

Mandatory School Uniform Policy in DC Public Schools

by

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Abstract

District of Columbia Representative City Council member Carol Schwartz (R-at large) introduced Bill NO. 13-404 entitled "Public Schools Uniform Act 1999" which proposed that all D.C. public schools shall adopt a mandatory school uniform to be worn by all Elementary through High School students beginning in the Fall of 2001. The stated purpose of this initiative is to reduce peer pressure, improve student discipline and decrease violence among city students.

Schwartz's proposal is a reflection of the growing trend to require school uniforms in American public schools. The benefits of school uniforms policies have been significant enough to merit President Clinton's attention in his 1996 inaugural address. Shortly after this address, President Clinton tasked the U.S. Department of Education to develop and publish a manual on school uniforms. In addition to the alternative proposed in Bill 13-404, popular alternative policies that are currently being used in schools across the country are considered as possible options to the proposed legislation.

This model analyzes the merits of adopting such a policy by considering the following four (4) alternatives: (1) continuing current voluntary (by school); (2) adopting mandatory DC wide uniform policy; (3) adopting a mandatory policy with Parental "Opt Out" option (child transferred from school); (4) adopting a mandatory with Parental "Opt Out" (no removal from school) policy.

The five alternatives are considered with respect to the effects on students, parents and school administration in various areas including impact upon peer pressure, environment, concentration, creativity/personal liberty, cost to parent, intrusiveness, security, community image, start up considerations, cost to school, and enforcement.

Introduction

On September 21, 1999 District of Columbia (D.C.) Council member Carol Schwartz (R-at large) introduced Bill No. 13-404, entitled: "Public Schools Uniform Act 1999". If enacted, this legislation mandates all D.C. public schools (including charter schools) shall adopt a school uniform to be worn by all students in Elementary through High School beginning in the fall of 2001. The proposal also provides for financial assistance to families who are unable to afford the purchase of the directed uniforms.¹

In her introduction of the bill, Ms Schwartz cited data showing improvements in student discipline and safety problems at schools where such a policy was enacted. She further suggested that wearing of school uniforms reduces peer pressure suffered by students who might not be attired in the current fashion.² The legislation proposed by Ms. Schwartz (and Kevin P. Chavous, D-Ward 7) addresses adoption of a mandatory policy with no parental "opt out" provisions. The proposed legislation does not offer alternatives to full implementation of the uniform proposal. It is the intent of the proposal initiators to secure approval of the proposal by the DC Council and present this anticipated approval to the D.C. School Board for implementation. In the event it is not approved as written, Bill 13-404 could be revised and resubmitted based upon comments received and debate results.³

The Project described in this presentation differs from the D.C. Proposal because it considers alternatives not contemplated in Bill 13-404. Although the D.C. Council will not have the benefit of weighing all possible options, these options were evaluated by the Project A Team in reaching a conclusion.

Project Team Goal

This report and its associated Expert Choice model will be shared with Ms Schwartz' office in the DC Council. Public hearings are expected to be held in November/December 1999 to secure public opinion on this contentious topic prior to a Council vote. This information may prove useful to Ms Schwartz and her staff as they debate this topic. This journey of this legislation will be monitored by the Project A team.

Background

School uniforms have long been associated with private schools, most frequently schools with a religious affiliation. In 1987, however, Cherry Hill Elementary School in Baltimore, Maryland, made national news when it became one of the first public schools in the country to adopt a school uniform policy.⁴ More than ten years later, Cherry Hill students are still wearing school uniforms and the uniform movement has spread to public schools nationwide. In 1994, the Long Beach Unified School District in Long Beach, California became the first large urban school district in the United States to implement school uniforms in its elementary and middle school students.

In President Clinton's 1996 inaugural address, he identified several challenges for the nation. Among these, he highlighted the need to provide educational opportunities to American youth by teaching them character education, good values and good citizenship. He

revitalized the public school uniform debate in his speech by stating: “And if that means teenagers will stop killing each other over designer jackets, then public schools should be able to require school uniforms.”⁵ He tasked the U.S. Department of Education to develop and publish a manual on school uniforms. This manual, which touts the merits of a school uniform policy, was subsequently distributed to 16,000 school districts nationwide.⁶ Not all, however, have been supportive of a public school uniform policy. The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) has stated that it is opposed to mandatory public school uniforms without an elective for parents to “opt out” of the policy.⁷

D.C. Public Schools

Last year the D.C. Public School System enrolled nearly 72, 000 students in its one-hundred forty six (146) schools.⁸ Almost half of the D.C. public schools currently give students the option of wearing uniforms on campus under a policy that was adopted several years ago by the D.C. Board of Education.⁹ Current D.C. Public School policy permits each school to develop a dress code or uniform policy for that school. The policy should be jointly developed after consultation with faculty, local parent groups and students. It is required that the policy be designed to support (1) neatness and cleanliness, (2) elimination of distractions and disruptions to the education process, (3) health and safety considerations and (4) respect for the rights of others. Section 2408.4 of the policy, requires that parents and students be informed of the voluntary nature of any uniform policy and that no penalties will be suffered if they elect not to participate in the program.¹⁰

Alternatives

The four (4) alternatives this team has identified for the topic of “Mandatory School Uniforms for D.C. Public Schools” were selected based on research of school uniform policies used in other school districts across the United States. The options discussed below are, by far, the most commonly implemented solutions.

