

Lena Lin

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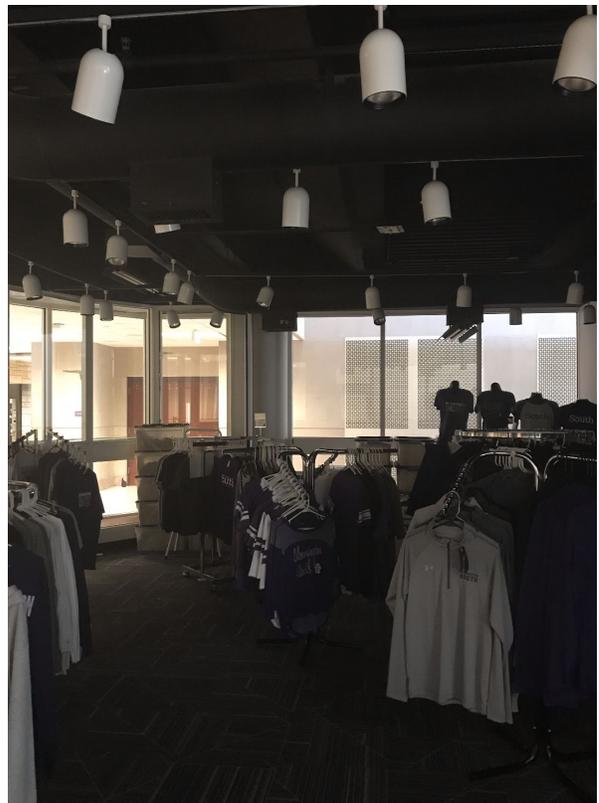
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Bloomington High School South

Day 21 Greenest

I went to the bookstore in my high school. I could not spot any fair trade items, and I know that my school doesn't offer fair trade items at all on campus. Five items in the bookstore and in the school in general that are not fair trade but could be are: cotton t-shirts, cotton sweatpants, bananas, chocolate, and granola bars.

I chose t-shirts as my item to try to make fair trade, as I think that would make the biggest difference out of all the above items because our school orders many t-shirts, whether that be for sports, for sale in the bookstore, or even for individual clubs. I focused mostly on our bookstore to begin with: (pictures taken after school because I forgot to when it was still open)



Here is how I went about trying to get my school to switch to fair trade:

First, I contacted my school's assistant principal, Mr. True, who typically deals with these kind of campaigns. This was after I already scheduled a meeting with him about food insecurity, so I asked if I could also talk to him about fair trade clothing since I was going to be meeting with him anyway.



LENA LIN <linlen0@mccsc.net>

Tue, Oct 22, 1:05 PM (1 day ago) ☆ ↩ ⋮

to Jay ▾

Okay, thank you! Can I come after school today? Additionally, would you also know who I would have to contact to ask about fair trade clothing in our stores?

Thank you!



True, Jay C

Tue, Oct 22, 1:37 PM (1 day ago) ☆ ↩ ⋮

to me ▾

I will be here.

When we had our meeting, I asked about who to contact, as he did not deal directly with the apparel sold at our school. He told me to talk to Ms. Whitehead, the lady in charge of the ordering apparel who is also in charge of the bookstore. He gave me a few vendors (BSN Sports, and Underground Printing) we buy from, and in the same day, I went to talk to Ms. Whitehead about the remaining vendors we buy from (T.I.S.) and if I could schedule a meeting with her to talk more in depth about the topic.

These are the notes I took while talking to Mr. True: (Dance Marathon is a club that frequently buys mass amounts of shirts that must be cheap because they are given to club members for free; 4-5 vendors is the amount of vendors Mr. True said we buy from (the actual number is 3, as confirmed by Ms. Whitehead); Mr. Doyle is another administrator who works with buying sports apparel; Mr. True suggested looking into hoodies because we also sell large numbers of hoodies along with t-shirts)

BSN SPORTS - sports

local - underground printing

dance marathon

4-5 vendors

mr doyle

hoodies

Ms. Whitehead

TIS

After Ms. Whitehead and I scheduled a meeting, I went home and did more research on what specific vendors could be potential alternatives for the ones we already buy from. The next two pages are the doc I created to present to Ms. Whitehead. The first page is just my Day 21 Greener submission, as I thought it would be a good way to introduce what fair trade is, and the second page is a chart I made to compare our current vendors to fair trade ones.



