



# ASIAN AMERICANS IN WASHINGTON STATE: *CLOSING THEIR HIDDEN ACHIEVEMENT GAPS*

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# ASIAN AMERICANS IN WASHINGTON STATE: CLOSING THEIR HIDDEN ACHIEVEMENT GAPS

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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## BACKGROUND OF REPORT

In 2008, the Washington State Legislature (HB-2687 Sec. 119, 1&2) funded two separate studies of Asian American and Pacific Islander American students in the State's public schools. This report on Asian American students fulfills the requirement of an agreement with the State of Washington Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs (CAPAA) to conduct a study on the achievement gap of Asian American students, with attention to demographic and educational trends, their ethnic groups and school, family, and community systems. There is a separate report on Pacific Islander students. Studies on African American, American Indian/Alaska Native and Latino students were also undertaken in this period as part of a larger effort of the State to close Washington's achievement gap.



## FRAMEWORK AND PROCESS OF STUDY



The study begins with the premise that the academic challenges of Asian American students are hidden by: (1) the “model minority” stereotype that assumes all Asian Americans are academically successful; (2) the practice of lumping disparate Asian American groups into a single category; and (3) a predominant reliance on mainstream sources to explain Asian American educational experiences. To uncover Asian American achievement gaps, the study features disaggregated data to identify differences across and within Asian American ethnic groups in education and other variables. It also incorporates the findings of community-based research that provide Asian American voices and insights of their situation in schools and U.S. society.

The researchers reviewed State education reports and incorporated quantitative data from the U.S. Census, Office of the Superintendent and Public Instruction (OSPI), Seattle School District, and other sources. The study makes use of qualitative studies on Asian American student experiences and reports of community-based organizations. We also conducted a survey of Asian/Asian American teachers, consulted with youth and social service agencies, and met monthly with an advisory committee of community representatives. The study began on August 1, 2008 and was submitted to CAPAA at the end of December 2008.

## OVERVIEW: WHO ARE ASIAN AMERICANS?

Asian Americans are persons with ancestry from Asian countries and islands in the Pacific Rim who live in the United States. They are an integral part of Washington’s past, present, and future. They helped develop the Pacific Northwest in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries (railroads, mining, agriculture and fisheries) and today can be found in all economic sectors, including Washington’s aerospace, biotech, and high-tech industries and its small businesses, as well as the State’s political and cultural arenas.

In 2007, Asian Americans comprised 6.6% of the State’s population. They are 8% when Asians alone and those who are mixed race are combined. They are



(Source: Wing Luke Asian Museum)

diverse in ethnicity, (24 groups are counted in the U.S. census), languages, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Chinese, Filipinos, Vietnamese, Koreans, and Asian Indians are the five largest groups in the State. Washington has the 7<sup>th</sup> largest number of Asian Americans (429,406) among states.

Currently, 67% of Asian Americans in the State are foreign-born, an outcome of the 1965 Immigration Act and the post 1975 Refugee Acts following the wars in Southeast Asia. And 40% of Asian Americans in the State are limited in English proficiency, which can be a barrier to schooling and employment.

Washington's Asian American ethnic groups have varying family and community resources and networks by which they can support their children's education. For example, the average Asian American per capita income was \$20,141 in 2000, but it ranged from \$28,307 for Japanese to \$6,445 for Hmong. While 36.8% of Asian Americans hold a bachelor's degree or higher, only 6.6% of Cambodians do so, compared to 67% and 58% of Taiwanese and Asian Indians, respectively. Southeast Asian groups are especially disadvantaged in income, poverty rates, education, and English language proficiency (e.g., 65.6% of Vietnamese speak "English less than 'very well'").

## **FINDINGS: HIDDEN AND EVIDENT ACHIEVEMENT GAPS**

### **Washington State Public Schools**

Asian Americans are 8% of the State's students and are concentrated in school districts along the I-5 corridor. In 2007, there were 16 school districts with Asian Americans comprising more than 10% of their student body, most notably, Bellevue (26%), Renton (25%), Seattle (22%) and Highline (21%).

They speak more than 100 languages and dialects with 40% speaking a language other than English as their primary language. The five largest language groups are Vietnamese, Korean, Chinese-Cantonese, Tagalog, and Khmer (Cambodian). Forty percent of Vietnamese-speaking students are enrolled in Seattle (24%), Renton (8%), and Highline (8%) School Districts, whereas nearly 40% of Korean-speaking students are in Federal Way (19%), Bellevue (14%), and Mukilteo (7%).

More than 30% of Asian Americans receive Free/Reduced Price Lunch and 14% are enrolled in Transitional Bilingual Instruction Program (TBIP). In aggregate the Asian American WASL (Washington Assessment of Student Learning) performance is strong compared with other racial/ethnic groups, but uneven by subject area, grade level, and student subgroup. Many are not performing well in math, contrary to their stereotype. ELL students are especially at risk. Girls are outperforming boys in every subject across grades.

## Seattle Public Schools

Seattle schools have the largest number (10,311 or 12%) of Asian American students in the State. Chinese, Vietnamese, and Filipinos are the major groups. There are ethnic group differences. Of Southeast Asians, 46% are not living with both parents, compared with 16% for Chinese. The highest high school dropout rates are among Other Southeast Asians (14%), Other Asians (14%), and Filipinos (9%). School dropout data are likely underestimated, and also include students who report being pushed out or kicked out by authorities. Japanese Americans are doing well in all WASL subjects. Filipino Americans are struggling academically.

## Disengaged English Language Learner Students

Asian American ELL students are underserved, undersupported, and experience academic difficulties. Only one third of Asian Non-Native English speakers are in ELL programs and few of them have been provided with language assistance programs/services in their native language. While the linguistic diversity of Asian American ELL students has long been the excuse for not attending to their needs, school districts along the I-5 corridor can identify their major two to three language groups, but few of them have developed any program for these majority Asian language groups. Teacher quality, teacher-ELL student ratio, and years of support are inadequate. Teacher-centered pedagogy and mainstream-centered ELL curriculum alienate ELL students. Programs that result in English monolingualism (but not necessarily English proficiency) instead of bilingualism, negatively affect students' communications and relations with their families and communities. Little opportunity has been given to develop learning communities that value and incorporate families and their cultures to assist ELL students.

## An Unsupportive School Climate: Asian American Students at Risk

Asian American students experience alienation and marginalization in schools to varying degrees, but WASL data reveal that **Filipino American** and **Southeast Asian American** students are most at risk. Qualitative studies find that teachers favor East Asian students over them. They are seen as low achievers and gang members. They feel no one cares when they are not in the curriculum, and they face bullying and racial violence. Peer group pressure and mental health problems are issues. Asian American teachers play a vital role in supporting students of color. University of Washington-Beyond High School data find ethnic group differences in parental school participation and college attendance. More Southeast Asians and Filipinos are in community colleges than 4-year institutions. Korean and Chinese Americans are more typically in 4-year universities.

## **School, Family and Community Relations**

Asian American parents emphasize education as a hedge against discrimination in a racial climate. The pressures they place on children to succeed can contribute to student distress. Ethnic-based out-of-school time (OST) programs supplement public schooling, supporting both high achievers and struggling students. Community-based youth and social service agencies intervene to support students in academic need, as well as dropouts and gang members, help bridge cultural and generational differences within families, and assist in school-student relations. Models of school-community organization partnerships that increase parental engagement in schools can help close achievement gaps.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **1. Adopt a Data Collection, Research, and Evaluation Plan.**

To assess the reduction of achievement gaps over time, collect accurate data on students' backgrounds and academic outcomes. Disaggregated data by Asian American ethnic groups and in student subgroups is essential. Alone, aggregate data is incomplete. Develop common forms for all school districts to OSPI. Establish links between CSRS and other data sets to facilitate comparative and longitudinal assessment. Consult with Asian American groups in data development and research questions. Follow up with student dropouts and graduates.

### **2. Create a Seamless Pipeline Pre-K through 16.**

Ensure that all Asian American ethnic groups, especially those at-risk, are included in academic and co-curricular programs from early education (pre-K) through K–16. To enhance outreach and partnerships, collaborate with community groups and higher education institutions.

### **3. Broaden and Enhance Measurements and Accountability.**

Use a range of measurements to evaluate student performance. Balance cognitive-based tests ("high-stakes" testing with other forms; qualitative with quantitative data likewise). Educate students and families about measurements, standards, and requirements. Review assessment methods and materials for cultural biases. Engage all stakeholders to ensure positive not punitive measurements.

#### **4. Foster Culturally Responsive Approaches and Practices.**

A supportive school climate for Asian Americans is positive, individualized, free of stereotypes, and views them as assets. Eliminate institutional barriers that disengage students, such as discrimination, bullying, and expectations based on the model minority stereotype. Incorporate culturally responsive teaching and curricula. Train all school personnel to work more effectively with Asian Americans. Recruit, retain, and advance effective Asian American teachers and administrators.

#### **5. Adopt Effective ELL Programs.**

Adopt effective ELL programs and support them for the time necessary for students to achieve academic English proficiency. Ensure all Asian American ELL students are well served. Employ highly effective and well-trained bilingual/ESL teachers, aides, and counselors.

#### **6. Address Teacher Quality and Effectiveness.**

Recruit, support, and reward teachers who demonstrate effectiveness in closing Asian American achievement gaps. We recommend teachers develop positive relations with families and communities; view students as individuals not stereotypes; know their students by gaining knowledge of Asian American ethnic groups; use multiple teaching styles; and provide challenging and engaging curricula that incorporates Asian American histories and cultures.

#### **7. Engage Asian American Families in Schools.**

Many foreign-born parents are unfamiliar with U.S. practices, such as what teachers and schools expect of them and what they can expect of teachers and schools. Engage Asian American parents in ways that are meaningful to them. To be more welcoming, school leaders are encouraged to know their communities, recognize Asian American families and cultures as resources, and help them navigate the U.S. school system. Hold information meetings on community sites. Eliminate language barriers in print materials and with translators.

#### **8. Strengthen School-Community Partnerships.**

Asian American community groups have wide-ranging networks and experts. Community-based organizations (CBOs) have skills and experience working with Asian American families, youth, and their issues. Schools are encouraged to collaborate with community groups and organizations to meet the needs of Asian American students and better serve their families. Partnerships and resource sharing can enhance the work of both schools and communities in closing student achievement gaps, especially in a difficult budget period.

# I. INTRODUCTION

## 1. Framework of the Study

Why a closing the achievement gap report on Asian Americans? Are Asian Americans not a “success story” with relatively high educational attainment in K–12 and beyond? Indeed, there are many Asian American students who are high achievers and doing well academically. Others are stressed out from the pressure of parents, teachers, and society to perform at very high levels. Still others are struggling academically, alienated from schooling and performing below their abilities or dropping out. Why do we not know about them?

The report seeks to make visible Asian American achievement gaps that are hidden by (1) their racial stereotyping as a “model minority” group; (2) the practice of combining all Asian American ethnic groups into a single category; and (3) a predominant reliance on mainstream sources, with little attention to community-based research, to explain Asian American educational status and experiences.

**The Limits of the “Model Minority” Stereotype.** This popular image of high-achieving Asian Americans is exaggerated by stories of some successful Asian Americans and ignores those who are not successful. High educational attainment does not extend to all Asian Americans. Instead the stereotype masks the academic struggles of Asian Americans, silences students’ voices, and separates families and communities from assistance that will benefit youth in learning and thriving in school.

**The Limits of Aggregate Data on Asian Americans.** The hidden Asian American achievement gaps are also obscured by using only combined or aggregate data. Asian Americans are not homogeneous. They are a collection of more than two dozen ethnic groups with distinct histories and cultures in their homelands. Their varying experiences in the United States and with the U.S. government contribute to differences in academic success within and across their ethnic groups. Used alone, aggregate data diminishes the ability of educators and others to identify and assist students with academic difficulties.

**The Value of Disaggregated Data on Asian Americans.**<sup>1</sup> The report uses data that disaggregates by Asian American ethnicity and other attributes. By giving attention to struggling sectors of the Asian American population, such as recent immigrants or refugees, English Language Learners, the working poor, families with health issues and limited networks or whose youth are engaged in gangs and drugs, educators and policymakers can begin to truly understand and support their educational development. Student subgroup data also reveal different academic challenges.

**The Value of Community Studies.** We incorporate qualitative research on Asian American communities. Community-based and ethnicity-specific studies reveal multiple challenges that particular ethnic groups have with the school system. They also provide us with students’ perspectives and voices to gain a greater understanding of their experiences.

In short, the report identifies areas where Asian American students are academically stressed and focuses on those aspects and Asian American student groups most at-risk. The report acknowledges “strivers,” those achieving at great odds.

Asian American community groups celebrate their diversity and complexity. They are very proud of the numbers of their youth who complete high school and continue on to college and beyond, oftentimes in the midst of significant family sacrifices and commitments. But not all Asian American students are succeeding in school. The report will explore in greater detail why this is so.

## **2. Background of the Study**

In April 2008, the Washington State Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs (CAPAA) invited Dr. Shirley Hune, Professor of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies in the College of Education, University of Washington Seattle, to serve as project director for a study of the achievement gaps of Asian American and Pacific Islander American students in Washington State. The project is funded from the General Fund–State Appropriation through HB-2687 Sec. 119 (1&2).

It is a path-breaking move for legislators to acknowledge acute differences between Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders despite their being “lumped together” as a single category for decades and to provide funding for two reports. Two research teams were formed, and they worked both separately and together, with Dr. David T. Takeuchi as the second lead researcher. The studies commenced on August 1, 2008, with final reports submitted at the end of December 2008. See also the separate report on Pacific Islander academic achievement.

The Asian American and Pacific Islander reports are part of a larger effort of the State to close its achievement gap. Studies on African American, American Indian/Alaska Native, and Latino students are also being developed under the auspices of their respective Commissions. During the process, researchers from the various studies shared ideas and resources. Commonalities across the groups will be identified upon the completion of all reports.

**The Multi-Ethnic Think Tank Position Statement (2002).** The CAPAA agreement directed the researchers to begin their analysis with the 2002 position statement of the Multi-Ethnic Think Tank (METT). The METT statement is a bold call to action, seeking educational transformation with an emphasis on an “equitable and culturally competent education for all students in Washington State.” It singles out four conditions that contribute to an inequitable education for minority groups:

- A Eurocentric paradigm that devalues and marginalizes other understandings.
- The State’s overinvestment in narrow and culturally biased standardized tests.

- Socioeconomic disparities, including poverty, crime, gangs, drugs, and community problems.
- The State’s “insufficient data collection and reporting,” which have provided “incoherent and unreliable” information on the educational status of racial and ethnic groups and their subgroups.

The statement also pointed out that the State’s interests and its diverse communities would be better served by assisting more low-income and minority students to be college eligible and to obtain high-skilled jobs and incomes sufficient to support a family in the current economy.<sup>2</sup>

**Aims of the Asian American Study.** A strategic next step is to provide more complete data on specific racial and ethnic groups, including their subgroups. Toward a better assessment of the educational status of Asian American students, CAPAA directed researchers to provide the following:

1. A detailed analysis of the achievement gap for Asian American students that includes:
  - A review of the demographic characteristics of subsets of Asian Americans in Washington State.
  - Consideration of the effects of demographic trends among Asian Americans in state educational systems (early learning, K–12, and higher education).
  - An analysis of disaggregated data for Asian Americans on the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL).
  - An analysis of other disaggregated data for Asian Americans related to student success and positive impact on student learning.
  - An analysis of school, family, and community support systems for subsets of Asian Americans in Washington State.
  - Study and review of current quantitative data regarding Asian American students.
2. Recommendations for a comprehensive plan to close the achievement (opportunity) gap for all students, with particular attention to and emphasis upon strategies that positively impact Asian American students, including New Americans.
3. Identification of performance measures suitable for personalizing instruction for Asian American students, school accountability, and state accountability (including federal requirements under the No Child Left Behind Act regarding adequate yearly progress).<sup>3</sup>

**A Community-Based Approach.** The researchers are representative of and have expertise in several Asian American and Pacific Islander communities. Some have extensive research experience in education and related fields. We had a short time (5 months) to conduct and write the study.



We first examined key State publications related to K–12 and beyond. For example, three reports provide a vision, new initiatives, and attention to reducing educational disparities and expanding opportunities for minority groups. They are: the Addressing the Achievement Gap study (2002) of the Office of the Superintendent and Public Instruction (OSPI),<sup>4</sup> the final report of Washington Learns (2006),<sup>5</sup> and the Washington Higher Education Coordinating Board’s 2008 Strategic Master Plan for Higher Education.<sup>6</sup> Though insightful of the issues, these and other reports offer an organizational (top-down) view to closing the achievement gap.

This study proposes that a community-based analysis be incorporated as well in evaluating Asian American student data and experiences. Such an approach from the ground up utilizes knowledge of their histories and communities and considers students, families, and communities as contributors and partners in closing their achievement gaps.

The report uses a range of quantitative data on Asian Americans: the U.S. Census, the State’s Office of Superintendent and Public Instruction (OSPI), the Seattle Public School District, and the University of Washington–Beyond High School (UW-BHS) project. We sought out data that separated Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, as well as data on Asian American subgroups. In some cases, we include combined Asian American and Pacific Islander (API) data because disaggregated data are not available. To complement and supplement the data, which were limited in some areas, the report includes research findings on Asian Americans and their education in other states.

We ground the study in reports of educational associations and community organizations. We listened to community members and former students talk about their encounters with the education system. We conducted a survey of Asian/Asian American teachers in Washington State and sought their insights. The study also consulted with youth and social service center leaders. We met monthly with an advisory committee of community representatives and were guided by them. A confluence of publications is sounding an alarm about the marginalization of Asian American students in educational policy and of growing socioeconomic disparities within and among their communities.<sup>7</sup> The report joins this concern.

The report is divided into three parts: (1) an executive summary; (2) a narrative, accompanied by a map, tables, and figures, with descriptions of Asian American immigration history and demographics; analyses of educational data; discussions of key at-risk groups and issues of school, family, and community engagement; and recommendations, with “best practices” being discussed at different stages of the report; and (3) appendices with additional demographic data, selected bibliographic materials, and brief notes on the lead researchers and research team.

## II. WHO ARE ASIAN AMERICANS?

### 1. Asian Americans as a Racial Category

**Defining Asian Americans.** Asian Americans are persons with ancestry from countries on the Asian continent and islands in the Pacific Rim who live in and call the United States their home. The map on the following page identifies their original locales. Although classified as a single racial category in U.S. census and institutional data, Asian Americans are a collection of many national groupings, making them a diverse and complex population. Asian American is a fluid, flexible, and some would say, politically determined term that is subject to various interpretations by different persons and situations.

**The Asian American Category in the U.S. Census.** Complicating the matter, in 1977 federal agencies combined Asian American and Pacific Islander into a single racial category, Asian and Pacific Islander, for administrative and statistical reporting. Although useful in some respects, the two communities found the consolidated category to be a disservice to them in resource and service allocations and called for two separate categories. In the 2000 census, there are separate data for Asians and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islanders (NHPI) and disaggregated data for the two categories. Table 1 identifies the 24 groups in the U.S. census under the Asian American category and the extent of their ethnic diversity.

Because the U.S. Census collects data on Filipinos as Asian Americans, we include them in this report. We note that some Filipinos consider themselves part of the Pacific Islander category.

