



SDMC Special Meeting Minutes

June 24, 2021 – 3:30 PM

Members Present:

Chavis Mitchell, Bryan Berry, Cecilia Allen, Elizabeth Benne, Eileen Hairel, Leslie Hokanson, Nimci Saravia, Desiree Slack, Tasha James

New Business:

Discussing Dress Code

Mr. Mitchell displayed the current 2021-2022 dress code and shared that the community has been discussing online and emailing regarding concerns with the students' legging policy. The community has expressed that they would like leggings to be worn as pants without any additional covering.

Mr. Mitchell stated that he wanted to bring this back to the SDMC, because the committee had already voted on the policy for the coming school year. Mr. Mitchell asked if anyone would like to share feedback regarding the policy. Several members shared the following points:

- We state that leggings are only allowed under shorts, skirts, and jumpers. She said that she has been looking at other schools' policies and that one stated that they can only be worn under shorts, skirts, or jumpers and that they must be covered.
- A member asked if the meeting should be recorded and Mr. Mitchell and Mr. Berry stated that only the taking of minutes is required.

Mr. Mitchell continued to discuss the concern and the need for this clarification. He stated that parents' primary request appears to be that they want leggings to be worn as pants without the requirement of any coverup.

- A member stated that the overwhelming majority of feedback that she is hearing, although not exclusive, is that leggings should be considered as pants. Period. End of sentence. She said that she does not know how many parents are providing feedback, but she is concerned that our community is going to battle over whether leggings are pants. If we continue to maintain that leggings are an undergarment, she is concerned that the push back from the community will continue to be a concern.
- Another member said that she has been thinking about this a lot and that she has read pretty much all the Facebook comments, emails, and articles. She had not realized how charged a topic this was. Thinking about the last year and a half the emphasis has been on comfort and the one thing that has been available has been leggings. Boys have athletic shorts and girls have leggings. She agrees with the sentiment. If she voted again, she would allow leggings as pants.

Mr. Mitchell said that he wants to be clear that athletic shorts are not only for boys. He understands that girls may be more likely to wear leggings, but boys are certainly allowed to wear them as well. He said that how clothing is made, he understands that girls' shorts are cut differently and will usually be shorter.

He said that he is open to feedback and compromise. He did not know that it was going to turn into something that we did not intend. He wants to make sure that any revisions and messaging are clear.

- Another member said that her thoughts on the topic are that she does believe that leggings are more affordable, but we also run the risk of how thin they may be and that we may be able to see students' undergarments, and she asked how we could go about avoiding this situation. Kids are very observant and are going to comment and say things. If a students' leggings are too thin, it will create another situation that will have to be addressed. If these situations can be prevented, we need to think about that. She also said that she thinks that we are losing sight of the purpose of coming to school. The sole purpose is to educate our kids.

Mr. Mitchell asked that if we do make these changes, what do we need to share to make this clear to prevent this and to ensure that this does not happen. Even with our current dress code we will still have to enforce and address issues. So, what would a revision need to say?

- A member said that she thinks that every parent wants their child's undergarments to be covered up. Looking at this community as a whole and how divisive this has become, do we allow leggings and differentiate the difference between leggings and tights? Tights which are see through are not permitted as bottoms. If they are transparent, they are an undergarment. They are tights and not leggings. We span students who are potty training and students who can give birth to children. That is a lot of different body types to accommodate for. In addressing this, if they are see-through, they are not leggings and must have something worn over them. She believes this would meet the request the community. If we see an intense increase on policing this, the issue could be revisited. She suggested we collect the data and that we revisit this in February 2022 so that we can have data to look at for the coming school year.
- Another member echoed this as well. Underwear may not be visible. Holes and tears may not be visible. We might want to consider the arms raised rules for tops. If your front midriff or back midriff is exposed that may help to address the concern of having bottoms mostly covered as well. The other thing that she would add on is her sensitivity to students saying that they can see someone's underwear, but this is a teachable moment where we can tell someone, we do not talk about or tease others about their clothing. This is a good age to reach them with the message that it is not their job to police someone about someone else's body.

