

1-1-1995

Assertive And Alternative Discipline Methods Within 33 Rural Southern Illinois Elementary School Districts

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This research is a product of the graduate program in [Educational Administration](#) at Eastern Illinois University. [Find out more](#) about the program.

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ASSERTIVE AND ALTERNATIVE DISCIPLINE
METHODS WITHIN 33 RURAL SOUTHERN
ILLINOIS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICTS

HARLAN

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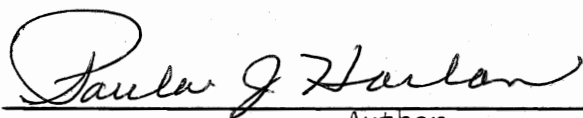
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Assertive and Alternative Discipline Methods

Within 33 Rural Southern Illinois Elementary
(TITLE)
School Districts

BY

Paula Jean Harlan

Field Experience
THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF

Specialist in Education

IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL, EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
CHARLESTON, ILLINOIS

1995
YEAR

I HEREBY RECOMMEND THIS THESIS BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING
THIS PART OF THE GRADUATE DEGREE CITED ABOVE

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November 6, 1995
DATE

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine and assess the current forms of discipline in use within 33 rural Southern Illinois elementary school districts since the ban on corporal punishment went into effect on January 1, 1994. A survey of the teachers and administration of these 33 districts was conducted and each respondent was asked questions concerning (a) alternative programs used by each district, (b) methods used to prepare the staff to use each program, and (c) perceptions regarding the effectiveness of the training to meet each program's objectives and goals.

In addition a review of current literature and research associated with discipline were presented. Included in this review were articles on punishment as well as alternative discipline methods.

Research data was presented in tables and narrative form. An analysis of gathered data from responding administrators and staff indicated that the majority of surveyed districts used a formal discipline plan; however, a significant number of respondents indicated that their districts still lacked a formal or written policy as well as staff training in discipline. Results indicated administrators and staff agreed upon the overall effectiveness of formal programs but were divided in their perceptions concerning the need for training and program changes. Results also indicated a need for improved communications. The findings and recommendations from this study emphasize the importance of a sound discipline policy as a part of an effective school management program.

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to the memory of my father and to my family. May I never forget the great love of knowledge from "Grandpa Bill" nor the patience everyone shared with me as I reached my goals.

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Chapter I

Overview

Introduction and Background

Current discipline programs are undergoing a necessary change due to the regulations placed into effect on January 1, 1994, by the Illinois School Code following P.A. 88-346. These changes include restrictions on slapping or paddling students and/or placing them in prolonged physically painful positions. This increases the importance of alternative methods used instead of corporal punishment, the extent of training teachers are receiving in alternative methods, and the general satisfaction with such training .

Each year since 1969 *Phi Delta Kappan* has sponsored a Gallup Poll of Public attitudes toward education. In the vast majority of years since 1969, the public has listed discipline as the number one problem (Gallup & Clark, 1987). School board members are a part of that public and are concerned with maintaining discipline within their local districts. The Illinois School Code gives each local board the power to establish discipline rules and charges teachers , as well as other certified educational employees, to maintain discipline in the schools (1994 Illinois School Code). Until recently corporal punishment , a practice from colonial times, was widely used as one method to maintain this discipline (Johns & MacNaughton, 1990). While 23 states still permit corporal

punishment, there is a growing movement toward alternative methods . These changes are based upon the decrease of popular favor and the growing weight of evidence of corporal punishment's ineffectiveness . On January 1, 1994, Illinois amended the Illinois School Code to ban corporal punishment. While discipline policies may vary from district to district depending upon local standards, the Illinois School Code requires each district to adopt a policy that will reflect this change (Braun,1994). Thus one of the most demanding and often publicized duties for the administrator and staff is the effective management of a discipline policy. Each district's policy is increasingly important as one method to protect the safe environment of a school in a manner that is both productive and economically sound (Gorton,1988).

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to examine and assess the alternative discipline methods used by 33 rural elementary school districts located in 11 counties in Southern Illinois. These areas are predominantly agricultural with a significant rate of unemployment. Many of the districts are consolidated (21 of 33) and face similar financial difficulties of restricted funding and local support.

The writer anticipated the results from this field study would provide information necessary to :

1. Evaluate types of current programs
2. Assess teacher training for each program
3. Develop new or alternative programs

4. Measure how the administrators and teachers relate their training to the program's effectiveness.

It was also expected that this study and the shared results may provide a new exchange of information for the administrators and teachers of the districts within this 11 county region.

Because these schools share similar characteristics ,they received surveys containing questions pertaining to the following objectives:

1. The first objective was the identification of any alternative programs currently being used in each district since the state ban on corporal punishment.
2. The second objective was an assessment of the different methods used to prepare the staff to use each discipline program.
3. The third objective was the identification of the perceptions of the administrators and teachers regarding the effectiveness of training in the discipline program to meet each program's goals and objectives.

While discipline policies may vary between districts , it is still the responsibility of the administration and the school board to develop and cause to be employed a discipline policy that protects the safe and orderly environment of the school. This must be done in such a manner that the goals of the school are met with the least drain upon resources. This is increasingly difficult, as school systems are faced with varying behaviors linked to an increasing number of social problems. The use of alternative methods of discipline offer integrated systems that are nondisruptive and

cost effective, while meeting code requirements.

Assumptions

The following assumptions were made:

1. All members of school administration teams were familiar with the new discipline code requirements.
2. All those responding to this survey based their answers on their own experiences and beliefs, not on popular or current trends.

Delimitations

The following areas have been placed outside the scope of this study.