**Table 1. U.S. Census 2000: Asian American Ethnic Groups**

Asian Indian	Filipino	Laotian	Singaporean
Bangladeshi	Hmong	Malaysian	Sri Lankan
Bhutanese	Indo Chinese	Maldivian	Taiwanese
Burmese	Iwo Jiman	Nepalese	Thai
Cambodian	Japanese	Okinawan	Vietnamese
Chinese	Korean	Pakistani	Other Asian

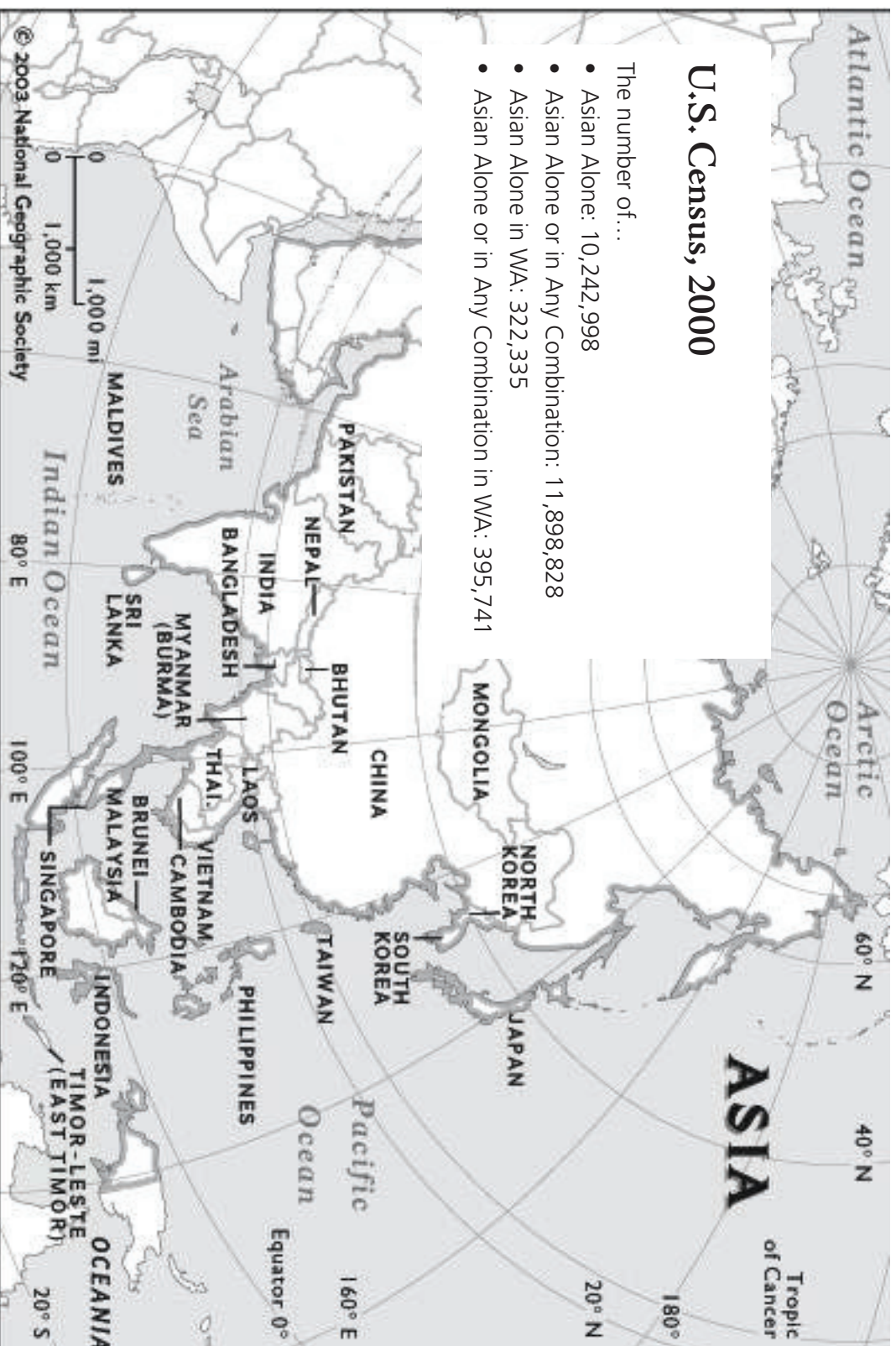
Source: National Commission on Asian American and Pacific Islander Research in Education (CARE). *Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, Facts, Not Fiction: Setting the Record Straight*. New York: The College Board, 2008, 16.

## The Map of Asia: Countries of Asian American Origin

### U.S. Census, 2000

The number of...

- Asian Alone: 10,242,998
- Asian Alone or in Any Combination: 11,898,828
- Asian Alone in WA: 322,335
- Asian Alone or in Any Combination in WA: 395,741



Asian American ethnic groups also have commonalities, such as how they are treated by U.S. institutions and other Americans. Across the nation, they come together in pan-Asian organizations, and oftentimes with Pacific Islander groups in Asian Pacific Islander or Asian Pacific American (terms are used interchangeably) associations, to address shared concerns. This can be seen in Washington State, for example, in churches, ethnic newspapers, and social agencies. The historic pan-Asian community of Seattle's Chinatown/International District and the pan-Asian and Pacific Islander focus of the Wing Luke Asian Museum are models of ways in which Asian American and Pacific Islander groups coexist and collaborate.

## **2. Knowing Asian American Immigration History**

Knowledge of Asian American history is beneficial to educators and policy makers addressing their achievement gaps. The history of Asian Americans begins with the sea trade. Filipino seamen sent to Mexico on Spanish galleons settled in southeastern Louisiana in the mid-1760s. East Indians (Asian Indians) transported on English and American vessels in the 1790s as part of the India trade could be found as household servants of sea captains in Massachusetts and as indentured servants or slaves in Pennsylvania.<sup>1</sup>

**First Wave of Asian Immigrants: 1840s–1930s.** Three large-scale waves of Asian migration, interspersed with U.S. immigration restriction laws, mark Asian American history and demographics. The first wave of nearly 1 million Asians, most of them young men, was significant in the economic development of the western states and Hawai'i. The 370,000 Chinese (1840s–1880s), 400,000 Japanese (1880s–1920), and 180,000 Filipinos, 7,000 Koreans, and 7,000 Asian Indians (1900s–1930) are recognized as pioneers in developing processes, industries, and services that enriched the nation.<sup>2</sup>

**Asians in the Pacific Northwest.** The Chinese mined gold and coal and built most of the railroad lines and connections before 1900. The Japanese worked on the railroads and in construction. Filipinos were important in farm work and the canneries, as were Koreans, and were active union organizers. Asian Indians were also agricultural workers. All groups started small businesses as well. During this period, Washington's economic growth benefited significantly from their labor and know-how.<sup>3</sup>

**Anti-Asian Activities.** Asian American history prior to the end of World War II is also one of racism and xenophobia that included anti-Asian laws, violence, school and housing segregation, job discrimination, and civil rights violations. Two transformative events impacted all Asian groups: (1) the Chinese Exclusion Acts (1882–1943) that initiated a series of anti-Asian immigration acts and (2) the removal of about 110,000 Japanese Americans from the West Coast during World War II and their internment in "war relocation camps," based largely on racial bias, war hysteria, and failed political leadership at the highest levels.

Washington has had its share of anti-Asian activities. For example, 700 Chinese residents were expelled from Tacoma in 1885, the largest anti-Chinese demonstration in the State. Japanese and Filipinos were restricted from owning or leasing land by anti-alien land laws passed in the 1920s and not repealed until 1966. Asians also faced major opposition when they sought to socialize and especially to marry outside their race.<sup>4</sup>

Asian immigration did not begin again until after the McCarran-Walter Act of 1952. Among the immigrants were Chinese, Japanese, and Korean wives of Asian and non-Asian servicemen from World War II and the Korean War. The second large-scale wave of Asian immigration began after 1965 and continues to the present.

**Second Wave of Asian Immigrants: Post-1965.** The 1965 Immigration Act is a watershed in U.S. and Asian American history. As an unanticipated outcome of immigration reform, it increased and diversified Asian immigration by (1) providing Asian states with annual quotas after removing restrictions based on national origin (i.e., anti-Asian legislation); (2) giving priority to family reunification, which allowed Asian Americans to sponsor close relatives, and (3) introducing economic visa preferences to meet U.S. labor needs.

**Socioeconomic Diversity by Economic Visa Preferences.** Selective Asian migration to the U.S. contributes to their socioeconomic and educational differences. Some new Asian immigrants have limited English and little formal education. Many of them arrive under a visa preference to fill low-skill low-paying jobs where there are labor shortages as determined by the Department of Labor. Others hold higher education degrees. As part of a global circulation of talent, professionals are recruited for exceptional ability as nurses, physicians, scientists, engineers, and other highly skilled specialists. They are a “brain gain” to the United States and a “brain drain” to their homeland. Aerospace, high-tech, and biotech industries in Washington benefit from this preference.

**Third Wave: Southeast Asian Refugees, 1975 and After.** Refugees are persons who do not willingly choose to leave their homelands. The third wave, made up largely of refugees, is an outcome of the U.S. military involvement in Southeast Asia. U.S. refugee acts after 1975 sought to resettle Southeast Asians displaced from their war-torn countries. One million Vietnamese, Cambodian, Hmong, Mien, and other Laotians arrived between 1975 and 1990 alone. Most started their new lives in America with few material goods, their remaining family members scattered or lost, and often traumatized by wartime, their escape, and many years in refugee camps. Southeast Asian groups are part of the new ethnic landscape of Washington. Their challenges to make up for the disruptions of their lives and livelihoods are significantly different from those who come as traditional or “voluntary” immigrants with plans and established social networks.

**Asians in the Diaspora.** Asian American ethnic identity and community building is also enriched by the Asian diaspora. Asians settled in other parts of the globe in earlier centuries and acquired new cultural forms and experiences before subsequently immigrating to the United States. What does it mean to be Chinese when one’s family has resided in Vietnam, Peru, the Caribbean, Canada, or New Zealand for more than

one generation? “Chino Latinos” include those of Chinese, Japanese, and/or Korean heritage from Latin America; they may often cite Spanish or Portuguese as a primary language. How are Filipinos from Fiji, Guam, or Hawai’i similar to or different from those coming directly from the Philippines? There are also East Indians from the Caribbean and Africa whose families originated in South Asia. Moreover, there are incredible cultural diversities within each Asian country.

**Adoptees and Mixed-Race Asian Americans.** Asian adoptees, notably Koreans and Chinese, are also Asian Americans. Another change is the growing numbers of mixed-race Asian Americans with bi/multiracial, bi/multicultural, and also transnational experiences. The 2006 U.S. Census cited Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue as having the highest concentration of mixed-race people (nearly 4% of the area’s population) of the nation’s 25 largest metropolitan areas. Many of them are Asian Americans.<sup>5</sup>

.....  
: Searching for the American Dream :  
: Some Asian Americans have :  
: achieved the American dream; :  
: others still struggle to achieve it. :  
.....

**Becoming an Asian American and an Ethnic.** All New Americans face challenges in acculturating. The process goes beyond acquiring paper documents and other forms of identification. It is about learning different ways of being, doing, and thinking, and very often, a new language. For Asian Americans, this includes becoming an ethnic group member as designated by U.S. policies and practices. Shifting one’s identity from Vietnamese national to being a Vietnamese American, for example, generally takes more than one generation in the United States. Becoming comfortable in a new ethnic identity takes time and support. It is heavily influenced by how one is treated in the larger society and its institutions. Schools play a vital role and have always been sites for both reinforcing inequality and providing opportunities for greater equality.

### 3. Asian Americans Today

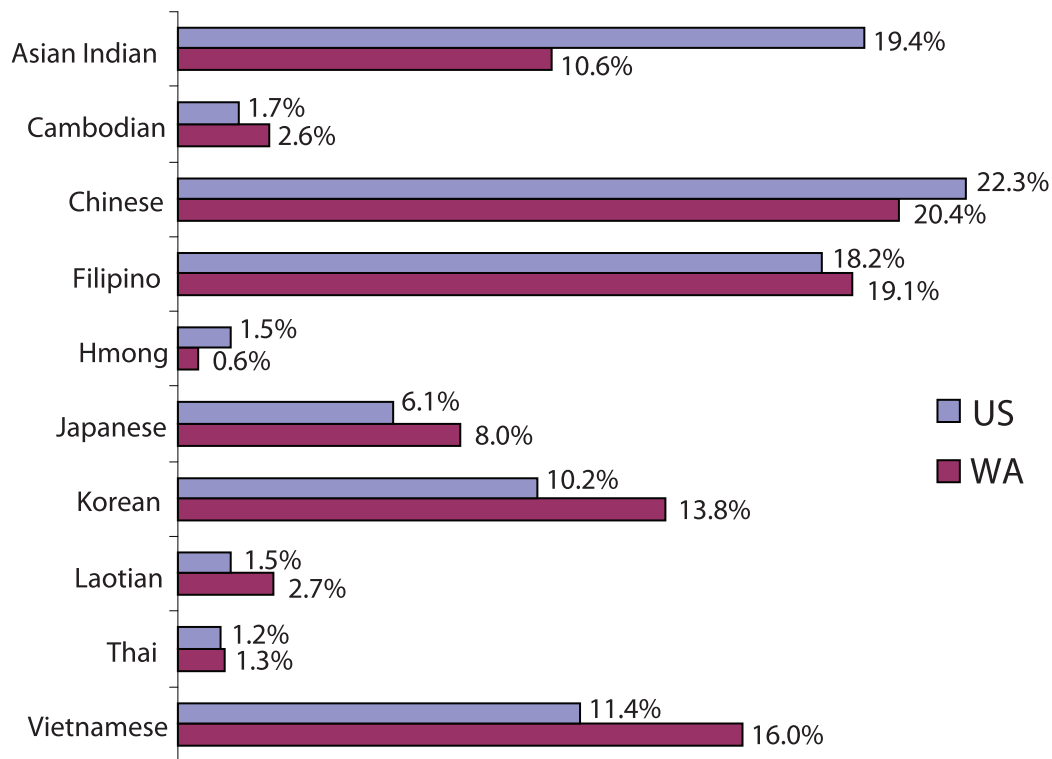
The dynamics of Asian migration discussed above are reflected in Washington’s Asian American population today.

**Population Growth and Size.** Asian Americans are the second fastest growing racial or ethnic group in the United States after Latinos (Hispanics).<sup>6</sup> Like Latinos, this increase is due primarily to immigration. In 2007, Asians alone made up 4.4% (13.2 million) of the U.S. population and 6.6% (429,406) of the State’s population. Asian Americans are the largest racial minority group in Washington, followed by African Americans (3.4%). Asian Americans constitute an even larger group, 8% in the State, when Asians alone or in any combination with one or more other races are considered (Appendix A, Table A1). Washington ranks fifth in the nation in the percentage of Asians alone after Hawai’i,

California, New Jersey, and New York (Appendix A, Table A2). They are concentrated in King, Snohomish, and Pierce counties (Appendix A, Table A3).

**Largest Asian American Ethnic Groups.** Figure 1 compares Asian American groups in the United States and Washington State in 2007. The five largest groups in the State are the Chinese, Filipinos, Vietnamese, Koreans, and Asian Indians. In comparison, the five largest groups nationwide are the Chinese, Asian Indians, Filipinos, Vietnamese, and Koreans. Some groups, such as Filipinos, Koreans, and nearly all Southeast Asian groups, are proportionally larger in the State than in the nation. Washington’s Asian Indian population has increased to such an extent that India plans to open a consulate in Seattle next year.<sup>7</sup> The State’s Asian American population is growing, diverse, and ever changing.

**Figure 1.**  
**Ethnic Group Percentages of Asian Americans in the United States and Washington State, 2007**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2007 American Community Survey. Table B02006. Asian Alone by Selected Groups—Universe: Total Asian Alone Population. Data Set: 2007 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates.

**Foreign Born versus Native Born.** Together, second- and third-wave Asians have shifted Asian Americans to a predominantly foreign-born population. They outnumber those native born 2 to 1 (69% nationally and 67% in Washington of all Asian Americans). This is vastly different from other racial and ethnic groups in the State. Whites, Blacks, American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN), Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (NHPI), and Latinos are 5%, 8%, 3%, 27%, and 38% foreign born, respectively. There are differences among Asian American ethnic groups, too. In the

State, most Japanese Americans (about 59%) are U.S. born and many generations American, but all other Asian American ethnic groups are predominantly foreign born. Of the largest groups in Washington, nearly 66% of Filipinos, 69% of Chinese, 78% of Vietnamese, and 78% of Koreans are foreign born (Appendix A, Table A4).

#### **4. Socioeconomic Characteristics: “Success Story” or Struggling to Survive**

Two indicators, median family income and education attainment, are used often to show that Asian Americans are not in need of attention from policy makers and educators. Disaggregated data within socioeconomic indicators and immigration history give a different picture. Some are successful; many are struggling to survive.

**Median Family Income.** Median family income suggests Asian Americans are successful until we consider subgroup data. In Washington State in 2000, Asian American families (\$54,611) earned more than the national average (\$53,760) and slightly less than Whites (\$55,856). However, some ethnic groups have median family incomes far below the Asian American average in Washington State. This includes Cambodian, Hmong, and Indonesian families with incomes of \$34,801, \$27,955, and \$34,239, respectively (Appendix A, Table A4).

**Per Capita Income and Household Size.** Per capita income more accurately measures economic well-being than does median family income. The average Asian American household size in 2000 was 3.1, larger than the nation in general (2.6). But this too differs. It is common for individuals in most Southeast Asian groups to live in households of 5 or more people.<sup>8</sup> In Washington, per capita income of Asian Americans (\$20,141) is less than the U.S. average (\$22,973) and that of Whites (\$24,674), given (or reflecting) the larger Asian American household size. Per capita income of Cambodians (\$10,584), Hmong (\$6,445), Laotians (\$12,911), and Vietnamese (\$14,553) in the State are much lower than the U.S. and Washington State averages for Asian Americans (Appendix A, Table A4).

**Poverty and Health Care.** In Washington, 13% of Asian Americans live in poverty, which is slightly higher than the State average of 11%. Poverty rates are much higher than the State average for certain ethnic groups, notably the Hmong (46%), Indonesians (26%), and Cambodians (25%) (Appendix A, Table A4). Health care statistics also reveal the fragility of Asian American communities. Nineteen percent of Asian Americans lacked health insurance, similar to Blacks (19.5%) in one 3-year period (1998–2000). In Asian American families whose income is below the poverty level, the uninsured rate for children is almost 28%.<sup>9</sup>

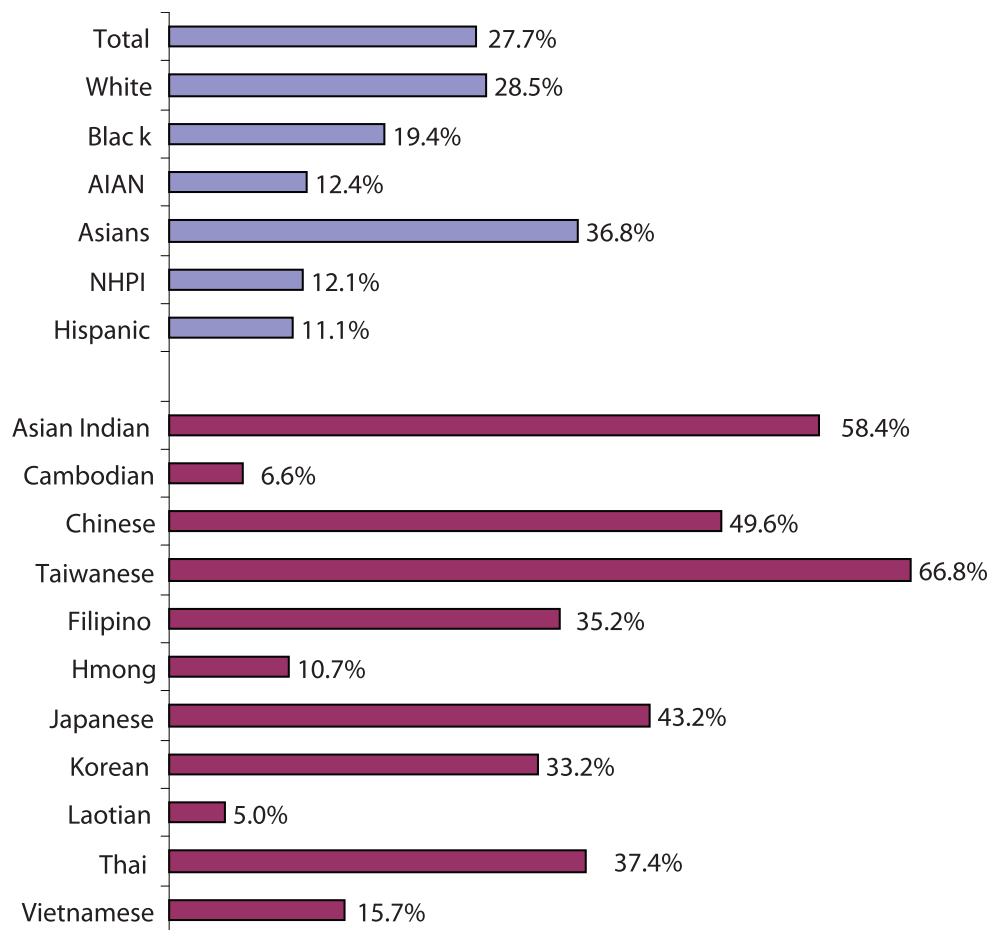
**Home Ownership.** Home ownership is a measure of achieving the American dream. In 2000, only 53% of Asian Americans lived in homes they owned, compared with 66% for all Americans. All Asian American ethnic groups have below-average homeownership rates, but there are differences. Consider the proportions of home owners among the following: Japanese (60%), Filipinos (59%), and Chinese (58%), compared with



Pakistanis (40%), Koreans (41%), and Cambodians (44%). Moreover, many households live in overcrowded conditions.<sup>10</sup>

**Educational Attainment.** Figure 2 provides data on bachelor’s or higher degrees held by Asian Americans in Washington in 2000. Asian Americans in aggregate are the most educated group in the State by this indicator.

