

**Public Comment on 704 KAR 7:170, Corporal Punishment**  
**Alex Young, Student Advocate**  
**December 1, 2021**

Commissioner Glass, Chair Young, Members of the Board,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide public comment on the proposed regulation which would limit corporal punishment in Kentucky schools. My name is Alex Young, and I am a senior in high school. For the past five years, I have been leading the legislative effort to end corporal punishment in schools. With the help from advocates from across the Commonwealth, we have garnered support for this effort across geographical, social and political differences. In 2020, legislation passed in the House of Representatives but was stopped short in the Senate when the pandemic hit.

Corporal punishment has no place in any education system. The archaic method deteriorates relationships within schools. Students need safe learning environments in order to learn and grow. It is highly problematic that students in Kentucky are still threatened with legalized physical force at the hands of trusted adults. Strong schools require strong relationships and trust, neither of which can be formed when the threat of paddling exists.

Physical discipline is often administered on at-risk children and those already in positions of vulnerability. In the 2019-2020 school year, the Kentucky Department of Education reported that forty-six percent of instances of corporal punishment involved students with disabilities. The paddling of students with Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) is completely unconscionable.

It is abundantly clear that corporal punishment is not an appropriate or safe disciplinary measure. Because of this, I am grateful for the Board's proposed regulation and willingness to take action by limiting the use of corporal punishment in schools.

The proposed changes, including required parental consent and mandatory counseling for students that receive corporal punishment, are steps in the right direction for Kentucky students. It is my hope that school districts and administrators will see this as a clear message that physical force is not an appropriate disciplinary measure.

It is also my hope that the General Assembly will see this as a call to action to fully ban corporal punishment in schools in the 2022 legislative session. If the General Assembly fails to do so again, I ask that this Board considers a full ban under the powers that the Office of the Attorney General opined it has in OAG 92-20.

Thank you for your attention to this pressing matter and for your leadership in working to provide the best possible education for all Kentucky students.