1. Adoption of a mandatory school uniform policy (referred to in the Expert Choice (EC) model as “13-404”).

Consistent with the language in the referenced legislation, this option requires all D.C. public school students (Elementary through High School) to wear a school uniform beginning in the Fall of 2001. Parents may not “opt out”, that is, exempt their children from donning the selected school uniform. This option also provides for financial assistance for students for whom the purchase of the uniforms would impose a financial hardship.

2. Adoption of a Mandatory school uniform policy with a parental “opt out” provision (referred to in the EC model as “Change”).

This option permits parents of D.C. students to exempt their children from the mandatory school uniform policy. It does, however, require exempt students to transfer to a D.C. school where a mandatory school uniform policy is not in effect. It is anticipated that this would necessitate designating specific schools throughout the city as “uniform free”.

3. Adoption of a Mandatory school uniform policy with a parental “opt out” Provision (referred in the EC model as “Remain”).

This option permits parents of D.C. students to exclude their children from the mandatory school uniform policy and allow the students to remain in the same school.

4. Continuation of the current voluntary school uniform policy in D.C. public schools (referred in the EC model as “Sts Quo”).

Almost half of D.C.’s one hundred forty six (146) public schools already give students the option of wearing school uniforms. Currently seventy seven (77) elementary schools, three (3) educational centers, six (6) middle schools and five (5) junior high schools have voluntary school uniform policies in place.¹¹ This option allows individual schools to directly determine their participation in a school uniform program.

Objectives

In considering the above-mentioned alternatives, the project focuses on three (3) areas that would be impacted if any of the proposals were adopted. These stakeholders are: (1) Individual D.C. Public School **Student**, (2) **School** (including the D.C. Board of Education, Superintendent’s Office and D.C. Public School’s Division of Security) and (3) **Parent** of the D.C. Public School Student. These three areas were considered and, as displayed in Chart 1, the **Student** was determined to be the area which could be most impacted by the implementation of any of the alternatives. The student is the stakeholder that will be required to wear the uniform daily and will have to change the most basic daily activity of getting dressed to comply with the public policy. At the same time, the student has the most to gain from any potential benefits of the uniform policy. Both the Parent and School are almost equally effected by the decision, but a distant second and third respectively when compared to **Student** impact levels.. The Parent will have to decide, in several of the alternatives, whether their child(ren) will participate in the policy. If so, the parent will have to implement the policy at home, by purchasing the uniforms, participating and supporting any resultant

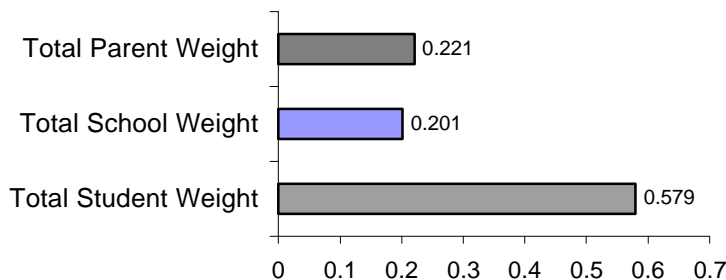


Chart 1 Student, Parent and School Objective Weights

uniform policy. This involves surrendering some parental responsibility for, in effect, a public institution is deciding for the parent what is the proper attire for their child. As a result, the parents could experience some potential financial impact for implementing the policy and may also be inconvenienced by having to change schools if the child does not participate, but will also gain any benefits that the policy has to offer. The school system will be responsible for implementing the policy on a city wide basis. Policy's and procedure swithin the district

will need to be updated and the staff will need to be educated on the policies and penalties for non-compliance. The school may also need to alter busing routes and school districts to accommodate the change depending on the outcome. However, the role of the school is to support the student's best interests, so based upon this imperative, any additional work or inconvenience must also be tempered with the reality of budget constraints within the District.

Sub-Objectives

As a result of extensive data collection, areas assessed by the team under each of the three stakeholders: **Student**, **Parent** and **School** will be discussed in turn. Charts 2, 3 & 4 below, display a graphical representation of each of the priorities for the stakeholders. The weights for each objective are listed and supported in the sections below.

