

From Paddling to
Advocacy: Ending
Corporal Punishment in
Arkansas Schools.
Jeffery Burton, M.Ed.
Assistant Principal

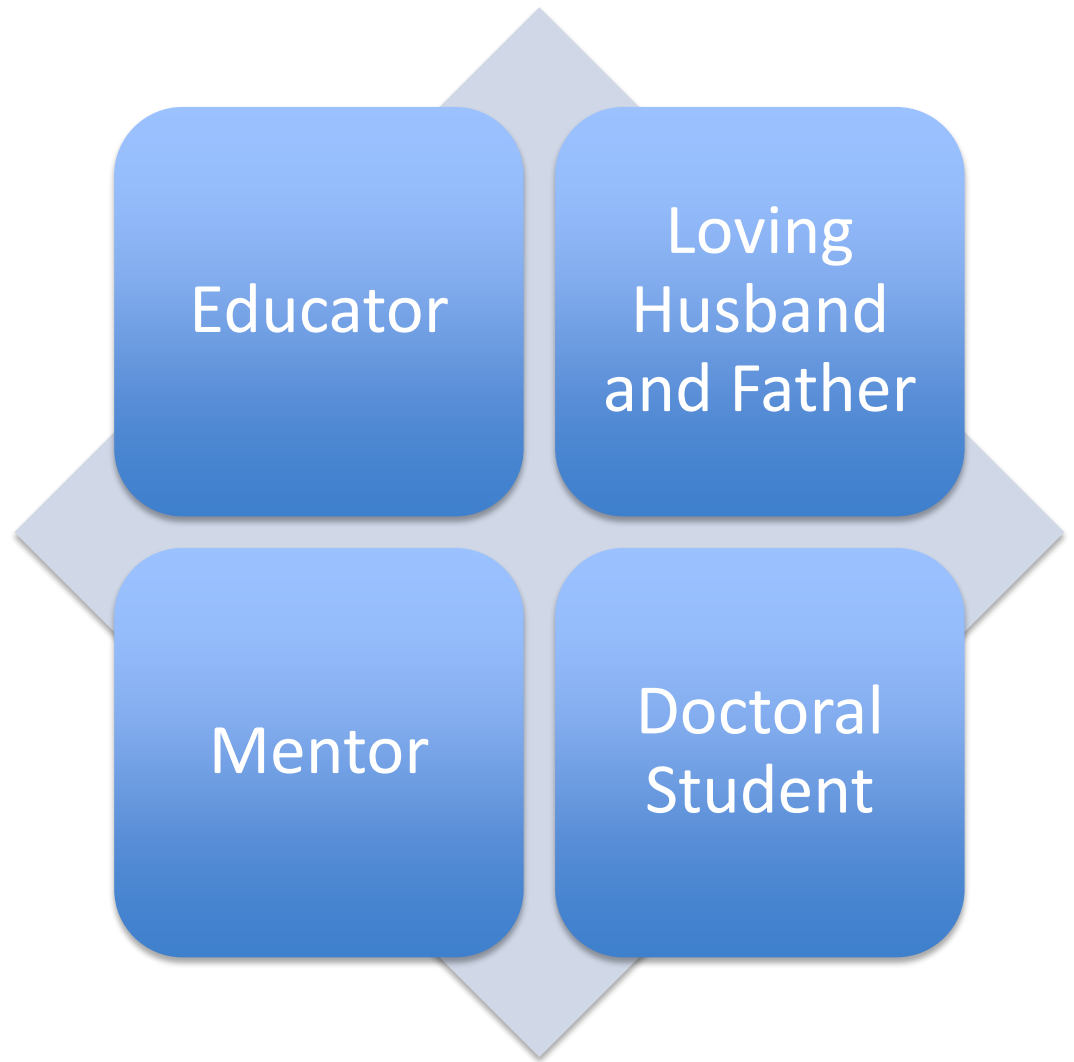
A Personal Journey and
Call for Change



In The Chat

- Tell me what state you are from
- Has your state banned corporal punishment?
- What are your thoughts surrounding corporal punishment?

Who Am I?



- My background as an educator in Arkansas schools
- Initially open to paddling as a disciplinary method
- Corporal punishment as a norm in the district

The Turning Point

- Experience with paddling students

- Noticing the same students visiting my office

- Realizing corporal punishment wasn't solving the problem

Exploring Alternatives

- Research into alternative discipline methods
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- Examples: Restorative practices, positive behavior interventions
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- Corporal punishment fails to address root causes

Corporal Punishment in Arkansas

Corporal punishment trend since the
2016-2017 school year

2016-2017	17,541
2017-2018	15,453
2018-2019	13,692
2019-2020	5,794
2020-2021	3,496
2021-2022	4,389
2022-2023	5,309

*Note that ACT 557 was passed in 2019
that prohibited the use of corporal
punishment on a child with a disability

- Negative outcomes: academic performance, behavioral issues



Joining an Advocacy Group

- Motivation for joining an anti-corporal punishment group
- Efforts to raise awareness and change policy
- Sharing my story to advocate for change



- Educate
- Advocate
- Repeat



BRIAN CHILSON

as the designated paddler at a campus where he taught, educator Jeffery Burton joined the push to end corporal punishment in Arkansas schools.

m and occupational therapist in North Little Rock who serves with Aldrich on the board of the nascent group Arkansans Against School Paddling. Davis and her husband allowed a teacher to paddle their kindergartener son years ago, and the immediate regret launched Davis on a crusade to stop what she sees as a cycle of violence that inordinately visited on children of color and children with disabilities, both categories that

Jeffery Burton, a school administrator and board member for Arkansans Against School Paddling, described the incident as what he called “the executioner” at the school where he worked opened his eyes to the stark disparities in how corporal punishment was meted out. As the one designated to do the paddling at a small, rural school, Burton said he had noticed that while Black students made up a small part of the student body, they were

concentrated in areas in the South that have legacies of racial violence, you can see the through-line to corporal punishment in schools. “It’s a residual part of racial violence in America’s past.”

Students with disabilities are also singled out disproportionately for physical punishment. In Arkansas, Act 557 of 2019 moved the needle in the right direction, prohibiting the use of corporal punishment against children who are “intellectually disabled, non-ambulatory, non-verbal, or autistic” but failing to protect students with other disabilities that could affect their performance or behavior in the classroom. That was where progress stalled out.

So why do we continue to hit kids in schools? Tradition is the most likely answer. We do it because we were hit in school and feel like we turned out OK.

“It’s hard to admit that perhaps the school

BLACK BOYS ARE TWICE AS LIKELY TO RECEIVE CORPORAL PUNISHMENT AS WHITE BOYS, AND BLACK GIRLS ARE THREE TIMES AS LIKELY TO BE HIT AS WHITE GIRLS.

Ongoing Advocacy



- CONTINUED EFFORTS TO SHARE MY EXPERIENCE



- PROGRESS IN ADVOCACY: POLICY SHIFTS AND PUBLIC OPINION



- CALL TO ACTION: GETTING INVOLVED IN THE MOVEMENT

- Summary of my journey from paddling to advocacy
- Final thoughts on the future of discipline in schools
- Questions and Answers

Thank You

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