



Corporal Punishment in K-12 Public Schools: Where Does it Stand in 2024?

Data Visualization Sources

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Figure 1: U.S. School Corporal Punishment Legality (2024) and Usage (SY17-18) in 50 States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico

State	Legality	Justification and Description
Alabama	Permitted	Alabama permits corporal punishment in public schools. ¹
Alaska	Prohibited	Alaska banned corporal punishment in public schools in 1989. ²
Arizona	Permitted	Arizona permits corporal punishment in public schools. ³
Arkansas	Permitted, w/ Disability Ban	Arkansas banned corporal punishment in public schools “on a child who is intellectually disabled, non-ambulatory, non-verbal, or autistic” in 2019. ⁴

¹ Data for Alabama, “Corporal Punishment,” State Policy Database, National Association of State Boards of Education,

<https://statepolicies.nasbe.org/health/categories/physical-environment/corporal-punishment/alabama>.

² Elizabeth T. Gershoff and Sarah A. Font, “Corporal Punishment in U.S. Public Schools: Prevalence, Disparities in Use, and Status in State and Federal Policy,” *Social Policy Report* 30, no. 1 (2016):

<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC5766273/>.

³ Data for Arizona, “Corporal Punishment,” State Policy Database, National Association of State Boards of Education,

<https://statepolicies.nasbe.org/health/categories/physical-environment/corporal-punishment/arizona>.

⁴ 2019 Ark. Acts 557,

<https://www.arkleg.state.ar.us/Home/FTPDocument?path=%2FACTS%2F2019R%2FPublic%2FACT557.pdf>; Arkansas State Legislature, Regular Session, 92nd General Assembly, “SB381: To Prohibit the Use of Corporal Punishment on a Child with a Disability,”

<https://www.arkleg.state.ar.us/Bills/Detail?ddBienniumSession=2019%2F2019R&measureno=sb381>.

California	Prohibited	California banned corporal punishment in public schools in 1986. ⁵
Colorado	Prohibited	Colorado banned corporal punishment in public schools in 2023. ⁶
Connecticut	Prohibited	Connecticut banned corporal punishment in public schools in 1989. ⁷ Although scholars have debated whether Connecticut's 1989 ban on maltreatment of children encompasses school corporal punishment, Sec. 53a-18 (6) enumerates when a teacher is permitted to use reasonable force to discipline a child and does not include school discipline, implying that corporal punishment is forbidden. ⁸
Delaware	Prohibited	Delaware banned corporal punishment in public schools in 2003. ⁹
District of Columbia	Prohibited	The District of Columbia banned corporal punishment in public schools in 1977. ¹⁰
Florida	Permitted	Florida permits corporal punishment in public schools. ¹¹
Georgia	Permitted	Georgia permits corporal punishment in public schools. ¹²
Hawaii	Prohibited	Hawaii banned corporal punishment in public schools in 1973. ¹³
Idaho	Prohibited	Idaho banned corporal punishment in public schools in

⁵ Gershoff and Font, "Corporal Punishment."

⁶ Colorado General Assembly, Second Regular Session, 74th General Assembly, "HB23-1191: Prohibit Corporal Punishment of Children," <https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/hb23-1191>.

⁷ Gershoff and Font, "Corporal Punishment."

⁸ Conn. Gen. Stat. § 53a-18, https://www.cga.ct.gov/current/pub/chap_951.htm#sec_53a-18; Esaa Mohammad Sabti Samarah, Lisa Schelbe, Shayna Harris, and Bart Klika, *Corporal Punishment in Public Schools in the United States: An Overview of State Policy* (Prevent Child Abuse America & Florida State University College of Social Work, 2023), <https://preventchildabuse.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/PCA-Corporal-Punishment-One-Page-June-9-2023-1.pdf>.

⁹ Gershoff and Font, "Corporal Punishment."

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Data for Florida, "Corporal Punishment," State Policy Database, National Association of State Boards of Education, <https://statepolicies.nasbe.org/health/categories/physical-environment/corporal-punishment/florida>.

¹² Data for Georgia, "Corporal Punishment," State Policy Database, National Association of State Boards of Education, <https://statepolicies.nasbe.org/health/categories/physical-environment/corporal-punishment/georgia>.

¹³ Gershoff and Font, "Corporal Punishment."