Chart Based On: <http://ohiofairtrade.com/shop-fair-trade/fair-trade-apparel/>

Current Vendors	Price*	Shipping Time	Fair Trade Alternatives	Price	Shipping Time
Underground Printing	100 - \$9.18 200 - \$7.93 300 - \$7.52 500 - \$6.92	~2 weeks	Hae Now https://www.haenow.com/content/our-services/organic-cotton-fair-trade-blank-ts-hirts	\$4.50+	~7-10 days
BNS Sports			All American Clothing** https://www.allamericanclothing.com/F/AQS.html	\$4-6	~1-2 days
TIS			Lifewear** http://www.lifewear.net/ts-hirts	\$4-6 wholesale pricing	~1-2 days

*Based on quantity of shirts with a simple school logo/mascot design on the front

**Not Fair Trade, but Union Made in the U.S.

Other Fair Trade Alternatives

Royal Apparel: <https://www.royalapparel.net/fair-trade-wholesale-clothing>

During the research phase, I created accounts on each vendor's website and got a rough estimate of how much everything would cost. I could not get information on BNS Sports or T.I.S., although Ms. Whitehead did say that the average price they paid for shirts overall were about \$8, so I tried looking for fair trade alternatives that were around the same price. Mr. True had also previously told me that the main issues with switching vendors was that the school needed to make sure orders could be processed and shipped within a timely manner, so I also looked for vendors that had a relatively fast turnaround times (total time it takes to fulfill the order from the point of submission to the point of completion). This was difficult, as many of the vendors required a specific quantity/design/etc. to determine the price and turnaround time, so I mostly had to rely on other sources that told me how quickly each vendor completes mass orders. I was not too worried about the prices of each because many of the vendors offered wholesale pricing. Another obstacle I can across, however, was that many of the vendors suggested by my main source (linked at the top of previous page) did not fulfill the needs of my school in one way or another (too expensive, too slow, no custom printing option, etc.), so I had to settle for some Union Made in U.S. vendors as well as fair trade vendors. However, I figured that union made is still better than nothing, so I wasn't too worried about it, especially because the fair trade vendors also seemed particularly viable.

After my research, I presented my findings to Ms. Whitehead. She responded quite well to my short presentation about what fair trade meant, and she thought it sounded like a great movement and was glad I brought it up to her. I told her that besides the fact that fair trade is important in general, it is particularly important that schools offer fair trade products because schools are so

influential. Not only are we a massive distributor of school apparel to almost 2,000 students, but as one of the two main/biggest high schools in my town, we also set an example for other schools. She agreed with me, and we moved on to talking about the potential alternatives. I presented my chart to her and showed her each individual site and the approximate price differences. I said that the pricing and turnaround time would most likely be the same as our current vendors, but the quality of the shirts would be higher, it would support a great movement, and it would help increase the health of the environment and entire communities. I also said that the only disadvantage could be that the turnaround time might be slower, but because we do not restock old designs at given times (we just add more clothes every once in awhile to keep a variety in the bookstore at all times, which Ms. Whitehead told me) I doubt it would be a serious issue considering all of the other advantages of offering fair trade products. Ms. Whitehead told me that she certainly liked the idea of switching to fair trade products, and it is definitely possible with enough research. I said that because so many vendors require very specific information about the school, quantity of shirts, designs, etc., I would need to gather that information from the school before being able to check the prices and specific turnaround times (I offered to do this because I think that the administrators of the school are too busy to sacrifice their leisure time for switching vendors when the school already has several reliable vendors, so it would never happen if a student did not do it). Ms. Whitehead agreed that she would be willing to give me all of the information and even said that I could create the designs if I wanted to (because typically the vendors come to my school and talk to her about designs, but they create the designs rather than the school).

Reflection:

I thought the meeting went pretty well, and I definitely will continue this in the future! I will not be able to complete this campaign for free-trade cotton t-shirts within the next few weeks because of my schedule, but because I got approval from the school about potentially switching to fair-trade shirts, I have created a to-do list for the next few months so that I may fully carry out this campaign eventually (most likely after PGC ends):

Target Date	Action
Early November	Start a fair trade campaign at South: https://fairtradecampaigns.org/about/
Early November	Revisit the bookstore and take pictures/notes on designs, and then create a potential design that can be used for testing in the following step
Mid November	Revisit vendor sites (both current and fair trade) and create a list of the information needed to determine prices/turnaround times
Mid November	Present list to Ms. Whitehead and gather all of the information needed, then plug the information into the vendor sites to determine accurate prices/turnaround times
Mid November	Determine the best two fair trade alternative vendors and present them to the school
Late November	If needed, order shirts (If not needed, confirm with the school that the next order <u>will</u> be from the chosen fair trade vendor)