

To the Editor of the Times,

I wish to comment on The Times article of September 19th by Gregory Sullivan: “About decency, not dress.”

Do sagging pants and exposing private parts in public lead to destructive behavior? Obviously, there is wide difference of opinion on what constitutes indecent exposure, and whether sagging jeans are only making a statement or will lead to destructive behavior.

Parents today need support in asserting authority. What if they were aided by those who stand in “loco parentis” – our public schools. We need to turn to our schools: school boards, principals and teachers who, together, make the rules regarding acceptable behavior in our classrooms. These rules should maximize an atmosphere conducive to learning.

I recall a research study conducted on student violence. It compared schools with clear statements for parents and students on acceptable behavior and the consequences for violations, with a group of schools without stated rules. The schools with clear statements had greater reductions in student violence.

It is my belief that we, the public, need to work with our school authorities to achieve more action – “loco parentis” in pursuit of social decency.

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