



PRESS RELEASE

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THIRD FORMER KENNEDY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS FILES LAWSUIT AGAINST ANAHIEM UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT ALLEGING SEXUAL ABUSE BY WATER POLO COACH

Irvine, California - Attorneys representing two former student athletes at John F. Kennedy High School in Anaheim, California announced the filing of another lawsuit against Anaheim Unified School District (AUHSD). The new Complaint details allegations by a third former student against Defendants Principal Russell Earnest, Athletic Director David Jankowski, Co-Athletic Director Dean Wang, Coach Eric Pierce, teacher Ian Sabala and former water polo coach Joshua Owens. [Click here for Motion.](#) [Click here for Declaration.](#)

The suit alleges that the Defendants concealed from the victim's parents and law enforcement officials the fact that victim was sexually abused and harassed coach Owen.

Owens was a part-time girls water polo coach and swim coach at Kennedy High School within AUHSD. He was also a seasonal lifeguard for the Long Beach Fire Department.

The amended Complaint establishes a history of prior knowledge by Earnest, Pierce, Jankowski, Wang and Sabala of alleged abuses by Owens at Kennedy High School in the Anaheim Union High School District. The lawsuit alleges that two years prior to Owens arrest, a parent reported Owens alleged abuse of his daughter to Coach Pierce. Then one year later, a former student notified Teacher Sabala that Owens was alleged to be abusing students. Sabala, in turn advised Jankowski, Wang, and Earnest of the alleged abuse. It is alleged that none of these employees of the District performed their mandatory duty and reported Owens to law enforcement.

Plaintiffs' counsel, Morgan Stewart, in comment stated, "Child sexual abuse at Anaheim Unified High School District began as a serious problem and is becoming a full-blown scandal. Three former students have now come forward and the District still refuses to take action against those who failed to report sexual abuse of minor as required by law." This case is one of two currently involving Kennedy High School coaches abusing students.

Mr. Stewart added: "To have AUHSD then continue to employ Jankowski, Wang and Sabala, despite these failures to report, only reinforces that AUHSD tolerates the abuse of its students and rewards those who fail to report."

The Complaint alleges that while Owens was arrested and has already served time, Earnest, Jankowski, Wang, Sabala and Pierce were never prosecuted despite the police recognizing that they failed to report as required by the law. Rather, each of them continues to work in school environments around minors. Mr. Stewart added in response to this: "The fact that these

individuals placed 14- and 15-year-old girls at risk and continue to work around children is a harbinger that should leave all parents afraid as long as their children remain in a school environment with those that fail to comply with the law and protect children.”

The Complaint notes ongoing investigations of the school and its failure to report and protect children. The Plaintiffs, as part of their claims, urge a complete investigation by the California Department of Education, the California Attorney General and the Commission on Teacher Credentialing. Mr. Stewart said: “It is time to hold Districts and their Administrator’s accountable and make them realize they cannot ignore clear signs of reported abuse of students.”

[Manly, Stewart & Finaldi](#) is the nation’s leading firm representing athletes in child sexual abuse cases against school districts, Universities and Olympic Governing Bodies. They recently represented 180 alleged victims of former Olympic Team doctor Larry Nassar resulting in a \$500 million-dollar settlement against Michigan State University. In 2018 the firm settled cases against the Torrance Unified School District for \$31 million on behalf of alleged victims of former wrestling coach and convicted child molester Thomas Snider, against Los Angeles Unified School district for \$8 million in cases involving former football coach and convicted child molester Jamie Jimenez and for \$14 million in cases involving former Los Angeles Unified District employee Ronnie Lee Roman.