**Figure 2.**  
**Educational Attainment (Bachelor’s Degree or Higher) by Race/Ethnicity and Asian American Ethnic Groups in Washington State, 2000**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2000 Decennial Census. Tables DP-2. Profile of Selected Social Characteristics: 2000. Data Set: Census 2000 Summary File 4 (SF 4)–Sample Data.

Disaggregated data, however, reveals wide disparities. Among Taiwanese and Asian Indians, 67% and 58%, respectively, hold college degrees, whereas other Asian American ethnic groups, notably some Southeast Asian groups, fall below Blacks, American Indians and Alaska Native, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders, and Latinos in earning college degrees. Their high and low education attainment reflects the selective migration of Asian professionals and those with little or no formal education, including many refugees.

A truer measure of Asian American educational attainment takes into account the opportunities (or lack of them) available in the K–16 pipeline, whether they be newcomers or two or more generations in America. Combining the educational attainment of the brain gain, which is based on immigration selectivity, with this measure inflates Asian American degree gains and distorts any assessment of the academic achievement of Asian Americans within the American educational system.

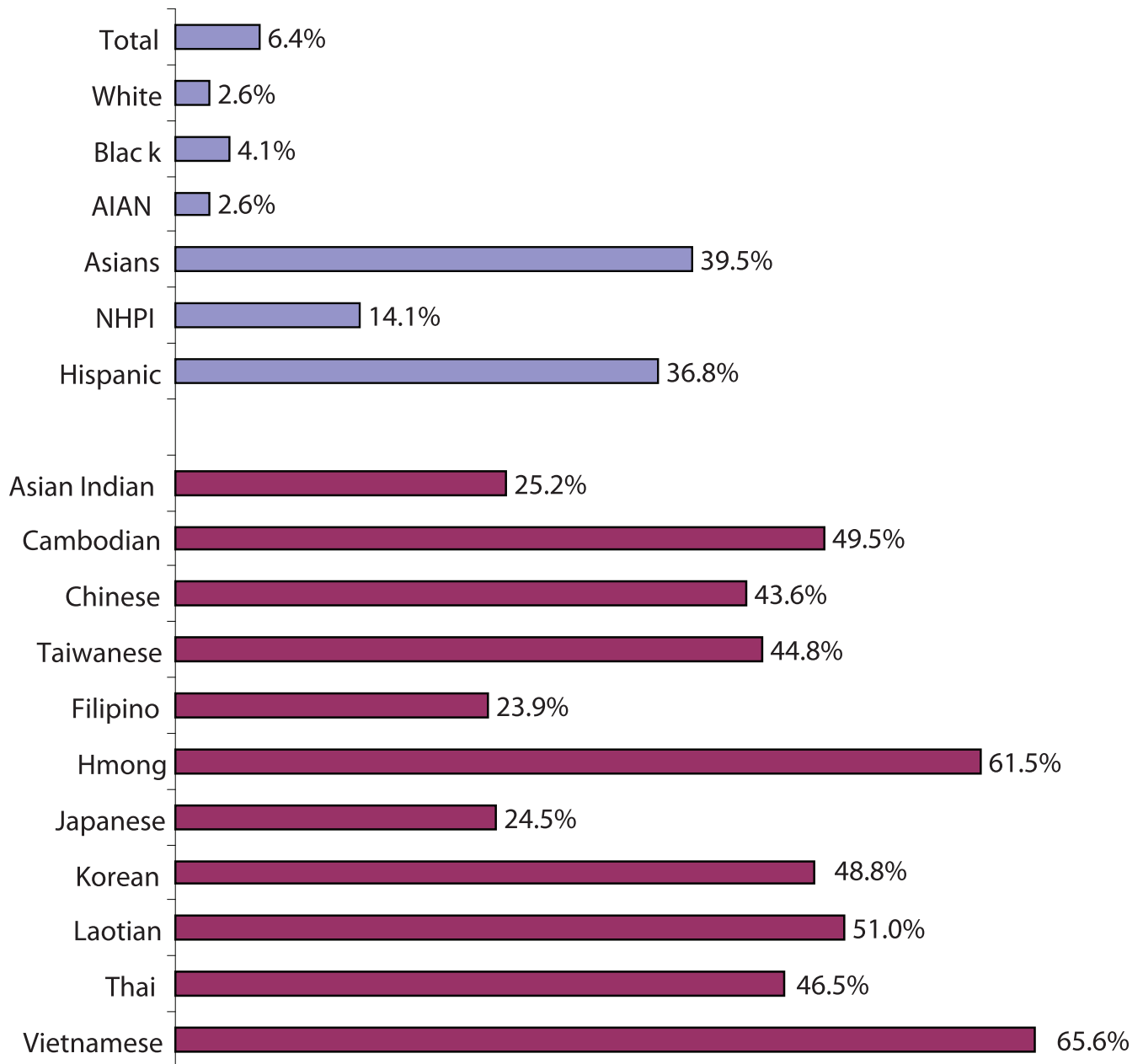
**English Language Proficiency.** English language proficiency broadens access to and opportunities for schooling and employment. Figure 3 reveals that nearly 40% of all Asian Americans in Washington are of limited English proficiency (LEP), that is, they spoke “English less than ‘very well’” in the 2000 census; their rate is higher than that of Latinos (nearly 37%) in the State. Again, there are wide disparities, with Vietnamese (65.6%), Hmong (61.5%), Laotians (51%), and Cambodians (49.5%) having very high LEP rates.

Figure 3 shows the extent to which specific Asian American ethnic groups are considered LEP. The challenges that adult Asian Americans face is one matter, but for students, being an English Language Learner is a significant obstacle to their academic achievement and one we will examine in the report.

To summarize, Asian Americans are a diverse and complex population; not all are successful. In addition to ethnic group disparities, there are within-group socioeconomic differences. One study of distressed or job poor areas for Asian Americans noted the Seattle area bound on the west by S. Airport Way and on the east by Highway 157. Asian Americans in distressed areas have a high foreign-born birth rate, poor English language abilities, low levels of education, and the need to commute elsewhere for work.<sup>11</sup>

The implications for grades K–12 are challenging. Asian Americans are also younger than the U.S. population as a whole.<sup>12</sup> Attention to their early education in the State is needed. Most important, being largely foreign-born and raised in countries other than the United States, most families and students are unfamiliar with the State’s educational system and American cultural practices of how to relate to schools.<sup>13</sup>

**Figure 3. Percentage of Limited English Proficiency (LEP) by Race/ Ethnicity and Asian American Ethnic Groups in Washington State, 2000**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2000 Decennial Census. Tables DP-2. Profile of Selected Social Characteristics. Data Set: Census 2000 Summary File 4 (SF 4)-Sample Data.

### III. ASIAN AMERICAN STUDENTS IN WASHINGTON STATE PUBLIC SCHOOLS: OSPI DATA

**OSPI Data.** To examine the status and progress of Asian American students in the State, we relied on two data sets from the Office of the Superintendent and Public Instruction (OSPI): 2007–2008 Core Student Record System (CSRS) and Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) data. The WASL is a statewide assessment tool to measure student academic performance. It serves as a measure of accountability for schools and districts and meets the requirements of the 2001 federal education law No Child Left Behind (NCLB).

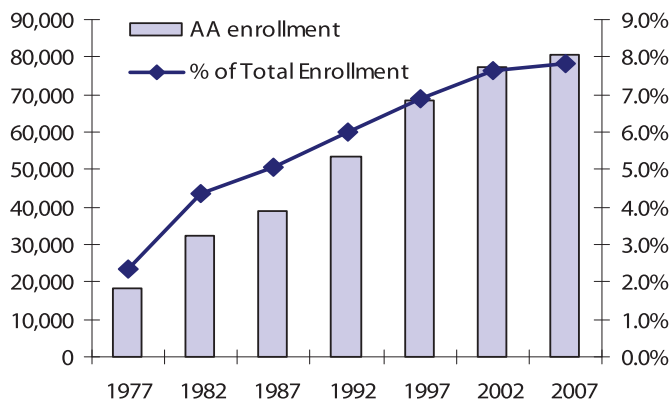
Beginning in 2004, OSPI provided separate data for Asian American and Pacific Islander students. This allows for analyses of each community. The CSRS is designed to provide comprehensive information regarding student demographics and academic tracks in response to federal and state reporting requirements. The WASL tests students in four subject areas at different grade levels: reading (Grades 3–8 and 10), writing (Grades 4, 7, and 10), mathematics (Grades 3–8 and 10), and science (Grades 5, 8, and 10). WASL data focus on individual scores, levels, and pass or fail in meeting standards for every subject tested in each grade. Although the two data sets function as highly qualified sources for our analysis, they also pose difficulties.

**Limitations of OSPI Data.** The data do not disaggregate for Asian American ethnic subgroups other than by language codes and hinder an analysis of disparities across their ethnicities. Though the two data sets were expected to be identical in terms of student demographics, such as grade and language, we found discrepancies when merging them. For example, language codes for the WASL and CSRS were different. Some districts provided incorrect or incomplete information for some students, particularly those who transferred in or out, and in regard to ethnic codes. Some districts lumped together Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in their CSRS report. This compromised our ability to provide an accurate demographic profile. Bearing these discrepancies in mind, we provide key characteristics of Asian American students in the State’s public schools.

#### 1. Enrollment Growth

Figure 4 shows Asian American enrollment

**Figure 4.**  
**Asian American K-12 Enrollment in Washington State, 1997-2007**



Note: Prior to the school year of 2004, OSPI combined AA and PI data.

Source: OSPI Enrollment Data

increasing from 2.4% of the State's students in 1997 to nearly 8% in 2007, or from less than 20,000 to more than 80,000 over three decades. Their increased presence requires the appropriate attention of schools.

## **2. Geographical Concentration of Asian American Students by School District and Language Group**

Table 2 delineates the school districts where Asian Americans and Asian language students are enrolled. Two thirds of Asian Americans are in 16 school districts around the Seattle Puget Sound area. Seattle Public Schools is the largest school district and has 12% of all Asian American students in the State. In terms of percentage of Asian Americans within district, Bellevue School District has the highest rate at 26%, followed by Renton (25%), Seattle (22%) and Highline school district (21%).

Asian language groups are concentrated in different districts (Table 2). For example, 40% of Vietnamese-speaking students are enrolled in Seattle (24%), Renton (8%), and Highline (8%) school districts, whereas nearly 40% of Korean-speaking students are in Federal Way (19%), Bellevue (14%), and Mukilteo (7%). In another interesting comparison, 42% of Chinese Cantonese-speaking students are enrolled in Seattle Public Schools, whereas 40% of Chinese Mandarin-speaking students are in the Bellevue school district. Hence, districts have different challenges in assisting parents and students.

OSPI language group data, however, is an incomplete representation of both ethnic group data and language group data. It is not a proxy for ethnic diversity, because some Asian American students are English-speaking only. Other Asian Americans are not in the language group database because their families chose not to identify them in this manner. Many families believe that placing their children in English Language Learner (ELL) programs penalizes them or is a liability to their integration into the mainstream. Some families simply are not given the appropriate information or lack a comprehension of the language programs and their forms to utilize them, a situation made more complicated by the parents' own limited English proficiency. Yet, many children considered limited English proficient (LEP) might benefit from receiving ELL services. On the other hand, there are also Asian American students in ELL programs who should not have been placed there and others who are languishing in them and would find their academic development enhanced in regular programs.

Table 2. School Districts with More Than 10% Asian Americans and Geographical Concentration by Asian Language Group, 2007

	All Asian (N=83,226)		Vietnamese (N=7,939)		Korean (N=4,463)		Cantonese (N=2,629)		Tagalog (N=2,619)		Cambodian (N=2,294)		Punjabi (N=1,660)		Mandarin (N=1,352)		As Am % within district
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	
Seattle	10,311	12.4	1,934	24.4	78	1.7	1,097	41.7	638	24.4	389	17.0	23	1.4	218	16.1	22%
Bellevue	4,378	5.3	228	2.9	619	13.9	480	18.3	78	3.0	42	1.8	11	0.7	545	40.3	26%
Kent	4,352	5.2	561	7.1	124	2.8	90	3.4	254	9.7	164	7.1	566	34.1	33	2.4	15%
Highline	3,857	4.6	636	8.0	5	0.1	6	0.2	76	2.9	100	4.4	107	6.4	3	0.2	21%
Tacoma	3,637	4.4	577	7.3	123	2.8	18	0.7	31	1.2	595	25.9	6	0.4	0	0.0	12%
Lake Wash.	3,629	4.4	144	1.8	95	2.1	72	2.7	24	0.9	48	2.1	15	0.9	80	5.9	15%
Federal Way	3,513	4.2	288	3.6	859	19.2	56	2.1	166	6.3	93	4.1	118	7.1	19	1.4	15%
Renton	3,464	4.2	669	8.4	43	1.0	258	9.8	174	6.6	85	3.7	53	3.2	35	2.6	25%
Issaquah	3,342	4.0	83	1.0	188	4.2	33	1.3	10	0.4	3	0.1	6	0.4	37	2.7	20%
Edmonds	3,043	3.7	354	4.5	255	5.7	83	3.2	83	3.2	62	2.7	60	3.6	34	2.5	14%
North Shore	2,274	2.7	88	1.1	112	2.5	0	0.0	23	0.9	17	0.7	15	0.9	33	2.4	11%
Everett	2,263	2.7	344	4.3	197	4.4	12	0.5	65	2.5	76	3.3	55	3.3	9	0.7	12%
Mukitteo	2,186	2.6	236	3.0	316	7.1	33	1.3	60	2.3	73	3.2	53	3.2	21	1.6	15%
N. Thurston	1,808	2.2	86	1.1	64	1.4	19	0.7	14	0.5	37	1.6	0	0.0	0	0.0	13%
Shoreline	1,719	2.1	131	1.7	201	4.5	143	5.4	105	4.0	17	0.7	27	1.6	56	4.1	18%
Auburn	1,660	2.0	108	1.4	58	1.3	0	0.0	64	2.4	37	1.6	96	5.8	0	0.0	11%
<b>Total</b>	55436	<b>66.6</b>	6467	81.5	3337	74.8	2400	91.3	1865	71.2	1838	80.1	1211	73.0	1123	83.1	

### 3. Linguistic and Socioeconomic Characteristics of Asian American Students

Asian American students in Washington are linguistically diverse. They speak more than 100 languages and dialects. As Table 3 indicates, 40% of them speak languages other than English as their primary language. Of the languages spoken by more than 1,000 Asian American students, the largest non-English language group is Vietnamese, followed by Korean, Chinese-Cantonese, Tagalog, Khmer, Punjabi, Chinese-Mandarin, and Japanese. Tagalog is used by Filipinos. Although the terms Cambodian and Khmer are often used interchangeably, Khmer is the proper name of the language of the Cambodian community.<sup>1</sup> These, the eight largest Asian non-English speaking groups in the State, constitute 29% of the total Asian American student population and 73% of its non-English-speaking population.

More than one third (36%) of Asian American students speaking these eight languages are English Language Learners (ELL), ranging from 29% to 42% depending on the ethnic group. Language barriers are an impediment to academic achievement for all students. For some ethnic groups, these obstacles are made more difficult by their families' low socioeconomic position. More than 50% of Asian American ELL students are receiving Free/Reduced Price Lunch, a much higher rate than those of Asian Americans overall (31%) and the State student population (36%).<sup>2</sup>

**Table 3. Linguistic and Socioeconomic Characteristics of Asian American Students in Washington's Public Schools, 2007**

		<b>% of Total Asian</b>	<b>% of Asian Non-English Speakers</b>	<b>% of TBIP</b>	<b>% of FRPL</b>
<b>All Asian</b>	83,226				
<b>TBIP (ELL)</b>	11,676	14	NA	NA	51
<b>FRPL</b>	25,750	31	NA	23	NA
<b>Languages with 1,000+ Speakers</b>					
<b>English</b>	50,204	60	NA	NA	23
<b>Vietnamese</b>	7,939	10	24	38	55
<b>Korean</b>	4,463	5	14	32	19
<b>Chinese-Cantonese</b>	2,629	3	8	29	43
<b>Tagalog</b>	2,619	3	8	39	39
<b>Khmer (Cambodian)</b>	2,294	3	7	37	64
<b>Punjabi</b>	1,660	2	5	42	60
<b>Chinese-Mandarin</b>	1,352	2	4	29	20
<b>Japanese</b>	1,000	1	3	37	12

Note: Chinese-unspecified language group (N = 1,181) is excluded from this analysis due to the inability to identify their languages. TBIP = Transitional Bilingual Instruction Program; ELL = English Language Learner; FRPL = Free/Reduced Price Lunch.

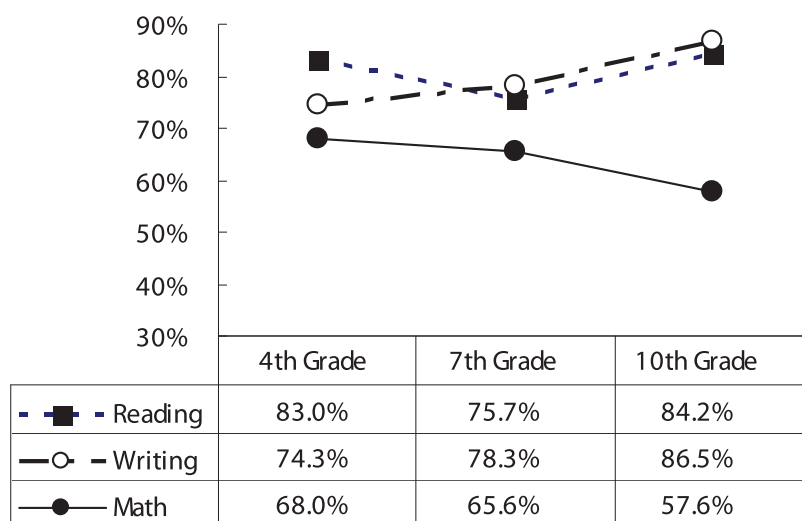
Source: OSPI CSRS October Data, 2007.

Table 3 also reveals ethnic disparities in participation in Transitional Bilingual Instruction (TBIP) and Free/Reduced Price Lunch programs. Khmer, Punjabi, and Vietnamese language speakers have higher rates of receiving Free/Reduced Price Lunch (64%, 60%, and 55%, respectively) than Korean and Chinese-Mandarin language speakers have (19% and 20%, respectively). Though the latter ethnic groups have higher household incomes, English language proficiency remains an issue for them as well.

