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The Ever-Present History of Violence in U.S. Schools

How State-Sanctioned Cruelty Persists through School Corporal Punishment Policies

By Morgan Craven, J.D., & Kaci Wright

On April 30, we observed International Day to End Corporal Punishment, a global effort to recognize the harms of violence against children and the work we must do to stop it. Though corporal punishment of children has been banned in 68 countries, hitting, paddling, spanking, slapping and other forms of physical punishment remain legal in K-12 schools in 20 U.S. states.

In 2017-18, nearly 70,000 students – some as young as preschool age – were paddled, spanked or hit in their schools (OCR, 2020).

The U.S. Department of Education reported that more than 19,400 students were hit in 2020-21 and 24,500 students in 2021-22. But instances were likely under reported due to COVID-19 school closures. State and national data for 2021-22 are not available through CRDC.

Hitting even one student is harmful. When corporal punishment is used in schools, students are exposed to the well-documented harms of violence, including physical wounds, negative social impacts, and threats to attendance and academic success.

Sadly, this violence against young people is not new. Corporal punishment has a nasty history that is rooted in attempts to control and instill fear in communities of color. The throughlines are clear, and the effects are still felt today.

Violence Against Black Students

Of the 70,000 students in 2017-18 who received corporal punishment, 37% were Black, though Black students only represent 15% of the student population and are not more likely to break school rules (OCR, 2020).

The majority of states that explicitly allow corporal punishment in schools are located in the U.S. South and Southwest, and the majority of students who received corporal punishment in 2017-18 were in Alabama, Arkansas, Mississippi and Texas (OCR, 2020).

From 1882 to 1968, more than 4,000 lynchings occurred in the United States, targeting Black Americans, mainly in those same southern states (EJI, 2017). These public displays of violence, which continued the tradition of physical violence against enslaved and other Black people in the United States, were extra-judicial and designed to terrorize and cause fear, specifically among Black communities.

Researchers have found connections between the prevalence of lynching in communities and other violent acts that occur today, including corporal punishment. The counties in the South that had the highest rates of lynching are significantly more likely to use corporal punishment against students today, particularly against Black students (Ward et al., 2021).

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Fear and control are not conducive to a safe and supportive school environment where all children can learn. In fact, they destabilize school communities and harm students.

(The Ever-Present History of Violence in U.S. Schools, continued from Page 1)

Mississippi had the highest number of lynchings from 1882-1968. Today, it also has the highest rates and the most extreme racial disparities in school corporal punishment (Ward et al., 2021; Gershoff & Font, 2016).

Nearly 30% of all instances of corporal punishment in U.S. schools in 2017-18 occurred in the state of Mississippi. Black children accounted for 63% of students corporally punished, even though they made up 49% of the student population. Black girls received 73% of the punishments given to girls in the state. (OCR, 2020)

Violence Against Spanish-speaking Students

In 1918, Texas passed laws that forbade the teaching of Spanish in schools. At the time, legislators claimed that speaking Spanish impeded the ability of English learners to learn English and “American” culture (Rodríguez, 2020).

In effect, these “no Spanish” rules banned the use of students’ home language in classrooms and institutionalized decades of abusive and punitive practices, including corporal punishment. According to Mexican American Education Study (MAES) reports, commissioned and published in the 1970s by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, Latino students who were caught speaking Spanish were exposed to physical abuse and other punishments, like fines and various forms of humiliation (1972).

The reports revealed: “In many instances, those Chicano pupils who use Spanish, the language of their homes, are punished. The Mexican American child often leaves school confused as to whether he should speak Spanish or whether he should accept his teacher’s admonishment to forget his heritage and identity” (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1972).

The use of physical punishment is a cruel, ineffective practice that persists in schools, even as it has been banned in other contexts.

