

The Skinny on Jeans

By Reg P. Wydeven
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The greatest trend in fashion history happened to hit the scene when I was in high school, where dressing cool was a matter of life and death. Jean jackets were great. Tightly rolled pant leg cuffs were boss. Stone-washed denim was all the rage. But nothing could top Zubaz.

Zubaz pants were a cotton/polyester blend. They were lightweight, loose fitting and unbelievably comfortable. And if that wasn't enough, they came in crazy colors and patterns, with the zebra print being far and away the most popular.

All of my buddies had Zubaz. Many of them were Badger red-and-white or Packer green-and-gold. We wore the pants because we bought into the company's slogan of "Dare to be Different," which was ironic seeing as everyone had a pair.

I had a pair of Detroit Lions Zubaz that featured a crazy pattern containing subtle lion heads. I loved these pants because they were so comfy. Plus, when your nickname is 'Crisco' (because you're fat in the can), the elastic waistband and roomy fit were a dream come true.

That's why I'm eternally grateful I'm not in high school now. Today's fashion trend is skinny jeans. My niece wears them and looks absolutely adorable. It's no coincidence that she's also skinny. If I had a pair when I was in high school, I could probably only get in them if my buddies stood in the driveway holding them open for me while I leapt off the roof of our garage.

So if I was a high school student in New Hanover County, North Carolina, I would be a huge fan of the school system's proposed ban on skinny jeans.

Last month, the district, near Wilmington, introduced a policy that would prohibit all students from wearing leggings, skinny jeans and "any other excessively tight fitting pants" unless worn with a top or dress that "must cover the posterior in its entirety." I would totally rock a cape.

School Board Vice Chairwoman Jeannette Nichols introduced the proposal after some "bigger girls" were being bullied because of their tight jeans. According to Nichols, a teacher suggested that one of the girls wear "a longer top, and the student replied, 'You can't tell me what to do because it's not in the dress code.'"

The policy quickly garnered national attention with widespread opposition. While we would have complained about the policy to one another in the arcade at the mall, today's high school students quickly took to social media to voice their disapproval. Some accused the school board of body shaming and violating their First Amendment rights, while others suggested the school should focus its efforts on the bullies and not on the pants.

The initial plan was for administrators to collect feedback on the policy to present to the school board. However, after the passionate outcry of opposition to the ban, Nichols indicated that she would likely recommend the proposal be brought back to the policy committee for more discussion.

Chris Furner, a parent of a first-grade student in the district, summed it up nicely when she told the Wilmington StarNews that administrators should teach students how to interact with one another.

Under no circumstances is bullying ever okay. However, when I look at dorky old pictures of me in my Zubaz, even I'm tempted to give myself a wedgie.

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