		2023. ¹⁴
Illinois	Prohibited	Illinois banned corporal punishment in public schools in 1993. ¹⁵
Indiana	Permitted	Indiana permits corporal punishment in public schools. ¹⁶
Iowa	Prohibited	Iowa banned corporal punishment in public schools in 1989. ¹⁷
Kansas	Permitted	Kansas permits corporal punishment in public schools. ¹⁸ Kansas law stipulates that with written permission school officials can apply corporal punishment to discipline students. ¹⁹
Kentucky	Prohibited	As of November 2023, every school district in Kentucky has prohibited corporal punishment. In August 2023, the Kentucky Department of Education required districts to create policies on school corporal punishment, and districts responded by banning the practice. Although state law does not prohibit corporal punishment in public schools, it is nevertheless illegal in the entire state. ²⁰ Moreover, July 2022 regulations adopted by the Kentucky Department of Education prohibit corporal punishment on "students with an Individual Education Program (IEP) pursuant to 707 KAR Chapter 1, students with a 504 plan pursuant to Section 504 of the

¹⁴ Idaho Code § 33-1224, <https://legislature.idaho.gov/statutesrules/idstat/title33/t33ch12/sect33-1224/>; Becca Savransky, "Corporal Punishment, Restraint and Seclusion as Discipline Will Be Banned in Idaho Schools," *Idaho Statesman*, April 6, 2023, <https://www.idahostatesman.com/news/politics-government/state-politics/article273731975.html>.

¹⁵ Gershoff and Font, "Corporal Punishment."

¹⁶ Commission on Improving the Status of Children: Subcommittee on School Climate and Discipline, "Recommendation to the Commission," October 20, 2021, https://www.in.gov/children/files/IN-CISC_Recommendation_Corporal_Punishment.2020-Update.docx.pdf.

¹⁷ Gershoff and Font, "Corporal Punishment."

¹⁸ DRZ Trial Attorneys, "Are Kansas Teachers Allowed to Physically Punish Kids?," *DRZ Law Firm* (blog), July 3, 2022, <https://drzlawfirm.com/blog/are-kansas-teachers-allowed-to-physically-punish-kids/>; Gershoff and Font, "Corporal Punishment"; U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, *Corporal Punishment in Public Schools* (Focus on Student Discipline, Part 4 of 5, updated March 2023), https://civilrightsdata.ed.gov/assets/downloads/Corporal_Punishment_Part4.pdf.

¹⁹ H.B. 2699, 2013-2014 Reg. Sess. (Kan. 2014), https://kslegislature.gov/li_2014/b2013_14/measures/documents/hb2699_00_0000.pdf.

²⁰ Valarie Honeycutt Spears, "After Years of Debate, Corporal Punishment Ends in Kentucky Schools," *Lexington Herald Leader*, November 3, 2023, <https://www.kentucky.com/news/local/education/article281378858.html>.

		Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and homeless children or foster care youth pursuant to 704 KAR 7:090." ²¹
Louisiana	Permitted, w/ Disability Ban	In 2017, Louisiana passed a law that stipulated "no form of corporal punishment shall be administered to a student with an exceptionality, excluding gifted and talented, as defined in R.S. 17:1942 or to a student who has been determined to be eligible for services under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and has an Individual Accommodation Plan." ²²
Maine	Prohibited	Maine prohibits corporal punishment in public schools. ²³
Maryland	Prohibited	Maryland banned corporal punishment in public schools in 1993. ²⁴
Massachusetts	Prohibited	Massachusetts banned corporal punishment in public schools in 1971. ²⁵
Michigan	Prohibited	Michigan banned corporal punishment in public schools in 1989. ²⁶
Minnesota	Prohibited	Minnesota banned corporal punishment in public schools in 1989. ²⁷
Mississippi	Permitted, w/ Disability Ban	Mississippi banned corporal punishment on public school students with disabilities (defined as students with an IEP or Section 504 plan) in 2019. ²⁸

²¹ Kentucky Department of Education, *Guidance on 704 KAR 7:170, Corporal Punishment* (July 1, 2022), <https://www.education.ky.gov/school/sdfs/Documents/Corporal%20Punishment%20704KAR7170%20Guidance.pdf>, 6.

²² Steven J. Dick, Kerri D. Prejean, and Richard Fossey, "School-Based Corporal Punishment of Students with Disabilities: A Law and Policy Analysis," *West's Education Law Reporter* 358, no. 733 (2018): https://picardcenter.louisiana.edu/sites/picardcenter/files/2018%20ELR%20article%20on%20corporal%20punishment%20by%20Steven%20Dick.Kerri%20Prejean%20and%20Richard%20Fossey_0.pdf; Will Sentell, "Without Fanfare, Governor's Ban on Paddling Disabled Students Expanded," *The Advocate*, June 9, 2017, https://www.theadvocate.com/baton_rouge/news/politics/legislature/without-fanfare-governors-ban-on-paddling-disabled-students-expanded/article_564db9f0-4c63-11e7-8511-ef4226080028.html.