If an adult hits another adult... they could be charged with assault under state penal codes.	If a child hits another child... they are taught that such violence is wrong and may even be suspended or arrested in school under state law and the school district's own code of conduct.	If a federal prison guard paddles an incarcerated person... that guard's behavior could be punished for violating rules against the use of corporal punishment established by the U.S. Department of Justice.
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It's time to end corporal punishment in schools!
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While no school administrators surveyed by the commission admitted using corporal punishment, students shared their experiences in hearings: “Two San Antonio high school students told of being suspended, hit and slapped in the face for speaking Spanish. Another young Mexican American, a junior high school dropout, revealed that one of the reasons he left school in the seventh grade was because he had been repeatedly beaten for speaking Spanish” (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1972).

The humiliation, physical abuse and trauma that generations of Spanish-speaking students experienced are remembered today. Many students who endured shame and abuse in their schools for speaking Spanish later refused to teach their own children Spanish for fear that they too would be targeted in school, creating a cycle of internalized cultural suppression and a loss of early language acquisition (Luna, 2013; Hinojosa et al., 2021).

Currently, it is no longer legal to punish students for speaking Spanish in school. But former students still feel the trauma of physical punishments, and it continues to be forced upon Latino children in schools today.

Latino students in Arizona made up 45% of public students but accounted for 93% of those receiving corporal punishment in 2017-18. Of all Latino students receiving corporal punishment in U.S. schools, 70% were in Texas, where state law still allows children to be slapped, hit, paddled or spanked for discipline purposes (see Spielberger & Fernandez, 2023; TEC, Sec. 37.0011).

Violence Against Native American Students

Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, thousands of Native American children were forced to attend federal boarding schools in order to assimilate them into Western culture and strip away their cultural identities (NNABSC, n.d.). By 1925, more than 60,000 children were at these schools where they were forced to use English names, cut their hair and work laborious jobs (Colwell & Montgomery, 2020).

School staff also often inflicted severe corporal punishment against students for “minor offenses,” such as speaking in their Native language. Students who refused to assimilate were (cont. on Page 6)

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On the State of Integration and Our Common Humanity

By Paige Duggins-Clay, J.D.

Editor's Note: In February 2025, the National Coalition on School Diversity held its annual conference with the theme, "NCSD at 15 – An Inflection Point in the School Integration Movement." IDRA is an active member of NCSD. IDRA Chief Legal Analyst Paige Duggins-Clay, J.D., presented the following marks during the opening plenary panel.

I am the daughter of Natalie Duggins and Bobby Sutton, a white woman and a Black man who dared to produce a Black bi-racial child in the year 1991 – the same year that racial apartheid legally ended in South Africa.

Despite the Supreme Court's invalidation of laws banning interracial marriage in 1967 through *Loving v. Virginia*, three states (Mississippi, South Carolina, Alabama) still had such laws on the books in 1991 when I was born.

In fact, Mississippi maintained its anti-miscegenation provisions, which outlawed interracial marriage, until 1987, when voters narrowly approved a constitutional amendment to remove them with 52% in favor and 48% against.

South Carolina followed in 1998, with 62% of voters supporting the repeal of the state's anti-miscegenation language.

Alabama was the last state to remove such provisions, doing so in 2000 through a voter-approved amendment that garnered the support of only 60% of voters.

There are many data points and historical references relevant to a discussion about the state of integration nationally, in the South, and in my home state of Texas. But I begin here because, in many ways, my own life story is deeply intertwined with the pursuit of integration.

Finding ways to blend and harmonize the immensely different worlds from which my parents came against the social and political backdrop of southern "massive resistance" has been core to my identity and education and is almost certainly a component of the lived experience of all children of the South.

I am proud and privileged to work as the Chief Legal Analyst at IDRA, a national, non-profit civil rights organization dedicated to achieving equal educational opportunity for all students through strong public schools.

Over our 52-year history, IDRA has worked in deep community with students, families and educators in Texas (where the organization is based) and across the U.S. South to dismantle the enduring legacies of racism while simultaneously confronting its ever-evolving forms, ensuring that our efforts address both the past and present realities of educational inequity.