1. The school population of the city and urban schools in the 11 county region included in this study.
2. The school population of the secondary schools within this 11 county region.
3. The school population of private schools within this 11 county region.

This study was restricted by the following limitations:

1. The collected data from this research were from a rural Southern Illinois population and caution should be used in generalizing these findings into other populations.
2. The sample population included schools with K-8 populations only and generalizations should apply only to elementary schools with a similar population.
3. Data were collected during a limited time (1995) and findings

may not apply to later periods.

4. The collected data were based upon respondents' answers to questions on a survey.

Operational Definitions

For the purpose of this study the following terms are defined:

Alternative Programs- Those programs of disciplinary strategies including assertive discipline and behavior modification used to manage misbehavior.

Corporal Punishment - The use of physical punishment of a student including slapping , paddling , and prolonged physically painful positions deemed necessary to maintain discipline or enforce school rules.

Discipline -The desired pattern of conduct or acceptable behavior.

District- The area legally describing the physical boundaries of a school.

Discipline Program- The policies within a district that outline expected behavior and the results for noncompliance .

Evaluation- The process used in forming a judgment about the worth or value of any program in relationship to a particular set of goals

Goals and Objectives- The product of what is hoped to be accomplished.

Survey- The instrument or the document used for the study.

Chapter II

Rationale, Related Literature and Research

Rationale

Year after year, national opinion polls- conducted by public pollsters like the Gallup brothers and by educational groups like The National Education Association- report that teachers, parents and administrators view discipline as a significant problem. It is the opinion of the writer that discipline is an emotional topic composed of difficult and complex issues that affect the efficient management of a school district and the development of student skills.

For the teacher, discipline affects two important areas ; how the students develop personal and cognitive skills , and the enjoyment of teaching. For the public, discipline is viewed as both necessary and a legal matter. For the administrator, discipline is more than just a legal matter. Discipline is seen as a drain on both time and budget, and a challenge to tenure .

The educational use of discipline in American schools, including corporal punishment, can be traced to the colonial period (Johns & MacNaughton, 1990). It remained an accepted tradition and was not legally challenged until *Baker v. Owen* in 1975. In this 1975 decision , the U.S. Supreme Court determined that school officials could, over parent's objections, employ corporal punishment. In 1977, in *Ingraham v. Wright* , the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that corporal punishment did not come within the scope of the Eighth Amendment protection against cruel

and unusual punishment. However, in 1988, the U.S. Supreme Court declined to hear *Miera, Sanchez, and Duram v. Garcia*. This action allowed the Tenth District Appeals Court decision to stand, granting parents the right to sue school officials for "grossly excessive" punishment (Johns & MacNaughton, 1990). The Tenth Amendment to the Constitution makes it necessary for the individual states to ban corporal punishment. As opposition to any form of corporal punishment continues to grow, many states are seeking a legal remedy. Currently 26 states, including Illinois, effective January 1, 1994, have banned the use of any form of corporal punishment (Slate, Perez, Walden & Justice, 1991).

It is the opinion of the writer that the change in state law regarding schools and punishment will effect district discipline policies in several ways. School districts will be required to incorporate the new regulations into existing policies or to provide alternative options. If these alternative or revised policies are to be effective, they will require planning by both the staff and administration, as well as the opportunity for training and developing of parent support.

Review of Literature and Research

Each person viewing a school will form his/her own judgments based upon what he/she sees and what he/she believes (Gorton, 1983). Each year since 1969, *Phi Delta Kappan* has sponsored a Gallup Poll of Public Attitudes Toward Education. In the vast majority of years since 1969, the public has listed discipline as the number one concern (Gallup & Clark, 1987). According to the 1994 poll, the public currently

believes discipline is outranked only by drugs and is an increasing problem (Elam, Gallop & Rose, 1994).

The administrator is the person responsible for the wise development and employment of the school's resources for the purpose of achieving the goals of the effective school (Gorton, 1983). It is the job of the administrator to provide leadership , focus and the opportunity to learn in a safe and orderly environment without unnecessary disturbances. According to Jim Burke , "Students cannot learn if they do not feel safe. No matter how you define safety-emotional or physical- it is necessary in both the school and classroom " (Burke, 1991, p.11). The administrator must ensure the effective use of limited resources toward the goals of an effective school.

This goal is becoming increasing difficult as the school system is forced to deal with a widely varying set of behaviors linked to social problems of abuse, divorce, changing family units, dysfunctional relationships and the changing socio-economic pressures (Elkind, 1992). Administrators must deal with the stress these factors place upon their limited resources and often weary staff without infringing upon students' rights (Burke, 1993). Several models for discipline offer options to deal with misbehavior. The Redl and Wattenburg Model for dealing with a group, the Ginott Model for use of sane messages and the Canter Model for taking charge assertively are only a few of these options (Charles, 1989). However, for the purpose of this study , emphasis was given to the assertive discipline model.

Misbehavior or any action inappropriate to the setting or situation in which it occurs must be recognized and the correct discipline swiftly applied to cause the student to act correctly in school (Canter, 1988). Discipline is intended to suppress, control, and redirect a student's actions. Both teachers and administrators must be aware of the need to develop practical skills to organize and maintain the necessary preventive, supportive and finally corrective discipline (Canter , 1979). This process, known as Assertive Discipline , offers an alternative to the traditional and often unsuccessful methods used during the early development of our educational system.

While 23 states still permit corporal punishment in their public schools , there is a growing movement toward alternative methods as the weight of evidence of its ineffectiveness grows (Elliot, 1994).