Student

(a) **Concentration.** Attendance and an ability to concentrate in the classroom are absolutely required for active learning. If students are not present in the classroom then it is clear that the learning process can not occur. Because of the importance of attending school, the team felt this area was an extremely important objective. The implementation of a school uniform policy has a very tangible effect upon students' ability to concentrate while in the classroom, namely, a higher attendance rate. School attendance in schools with uniforms significantly improves as evidenced by the results obtained in the Long Beach, California school district. In Long Beach, the percent of actual attendance in elementary schools in 1995-96 reached 94.7 percent, the highest point in the 17 years the district has been compiling these statistics. In middle schools, student attendance increased to 94.6 percent, also an all-time high. When excused absences for illness are added in, student attendance exceeded 99 percent.¹⁴ The statistics support the teams decision that option 13-404 rated highest in this area because all student would be required to wear the uniform and therefore the benefits could be available to a larger portion of the population.

(b) **Environment.** The environment in which a student is placed has a direct impact upon the learning achieved in the classroom. For example, in the NAESP survey mentioned above, elementary school principals of schools where there is a uniform policy in place, clearly confirm (80%) the positive effects that a school uniform policy has upon classroom discipline (Table 2). Teachers interviewed have stated that students' wearing of uniforms promoted a "down to business" approach because students view uniforms a "work clothes" and then take school more seriously.¹³ Since even the best students are distracted by discipline problems in the classroom, a reduction in classroom disturbances benefits the students and school if all students are wearing uniforms. If the students that are not participating in the uniform policy are able to "Remain" in the same school as students that are participating then the environment will still have some students in the more casual attire and distractions may continue to occur.

(c) **Peer Pressure.** As shown in Table 2 below, results of a February 1998 National Association of Elementary School Principals' (NAESP) survey, report the positive results of an implemented school uniform policy. It is evident in these results that reduction of Peer Pressure was an important anticipated result of a school uniform policy as assessed by elementary school principals who do not yet have a school uniform policy in place (column 1). Although a reduction of peer pressure is less appreciated by principals with uniform

policies in place, it still received a very positive score. Instinctively, too, one knows that the way a youngster is dressed impacts his/her acceptance by classmates. A school uniform policy, therefore, can be a great equalizer. A further consideration is that certain colors, designers, etc. can be associated with gang affiliation and violence. This is explored in greater detail under the School Objective. The team felt peer pressure was important, but it was more important for the students to be in school and engaged in the learning process first. If an option made students feel more accepted, that would be great. However, learning remains the top priority of the school.

	Positive effects, as rated by schools without uniforms	Positive effects, as rated by schools with uniforms
Peer Pressure	77%	76%
Image in the Community	65%	86%
Classroom Discipline	64%	80%
School Spirit	60%	82%

Table 1 (Source NAESP Press Release, March 20, 1998¹² 958
 principals from elementary and middle schools across the nation were surveyed

(d) **Creativity/Personal Liberty.** Students express concern that their right to personal expression is being curtailed by requiring them to wear a specific uniform. The team felt that students right to wear religious items could not be impacted; however, the overriding goal of school is to provide an place that learning can occur. The team felt that creativity could be expressed in may other ways such as music, art, creative writing, athletics, etc. so therefore, creativity was not given much consideration overall. In the teams research, we found that school uniforms policies may not, in fact, prohibit a student from wearing or displaying expressive items, for example a button that supports a particular political candidate, may be worn if the item does not independently contribute to disruption by substantially interfering with discipline or with the rights of others. A student could, however, be restricted from wearing a button that displays a gang insignia.¹⁵ Special care too must be taken to ensure that the wearing of personal religious messages not be stymied by the uniform. For example, when wearing yarmulkes or head scarves is part of the student’s daily religious practice then the uniform policy may not (under the Religious Freedom Restoration Act) generally prohibit the wearing of such items.¹⁶

Based on the above research, the team made individual judgements. Then the team met and discussed each sub-objected. Both team members came to consensus on sub-objective weights that reflect the individual judgements. A graphical display of the sub-objective data is shown in below.