So, what is the state of integration in Texas and the broader southern region? I posed this question to a dear friend earlier this week, who suggested it is more like the state of "dis-integration." I thought that was a fair characterization.

I don't have to tell the folks in this room the abysmal statistics regarding the siloed demographic composition of our schools. We all know that the vast majority of schools in the U.S. South are just as or more racially segregated now as they were in 1954 when the Supreme Court decided *Brown v. Board of Education*.

And, of course, given the current legal landscape dominated by federal courts that have retreated from enforcing integration plans (and even invalidate lawful interventions) and by coordinated campaigns to attack and undermine non-discriminatory school climates through classroom censorship and limits on diversity, equity and inclusion, I think it is fair to say that the era of seeking "integration" in the formal, traditional sense is over, for now.

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Despite the challenges, the "state of integration" is strong because we are strong and because our schools are stronger when we celebrate our diversity.

(On the State of Integration and Our Common Humanity, continued from Page 3)

But our work to create and maintain racially just, culturally sustaining schools continues. Consider this: In January of this year, the FBI reported receiving the highest number of complaints of hate crimes ever in the agency's history. Schools are the third most common place where hate crimes occur. (FBI, 2024)

Continuing a disturbing, decades-old trend, the most common bias type motivating hate crimes at schools is – you guessed it – anti-Black bias (FBI, 2024). Between 2018 and 2022, Black students reported experiencing 1,690 hate crimes in school. In comparison, white and Latino students together reported fewer than 500 incidents combined.

In fact, if you add all the reported incidents of school-based hate crimes against all other students (934), Black students still experience nearly *double* the amount of race-based hate crimes in this country.

Unsurprisingly, Texas serves as an epicenter for extremism, hate crimes and harassment, driven by the heavy presence of white supremacist and anti-LGBTQ+ groups headquartered or highly active in the state (Downen, 2023; ADL, 2023; Duggins-Clay & Lyons, May 2023). Hate crimes reported in Texas increased by 33% since 2020, with the increase disproportionately impacting Black communities (ADL, 2023).

Segregation through Discipline

This broader climate has unfortunately permeated Texas schools. Students increasingly report alarming examples of bias-based incidents in schools (Duggins-Clay & Lyons, April 2023).

For example, a Texas school district has pushed out not one, not two, but three Black male high school students through the use of exclusionary disciplinary practices by using an outdated and discriminatory dress code and grooming policy to ban the wearing of protective hairstyles, like locs. Barbers Hill ISD justified this practice by insisting (in a paid advertisement run in the *Houston Chronicle*) that “being American requires conformity” (Salhotra & Serrano, 2024).

IDRA joined student, civil rights and Native American rights organizations in filing an amicus brief challenging the legality of this slavery and segregation-era practice (IDRA, 2024).

Black students in Lubbock, Texas, have been repeatedly subjected to racial bullying, cyberbullying, hate crimes and harassment with no recourse from school administration. Students are called colorful combinations of “monkey,” the “N-word,” “Black B-word” and a host of other derogatory slurs too horrific to repeat here. And when they fight back, the district sends them to a disciplinary alternative education program where they are required to change into orange jumpsuits daily.

IDRA worked with the Lubbock NAACP and impacted students and families in filing legal complaints to the state and to the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights to address this discriminatory, hostile climate.

Similarly, while Black students make up only 13% of the student population in Texas, they represent nearly 30% of all out-of-school suspensions and 25% of all in-school suspensions. They are four times more likely to receive out-of-school suspensions compared to their white peers (FBI, 2024). As in many other southern states, the Texas Legislature is trying to double down on discriminatory exclusionary discipline practices. IDRA is engaged in an intense battle to combat these efforts.

