

Parents oppose dress code push

To say that the York Region Elementary Catholic School Board has not communicated effectively in regards to its new standardized dress code is an understatement!

They have also changed the rules in order to implement a policy they want in effect. In previous years if the parent community wanted uniforms or a standardized dress code implemented at their school a formal vote was needed and 85 per cent agreement was required.

If some votes were not returned to the school, follow up was required until all votes were accounted for. If you managed to achieve that 85 per cent it was only in force for 2 years and then it could be voted on again.

This new policy is being rolled out by the board WITHOUT a formal vote from the parents. Instead, as parents, you have to try and stop it.

Not very democratic if you ask me!

If 20 per cent of the families sign a petition saying they want to opt out of the dress code only then does it go to a formal vote.

However unlike the 85 per cent that was needed previously it has now been reduced to 50% + 1! The policy cited that 85 per cent was needed to have the strong support of the community, I guess that doesn't matter anymore? The best part however is that any votes that are not returned to the school count as IN FAVOUR OF!

We all know that votes get lost, never make it home or we as parents forget to return them...these would all count as in favour of the dress code. Also, instead of two years until the next vote it would now be five years before a change can be made.

So, although the school board would like us to believe that they are giving us a chance to voice our opinion they clearly are not. With these new regulations the chances of being able to stop it are near impossible. I believe only two school board trustees voted against the implementation of this dress code and they will be getting my vote at the next election.

I realize the previous code was up for discussion and renewal in 2013, however it seems a bit suspicious to me that at the exact same time the board decides to roll out a standardized dress code it also lowers all the requirements to put it in place. Each school has to hold a public meeting this week to explain the process to the parents, just another waste of time and money as they have made their decision and have made it very difficult to stop.

I am unclear as to why we would want a standardized dress code in the first place. It is only a colour code not a uniform. Some kids will still buy their clothes at the more expensive stores and others at discount stores, it does not unite the student body at all or provide the kids with a sense of belonging as they are all going to look different.

They have eliminated blue jeans as well leaving our kids to go to school in leggings, tights and track pants unless they are going to wear dress pants to school! The only good thing? That the school board, principals and teachers have no way to enforce it. They are not allowed to issue a suspension or even a detention for not following the standardized dress code.

I believe the teachers and principals have better things to do with their time then to deal with an issue they cannot enforce. If the board has been discussing this new code for a year, why haven't the families been consulted from the very beginning and not AFTER the board made it's decision? Why indeed.

Tania DeFreitas
Member, Holy Spirit Catholic School Council