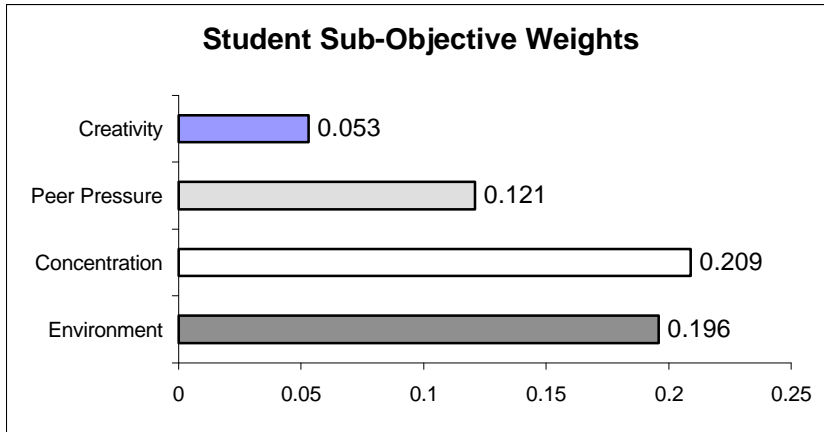


Chart 2 Student Sub-Objective Weights

Parent

Continued data collection by the Project Team aided in the assessment of the following areas under the **Parent** objective and the weights derived are generally explained below.

(a) Cost to Parents. Parents and school officials express concern that the cost to purchase school uniforms can be prohibitive for some families. Bill 13-404 provides that financial assistance be available to families for whom such an expenditure is a burden. This is consistent with the Department of Education’s Manual on School Uniforms which suggests that: (1) The school district provide the uniforms to families unable to afford them; (2) school parents work together to make uniforms available to families that are economically disadvantaged or (3) used uniforms from graduates be made available for incoming students¹⁷. A fourth option is that community or business leaders provide uniforms or contribute financial support for those who cannot afford them. This latter approach is consistent with the D.C. Public Schools philosophy to involve businesses and community groups in “enriching the education of District Students. These groups are encouraged to play a more significant role in preparing youth for the workplace through a variety of partnership activities with individual schools.”¹⁸ Even with all the options available, the team felt that some parents may still be very skeptical about the programs working or being implemented properly base on the DC governments history. Since financial concerns were consistently raised in our research and in the discussions on the DC proposal, the team decided it was an important objective.

However, the alternative which had a mandatory uniform policy were not strongly impacted by it because there are numerous school uniform suppliers who have programs in place to assist schools in the establishment of a uniform program. School Days School Uniforms, located in Leesburg, Florida (<http://www.school-days.com>) offers consultant services which provide expert advice on: the benefits of school uniforms; how to present the program to students and schools; how to develop a scholarship fund for disadvantaged students; fundraising promotions; volume incentives and direct sales percentage that can earn the school thousands of dollars each year.¹⁹

Uniforms can be less expensive than the brand name clothes children otherwise would want to wear to school. Schools Days recommends the purchase of a Starter Set, sufficient

clothes for a student’s three days wear. The anticipated costs for this basic uniform (does not include, socks, shoes, tie, nor dress shirt) is estimated below:

Boys Item	Cost *	Girls Item	Cost*
Long Sleeve Cardigan	\$16	Round neck cardigan	\$16
Double Knee pants	\$16	V Neck Jumper	\$12 or
		Pleated Skirt	\$11
Short Sleeve Polo shirt	\$ 9	Short Sleeve polo shirt	\$ 9
Boys total wardrobe: \$75.00		Girls total wardrobe: \$77.00	
1 sweater, 2 pr pants, 3 polo shirts		1 sweater, 2 jumpers, 3 polo shirts	

Table 2 Estimated cost for a student uniform

* costs posted are from “Uniforms 4 U” (<http://www.discountuniforms.com>) and are posted at the highest unit price advertised that is usually charged for larger sizes. Costs are similar to those of other school uniform providers. It is worth noting that large retailers such as Target, K-Mart and Kids-R-Us also have school uniform departments, which frequently discount these items. No school uniform is preferred over others; schools can select the style, pattern, color etc. Many schools, however, opt for a plain white shirt and a navy or khaki colored trouser or skirt. Costs for this basic uniform are estimated at \$30-\$35 per student. The selection of a particular school uniform should be a collaborative effort between school administrators, students and parents.

The costs above are considered by the evaluators (parents of school age children) to be far less costly that purchasing a complete wardrobe for a student in a non-uniform school.

(b) **Intrusiveness.** Some parents perceive a school uniform policy as an invasion into their area of responsibility and, if given a choice, would “opt out” of a mandatory school uniform policy. Because the parents are ultimately the final authority for their child, this perception had to be considered. In most cases, school districts with mandatory policies allow students, normally with parental consent, to select the “opt out” elective to the school uniform requirements. Some schools have determined, however, that a mandatory policy with no "opt out" provision is necessary to address a disruptive atmosphere. A Phoenix, Arizona school, for example, adopted a mandatory policy requiring students to wear school uniforms, or in the alternative attend another public school. That Phoenix school uniform policy was recently upheld by a state trial court in Arizona.²⁰

