

February 7, 2016

Dear Round Rock ISD Board of Trustees,

My name is Amelia Mercado, and I am a sophomore who attends Round Rock High School. I am looking for a change in the Round Rock Independent School District Dress Code. The achievement of this letter is to not repeat how our dress code should be changed, but why it should be changed. The heat we deal with, convenience of some attire, and the outdated components of the Round Rock ISD dress code all contribute to why we ask for a change to allow certain athletic shorts.

I am sure that you are well aware of the ever changing weather Texas portrays during the seasons. As the seasons change, so do people's wardrobes accordingly. When it is cold, we bundle up with jackets, and warm sweaters. When our weather is quite the opposite, we wear shorts, t-shirts, or anything to keep us cool. The dress code states, "there is a close relationship between high standards of dignity and pride and proper grooming which all contribute to an appropriate learning environment" or in other words, all clothes that do not follow the dress code are seen as disruptive to the learning environment. Athletic shorts above your fingertips are seen as "distracting" according to my teachers. The word distracting is pointed towards people who cannot keep their focus in the learning environment such as teachers, administrators, and students. Are the clothes that don't correspond to the dress code distracting to adults or students? Either way why should we be the people who are penalized. The real distraction lies in the "soaked in sweat" jeans we are wearing when it is 90+ degrees outside. When our legs are itching like crazy and we cannot obtain our focus. When all we can wear to school is jeans, simply because the athletic shorts we own are prohibited at our schools. How has the distraction of others become my or others problem?

The first time I was dress coded, was this year. It was towards the beginning of September where the high temperature averages around 94 degrees. Considering the heat, I was wearing athletic shorts that reached the length of my upper thigh. I walked into school, and I was told to put my arms down. Then, without having even dropped my arms all the way, I was told to change into something more appropriate. My name was taken and I imagine I was checked later on that day to see if I had changed. Considering I was 15, I hadn't began to drive yet, so I was frantically calling my mom all day so she could bring me some jeans. I was distracted all throughout my first period, constantly thinking of the consequences I would face if my mom didn't come sooner. This provides less focus on school work than me comfortably wearing my athletic shorts. The system that is provided to prevent distraction of others has somehow become to a reverse. The distraction lies within the person who apparently provides the disruptiveness. Dress coding specifically for athletic shorts, such as the nike shorts that rise above the required dress code, creates more distraction than if the student were to wear their athletic shorts in the first place. After I was dress coded, my mom took me that weekend to buy new jeans, considering that was really all I could wear. My mom spent quite a bit of money on new clothes for me, and since I could wear nothing else, we had no choice. I wonder, what about the students who can simply only wear athletic shorts that go against the dress code for their convenience? What if they can't afford to have the luxury of buying new clothes that follow the dress code? What do those students do? Wear the same "sweat soaking" jeans every day?

I believe the dress code states, "Shorts, skirts, and skorts must be worn at the hip and cover undergarments." and "Shorts, skirts, and skorts must be at a fingertip length as measured with relaxed shoulders." Measuring modesty by the length of our arms seems to be inaccurate as we all have different arm and leg lengths. This part of our dress code is outdated. I understand there was once a time where showing more than necessary was not considered modest. The year is now 2016, and majority of people are exposed to much more than upper thighs. The internet and media make almost everything accessible,

meaning you can see whatever you would like in a click. Students wearing athletic shorts, that go against the dress code specifically, is still modest compared to what is on the internet nowadays. I believe that athletic shorts, for example the Nike girls running shorts, present modesty, as they only show our legs. Wearing these shorts still present student modesty. They aren't tight fitting, but loose. The wearing of these shorts even take place on college campuses around the nation, and nothing is addressed to them about how they don't present modesty. I assure you have daughters who wear these types of shorts, and see people everyday out and about wearing them. Our intention of wearing these athletic shorts that go against the dress code is for comfort, not to be intentionally disruptive or distracting.

I am not asking that the whole dress code be completely modified. All I, and others, are asking is that you make miniscule changes to allow the wearing of athletic shorts that go against the current dress code. Please keep the factors mentioned above in mind. I hope this has opened up a door to change to the Round Rock High School District's dress code.

Inserted below are images of a petition website. The signatures are of students, and parents who have read this letter and agree with what is stated and what it is asking for.

Sincerely,

Amelia Mercado