would have to pay for the uniform no matter what it costs. Then they would need to buy other clothes for their children to wear outside of school.

Mr. Russell has asked the school committee to vote for his plan. Clearly, this city is not ready to make a decision yet. We need more information. The school committee should interview students, parents, and teachers in towns that have school uniforms. They should do research to find out the cost of uniforms. Then they should hold public meetings to discuss their findings. It would be foolish to rush into a vote on this question.

