

Uniforms Are a Lie

I believe that school uniforms should be abolished from all public schools.

First, while some people claim that uniforms make students “equal” regardless of their wealth or poverty, this claim is nonsensical. **The truth is that school uniforms don’t actually conceal this aspect of students’ lives. Anyone who has attended a school with uniforms will tell you about how backpacks, shoes, phones, accessories, and hairstyles are all indicators of one’s socioeconomic status. Indeed, several studies have found that most people can quite accurately guess a stranger’s socioeconomic background after just a few moments of conversation over the phone. School uniforms don’t hide poverty, and the idea they could is both stupid and insulting to young people.** Next, school uniforms in fact primarily serve to reinforce systemic inequality in schools. **While they don’t hide inequality, uniforms are a pretext for avoiding *acknowledging* it. Erasing wealthier students’ advantages makes systemic unfairness officially “invisible” in schools. By creating an environment where certain kinds of inequality are systematically ignored, it becomes easier to maintain the fantasy that schools are “fair” to all students, regardless of the very real advantages or disadvantages that individual students actually face. Schools are not fair, and school uniforms mainly serve just to help to erase that unfairness.** Finally, this attempt to erase inequality in schools unnecessarily hampers students’ education. **Just as exposure to students of different ethnic backgrounds is one of the best ways to help students become empathetic and to reduce racism in society, allowing students to recognize that socioeconomic inequality exists in schools, in their classrooms, and in their own relationships will force them to develop empathy. *Students will be more thoughtful and empathetic if they grow up wondering why one kind and clever classmate never has enough food to eat, or why a child who got help from an expensive tutor is given the same test as a kid who had to study alone, or whether the fact that a classmate might have failed an exam last week because her father died at work the day before, and whether that failing grade is “fair” considering the stress and grief she is feeling.* We need to stop shielding students from these questions, and instead encourage them to explore them together, since they will face similar questions throughout their lives.** For all these reasons, I believe school uniforms need to be abolished immediately.

TYPES OF SUPPORTING MATERIAL

- **Evidence:** “proof”—statistics, studies, trends, opinions of experts
- **Example:** specific case or experience—*story* (“case study”) — Phineas Gage
- **Explanation:** provide background information, connect case studies and evidence