School Uniform Committee Toolkit

Here's a toolkit to guide your School Uniform Committee's work, including a **sample** timeline, communication plan, example outreach strategies, considerations, and guidance on your final committee report.

1. TIMELINE AND MILESTONES

AUGUST - NOVEMBER

- **Establish Committee:** Identify members, confirm roles, and introduce the committee's purpose.
- **Set Committee Goals:** Review the committee's objectives, including the stakeholder engagement plan, uniform options, and communication requirements.

NOVEMBER - JANUARY

- **Initial Stakeholder Engagement:** Begin gathering initial input from key stakeholders (parents, students, and staff) through surveys, focus groups, or informal feedback sessions.
- **Develop Engagement and Feedback Plan:** Outline the methods and schedule for collecting feedback, ensure to include a minimum 20-day public comment period and a GO Team meeting that allows for public input on the proposal as a part of your plan.

JANUARY - FEBRUARY

- **Finalize Uniform Options:** Define uniform components and present a clear, appealing overview for community consideration.
- **Launch Public Comment Period:** Open the 20-day period with all communication channels; collect anonymous feedback and schedule a GO Team meeting to receive public comment.

MARCH

- **Student Vote (if applicable):** For middle and high schools organize and complete a student vote on proposed uniform options.
- **Analyze Feedback:** Begin analyzing feedback gathered through surveys, meetings, and votes to shape the final recommendation.

BY APRIL 15

- **Submit Final Recommendation:** Present the final report to the school's GO Team with a summary of stakeholder feedback, key insights, and suggested next steps.

MAY - AUGUST

- **Implementation:** If a uniform is adopted, implement the Committee's outreach plan for your community.

ANNOUNCEMENT TEMPLATES

- **Initial Announcement:** Introduce the committee's purpose, outline the process, and invite participation.
- **Feedback Invitation:** Announce the public comment period, including how to submit feedback anonymously or attend the governing team meeting.
- **Voting Information (if applicable):** Notify eligible students about voting dates, the importance of their input, and how to participate.

OUTREACH STRATEGIES

- **Leverage School Channels:** Use the school's website, newsletters, social media, and bulletin boards to share updates.
- **Engage Diverse Stakeholders:** Consider family diversity (e.g., multilingual families) and ensure translation services are available.
- **Regular Updates:** Keep the community informed about milestones, such as the start of the public comment period and voting timelines. The committee chair will submit a progress report at every full GO Team meeting.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Engaging each group thoughtfully will help ensure the committee gathers diverse input and builds community support. Here are some specific strategies:

1. PARENTS AND GUARDIANS

- **Surveys**
  - Send out a digital survey to parents and guardians to gather broad input on their views regarding the uniform policy. Ensure the survey is available in multiple languages if needed, and provide a paper version for families without reliable internet access.
  - Include questions on uniform preferences (colors, styles, etc.), expected costs, and any specific needs (such as uniform assistance for low-income families).
- **Focus Groups**
  - Organize small, facilitated discussion groups with diverse parent representation to allow for in-depth conversation. Aim to include parents from varied cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic backgrounds.
  - Schedule sessions at different times (morning, afternoon, evening) to accommodate work schedules.
- **Town Hall Meetings**
  - Host virtual or in-person town hall meetings for parents to ask questions, share concerns, and discuss the proposed uniform policy. Ensure the principal, committee chair, and a few committee members are present to listen and answer questions.

- o Offer childcare and language interpretation to encourage participation, and share a recording or summary afterward for those unable to attend.

2. STUDENTS

- **Student Forums**
  - o Hold forums during class periods, lunch hours, or after school where students can discuss their views on a school uniform. Encourage feedback on practical aspects, like comfort, style preferences, and functionality, to help the committee understand students' daily experience.
  - o For middle and high schools, collaborate with teachers to schedule these forums as a short activity within advisory periods or homeroom.
- **Student Government Association or Elected Representatives**
  - o If the school has a student government association (SGA), arrange for representatives to gather feedback from their peers, bringing student perspectives directly to the committee.
  - o For schools without an SGA, ensure representatives are elected to bring an authentic student voice to the discussion. They can also help communicate updates back to the student body.
- **Student Poll or Vote (if applicable)**
  - o For middle and high schools without an SGA, conduct a vote on uniform options, ensuring the ballot is easy to understand and accessible. Host an assembly or share a short video explaining the voting process and the importance of student input.
  - o Consider an "informal poll" option for younger students to gather their thoughts in a way that feels more casual, such as sticky notes on a poster board, allowing for both visual and verbal feedback.

