

HB 0679

2005

1                                   A bill to be entitled  
 2           An act relating to Orange County; providing legislative  
 3           findings; requiring the Orange County School Board to  
 4           adopt a dress code policy that requires students to wear a  
 5           schoolwide uniform; providing for implementation;  
 6           providing an effective date.

8 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

10           Section 1. (1) The Legislature finds and declares the  
 11 following:

12           (a) This act shall apply only to Orange County.

13           (b) The children of Orange County have the right to an  
 14 effective public school education. Both students and staff of  
 15 public elementary, middle, and high school campuses have the  
 16 constitutional right to be safe and secure in their persons at  
 17 school. However, children in many of our public schools are  
 18 forced to focus on the threat of violence and the messages of  
 19 violence contained in many aspects of our society, particularly  
 20 reflected in gang regalia that disrupts the learning  
 21 environment.

22           (c) Gang-related apparel is hazardous to the health and  
 23 safety of the school environment.

24           (d) Instructing teachers and administrators on the  
 25 subtleties of identifying constantly changing gang regalia and  
 26 gang affiliation takes an increasing amount of time away from  
 27 educating our children.

28           (e) Weapons, including firearms and knives, have become  
 29 commonplace upon even our elementary school campuses. Students

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30 often conceal weapons by wearing clothing, such as jumpsuits and  
31 overcoats, and by carrying large bags.

32 (f) The adoption of a schoolwide uniform policy is a  
33 reasonable way to provide some protection for students. A  
34 required uniform may protect students from being associated with  
35 any particular gang. Moreover, by requiring schoolwide uniforms,  
36 teachers and administrators may not need to occupy as much of  
37 their time learning the subtleties of gang regalia.

38 (g) To control the environment in public schools, to  
39 facilitate and maintain an effective learning environment, and  
40 to keep the focus of the classroom on learning and not personal  
41 safety, schools need the authorization to implement uniform  
42 clothing requirements for our public school children.

43 (h) Many educators believe that school dress significantly  
44 influences student behavior. This influence is evident on school  
45 dress-up days and color days. Schools that have adopted school  
46 uniforms experience a feeling of coming together, greater school  
47 pride, and improved student behavior in and out of the  
48 classroom.

49 (2)(a) The Orange County School Board shall adopt a  
50 reasonable dress code policy that requires students in the  
51 public elementary, middle, and high schools in the school  
52 district to wear a schoolwide uniform. The dress code policy  
53 shall be implemented no later than August 1, 2006.

54 (b) The dress code policy shall not preclude students that  
55 participate in a nationally recognized youth organization from  
56 wearing organization uniforms on days that the organization has  
57 a scheduled meeting.

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58        (c) The dress code policy shall provide for a dress-down  
59        day each school year according to policy guidelines.

60        (3) The Orange County School Board shall not be  
61        responsible for the purchase of school uniforms for indigent  
62        students. However, the school board may authorize programs to  
63        promote donations of funds and/or uniforms to assist indigent  
64        student.

65        Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2005.