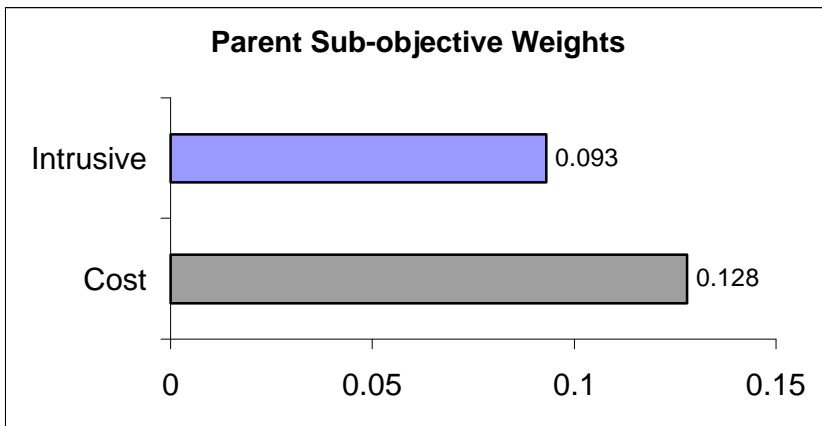


Chart 3 Parent Sub-objective Weights

School

As a result of extensive data collection, areas assessed by the team under the **School** objective and the weights derived are generally explained below.

(a) **Security.** It was noted in a special 1993 report from the National Education Goals Panel, that there was an increase from 19% in 1980 to 25% in 1992 in the percentage of U.S. twelfth graders threatened without a weapon.²¹ The fact that one in every five students is at risk to be victimized is cause for great alarm among school officials, parents and students. For this reason, the team agreed that security is the most important objective of the school. Both parents and students are trust the school to provide a safe place for students to learn. The team rated the option "13-404" highly for providing increase security based the recent violence at Columbine High School in 1999. The tragic shootings in April 1999 at Columbine High School in Colorado which claimed the lives of twelve student and one teacher and wounded 23 others, were committed by two students clad in long dark trench coats and loose fitting trousers....coats long enough to conceal the weapons the shooters brought into the school to commit their heinous crimes. A student was overheard making the following simple statement when asked about school uniforms and their impact upon violent behavior "If shirts are required to be tucked in, it is much harder to conceal a weapon." An added benefit of school uniforms is that intruders (including gang members) into the school can be readily identified and removed by school security. Because the alternative "remain" would make this identification as difficult as "status quo" these options did not rate highly in this area.

The Long Beach California school district has provided documented results showing that school uniforms decrease violence in the schools. Long Beach officials show a dramatic decline in violence in their K-8 schools from 1993-97. These statistics and the positive results of the implementation of a school uniform policy are depicted in Table B below:

LONG BEACH, CALIFORNIA ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOL CRIME SUMMARY (STUDENT UNIFORMS REQUIRED K-8)

SCHOOL CRIME REDUCED	1993-94 Before Uniforms	1994-95 Uniforms Required	1995-96 2nd Year with Uniforms	1996-97 3rd Year with Uniforms	Change
K-8 Enrollment	57,497	58,376	59,822	62,039	
Assault/Battery *	319	214	53	47	
Assault with a Deadly Weapon *	6	3	16	11	
Fighting	1135	554	653	556	-51%
Sex Offenses	57	15	5	4	-93%
Robbery/Extortion	34	12	13	5	-85%
Chemical Substances	71	29	24	20	-72%
Weapons or Look-alikes	145	78	28	24	-83%
Dangerous Devices	46	23	1	2	-96%
Vandalism **	1409	1155	127	93	
Total	3222	2083	920	762	-76%

*The statewide category of assault has been revised because of different interpretations of what constitutes assault. Verbal threats without physical contact were sometimes reported as assaults. There is also a new, expanded definition of assault with a deadly weapon as of 1995-96. Reported now is any item that is actually used in an effort to inflict any bodily harm, i.e. a foot, a fist, a pencil or a comb.

**Under the new California Safe Schools Assessment School Crime Report, only vandalism over \$100 is included. Some prior years' incidents were under \$100, so the actual reduction is less than this.

Table 3 K-8 School Crime Report Summary. (Source: <http://www.lbused.k12.ca.us/crime.htm>)22

Dr. John German, the Principal of the South Shore Middle School, Seattle Washington, reported that since his school began the mandatory school uniform policy in 1995 for his 900 middle school students, “the demeanor in the school has improved 98%, truancies and tardies are down, and we have not had one reported incident of theft.”²³ Using U.S. Department of Education software to track discipline data, the Ruffner Middle School (977 students) in Norfolk, Virginia noted significant improvements in the students’ behavior. Leaving class without permission was down 47%, throwing objects was down 68%, and fighting decreased by 38%.²⁴

(b) **Community Image.** An unanticipated bonus to having school uniforms worn within the school is the positive impact the uniforms have within the community. Neighbors, shopkeepers and strangers can focus on the “**student**” and what he or she is saying rather than on being distracted or influenced by the youth’s attire. More than 85% of principals with school uniforms in place believe that the wearing of school uniforms elevates the school’s image within the community.²⁵ The result of this positive impact can be far reaching and for this reason the team felt options which bolstered the school status within the community were very important.