3. STAFF (TEACHERS, ADMINISTRATORS, SUPPORT STAFF)

- **Staff Survey**
  - o Distribute an anonymous survey to gather feedback on potential impacts of a school uniform policy on the school environment, including classroom management, student-teacher interactions, and perceived benefits or challenges.
- **Staff Meeting Presentations**
  - o Dedicate a portion of a staff meeting to presenting the uniform options and explaining the feedback process. Invite staff to ask questions or share their initial thoughts with committee members present. This is an opportunity for teachers and support staff to give candid, frontline perspectives on how uniforms may impact students.

- **Open Office Hours**
  - Set up drop-in times when committee members are available to meet with staff one-on-one. This approach can be especially helpful for staff who may not feel comfortable sharing feedback in larger settings.

3. KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- **Inclusivity in Decision-Making:** Ensure that feedback is representative by actively reaching out to typically underrepresented groups within the school community.
- **Transparency:** Share updates regularly, and clarify how feedback will influence the decision-making process.
- **Access to Information:** Make uniform options and related information accessible for review online and in-person for those without internet access.

4. FINAL REPORT OUTLINE

The final report should summarize the committee's process, findings, and recommendations. Key sections to include:

- **Introduction:** Briefly describe the committee's purpose and the work undertaken.
- **Overview of Engagement Activities:** Detail how feedback was collected, including public comment methods, outreach efforts, and any surveys or focus groups conducted.
- **Summary of Feedback:** Present the main themes and preferences expressed by stakeholders, highlighting any significant concerns or preferences.
- **Recommendation:** Outline the final recommendation, including any proposed uniform components, timelines for implementation, and reconsideration guidelines.
- **Appendices** (if needed): Include additional data, such as survey results, voting outcomes, or cost estimates (if applicable).

Using these tailored approaches, the committee can gather meaningful insights from each group while fostering a sense of inclusion and transparency in the decision-making process.

RESOURCES

Week	Engagement Tactic	Key Audience	Length of Engagement
1	Kick-off Community Meeting	Parents, Students	1.5 hours
2	Online Survey Launch	Parents, Students	2 weeks (open for input)
3	Focus Group Discussions	Parents (various demographics)	2 hours each (2 sessions)
4	Classroom Discussions	Students (grades PK-5)	1 hour
5	Informational Flyers Distribution	Parents, Students	Ongoing
6	Virtual Q&A Session	Parents, Students	1 hour
7	Online Comment Box	Parents, Students	2 weeks (open for input)
8	School Council Meeting	Parents, Staff	1 hour
9	Family Engagement Night	Parents, Students	2 hours
10	Open House Presentation	Parents, Students	1 hour
11	Peer Discussion Circles	Students (grades 3-5)	1 hour
12	Parent-Teacher Conferences	Parents	15 minutes (during each conference)
13	Virtual Forum	Parents, Students	1 hour
14	Final Feedback Survey	Parents, Students	1 week (open for input)
15	Announcement of Decision	Parents, Students	1 hour (presentation)
16	Celebration Event	Parents, Students	2 hours

1. **Establish a Student Input Committee**
   - Form a diverse group of student volunteers across different grades and backgrounds to represent the broader student body.
   - The Uniform Advisory Committee formed by the GO Team will support and guide the discussions.

2. **Surveys & Questionnaires**
   - Distribute a simple survey to all students to gather their opinions on the introduction of uniforms. Ensure questions are clear, with options for both multiple choice and open-ended responses. This could occur in advisement or a specific class period.
   - **Example questions:**
     - ◊ Are you in favor of a uniform policy? Yes/No
     - ◊ How would you feel about uniforms at your school? (scale 1-5)
     - ◊ What concerns do you have about implementing a uniform policy?

3. **Organize Focus Groups**
   - Host focus group discussions with a diverse mix of students. Select 10-15 students per group and discuss their thoughts on uniforms in a relaxed setting. This could occur during lunch periods. Consider offering school-based incentives for participation.
   - Assign a facilitator from the Uniform Advisory Committee to guide the conversation and document feedback.

4. **Use Technology**
   - Set up a virtual feedback platform using Google Forms, polls, or discussion boards where students can anonymously share their thoughts on the uniform policy.

5. **Host School Wide Assemblies/Town Halls**
   - Schedule assemblies/town halls where administrators explain the uniform proposal and allow time for live student questions and feedback.
   - Offer multiple sessions to accommodate different grade levels.

6. **Visual Boards or Suggestion Boxes**
   - Place suggestion boxes around the school for students to anonymously submit their input.
   - Create a visual feedback wall where students can post their opinions on the uniform policy using sticky notes or pre-designed cards.