#### 4. Asian American Academic Disparities: WASL Performance

The WASL and standards testing in general are widely discussed by educators but are outside the scope of our report. We focus here on interpreting WASL data as it pertains to Asian American students. They in aggregate (all Asian) perform better than any other racial or ethnic group in Washington State in terms of WASL achievement, but this performance is uneven by grade level, subject area, and student subgroup.

**Figure 5.**  
**Asian American WASL Performance by Grade and by Subject Area, 2007-08**

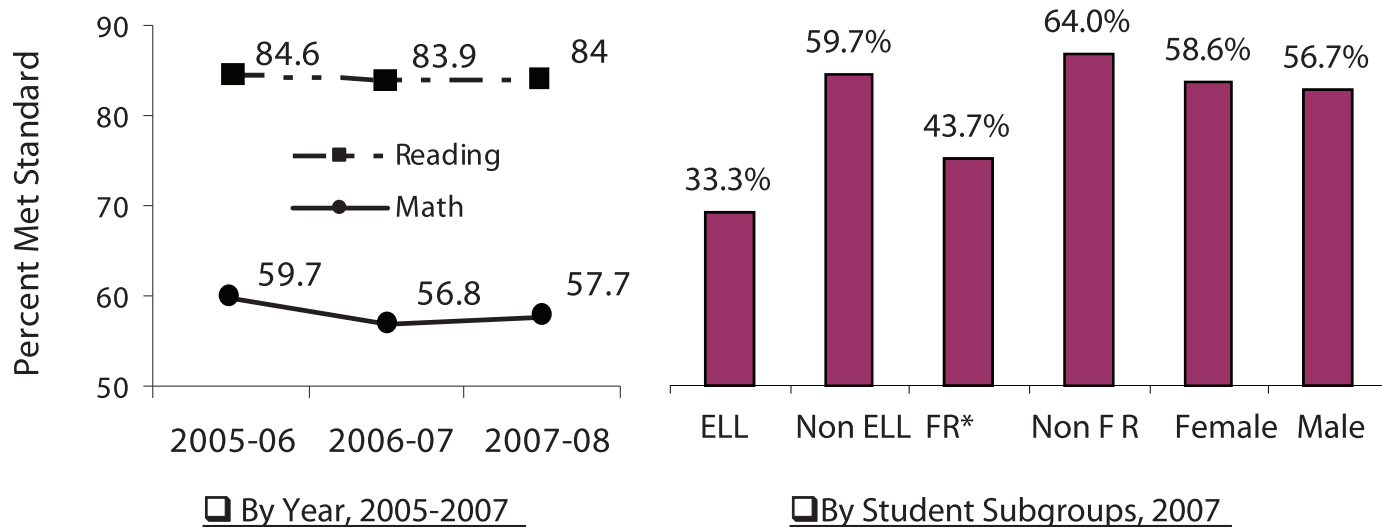


Source: OSPI WASL Data, 2007-08

**Grade Level and Subject Area.** As Figure 5 illustrates, 4<sup>th</sup> grade Asian American students earn their highest passing rate in WASL reading, whereas 7<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> graders perform best in writing. Across grades, 4<sup>th</sup> grade has the largest gap between reading and writing, an almost 10% difference, closing to about 2% in the higher grades. Overall, 10<sup>th</sup> graders perform best in both reading and writing. In contrast, math performance is associated negatively with grade level, with lower math performance at the higher grade. In addition, the gap between math and reading increases significantly as the grade level goes up. For example, in 7<sup>th</sup> grade, the gap between these two subjects is about 10%, but in 10<sup>th</sup> grade the gap reaches almost 27%. More than 40% of Asian American high school students are at risk of academic failure in math.



**Figure 6.**  
**Asian American 10<sup>th</sup> Grade Math WASL Performance**



FR\* = Free/Reduced Price Lunch

Source: OSPI WASL Data, 2005–2007.

**Math Challenges.** These findings (Figure 5) challenge the stereotype of Asian American students as “whiz kids” with exceptional math abilities. Asian Americans show consistently discouraging performance in math (Figure 6). The gap between math and reading persists with a large discrepancy of more than 20%. Among student subgroups, there is a wide disparity from 33.3% to 64%.

How do we account for the gap between the math scores of Washington’s Asian Americans and those of the “model minority” profiles of Asian Americans who do excel in math? The research literature offers a clue. According to one cross-cultural study of math-talented students, countries that value, encourage, and reward mathematical problem solving for both boys and girls have been dominating international math competitions for some time. East Asian and Eastern European states stand out, and many of their exceptional math scholars have come to the United States. The study, however, finds a different cultural context in the United States. American students view being good in math as a negative social stigma and prefer to spend their time in other forms of activities. Furthermore, very few are provided with rigorous math-solving activities in their classrooms.<sup>3</sup> In short, the U.S. educational system is failing all American students in math preparation and that includes Asian Americans.

It is immigrant students from countries where mathematics is greatly valued who are excelling at very high levels. U.S.-born students who are exceptional in math are more likely to attend a special public or elite private high school, seek out college-level math courses, and develop their math skills with a parent who is highly knowledgeable in mathematics and may even hold degrees in the field. Also, some exceptional math students do not go to school but are home-schooled.<sup>5</sup>

This explains why some Asian American students, those raised in immigrant households with educated parents who share their math skills with them, do well in math. Asian Americans who lack such a home environment rely heavily on the public schools to gain math proficiency. The math (and science) crisis in the State is a much larger national and cultural issue that needs to include Asian American students in the discussion.

**What’s Cool? Math or Sports?**

...in China math is regarded as an essential skill that everyone should try to develop at some level. Parents in China...view math as parents in the United States do baseball, hockey, and soccer. Here everybody plays baseball...If you don’t play well, it’s OK. Everybody gives you a few claps. But people [in the U.S.] don’t treat math that way.

–Dr. Zuming Feng, who teaches math at Phillips Exeter Academy, New Hampshire<sup>4</sup>

**ELL Challenges.** Table 4 disaggregates by Asian American student subgroup, and we find significant achievement gaps among them. The lowest performers are ELL students. They participate in the Transitional Bilingual Instruction Program, which most commonly practices either the pull-out or sheltered model.

**Table 4. Asian American WASL Performance by Subject Area and by ELL, Non-ELL, and All Asian, 2007–2008**

	Reading, %	Writing, %	Math, %	Science, %
<b>10th Grade</b>	84.2	86.5	57.6	43.9
<b>ELL</b>	<b>51.9</b>	<b>46.6</b>	<b>33.3</b>	<b>9.0</b>
<b>Non-ELL</b>	87.1	90.1	59.7	46.7
<b>7th Grade</b>	75.7	78.3	65.6	
<b>ELL</b>	<b>22.7</b>	<b>35.1</b>	<b>24.0</b>	N/A
<b>Non-ELL</b>	80.3	82.4	69.5	N/A
<b>4th Grade</b>	83.0	74.3	68.0	
<b>ELL</b>	<b>48.7</b>	<b>39.4</b>	<b>31.4</b>	N/A
<b>Non-ELL</b>	87.6	79.0	72.9	N/A

Source: OSPI WASL data, 2007–2008.

Like all students, Asian American ELL students are required to meet state standards. To graduate and obtain a high school degree, they must pass the 10<sup>th</sup> grade WASL test in reading and writing. Currently, students are not required to pass the math and science WASL tests for graduation, but there is a challenging math graduation requirement. Students must either pass the high school math WASL (or a legislatively approved alternative) or earn two math credits after 10<sup>th</sup> grade and take an annual math assessment such as the WASL, SAT, ACT, or advanced placement (AP) exam.

Due to their language barrier, ELL students are less likely to be in AP classes and meet the math requirement through other national testing. Given that two out of three Asian American ELL students are failing the high school math WASL and have a much lower achievement level than non-ELL students, they face severe limitations in graduating from high school and pursuing higher education. Moreover, Asian American ELL students find their greatest challenge in science, which, as some Washington State educators point out, requires reading and comprehension skills in English as well as knowledge of the subject. Only 9% of Asian American ELL students met the standard in science, compared with 43.9% of all Asian Americans and 46.7% of non-ELL Asian Americans. The achievement gap faced by Asian American ELL students is so severe we give special attention to this group in a later section.

**Gender Differences.** Asian American female students show the highest rates of meeting standards in every subject across grade (Table 5). The most significant gender gap is in writing. In 4<sup>th</sup> grade, boys are underperforming, showing a nearly 15% difference in meeting the standard in writing (82% for girls versus 68% for boys). However, in math and science the gap is less than 5%, with female students still outperforming their male peers. Overall, boys begin to close that gender gap in the higher grades.

Table 5 examines student participation in various school programs by gender. Asian American boys are more likely to be in an ELL and/or a special education program than their female peers are. This is most acute in special education, where the number of boys is almost twice that of girls and 9% and 5%, respectively.

Available data do not allow a deeper analysis of gender differences across Asian American ethnic groups at the K–12 level. In the aggregate, Asian American girls are at parity or performing slightly higher than their male peers across subjects and areas and within student subgroups. Girls generally are striving academically to be college ready. This is visible in higher education, where the increased gains of women in all racial and ethnic groups, including Asian American females, is evident in their associate, bachelor, master's, professional, and doctoral degrees earned over the past two decades.<sup>6</sup>

One study concludes that female students are more "hopeful" for their future in contrast to the academic underachievement of "troubled boys." This is most acute in urban schools, where research has focused almost exclusively on African American and Latino males.<sup>7</sup> Scholars are beginning to address the impact of this phenomenon on Asian American male students.<sup>8</sup>

Though some Asian immigrant (first-generation) parents are more restrictive of second-generation girls' activities in and out of school, there is widespread encouragement for both daughters and sons to gain academic credentials that will provide jobs to improve the families' economic situation. Asian immigrant girls are positively inclined to persist against cultural and structural barriers, seeing an education as a path to a better life. Asian immigrant boys and men, on the other hand, often feel a loss of place, status, and meaning as American males. The dominant mainstream notions of masculinity place

much lower value on males who lack physical stature, are quiet, and are considered “nerdy.” Some males respond by becoming disengaged from schooling, which adds to diminished self-worth and a lower achievement rate among Asian American boys.<sup>9</sup>

Another study notes that some Asian American youth instead adopt hyper-masculine postures, which teachers identify as gang activities, to counter the negative image in the general society of Asian American males as ineffective.<sup>10</sup> Gender differences in academic performance and persistence are issues that require the attention of State educators as well as Asian American families and communities.

**Table 5. Asian American Student Profile and WASL Performance by Gender, 2007-2008**

	Overall		Girls		Boys	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	83,226		40,969	49	42,257	51
<b>By Program</b>						
ELL Served	11,676	14	5,149	13	6,527	15
Special Education	5,693	7	1,857	5	3,836	9
Gifted Program	4,274	5	2,168	5	2,106	5
Grant 21st Century	1,001	1	493	1	508	1
Free/Reduced Price Lunch	25,814	31	12,510	31	13,304	31
<b>WASL Performance (Percent Met Standard)</b>						
<b>10<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>						
Reading		84.2		86.5		81.9
Writing		86.5		89.9		83.3
Math		57.6		58.6		56.7
Science		43.9		45.9		41.8
<b>7<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>						
Reading		75.7		80.3		71.2
Writing		78.3		86.1		70.8
Math		65.6		66.5		64.6
<b>4<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>						
Reading		83.0		86.8		79.3
Writing		74.3		81.6		67.2
Math		68.0		69.1		66.8

Source: OSPI CSRS October data, 2007.

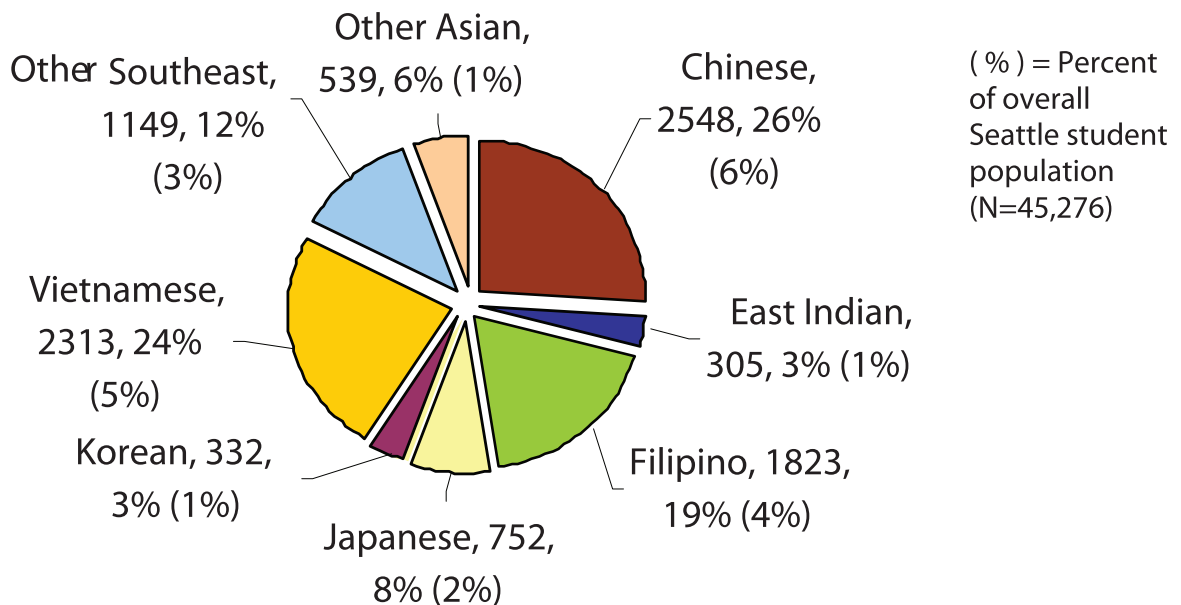
## IV. ASIAN AMERICAN STUDENTS IN SEATTLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

### 1. Enrollment and Ethnic Group Diversity

In this section, we utilize Seattle Public School District data. They have the largest concentration of Asian American students (10,311 in 2007; see Table 2), about 12% of all Asian American students in the State. Most important, the District collects disaggregated data on Asian American students enabling us to examine their academic performance by ethnic diversity. Moreover, Seattle is a major urban center with a diverse and complex population, much as Asian Americans are.

Figure 7 shows that the Chinese are the largest ethnic group in the Seattle Public Schools, being 6% of total Seattle students and 26% of all Seattle Asian American students, followed by the Vietnamese (5% and 24%, respectively) and Filipinos (4% and 19%, respectively).

**Figure 7.**  
**Ethnic Group Diversity of Asian Americans in Seattle Public Schools, 2007**



Note: East Indian refers to persons whose ancestors originated in India, Sri Lanka (Ceylon), Pakistan and Bangladesh. More contemporary terms are Asian Indians, when referring only to those from India and South Asians for a larger collective term, including other countries in the subcontinent. Other Southeast Asians are those whose ancestors originated in Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, Indonesia, Burma or Malaysia. Other Asian are persons with ancestry in parts of Asia not listed above.

Source: 2007 District Report, Seattle Public Schools.

## 2. Family Structure, Socioeconomic Status, and School Performance

**Family Structure.** Table 6 reveals that 28% of Asian American students are not living with both parents. But the gap between ethnic groups is substantial, being 16% for Chinese Americans and 46% for Other Southeast Asian groups (Cambodian, Laotian, Hmong, Mien). Although a perception persists that Asian Americans live in intact, multigenerational family structures, the data show that many of their youth in Seattle Public Schools live in single-parent households.

**Socioeconomic Status.** Table 3 noted that nearly one out of three (31%) Asian American students in Washington State are in Free/Reduced Price Lunch programs. In Seattle, it is almost half, with great disparities among their ethnic groups. Japanese and Koreans (10% and 13%, respectively) have the lowest rates of receiving Free/Reduced Price Lunch, whereas almost two thirds of Vietnamese and Other Southeast Asians (68% and 60%, respectively) depend on the Free/Reduced Price Lunch Program (Table 6). Given that poverty is related closely to academic performance, the high rates of specific ethnic groups receiving Free/Reduced Price Lunch are alarming. These and other hardships reflect the overall struggles of many Asian American families in Seattle.

**Table 6. Characteristics of Asian American Ethnic Groups in Seattle Public Schools, 2007**

	Total Enrollment	Not Living With Both Parents, %	Free/Reduced Price Lunch, %	High School Short-Term Suspensions, %**	High School Long-Term Suspensions, %	High School Dropout, %
<b>All Asian</b>	9,761*	28	47	3	1	8
<b>Chinese</b>	2,548	16	45	2	0	3
<b>East Indian</b>	305	17	33	6	1	2
<b>Filipino</b>	1,823	31	39	4	0	9
<b>Japanese</b>	752	17	10	3	1	4
<b>Korean</b>	332	17	13	3	0	7
<b>Vietnamese</b>	2,313	35	68	3	1	8
<b>Other Asian</b>	539	33	43	9	1	14
<b>Other Southeast</b>	1,149	46	60	3	1	14

\* The total enrollment for All Asian in this table may be slightly different from what is found in Table 2 in this report due to data inconsistency.

\*\* A suspension is a removal from a single subject, class period, or full schedule of classes for a definite period of time. WAC 180-40-205(2). "Short-term suspension" shall mean a suspension for any portion of a calendar day up to and not exceeding 10 consecutive school days. "Long-term suspension" shall mean a suspension that exceeds a "short-term suspension" as defined above.

Source: 2007 District Report, Seattle Public Schools.

**Suspensions and Dropouts.** As an aggregate, Asian American students show the lowest rates of suspensions and dropouts compared with other racial and ethnic groups. However, the significant differences among their ethnic groups need attention. Table 5 shows that East Indians have the lowest rate (2%) of high school dropout, but are twice as likely as the overall Asian American student population to be associated with short-term

suspensions (6% versus 3%). Since short-term suspensions can evolve into more serious matters, this requires more attention from educators. The most troubled ethnic groups are those identified as Other Southeast Asian, Other Asian, and Filipino, with dropout rates of 14%, 14%, and 9%, respectively.

**Dropouts, Push Outs and Kick Outs.** We lack sufficient data and explanations for why Asian American students drop out in Washington, but studies conducted elsewhere shed some light. A study of Asian American students in New York City's public schools, aptly named Hidden in Plain View, conducted student interviews. It found that among Asian American dropouts are those who leave school because they are being pushed out. The students expressed isolation and disconnection with their studies and the curriculum, as well as feelings of being lost among so many students. Other reasons included missing class, falling behind on assignments, and feeling the weight of meeting the standards tests. Mostly, students became disempowered. With doubts that they can catch up academically and lacking appropriate assistance from teachers and guidance counselors, the students come to believe that dropping out is an acceptable solution. Some students begin acting out or resisting school rules and teacher expectations prior to not returning to school.<sup>1</sup>

Still another study identified schools in different states that purposefully pushed out or allowed Asian American ELL students to drop out with little or no intervention on the part of school personnel. Asian American students also have been expelled under dubious situations. The latter has been referred to as being "kicked out." One explanation given is that ELL students would likely score low on No Child Left Behind–mandated standardized tests and harm the school's record.<sup>2</sup>

Asian American dropout rates are considered to be underestimated, given limitations in tracking students, incomplete or inaccurate data, and questions surrounding the validity and reliability of graduate rates. More important is the recognition that the dropout, push-out, and kick-out issue in Washington is more complex than a statistic.<sup>3</sup>

### **3. Ethnic Group Academic Disparities: WASL Performance**

Using aggregate data, the overall Asian American population exceeds the state levels of WASL achievement in every subject (OSPI data). Using disaggregated data by ethnic group, we find achievement gaps.

