Many school board policies and rules reflect the prevailing norms and customs of the community which, of course, change over time. For example, at one time, many school dress codes included a prohibition on students wearing jeans to school. Most school board members who approved those dress codes would have said that they were based on the belief that jeans were “too casual” for school and that students should “look nice” as a sign of respect for their teachers and for education in general. The following article provides a different perspective on how jeans were perceived at some points in history.

How Denim Became a Political Symbol of the 1960s
The blue jeans fabric conquered pop culture and fortified the civil rights movement

In the spring of 1965, demonstrators in Camden, Alabama, took to the streets in a series of marches to demand voting rights. Among the demonstrators were “seven or eight out-of-state ministers,” United Press International reported, adding that they wore the “blue denim ‘uniform’ of the civil rights movement over their clerical collars.”

Though most people today don’t associate blue denim with the struggle for black freedom, it played a significant role in the movement. For one thing, the historian Tanisha C. Ford has observed, “The realities of activism,” which could include hours of canvassing in rural areas, made it impractical to organize in one’s “Sunday best.” But denim was also symbolic. Whether in trouser form, overalls or skirts, it not only recalled the work clothes worn by African Americans during slavery and as sharecroppers, but also suggested solidarity with contemporary blue-collar workers and even equality between the sexes, [to continue reading this article, please go to https://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/denim-political-symbol-1960s-180976241/]

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