In the midst of all of the chaos and turmoil, we must not lose sight of the fact that these incidents create an illegal, discriminatory hostile educational environment, which is tantamount to the deprivation of educational opportunity. And when such environments push or remove (through exclusionary discipline or deliberate indifference) Black students and other students of color out of schools, we have replicated the intent and impact of segregation in our schools.

Segregation through School Privatization

In the meantime, political leaders in Texas have done everything in their power to rig our legislature to pass private school vouchers. It bears remembering that, in a 1954 amicus brief submitted to the U.S. Supreme Court in *Brown II*, then-Texas Attorney General Jon Shepperd invoked the rhetoric of “school choice” in crafting his plea for a “gradual adjustment” to the court's desegregation order (1954).

Arguing in the amicus brief that “integration can no more be compelled than can segrega-

tion,” the former Texas Attorney General laid out several examples of how the state would evade full implementation of integration (*Brown*, 1954).

The proposed plans included the “complete abolition of the free public school system,” “turning the state schools into private schools,” and repealing “the section of the law which provides for compulsory education” so that if parents desired, they “could select a school in which the majority of the other pupils are of the same race as the child, or... in which the other pupils are of both races, thereby providing equality of opportunity and freedom of individual choice.”

Make no mistake: Contemporary calls for “school choice,” “parent rights” and funneling public tax dollars to private schools bear a chilling resemblance to the discriminatory policies intended to perpetuate segregation of the not-so-distant past.

Collective Power for Children

Despite this discouraging dispatch, I'd like to end on a point of hope.

Prior to attending law school in 2014, I spent a summer living and working in South Africa, serving as a volunteer teacher while earning a certificate in Restorative Justice and Community Development from the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University. It was there that I was introduced to the concept of *Ubuntu*, which roughly translates to “I am because you are” or, put another way, “our common humanity.”

The proverb expresses a universal African core belief that “the individual exists only in relationship to the collective” (Davis, 2019). Some also translate the expression to “A person is a person through their relationships.” This concept further emphasizes our need to build strong communities with one another, along with the corollary responsibility to care for one another and the community we co-create. This ethos can be found in other cultural and faith traditions, forming part of the mosaic of identities represented in our public schools.

Schools must be central to our nation's efforts to address and end discrimination, harassment and bias-based harm perpetrated against youth in our communities.

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Developing the Joy of STEM through Student and Teacher Experiences

By Jeff Wheatcraft, Asaiah Puente, Ed.D., CNP, & Stephanie Garcia, Ph.D.



As both the educational and political landscapes change daily, what remains the same is the need for high-quality STEM education pathways to engage teachers and students. We need pipelines that cultivate awareness and intrigue of STEM career-related opportunities.

Through powerful partnerships, IDRA recently led two experiences that engaged teachers and students in STEM-related career fields. As a Defense STEM Education Consortium (DSEC) partner, IDRA is helping prepare a workforce ready for the challenges of the future. We also co-lead the Alamo STEM Ecosystem, which builds “stronger connections with students and to support them as they graduate from one STEM program to another” (Garcia, 2022).

These seamless collaborations, along with affiliate local and national partnerships, facilitated a STEM educator conference and a San Antonio city-wide STEM youth summit to support teachers and students of all backgrounds and improve STEM awareness.

Student-Serving STEM Youth Summit

In partnership with St. Philip’s College, IDRA hosted our annual STEM Youth Summit in March. Coming off a successful DSEC-funded pilot event the previous year, this collaboration of STEM stakeholders bolstered nearly 200 students from over 12 schools to engage and discuss STEM career pathway opportunities.

Student groups from across San Antonio were greeted by an opening session featuring key-

note speakers Dr. Adena Williams Lawston, president of St. Philip’s College, and Varsha Shashishekar, an inspiring local entrepreneur and high school senior who founded PiGirls, a non-profit that supports girls who code.