Illinois State Law , effective January 1, 1994 , prohibited the use of corporal punishment and directed each school district to adopt a policy that will reflect this change (Braun, 1994). The effective administrator must offer leadership in selecting a discipline plan for the district that would meet state requirements and provide the necessary structure to protect the learning environment. District personnel are increasingly looking at alternative models like assertively taking charge to provide that structure.

Assertive Discipline offers a climate of care and positive support for both the student and the teacher in the learning environment through the use of five steps:

1. Recognizing and removing roadblocks
2. Practicing assertive response styles
3. Learning to set limits
4. Learning to follow through on limits
5. Using a system of positive assertions (Canter, 1979).

Step one involves the instructor learning to recognize and remove negative expectations about students. Educators must then accept their ability to have a positive influence on their students, regardless of the problem.

The second and third steps are to learn the assertive response styles through practice while eliminating any non-assertive or hostile responses and setting limits. Teachers make expectations clearly known and insist in a businesslike manner on compliance. These directions are then backed up with actions. Any compliance will result in a positive benefit while any noncompliance will result in the appropriate consequences (Davidson & Davidson, 1984).

Step four deals with following through on limits. The limits or positive demands placed upon students are carefully explained and often are posted in the classrooms or halls. Students can easily see the results of each of their choices. These consequences must be appropriate and easily enforced. The last step involves the use of a system of positive consequences. These rewards may be individual or group and may range from a personal remark to notes sent home or actual rewards (Charles, 1989).

The use of discipline models such as Assertive Discipline offer an integrated system that provides student choice, logical consequences, and reinforcement while addressing the situation, rather than the student's character. While there are many that question the strict methods often followed in these models, they offer a unique overall insistence on meeting both the teacher's right to teach and the student's right to learn in a safe environment. The emphasis on caring, a refusal to accept self-defeating behavior, and the required involvement of parents, as well as teachers and administrators, are qualities important to the discipline of a district (K. Settle, personal communication, February 8, 1994). In addition to these qualities, this type of model also offers a cost effective, nondisruptive method that will provide consistent and effective communication strategies for rural as well as urban districts while meeting state requirements.

Chapter III

Design of the Study

Research Questions

The survey questions were designed to determine the forms of discipline currently used within 33 elementary school districts in rural Southern Illinois. The study focused upon three main questions:

1. What alternative discipline programs are currently used in these districts since the ban on corporal punishment?
2. What methods, if any, were used to prepare the staff to use these alternative discipline methods?
3. What are the perceptions regarding the effectiveness of the training to meet the program's goals and objectives?

Sample and Populaton

The researcher developed a survey that was sent to both staff and administration in 33 rural Southern Illinois elementary school districts in an eleven county area. These counties were Jefferson, Franklin, Washington, Clinton, Johnson, Jackson, Wayne, Marion, Union, Randolph and Perry. All of the counties included were selected from the schools listed in the Directory of Illinois Public Schools, School Districts, and Other Educational Units. This eleven county area covers most of Southern Illinois south of U.S. Route 50 (Appendix A). These counties share similar population characteristics that allow for a fair assessment.

Data Collection and Instrumentation

The questionnaire mailed in this research was designed by the researcher (see Appendix B). The questionnaires were administered entirely by mail during the early Summer of 1995.

The first part of the survey was used to determine general information about the respondent including, experience, job placement and class size ,where applicable.

The second part of the survey was used to gather information concerning the different discipline policies within each district, staff preparation for each program and the perceptions regarding the effectiveness of the training to meet program objectives and goals.

A survey (see Appendix B) with a cover letter (see Appendix C) that included return options was sent to school superintendents and to local teacher organizations in all 33 districts. Each letter carried a code for district identification purposes only . A follow-up letter or card (see Appendix D) was mailed approximately two weeks after the initial mailings in an effort to increase the response rates.

Twenty -eight questionnaires were returned by the administrators . While the majority included additional remarks or comments, only one was incomplete . An 84% return rate was achieved.

Twenty -seven questionnaires were returned by staff members. Two questionnaires were returned incorrectly completed. A return rate of 81% was achieved.

Data Analysis

The returned surveys were tabulated by hand , and responses from each question were placed in a table . The data in each table were organized in frequencies and percentages . General information concerning years of experience, school district size and type of school district was also reported in tables followed by a brief discussion.

The results of the study were tabulated and reviewed. The gathered information was displayed as data , organized into frequencies and percentages, and arranged into tables that were followed by narratives.

Chapter IV

Results

General Information

School administrators and teachers were asked to respond to questions concerning the discipline practices or programs used within their districts. The first part of the questionnaire provided general information concerning the respondents and their districts including district type, years of experience, and district enrollment. As shown in Table 1, all the schools were either in elementary or unit districts.

Several patterns were indicated by the general information. While the staff had a wide range of experience ranging from 0 to 20+ years, the majority of administrators fell into the 5 years or less category. Staff members appear to have more years experience or tenure than do administrators in rural districts which may be an economic issue based upon lower pay schedules commonly found in rural or small districts. All districts had 400 or fewer pupils with the majority in the "under 200" classification. These characteristics are a general representation of most small, elementary districts located in rural regions of Southern Illinois.

Table 1

General Information Regarding Returned Questionnaires.

	Administration		Staff	
	(N)	(%)	(N)	(%)
Type of District				
Elementary	11	38%	10	40%
Middle	0	0	0	0
Unit	17	62%	15	60%
District Enrollment				
Under 200	16	57%	12	48%
200-300	7	25%	10	40%
300-400	5	18%	3	12%
400-500	0	0	0	0
400-500+	0	0	0	0
Experience (years)				
0- 5	16	57%	9	36%
6-10	6	21%	5	20%
11-15	1	4%	5	20%
16-20	5	18%	3	12%
20 plus	0	0	3	12%

As indicated in table 2, 8% of the teacher responses indicated they were undecided. Written comments indicated questions from the staff regarding a clear district policy defining corporal punishment. The administrators all reported that their districts followed the state ban on

corporal punishment. Responses of this nature may indicate a need for improved communication and information.

