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Child Ousted from School for Genetic Marker

A California couple is suing a school district for violation of their son’s privacy rights. A teacher divulged that the 11-year old student has a genetic marker for Cystic Fibrosis. He doesn’t have the disease, but he was ousted from the school after the parents of two other children with cystic fibrosis were told about his genetic marker without his parent’s consent. But as a carrier, he poses no risk at all.

The U.S. Departments of Education and Justice have submitted an amicus brief in support of the parents and against the school. One physician says it’s unfortunate the child got labeled with cystic fibrosis. Think of what will happen as newborn screening expands to identify more and more genetic markers in children at birth.

“Palo Alto DNA-privacy case could have wide implications,” Sue Dremann, Palo Alto Online, January 26, 2016.