

# POTTSTOWN CITIZENS FOR Enlightened LEADERSHIP

## Hill School maintains standards

A friend recently asked me if I could write something positive about The Hill School.

I can.

Unlike peers such as Lawrenceville and Peddie — and elite New England prep schools like Andover, Exeter, and Hotchkiss — The Hill School maintains a dress code: blazers, dress shirts and ties for males; blazers and collared shirts for females.



Commentary by  
Thomas Hylton

This is a tradition well worth maintaining, even as it flies against the spirit of the times.

Prior to the Hippy movement and the “Me” generation, most adults and budding adults tried to make themselves look as attractive and dignified as possible in public.

Men wore suits and sports coats. Women wore dresses or skirts and blouses. You dressed as a sign of respect for yourself, your workplace, your church, and your peers.

Now anything goes. At restaurants, public meetings, offices, the grocery store, people come attired in hoodies; T-shirts or sweatshirts (often emblazoned with some slogan); tank tops, yoga pants; sandals, and flip-flops.

Jeans are de rigueur; cargo shorts are always in season; kaleidoscopic leggings are chic; pajama bottoms are acceptable for mix and match. Ripped denim is a fashion statement, along with fluorescent sneakers.

Slovenliness is in. Decorum is out.

Some years ago, a number of Pottstown school directors (I was not in-

involved) successfully advocated, after much effort, the adoption of a modest uniform policy — solid color tops and bottoms in white, blue or khaki. The rationale was to instill pride in our students and improve behavior.

But each year after the policy was adopted, some parents complained, and it was eventually rescinded.

That’s democracy.

But a private school can offer



**POTTSTOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT’S uniform policy, modest as it was, lasted from 2008 to 2018. Parents complained, so out it went.**

more than what the student or the parent or the public desires. It can advocate what they *ought* to desire.

A private school can pursue ideals, not utility, and be governed by the wise, not the many.

Lowest-common-denominator dress may have become today’s societal norm, but it’s not something worthy of emulation.

Respectful attire fits with the ethos of Paul: whatever is lovely and gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything admirable, fill your thoughts with these things.



**MAINSTAY OF TRADITION** — Unlike most contemporary private schools, The Hill School maintains a dress code — blazers, dress shirts and ties for males; blazers and collared shirts for females.