Table 2

My District Follows The State Ban On Corporal Punishment.

	SA	A	U	D	SD
Teachers	(18)	(5)	(2)	0	0
	72%	20%	8%	0	0
Administrators	(25)	(3)	0	0	0
	89%	11%	0	0	0

As revealed in Table 3, staff members and administrators were split concerning the frequency of past uses of corporal punishment. Staff members were evenly split on the past use of corporal punishment, while 57% of administrators indicated that corporal punishment was not used frequently in their districts. Twenty-eight percent of the administrators agreed their districts had used corporal punishment frequently and 14% were undecided. One possible explanation for this difference of perception may be the level of involvement in the discipline process as well as the individual's definitions of corporal punishment and frequency of its use.

Table 3

In The Past Corporal Punishment Was Used Frequently In This District

	SA	A	U	D	SD
Teachers	(12)	(0)	(1)	(0)	(12)
	48%	0	4%	0	48%
Administrators	(4)	(4)	(4)	(7)	(9)
	14%	14%	14%	25%	32%

As revealed in Table 4, the majority of teachers and administrators agreed that the use of corporal punishment had been effective in eliminating certain behaviors. Written comments indicated an increasing concern from both staff and administrators over legal involvement and the costs. The general consensus was possible gains were not worth potential costs.

Table 4

Corporal Punishment Was Effective In Eliminating Certain Behaviors.

	SA	A	U	D	SD
Teachers	(8)	(13)	(2)	(2)	(0)
	32%	52%	2%	2%	0
Administrators	(6)	(10)	(7)	(2)	(3)
	21%	36%	25%	7%	11%

As revealed in Table 5 sixty percent of all staff and 61% of the administrators surveyed agreed that their districts had prepared a new plan . An almost equal amount of staff and administrators were undecided and disagreed. Written comments indicated that several districts had only modified their existing plan or were in the process.

Table 5

My District Has Written A New Plan Since The Ban.

	SA	A	U	D	SD
Teachers	(8)	(7)	(3)	(3)	(4)
	32%	28%	12%	12%	16%
Administrators	(7)	(10)	(3)	(4)	(4)
	25%	36%	11%	14%	14%

As indicated in Table 6, while all administrators agreed that their districts now follow an alternative method of discipline , only 84% of the staff perceived their districts to be following any alternative methods. The remaining 16% were evenly divided between undecided and disagree.

As shown in Table 7, staff responses indicated the perception that the majority of districts were using purchased programs. However the administrators indicated that only 7% of the districts were using commercial plans. Written comments from staff members indicated

dissatisfaction with the inconsistency or partial use of programs.

Table 6

My District Now Follows An Alternative Method Of Discipline.

	SA	A	U	D	SD
Teachers	(9)	(12)	(2)	(0)	(2)
	36%	48%	8%	0	8%
Administrators	(8)	(20)	(0)	(0)	(0)
	29%	71%	0	0	0

Table 7

My District Uses A Purchased Discipline Plan.

	SA	A	U	D	SD
Teachers	(9)	(12)	(2)	(0)	(2)
	36%	48%	8%	0	8%
Administrators	(0)	(2)	(0)	(6)	(20)
	0	7%	0	22%	71%

As shown in Table 8, a majority of both staff and administrators indicated an increase in the use of detention since the ban. Twenty percent of staff members strongly disagreed that the use of detention had increased, with an equal number undecided. Twenty-five percent of

administrators disagreed that the use of detention had increased and 11% remained undecided.

Table 8

My District Has Increased The Use Of Detention Since The Ban.

	SA	A	U	D	SD
Teachers	(13)	(2)	(5)	(0)	(5)
	52%	8%	20%	0	20%
Administrators	(3)	(15)	(3)	(5)	(2)
	10%	54%	11%	18%	7%

As shown in Table 9, the majority of both teachers and administrators agreed that their districts were using a form of behavior modification. The administrators had a 78% rate of agreement, with only 4% undecided and 18% in disagreement. Staff members indicated an 88% rate of agreement with 28% undecided and only 12% in disagreement.

Table 9

My District Uses A Form Of Behavior Modification.

	SA	A	U	D	SD
Teachers	(0)	(15)	(7)	(0)	(3)
	0	60%	28%	0	12%
Administrators	(2)	(20)	(1)	(4)	(1)
	7%	71%	4%	14%	4%

As indicated in Table 10, only 8% of the staff reported any use of Saturday School. The responses from administrators indicated this form of discipline was not used in their districts. Written comments from several teachers indicated a question to the definitions of this discipline method indicating some confusion. Based upon this information it is the opinion of the researcher that Saturday School is not used in these rural districts at this time.

Table 10
My District Uses Saturday School.

	SA	A	U	D	SD
Teachers	(2) 8%	(0) 0	(0) 0	(10) 40%	(13) 52%
Administrators	(0) 0	(0) 0	(0) 0	(3) 11%	(25) 89%

As shown in Table 11, the majority of staff respondents and all administrators indicated the use of suspensions in their districts. Twelve percent of staff remained undecided and 12% disagreed. This perception may be based upon the type of involvement with this program and the grade levels taught.