(c) **Start-up Considerations.** Of those principals surveyed who have already implemented a school uniform policy, 68% reported that they had the policy in effect in less than one year; 25% stated that it took them 1-2 years in order to fully implement the new policy, while only 7% said it took more than 2 years.²⁶ Although start up efforts should be reasonable, the overriding benefits to the student should be the first consideration.

A sub-factor which could impact a policies start-up is the threat of litigation. As far back as 1969, several court cases have addressed school uniforms in public schools. The most recent case is a 1997 case in which an Arizona state judge upheld a lower-court ruling that a Phoenix School is not violating students’ free speech rights in requiring them to wear uniforms to school.²⁷ The filing of a lawsuit by parents or organizations such as the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) could delay the implementation of the program is it essential that the topic be fully explored in an open forum with all interested parties weighing in their support or concern. Parental support is essential in order to make the program succeed.

The only alternative of the four considered by the Project Team which has potential school costs associated with it (other than the cost of the actual uniforms) is Alternative 2 (“**Change**”) which would require parents who “opt out” to transfer their children to a special school within the District where uniforms are not required to be worn. This may entail some costs to bus these students daily to their new school. These costs cannot be estimated until the participation level is ascertained.

The enforcement of the any new uniform policy would first require that the uniform policy be fully discussed, clearly written and communicated with students, parents, teachers, school administrators and security personnel. A consistent application of the policy city-wide is essential to the success of the program. This additional training for staff can be combined with existing In-house training in order to minimize the training costs and maximize the trained population. A collaborative policy developed by staff and parents (with student participation) must address penalties for student infractions.

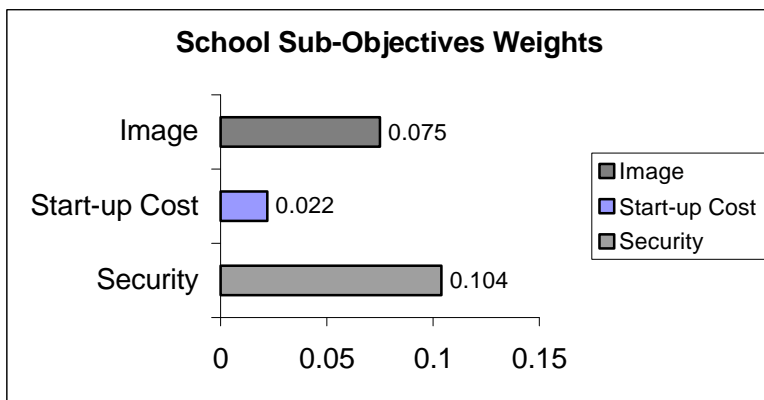


Chart 4 School Sub-Objective Weights

Conclusion

As shown above, the team researched the key objectives that are affected by the issue and derived priorities based on judgments for each of the four (4) potential alternatives. Using the Expert Choice software, the team developed a model to record and calculate the best alternative based on the derived weights of the objectives and sub-objectives. Chart 5 shows a performance sensitivity analysis chart exported from Expert Choice software. According to Expert Choice, performance sensitivity analysis graphs "provide a composite sensitivity presentation showing how well each alternative performs on each criterion and overall, when all the criteria are taken into account."

To interpret the chart, Expert Choice explains that each criterion is shown by a vertical line. The point where an alternative line intersects such a vertical line, as read from the axis on the right (labeled "Alt%"), indicates the priority the alternative received on that criterion. The overall priority of each alternative is where it intersects the rightmost axis. The priority of each criterion is shown by the small blue rectangular box on that criterion's vertical line, as read from the axis at the left (labeled Crit%).

Chart 5 depicts an overall or composite sensitivity analysis for the goal. It is clear that adoption of the proposed "13-404" is the most appropriate selection for all three stakeholders because it is rated the highest for each of the stakeholders (or criterion). The next alternative is about half as appropriate as "13-404" and the final two selections, "same" and "status quo" are a distance third and fourth.

However, alternative "13-404" does not rate highest for all criterion. For example, in the sub-objectives for the students the best alternative for the criterion of creativity was the "status quo". Student are best able to show their individual creativity when they can dress in a way that expresses their individuality. However, the creativity criterion was rated fairly low, so the impact of this "peak" on the overall score was minimal.

