Sample Essay for Accuplacer Essay Test Practice

A Mother's Argument for School Uniforms

I grew up in the 1970s and no one was talking about making public school students wear uniforms. As students, we projected who we were with our clothing choices. After being forced to wear skirts in elementary school, I reveled in the freedom of wearing blue jeans to high school. But now, as the mother of three very lively and opinionated girls, I believe uniforms are a better choice because they reduce social pressure, are more economical, and help emphasize orderliness in school.

Today there is more social pressure concerning clothing than there was in my day. I was happy in my jeans and flannel shirts while other young girls wore dresses or skirts. Nowadays, not only is there pressure to look nice, but also every item of clothing has to be a particular brand name and match the outfit perfectly. Shoes have to be Uggs, Nikes, or Steve Madden. Dresses have to be from Forever 21, jackets from North Face. The girl fashion police can be quite cruel if someone doesn't conform to the current version of what is cool. With everyone wearing a school uniform, my children will not have to face the pressure to dress to impress while they are in school.

In addition, paying for school uniforms won't send me through the kind of sticker shock I felt recently when I went shopping with my eldest daughter. How can a skirt with less than one yard of material cost $75? I used to wear blue jeans because they were inexpensive and lasted forever. I could wear them even when they started to fade, and I used to sew my own creative patches to cover any holes. My jeans lasted my entire high school career. At the mall last week, I was shocked to see my oldest daughter pick out a pair of jeans that was already faded and the store wanted five times as much for that pair as a regular one—one hundred dollars for a pair of pants! With school uniforms, I can buy each of my three daughters enough for one week's wear between washings for the price of that single pair of jeans.

Finally, the argument in favor of school uniforms that really works for me has to do with the way the students look. When I was in high school, times were pretty chaotic. Behavior and clothing seemed to match a disregard for the learning environment. This year, on the first day of school, as my three daughters, all dressed in their uniforms, walked to school, I could sense that they were ready to learn. They weren't wearing clothes to play in or clothes to party in; they were wearing clothes to learn in. We got to the school and the playground was filled with children similarly dressed. The uniforms were clean and neat. The children were smiling. This was a great way to take dress out of the equation and put learning in.

At first, my girls complained about school uniforms, but a couple days into the semester, they forgot about the issue completely, as they should forget about dressing when learning is the priority. I even had a bit of extra money to buy them weekend clothes so they could express themselves in their free time. The perspective of a mother is often different than a child's, and from here, I believe school uniforms have a positive impact on both my pocket book and the learning environment.