Students then participated in sessions that included leadership talks, STEM career pathways, and hands-on experiences. Many of St. Philip’s College faculty led discussions, like virtual reality, engineering and automotive electric technology. Leadership discourse included talks from UT Health, Find Your Grind, Girls Inc., and IDRA. San Antonio Parks and Recreation partnered with the San Antonio Museum of Science and Technology (SAMSAT), an ASE co-lead with IDRA, to showcase Robonation’s SeaPERCH.

In the afternoon, we held a STEM Expo where students could meet with and discuss STEM career pathways of multiple STEM stakeholders. These included the San Antonio International Airport, the DoSeum, the Wex Foundation, STEMflights, Gardopia Gardens, and various local college STEM programs.

The feedback we received from students highlights the summit’s role in boosting students’ confidence in their ability to pursue STEM fields. Many students shared positive comments about their experience, describing it as engaging and informative. Several students also appreciated the supportive environment and interactive learning sessions.

- “I never thought I’d be into coding, but after today’s workshop, I’m seriously considering it!
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“Now I kind of want to be an engineer... and I didn’t even know what that meant before today.”

– High school student at IDRA’s STEM Youth Summit

(Developing the Joy of STEM through Student and Teacher Experiences, continued from Page 5)

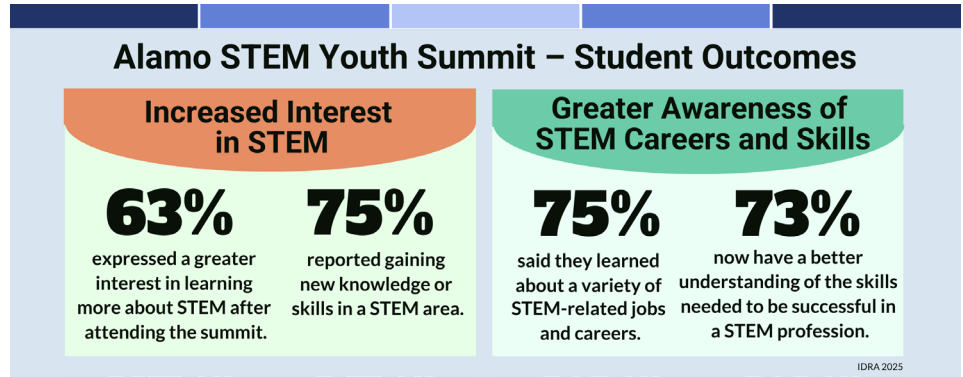
- “It was awesome to see so many students like me interested in science and tech.”
- “Now I kind of want to be an engineer... and I didn’t even know what that meant before today.”
- “I asked a speaker how they got started, and they told me they were just like me in high school. That stuck with me.”

Educator-Serving STEM Educator Conference

Two weeks earlier, IDRA and the Alamo STEM Ecosystem held the annual STEM Educator Conference. This free event for local teachers and pre-service educators provided inspirational talks, hands-on activities and an engaging STEM Expo. The event enabled teachers to learn, network and collaborate with other educators and local STEM partners.

The focus of this year’s conference was “The Joy of STEM,” a hopeful spark in a time of uncertainty. With nearly 200 participants, teachers at this year’s conference had opportunities to dig deep into STEM practices that bring joy to teachers and students. The sessions ranged from understanding microplastics and mathematics in Mariachi music to hands-on investigations in kinesthetic astronomy and a mystery bones scientific investigation.

Sponsors such as the UTSA College of Education and Human Development (with venue



and conference chair, Dr. Crystal Kalinec-Craig), Alamo AFCEA Education Foundation, and TXFame, made this a memorable event. In addition, a STEM Expo was led by many local industry partners, connecting with educators on the latest products and research to enhance the classroom experience.

By the end, educators had collected multiple items, be it lesson plans or ideas, to take back and share with students. They also received continuing professional education (CPE) hours from the state. When asked, “What was your major takeaway from the conference?”, teachers replied:

- How to implement STEM concepts in my classroom in authentic ways.
- I learned how to incorporate more creative ideas in the hands-on realm of teaching middle school science, which was why I came!