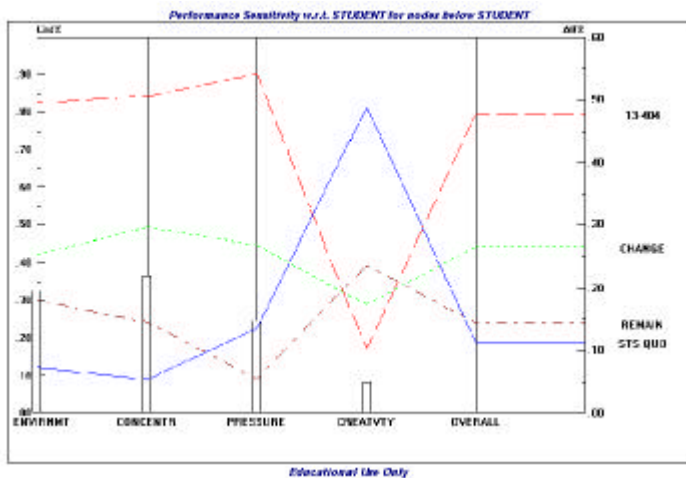
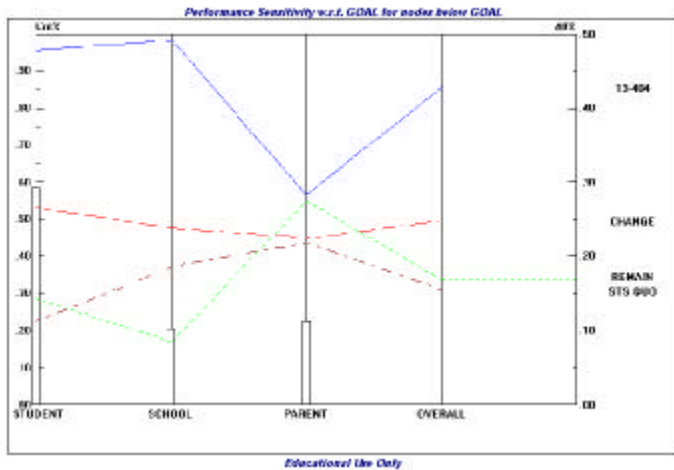


Chart 6 Expert Choice Performance Sensitivity Chart with regard to Student sub-objectives

Another sub-objective criterion that does not favor alternative "13-404" was intrusiveness under Parents. The team agreed under the "13-404" alternative parents were losing some of their parental "rights" to select the clothing that their children wore. Parents had the least amount of intervention from outside organizations under the "status quo". The intrusiveness criterion brought the overall rating down for the "13-404" alternative as viewed from the "Parent" point of view. Although "13-404" was still the highest rated alternative, in for all stakeholders, it was a closer outcome for the "Parent".

The "13-404" alternative consistently rated high from the school's perspective. As the research shows the security of the school and the school image both improve with mandatory uniform policies. If some of the students were in uniforms and others were not, which is the case in "status quo" or "remain" then safety would be less. In fact, we judged that if student that opted out of wearing a uniform were in a uniform school then, the false sense of safety would result. Therefore, the team judge "remain" alternative to be less safe than "status quo".

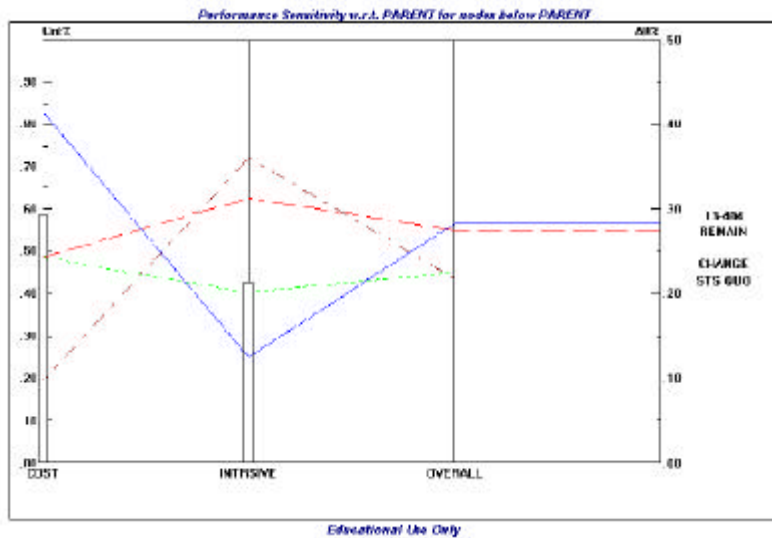


Chart 7 Expert Choice Performance Sensitivity Chart with regard to Parent sub-objectives