Table 7 compares the largest Asian American ethnic groups in Seattle Public Schools. Japanese American students, the vast majority of whom are not only U.S. born but often two or more generations American, are doing well in every subject. Filipino students, some of whom are long-time Seattleites and others who are new immigrants, are more likely to be at risk of academic failure, showing the lowest rates among the ethnic groups of meeting the set standard in every WASL subject in 2007–2008, with the exception of reading, where Koreans are the lowest ranked. Filipino American performance also declined in all four subject areas from 2006–2007 to 2007–2008.

**Table 7. 10<sup>th</sup> Grade WASL Performance by Asian American Ethnic Group, Seattle Public Schools, 2006–2007 and 2007–2008**

Seattle Public Schools	Reading, %		Writing, %		Math, %		Science, %	
	2006-07	2007-08	2006-07	2007-08	2006-07	2007-08	2006-07	2007-08
<b>All Asian</b>	83.4	80.5	79.9	83.0	57.5	51.8	35.0	31.7
<b>Chinese</b>	85.2	84.4	83.2	83.1	71.7	70.1	44.2	44.7
<b>East Indian</b>	86.4	84.2	86.4	89.5	68.2	41.2	57.1	41.2
<b>Filipino</b>	89.9	77.2	84.5	79.3	45.0	38.2	27.3	22.1
<b>Japanese</b>	96.1	89.8	90.2	95.0	80.0	78.7	62.0	66.7
<b>Korean</b>	84.6	75.0	76.9	86.7	61.5	75.0	42.3	56.3
<b>Vietnamese</b>	80.3	83.0	71.5	87.3	55.4	56.1	27.9	31.1
<b>Other Asian</b>	83.3	82.1	78.9	86.5	36.8	30.6	15.8	21.1
<b>Other Southeast</b>	73.6	78.1	75.3	79.6	33.8	33.3	19.7	10.5

Source: 2007 District Report, Seattle Public Schools

The Vietnamese also are doing poorly in science, but are performing well in reading and writing. They also made small gains from 2006–2007 to 2007–2008 in all four subject areas. Cambodians, Hmong, Mien, and other Laotians are lumped together as Other Southeast Asians. In 2007–2008, whereas their reading and writing performance was 74% and 78% respectively, two thirds were failing math and nearly 90% were failing science in 2007–2008 (Table 7).

That many Asian American students in Washington have low math and science performance (as discussed in Part III) is evident here in greater detail by the ethnic group diversity in Seattle Public Schools data. By viewing Asian American students as all the same, educators are providing a disservice to meeting the academic needs of individual students and of particular ethnic group members in specific subject areas. Greater knowledge of their diverse communities can help close their achievement gaps.



## V. STUDENT (DIS)ENGAGEMENT: ASIAN AMERICAN ELL STUDENTS

Student engagement is critical to performance and persistence. In this section we address challenges faced by ELL students. Part VI focuses on Filipinos and Southeast Asian students. The difficulties these three groups encounter illustrate key ways in which Asian American students become disengaged from schooling. To varying degrees, all Asian American student subgroups and ethnic groups confront similar hurdles. We provide strategies (best practices) from the research literature for academically engaging Asian American students toward closing their achievement gaps.

### 1. English Language Learners: Underserved and Undersupported

A 2008 OSPI report concludes that ELL students often have lower levels of academic performance and higher dropout rates than their English-proficient peers.<sup>1</sup> All ELL students have challenges, including poverty and living in single-parent and linguistically isolated households. It is often argued that until socioeconomic conditions are fixed, schools cannot improve the achievement gap of ELL students. Or can they?

What is the State doing to academically prepare Asian American ELL students? In 2007, more than 30,000 Asian American students in Washington were non-English speakers, but only 14% of them are currently in the Transitional Bilingual Instruction Program (TBIP) (Table 3), meaning they are severely underserved.

There are 13 Asian language groups with at least 100 ELL students in the given language. Among those, Vietnamese-, Korean-, and Tagalog-speaking groups are the largest with more than 1,000 ELL students each (Table 3). In reality, few school districts adequately support them. The Seattle School District has been criticized for not providing services to 52% of Asian American ELL students, much higher than the percentage of African (32%) and Latino ELL (33%) students not being served.<sup>2</sup>

Furthermore, Asian Americans who spend hours looking up words in the dictionary to make sense of lessons taught in English find their ELL deficiencies are not fully addressed. Teachers tend to reward hard work and good behavior, assuming that Asian American students are smart and do not need the same kinds of assistance as other ELL students. One report named this “an invisible crisis.”<sup>3</sup>

It is ironic that Asian American ELL students’ needs are so poorly supported. After all, it was Chinese American parents who filed the class action suit that culminated in the 1974 U.S. Supreme Court Decision *Lau v. Nichols* and extended equal education rights to language minority groups.

**Washington’s ELL Program Weaknesses.** OSPI reports are self-critical about weaknesses in the State’s ELL programs and acknowledge that better models and practices exist. The State’s Transitional Bilingual Instruction Program is failing to meet its objective for ELL students to develop their academic English competence. The program has at least five different ELL instructional models (i.e., dual language, early

exit, late exit, sheltered, and ESL pullout/push in), but most districts depend on either ESL pullout or sheltered rather than dual language or late exit. Moreover, these models are not utilized consistently across the State, making it difficult to evaluate the program's effectiveness.

Though OSPI recognizes that primary language instruction is necessary for ELL students to achieve academic competency, many districts rely on instruction in English rather than in a student's primary language. This practice is so common that the meaning and functionality of TBIP is lost. In some school districts, ELL programs work like an English immersion program with no primary language assistance and push ELL students into mainstream classes without their being ready. Because the State loosely defines ELL standards by mixing them with mainstream standards, it fails to assist ELL students in mastering course content. Consequently, TBIP contributes to students becoming monolingual in English, but not necessarily English proficient. Maintenance or late-exit programs emphasize bilingualism and biliteracy, which strengthens immigrant family relations.

The State's ELL students are often in teacher-centered programs, yet student-centered ones are more effective. All students benefit from a rigorous curriculum; ELL students are provided with a less rigorous curriculum than their mainstream peers are. The State also has a shortage of qualified teachers. Teacher aides with heritage language skills often are underutilized for instruction. Most students require a minimum of 5 to 7 years of program support to achieve English language proficiency. However, such sustained assistance is often not made available to them. There is a gap between OSPI's knowledge of what works better for limited English proficiency students and the programs that the State funds.<sup>4</sup>

Many ELL students do not communicate in English well enough at school to be accepted and are stigmatized by their peers. They report a range of hostile interactions from schoolmates, from ridicule for their accents to overt forms of bullying and racist attacks. Being marginalized in and outside the classroom contributes to Asian American students becoming disengaged from schooling, as seen in low self-worth, a diminished sense of belonging, suspensions, and dropping out.<sup>5</sup>

Given budget and teacher preparation issues, the achievement gap for Asian ELL students and other ELL students will continue unless there is a significant intervention.

**Reframing Non-English Language Use.** A new framework is in order nationwide. Historically, America's prevailing view of culturally and linguistically diverse people is one of ambivalence at best. Oftentimes, people who are different are distrusted, even feared, and are excluded. Assimilation, understood to be conforming to White mainstream or Euro-centered culture, is the prescribed model of successful adaptation for new immigrants. Multiculturalism and cultural pluralism on equal footing is far from a reality, and appreciation of difference is too often tokenized.

In the current global economy, knowledge of other cultures and languages makes a people and nation more—not less—competitive and richer in many ways. Having home-grown Asian-language speakers is an asset, not a liability to the State’s present and future, and as cultural and linguistic resources they are too important to be tossed aside.

To the contrary, though, school practice is to encourage non-English speakers to suppress or lose their language and replace it with English. Ironically, the nation then seeks experts in non-English languages for critical positions and universities are expected to teach these languages.

## 2. Student Engagement: Creating Learning Communities and Building Relations

Community-based research offers alternative perspectives to closing the achievement gap

for ELL students. For example, Danling Fu (see box) followed four Laotian siblings in California who came as refugees in the 1990s. Siting through their English as a Second Language (ESL) classes and meetings with tutors, she found their learning enhanced with a student-centered approach in conjunction with multiple teaching methods that supported their individual strengths and weaknesses. Approaches that integrated students’ cultural values into literacy learning and allowed the students to bring their family’s history and experiences in Laos into the learning process enhanced their self-esteem and achievement.

Institutional arrangements are also important. Fu found that well-meaning teachers need more time and flexibility to teach and use materials. She also recommended greater recognition of their professional role from other school personnel and opportunities to learn from others, these could include community members and those working in the field of multicultural studies.<sup>6</sup>

### Creating a Learning Community That Supports ELL Students

As an educator, I want to help those students who are suffering the same humiliation, frustration and alienation in their reading and writing as I did when I first came to study in America. . . . once reading and writing connect with students’ backgrounds and experiences, everyone can read and write. It is not that some of our students are unable to learn; it is our teaching approach that sometimes fails to reach them, to discover their potential as learners, to invite them into our learning community.

—Danling Fu<sup>7</sup>

A study of a Khmer Bilingual Program in southern California in the 1990s also showed how a lack of trained teachers and materials to work with Cambodian students could be

overcome. Recruitment efforts in Cambodian community venues resulted in 23 Cambodian American teachers being hired between 1993 and 2000, along with teacher aides. Khmer translations of English materials were created inexpensively on computers and were used in the District’s standards-based assessments as well. These efforts had a positive impact on Cambodian family and community relations with schools and enabled students to become bilingual and more academically confident. Regrettably, this successful program was dismantled after the passage of Proposition 227, which was designed to essentially eliminate bilingual education in California.<sup>8</sup>

Overall, being dismissive and disrespectful of the cultures and languages of students—“subtractive schooling”—disengages and disempowers students from learning. An active “authentic caring” and culturally integrated approach is more academically sound and a best practice.<sup>9</sup> Multiple teaching methods that recognize individual student needs are another positive strategy.<sup>10</sup>

Research also finds that Asian American parents recognize the need for their children to learn English, but not at the expense of their home language. Losing one’s native language restricts interactions with parents and grandparents and contributes to a loss of knowledge about one’s heritage. Adults who have limited English skills also find intergenerational communication and relations compromised, and cultural differences can further exacerbate parent-youth tensions. Moreover, as many adults are dependent on their children to negotiate with the English-speaking world for them, whether it be the landlord or health care workers, parent-child relations become skewed unless students also learn skills from their parents (see box at right). ELL programs that do not preserve the home language undermine the very family relations that U.S. society praises in Asian American households and weakens the capacity of ethnic groups to develop community resources and leadership.<sup>11</sup>

**Building Self Esteem, Cultural Pride, and Intergenerational Relations**

[Cambodian] students who learn Khmer have better and closer relationships with their parents. When they study Khmer there are many things their parents can help them with from school. When students learn English, their parents are usually unable to help them. Thus, students, rather than seeing their parents as helpless, see their parents with more respect. The students pride themselves in their knowledge of Khmer language and culture. And when they make progress in English, they really see the value of their Khmer language ability. The students who learn in nonbilingual programs, often they are too ashamed to admit that they are Khmer.

—Wayne E. Wright<sup>12</sup>

## VI. AN UNSUPPORTIVE SCHOOL CLIMATE: ASIAN AMERICAN STUDENTS AT RISK

### 1. Focus: Filipino and Southeast Asian American Students

Two Asian American ethnic groupings stand out in terms of needing attention from schools and society.

Filipino Americans are one of the oldest Asian American immigrant groups in the State and currently the second largest. They include Washingtonians of several generations, some of whom are mixed race, and newcomers. They constitute 19% of all Asian Americans in the State (Figure 1). Seattle has been and continues to be a vital center of Filipino American activities and community organizations for the nation.

Compared with adults in other Asian American groups, many more Filipino American adults are English proficient and hold professional positions. However, many youth face challenges, including growing up in single-parent households and having academic difficulties. Some are helping their immigrant families make cultural and social transitions; others are more acculturated.<sup>1</sup>

Southeast Asian groups in Washington make up nearly 22% of all Asian Americans (Figure 1). They include Cambodians (2.6%), Hmong (0.6%), Laotians (2.7%), and Vietnamese (16%). Their youth are generally U.S. born, but their family's settlement in the United States as refugees still inform their lives. Southeast Asians have fewer community resources and networks than other groups.

Most Laotians lacked possibilities for formal education in Laos. Many educated Cambodians were killed under Pol Pot's policies while those who spent time during the Khmer Rouge regime in labor camps or, later, in refugee camps were denied or lacked educational opportunities, respectively. Some adults are unable to parent well due to mental and physical traumas. They are less able to assist in their children's schooling and know little of how the U.S. educational system works and what is expected of them. Some are ambivalent, even a bit distrustful of schooling, because they did not receive a formal education themselves.<sup>2</sup>

Southeast Asian American youth often live in limited English proficient, low-income, and single-parent households. Many encounter language and cultural difficulties in negotiating between home and school lives. Their neighborhoods may lack resources and positive stimulations. Parents may work long hours or not at all. Youth frequently have responsibilities at home at a young age, such as caring for siblings, preparing meals, and translating for parents. Schools can support these students by recognizing the "bicultural strengths" they develop to cope with their complex lives.<sup>3</sup>

There are Cambodian, Filipino, Hmong, Laotian, Mien, and Vietnamese American students who continue on to college, demonstrating a high degree of resilience. They

have indeed overcome significant socioeconomic and cultural barriers. More research needs to be done on high-achieving minority youth.

Nonetheless, as demonstrated by WASL performance and dropout rates, many Filipino and Southeast Asian American students in Washington are struggling academically. *The State’s emphasis on cognitive measurements and testing finds fault with student deficiencies. The qualitative research literature says other things. It brings attention to how school, personnel, peer group, and related factors contribute to gaps in Asian American academic achievement.* Although we focus on Southeast Asians and Filipinos here, all Asian American ethnic groups share many of the same experiences in the public schools to different degrees.

**2. Feeling Like No One Cares**

**Model Minority Stereotyping.** Teacher expectations of Asian American student attitudes and behaviors are formed by the model minority stereotype, which grew out of earlier encounters with East Asian students, namely, Chinese, Japanese, and Korean Americans. Filipino, Southeast Asian, and other Asian Americans suffer from teacher biases that center on East Asians and view those who act differently from them as being less intelligent, not as hard working, and culturally deficient.<sup>4</sup> Asian American students also observe that educators give more attention to the high achievers among them.

**Teacher Biases and Expectations.** One study has compared the experiences of Filipino and Chinese American high school students. Although both groups found negative stereotypes of Asian Americans in general in their schools, they were treated differently from each other. Chinese students reported pressures from teachers and counselors to behave like a model minority and perform at a very high level. Filipino students concluded teachers and counselors did not care about them. The unsupportive school climate they described included being seen as delinquents or failures, being tracked into less academically demanding courses (making students less ready for college), and being denied information that could better prepare them for college admission. Moreover, Filipino American males felt teachers saw them as gang members, as did some of their peers. With these low expectations from school personnel and others, Filipino American students distanced themselves from schooling.<sup>5</sup>

Southeast Asian Americans in one study stated that many teachers had negative stereotypes and low expectations of them. Cambodian and Laotian students, in particular, felt that due to their clothing style, music choice, and manner of speaking, teachers saw them as low achievers, at risk, and even “gangsters.” Hence, teachers and guidance counselors did

.....  
• **Why I Dropped Out** •  
• They [the teachers] pretended that •  
• I wasn’t there. They treated me like a little •  
• kid, and I did not like that. •  
• [He wanted to learn and be challenged.] •  
• —Vietnamese male student, •  
• Washington State public school<sup>7</sup> •  
.....

not spend time or resources to support their academic development.<sup>6</sup>

Hmong Americans found that teachers saw them as intellectually and culturally deficient and would refer them to ESL classes rather than teach them in mainstream classes. In another situation, schools in Wisconsin sought to alleviate the lower status of females in Hmong households by giving more assistance to Hmong girls and neglecting the education of Hmong boys, whom they frequently stereotyped as gang members. This strategy has had a negative impact on Hmong boys' morale and academic achievement.<sup>8</sup>

### Questioning What We Are Taught About Ourselves = Acting Out

[In high school] the only thing I learned about the Philippines or Filipinos was a paragraph about the Spanish-American War. Acquiring this belief led from one stereotype to another, such as being passive and foreign... Collectively, we began to question facts in textbooks especially in our history and American government classes as demonstration of resistance to the stereotypes we internalize (lazy, troublemaker, under achiever). This was seen by educators as "acting out."

—Filipino American graduate student

Aggregate data also contribute to schools and school personnel treating members of the many Asian American ethnic groups as one success group and not as individuals with academic strengths and weaknesses. Some students who are in need of academic support find that teachers have very high expectations of them that are out of their reach. This only adds to their sense of failure.

**Curriculum and Pedagogy That Marginalize and Alienate.** Minority students often point out how overlooked, distorted, and invisible they are in the curriculum, all of which affects their self-confidence, sense of belonging in school, and ultimately their academic achievement. Second-generation Southeast Asian American students feel marginalized by a largely Eurocentric curriculum that ignores and disrespects their historic homelands, history, and culture in high school curricula. Even a topic such as the Vietnam War is absent or glossed over.<sup>9</sup>

Teachers also know little about Filipino American history and culture and are frequently disrespectful of the cultural knowledge that minority and immigrant students bring to the classroom. Filipino American students often experience cultural conflict in the different messages they receive about being Filipino—the "personal/cultural knowledge" taught in the home versus the "academic/formal" knowledge of the classroom, which undermines their self-confidence.<sup>10</sup>

## Asian American Teachers Speak Up

“Students are more willing to approach me and seek me out to intervene with other staff.”

“Minorities feel the difference (of my presence). Be it any minority. Students share more of their cultural heritage and differences more readily because they know I’ve felt it too.”

“Students of Asian descent marvel at the idea of having an Asian teacher.”

“... Asian students who are so shy tend to interact with me sooner than other teachers.”

“Students are able to relate to shared experiences of immigration, ethnic duality, identity, and race [discrimination].”<sup>11</sup>

Moreover, when students of color, in particular, question what they are being taught, they are often seen as behaving inappropriately, which can result in their suspension or other disciplinary action (see box above).

**Lack of Teacher Role Models.** Ethnic and immigrant youth comment on the lack of teachers and counselors who look like them or understand them and their many challenges. Asian American teachers provide some insights on the vital role that they play in countering an unwelcoming school environment for Asian American students.

Another best practice to close Asian American achievement gaps is for schools to have more Asian American teachers and others who are culturally responsive and able to work with students as individuals and not as

stereotypes. In turn, all instructional personnel can be provided with training to strengthen their ability to work with a wide range of culturally and linguistically diverse students and to use multiple teaching approaches.

**Peer Group and Popular Culture Influences.** Like all students, Asian Americans face peer group pressure and are influenced by popular youth culture. Hip hop is often viewed by the dominant culture and by parents as counter-productive to doing well in school. One study of Filipino American education suggests that hip hop and other forms of dancing and singing distract many Filipino students from academic activities.<sup>12</sup> Teachers of Hmong American students in Wisconsin also concluded that hip hop culture was to blame for their academic difficulties.<sup>13</sup>

Most adults of a certain age can recall how their popular culture choices as youth were dismissed and even denigrated. Blaming American popular culture for low student achievement is a misunderstanding of Asian American student experiences. It is the alienation they experience in schools and their difficulties in gaining a positive ethnic identity that draws them to find meaning elsewhere. Hip hop is a cultural phenomenon that many youth embrace, because it allows personal creativity and recognition through individual expression. For some it is a positive and successful activity that promotes their



staying in school (see box: The Value of Hip Hop). As an “oppositional style” it is a sign of deeper schooling issues among youth.<sup>14</sup>

**Bullying and Racial Violence.** Asian American students find that teachers’ tendencies to reward model minority-type student behavior in the classroom contribute to tensions between themselves and other racial and ethnic groups. They report resentment against Asian Americans, even if they themselves are academically struggling. Such hostility can be in the form of verbal and physical harassment and occurs in and outside of classrooms, including the cafeteria, the bathroom, and school hallways, making school an unsafe place for them.<sup>15</sup>

Such activities as bullying, racial harassment, and violence are part of an inhospitable school climate. It is even more distressful because it is largely conducted by peers. Many Asian American students become depressed, demoralized, and disempowered because they are reminded every day that they look, speak, and may dress and eat differently from their classmates.<sup>16</sup> Southeast Asian Americans report feeling looked down upon because their families came as refugees, and their communities’ links to the U.S. wars in Southeast Asia are still filled with bitterness.<sup>17</sup> After 9/11 South Asian Americans have experienced more racially motivated attacks, even as students.

