

## Corporal Punishment Will Return To Marion County, Florida Elementary Schools

Monday, May 13, 2013 | StateImpact Florida John O'Connor, Sara Gonzales, and Sammy Mack

The Marion school board has voted to reinstate paddling in county elementary schools after a three-year hiatus. The punishment comes with a few restrictions. From the *Ocala Star-Banner*: The board ruled that paddling can be used only if a parent gives a standing written OK once a year. In addition, the principal must obtain verbal permission at the time the punishment is handed down. Under the policy, corporal punishment can only be used at the elementary school level. It can only be used on a child once a semester. Principals are not bound to use the punishment.



Spanking in school may seem like a relic of the past. But in Florida, students from preschoolers to high school seniors are still being paddled by teachers and principals. In parts of the state, mostly in the rural north, getting spanked at school, on your butt, with a wooden or fiberglass board, is just part of being a misbehaving student. "I been getting them since about first grade," said Lucas Mixon, now a junior at Holmes County High School in Bonifay, Fla. "It's just regular. They tell you to put your hands up on the desk and how many swats you're going to get." And that's just fine for parents like Bud Glover of Bonifay, a small town 15 miles from the Alabama border. It's a place where tradition is valued and paddling is considered tradition. "I got my butt beat and I know what's right and wrong. And my children are going to know what's right and wrong," Glover said. Glover represents the feelings of many parents in this part of Florida who support such punishment.

### BACKGROUND

Florida is one of 19 states that still allow public schools to paddle, according to the Center for Effective Discipline. The most recent data show that 3,661 students were spanked in 2010, according to the Florida Department of Education. Most school districts in Florida have opted out of using corporal punishment. But almost all counties in rural north Florida have policies to allow schools to paddle students. State Rep. Ari Porth, a Democrat, sponsored a bill to ban school corporal punishment statewide. He said where students live should not determine whether they get spanked at school.

In 2009, former Florida Gov. Charlie Crist signed legislation requiring school districts that still use corporal punishment to review the policy at a School Board meeting every three years. Schools that want the right to paddle students must hear public testimony, and districts that do not meet the requirements are banned from paddling students as a form of discipline. Florida statutes on school corporal punishment do not require schools to get parental consent before they paddle students, though many Florida school districts do send home a waiver asking parents for permission. There are no regulations on what instrument can be used when administering school corporal punishment, but it is often a wooden or fiberglass board made by community members or by students in wood shop class.

The following procedures are required by state law if a teacher or principal is administering corporal punishment. The use of corporal punishment shall be approved in principle by the principal before it is used, but approval is not necessary for each specific instance in which it is used. The principal shall prepare guidelines for administering such punishment which identify the types of punishable offenses, the conditions under which the punishment shall be administered, and the specific personnel on the school staff authorized to administer the punishment. A teacher or principal may administer corporal punishment only in the presence of another adult who is informed beforehand, and in the student's presence, of the reason for the punishment. A teacher or principal who has administered punishment shall, upon request, provide the student's parent with a written explanation of the reason for the punishment and the name of the other adult who was present.

Schools are the only public institution where hitting is allowed. It's not allowed in prisons, hospitals, mental institutions or the military. The most recent statistics show that 223,190 students in the U.S. received corporal punishment in 2006, according to the Center for Effective Discipline. But school corporal punishment in general has been on the decline. New Jersey was the first state to ban school corporal punishment, in 1867. The next state, Massachusetts, didn't follow until more than 100 years later, when child protection laws started popping up and paddling students starting falling out of fashion. New Mexico is the most recent state to ban paddling. The ban passed just last year. Deborah Sendek, a clinical child psychologist with the Center for Effective Discipline, says many studies on school corporal punishment show paddling does not deter students from misbehaving.

Legal definition of corporal punishment is the "Moderate use of physical force or physical contact by a teacher or principal as may be necessary to maintain discipline or to enforce school rule." The term corporal punishment "does not include the use of such reasonable force by a teacher or principal as may be necessary for self protection or to protect other students from disruptive students."

**Next Generation Sunshine State Standards** adapted from [floridastandards.org](http://floridastandards.org). Standards specifically addressed in this edition are strategically aligned with state standards and annotated adjacent to the respective inquiry.

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1. In appropriate paragraph form, compare and contrast the pros and cons synonymous with employing corporal punishment in public schools more specifically at the elementary level? Thoroughly explain your reasoning and provide specific artifacts and evidence not limited solely to passage above to support your response. Create and illustrate a Venn Diagram to effectively explore relationships and patterns and to make arguments about relationships between sets. **(LA.910.3.2.2; LA.910.1.6.2; MA.912.D.7.2; MA.912.A.10.1)**
2. In compliance with longstanding Florida state law articulated above, a public school administrator has decided to employ corporal punishment upon a 10-year-old child who has blatantly elected not to adhere to policies and procedures as articulated in the student handbook. The school official passionately swings the paddle upward with a starting velocity of 2 feet per second from an initial height of 4 feet. Without taking into consideration wind resistance or related applicable factors, assuming the paddle travels uninterrupted, how long will it remain in the air? Explain your reasoning via employing the vertical motion formula  $h = -16t^2 + vt + c$ . **(MA.912.A.10.1; MA.912.A.7.2; MA.912.A.7.8)**
3. In the best interest of ensuring a safe and secure educational environment conducive to student learning, school officials are targeting the specific location in which an intense food fight occurred in the cafeteria. Local law enforcement wants to arrest multiple students for inciting a riot; however, administrators have determined this situation will be rectified internally in absence of legal intervention. Naturally, they contract the intellectual services of the mathematics department who meticulously analyzed film, disaggregated data, and reconstructed the cafeteria into a coordinate plane. The following readings were rendered: circle A center (-2, 2.5) and 7 feet away; circle B center (4, 6) 4 feet away; circle C (3, -2.5) 5 feet away. Write the standard equation of each circle. Graph the circles and identify the intersection of all three circles. **(MA.912.G.1.2; MA.912.G.6.6; MA.912.G.6.7)**
4. Identify and thoroughly support your reasoning regarding which of the following that best describes the author's attitude toward the subject matter discussed: flippant disregard, mild frustration, passive resignation or an informed citizen. Explain the primary purpose of this passage and identify any indicators, which suggest the author may possess a bias for or against corporal punishment. What is the central idea and what conclusion might one draw from this passage? Provide an inference that students, parents, teachers, administrators, and members may derive. Explain your reasoning. **(RI.9-10.1 - 10.6)**
5. Using contextual clues only, determine the most complete and accurate definitions of following italicized terms: *statutes*, *testimony*, *relic*, *hiatus*, and *reinstate* as obtained from the passage above. Additionally, use each word in a complete sentence to demonstrate further comprehension. **(LA.910.1.6.3; LA.910.1.6.1)**
6. **SARASOTA MILITARY ACADEMY WORD-OF-THE-WEEK** Create a concluding paragraph aligned with the passage above using the following italicized word: *Nomenclature* (noh-muh n-kley-cher) n. The name or terms defining a set or system. **(LA.910.1.6.1; LA.910.1.6.5)**