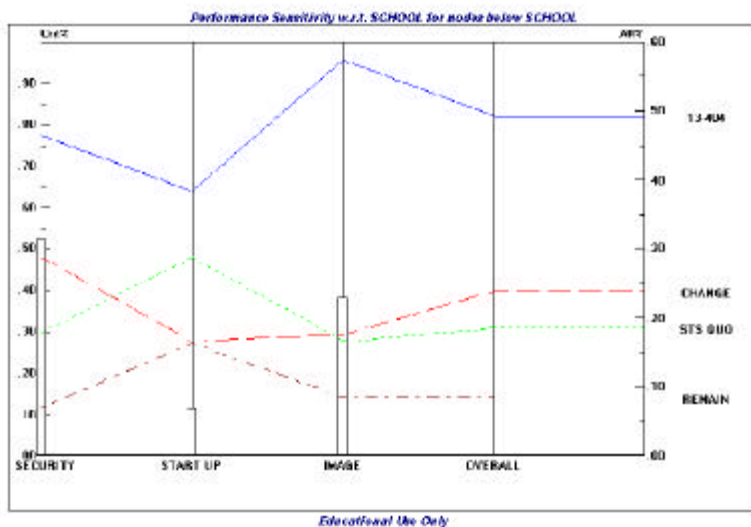


Chart 8 Expert Choice Performance Sensitivity Chart with regard to School sub-objectives

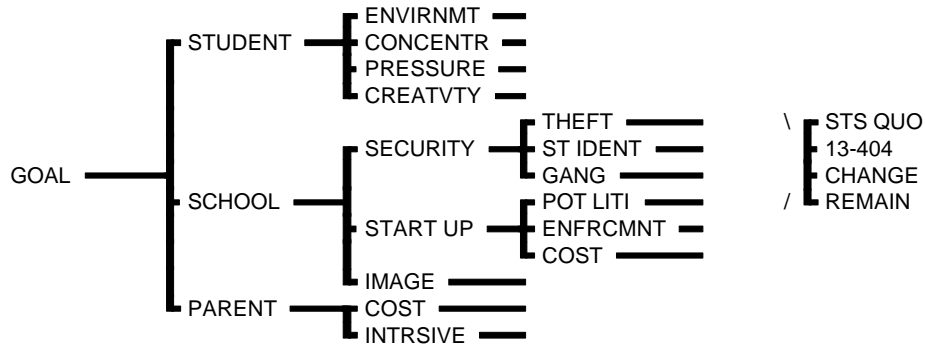
If approved by the D.C. Council, "13-404" will direct all public schools in the District of Columbia to implement a mandatory school uniform policy in all Elementary and High Schools. It is strongly recommended by this project team that the D.C. Council adopt Bill 13-404.

Future Activity

This paper was discussed with and submitted to Mr. Mark Sobo, DC Council Legislative Counsel, responsible for the drafting and staffing of the proposed legislation. Mr. Sobo was appreciative of the submission and advised that the public hearing for the Uniform Proposal would be held in the District of Columbia in the November-December timeframe. Both project preparers will attend the hearing and are prepared to testify on behalf of the proposed policy, if appropriate. A summary of the hearings and the outcome will be provided in an addendum to this paper.

Glossary

Make recommendat on proposed school uniform policy for DC schools



Abbreviation	Definition
GOAL	
13-404	Adoption of mandatory uniform policy as proposed in Bill 13-404
CHANGE	Schools have mand uniforms with parental opt out must chg schools
CONCENTR	Help students concentrate on school work
COST	Cost of policy on school systems
CREATVTY	Stifling Creativity/Individuality
ENFRMNT	Enforcement of the policy
ENVIRNMT	Classroom Environment conducive to learning
GANG	Gang Colors and Insignia
IMAGE	School image within the community
INTRSIVE	Intrusive in areas of personal choice
PARENT	Impacts of the proposed policy on parents
POT LITI	Time/publicity impact of potential litigation
PRESSURE	Reduces peer pressure
REMAIN	Schools have mand uniforms-parental opt out stay in same school
SCHOOL	Impacts of proposed policy on DC School Admin
ST IDENT	Student Identification
START UP	Start up considerations
STS QUO	Continue Voluntary (by school) Uniform Policy in DC Schools
STUDENT	Impacts of policy on individual students

Figure 6 Performance Sensitivity rating as displayed in Expert Choice software.

Educational Use Only

Endnotes

- ¹ Council of the District of Columbia Proposed Bill No. 13-404, “Public Schools Uniform Act 1999”, (Carol Schwartz and Kevin P. Chavous), 21 Sep. 1999.
- ² Carol Schwartz, Introductory Comments to Proposed “School Uniform Act of 1999”, District of Columbia Council, Washington, D.C., 21 Sep. 1999.
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