As revealed in Table 12, the majority of responses from both staff and administrators indicated the use of in-house suspension as a discipline method. Twelve percent of staff and 28% of administrators disagreed. Written comments from staff and administrators indicated

several districts followed a program of lost or quiet time but did not call it in-house suspension.

Table 11
My District Uses Suspension.

	SA	A	U	D	SD
Teachers	(10) 40%	(9) 36%	(3) 12%	(0) 0	(3) 12%
Administrators	(10) 36%	(18) 64%	(0) 0	(0) 0	(0) 0

Table 12
My District Uses In-House Suspension.

	SA	A	U	D	SD
Teachers	(10) 40%	(12) 36%	(0) 0	(0) 0	(3) 12%
Administrators	(6) 22%	(14) 50%	(0) 0	(4) 14%	(4) 14%

As shown in Table 13, fifty six percent of the staff and 47% of the administrators perceived an increase in the number of suspensions since the ban on corporal punishment. A significant number of staff remained uncertain and 20% did not perceive an increase.

In Table 14 the researcher noted that 48% of the staff agreed that the school used weekly reports on discipline while only 32% of administrators felt that this was true. These results may indicate the

level of involvement of the administration in the discipline process or a failure within the district to communicate information to the main office.

Table 13

Since The Ban The Number Of Suspensions Have Increased.

	SA	A	U	D	SD
Teachers	(4) 16%	(10) 40%	(6) 24%	(2) 8%	(3) 12%
Administrators	(3) 11%	(10) 36%	(3) 11%	(9) 28%	(3) 11%

Table 14

My School Uses Weekly Reports.

	SA	A	U	D	SD
Teachers	(6) 20%	(7) 28%	(2) 8%	(4) 16%	(7) 28%
Administrators	(1) 4%	(8) 29%	(2) 7%	(11) 11%	(6) 21%

As revealed in Table 15, eighty-eight percent of the teachers and 64% of administrators indicated a perception that their districts used parent pick-up. Twenty-nine percent of administrators indicated their districts did not use this method.

Table 15

My School Uses Parent Pick-up As A Discipline Practice.

	SA	A	U	D	SD
Teachers	(8) 32%	(14) 56%	(3) 12%	(0) 0	(0) 0
Administrators	(8) 29%	(10) 35%	(2) 7%	(8) 29%	(0) 0

As revealed in Table 16, the overwhelming majority of both staff and administrators responses indicated a perception of posted rules in all locations. Only 12% of responses indicated that rules were not posted.

Table 16

Classroom Rules Are Clearly Posted In All Locations.

	SA	A	U	D	SD
Teachers	(12) 48%	(10) 40%	(0) 0	(0) 0	(3) 12%
Administrators	(12) 42%	(12) 42%	(1) 4%	(2) 8%	(1) 4%

As shown in Table 17, seventy-six percent of the staff responses and 89% of administrator's responses indicate the perception that students understand the posted rules. Sixteen percent of the staff and 7% of the administration remain undecided. Only 8% of the staff and 2% of the administrators indicated they did not believe students understood the

posted rules. Several written comments indicated a recent effort in several districts to communicate policies to staff, students and the community. One written comment indicated that the staff member felt general discipline to be a difficult task due to the lack of consistent posted rules.

Table 17

All Students Understand The Posted Rules.

	SA	A	U	D	SD
Teachers	(10) 40%	(9) 36%	(4) 16%	(2) 8%	(0) 0
Administrators	(11) 39%	(14) 50%	(2) 7%	(1) 2%	(0) 0

Responses to the question on availability of a discipline manual raised some concern for the researcher. As indicated in Table 18, eighty one percent of the administrators and 72% of the staff had copies of a manual for reference , while the remaining staff and administration failed to have this resource. When compared to the results in Table 5, the researcher noticed a correlation between the number of districts that had not completed a new discipline policy and the number without manuals. Written comments from several districts pointed to this as a problem for the staff. The failure of the district to provide a consistent and clear plan could lead to lengthy discipline sessions as questions are debated and rulings rendered. This interruption into the orderly environment could be avoided.

Table 18

I Have A Copy Of The Discipline Manual For Easy Reference.

	SA	A	U	D	SD
Teachers	(12) 48%	(6) 24%	(3) 12%	(3) 12%	(1) 4%
Administrators	(13) 46%	(7) 25%	(5) 18%	(3) 11%	(0) 0

As shown in Table 19, all administrators indicated a perception of understanding the posted rules. However only 72% of the staff indicated an understanding, while 20% remained undecided and 8% disagreed indicating they did not understand the posted rules. These responses caused the researcher to compare these percentages to the number of schools without formal plans. The remaining percentage was still significant and raised the question of the process used to develop these rules.

Table 19

I Understand All The Posted Rules.

	SA	A	U	D	SD
Teachers	(13) 52%	(5) 20%	(5) 20%	(2) 8%	(0) 0
Administrators	(10) 36%	(18) 64%	(0) 0	(0) 0	(0) 0

As revealed in Table 20, 86% percent of the administrators and 72% of the staff responses indicated a perception of understanding the program goals and objectives. Twelve percent of the staff were undecided and another 12% disagreed. Only 11% of the administrators did not agree. Written comments indicated that several districts did not have formal policies with goals and objectives.

Table 20

I Am Aware Of The Goals And Objectives Of Our Discipline Program.

	SA	A	U	D	SD
Teachers	(11)	(8)	(3)	(0)	(3)
	44%	32%	12%	0	12%
Administrators	(12)	(12)	(1)	(3)	(0)
	43%	43%	3%	11%	0

As shown in Table 21, staff and administration responses were divided in their perception of the availability of training prior to using discipline programs. Sixty percent of the staff and 39% of the administrators indicated they had received training. This difference may be the result of administrators not participating in the staff in-service.