**Mental Health Issues.** Asian Americans have mental health issues, like all racial and ethnic groups. Growing up a person of color and as children of immigrant and refugee communities are added stressors. Identity formation, language barriers, acculturation, bridging different cultures and generations, and responsibilities for helping parents negotiate the English-speaking world are a lot for students to carry. Getting appropriate assistance is not addressed when health care agencies and personnel overlook Asian

**The Value of Hip Hop:  
One Student’s Perspective**

Hip hop has a positive influence in my life and I always utilize it to address social issues. It is one of my motivating factors, why I’m in school and helping my community. I know a lot of young Filipino Americans that are contributing to foster reflective citizenship in our pluralistic society are a part of hip hop. Hip hop’s intent was to give voice to the voiceless. I think most recent immigrant parents think that hip hop is counter-productive because it’s “black” music and it’s an easy scapegoat because they have been conditioned to equate “blackness” as inferior. ... [blaming hip hop] is an easy scapegoat for the [school] system’s failure. Have they ever asked the kids if hip hop is the problem?

—Filipino American male doctoral student

Americans as a community with mental health needs and because Asian Americans often do not seek help in the early stages before serious harm is done.<sup>18</sup>

Among Asian American youth, incidents of depression, thoughts of suicide and suicide attempts are higher than among White peers. School as a site of alienation, marginalization, pressure to perform, and cultural and physical conflict is a contributing factor. One survey of high school students in the San Diego Unified School District identified Filipino American males and females as especially at risk for depression and suicide. Contributing factors included difficulties negotiating cultural conflicts, social pressures to assimilate, racial harassment, and a desire for more guidance from adults, including parents.<sup>19</sup>

Issues around sexuality are other factors in students' well-being and academic success. As more Asian Americans seek support for their gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender identities, often in the midst of peer, family, and community hostility, schools have increasing responsibilities to support Asian Americans in these areas as well.<sup>20</sup>

**Gang Involvement.** What do some young men (and women) do when school is failing to address their academic concerns? Gangs have been an outlet for some youth of all ethnic and racial backgrounds who find their ambitions and opportunities blocked in socially acceptable channels, such as schools. In today's global, competitive economy where low-paying service jobs that do not support a family prevail and where blue-collar jobs that once provided entry into the middle class are in short supply, young people feel overwhelmed about their future. Living in households with differences over cultural values, gender roles, and generational concerns and in neighborhoods that have few positive activities (but do have an abundance of crime, drugs, and others ways to make quick money, gain a support group, and feel important), some Southeast Asian American youth participate in gangs.<sup>21</sup>

### Why I Joined a Gang

My family situation was pretty tough at the time...my two older brothers, they were troublemakers. They were the ones who were rejected by the schools and were influenced by peer pressure to fit in. They got involved with gangs and illegal things.

—Vietnamese male

[At the age of 10] I was peer pressured by friends. They consistently come up to my face everyday telling me to go with them and do things...I wanted to be part of the boys, so I did whatever they did...I was involved in robbery...I got locked up several times, but I still kept on kickin' with them.

—Mien male

Teachers didn't really know how to listen to me... They didn't really want to teach me, so I decided to skip...[school wasn't safe,] kids were always getting into arguments and fights. Half the students were gang affiliated and it was racist.

—Cambodian male<sup>22</sup>

Listening to students' descriptions of how they became involved in gangs (see box above) raises the question: How could a more supportive school environment have made a difference?

### 3. Beyond High School: More Achievement Gaps

Asian American students struggle under family, community, and societal pressures to achieve and go on to college. The University of Washington–Beyond High School (UW-BHS) project<sup>22</sup> surveyed students in their senior year of high school about their educational goals and transition from high school to college. Selected data from the surveys reveal hidden gaps in Asian American achievement and are informative of the perspectives of high school students and their parents in the State.

**Parental Expectations and Engagement.** According to UW-BHS data (2008), the vast majority of Asian American parents (N = 370) have high levels of educational aspiration and expectations for their youth to go to a 4-year college and beyond. More than two fifths of the students (N = 1,722), however, perceived their parents as not being interested in their school activities and events. Among subgroups, Cambodian and Vietnamese students are most disadvantaged, having lower levels of parental school participation.<sup>23</sup>

This lack of participation is generally not due to a lack of interest, but limited information and experience on the part of parents about college access. Parents also may lack time or are too embarrassed by their limited English to attend school functions. Generally, Asian American parents (over)trust the schools to be doing what is right for their kids.

**Student Aspiration, Expectation, and Achievement.** The UW-BHS data reveal that Asian American students have higher levels of educational aspirations, expectations, and achievement than their non-Asian counterparts have.<sup>24</sup> However, there is a significant gap between their ambitions and 4-year college attendance. Figure 8 reveals that 43% of Asian Americans students in the study were attending a 4-year institution, but there are wide ethnic group differences, from lows of 23% and 29% for Cambodians and Laotians, respectively, to highs of 60% and 57% for Koreans and Chinese, respectively.

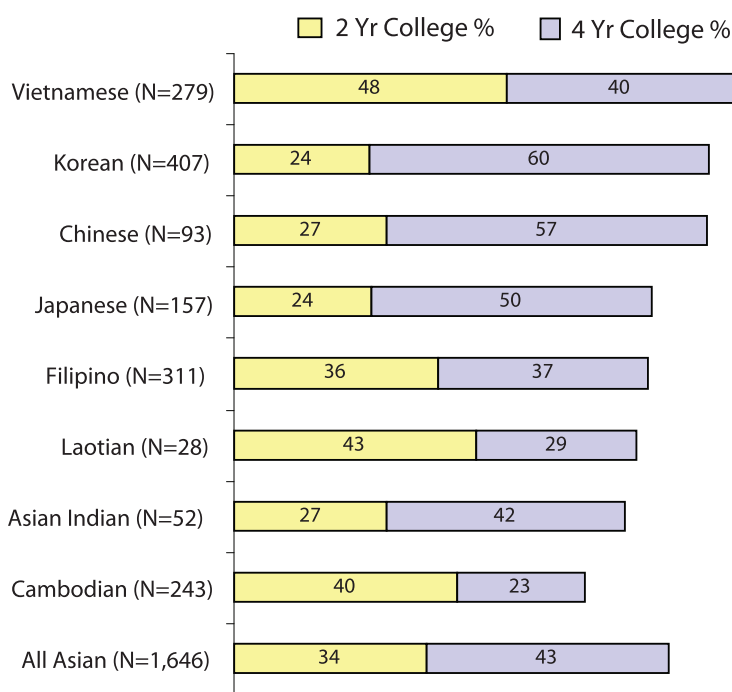
Why are so many Southeast Asian and Filipino students in 2-year institutions? In this study, 48% of Vietnamese, 43% of Laotians, 40% of Cambodians, and 36% of Filipinos made this choice. Confounding a popular belief that Asian Americans are largely in elite and 4-year institutions, their proportion in 2-year institutions has remained relatively constant over the years. In 2005 nationwide, 47% of Asian Americans in college were in 2-year institutions.<sup>25</sup>

Some students may not be academically eligible for a 4-year institution. Even so, 2-year institutions are often a first choice of many first-generation low-income students due to their lower tuition, location, and practical degree offerings. Many Asian American students must live at home and work to support their families. Immigrant parents are also fearful that if their children go too far, they will lose them to American society.<sup>26</sup> Two-

year colleges provide more flexibility to maintain family responsibilities, and many of their offerings appeal to students' career goals.

Other students report they are being tracked away from higher education by not being provided by high school staff with information about college itself, the application process, and requirements needed to be eligible to make the appropriate decisions. Southeast Asian parents, in particular, lack experiences with U.S. education to provide guidance; students must rely on older siblings, friends, and themselves regarding college choice issues.<sup>27</sup> Community college participation reflects the socioeconomic challenges of many Asian American households, while meeting a student's goal of pursuing college as a strategy for economic survival and reducing parental concerns of leaving the family.

**Figure 8. College Attendance Among Asian American Students, University of Washington–Beyond High School, 2008**



Source: University of Washington–Beyond High School Project, 2008.

An achievement gap also occurs when Asian American students who are eligible for and seek out 4-year colleges are guided into 2-year institutions by teachers, counselors, and parents, sometimes with well-meaning intentions, and then face challenges when they seek a BA or BS degree. South Seattle Community College has a strong record of helping students negotiate the college transfer to 4-year institutions. But the process can be daunting without appropriate supports. More effort needs to be made by teachers and counselors at high schools and colleges to prepare and assist the most disadvantaged groups within the Asian American population in their college choice goals, decisions, and transfers.

# VII. SCHOOL, FAMILY, AND COMMUNITY: STRENGTHENING ENGAGEMENT AND PARTNERSHIPS

## 1. Reframing Asian American Educational Reform

Closing the hidden achievement gaps of Asian Americans requires a new approach. In this final section, we consider new concepts of educational reform drawn from current research. To address educational inequities, school reformers have focused narrowly on schools, programs, school personnel, and more recently, standards and testing. A broader approach, one that better serves Asian Americans in general, and those in low-income and urban communities specifically, are to improve schools in conjunction with community development.<sup>1</sup> The box above offers one view of this collaborative approach.

**Appreciating and Building  
Parent-Community Partnerships  
with Schools**

...educators need to shift from seeing children, their families, and their communities as problems to be fixed toward an appreciation of their potential strengths and contributions. Such a paradigm shift recognizes the potential of schools, in partnership with community organizations, to create agency among all stakeholders and to build the capacity for change. This requires providing parents and community members with opportunities for meaningful and powerful forms of participation in school and community life.<sup>3</sup>

Community development groups that provide family services and seek to revitalize neighborhoods can benefit schools if they are better linked. What if school reformers and community builders work more closely together? A centerpiece is the role of parents who have been neglected by or are disengaged from the schools their children attend. One study finds that community-based organizations (CBOs) that have the support of ethnic communities can act as go-betweens by assisting school officials to gain a better cultural understanding of the families and ethnic groups they serve. They can also help parents to become more engaged in school activities. In turn, schools can recognize that they are not islands but are situated in communities with families—schools benefit by seeing ethnic communities as resources and by partnering with CBOs. Some schools and communities already do this, and those working in this direction have shown positive results.<sup>2</sup>

Accordingly, greater inclusion of Asian American parents and communities with schools is a needed strategy. Where large numbers of Asian American students are concerned, there are within Asian American ethnic communities and organizations untapped sources of leadership, expertise, and resources to be consulted and to use as partners. It does take

a village (or more) to raise a child, and all schools and communities are rich in different kinds of resources.

## **2. Family-School Involvement: How Asian Immigrant Parents Understand It**

What is the current involvement of Asian American parents in education? We provide three broad aspects of Asian American parent-student-school dynamics to help educators and policy makers better understand the perspectives and actions of their families with respect to U.S. education. Bear in mind that Asian American ethnic groups are diverse and so are their capacities to provide supports for their youth.

**Understanding Why Asian American Parents Emphasize Education.** Historically, racism, stereotyping, and other barriers to employment experienced by Asian Americans have contributed to parents encouraging children to go to college, because a college degree represents a hedge against further discrimination in the workplace. Asian American parents also emphasize practical degrees, such as engineering, the sciences, health care, and accounting, because these fields are highly valued; provide job security, possibilities for advancement, good wages, and status; and are less likely to be eliminated in a difficult economy. Just as important, employers and the American public have not considered Asian Americans to be suitable for positions in the entertainment, political, sports, and corporate arenas until very recently, due again to racial practices and biases.<sup>4</sup>

With these limitations, many Asian American parents conclude that their children must perform in school because it is a known pathway for them to do well in life. Therefore, they pressure students to study, study, and study more. They can be highly demanding of students' academic performance, giving them little time and encouragement to "play" and develop other interests and abilities. Knowing more about Asian American parental motives and histories in America can help school personnel better serve and guide students and families.

**Asian American Family Interdependency—"a Two-Edged Sword."** Youth in immigrant households, be they of Asian, Pacific Islander, Latino, African/Afro-Caribbean, or European backgrounds, place more emphasis on family interdependency than do youth with U.S.-born parents. This is an economic necessity, not simply a cultural choice. Immigrant (first-generation American) parents rely on children to translate, take care of siblings, do major chores, and oftentimes to work part time while in school to support the household or as unpaid labor in a family workplace.<sup>5</sup>

Asian American youth are motivated to do well in school, knowing how hard their parents work and sacrifice for the family. Students' attentiveness in school contributes to high academic achievement for many, but it has a downside as well. Parental pressures and always putting family needs first add to the weight that young people carry in having to fulfill school and societal expectations of being a model minority, especially when adults do not understand their difficulties as ELL students and/or as students of color and are not responsive to their academic limitations. When Asian American students cannot

perform at the high academic levels that their parents or teachers expect, or feel pushed to do well in fields of study that do not interest them, or are distressed in school because classmates don't like them due to academic and racial stereotypes, they can become depressed, feel disempowered, and often lose interest in schooling.<sup>6</sup>

**School-Parent Involvement versus Engagement.** The limited involvement of immigrant parents in schools, especially among low-income households, is a frequent observation of school officials. This is not necessarily the case of U.S.-born Asian American parents (i.e., second or third generation and beyond). Noninvolvement is generally measured by lack of participation in PTA activities, bake sales or other fund-raisers, and sports events. These are traditional ways of doing things and have meaning for schools, but may be less relevant for Asian immigrants. The reasons are often stated as: Immigrant parents have poor English language skills, don't question school or teacher policies, are working, don't have time or interest, or don't understand the importance of such activities. To the contrary, the vast majority of Asian American parents are very much interested in their children's education; they just express it differently.<sup>7</sup>

Asian American educators have a different perspective of school-parent involvement. A school-focused view seeks parental involvement on school terms, but that is not engagement. Engagement is a two-way street that is authentic and meaningful for both parties. To form school-parent partnerships that are welcoming, schools are encouraged to reach out to immigrant parents in ways that are culturally responsive and to provide opportunities for them to share their knowledge, culture, and expertise.

It is necessary to utilize newsletters or other forms of communication in a language parents understand and staff members or volunteers, such as family advocates or liaisons, who can translate. Events planned with Asian American parents and representatives of Asian American communities in visible positions at the school send a positive message that the school truly cares. Through different activities, schools can assist immigrant and low-income parents in understanding how the U.S. school system works and the role that parents can play in supporting their children. For example, parents need to know more about the value of their youth participating in extracurricular activities. Providing English classes or other skills-based classes and health and social services are other ways to bring parents to schools. Schools can help families belong and feel part of a larger community and this, in turn, enhances their participation and student academic achievement. By acknowledging immigrant families as assets to the school community, everyone—school personnel, students, and parents of all backgrounds—benefits.<sup>8</sup>

### **3. School-Community Engagement**

Asian American communities support their children's schooling outside of school in many ways. We identify the role of "out-of-school time" (OST) learning in supplementing and enhancing school learning as sound practice. The Seattle Public Schools Office for Community Learning also speaks of aligning OST with student learning. Students who attend high-quality after-school programs have better peer

relations, grades, emotional adjustment, and other attributes than peers who are not in after-school programs.<sup>9</sup>

Asian American groups have long operated OST programs because their social and cultural needs have not been adequately met by U.S. society. We provide examples to illustrate how their work aligns with regular school programs. These OST programs are valuable community resources that are largely unrecognized by school officials.

**Ethnic-Based Schools as Supplementary Education.** Ethnic-based language and cultural schools are long-time American institutions among immigrant communities, including European groups. Today, nonprofit, community-based language schools, most notably among Chinese and Korean communities, supplement and enrich the education that Asian American youth receive in public schools. Whether after school or on weekends from New York City to Los Angeles and Seattle, a broad curriculum of language, arts, music, dance, and athletics is offered, largely to immigrant children. Many schools also provide tutoring in U.S. school subjects, including English and mathematics.

Parents with greater resources may send their children to private, for-profit schools. Here parents anxious to get their children into the best colleges are informed of the intricacies of the U.S. education system. The Chinese-run “buxiban” or “kumon” program and the Korean-run “hagwons” are noted for their SAT, PSAT, and AP preparation. These nonprofit and for-profit community-supported schools help explain, along with selective immigration that has brought highly educated Asian professionals to the United States, why many Chinese Americans and Korean Americans are academically successful in U.S. schools so quickly as recent immigrant group members.<sup>10</sup>

The Filipino American Educators of Washington, a group of about 30 educators from the Seattle and Renton school districts, has been providing spelling bees, essay contests, and tutoring programs for middle-school students to supplement and support their academics. The Filipino Community of Seattle (FCS) is also raising funds to expand a Saturday WASL Test Prep Program, which was begun in 2004 with seven students and recently served two dozen students, to include other activities as well.<sup>11</sup>

Not all Asian American families have such resources nor do all Asian American ethnic groups have such enterprises. Nor should it be the responsibility of parents and ethnic communities to fill in all the gaps of the U.S. public school system where they are failing to educate Asian American children. Nonetheless, ethnic-based language and cultural schools do play an important role in Asian American academic achievement. They are also a form of community-based, culturally responsive schooling. The public schools and ethnic communities could partner to develop programs to address the lower academic performance of specific ethnic groups within the Asian American community.

**Community-Based Organizations (CBOs).** Nonprofit community-based organizations, especially youth and social service agencies, have stepped in to help at-risk youth and their relations with families and schools. Increasingly, they are filling in the “spaces” (see box) through OST programs to support Asian American academic development. New



research proposes that CBO collaboration with public schools has the potential of enhancing parental engagement in schools. Whereas a school's disconnection from families and communities weakens its effectiveness, CBOs that serve neighborhoods and ethnic families whose children attend public schools can help close Asian American achievement gaps.<sup>13</sup>

In greater Seattle, the staff of the Chinese Information and Service Center (CISC) speaks several Asian languages and dialects as well as Spanish, Russian, and English. The Center helps Vietnamese and South Asian families in addition to Chinese immigrants. Their after-school programs assist students with school work and study skills. Staff broker relations between generations and bridge the cultural barriers between school, home, and the larger American culture. The Center also has leadership training programs to prepare youth for college and careers. In short, the academic and social/cultural support of CISC promotes the success of immigrant youth and is developing a new generation of leaders.<sup>14</sup>

SafeFutures Youth Center, which serves King County, provides comprehensive services to primarily Southeast Asian, East African, African American, and Pacific Islander youth and their families. It plays a critical role in raising community awareness about juvenile delinquency, promoting mutual understanding and communication between generations, developing leaders among youth of color, and helping them complete their studies. The Center works with youth who have been kicked, pushed, or dropped out of schools and with those who are in gangs or trying to leave gangs. In motivating youth to do well in school, finding alternative schools and activities for them, and increasing the number of GED recipients, it provides new possibilities for struggling youth. In supporting family

**Community-Based Organizations:  
“They See Us as Resource”**

Because one institution cannot provide all the services required, “schools need to work together with a wide array of community-based organizations.” ... As a result of the rise in standardization and accountability and the increase in class size, the curriculum and pedagogy of schools serving students of color and working-class and poor students are affected nationwide. OST programs serve as critical partners in assisting schools to fill these gaps... Schools are not the only place where learning happens, rather “community-based organizations... are also [themselves] settings for learning and engagement.” After-school settings offer a unique context and “because they are not necessarily associated with the expectations of school or other major institutions, students may feel more at home in intermediary spaces.”<sup>12</sup>

members to connect with each other and in bridging school and community, SafeFutures is an important safety net for youth. In training youth counselors, it is building capacity in ethnic communities.<sup>15</sup>

These examples suggest that CBOs are picking up the slack for schools in some cases. In this economy, their staffing and financial resources are stretched thin, which limits their services. Increased engagement between schools and communities through partnerships with CBOs can enhance student academic achievement and leverage limited resources.

