

Booker T. Washington High School Uniform Committee Report and Recommendations

Date: May 12, 2025

To: Booker T. Washington High School GO Team

From: School Uniform Committee

Subject: Findings and Recommendations Regarding the Proposed Optional School Uniform

I. Introduction

The School Uniform Committee was established to explore the potential benefits and feasibility of implementing an optional school uniform at Booker T. Washington High School. As part of this process, a comprehensive survey was conducted to gather feedback from various stakeholders within the school community. This report summarizes the findings from that survey and presents the committee's recommendations for moving forward.

II. Proposed Optional Uniform Details

The proposed optional uniform, which was the subject of the survey, consisted of the following components:

- **Tops:** White, Royal Blue, Black, or Gray (polo shirts, t-shirts, button-down shirts)
- **Bottoms:** Navy Blue, Black, or Khaki (pants, skirts, shorts, skorts)
- **Jeans:** Permitted in any wash.
- **Booker T. Washington Apparel:** Any official Booker T. Washington High School-branded apparel would be permitted as part of the uniform.

III. Survey Methodology

The survey was made available to the Booker T. Washington High School community from April 1, 2025, until April 21, 2025. This 20-day feedback period was established to meet the requirements set forth by the Atlanta Public School Board for community input.

IV. Survey Results Analysis

A total of **63 surveys** were completed during the feedback period. The demographic distribution of respondents was as follows:

- **Students:** 52%
- **Parents/Guardians:** 20%
- **Alumni:** 18%

- **Faculty/Staff:** 8%
- **Community Members:** 4%

The detailed results for each survey question are summarized below:

- **Belief that the proposed optional uniform is in alignment with the Atlanta Public Schools Dress Code:**
 - 75% of respondents believed it was in alignment.
 - 25% of respondents did not believe it was in alignment.
- **Agreement that the proposed optional school uniform would contribute to a more positive and focused learning environment:**
 - 44% of respondents agreed.
 - 44% of respondents did not agree.
 - 12% of respondents were unsure.
- **Belief that the proposed optional school uniform would reduce distractions related to clothing:**
 - 48% of respondents believed it would reduce distractions.
 - 44% of respondents did not agree.
 - 8% of respondents were unsure.
- **Belief that having the option of wearing jeans was a positive addition to the uniform:**
 - 79.17% of respondents believed it was a positive addition.
 - 20.83% of respondents did not agree.
 - 0% of respondents were unsure.
- **Belief that allowing BTWHS apparel as a part of the uniform would be a positive addition:**
 - 76% of respondents believed it was a positive addition.
 - 12% of respondents did not agree.
 - 12% of respondents were unsure.
- **Preferred duration for the optional school uniform to remain in place before review, if implemented:**
 - 52.17% preferred 2 years.
 - 17.39% preferred 3 years.
 - 30.43% preferred 4 years.
- **Overall support for the implementation of the proposed school uniform:**
 - 44% strongly supported.
 - 12% supported.
 - 4% were neutral.
 - 4% opposed.
 - 36% strongly opposed.

V. Discussion of Findings

The survey revealed a mixed but slightly favorable sentiment towards the proposed optional school uniform. A clear majority (75%) perceived the uniform as aligning with existing APS dress code policies, suggesting it is not seen as overly restrictive in its proposed form. Furthermore, there was strong consensus and positive reception for the inclusion of both jeans (79.17%) and official Booker T. Washington High School branded apparel (76%), indicating these elements are highly valued by the community.

However, opinions were notably divided regarding the core benefits often associated with school uniforms, specifically their impact on fostering a positive learning environment (44% agree vs. 44% disagree) and reducing clothing-related distractions (48% agree vs. 44% disagree). This suggests that while some see these as clear advantages, a significant portion of the community remains unconvinced or skeptical on these points.

Overall support for implementation, while leaning positive (56% combined support), also shows a substantial level of strong opposition (36%). This indicates that while a majority may be open to the idea, there is a vocal and significant segment of the community with strong reservations. The most preferred review period, if implemented, was two years (52.17%), suggesting a desire for an initial trial period rather than a long-term commitment from the outset.

VI. Recommendations

Based on the survey data, the School Uniform Committee observes a slight overall majority in favor of implementing the proposed optional school uniform. However, the significant level of strong opposition and the divided opinions on its direct impact on the learning environment and distractions necessitate a cautious, transparent, and iterative approach.

Therefore, the committee proposes the following recommendations to the GO Team:

1. **Pilot Implementation for Two Academic Years:** The committee recommends proceeding with a pilot implementation of the proposed optional school uniform for a period of two academic years (2025-2026 and 2026-2027). This aligns with the most popular preference for a review period and allows the school community to experience the uniform firsthand before a long-term decision is made.
2. **Emphasize "Optional" Nature:** It is crucial that all communications clearly and consistently emphasize that participation in the uniform policy is entirely voluntary for students. This addresses concerns about choice and maintains

flexibility.

3. **Highlight Popular Elements:** During the pilot phase and in all promotional materials, actively highlight and promote the inclusion of jeans in any wash and official Booker T. Washington High School apparel. These elements received strong positive feedback and can serve as key selling points for the uniform's appeal.
4. **Comprehensive Data Collection and Monitoring:** Throughout the two-year pilot period, the school should actively monitor and collect data on the perceived impact of the optional uniform. This should include:
 - Teacher feedback on classroom environment and student focus.
 - Student and parent surveys (conducted periodically) on their experiences and perceptions.
 - Review of any relevant disciplinary data related to dress code violations.
 - Tracking of student participation rates in the optional uniform.
5. **Formal Review and Decision:** At the conclusion of the two-year pilot period (Spring 2027), a thorough and formal review of the program must be conducted. This review will analyze all collected data, gather additional stakeholder feedback, and inform a definitive decision on whether to continue, modify, or discontinue the optional uniform policy for subsequent academic years.
6. **Consider Further Engagement:** Prior to the pilot implementation, the school may consider holding additional, targeted forums or discussions, particularly with those who expressed strong opposition, to better understand their specific concerns and explore whether any further clarifications or minor adjustments to the pilot plan could address them.

VII. Conclusion

The School Uniform Committee believes these recommendations provide a balanced approach, respecting the diverse opinions within our community while allowing for a practical assessment of an optional uniform's benefits. We are committed to fostering an environment that supports all students' success and look forward to the GO Team's consideration of this report.

Sincerely,

The School Uniform Committee
Booker T. Washington High School