

[Date]

Dear

We urge you to consider a ban on corporal punishment in your school district.

Here are some questions most frequently asked about school corporal punishment:

Q. Where are children educated without the use of corporal punishment?

A. Almost everywhere! Corporal punishment in 2008 was prohibited in 29 states and in thousands of districts across the U.S. in states where it is still legal. Only a handful of the 100 largest US school districts permit its use (See stophitting.org – discipline in schools). It has been abolished in over 100 countries worldwide including Canada, all of Europe, South and Central America, China, Japan and even a handful of countries in Africa.

Q. What organizations oppose corporal punishment?

A. To name just a few: The National Association of Elementary School Principals, the National PTA, the National Education Association, the American Medical and Bar Associations, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the United Methodist Church and the American Association of State Boards of Education. Prominent African American leaders and organizations have signed a proclamation calling for an immediate end to corporal punishment. Find more at: <http://www.stophitting.com/disatschool/usorgs.php>

Q. What national organizations favor school corporal punishment?

A. None. There are a few websites that advocate its use in school, occasional individuals and some fundamentalist religious organizations and schools, but no other national education, mental health, legal or medical organizations.

Q. What does the research show?

A. Schools that ban paddling usually have higher graduation rates, lower incidence of school vandalism, students achieve higher scores on national achievement tests, and surveys of school administrators taken a year or two after a ban show that a large majority report discipline has improved or stayed the same. Only a very small minority feel it worsened.

Q. What is happening in the legal climate?

A. A case from Penasco, NM [Garcia v. Miera] made it to the U.S. Supreme Court. The Supreme Court declined to hear it, but this action upheld a ruling from the Court of Appeals favoring the child and family, and the school board quickly reached a large out of court settlement. The internet has given parents, and attorneys, more incentive to sue as they find other successful lawsuits around the country. Many suits are not won, many settle out of court, only a few make it through the level of a court decision. All are expensive, cost staff time, and lead to community polarization.

Q. What are reasons some people support corporal punishment?

A. In twenty years of studying school corporal punishment, we have found that the main arguments for keeping it are (1) *I was hit when I was a kid and I turned out OK*, (2) *If we stop paddling kids, there will be chaos in schools*, (3) *Kids are violent so we have to hit them*, and (4) *We need to leave this to 'local decision'*. None of those arguments have a scientific basis. There are no empirical studies supporting the use of school corporal punishment.

Banning corporal punishment is a “local decision”. The board needs to do the right thing and ban corporal punishment.

Please see <http://www.stophitting.org> for laws, alternatives, and status of child corporal punishment in our country and others. Please call or email the Center for Effective Discipline if you have questions. Tel. (614)221-8829. Email: info@stophitting.org

Sincerely,