

## **Board Narrative-- Exhibit 5132 Dress Code**

### **Background**

The Santa Barbara Unified School District is committed to maintaining a safe and secure learning environment for all students. While a student's attire is generally at the discretion of the student and their parent/guardian, appropriate the philosophy and policy of the SBUSD is that dress standards are necessary for the healthy, safe and uninterrupted operation of a school. It is essential that district's dress code policy is calibrated so that it will be enforced consistently and fairly on all school campuses.

AR 5132 states that the guidelines listed in Exhibit 5132 (Santa Barbara Unified School District Dress Code) shall apply to all regular school activities as well as extracurricular events. The purpose of Exhibit 5132 is to provide guidelines to staff, students, and parents/guardians regarding student attire.

### **Updates**

Exhibit 5132 was last updated in 2009. A review of this exhibit by community stakeholders, students, and district administrators revealed several problematic guidelines, including gender and cultural bias. The Assistant Principals and Deans met as a team in January 2018 to review the exhibit and give input on needed changes. The overarching theme of that process was the need for the exhibit's language to be broad enough to survive changes in clothing styles, while at the same time being appropriately prescriptive in order to enforce dress code for the purpose of keeping students safe and ensuring a learning environment that is free of distractions. In addition, site administrators communicated the need to have the exhibit be free of the bias previously mentioned. For example, the section on "Gang Attire" has been removed as it was the general belief of the group that these types of restrictions lead to the targeting of students of color. Updates to the exhibit will allow school staff to address concerns about clothing that contains symbols or images that are known to be disruptive to the learning process. Also, changes were made to language that targeted female students (e.g.-- the gendered word "midriff" was changed to "torso.") Finally, the disciplinary guidelines in the exhibit were reviewed and found to be misaligned with the district's philosophy of restorative approaches, which asks teachers to be the first line of communication with students on issues such as these. Teachers and administrators will follow the guidelines of the SBUSD Discipline Ladder and Matrix when addressing dress code violations.