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Jefferson Parish public schools formally drop their policy on using the paddle

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(<http://connect.nola.com/user/mwaller/index.html>)

By Mark Waller, The Times-Picayune (<http://connect.nola.com/user/mwaller/index.html>)

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The **Jefferson Parish School Board** (http://www.nola.com/education/index.ssf/2012/07/jefferson_parish_school_board_133.html) this week scrapped a mostly vestigial policy that spelled out how educators can use the paddle (http://www.nola.com/education/index.ssf/2012/07/jefferson_parish_school_board_133.html) as a discipline strategy. Educators said they no longer endorse corporal punishment (http://www.nola.com/education/index.ssf/2011/06/paddling_is_extraordinarily_ra.html) in schools and that they found only one example of a Jefferson public school using it in the last few years.



"We do have a policy in our district that allows corporal punishment, and we do allow it within certain



Mark Waller/The Times-Picayune

The Jefferson Parish School Board.

parameters in our elementary and middle schools," Richard Carpenter, deputy superintendent for instruction, told School Board members in a meeting Wednesday.

"These types of actions or consequences are better done at home," he said. "It's a parent decision. It's just existing on our books and we thought we should address something that we no longer believe in."

Before Wednesday's board vote repealing it, the policy stated, "that corporal punishment shall be defined as not more than three swats on the buttocks with a paddle. Elementary and middle school principals and assistant principals may administer reasonable corporal punishment with prior written consent of the parent/legal guardian, in the presence of a witness, after other reasonable means of disciplining the student have been attempted."

Carpenter said a survey of elementary and middle schools found only one elementary campus that used the paddle one time over a three-year period.

He said the schools haven't received any complaints or discovered problems with corporal punishment being used. The board's policy repeal, however, said it "sends an inappropriate and inaccurate message that our system condones the use of physical force."

"The message we wish to send to our students is that violence is not an acceptance means of solving problems," the document says.

The issue of corporal punishment flared up in 2010 and 2011 at St. Augustine High School in New Orleans after the Catholic Josephite Order that owns the school called for an end to a longtime tradition of using the paddle there. Archbishop Gregory Aymond joined in insisting that the practice must stop because it defied Catholic values.

That sparked protests and resistance from parents, alumni and St. Augustine officials, who argued that the paddle was a signature feature in a character-building regimen that helped produce years of successful graduates.

An ensuing legal **dispute ended late last year with the installation of a new leadership structure and the permanent banning of corporal punishment (http://www.nola.com/religion/index.ssf/2011/12/st_aug_board_says_it_is_reinst.html)** at St. Augustine.

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