- New resources related to content I teach in my current elementary classes.
- What an amazing collection of STEM resources exists. Sometimes, in the hustle-bustle of day-to-day teaching, we don’t have time to explore and find things.
- The key takeaway was the investment that people have in STEM.

These two events represent the goals of the IDRA and the Alamo STEM Ecosystem and embody the passion and hard work of all the STEM partners in the San Antonio area. With relationships like these, the future of STEM in San Antonio looks bright.

Jeff Wheatcraft and Asaiah Puente, Ed.D., CNP, are IDRA school-based consultants. Comments and questions may be directed to them via email at jeff.wheatcraft@idra.org and asaiah.puente@idra.org. Stephanie García, Ph.D., is IDRA’s STEM education specialist and directs the IDRA VisionCoders program. Comments and questions may be directed to her via email at stephanie.garcia@idra.org.

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beaten, whipped or placed in solitary confinement. (Adams, 2020)

The majority of these boarding schools closed in 1969, but the full truth of how harmful these schools were would be revealed over time. In 2021, the U.S. Department of the Interior launched the Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative to investigate the toxic nature of these boarding schools and discovered that nearly 1,000 child deaths occurred at these boarding schools from 1919 to 1969 (Newland, 2022). The physical, mental and emotional abuse students experienced has resulted in intergenerational trauma within Native communities (Brown, 2023).

In 2024, President Joe Biden formally apologized for the U.S. government’s role in the abuse

of Native American children that occurred in the boarding schools (Pietrorazio, 2024). Yet, state-sanctioned violence against Native children persists today in public schools.

Native American children receive corporal punishment at almost twice the rate of their enrollment. While comprising 1% of U.S. public school students in 2017-18, they accounted for 1.9% of corporal punishments (OCR, 2020).

Of all Native students who received corporal punishment nationally, 74% were in Oklahoma, the state that also had the highest concentration of federal boarding schools (OCR, 2020; Newland, 2022). Native American students accounted for nearly 25% of Oklahoma students who received corporal punishment, though they only comprised 14% of the student population (see Blatt et al., 2023).

Violence Against Schoolchildren Must End

What do these histories of physical violence against Black, Latino and Native people have in common? They are fundamentally about control, punishment and fear. Threats and acts of violence, by their nature, are designed to force those less powerful to submit to rules and norms out of fear for their safety and well-being. Those purposes remain in schools today.

Students with disabilities are also disproportionately punished. They made up 15% of the U.S. student population in 2017-18 but accounted for 21% of corporal punishments.

Corporal punishment in our schools is fundamentally about controlling students and

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instilling in them a sense of fear of, rather than connection to, the adults in their school communities. The proof of that persistent and barbaric purpose is highlighted in the words of corporal punishment supporters. In 2023, the Texas House of Representatives debated a bill to ban corporal punishment in schools. One opponent of the ban stood to speak against the bill and reasoned that “kids do need to fear leadership” (2023).

Another opponent of the ban declared that corporal punishment is the “design God has for disciplining children,” and we must hit students “because we love them because we want to see their future be bright” (Texas House of Representatives, 2023).

In contrast, there is no debate among experts that corporal punishment, fear and control are *not* conducive to a safe and supportive school environment where all children can learn. In fact, they destabilize school communities and harm students.

IDRA will continue to oppose corporal punishment. We do this work alongside many organizations, schools, school districts and professional associations representing teachers, school administrators, doctors, mental and behavioral health professionals, faith-based communities, legal experts, families and students.

We urge you to join the growing community of advocates dedicated to ending corporal punishment in schools and ensuring that all children have access to excellent and equitable learning environments they deserve.

Citations available online.

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Corporal Punishment is Violence Against Children

In 20 states, teachers are allowed to **spank, paddle, slap, hit or use other physical force** against students.