As revealed in Table 22, 40% of the staff responses and 39% of the administrators responses indicated an interest in additional training. Thirty-two percent of the staff and 21% of the administrators did not desire additional training. Written comments indicated several districts did not have formal policies to use as a base for any training .

Table 21
I Received Training Prior To Using This Program.

	SA	A	U	D	SD
Teachers	(7) 28%	(8) 32%	(0) 0	(7) 28%	(3) 12%
Administrators	(4) 14%	(7) 25%	(3) 11%	(11) 39%	(3) 11%

Table 22
I Would Like Training In This Program.

	SA	A	U	D	SD
Teachers	(7) 28%	(3) 12%	(7) 28%	(0) 0	(8) 32%
Administrators	(0) 0	(11) 39%	(4) 14%	(10) 10%	(3) 11%

As shown in Table 23, the majority of both staff and administrators agreed they used their programs daily . The written comments indicated that the 16% of staff that disagreed were unable to comply and desired a formal program.

As revealed in Table 24, the majority of both staff and administration agreed that their districts used their programs on a regular basis. Written comments indicated that the 16% of the staff that disagreed were unable to comply and desired a formal program.

Table 23
I Use This Program Daily.

	SA	A	U	D	SD
Teachers	(10) 40%	(11) 44%	(0) 0	(2) 8%	(2) 8%
Administrators	(11) 39%	(10) 36%	(1) 4%	(5) 21%	(0) 0

Table 24
I Use This Program Regularly.

	SA	A	U	D	SD
Teachers	(10) 40%	(11) 44%	(0) 0	(2) 8%	(2) 8%
Administrators	(13) 47%	(11) 39%	(2) 7%	(2) 7%	(0) 0

As indicated in Table 25, 84% of the staff responses and 68% of the administration responses indicated the use of alternative methods.

Written comments indicated the 16% of the staff that responded as a "strongly disagree" served in districts that lacked a formal program.

Written comments listed several alternative methods and included the use of phone calls to parents and grandparents, in-class suspension, hall time, daily charts, classroom observations and visits to the office.

Table 25
I Often Use Alternative Methods.

	SA	A	U	D	SD
Teachers	(10) 40%	(11) 44%	(0) 0	(1) 4%	(3) 12%
Administrators	(3) 11%	(16) 57%	(5) 18%	(4) 14%	(0) 0

As shown in Table 26, the overwhelming majority of staff and the majority of administration responses agreed that using their programs did impact misbehaviors. It is of interest to note that no staff responses were undecided and only 16 % disagreed. Written comments from staff members who indicated no reduction in student misbehaviors indicated their district lacked a formal program.

Table 26
When I Use This Program I See A Reduction In Misbehavior.

	SA	A	U	D	SD
Teachers	(10) 40%	(11) 44%	(0) 0	(2) 8%	(2) 8%
Administrators	(6) 21%	(15) 54%	(5) 18%	(2) 7%	(0) 0

As indicated in Table 27, 40% of the staff and 21% of the administrators perceived no changes from the mandated changes in discipline policies. However the majority of administrators and staff that had developed and used a formal policy agreed the program had been

effected by the changes .

Table 27

I Can See No Effects From The Changes .

	SA	A	U	D	SD
Teachers	(2)	(8)	(0)	(7)	(8)
	8%	32%	0	28%	32%
Administrators	(2)	(4)	(10)	(10)	(2)
	7%	14%	36%	36%	7%

As revealed in Table 28, responses to the questionnaire indicated that staff and administration were divided in their perceptions concerning the need for change within their current programs. Thirty-six percent of staff and 50% of administration responses favored change. Thirty-seven percent of staff and 25% of administration responses were against changes. An equally high percentage of staff and administrators were undecided in regard to the need for changes. Change remained a matter of opinion.

Table 28

I Would Like To See This Plan Changed.

	SA	A	U	D	SD
Teachers	(8)	(2)	(7)	(5)	(4)
	28%	8%	27%	21%	16%
Administrators	(3)	(11)	(7)	(6)	(1)
	11%	39%	25%	21%	4%

As shown in Table 29, the staff responses were divided regarding the consistency of their discipline programs. Written comments indicated that of the 48% in disagreement, 12 districts lacked formal plans. The responses for administrators indicated that 75% had the perception that their program was consistent for all grades. Seven percent of the administrators disagreed and 18% remained undecided.

Table 29

This Program Is Consistent For All Grades.

	SA	A	U	D	SD
Teachers	(13) 52%	(0) 0	(0) 0	(24) 24%	(24) 24%
Administrators	(10) 36%	(11) 39%	(5) 18%	(2) 7%	(0) 0

The responses from the staff questionnaires as shown in Table 30, indicated that 48% perceived the program to be effective in improving home-school relations. Thirty-six percent of the staff remained undecided and 16% disagreed. Written comments indicated that the 16% that disagreed were from districts that did not have a formal program. Thirty-six percent of the administrators agreed but 46% remained undecided and 18% disagreed on the programs help to improve home-school relations.

Table 30

Our Program Helps To Improve Home-School Relations.

	SA	A	U	D	SD
Teachers	(1) 4%	(11) 44%	(9) 36%	(2) 8%	(2) 8%
Administrators	(4) 14%	(6) 22%	(13) 46%	(5) 18%	(0) 0

As revealed in Table 31, both sets of questionnaires from the staff and administration were consistent in their responses on increased time on task. The majority of both staff and administration agreed the program produced an increased amount of time on task. Thirty-six percent of administrators and 40% of staff were undecided. Eight percent of the staff and 7% of the administrators were in disagreement.

