**Fredericton High School dress code defended by superintendent**

**Anglophone West School District superintenent David McTimoney will meet with dress code opponents**

[CBC News](http://www.cbc.ca/news/cbc-news-online-news-staff-list-1.1294364)Posted: Nov 19, 2014 10:57 AM ATLast Updated: Nov 19, 2014 11:11 AM AT

The superintendent of the Anglophone West School District is defending the dress code that's in place at Fredericton High School amid accusations that the policy promotes “rape culture.”

The Fredericton Youth Feminists [recently released a video](http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/new-brunswick/fredericton-high-school-dress-code-targeted-by-young-feminists-1.2838222) that takes aim at the high school’s dress code.

The group says the dress code promotes a rape culture by blaming female victims for attracting male aggression.

David McTimoney, the district superintendent, said the dress code is necessary to help establish self-respect and respect toward others in the school.

“To me, it comes down to respect for self, respect for others, when we talk about student attire or for that matter the adults in the building who are working and the clothing that they choose,” he said.

**FHS dress code**

When at school, all members of the education community are expected to dress in a neat, clean, modest and appropriate manner. Examples of inappropriate dress are such items that expose undergarments, clothing that promotes drugs/alcohol, profanity, sex, discrimination or violence. From the time you enter school in the morning until you leave at the end of the day, all hats and inappropriate headwear are to be removed.

The superintendent also said he disagrees with the group’s premise that the dress code promotes a rape culture.

“I have to 100 per cent say that the Anglophone West School District is not an organization that would support or condone a rape culture,” he said.

The school’s dress code states that all members of the school community are “expected to dress in a neat, clean, modest and appropriate manner.”

The group’s video and the reaction have prompted a meeting with the district’s administration next week.

“It's very clear that these ladies would like to be heard and I'm someone who needs to listen to them,” he said.

As for changing the dress code, McTimoney said it's too early to say whether that might happen following the meeting.

"I understand that these students are saying, 'Well, who is it that judges what is respectful and what is not?'" he said.

"That's where I think it's important that we sit and chat about that, and talk about perspectives that perhaps they haven't thought of, as well as perspectives that I may not have thought of and school administration may not have thought of."

Fredericton Youth Feminists released a video that says the Fredericton High School's dress code unfairly targets young women and promotes the idea that sexual assault should be blamed on the woman.

Lisa Dawn Hamilton, a psychology professor at Mount Allison University, studies youth sexuality.

She said dress codes that claim to be gender neutral are effectively biased against females.

And she said enforcement of these policies creates their own set of problems.

“The teachers have to say, ‘You're showing too much leg or I can see your stomach or I can see your bra straps,’” she said.

“And so the teachers themselves are both policing their bodies, but also sexualizing these young women who might have just been wearing shorts that were available to them at the store.”

The Fredericton Youth Feminists are also circulating a petition, which has now collected more than 1,000 signatures, that calls for a district-wide sexual harassment policy.

McTimoney said the district doesn't tolerate harassment and all complaints are taken very seriously.

There has also been discussion about a student walkout on Friday at Fredericton High School in protest against the dress code.

The superintendent said the walkout would be unnecessary.

“It seems to me that this particular group is interested in getting the attention of the school principal and the school district in trying to promote change and what they see as an unacceptable policy,” he said.

“I think with all of the attention that has been received, they have achieved their goal. They have got that attention. To me, it would be very disappointing if students decided to do that. It’s not necessary; it won’t change anything.”

|  |
| --- |
| **Corresponding Question:**  Do you agree with the current dress code implemented by the Anglophone West School District or does it unfairly target females as suggested by the Fredericton Youth Feminists? Explain your answer. (Evaluation) |