²³ Gershoff and Font, "Corporal Punishment"; Maine Department of Education, "Student Discipline" (Maine Department of Education School Policy, NEPN/NSBA Code: JK), <https://legislature.maine.gov/doc/3908>.

²⁴ Gershoff and Font, "Corporal Punishment."

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Miss. Code Ann. § 37-11-57; H.B. 1182, 2019 Reg. Sess. (Miss. 2019), <https://billstatus.ls.state.ms.us/2019/pdf/history/HB/HB1182.xml>.

Missouri	Permitted	Missouri permits corporal punishment in public schools. ²⁹
Montana	Prohibited	Montana banned corporal punishment in public schools in 1991. ³⁰
Nebraska	Prohibited	Nebraska banned corporal punishment in public schools in 1988. ³¹
Nevada	Prohibited	Nevada banned corporal punishment in public schools in 1993. ³²
New Hampshire	Prohibited	New Hampshire banned corporal punishment in public schools in 1983. ³³ New Hampshire also banned corporal punishment of children in state agency programs in 2021. ³⁴
New Jersey	Prohibited	New Jersey banned corporal punishment in public schools in 1867. ³⁵
New Mexico	Prohibited	New Mexico banned corporal punishment in public schools in 2011. ³⁶
New York	Prohibited	New York banned corporal punishment in public schools in 1985. ³⁷
North Carolina	Permitted	North Carolina permits corporal punishment in public schools. ³⁸
North Dakota	Prohibited	North Dakota banned corporal punishment in public schools in 1989. ³⁹
Ohio	Prohibited	Ohio banned corporal punishment in public schools in

²⁹ Michael Levenson, "Paddling Makes a Comeback in a Missouri School District," *New York Times*, August 27, 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/27/us/corporal-punishment-schools.html>.

³⁰ Gershoff and Font, "Corporal Punishment."

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² *Ibid.*

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ N.H. Rev. Stat. § 161:14,

https://gencourt.state.nh.us/bill_status/legacy/bs2016/bill_status.aspx?sr=603&sy=2022&sortoption=&xtsessionyear=2022&txtbillnumber=HB427.

³⁵ Gershoff and Font, "Corporal Punishment."

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ Evan Moore, "Yes, NC Grade School Students Can Be Spanked in Class. What State Law Says About Discipline," *Charlotte Observer*, August 26, 2022,

<https://www.charlotteobserver.com/news/local/education/article264905354.html>.

³⁹ Gershoff and Font, "Corporal Punishment."

		2009. ⁴⁰
Oklahoma	Permitted, w/ Disability Ban	In 2020, the Oklahoma Department of Education adopted regulations that prohibit “the application of corporal punishment to students with disabilities entitled to special education services under the IDEA.” ⁴¹ In recent years, lawmakers in Oklahoma have attempted to codify this prohibition on the use of corporal punishment on students with disabilities in state law. ⁴²
Oregon	Prohibited	Oregon banned corporal punishment in public schools in 1989. ⁴³
Pennsylvania	Prohibited	Pennsylvania banned corporal punishment in public schools in 2005. ⁴⁴
Rhode Island	Prohibited	Rhode Island banned corporal punishment in public schools in 1977. ⁴⁵
South Carolina	Permitted	South Carolina permits corporal punishment in public schools. ⁴⁶
South Dakota	Permitted, w/ Disability Ban	South Dakota banned corporal punishment for public school students with “developmental disabilities.” ⁴⁷ Gershoff and Font (2016) err in noting that South Dakota

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ 37 Okla. Reg. 1194 (Sept. 1, 2020), Volume 37, Issue 24, <https://rules.ok.gov/register?q=#>.

⁴² Barbara Hoberock, “Senate Passes Bill to Ban Corporal Punishment for Oklahoma Students with Disabilities,” *Oklahoma Voice*, April 23, 2024, <https://oklahomavoice.com/2024/04/23/senate-passes-bill-to-ban-corporal-punishment-for-students-with-disabilities/>; Nuria Martinez-Keel, “Oklahoma Lawmakers Study ‘Properly Administered’ School Corporal Punishment,” *Oklahoma Voice*, October 21, 2024, <https://oklahomavoice.com/2024/10/21/oklahoma-lawmakers-study-properly-administered-school-corporal-punishment/>.

⁴³ Gershoff and Font, “Corporal Punishment.”