Mr. Mitchell said that he agrees that we will always have teachable moments when it comes to dress code.

- The member continued that if we are contemplating allowing leggings, we should not allow white. White exposes you to way too many times where someone's underwear may be showing.
- A member agreed with this and shared that with no parents of daughters on the SDMC, we need to think about listening to the community because none of us here have that experience.

Mr. Mitchell said that we are not all male either, and there are many women that wear leggings and do have opinions related to the issues as well.

- Another member noted that while it is correct that no current SDMC member has daughters, she does have nieces that she keeps from time to time and does clothe. The leggings, she is just not with them for a young lady especially. Under the shorts and skirts, she agrees. But she said that she is just not for it.

Mr. Mitchell thanked the member and said that we do want to draw multiple opinions. He acknowledged the difference between tights and leggings. He thought that we needed to be specific about wording of whether clothes can be seen through.

- Another member said that she did research on other HISD elementary dress codes and there are very few that do not have a dress code, however it is pretty much half and half where either leggings are not permitted at all to yes they are permitted but they have to be covered with a tunic, shorts, jumper, or dress. She does not think the dress code that our committee has come up with is unreasonable. Even though she has three boys, she had a couple that it was difficult to buy pants for.
- A member responded that we are a fine arts community of predominately young mothers that are trying to say that they are not comfortable with this.
- The member agreed but said that she did not agree that we are a liberal school but that many of us are conservative.
- The member said that progressive is a better word and another member added forward thinking and said that this is the direction the nation has been moving for a couple of years.
- A member asked about the differentiation between being able to see actual underwear through pants compared to seeing the outline of a student's underwear?
- A member said that she does not have a problem with the line of the underwear being visible. Another member added that you are often able to see the tops of boys' boxers or the outline of girls' bra straps.

Mr. Mitchell agreed.

The committee decided to bring up the document and consider revisions.

- A member asked if the community would still hold their meeting and desire to present their concerns to the SDMC?
- A member asked if the community had one vote or if their votes were individual? Mr. Mitchell stated that each SDMC member has a single vote.

Each member voted whether they were for a revision. The majority favored revision.

Mr. Mitchell reread over the dress code regarding leggings. He first addressed that the plain white should be taken off and that the color scheme for leggings be khaki, black, navy, or denim.

The committee agreed and discussed revisions and wording of the dress code.

See approved updates and revisions below:



Standard Mode of Dress

2021-2022

The required Parker Elementary Standard Mode of Dress is:

- **Tops** (long or short sleeves) - red, white, or navy **solid/plain** shirt or a Parker spirit shirt.
 - Any undershirt must comply with red, white, or navy color scheme.
- **Bottoms** - pants, shorts, skirts, or jumpers **MUST** be **solid/plain** khaki, black, navy, or denim. Denim may be blue, black, or khaki.
 - Shorts, skirts, and jumpers **MUST** have lower hems reach the fingertips of the student wearing them when their arms are down.
 - **Leggings MUST be worn with shorts, skirts, or jumpers and comply with the color scheme of solid/plain white, black, or navy.**
 - Solid black or navy athletic shorts are allowed. **Shorts must be solid/plain with no branding.**
- **Pullovers, sweaters, etc.** - any of these that are worn during the day must comply with the color scheme of solid/plain red, white, black, navy, or denim.
- **Coats** – for outdoor activities may be of any color or style.
- **Other Items** - no hats may be worn indoors, and shoes must be closed-toed.
- Friday will be **middle school, high school, and college day**. Any middle school, high school, or college shirt may be worn or the above standard mode of dress. (no professional sports teams wear allowed)
- Non-uniform days for all students will be picture days and other designated days.

Failure to abide by dress code may result in:

- Parents being required to bring appropriate clothing for students
 - Conduct Grade issued in Communication Folder
 - Assigned detention for chronic issues

Ms. Hairel volunteered to work on formatting the document and the committee adjourned.

Meeting Adjourned:

5:21 PM

Minutes taken by Bryan Berry, edits by Eileen Hairel