**School-Community-Teacher Preparation Partnership.** Another example is a formalized school-community partnership in San Francisco. Pin@y Educational Partnerships (PEP) was established in 2001 as a service-learning collaborative teaching pipeline involving San Francisco State University's Asian American Studies Department, San Francisco public schools, and the Filipino Community Center. The chief focus is on utilizing upper-division undergraduates and graduate students at the University interested in education careers to work with students in the schools at all levels, but especially with those who are underperforming. One aspect of the program is to co-teach courses and provide a curriculum of the history and culture of the Philippines and Filipino Americans to help keep children academically motivated.<sup>16</sup> It is a model that aligns various interests and schooling sites and connects their expertise, skills, and resources.

#### 4. Closing Remarks

The researchers recognize the challenges that schools face and how hard teachers and school officials are working to educate students. They know the demands placed on public schools to meet societal needs along with student needs, which are made more difficult by budget constraints.

Parents want and expect their children to be well served by the State's public schools. Ethnic communities want and expect schools to be more culturally responsive, because they see themselves not as liabilities, but as contributors and assets in working with teachers and the public schools.

All kids can learn. Many Asian American students are doing well in school. Others are strivers or struggling. The report has highlighted subgroups most at risk (i.e., ELL students and Filipino and Southeast Asian Americans), but all Asian American students deserve to be academically prepared and supported.

What is most prevalent in the research and practice literature is that Asian American students do not want to be treated as stereotypes. They seek inclusion in all aspects of school life. They want to be understood as individuals with rich ethnic and cultural heritages and histories. They also desire broader opportunities, information, and guidance to develop their whole selves; to better prepare themselves for high school completion, college, and other possibilities; and to make wise choices in their personal and school lives pre K–16 and beyond so they can participate fully as adults in a democratic society.

## VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS

In this report, we distributed findings, strategies, and best practices throughout the text. We wrote separate contents for the Asian American and Pacific Islander reports, but combined our efforts to develop some guiding principles to shape reforms that will affect Asian American students and their families. Some recommendations overlap with the Pacific Islander study; others are distinct to the Asian American community. The recommendations are numbered for convenience and generally follow the outline of the report. We consider them to be equally important.

**1. Adopt a Data Collection, Research, and Evaluation Plan to Assess the Reduction of the Achievement Gaps Over Time.** Such a plan would benefit all racial and ethnic groups. Specifically, to improve Asian American student evaluation:

- Implement systematic data collection that can provide accurate, precise, and quality information on students' demographic backgrounds and academic outcomes.
- Collect disaggregated data by Asian American ethnic subgroups and within student subgroups for any meaningful analysis of their academic participation and performance. Alone, aggregate data is incomplete.
- Develop standard forms for students' demographic information, including ethnicity and language, from enrollment to graduation records, from schools through districts to OSPI to ensure consistency across different data sets.
- Establish data linkages between the CSRS and other data sets, including WASL, to enable the examination of various student factors that contribute to their educational outcomes and academic achievement both comparatively and longitudinally.
- Engage a community-based advisory group to advise on data development and research questions about academic achievement that are meaningful for schools and Asian American communities.
- Conduct follow-up of students who drop out of and who graduate from Washington State high schools. Such studies are critical to understanding the short- and long-term consequences of schooling in the State.

**2. Create a Seamless Pipeline Pre-K Through Higher Education.** Include Asian Americans, with particular attention to at-risk groups, in all academic and co-curricular programs, from early education (such as Thrive by Five) through K–12 and on to college access, information, and recruitment opportunities. More specifically:

- Collaborate with community-based organizations to increase resources, including linguistic and cultural experts, and to identify families and ethnic groups who can most benefit.

- Consult with Asian American teachers, counselors, administrators, other school personnel, and specialists on Asian American education.
- Develop partnerships with higher education, including 2-year and 4-year institutions.
- Collect and analyze aggregate and disaggregated data on Asian American student participation, performance and outcomes at all levels, pre-K–16.

**3. Broaden and Enhance School Measurements and Accountability.** Given that single (high-stakes) measurements tend to demoralize students and limit teacher effectiveness, the following are recommended:

- Balance cognitive-based measurement with assessment using other forms of knowledge acquisition and skills building, such as social and emotional learning.
- Adopt qualitative ethnographic studies along with quantitative data about student progress and performance.
- Inform students and families about measurements, standards, performance, and related matters in culturally responsive ways.
- Review assessment methods and materials to ensure they are free of cultural biases.
- Engage with all stakeholders, students, families, communities, educators, specialists, and others at local, regional and national levels to ensure measurements are appropriate, meaningful, and positive, not punitive.

**4. Foster Culturally Responsive Approaches and Practices.** Develop and implement a strategic plan that encourages the cultural responsiveness of the school system to Asian Americans and all racial and ethnic minority groups so the system is positive, individualized, free of stereotypes, and views them as assets. No single intervention will effectively enhance the academic achievement of all students in Washington State and simultaneously eliminate the gap of academic performance between some ethnic groups over others. What is needed at this time is a comprehensive and coordinated plan that will:

- Address institutional barriers such as discrimination, bullying, stereotyping, and inappropriate testing that create a hostile school climate and disengage students from learning in the classroom or participating in school activities.
- Incorporate culturally responsive teaching and curricula that include appropriate materials on Asian American groups and capitalize on students' cultural backgrounds. These have been shown to be effective and should be considered as possible interventions in overcoming some of these institutional barriers.
- Recruit, retain, and advance effective teachers and administrators from Asian American communities.

- Train all teachers and administrators to work more effectively with diverse groups of Asian American students and their families.

**5. Adopt Effective ELL Programs.** The achievement gap for Asian American ELL students and all ELL students must be closed. The following are recommended:

- Adopt effective ELL programs and support them for the time that students require them to achieve academic English proficiency.
- Enhance equal access for ELL students to information, programs, and opportunity for higher education.
- Ensure that all Asian American students who are ELL students or who could benefit from such programs are well served in them.
- Employ highly effective and well-trained bilingual/ESL teachers and counselors.

**6. Address Teacher Quality and Effectiveness.** Teachers should expect success for all children regardless of their ethnicity, primary spoken language, socioeconomic status, family configuration, age, religion, ability, gender, and physical characteristics. Schools need to support and reward teachers who demonstrate effectiveness in closing Asian American achievement gaps. We encourage teachers engaged with Asian American students to:

- Initiate positive, interactive relationships with families and communities as they participate in their children's education.
- Know students by gaining greater knowledge of Asian American ethnic groups, their histories and cultures here in the United States, and in their ancestral countries. Incorporate such information in the classroom and related school activities.
- Use multiple teaching styles to support students' different learning styles.
- Provide all students with access to challenging and engaging curricula.

**7. Engage Asian American Families in Schools.** As noted in the report, the research literature and practice fields offer many suggestions for reaching out to Asian American families, especially to parents born and raised outside the United States who are less familiar with how U.S. schools work, what teachers expect of them, and what they can expect of schools. Greater effort needs to be made to engage parents in ways that are meaningful to them; school-defined involvement is not enough. To be more welcoming, schools can, for example:

- Recognize families' rich and varied backgrounds and life experiences.
- Hold information meetings for families on community sites with translators and eliminate language barriers in print materials and at meetings.

- Provide families with needed information to navigate the U.S. school system.
- Hire family advocates and parent academic liaisons, as utilized, for example, by the Shoreline School District, to bridge relationships between teachers and families. Such personnel can provide access to resources and facilitate discussion and participation in schools in families' heritage languages.
- Collaborate with Asian American community groups and community-based organizations to enhance resources and to make connections with families (see Recommendation 8 below).
- Encourage school leaders and personnel to know the communities they serve.

**8. Strengthen School-Community Partnerships.** In the course of this study, we have been impressed with the talents, insights, motivation, and initiative of different groups. The Multi-Ethnic Think Tank, the Asian Pacific Islander American Think Tank, and the Pacific Islander Community Advisory Group, for example, have extensive community networks that make them potentially strategic partners in helping schools meet the educational needs of Asian Americans. Ethnic organizations have other resources, including cultural and heritage language supports. Community-based organizations (CBOs), in particular, have extensive knowledge and experience working with Asian American families and students.

The operative word in this recommendation is partnership. Partnerships involve collaborative relationships that reduce power imbalances and share responsibility in identifying the problem or issue, discussing ideas, developing solutions, and evaluating results of policy or programmatic interventions. Resource sharing is a strategy that can enhance the work of both schools and CBOs.

Closing the *hidden* achievement gaps of Asian Americans will require the support of all stakeholders. Our kids need all of us working together for their success.

# ENDNOTES

## I. INTRODUCTION

<sup>1</sup>For one of the first publications to use disaggregated data on Asian Americans to disclose educational and other disparities across and within ethnic groups, see Shirley Hune and Kenyon S. Chan, “Special Focus: Asian Pacific American Demographic and Educational Trends,” in *15<sup>th</sup> Annual Status Report on Minorities in Higher Education*, ed. Deborah J. Carter and Reginald Wilson, 39–67, 103–107 (Washington, DC: American Council on Education, 1997).

<sup>2</sup>*Call to Action: Mandating an Equitable and Culturally Competent Education for All Students in Washington State: Position Statement by the Multi-Ethnic Think Tank*. Revised October 2002. METT is a collectivity of African American, American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian Pacific Islander American, Hispanic, and Low Socio-Economic think tanks in the State.

<sup>3</sup>Interagency agreement between the State of Washington Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs and the University of Washington, July 24, 2008.

<sup>4</sup>G. Sue Shannon and Pete Bylsma, *Addressing the Achievement Gap: A Challenge for Washington State Educator* (Olympia, WA: Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, Research and Evaluation Office, November 2002). Its strategies for closing the achievement gap included changing beliefs and attitudes, being more culturally responsive, creating greater learning opportunities for students, developing more effective instruction, and increasing family and community involvement.

<sup>5</sup>*Washington Learns* (November 2006), the report prepared by the Washington Learns Steering Committee, sets forth long-term goals, a P-20 Council to monitor progress, and high expectations to provide a “world-class, learner-focused, seamless education” from pre-K through higher education.

<sup>6</sup>Washington Higher Education Coordinating Board, *Moving the Blue Arrow: Pathways to Educational Opportunity* (December 2007). The Board seeks a high-quality higher education system as an engine for the State’s economic innovation and prosperity. The report sets high goals for expanding educational opportunities for all Washingtonians and makes student diversity in higher education one of its broad strategies.

<sup>7</sup>For a listing of key reports and publications, see Appendix B.

## II. WHO ARE ASIAN AMERICANS?

<sup>1</sup> Gary Y. Okihiro, *Margins and Mainstreams* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994).

<sup>2</sup> Sucheng Chang, *Asian Americans: An Interpretive History* (Boston: Twayne, 1991). Other historical studies continuing into the contemporary period are: Ronald Takaki, *Strangers from a Different Shore: A History of Asian Americans* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1989); and Shirley Hune and Gail M. Nomura, eds. *Asian/Pacific Islander American Women: A Historical Anthology* (New York: New York University Press, 2003).

<sup>3</sup> *Asian Pacific American Heritage Resource Guide* for Washington State K–12 Schools. State of Washington Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs, 2001. A copy of this 74-page document is available in pdf form from the CAPAA Web site at: [http://www.capaa.wa.gov/pdf/community/APAHM\\_RG\\_050101.pdf](http://www.capaa.wa.gov/pdf/community/APAHM_RG_050101.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> *Asian Pacific American Heritage Resource Guide*.

<sup>5</sup> Lornet Turnbull, "This Is Who I Am," *The Seattle Times*, September 28, 2008.

<sup>6</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, *The Asian Population: 2000, Census 2000 Brief: American Community Survey, 2002–07*, Tables C02003. Race–Universe: Total Population. The U.S. Census data considers Hispanics (Latinos) an ethnic group, not a racial group.

<sup>7</sup> "India to Open Consulate in Seattle as Community of Immigrants Grows," *The Seattle Times*, November 4, 2008.

<sup>8</sup> Max Niedzwiecki and T.C. Duong, *Southeast Asian American Statistical Profile* (Washington, DC: Southeast Asia Resource Action Center [SEARAC], 2004), 27.

<sup>9</sup> Elizabeth A. Segal, Keith M. Kilty, and Rebecca Y. Kim, "Social and Economic Inequality and Asian Americans in the United States," *Journal of Poverty* 6, no. 4 (2002): 13–14.

<sup>10</sup> Asian Pacific American Legal Center of Southern California, *A Community of Contrasts: Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in the United States* (Washington, DC: Asian American Justice Center, Asian Law Caucus, and Asian American Institute, 2006), 8.

<sup>11</sup> Douglas Miller and Douglas Houston, "Distressed Asian American Neighborhoods," *aapi nexus* 1, no. 1 (2003): 67–84.

<sup>12</sup> *A Community of Contrasts*, 8.



<sup>13</sup> This is not an issue confined to poor urban neighborhoods. One middle-class suburban school district in New York State is developing new strategies to involve Asian parents. Asian parents, in turn, are learning about cultural practices in the United States and a parent's role in their child's education. Winnie Hu, "A School District Asks: Where Are the Parents?" *The New York Times*, November 12, 2008.

### III. ASIAN AMERICAN STUDENTS IN WASHINGTON STATE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

<sup>1</sup> Wayne E. Wright, "The Success and Demise of a Khmer (Cambodian) Bilingual Education Program: A Case Study," in *Asian American Identities, Families, and Schooling*, ed. Clara C. Park, A. Lin Goodwin, and Stacey J. Lee, 249 (Greenwich, CT: Information Age Publishing, 2003).

<sup>2</sup> OSPI CSRS Data, 2007.

<sup>3</sup> Titu Andreescu, Joseph A. Gallian, Jonathan M. Kane, and Janet E. Mertz, "Cross-Cultural Analysis of Students with Exceptional Talent in Mathematical Problem Solving," *Notices of the American Mathematical Society* 55, no. 10 (2008): 1248–1260.

<sup>4</sup> Quoted in Sara Rimer, "Math Skills Suffer in U.S., Study Finds," *The New York Times*, October 10, 2008.

<sup>5</sup> Andreescu et al., "Cross-Cultural Analysis of Students."

<sup>6</sup> Shirley Hune, "Asian Pacific American Women and Men in Higher Education," in *"Strangers" of the Academy*, ed. Guofang Li and Gulbhar H. Beckett, 15–36 (Sterling, VA: Stylus, 2006).

<sup>7</sup> Nancy Lopez, *Hopeful Girls, Troubled Boys* (New York: Routledge, 2003).

<sup>8</sup> The lead author was an invited participant at The College Board–sponsored Dialogue Day: Examining the Decline of Minority Male Participation and Achievement in Secondary and Postsecondary Education held in San Francisco, September 18–19, 2008, to address the status of Asian American and Pacific Islander American male students.

<sup>9</sup> Stacey J. Lee with K. Kumashiro, *A Report on the Status of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in Education: Beyond the "Model Minority" Stereotype* (Washington, DC: National Education Association, 2005), 6–7.

<sup>10</sup> J. Lei, "(Un)Necessary Toughness?: Those 'Loud Black Girls' and Those 'Quiet Asian Boys,'" *Anthropology & Education Quarterly* 34, no. 2 (2003): 158–181.

## IV. ASIAN AMERICAN STUDENTS IN SEATTLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

<sup>1</sup> The Coalition for Asian American Children and Families [CACF], *Hidden in Plain View: An Overview of the Needs of Asian American Students in the Public School System* (New York: The Coalition for Asian American Children and Families, 2004), 16–18; and Khatharya Um, *A Dream Denied: Educational Experiences of Southeast Asian American Youth* (Washington, DC: Southeast Asia Resource Action Center [SEARAC], 2003).

<sup>2</sup> Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund [AALDEF]. *Left in the Margins: Asian American Students & the No Child Left Behind Act* (New York: AALDEF, 2008).

<sup>3</sup> CACF, *Hidden in Plain View*, 6–18.

## V. STUDENT (DIS)ENGAGEMENT: ASIAN AMERICAN ELL STUDENTS

<sup>1</sup> Helen Magalon and Howard De Leeuw, “Executive Summary,” *Educating English Language Learners in Washington State, 2005–06*, Report to Legislature (Olympia, WA: Washington State Superintendent of Public Instruction, March 2008).

<sup>2</sup> Council of the Great City Schools, *Raising the Achievement of English Language Learners in the Seattle Public Schools* (CGCS, Summer 2008).

<sup>3</sup> Laurie Olsen, *An Invisible Crisis: The Educational Needs of Asian Pacific American Youth* (Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy [AAPIP], 1997).

<sup>4</sup> Pete Bylsma, *Educating Limited-English-Proficient Students in Washington State* (Olympia, WA: Office of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, December 2000); and Malagon and De Leeuw, *Educating English Language Learners*.

<sup>5</sup> Anti-Asian racism in schools and its impact on student learning and intergroup relations is well documented. For example, Rosalind S. Chou and Joe R. Feagin, *The Myth of the Model Minority: Asian Americans Facing Racism* (Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2008); Vivian Tseng, Ruth K. Chao, and Inna Artati Padmawidjaja, “Asian Americans’ Education Experiences,” in *Handbook of Asian American Psychology*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., edited by Frederick T. L. Leong, Arpana G. Inman, Angela Ebreo, Lawrence Hsin Yang, Lisa Marie Kinoshita, and Michi Fu, 105–123 (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 2007); and Olsen, *An Invisible Crisis*, 1997).

<sup>6</sup> Danling Fu, *“My Trouble is My English”: Asian Students and the American Dream* (Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook Publishers, 1995).

<sup>7</sup> Fu, *“My Trouble is My English.”*

<sup>8</sup> Wright, "The Success and Demise of a Khmer (Cambodian) Bilingual Education Program."

<sup>9</sup> Angela Valenzuela, *Subtractive Schooling: U.S.-Mexican Youth and the Politics of Caring* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995); and chapters in *Struggling to Be Heard: The Unmet Needs of Asian Pacific American Children*, ed. Valerie Ooka Pang and Li-Rong Lilly Cheng (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998).

<sup>10</sup> Fu, "My Trouble is My English." See strategies in *Asian-American Education: Prospects and Challenges*, ed. Clara C. Park and Marilyn Mei-Ying Chi (Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey, 1999) and other volumes listed in Appendix B, Key Edited Volumes.

<sup>11</sup> The works of L. Wong Fillmore discussed in Valerie Ooka Pang, Peter N. Kiang, and Yoon K. Pak, "Asian Pacific American Students: Challenging a Biased Education System," in *Handbook of Research on Multicultural Education*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., edited by J. A. Banks, 553 (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004) and Wright, "The Success and Demise of a Khmer (Cambodian) Bilingual Education Program."

<sup>12</sup> Wright, "The Success and Demise of a Khmer (Cambodian) Bilingual Education Program," 237.

## VI. AN UNSUPPORTIVE SCHOOL CLIMATE: ASIAN AMERICAN STUDENTS AT-RISK

<sup>1</sup> Pang, Kiang, and Pak, "Asian Pacific American Students," and A. Barretto Ogilvie, *Filipino American K-12 Public School Students: A National Survey* (Washington, DC: National Federation of Filipino American Associations. Draft Report, January 2008), 121.

<sup>2</sup> Um, *A Dream Denied*; Nancy J. Smith-Hefner. *Khmer American: Identity and Moral Education in a Diasporic Community* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); and shared by Sory Svy, SafeFutures Youth Center (December 2008).

<sup>3</sup> Peter Nien-chu Kiang, "Bicultural Strengths and Struggles of Southeast Asian Americans in School," in *Culture and Difference*, ed. Antonia Darder, 201–225 (Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey, 1995).

<sup>4</sup> Stacey J. Lee, *Up Against Whiteness: Race, School and Immigrant Youth* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2005); and Penelope V. Flores, "Filipino American Students: Actively Carving a Sense of Identity," in Pang and Cheng, *Struggling to Be Heard*, 27–43.