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ South Carolina Department of Education, “What Is the Department of Education’s Policy Regarding Corporal Punishment?,” <https://ed.sc.gov/how-do-i/public-schools/what-is-the-department-of-education-s-policy-regarding-corporal-punishment/>; “Corporal Punishment,” State Policy Database, National Association of State Boards of Education, <https://statepolicies.nasbe.org/health/categories/physical-environment/corporal-punishment>.

⁴⁷ S.D. Codified Laws § 27B-8-42, <https://sdlegislature.gov/Statutes/27B-8>.

		banned corporal punishment in public schools in 1990. ⁴⁸
Tennessee	Permitted, w/ Disability Ban	Tennessee prohibited corporal punishment for students with disabilities (defined as a “student who has an individualized education program (IEP) under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act or a Section 504 plan under the Rehabilitation Act”) in 2023 unless the student’s parent provides written permission authorizing the practice on their child. ⁴⁹
Texas	Permitted	Texas permits corporal punishment in public schools. ⁵⁰
Utah	Prohibited	Utah banned corporal punishment in public schools in 1992. ⁵¹
Vermont	Prohibited	Vermont banned corporal punishment in public schools in 1985. ⁵²
Virginia	Prohibited	Virginia banned corporal punishment in public schools in 1989. ⁵³
Washington	Prohibited	Washington banned corporal punishment in public schools in 1993. ⁵⁴
West Virginia	Prohibited	West Virginia banned corporal punishment in public schools in 1994. ⁵⁵
Wisconsin	Prohibited	Wisconsin banned corporal punishment in public schools

⁴⁸ Gershoff and Font, “Corporal Punishment”; National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments, *South Dakota Compilation of School Discipline Laws and Regulations* (April 30, 2024), <https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/sites/default/files/discipline-compendium/South%20Dakota%20School%20Discipline%20Laws%20and%20Regulations.pdf>.

⁴⁹ Erin McCullough, “Bill to Ban Corporal Punishment in Schools Filed in TN Legislature,” *WKRN*, January 25, 2024, <https://www.wkrn.com/news/tennessee-politics/tn-ban-corporal-punishment-schools-bill-filed/>; Tenn. Code § 49-6-4103 (2023), [https://law.justia.com/codes/tennessee/title-49/chapter-6/part-41/section-49-6-4103/#:~:text=\(B\)%20%22Student%20who%20has,%C2%A7%20701%20et%20seq](https://law.justia.com/codes/tennessee/title-49/chapter-6/part-41/section-49-6-4103/#:~:text=(B)%20%22Student%20who%20has,%C2%A7%20701%20et%20seq); Tennessee General Assembly, “HB0995 by *Stevens,” <https://wapp.capitol.tn.gov/apps/BillInfo/Default.aspx?BillNumber=HB0995&ga=113>.

⁵⁰ Pooja Salhotra, “Proposed Ban on Corporal Punishment in Texas Schools Fails Again,” *Texas Tribune*, April 26, 2023, <https://www.texastribune.org/2023/04/26/texas-house-corporal-punishment-public-schools/>; Tex. Educ. Code § 37.0011, <https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov/docs/ed/htm/ed.37.htm>.

⁵¹ Gershoff and Font, “Corporal Punishment.”

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

		in 1988. ⁵⁶
Wyoming	Permitted	Wyoming permits corporal punishment in public schools. ⁵⁷
Puerto Rico	Prohibited	Puerto Rico prohibits corporal punishment in public schools. ⁵⁸

Figure 2: Number of Reported School Corporal Punishment Incidents in the U.S. by School Year

- Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, "Recent Data Files," Civil Rights Data Collection, <https://civilrightsdata.ed.gov/data>.

Figure 3: Racial Disparities in School Corporal Punishment Application in the U.S.

- Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, "2017-18 State and National Tables," Civil Rights Data Collection, <https://civilrightsdata.ed.gov/estimations/2017-2018>.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Clair McFarland, "No More Spanking in Wyoming Schools? Legislation Moves Forward to Crack Down on It," *Cowboy State Daily*, January 13, 2023, <https://cowboystatedaily.com/2023/01/13/no-more-spanking-in-wyoming-schools-legislation-moves-forward-to-ban-it/>.

⁵⁸ U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, *Corporal Punishment*; Puerto Rico OMB, "Organic Act of the Department of Education of Puerto Rico" [Act No. 149 of July 15, 1999, as amended], revised December 1, 2011, https://presupuesto.pr.gov/Budget_2012_2013/Aprobado2013Ingles/suppdocs/baselegal_ingles/081/081.pdf.