70,000 Children were hit by adults at school in 2017-18 alone

Standard paddles for hitting children in school would be considered **weapons** in any other context

A 2003 study found that more than **10,000** Students needed medical treatment

Black student corporal punishment rates are over twice the rates of their peers

% of corporal punishments	37%
% of population	15%

Students with disabilities are more likely to receive corporal punishment

% of corporal punishments	21%
% of population	15%

Black students and students with disabilities are not more likely to break school rules

No student should be hit!

- Corporal punishment causes physical harm.
- Corporal punishment hurts students' academic outcomes.
- Corporal punishment causes psychological trauma.
- Corporal punishment is ineffective and even counterproductive as a discipline or teaching tool.
- Corporal punishment creates unsafe school climates, and it models violence to young people.

Students in school should be safe!

There are a number of proven strategies schools can use that promote safe, culturally-sustaining and supportive schools.

- Restorative practices
- Culturally-affirming social-emotional learning
- Authentic student and family engagement
- Increase teacher diversity with educators who are well-trained in research-based school climate and discipline strategies
- Increase access to diverse, well-trained full-time counselors, social workers, and nurses.
- Adopt policies that prohibit corporal punishment and other forms of punitive and exclusionary discipline

See how IDRA helps schools www.idra.org

Learn more
<https://idra.news/EndCorpPunishment>

Data sources: Civil Rights Data Collection, 2017-2018; Gershoff & Font (2014) Corporal Punishment in U.S. Public Schools: Prevalence, Disparities in Use, and Status in State and Federal Policy; Social Policy Report. Note: National data for 2021-22 are not yet available through CRDC.

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April 2025

(On the State of Integration and Our Common Humanity, continued from Page 4)

Though this work is hard, and indeed, miserable at times, I invite all of you not to lose sight of the cause that has brought us all here together today. Achieving the “more perfect union” promised by our Constitution is an ongoing project. I thank each and every one of you here

today for the important role you play, for the valuable work you do, for the cause of integration.

For me, despite the challenges, the “state of integration” is strong because we are strong and

because our schools are stronger when we celebrate our diversity.

Citations available online.

Paige Duggins-Clay, J.D., is IDRA’s chief legal analyst. Comments and questions may be directed to her via email at paige.duggins-clay@idra.org.

Focus: Imagining Joyful, Nonviolent, Integrated Schools

High School Student Tells Lawmakers: Georgia Bill “Erases Our Stories and Our Truths”

Editor’s note: In February, Laila Errold participated in IDRA’s advocacy training and shadowing event at the Georgia capitol. As she sat in a hearing about Senate Bill 120 that would effectively ban diversity, equity and inclusion in Georgia public schools, she quickly wrote her testimony and presented it before the Georgia Senate Higher Education Committee. The bill failed to be voted out of the Senate but could return in another form next year.

This is my first time at the Capitol [applause]. I would like to start off: My pronouns are she/her. My name is Laila Errold. I am a proud Black student at Dunwoody High School. I’m here to express my outrage against SB 120.

This bill is not just a piece of legislation, it’s an attack on our voices, our experiences, and our right to exist in an educational space that values diversity. This bill tries to erase our stories and our truths. It sends a message that the struggles we face because of our race, our gender and our backgrounds are not worthy of discussion.



Without this bill, I wouldn’t be here due to the course I take, AP African Studies. I refuse to allow anyone to dictate the narrative of my life or the lives of my peers. We are here and our experiences are valid.

When we learn about different cultures, perspectives and histories, we become better thinkers, leaders and citizens. This bill attempts to stifle that growth. And I will not stand by and let it happen. By silencing discussions on race and identity, SB 120 perpetuates ignorance and fear. It tells us that our struggles don’t matter, that our voices don’t matter.

We’re not just students, we’re activists. And we will fight for our right to learn in an environment that embraces rather than shuns diversity.

Watch Video: <https://idra.news/GaTestimonySB120VidLE>

*achieving equal educational opportunity for every child
through strong public schools that prepare all students to access and succeed in college*