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## **New Report Exposes High Suspensions of Black Students in San Diego Public Schools**

San Diego—Nov. 4-- San Diego public schools have disproportionately high suspension and expulsion rates for Black students, according to a new report from the Community College Equity Assessment Lab (CCEAL) at San Diego State University (SDSU).

The report, *[When They Teach Us: The Education of Black Children in San Diego](#)*, was inspired by Ava DuVernay's Netflix documentary "When They See Us," focused on the Central Park Five case that led to the incarceration of five innocent young men of color. Ultimately, the documentary highlighted how people of color, particularly Black males, are assumed to be guilty and therefore targeted by police. The report draws parallels between this treatment and how educational institutions in San Diego often convey the same perspectives to Black children, particularly Black boys.

"We found that Black males were 3.1 times more likely to receive an out-of-school suspension than the district average. Even worse, we found that the highest suspension disparity was for Black boys in kindergarten through third grade. So, we have to be conscious that we are talking about kids, young kids" said Mohamed Abdi, a report-coauthor.

The report is based on data self-reported by schools to the State of California. While the focus of the report is on school suspensions, it also addresses disparities in math, English language arts, and declining Black enrollment in the district. "Many of the schools we identified as having high suspension rates have small Black populations, therefore, Black children at these schools may feel even more isolated and targeted. Even more, many of these schools are considered "good" schools" said Abdi.

Some of the other key findings from the report include:

- The suspension rate for Black girls is 5.1%, which is 46% higher than the district average. The suspension rate for Black males is 10.7%. This rate is 206% higher than the district average and represents the highest suspension rate for any racial or gender group.
- Black male foster youth is the subgroup most likely to be suspended at 26%.
- The top schools suspending Black boys are Montgomery Middle School (at 52.4%), Fletcher Elementary School (at 40%), Innovation Middle School (at 38.9%), and Millennial Tech Middle School (at 36.2%).
- The top school suspending Black girls is Millennial Tech Middle School, (at 37%). This school is followed by Memorial Scholars and Athletes (at 27%), Challenger Middle School (at 20%), and Knox Middle School (at 20%).

“While San Diego Unified is a good district, it doesn’t mean that it’s a good district for Black children and their families. When you have some schools suspending upwards of half their Black students, we are no longer talking about an education, we are talking about denigration” said report co-author Frank Harris III, a Professor of Education at San Diego State University.

The study provides recommendations for reducing the suspension and expulsion of Black children in public schools as well as recommendations for the parents of Black children. These range from suggestions for professional development and the preparation of school district personnel to better understand and respond to Black children, and a call for the elimination of suspensions in early childhood education. The report also includes several anecdotes from the parents of Black children whose children suffered questionable treatment in San Diego public schools.

The report is part of an ongoing series focused on suspensions of youth of color in California public schools. “We hope that the district will see this report and work collaboratively with us and other dedicated partners to build a better school experience for all children, particularly Black children” said J. Luke Wood, a report coauthor and Professor of Education at SDSU.