

# The Great B-P Blue Jeans Debate

When the Bristol-Plymouth Regional School Committee ruled students could wear jeans to school, parents flocked to local malls and bought Levis, Lees, Calvin Kleins, and Forenzas.

They were told students could wear designer jeans, including Lee and Levi-brand blue jeans, but the final say about what was appropriate was left to Assistant Superintendent-Director John C. Correia.

At last week's school committee meeting, however, a parent complained the new, unfaded Lee jeans his daughter had worn to school since the beginning of the year, costing approximately \$25, were ruled inappropriate by Assistant Superintendent-Director Correia.

"I read what's in the handbook. It said the administrator has the final say about what are jeans and what are not," Correia told the committee. He couldn't give the parents any description of what jeans would be appropriate.

Neither could school committee members.

In my favorite quote of the year, Bridgewater Representative Robert S. Stone said, "You don't change a jean into a designer jean by changing the label. The only difference between a work jean and a designer jean is the label."

In essence, students and parents who have paid for jeans couldn't win. The school committee had ruled designer jeans appropriate, and then said there was no such thing as a designer jean.

Stone continued to protest the look of faded jeans, saying the only difference between appropriately dark blue jeans and faded jeans is the number of times they have been washed.

"Where do you draw the line?" he asked.

But where do you draw the line with other materials? Denim is cotton, and cottons fade. Do we outlaw faded cotton blouses, pants, and skirts? Are subtle, muted colors not allowable because the shade is faded, and not of a brilliant hue?

What if a jean is uniformly faded to a pale, blueish-white color? Aren't other materials washed, faded, and bleached to alter their original look? Maybe we should only allow clothes sewn together, never washed, and holding their original hues to be worn to school. I'll bet then Bristol-Plymouth halls would smell sweet.

Parents and school committees should not be concerned by what type of material students' pants are made from, but about how to teach students to dress with self-respect.

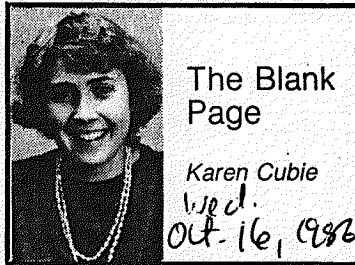
A neat, clean, well-fitting pair of blue jeans can be just as attractive as a neat, clean, well-fitting pair of pants cut from another material.

Parents and school committee members seem worried students will wear ripped, unwashed, and too tight pants to school. But I've seen plenty of wool, polyester, and cotton pants that are ripped, unwashed, and too tight.

Jeans were allowed where I went to high school, and most students I knew wore them. Some were sloppy, some were neat, some were fashionable, and some were not.

The same students who wore sloppy jeans, however, often wore everything else sloppily, and the same students who wore neat jeans often were neat in all their other outfits.

Some students never wore jeans but still looked ragged, poorly put together, and unkempt. A girl wearing a short, plaid skirt, a too-tight sweater, knee socks, and open-toed sandals is not as attrac-



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Committee members are filled with outlandish phobias against colors and material texture.

When Taunton representative Peter J. Wasylow first proposed his anti-jean motion the other night, it sounded like he was banning all slacks cut from navy-blue cloth.

"I'd like to make a motion a new policy be determined where the blue dungaree color not be allowed in school," he said. Later, however, he changed the motion to read "nothing of that color and material be allowed in school."

When asked if students could wear red denim or purple denim, he replied, "I'm 42 years old, and I have never seen a red dungaree."

Well, Bristol-Plymouth Regional Technical High School students now's your chance to show him something.

tively dressed as a girl wearing neat, well-fitting faded jeans, a sweater, and tennis shoes.

It also seemed unfair to me when the school's dress code allowed only designer jeans — always the most expensive around. In effect, that rule limited the number of students allowed to wear jeans to school.

The Bristol-Plymouth School Committee isn't even sure what a jean is or what it looks like.

"CONGRESS DOESN'T APPRECIATE WHAT A GOOD INFLUENCE I'VE HAD ON YOU"

