Guess which students get suspended the most

in our post-racial society

by Laura Clawson

*African-American, Latino, and disabled students are suspended from school at disproportionate rates compared to white students, a new report finds. In fact, except for the fact that high suspension rates emphatically should not be the norm, we might just say that straight white students without disabilities are suspended at disproportionately low rates:*

Laura, it is a near statistical impossibility for every group to be suspended at exactly the same rate. Some groups will be suspended more than others. If some groups are being suspended at significantly higher rates than others, then it might be more constructive to look more closely at these groups you described, and try to figure out why that is occurring, rather than just superficially lumping everyone into a victim pile and throwing the race card at it.

*Latino students, girls of color, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender students also were disproportionately suspended—a punishment the report said increases dropout risks and helps push troubled students out of classrooms and into the justice system.*

Laura, did the report say anything about how the punishment affected the rest of the class? Did it say anything about the increased ability of the well-behaved students to learn? To sit in class with less distraction and fear?

Did it say anything about how much better the teachers could perform their difficult jobs after the distracting students were removed?

*The researchers found that black students were 1.78 times as likely to be suspended out of school as white students.*

Laura, what about schools that are predominantly black? How do those rates compare? What about black students who are suspended by black teachers and black principals? Are they racist? And if so, why?

And why didn't you mention that in your essay?

*Latino students' suspension odds were 2.23 times greater than those of white students.*

Laura, why didn't you compare the Latino students to the black students? Based on the raw numbers you provided, it's also true that Latino students are being singled out relative to black students. Why did you only focus on white students?

How many teachers and principals are Latino? Do Latino administrators only suspend black students? If not, and they do suspend Latino students, are they still racist? And if so, why?

Are they only racist when they suspend students who are not from the same race they are? Should teachers and principals only be allowed to suspend students from their own race?

If that were instituted, do you think the suspension rates would change? And if so, why?

Before answering, remember that if your position is correct, then these administrators are racist, and therefore, the suspension rate should drop to nearly zero. Is that what you think would happen?

*Students with disabilities were suspended at twice the rate of their non-disabled peers, and for longer durations.*

Laura, was race involved? If not, then why didn't the report offer a reason, or at least a theory, as to why these racist administrators also hate disabled students?

*Worse, 25 percent of black students with disabilities received at least one out-of-school suspension in the 2009-2010 school year. Research shows that removing so-called "bad kids" from the classroom doesn't help non-disruptive kids learn, according to the collaborative.*

Laura, you can't be serious? Those fools need to redo their "research." If you are sitting in a classroom trying to learn, and someone is misbehaving and distracting everyone's attention away from the lesson, how could you possibly believe that the other students' ability to learn could not be affected?

*The group found that some restorative justice programs and prevention programs that call for more student-teacher engagement can help lower suspension rates and minimize disruptions. The researchers also found that school police often make arrests for “what might otherwise be considered adolescent misbehaviors.”*

*That's how you get a school-to-prison pipeline: When behaviors that, coming from a white, middle-class student, would look like kids being kids, something to educate them not to do but not anything to freak out over, are instead treated as Major Problems.*

Laura, the ones you are accusing of this racial prejudice are the teachers and principals. Many of them are black and Latino. They are undoubtedly fuming over your accusations ... and I don't blame them; and the white administrators have to be even more insulted by your accusations of racism.

You sit back in your ivory tower passing judgment on hard-working, dedicated teachers who are often threatened with physical violence ... and then you victimize them again with essays like this. This essay was a disgusting hack job on people who don't deserve it ... in defense of delinquents who do.

*Even in cases that don't involve police, it's not exactly conducive to learning if kids are learning that school is a punitive place where everything they do will be viewed with suspicion and anger because of who they are.*

Laura, nice example of Begging the Question. What evidence do you offer that they are being punished for who they are?

How many students were suspended for being black? Or Latino? Or etc?

They were suspended for bad behavior. It is a fact that certain groups get suspended at higher rates than other groups. But you have assumed that their suspensions were because they were members of a certain group. You cannot assume that ... you must present evidence to prove that. That is something you have failed to do in this essay.

*And when you look at the list of groups targeted for punishment, it's clear that it is because of who they are.*

Laura, why? Why is it clear? Because that is what you believe?

This essay has only exposed your own prejudice, Laura. You have offered no evidence that the teachers, principals, etc., who are involved in trying to educate our children deserve to be insulted with racist accusations.

*These are the wrong lessons for schools to be teaching, even if they are lessons these kids will eventually be taught by our criminal justice system and our economy.*

Laura, the lesson to learn from this essay is that even some of the brightest minds (like yours) can be led astray by unexamined prejudice.

Your position violates one of the most basic laws of logic: you cannot "assign" causation to a correlaton ... you must prove it.

And this essay offered zero proof.