Table 31

Our Program Increases Time On Task.

	SA	S	U	D	SD
Teachers	(3) 12%	(10) 40%	(10) 40%	(0) 0	(2) 8%
Administrators	(3) 11%	(13) 46%	(10) 36%	(2) 7%	(0) 0

As revealed in Table 32, the majority of both staff and administration agreed that the use of a school discipline program helped to establish a school wide philosophy . Twenty-eight percent of staff and

21% of the administrators were undecided. Eight percent of the staff and 11% of the administrators disagreed.

Table 32

Our Program Helps To Establish A School Wide Philosophy For Discipline.

	SA	A	U	D	SD
Teachers	(4)	(12)	(7)	(1)	(1)
	16%	48%	28%	4%	4%
Administrators	(8)	(11)	(6)	(3)	(0)
	29%	39%	21%	11%	0

As shown in Table 33, the responses from the questionnaire indicated that the majority of staff perceived the entire staff supported the discipline program. Only 16% remained undecided and an additional 16% , those without a formal program, disagreed . Fifty percent of the administrators indicated entire staff support for their program. Seven percent perceived the staff did not support their program , and 43% remained undecided.

Table 33

The Entire Staff Supports This Program.

	SA	A	U	D	SD
Teachers	(4)	(10)	(7)	(2)	(2)
	16%	40%	28%	8%	8%
Administrators	(6)	(8)	(12)	(2)	(0)
	21%	29%	43%	7%	0

Chapter V

Summary, Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

Summary

This study examined the methods of discipline within 33 rural Southern Illinois elementary school districts since ban on corporal punishment went into effect on January 1, 1994. This was accomplished by administering a survey to the teachers and administrators of 33 districts located in the 11 counties of Clinton, Franklin, Jackson, Jefferson, Johnson, Marion, Perry, Randolph, Union, Washington and Wayne. Analysis of the survey results provided information about the perceptions held by teachers and administrators concerning training used to prepare the staff, effectiveness of the training to meet the program goals and objectives, and the alternative methods or programs used in each district. The results from the survey also provided additional information concerning use and frequency of discipline methods and their perceived effectiveness.

Findings

One object of this study was to determine if training was provided prior to the use of any discipline plan. The results of the survey indicated that the majority of school districts did provide basic training. However, a significant number of districts (16 %) indicated through the survey and by written comments that their schools lacked either a formal written plan or an organized program for training. Teacher written responses

indicated a greater perception of need for additional training than did the administrator responses ; even though 60% of the staff ,compared to 39% of the administrators ,had already received formal training.

Another objective of the study was to determine the perceptions of the teachers and administrators to the effectiveness of this training to meet program goals and objectives, including time on task, reductions of misbehaviors and improved school and home relations. The questionnaire first determined if the teachers and administrators were aware of the goals and objectives. The results indicated that 15% of the teachers and 14% of the administrators were unaware or uninformed concerning the goals and objectives. Results from the survey also indicated that 36% of the teachers and 46% of the administrators were undecided if their discipline plan helped to improve community relations. An additional 16% of teachers and 18% of administrators indicated their programs did not help to improve relations. Written comments from teachers indicated that a lack of a formal program in their districts impeded this process. While an almost equal number of teachers and administrators were undecided if their programs increased time on task, the majority of teachers (52%) and administrators (57%) agreed their programs did improve time on task. The majority of both teachers and administrators agreed that the use of a discipline program helped to establish a school wide philosophy .

The third objective of this study was to examine alternative methods of discipline used in the surveyed districts since the 1995 ban on

corporal punishment. The survey included questions concerning the use of weekly reports, parent pick-up, suspensions, in-house suspensions, Saturday school and detentions. The results from each of the questions covering these topics indicated that a higher percentage of the teachers perceived their use than did administrators. However when asked if their districts followed alternative methods of discipline, 100% of all administrators responded in agreement. This could indicate undocumented discipline, incomplete or incorrect records or confusion concerning these methods. It seems apparent that some administrators may perceive discipline in a manner inconsistent with the ideas held by their staff. Through written responses teachers and administrators indicated a desire for current procedural and legal information covering discipline.

Conclusions

The researcher concluded that both teachers and administration should be more closely involved as each district examines its current program and alternative discipline plans. The January 1, 1994, ban of corporal punishment in all Illinois School districts has mandated change for all district discipline policies. The administrator must provide the leadership as each district works to develop or review its new policy. This may prove challenging due to the differing perceptions held by teachers and administrators. It is also important that the new policies are developed with input from the community and students as well as the teachers and administrators. Each district should develop its discipline program to include alternative methods that will provide the most

effective use of school resources while securing the highest standards for a safe and orderly learning environment.

Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to investigate the current forms of discipline in use within 33 rural Southern Illinois elementary school districts. The results of this study may give superintendents, principals, prospective superintendents , principals ,and board members information related to the effective development of alternative discipline methods within their districts. According to the survey , the majority of administrators and teachers perceived their schools to offer methods of discipline that were generally effective. Sixteen percent of the district personnel responding to the survey expressed a need for formal written policy. Many administrators had perceptions that were not consistent with those of their teaching staff, indicating a need for improved communications .

It is recommended that a rotating discipline committee within each district be established to regulate, review and recommend revisions in the discipline plan. This committee should include representatives from the administration, teaching staff, community and student population. This committee, led by the administrator, should cause to be developed a board approved discipline policy which is to be distributed to all staff members, students and parents prior to each school year or upon enrollment. It is also recommended that each committee participate in special county wide seminars where opportunities for in-service as well

as round table discussions would be provided.

