School Uniform Policies

According to New Jersey law, school districts may adopt a school uniform policy. When districts adopt such policies, the policies apply to all students (pre-k to grade 12) in the district. In accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:11-8(a) these policies shall include provisions to assist economically disadvantaged students. Additionally, N.J.S.A. 18A:11-8(b) states, “The board of education may provide a method whereby parents may choose not to comply with an adopted school uniform policy. If the board provides such a method, a student shall not be penalized academically or otherwise discriminated against nor denied admittance to school if the students’ parents choose not to comply with the school uniform policy.”

Key steps/actions
The NJDOE advises districts to review its school uniform policy to ensure it complies with N.J.S.A. 18A:11-8. Specifically, districts that adopt school uniform policies need to be aware of the following:

1) Districts with school uniform policies have an affirmative duty to assist economically disadvantaged students; and
2) If a district’s school uniform policy includes a method for parents not to comply with the policy, then a student cannot be punished, discriminated against or denied admittance to school when his/her parent exercises that option.

If a parent believes that the local board of education has violated its school uniform policy or has applied the policy an arbitrary or unreasonable way in connection with his/her child, the parent may file a petition of appeal with the Commissioner of Education.

Contact information
Districts wanting to discuss their policies can reach out to their NJDOE County Office of Education. Districts can also email their questions to the Division of Early Childhood Education at doeearlychild@doe.nj.gov.

c: Members, State Board of Education
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