



The Reverend Dr. Thomas E. Sagendorf

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TO: Public Schools of Robeson County Board Members

FROM: The Rev. Thomas E. Sagendorf

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The practice of paddling is outlawed in 29 states and throughout the entire civilized world. It is outdated and totally ineffective. School boards are, in fact, promoting a blatantly sadistic form of punishment. While there's a new focus on the problem of bullying in public schools and increased public concern about child abuse, school districts that embrace this kind of child abuse as a form of "discipline" are totally at odds with current developments.

Paddling in public and private schools is little more than institutional terrorism. It has nothing to do with good discipline or quality education. It creates an atmosphere of fear and dread. Thousands of reputable school systems get along well without it. Paddling simply provides a convenient haven for administrators and teachers who are incompetent, violent, brutal, vindictive and sometimes emotionally ill.

The result of paddling is not better behavior but anger, resentment and an inclination toward anti-social behavior. Hence, paddling not only is a violation of a student's body but also a violation of his or her mental health. The practice reinforces an understanding that the ultimate solution to human problems is violence.

In my judgment, those who paddle kids pose a risk to them that is little different from that of sexual abuse and illicit drugs.

Paddling in schools is despicable and cowardly. School systems that condone this practice are a disgrace to public education.