

Louisiana Special Education Abuse Case Highlights Need for Classroom Cameras and Oversight

A Louisiana lawsuit alleges abuse of a nonverbal student, highlighting the urgent need for classroom cameras and oversight in special education programs.

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- A recently filed civil rights lawsuit has drawn national attention to the treatment of students with severe disabilities in Louisiana public schools. The parents of a non-verbal student at Bonnabel High School in Jefferson Parish have sued

the school board, the superintendent, and individual employees after surveillance footage captured staff members kicking, striking, and restraining their son, "H.A.," and even forcing another student to change his diaper^[1]. The case underscores the importance of video monitoring and rigorous oversight in special education settings.

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Keith Altman

According to the complaint, H.A. has cerebral palsy, autism, and other complex medical needs. His parents requested that school officials install cameras in his classroom so they could monitor his care. When the family reviewed the footage, they saw school employees punching, kicking, and

dragging the child, restraining him by tying his arms to his wheelchair and tying his legs together with a sweatshirt. Staff failed to report the abuse even though they are mandatory reporters. The footage also showed an employee forcing another student to change H.A.’s diaper, a task that should have been performed by trained staff^[2].

The lawsuit, filed in September 2024, alleges violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Title II of the Americans with



Louisiana Case Reignites Call for Classroom Camera Reform

Disabilities Act, and the U.S. Constitution. It names the Jefferson Parish School Board, Superintendent James Gray, Bonnabel Principal Katelyn Pullen, and several staff members as defendants. The suit seeks compensatory and punitive damages and calls for systemic reforms.

The H.A. case is not an isolated incident. Louisiana's own audits have found widespread use of seclusion and restraint in special education classrooms. In the 2021-22 school year, there were more than 5,000 incidents of seclusion and restraint across the state, yet many school districts lacked adequate oversight and failed to notify parents. In response, state lawmakers passed legislation requiring video cameras in all self-contained special education classrooms. The law, enacted in 2023, initially applied only if parents

requested cameras. However, after the H.A. footage emerged, legislators expanded the law in 2025 to require cameras in all special education classrooms statewide.

Despite these mandates, compliance has been inconsistent. In Jefferson Parish, more than 200 special education classrooms still lacked cameras as of mid-2025. Advocates argue that without video evidence, abuse often goes undetected because many students cannot communicate what happens to them, and employees may not report misconduct. The cameras provide an objective record that can protect students and staff alike.

The H.A. case raises significant legal issues under federal special education and civil rights laws. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act guarantees students with disabilities a free appropriate public education and requires schools to provide services in the least restrictive environment. Physical abuse and improper restraint violate these mandates and may constitute a denial of meaningful educational access. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act prohibit discrimination against people with disabilities by public entities. Allegations that staff singled out a disabled student for abuse and failed to provide proper care could amount to discrimination under these statutes.

Louisiana law also imposes mandatory reporting obligations on school employees. Failure to report suspected abuse to child welfare authorities is a violation of the state's mandatory reporter law. In this case, several staff members allegedly witnessed or participated in abuse yet did not report it. The lawsuit seeks punitive damages for these failures. Finally, the H.A. case



Keith Altman Founder of K Altman Law

touches on the constitutional rights of students; the Supreme Court has recognized that excessive force by school employees can violate the Fourteenth Amendment's substantive due process protections.

[Keith Altman](#), founder of K Altman Law, explained that the allegations underscore systemic problems in special education programs. "No child should endure abuse at school, particularly a child who is unable to speak or defend himself," Altman said. "Video cameras are a critical tool to ensure accountability, but they are not enough on their own. Schools must provide proper training, adhere to federal and state laws, and take swift action when abuse is reported. Families entrust schools with their children's safety. When that trust is violated, parents have the right to seek justice."

Altman encouraged parents of children with disabilities to review their schools' compliance with camera laws and to report any concerns to both school officials and state authorities. "If you believe your child is being mistreated or if your school refuses to install cameras as required, you have legal options. Our firm is committed to holding schools accountable and ensuring that every student receives a safe and appropriate education."

If you are a parent, advocate, or educator concerned about special education safety, you can:

- Request installation and regular monitoring of classroom cameras as required by state law;
- Review your child's Individualized Education Program (IEP) to ensure that it includes appropriate behavioral and safety plans;
- Report suspected abuse or neglect to both school administrators and child protection authorities;
- Contact K Altman Law for a free consultation about your legal rights and options.

For more information, contact K Altman Law at kalonline@kaltmanlaw.com

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