7. **Transparency and Communication**
   - After gathering input, share the results with students and the broader school community, including both pros and cons. This will promote transparency and encourage further engagement.

8. Next Steps: Review and Decision

- The Uniform Advisory Committee will convene a committee meeting to review student input and summarize key takeaways.
- Share findings with the larger GO Team and discuss the possibility of conducting a pilot or making a final decision on uniforms.

These options ensure all students have the opportunity to provide input, even in schools without structured leadership organizations like SGAs or ambassador programs.

Download the Committee Report Template file.

<div align="center">

[SCHOOL NAME]
[COMMITTEE NAME]
Date: [insert date]
Time: [insert scheduled time]
Location: [insert meeting location]

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I.   Roll Call

Name	Present or Absent
[Name] - CHAIR	

Guests Present: [If someone has been invited to present to the Committee, list the name(s) here; you do not have to list observers]

II.   Discussion Items *(add items as needed)*
    a.   **Discussion Item 1**: [Add description of discussion item and brief summary of the discussion]
    b.   **Discussion Item 2**: [Add description of discussion item and brief summary of the discussion]

III.   Goals/Objectives Completed:
    a.   **Item 1** [Add description of the item]
    b.   **Item 2** [Add description of the item]

IV.   Goals/Objectives In-Progress/Pending
    a.   **Item 1** [Add description of the item]
    b.   **Item 2** [Add description of the item]

V.   Recommendations for the GO Team
    a.   **Recommendation 1** [Add detailed description of the recommendation]

        b.   **Recommendation 2** [Add detailed description of the recommendation]

VI.   **Questions for the GO Team**

        a.   **Question 1**

        b.   **Question 2**

VII.   **Announcements** [Include the next meeting date and add brief summary of any other announcements]

VIII.   **Adjournment**

Minutes Taken By: [Insert Name of Person taking the Report]

Position: [Insert Person's Position on the Committee – either the chair or just committee member]

Date Taken:

[*A copy of this report is to be provided at the next regular GO Team meeting and included as a part of that meeting's minutes.*]

What is the purpose of this FAQ?

This FAQ provides information about the optional school uniform policy for the 2025-2026 school year. The policy allows individual schools to decide if they want to implement an optional school uniform program.

Is my school required to implement a school uniform program?

No, a school uniform is optional. Each school will decide through a community engagement process whether or not to implement the program.

Why are we discussing an optional school uniform policy now?

The board revised the Student Dress Code policy on December 4, 2023, and June 3, 2024, to better align with district goals. The current focus is to ensure schools that wish to maintain or establish an optional school uniform for the 2025-2026 school year have adequate time to engage with their communities, vote, and communicate decisions before May 2025.

Where can I find the official Student Dress Code policy?

You can find the official policy **here**: http://tinyAPS.com/?2024APSDressCode

How will my school decide about implementing a school uniform program?

Schools wishing to implement a school uniform will form a committee through the GO Team. The Committee will engage with the school community to gather feedback before making a recommendation to the GO Team and, in middle and high schools, the students.

What is the GO Team's role in this process?

GO Teams are responsible for aligning school-level decisions with district policies. For schools considering an optional uniform, the GO Team will create a committee, engage the community, and vote on the matter. They are encouraged to use their regular meeting schedule to complete this work by May.

How will this process be supported?

The district is providing coordinated support to ensure equitable engagement across all school communities. This includes guidance on forming committees, community outreach, and managing the vote in alignment with board policy.

What if our school already has a uniform?

Schools with existing uniforms will need to follow the process to engage their community and hold a vote to align with the new policy.

What if our school does not want an optional uniform?

Per the APS Board policy, uniforms are optional and are not required to implement one.

What are my options if my school decides to discuss an optional uniform program?

- You can attend the GO Team meeting to learn more about the program and offer your opinion.
- You can vote against the implementation of an optional uniform program if a motion is made.
- You can suggest that the GO Team remove the discussion of an optional uniform program from the agenda.

How does this policy change affect enforcement of uniforms?

One of the goals behind the revised policy is to avoid consequences that impact instructional time or the overall student experience due to uniform non-compliance. The shift ensures that the decision about optional uniforms remains at the school level, empowering communities to address their unique needs.

Who will pay for the uniforms if my school implements the program?

The Board of Education has not yet determined how funding or distribution of uniforms would be handled. This will likely be a topic of discussion at the school level.

How can I learn more about the board's vision for funding and distributing uniforms?

The Board of Education discussed revisions to the dress code policy during the 2023-2024 school year. Reviewing meeting agendas and recordings from those meetings may provide more information on funding and distribution.

Who can I contact if I have further questions?

Please contact your school's principal or the GO Team Office for further questions.