A. BACKGROUND ANALYSIS

Parents, staff, and administrators have expressed support for implementing a school uniform policy at Flinn Middle School. A committee was formed during October 2003, to research the feasibility and practicality of implementing a school uniform policy. One hundred percent of the teaching staff favored a school uniform for Flinn Middle School students. School uniform information was shared with families during Open House sessions. Parents were surveyed during fall conferences. The results of that survey include the following:

- 75% of the parents think that students can determine the socio-economic levels of other students by the clothes they wear (7% undecided)
- 75% of the parents think that uniforms would improve student behavior at school
- 79% of the parents think that uniforms can increase self-confidence and self esteem by reducing peer pressure associated with clothing (7% undecided)
- 72%+ of the parents favor a school uniform for middle school students (7% undecided)

Available research supports the positive academic and social benefits of a school uniform policy. South Shore Middle School in Washington reports that the demeanor in the school improved by 98%, truancy and tardies were down, and the reports of theft were reduced to none. Ruffner Middle School in Virginia found that students leaving class without permission decreased by 47%, throwing objects decreased by 68%, and fighting decreased by 38%. The principal of RESA Middle School in Rockford, Illinois reports a 25% reduction in inappropriate student behavior resulting in a discipline referral. Lewis Lemon Academy in Rockford, Illinois, reports a decrease in discipline referrals and an increase in reading and writing achievement. Long Beach Unified School District in California reports: 1) overall school crime decreased by 36%, 2) sex offenses decreased by 74%, 3) fighting decreased by 51%, 4) weapons offenses decreased by 50%, assault and battery offenses decreased by 34%, vandalism decreased by 18%, and school suspensions decreased by 32%.
F. SUPERINTENDENT GOAL

The recommendation supports Superintendent Goals C. Student Achievement and E. Discipline.

G. IMPLEMENTATION AND ASSESSMENT PLAN

1. The Flinn Middle School “Dress for Academic Success” Committee will develop a clear and effective school uniform policy. On-going discussion with the school board, parents, staff, students, and the local business community will continue throughout the planning and implementation processes.

2. School uniform availability has been researched. Colors and styles have been selected: white shirts/blouses, polo or dress, both with button front; dark blue or khaki pants/skirts/knee-length shorts.

3. Information regarding Flinn’s school uniform policy and purchase will be available at the Family Resource Center and shared in Parent Newsletters. Students and parents will see sample uniforms and receive information about purchasing uniforms during registration in August 2005.

4. A plan is being developed to assist eligible families in the purchase of school uniforms. A plan is being developed to make used uniforms from graduates of Flinn and uniforms students have outgrown available to incoming students in future years.

5. Schedule of school uniform implementation: sixth graders entering Flinn the fall of 2005 and all subsequent years, add seventh graders the fall of 2006, add eighth graders the fall of 2007. All Flinn students will wear uniforms during the 2007-2008 school year and all subsequent years.

6. The administrative team will collect data on student behavior and academic achievement at the close of each academic quarter. An analysis of annual academic assessments, including the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT), will be completed each year. Comparisons with the data of previous school years will be completed and analyzed.

7. The school uniform policy will be reviewed by a committee of parents, students, and staff at the end of each school year during the implementation process. The committee will examine the success and impact of the policy and make recommendations for the following year.

ADMINISTRATION’S RECOMMENDATION

The Administration recommends that the Board of Education consider approval of the Flinn Middle School Uniform Policy.