<sup>5</sup> Robert T. Teranishi, "Asian Pacific Americans and Critical Race Theory: An Examination of School Racial Climate," *Equity & Excellence in Education* 35, no. 2 (2002):144–154.

<sup>6</sup> Bic Ngo and Stacey J. Lee, "Complicating the Image of Model Minority Success: A Review of Southeast Asian American Education," *Review of Educational Research* 77, no. 4 (2007): 415–453; and Um, *A Dream Denied*.

<sup>7</sup> Mao Theam, *SafeFutures Youth's Where Are They Now?*, (June 2002), 23.

<sup>8</sup> Lee, *Up Against Whiteness*.

<sup>9</sup> Lee, *Up Against Whiteness*; and Um, *A Dream Denied*, 15.

<sup>10</sup> Patricia C. Espiritu, *Collisions, Conjunctions, and Community: How Filipino American Students Experience a Curriculum About Self* (PhD diss., University of Washington, College of Education, 2001).

<sup>11</sup> We designed and sent out a survey to current Asian/Asian American teachers in Washington State in November 2008 asking them for "best practices" and comments about their experiences. These comments were drawn from that survey.

<sup>12</sup> Ogilvie, *Filipino American K-12 Public School Students*, 121.

<sup>13</sup> Lee, *Up Against Whiteness*.

<sup>14</sup> Lee, *Up Against Whiteness*; and Teranishi, "Asian Pacific Americans and Critical Race Theory."

<sup>15</sup> Pang, Kiang, and Pak, "Asian Pacific American Students," 543; and Tseng, Chao and Padmawidjaja, "Asian Americans' Education Experiences," 114–115.

<sup>16</sup> Olsen, *An Invisible Crisis*, 22.

<sup>17</sup> Um, *A Dream Denied*.

<sup>18</sup> Chi-Ah Chun and Stanley Sue, "Mental Health Issues Concerning Asian Pacific American Children." In Pang and Cheng, 1998, 75–87.

<sup>19</sup> Pang, Kiang, and Pak, "Asian Pacific American Students," 354.

<sup>20</sup> Kevin Kumashiro, *The Seduction of Common Sense: How the Right has Framed the Debate on America's Schools?* (New York: Teachers' College, 2008).

<sup>21</sup> Aihwa Ong, *Buddha is Hiding: Refugees, Citizenship, the New America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 229–241.

<sup>22</sup> The University of Washington-Beyond High School (UW-BHS) project is a study of more than 9,600 students in Washington State public and private high schools with diverse racial/ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds. Three of nine public high schools participate in the Washington State Achievers (WSA) Program; another three schools are private. The WSA Program targets talented students from low-income families across 16 designated high schools. It aims to encourage these students to attend college by offering scholarships, tutoring, and school reform. Recipients are selected on the basis of academic promise, teacher recommendations, and evidence of overcoming hardship.

UW-BHS seeks to describe and explain differences in the transition from high school to college by race and ethnicity, socioeconomic origins, family structure, and other characteristics. Students first completed a survey covering about 200 items in the spring of their senior year in high school and followed up 1 year later by phone, e-mail, or letter. Three baseline surveys were conducted in 2000, 2002, and 2003. For more information, see their Web site: <https://depts.washington.edu/uwbhs/project.shtml>

<sup>23</sup> Nine out of 10 Asian parents would like their children to go to a 4-year college and beyond. More than eight of them expect their children to do so. More than two fifths of Asian American students (N = 1,722) respond that their parents never or rarely discuss school activities and events of particular interest to them. More than half of Asian American students (N = 1,724) perceive that their parents never or rarely help with or check on their homework. More than two thirds of Cambodian and more than half of Vietnamese students perceive their parents as being disinterested in their school activities or events. Source: Beyond High School, University of Washington, 2008.

<sup>24</sup> Eighty percent of Asian American students aspired to and 70% said they expected a BA or BS degree, compared with 74% and 67% for non-Asians, respectively. Source: Beyond High School, University of Washington, 2008.

<sup>25</sup> The Chronicle of Higher Education, "College Enrollment by Racial and Ethnic Group, Selected Years," *The 2005-06 Almanac* (2005).

<sup>26</sup> Smith-Hefner, *Khmer American: Identity and Moral Education*.

<sup>27</sup> Um, *A Dream Denied*.

## **VII. SCHOOL, FAMILY, AND COMMUNITY: STRENGTHENING ENGAGEMENT AND PARTNERSHIPS**

<sup>1</sup> Mark R. Warren, "Communities and Schools: A New View of Urban Education Reform," *Harvard Education Review* 75, no. 2 (Summer 2005). Retrieved from: <http://www.edreview.org/harvard05/2005su05/s08/warren.htm>

<sup>2</sup> Mark R. Warren, Soo Hong, Carolyn Leung, and Phitsamay Sychitkokhong Uy, "Beyond the Bake Sale: A Community-based, Relational Approach to Parent Engagement in Schools," *Teachers College Record* (forthcoming).

<sup>3</sup> Warren, "Communities and Schools: A New View."

<sup>4</sup> Hune and Chan, "Special Focus," 44–45; and S. Sue and S. Okazaki, "Asian American Educational Achievements: A Phenomenon in Search of an Explanation," *American Psychologist* 45, no. 8 (1990): 913–920.

<sup>5</sup> Vivian Tseng, "Family Interdependence and Academic Adjustment in College: Youth from Immigrant and U.S.-born Families," *Child Development* 75, no. 3 (2004): 966–983. Tseng uses the term *two-edged sword*.

<sup>6</sup> Shirley Hune and Gigi G. Gomez, "Examining the College Opportunities and Experiences of Talented, Low Income Asian American and Pacific Islander Gates Millennium Scholars and Non-Recipients," in *Readings on Equal Education*, vol. 23, chap. 4 (New York: AMS Press, 2008); and Tseng, "Family Interdependence and Academic Adjustment in College."

<sup>7</sup> Olsen, *An Invisible Crisis*.

<sup>8</sup> Olsen, *An Invisible Crisis*; and Winnie Hu, "A School District Asks: Where Are the Parents?" For example, Sau-Fong Siu, "An Ethnographic Study of Chinese American Family Involvement in Young Children's Education," in *Research on the Education of Asian and Pacific Americans*, ed. Clara C. Park, A. Lin Goodwin, and Stacey J. Lee, 105–128 (Greenwich, CT: IAP Publishing, 2001).

<sup>9</sup> Office for Community Learning, Seattle Public Schools. <http://www.seattleschools.org/area/ocl/index.dxml>

<sup>10</sup> Min Zhou and Susan S. Kim, "Community Forces, Social Capital, and Educational Achievement: The Case of Supplementary Education in the Chinese and Korean Immigrant Communities," *Harvard Education Review* 76, no. 1 (2006): 1–26.

<sup>11</sup> Ogilvie, *Filipino American K-12 Public School Students*, 121.

<sup>12</sup> Nga-Wing Anjela Wong, "'They See Us as Resource': The Role of a Community-Based Youth Center in Supporting the Academic Lives of Low-Income Chinese American Youth," *Anthropology & Education Quarterly* 39, no. 2 (2008): 184.

<sup>13</sup> Warren, et al., "Beyond the Bake Sale."

<sup>14</sup> Discussions with Aaric Bien, executive director of the Chinese Information and Service Center. See also N. Wong, "'They See Us as Resource.'"

<sup>15</sup> Theam, *SafeFutures Youth's Where Are They Now?*; and discussions with Sorya Svy, executive director of SafeFutures Youth Center.

<sup>16</sup> More information about Pin@y Educational Partnerships (PEP) can be accessed through their Web site at <http://pepsf.org/default.aspx>

# APPENDIX A

## ASIAN AMERICAN DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Table A1. U.S. and Washington State's Population by Race and Hispanic Origin in 2007

	Alone		Alone or in any combination	
	US	WA	US	WA
	N	%	N	%
<b>Total</b>	301,621,159		301,621,159	6,468,424
Population of one race (alone)				
White	223,005,483	73.9%	228,569,609	75.8%
Black or African American	37,334,570	12.4%	39,663,004	13.1%
American Indian & Alaska Native (AIAN)	2,365,347	0.8%	4,429,514	1.5%
Native Hawaiian & Pacific Islanders (NHPPI)	<b>13,233,287</b>	<b>4.4%</b>	<b>14,940,775</b>	<b>5.0%</b>
Some other races	434,675	0.1%	27,564	0.3%
Population of two or more races	18,738,784	6.2%	251,023	3.9%
	6,509,013	2.2%	234,360	3.6%
<b>Hispanic Origin</b>				
Hispanic or Latino	45,427,437	15.1%	610,006	9.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2007 American Community Survey.

Table C02003. RACE - Universe: Total Population;

Table C03002. Hispanic or Latino Origin by Race - Universe: Total Population;

Table S0201. Selected Population Profile in the United States and Washington State for different population groups.

Data set: 2007 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates



**Table A2. Washington's Ranking by Percent of the Total Population Who Are Asian Alone, 2007**

	States	%	States	Population
1	Hawaii	38.8	California	4,511,407
2	California	12.3	New York	1,328,767
3	New Jersey	7.5	Texas	806,844
4	New York	6.9	New Jersey	648,484
5	<b>Washington</b>	<b>6.6</b>	Hawaii	498,468
6	Nevada	6.1	Illinois	551,835
7	Maryland	4.9	<b>Washington</b>	<b>429,406</b>
8	Alaska	4.8	Florida	409,144
8	Massachusetts	4.8	Virginia	373,305
8	Virginia	4.8	Massachusetts	310,654
11	Illinois	4.3	California	4,511,407
12	Oregon	3.6	New York	1,328,767

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2007 American Community Survey. Tables R0204. Percent of the Total Population Who Are Asian Alone: 2007 Universe; Tables S0201. Selected Population Profile in Each State for Asian Alone Population. Data Set: 2007 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates.

**Table A3. Top 10 Washington Counties with Largest Asian American Populations, 2003**

	Counties	Number
<b>1</b>	<b>King</b>	<b>214,252</b>
2	Snohomish	43,635
3	Pierce	40,334
4	Clark	12,561
5	Kitsap	10,876
6	Thurston	10,522
7	Spokane	8,388
8	Whatcom	5,461
9	Benton	3,613
10	Island	2,954
Subtotal		352,596
<b>% of total</b>		<b>95.5</b>
Total	Total	369,092

Source: Office of Financial Management (OFM), State of Washington. Table T3a. Washington's Ranking in 2003 by Individual Minority Group: [http://www.ofm.wa.gov/pop/race/minority\\_data\\_release.xls](http://www.ofm.wa.gov/pop/race/minority_data_release.xls)

**Table A4. Percentage of Foreign-Born, Median Family Income, Per Capita Income, and Percentage of Individuals Below Poverty Level in the U.S. and Washington State by Race, Ethnic Group, and by Asian American Ethnic Group, 2000**

	% of Foreign-Born		Median Family Income		Per Capita Income		% of Individuals Below Poverty Level	
	US	WA	US	WA	US	WA	US	WA
<b>Total</b>	11.1%	10.4%	\$50,046	\$53,760	\$21,587	\$22,973	12.4%	10.6%
White	6.3%	5.0%	\$53,356	\$55,856	\$23,918	\$24,674	9.1%	8.8%
Black	6.1%	8.4%	\$33,255	\$40,517	\$14,437	\$17,748	24.9%	19.2%
AIAN	5.4%	2.9%	\$33,144	\$34,638	\$12,893	\$13,622	25.7%	23.8%
Asian	68.9%	67.2%	\$59,324	\$54,611	\$21,823	\$20,141	12.6%	12.8%
NHPI	19.9%	17.2%	\$45,915	\$45,596	\$15,054	\$15,025	17.7%	15.5%
Hispanic/Latino	40.2%	38.5%	\$34,397	\$32,183	\$12,111	\$11,293	22.6%	24.9%
<b>Asian American Ethnic Group</b>								
Asian Indian	75.4%	76.7%	\$70,708	\$62,699	\$27,514	\$27,282	9.8%	8.8%
Bangladeshi	82.9%	-	\$38,146	-	\$13,971	-	21.3%	-
Cambodian	65.8%	65.8%	\$35,621	\$34,801	\$10,366	\$10,584	29.3%	24.7%
	70.5%	68.8%	\$59,497	\$62,317	\$23,642	\$24,822	13.4%	9.7%
Filipino	67.7%	65.5%	\$65,189	\$56,781	\$21,267	\$18,930	6.3%	6.4%
Hmong	55.6%	61.2%	\$32,384	\$27,955	\$6,600	\$6,445	37.8%	46.4%
Indonesian	82.8%	89.6%	\$47,038	\$34,239	\$18,932	\$18,320	20.9%	25.9%
Japanese	39.5%	41.2%	\$70,849	\$67,608	\$30,075	\$28,307	9.7%	12.1%
Korean	77.7%	77.9%	\$47,624	\$43,793	\$18,805	\$17,349	14.8%	17.1%
Laotian	68.1%	67.4%	\$43,542	\$44,536	\$11,830	\$12,911	18.5%	17.2%
Malaysian	88.8%	-	\$44,726	-	\$19,895	-	25.0%	-
Pakistani	75.5%	71.7%	\$50,189	\$57,634	\$18,096	\$18,367	16.5%	7.7%
Sri Lankan	82.6%	81.8%	\$61,452	\$70,515	\$27,478	\$24,346	10.4%	-
Taiwanese	77.1%	76.4%	\$70,276	\$64,191	\$25,890	\$22,569	14.7%	14.9%
Thai	77.8%	82.4%	\$49,635	\$50,192	\$19,066	\$16,723	14.4%	12.2%
Vietnamese	76.1%	78.0%	\$47,103	\$42,846	\$15,655	\$14,553	16.0%	18.5%
Other specified Asian	79.1%	67.0%	\$53,740	\$57,917	\$20,699	\$20,515	14.0%	6.8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. Tables DP-2. Profiles of Selected Social Characteristics: 2000; Tables DP-3. Profiles of Selected Economic Characteristics: 2000. Data set: Census 2000 Summary File 4 (SF 4) Sample data (1-in-6 households).

## APPENDIX B

### SELECTED READINGS ON ASIAN AMERICANS AND THEIR EDUCATION

#### 1. Major Census (Demographic) and Policy Reports Related to Education

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Hune, Shirley, and Kenyon S. Chan. "Special Focus: Asian Pacific American Demographic and Educational Trends." In *15<sup>th</sup> Annual Status Report on Minorities in Higher Education*, edited by Deborah J. Carter and Reginald Wilson, 39–67, 103–107. Washington, DC: American Council on Education, 1997.

Lai, Eric, and Dennis Arguelles, eds. *The New Face of Asian Pacific America: Numbers, Diversity, and Change in the 21st Century*. Los Angeles: Asian Week with UCLA Asian American Studies Center Press, 1998.

Lee, Stacey J., with K. Kumashiro. *A Report on the Status of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in Education: Beyond the "Model Minority" Stereotype*. Washington DC: National Education Association, 2005.

National Commission on Asian American and Pacific Islander Research in Education (CARE). *Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, Facts, Not Fiction: Setting the Record Straight*. New York: The College Board, 2008.

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Olsen, Laurie. *An Invisible Crisis: The Educational Needs of Asian Pacific American Youth*. Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy (AAPIP), 1997.

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Inkelas, Karen K. *Racial Attitudes and Asian Pacific Americans: Demystifying the Model Minority*. New York: Routledge, 2006.

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Teranishi, Robert T. "Asian Pacific Americans and Critical Race Theory: An Examination of School Racial Climate." *Equity & Excellence in Education* 35, no. 2 (2002): 144–154.

Tuan, Mia. *Forever Foreigners or Honorary Whites?: The Asian Ethnic Experience Today*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1998.

Wu, Frank H. *Yellow: Race in American Beyond Black and White*. New York: Basic Books, 2002.

## **3. K–12 Education**

Asian American Legal Defense Fund (AALDEF). *Left in the Margins: Asian American Studies & the No Child Left Behind Act*. New York: AALDEF, 2008.

Chen, Edith Wen-Chu, and Glenn Omatsu, eds. *Teaching about Asian Pacific Americans: Effective Activities, Strategies, and Assignments for Classrooms and Communities*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006.

The Coalition for Asian American Children and Families (CACF). *Hidden in Plain View: An Overview of the Needs of Asian American Students in the Public School System*. New York: CACF, 2004.

Lee, Stacey J. *Unraveling the "Model Minority" Stereotype: Listening to Asian American Youth*. New York: Teachers College Press, 1996.

Paik, Susan J., and Herbert J. Walberg, eds. *Narrowing the Achievement Gap: Strategies for Educating Latino, Black, and Asian Students*. Springer, NY: Springer Netherlands, 2007.

Pang, Valerie Ooka, and Li-Rong Lilly Cheng, eds. *Struggling to Be Heard: The Unmet Needs of Asian Pacific American Children*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1998.

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Zhou, Min and Carl L. Bankston III. *Growing Up American: How Vietnamese Children Adapt to Life in the United States*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1998.

## 6. Key Edited Volumes

*Journal of Southeast Asian American Education & Advancement*. <http://jsaaea.coehd.utsa.edu/index.php/JSAAEA>

Nakanishi, Don, and Tina Nishida, eds. *The Asian American Educational Experience: A Sourcebook for Teachers and Students*. New York: Routledge, 1995.

Park, Clara C. and Marilyn Mei-Ying Chi, eds. *Asian-American Education: Prospects and Challenges*. Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey, 1999.

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Park, Clara C., A. Goodwin Lin, and Stacey J. Lee, eds. *Research on the Education of Asian and Pacific Americans*. Greenwich, CT: Information Age Publishing, 2001.

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## APPENDIX C

### ABOUT THE LEAD RESEARCHERS AND RESEARCH TEAM

**Shirley Hune**, Ph.D., is a Professor of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies at the University of Washington Seattle. From 1992–2007, she was Associate Dean of the Graduate Division at UCLA and a Professor of Urban Planning. Her research focuses on immigration, race, and gender; Asian American history; and access and equity in higher education. She is a member of the Research Advisory Councils of the Gates Millennium Scholars and the Washington State Achievers programs.

**David T. Takeuchi**, Ph.D., is a sociologist and Professor in the School of Social Work and the Department of Sociology at the University of Washington. His research focuses on educational and health topics related to racial/ethnic minorities. He is the recipient of the Family Research Consortium Legacy Award for research and mentoring and the National Center on Health and Health Disparities Innovations Award for creative research contributions to improve the quality of life for people in diverse communities.

**Third Andresen** is a Ph.D. student at the College of Education, University of Washington, in curriculum and instruction focusing on multicultural education. He has been in the field of education and a community organizer for 12 years. He is a well-regarded spoken word artist, fundraiser, and producer in the Filipino American community of Seattle.

**Seunghye Hong** is currently a Ph.D. candidate in the School of Social Work at the University of Washington. Her primary research interests are neighborhood contexts, mental health, and immigration among racial/ethnic minority groups, focusing on Asian Americans and Latinos.

**Julie Kang** completed her Ph.D. in curriculum and instruction at the University of Washington in 2008. She is a faculty member at the University of Washington Seattle and Bothell, working with teachers seeking National Board Certification and Professional Teaching Certificates. Her research interests include oral histories of Asian American teachers, families, and communities of Title I/LAP (Language Assistance Program) and ELL students.

**Mavae‘Aho Redmond** is a graduate student in counseling psychology at Argosy University in Seattle. Her research interests consist of working within the Pacific Islander community, where she is known as an advocate. She served honorably in the United States Navy, active duty realm, and currently is stationed at Naval Station Everett, Washington, as a Reservist.

**Jeomja Yeo** is a Ph.D. candidate in curriculum and instruction at the University of Washington Seattle. Her research interests are immigration, race, ethnicity, and urban and suburban school policies and practices. She has been involved in various studies administered by the Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy (CSTP) during the course of her doctoral study.