



AVUHSD Discipline Discrimination Lawsuit

Cancel the Contract v. Antelope Valley Union High School District

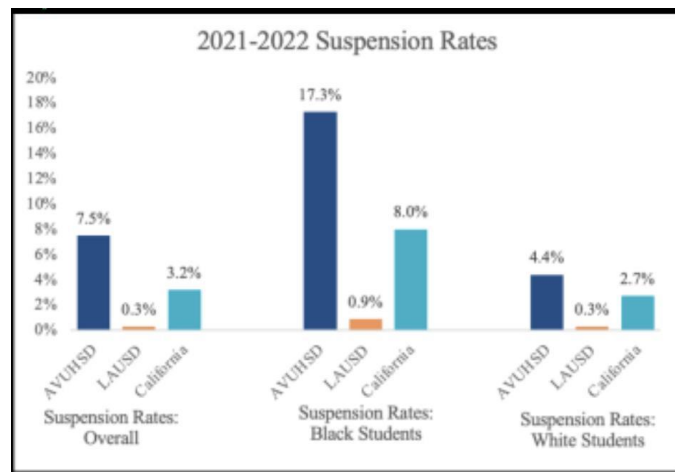
May 24, 2023

BLACK STUDENTS AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES ILLEGALLY NEGLECTED, PUNISHED, AND CRIMINALIZED IN AV SCHOOLS

The Antelope Valley Union High School District (“AVUHSD”) has demonstrated a pattern of discriminating against Black students and students with disabilities by disciplining them out of proportion to the general school population. AVUHSD’s own data confirms that, for years, it has disproportionately suspended and expelled Black students and students with disabilities, disproportionately excluded them from proper learning environments, and disproportionately encouraged unnecessary and harmful contacts between them and school-based law enforcement.

For example, in 2021-2022:

- AVUHSD reported 2,762 suspensions – over 50% more than the Los Angeles Unified School District, the second largest school district in the United States
- AVUHSD suspended Black students at a rate 204% higher than white students
- AVUHSD’s suspension rate for students with disabilities was nearly twice its suspension rate for nondisabled students



AVUHSD further discriminates against Black students and students with disabilities in its use of “informal,” off-the-books disciplinary measures such as removing students from their classrooms and sending them to on-campus detention rooms or disingenuously-named “Student Support Centers,” as well as sending disabled students to segregated “behavioral” classes or an alternative campus with no non-disabled students. Because school districts are not required to report these “informal” types of discipline, even the data reported to the state – as shocking as it is – likely understates by many degrees the discriminatory treatment to which Black and disabled students in AVUHSD are subjected.

The heavy presence of law enforcement on AVUHSD campuses only makes these problems worse. Teachers and staff have full discretion to call on untrained security officers for even minor behavioral issues, and those unnecessary encounters often escalate – causing further trauma and harmful consequences to the students.

These discriminatory practices of AVUHSD violate a number of federal and California laws, including:

- **The Civil Rights Act of 1964** - *prohibits public school districts from discriminating on the basis of race, and ensures that students will not experience a racially hostile environment*
- **The Americans with Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973** - *guarantee that disabled persons will not be subject to discrimination on the basis of their disabilities*
- **The California Constitution** - *guarantees all students equal access to educational opportunities – which is being denied to Black and disabled students*
- **The California Government and Education Codes** - *prohibit discrimination on the basis of race and disability, limits the offenses for which students can be suspended or expelled, provides procedural protections for students being disciplined*
- **California State Law** - *requires school districts to report information on school discipline, a requirement AVUHSD is evading by using “informal” discipline methods that are not required to be reported.*

This Complaint was filed by Cancel the Contract-Antelope Valley, along with several students (current and recently-graduated) and their parents and guardians. The lawsuit followed several attempts to engage with the AVUHSD board, superintendents, and administrators over these issues, including filing an administrative complaint with the California Department of Education and sending a letter outlining these concerns to the Board of Trustees of AVUHSD and the District Superintendent.

Among other things, the Lawsuit asks the court to order AVUHSD to:

- Take immediate action to reform the district’s policies and practices to fully comply with federal and state law
- Give families with children who are English language learners the appropriate language communication services as required under state and federal law.
- To prohibit School Resource Deputies (SRDs) and other security staff from physically restraining students
- Cancel the contract with the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department

CTC AV is a coalition of community organizations and leaders from the Antelope Valley calling for the end of law enforcement violence and racism in our communities. We’re calling on our cities and our schools to cancel the contracts with the LA Sheriff’s Department and reinvest those dollars in a new vision of community safety and meaningful services for our students and the community.

For more info: www.ctcav.org