According to the survey , administrators and teachers were divided in perceptions related to the use of alternative methods of discipline. It is recommended that each district, under the leadership of the administrator, establish clear , open lines of communication for all teaching staff members, administrators and board members. Options to be considered include workshops, in-service training, mentors, current publications, weekly bulletins and continued education.

The researcher also recommends that each district assess its district policies with respect to staff requirements, cost effectiveness, efficient record keeping and general impact upon the learning environment. Upon establishment of a formal policy , it is recommended that a regular cycle for review be established and evaluations of the program's effectiveness be performed on a regular basis with results promptly shared with the staff and community.

Discipline is an emotional topic composed of difficult and complex issues that continue to affect the efficient management of school districts and the development of student skills. For the public school it is both a necessary management tool and a legal concern. The effective administrator must deal with discipline as well as plan for continued staff development. The use of a well developed, cost effective , nondisruptive discipline plan will provide a medium for student growth, communication, and staff involvement.

Current information, careful planning and successful performance in

the area of discipline will help to ensure a safe and orderly learning environment and the continued career of a superintendent.

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Appendix A

Map of Eleven Southern Illinois Counties



Appendix B
Discipline Questionnaire

PART I: General Information

Please mark (x) each appropriate item.

1. Type of school: Elementary___ Middle___ Unit___
 2. Your position: Classroom instruction___ Administration___ Support___
 3. Length of time in district: (years) 0-5___ 6-10___ 11-15___ 16-20___ 20+___
 4. District enrollment: ___under 200 ___200-300___300-400
 ___400-500___ 500-600___600+
 5. Please list the discipline program/s used by your district:_____
-

PART II

The purpose of this study is to (a) determine the types of discipline currently used in your district, (b) evaluate the training given prior to use and (c) determine if the current program is meeting program goals and objectives. Please mark :1=Strongly Agree, 2=Agree, 3=Undecided

4= Disagree, or 5= Strongly Disagree

1. My district follows the state ban on corporal punishment. 1 2 3 4 5
2. In the past corporal punishment was used frequently in this district. 1 2 3 4 5
3. Corporal punishment was effective in eliminating certain misbehaviors . 1 2 3 4 5
4. My district has written a new plan since the ban. 1 2 3 4 5

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| 5. My district now follows an alternative method of discipline. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 6. My district uses a purchased discipline plan. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 7. My district has increased uses of detention since the ban. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 8. MY district uses a form of behavior modification. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 9. My district uses Saturday school. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 10 My district uses suspension. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 11. My district uses in-house suspension. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 12. Since the ban the number of suspensions have increased | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 13. My school uses weekly reports. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 14. My school uses parent pick-up as a disciplinary practice. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 15. Classroom rules are clearly posted in all locations. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 16. All students understand the posted rules. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 17. I have a copy of the discipline manual for easy reference. | 1 2 3 4 5 |

18. I understand all the rules listed . 1 2 3 4 5
19. I am aware of the goals and the objectives of our discipline program. 1 2 3 4 5
20. I received training prior to using this program. 1 2 3 4 5
21. I would like training in this program. 1 2 3 4 5
22. I use this program daily. 1 2 3 4 5
23. I use this program regularly. 1 2 3 4 5
24. I often use alternative methods. 1 2 3 4 5
25. When I use this program I see a reduction in misbehavior in my class/school. 1 2 3 4 5
26. I can see no effects from the changes. 1 2 3 4 5
27. I would like to see this plan changed. 1 2 3 4 5
28. This program is consistent for all grades. 1 2 3 4 5
29. Our program helps to improve home-school relations. 1 2 3 4 5
30. Our program increases time on task. 1 2 3 4 5
31. Our program helps to establish a school wide philosophy for discipline. 1 2 3 4 5
- 32 .The entire staff supports this program. 1 2 3 4 5

If you answered 1 or 2 on question 27 (wanting to see the plan changed)
please list how _____

If you answered 1 or 2 on question 24 (using other methods) please list
what you use _____

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP!

Appendix C

Cover Letter

INA COMMUNITY CONS. GRADE SCHOOL

Elm and Tamaroa Road

Ina, Illinois 62864

phone 618-437-5361

Superintendent Alan Bigley

Assistant Principal Paula Harlan

June 10, 1995

Dear Fellow Educator,

I am conducting a survey of the use of alternative discipline programs since the ban on corporal punishment went into effect on January 1, 1994. This study is being conducted to complete my Specialist Degree through Eastern Illinois University at Charleston and supervised by Dr. Donald Smitley.

Please take a moment of your busy time and respond to the attached survey. One copy is to be completed by the administration and one by the staff. Please return through Project Uplift or regular mail. All responses will be kept confidential and a copy of the results will be available by the end of July.

Thank you for your cooperation in this survey. I look forward to reading your responses and sharing the results.

Sincerely,

Paula J. Harlan

Assistant Principal

Appendix D
Follow-up Letter

INA COMMUNITY CONS. GRADE SCHOOL

Elm & Tamaroa Road

Ina, Illinois 62864

Superintendent Alan Bigley

Assistant Principal Paula Harlan

May 15, 1995

Fellow Educator,

Recently I mailed you a survey and a cover letter asking for your help. If you have already returned the survey I want to thank you, if not I want to remind you it is important. I hope you will find time in your busy schedule and complete the survey .

I really appreciate you taking time to complete this survey. Again, I want to thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

Paula Harlan
Assistant Principal

Appendix D
Reminder Card

PLEASE DON'T FORGET! I NEED YOUR HELP!

please take a moment and return the
survey on alternative discipline methods.

THANKS

Paula Harlan, Ina Grade School

618-437-5634